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UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

**HOLY TERROR: THE VAMPIRE AS NUMINOUS EXPERIENCE
IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE**

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

**Beth E. McDonald
Norman, Oklahoma
2000**

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HOLY TERROR: THE VAMPIRE AS NUMINOUS EXPERIENCE
IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN LITERATURE

A Dissertation APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation investigates the experience of the numinous in a specific category of Gothic literature, which employs a vampire as the primary focus of its action, regardless of whether that figure is literal or metaphoric. The texts examined in the following chapters include both poetry and fiction by both British and American authors. This study explores how the use of the vampire in literature has served to convey a human sense of alienation from the divine and a desire to overcome that alienation. While expressing the physical, isolated state of the individual human being, as a numinous figure, the vampire also represents the transcendent agent through which individuals and societies may confront questions about their innate goodness or evilness and the condition of their belief in the divine and in the possibility of an afterlife. This dissertation defines the idea of the numinous as it was developed by Rudolf Otto in The Idea of the Holy and expands upon that concept with the use of several later examinations of the experience of the numinous. This study argues that a textual experience of the numinous in the form of the vampire propels the subject of the experience on a spiritual journey involving both psychological and religious qualities, and that through that journey the reader, and possibly the main character, begins to understand the value of his or her existence in the world and to negotiate a new relationship with the divine.

CHAPTER ONE

DREADFUL REVELATIONS: THE NUMINOUS AND THE VAMPIRE

This dissertation investigates the experience of the numinous in a specific category of Gothic literature, which employs a vampire as the primary focus of its action, regardless of whether that figure is literal or metaphoric. The texts examined in the following chapters include both poetry and fiction, and all were written at or near the ends of their respective centuries by both British and American authors. This study explores how at the ends of the last three centuries these authors have used the numinousness of the vampire to convey a human sense of alienation from the divine and a desire to overcome that alienation. While expressing the physical, non-transcendent, and isolated state of the individual human being, as a numinous figure, the vampire also represents the transcendent agent through which individuals and societies may confront questions about their innate goodness or evilness and the condition of their belief in the divine and in the possibility of an afterlife. This dissertation defines the idea of the numinous as it was developed by Rudolf Otto in The Idea of the Holy and expands upon that concept with the use of several later examinations of the experience of the numinous as based on Otto's primary work. This study argues that a textual experience of the numinous in the form of the vampire propels the subject of the experience on a spiritual journey involving both psychological and religious qualities, and that through that journey the reader, and

possibly the main character, begins to understand the value of his or her existence in the world and to negotiate a new relationship with the divine.

Method of Inquiry

The purpose of this dissertation is to discuss the use of the vampire figure as a representation of the numinous over several literary periods in a kind of super-religious context that goes beyond the realm of traditional religious systems.

Although some mention of other vampire texts and other vampires might be made in the discussion, I have chosen to divide the body of the dissertation into three chapters, dealing with the Romantic, Victorian, and late twentieth century periods, respectively.

The first two analytical chapters of the dissertation each examine one work by one writer from that particular period. The third chapter, however, explores the numinous in relation to a particular character through a series of texts by one writer. For the Romantic period I have chosen to analyze Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere" (1798), basing my use of this poem as a vampire text on James B. Twitchell's arguments for that perspective in The Living Dead. No analysis of the vampire in literature would be complete without the now classic vampire Dracula, so as a representative of vampire fiction in the Victorian period, I have examined Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897); and for the late twentieth century, I have selected the first five books of Anne Rice's popular Vampire Chronicles (1976-1995) for analysis. Despite the fact that I am considering the vampire figure as a negative representative of the numinous in all the chapters, rather than using one text dealing with the numinous concept as a foundation and following that particular thread through the texts of all three centuries, I have chosen a different perspective on the

numinous for each chapter. With this method, I hope to show how an experience of the vampire as a numinous figure can be analyzed on both psychological and religious levels.

However, before any attempt can be made to examine the vampire in terms of an experience of the numinous, several issues must be addressed. These issues include: the problem of how to reconcile the textual construction of an experience of the numinous through language with the idea that the numinous, by definition, is indescribable; the philosophical question of whether the divine in any form truly exists and where belief in the divine enters into an encounter with the numinous; and whether a discussion of the experience of the numinous in literature should be approached from a purely psychological point of view, a purely religious one, or a combination of the two perspectives. The problem of textual construction and the ineffableness of the numinous can be resolved, or at least clarified, in a discussion of the conventions of realism and the fantastic or Gothic text. Questions of the existence of the divine, of whether a belief in that existence is required in an experience of the numinous, and of the psychological versus the religious approach can be examined in a discussion of the definition of the numinous and the connection of an experience of the numinous to both the psychological and religious realms of knowledge.

Realism, the Fantastic, and the Numinous

In The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding (1957), Ian Watt attributes the development of the novel in the early eighteenth century to the advent of realism as a philosophic viewpoint, to the rise of the middle class as an important contingent of the reading public, and to the influence of the courts of law.

Watt maintains that realism has been recognized as the “defining characteristic which differentiates the work of the early eighteenth-century novelists from previous fiction” (10). Drawing on the work of philosophers, such as René Descartes and John Locke,¹ he argues that “modern realism...begins from the position that truth can be discovered by the individual through his senses” (12). With its use of realism, the novel “attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience” (11); and, therefore, the importance of realism lies not in what kind of experience is portrayed, but in how that experience is presented to the reader.

In Watt’s estimation the most important problem that realism foregrounds is “the problem of correspondence between the literary work and the reality it imitates” (11). Watt locates the basis of this epistemological problem in the diametrically opposed philosophies of earlier literary periods and the more “modern period” (12) in which the novel developed, a period Watt describes as having a “general intellectual orientation” (12) toward the individual experience through rejection of the classical and medieval philosophic orientations toward abstractions and universals. He suggests that just as many philosophers of the eighteenth century rejected universals and abstractions, so many of the eighteenth-century novelists also rejected the formal conventions and traditional plots of earlier literary works based on universal subjects such as myth, history, and legends.

While acknowledging Ian Watt’s work as the most successful of past studies on the novel, in The Origins of the English Novel 1600-1740 (1987), Michael McKeon addresses problems he feels are inherent in Watt’s discussion, including Watt’s argument for the rise of realism from philosophy, the growth of the middle

class, and the influence of the courts of law. McKeon argues that the historical situation of the emergence of the novel is more complicated than Watt envisioned it to be; his argument is that the changes that influenced the writers over time came not only from philosophical viewpoints, socio-economic advancements, and the influence of courts of law, but also from the affect of the religious and scientific movements of the various periods and from the rise of the print media itself.

McKeon's main criticism of Watt's study is that Watt did not extend his research far enough into the history of literature to give an accurate view of how realism became part of the literary tradition. Therefore, while Watt believes the eighteenth-century novelists were rejecting tradition, McKeon sees the new novelistic convention of realism grounded in the traditions of the past. From McKeon's perspective, the literary romance grew out of earlier oral traditions as the conventions of myth were employed in the service of "plausibility" (7).² Drawing on the archetypalist theories of Mircea Eliade, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Northrop Frye, McKeon argues that the novel emerged from the genre of romance which itself was grounded in the mythic stories of many primitive tribal societies.

However, McKeon maintains that another problem arises in the use of archetypalist theory to trace literary history. As Watt's approach relied on differences between genres, archetypal theory tends to "overemphasize continuity and identity" (McKeon 10). In the antithesis of these views, however, McKeon finds hope for a comprehensive theory of genre. The historical evidence McKeon gathers to support his premise indicates that the conventions of myth were never exhausted, but simply destabilized and changed into the conventions of romance. Claiming that early

writers of romance employed some characteristics of formal realism, McKeon argues that the differentiation between factual and fictional literature was already becoming established long before the novel's emergence as a genre in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and that the conventions of romance were never entirely replaced by those of realism. In a study that attempts to trace the movement of these overlapping genres through history, McKeon takes a dialectic approach, examining how the literature of each period handled questions of truth and virtue in an atmosphere of alternating pressures from "naïve empiricism ... [and] extreme skepticism" (21) motivated by progressive and conservative ideas. He maintains that through the changes wrought under these pressures the conventions of realism and the novel itself were born; and by the end of the eighteenth century, he argues, the idealism of romance had weathered a long re-evaluative process which gave rise to the romantic movement and "the secularized, human spirituality of the aesthetic" (419).

While McKeon's study of realism's genealogy is interesting, Watt's study of realism provides knowledge that is more practical for a discussion of realism and the individual human experience. Watt calls attention to the fact that, in relating human experience, the eighteenth-century novelists adapted traditional prose styles to reflect their claims of "complete authenticity" (27) and faithfulness to the human experience. In order to recreate the unique experience of the individual as faithfully as possible, characters had to be presented as particular people with proper names that demonstrated their individuality rather than names that reflected a general type of human being. Many early novelists also found that the Aristotelian unities of time

and space had to be particularized along with the characters. Time and space became an important facet of presenting a particular setting and character realistically. Time also became important in realism because the concept of time allows the self-aware person to see a cause and effect connection between past experience and present action.

If the novel with its conventions of realism promises an authentic account of human experience, the novelist must seek to satisfy the readers with details that reflect the individuality of the characters and the specifics of time and space in which the characters act and speak. The problem with the individual experience in literature, as in life, lies in the same particularity that makes the experience realistic or believable. McKeon's principle of reversals shows itself at this point, because the realistic novel might be considered a product of naïve empiricism, seeking to provide an authentic version of the world; however, in McKeon's analysis, extreme skepticism is always waiting in the wings. An attitude of skepticism toward a text tells the reader that this particular version of events is not the only version, and the questions of truth and virtue must be applied to elements of the text in order to ascertain whether this particular version can be trusted to be authentic. Since language is the medium of text production, the details of an individual human experience are presented in the realistic novel with "a more largely referential use of language than is common in other literary forms" (Watt 32). Realism, therefore, makes fewer demands upon the imagination of the reader; however, a genre such as the fantastic makes larger demands on the audience because use of the conventions of the fantastic causes the reader to question the truth of the individual experience.

Questioning the truth or authenticity of an account of human experience underscores the probability of multiple interpretations, which in itself implies the possibility of there being no definitive interpretation. This lack of interpretability produces a feeling of chaos in the imagination of the reader, a chaos that challenges the individual's comprehension of order within his own life.

It is this chaos, this lack of interpretability, which concerns theorist Tzvetan Todorov. In The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre, he writes, "in a world which is indeed our world, the one we know, a world without devils, sylphides, or vampires, there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this familiar world" (25). Seeking a linguistic basis for the structural features he sees in fantastic texts, Todorov places the interpretation of meaning secondary to the effect produced by the language. Despite his assertion that one cannot "define the fantastic in terms of opposition to the faithful reproduction of reality" (36), an overview of the conventions of fantasy as he developed them placed against Watt's conventions of realism helps to lay the foundation on which to build a discussion of the numinous.

In his study, Todorov places the fantastic at the center of a spectrum of reaction to the chaotic events. However, it is the reader, and sometimes the main character, who decides whether "laws of reality remain intact and permit an explanation of the phenomena described ... [or] if, on the contrary, ... that new laws of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena" (41). Once the person has chosen to believe in either natural or supernatural causes for the events encountered, he or she has entered the genres of either the uncanny or the marvelous,

respectively. Works that maintain the hesitation of the character for a long period but in which ultimately the decision is made between natural and supernatural causes are relegated to the sub-genres of fantastic-uncanny or fantastic-marvelous that lie between the central pure fantastic realm and the two extremes of pure uncanny and pure marvelous. According to Todorov, the truly fantastic can be found only in the uncertainty and hesitation of the subject who suffers from the lack of interpretability that characterizes the text. From a structuralist viewpoint, the reader ultimately decides what texts are fantastic, as in the process of reading he or she identifies with a character in the story and attempts “to reconstruct the story the text is telling” (Genres 125) through that character.

Todorov further delineates conditions that must be met if a text is to be considered fantastic. Not only must the reader accept the textual world as populated by real people, identify with one or more characters in that world, and experience the hesitation between natural and supernatural explanations, but the hesitation felt by the reader may be experienced by one or more of the characters in the text. In this way the hesitation felt by the reader becomes a theme of perception within the text. The reader's attitude toward the text must also be such that the reader rejects both allegorical and poetic ways of reading the text in favor of reading the events as real and unexplainable. To read allegorically is to read events as being significant of more figurative meanings, of standing for something else. To read poetically would be to read the events as literally true but with the added awareness that they are not. To accept some event as fantastic, however, requires that we not know whether the event is real or not. Seeking the linguistic foundations for the structural features he

sees in fantastic texts, Todorov attempts to explain the system of language that makes the literary effects of fantasy possible by relying on the verbal, syntactical, and semantic features of language.

The verbal factors of Todorov's structuralist theory are constituted in what Todorov refers to as "ambiguous vision" (Fantastic 33), manifested verbally by the mode, time, perspective, and voice of the fictional discourse. Mode of discourse pertains to "the degree of exactitude" with which the events of the plot are evoked in the text (Todorov Poetics 29). The ambiguous vision of the fantastic text is produced through a manifestation of mode that transgresses realistic conventions with the use of figurative discourses such as exaggeration and metamorphosis. Time involves the relationship between two temporal lines that have been juxtaposed within the text: that of the "universe represented" within the text and that of the "discourse representing it" (29). In a fantastic text, time is manipulated with foreshadowing techniques and pacing to condition the reader to the coming fantastic event and build tension to which the reader reacts. Perspective or vision involves the point of view from which the story is told, as either objective or subjective. Objectively, the reader is informed about what is perceived; subjectively, the reader discovers information about the perceiver of the action or object. In regards to the reader's degree of knowledge about the fictive world, two things are important: first, the extent of the vision or the angle from which events are observed, as either internal or external, and second, the depth or degree of vision. Narrative voice concerns the agent of the construction of the fictive universe. The narrator establishes the principles on which judgments of value and reality are made in the text and conceals or reveals the

character's thoughts and actions in order to move the story along the path it must follow to its climax. Involved along with the narrator is the "narratee," who, as Todorov says, "is not the real reader, any more than the narrator is the author" (Poetics 40). The narratee, he or she to whom the fictive discourse is addressed, does, however, serve as a liaison between narrator and actual reader, characterizing the narrator, bringing out themes, advancing the plot, and showing the actual reader how to read the text.

In an essay "Reading as Construction," Todorov maintains that "only referential sentences allow construction to take place" (68)³; however, in reading fantasy, though the sentences themselves must be referential in order for the reader to construct the fictive universe, the ambiguity of vision suffered by the narrator undercuts the constructive process, forcing a de-construction to take place at the same moment of construction. In this de-constructive process, gaps of knowledge and belief appear in the story through the modalization of doubt and the ambiguity of vision.⁴

In Todorov's theory, the second feature of language that is important to production of the fantastic is the syntactical character of the structure. Syntactical structure involves the reactions of characters to the events seen as formal units of language utterance. These utterances can be logical, temporal, or spatial. Realistic fictional works are structured in accordance with temporal and spatial order and with the logical constraint of cause and effect. However, in the fantastic text, syntactical structures involve the reactions of the characters to the events. These reactions can be seen as formal units that Todorov articulates as: "I + verb of attitude + modalization

of that verb in the direction of uncertainty” (Todorov Genres 24). Ambiguity results syntactically with the use of a verb and the modalization of that verb toward uncertain vision. The pronoun “I,” representing the reader of the text as guided by the narrator within the text, and subject to the same ambiguity of vision which the narrator suffers, responds to the fantastic events recounted within the text with some form of attitudinal reaction characterized by words such as believe or think. However, the hesitation that Todorov characterizes as the most important element in the reader’s reaction to the fantastic comes into play here. The reader experiences the narrator’s ambiguous vision as the narrator modalizes the verb of attitude through use of the imperfect tense to establish “distance between narrator and character” (Fantastic 38) and with “adverbs of manner such as almost, perhaps, doubtless” (24). In this way, the fantastic text is both logically and temporally shifted toward a feeling of uncertainty over the events, rather than toward sureness of a natural or a supernatural causality.

Although spatial order is often considered more important in poetry than in prose, it also has its application in the construction of a fantastic text. Todorov defines spatial order as “the existence of a certain more or less regular disposition of the units of the text” (Poetics 46). In terms of syntactic elements of a text, spatial order involves organization of the text in symmetrical patterns involving repetition, gradation, parallelism, and thesis/antithesis. Repetition and gradation, in which each repeated manifestation of a fantastic event becomes gradually more obvious, more real to the character and reader, and more threatening to the character’s and reader’s already tenuous hold on the reality of the overall chain of events work together to

produce a spatial structure in which the repeated events form the impetus for the plot and the thread which ties the actions of the characters together. On the other hand, parallelism and thesis/antithesis form spatial structures with the use of doubling and polarities that manifest themselves in events and characters which split the discourse of both plot and characters into separate threads to be rewoven in the reader's mind. These doublings and polarities then become themes of the self and the other so important in the development of fantastic texts.

In the development of themes, the semantic aspect of structuralism becomes important. The semantic properties of Todorov's structuralist theory involve relationships "of meaning and of symbolization" and of "configuration, of construction" (Todorov Poetics 14). In terms of meaning and symbolization, "a certain signifier signifies a certain signified, a certain phenomenon evokes another, a certain episode symbolizes an idea, another illustrates a psychology" (14). The power of meaning and symbolization is the power to evoke the existence of one thing through the manipulation of another. With configuration or construction, it is "the power of causality" which links the phenomena. The antitheses and gradations of the manifestation of phenomena, instead of the symbolization, form the relationships between characters, and word combinations form the relationships of those things or people juxtaposed. Meaning and symbolization are paradigmatic, relying on repetition and parallelism to create patterns, while configuration and construction are syntagmatic, relying on the reactions of the characters to provide causality. In fantastic literature, the syntactical reactions of the characters to repeated events represent themes of perception and of its notation by the character. The problems and

awareness of ambiguous perception are manifested in the fantastic text as polarizing themes of the self, involving divisions of personality or doubling, as the play of dream and reality, and as the play of mind and matter. These themes can be represented as what Todorov calls “themes of discourse” (Fantastic 39), involving qualities of otherness in which the relationship of man with his unconscious, with his own feelings of desire for both sexual gratification and violence, become important.

By virtue of its structural focus, Todorov's theory of the fantastic puts the burden of construction of the text upon the reader's shoulders. In order to experience the hesitancy which Todorov feels to be the main requirement of the fantastic text, the reader must constitute the ambiguous vision of the narrator through his or her reading of the verbal, syntactic, and semantic structures in the text. If we consider the numinous to be an effect of the language of a text, just as the fantastic is, we now must question where an experience of the numinous should be situated in terms of the conventions of both realism and the fantastic.

For Rudolf Otto, whose work The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the non-rational factor in the idea of the divine and its relation to the rational (1958)⁵ defines the experience of the numinous, the Gothic is the most numinous of literary genres, due to its use of sublime and daemonic conventions, such as mountainous crags, glaciers, ice flows, and ruined castles; and in the past, works such as Devendra P. Varma's The Gothic Flame (1957) have appropriated Otto's phrase the numinous to describe the Gothic as the "quest for the numinous" (206), a quest Varma characterizes as having been brought on by religious decline and by humanity's need to find a new outlet for its guilt and fear. Varma likened this quest to “an almost

archetypal impulse" (211) that drives the individual to attempt to experience the infinite within a finite existence. Almost four decades later The Gothic Sublime (1994) by Vijay Mishra returns to Varma's earlier work on the numinous to redraw the symbols of the quest and flame, discussing the idea of the numinous under the title Gothic sublime.⁶ Mishra finds that at the heart of the Gothic is the inability to present meaning because the "sublime threatens our very capacities of cognitive judgment" (16).

Mishra's characterization of the Gothic sublime as a threat to the human capacity for apprehension must take us back once again to Todorov's theory of the fantastic. For Todorov, the Gothic displays plots that tend toward both the uncanny and the marvelous poles of his theory. His reading of Gothic literature has lead him to conclude that the Gothic only manifests the fantastic during "a portion of [the] reading" (Fantastic 41); so, if we are to define the numinous as a textual construct within the Gothic genre, we must situate it both in terms of realism and the fantastic. In order to place the conventions of the numinous in literature somewhere between those of realism and the fantastic, and to answer the questions of the ineffableness of an experience of the numinous and the existence of the divine, we will turn to Rudolf Otto's Idea of the Holy for a definition of the numinous as a religious experience.

According to Otto, a deity is characterized by concepts, such as "spirit, reason, purpose, good will, supreme power, unity, [and] selfhood" (Idea of the Holy 1). A rational religion is based on the definition and analysis of, and consequent belief in, these concepts rather than on "mere feeling" (1). However, human knowledge of these concepts, then, can only rest on faith, according to Otto, because

"knowledge of God and eternity, and the real value, transcending space and time, of our own inner being" (Naturalism and Religion 11) cannot be established only through reason and scientific study. For Otto, the rational, conceptual aspects of the sacred, though an essential moral and ethical part of the religious experience, do not define it entirely. Religion also has a non-rational nature, which, neither in opposition to, nor superior to, reason, is still beyond the conceptual foundation of knowledge which reason posits. In The Idea of the Holy, Otto's purpose is to balance the non-rational, mysterious quality of the sacred against the human tendency to reduce the experience to something within our own limits of understanding. To help define this non-rational experience, Otto coined the word "numinous" from the Latin numen to signify not only the divine, but also to designate that "feeling which remains where the concept fails" (Otto Foreword by the Author to First Edition n.p.).⁷ Otto conceives this feeling not as emotion per se, but as a subjective awareness that "completely eludes apprehension in terms of concepts" (5), and through which the observer of the sacred comes to comprehend and acknowledge the numinous object or situation. An experience of the numinous as a "moment" (5) of awareness of the sacred is "perfectly sui generis and irreducible to any other" (7), and, as such, is ineffable and beyond the power of language to describe. Otto, however, seeks to express the inexpressible experience by articulating its attributes as "mysterium tremendum et fascinans" (Varnado 1), a frightening mystery, which is, at the same time, fascinating and enticing.

The attribute that Otto terms mysterium is defined as whatever is "beyond our apprehension and comprehension" because in the experience of the numinous the

individual encounters "something inherently 'wholly other'" (Idea of the Holy 28) and is struck with a sense of awe and confusion. It is this reaction to the otherness of the numinous object that delineates the first necessary attribute of the numinous. To be a mystery, to be "wholly other" (28), the numinous must be perceived as an objective entity, something outside of the observer, obscure in its own way and, therefore, puzzling. The mysterious nature of the numinous allows the hesitation of which Todorov speaks in terms of the fantastic also to be part of the conventions of the numinous. In this mystery and the puzzlement it produces, there exists a modality of doubt that leads to reader hesitation as to what the experience means and as to whether the experience is real or not. However, the subject of an experience of the numinous must eventually perceive the experience as real in the sense that it represents the other as opposed to the self of the subject.

The mysteriousness of the numinous object is then "heightened and clarified" (Otto Idea of the Holy 29) by the addition of the adjective tremendum in Otto's definition. Now the mystery evokes more than wonder; it evokes fear. While Todorov feels that fear does not necessarily need to be present in the fantastic text, for Otto, this feeling "implies ... a category of valuation which has no place in the everyday natural world of ordinary experience", arising only for one "in whom has been awakened a mental predisposition, unique in kind and different in a definite way from any 'natural' faculty" (15), in other words, a new way of seeing, experiencing, and knowing.

In Otto's definition, tremendum or dread is characterized by the elements of awefulness, overpoweringness, and energy, which work together to produce the dread

inherent in an experience of the numinous. The awe and natural fear evoked by the sight of a raging ocean, a mountain lightning storm, or the unbroken expanse of a starlit night sky may sweep one with a feeling of what Kant referred to as the "noble" sublime (Observations 48), a recognition of the self in relation to a divine Being who not only made man but also the immensity of the natural world which surrounds him; or, as tremendum, the mystery may "burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy" (Otto Idea of the Holy 12).

However, it is not the degree or intensity of the fear that is most important, according to Otto; it is that the person not only trembles before something apparently absolute and powerful, but also that the person is left with a sense of the self's insignificance in relation to that absolute power. This sense of utter powerlessness comes into play with the addition of the second element of tremendum, which Otto describes as "'absolute overpoweringness'" (Idea of the Holy 19). The submergence of one's own significance in relation to the absolute power of the numinous object engenders a "'feeling of dependence'" (9) which is more than dependence. Otto calls this feeling "'creature-consciousness'" (10) and compares it to being, like the Biblical Abraham, "but dust and ashes" (Otto 9, Gen. 18:27) before that which is "supreme above all creatures" (10). The character of this overpoweringness is verbally inexpressible, suggestible only through the person's reaction to it, which must be "directly experienced" (10) within oneself in order to be comprehended as a sense of powerlessness before what is perceived as an absolute power. For Otto, an individual's dread of this presence produces a sense of his or her own creatureliness

and mortality. This sense of one's own mortality in the face of the absolute power and immortality of a divine power evokes fears of the destruction of the self and these, in turn, engender their own understanding of the "transcendent as the sole and entire reality" (21) and an estimation of the self as "something not perfectly or essentially real" (21).

The subject's sense of the power of the divine involves the third element of tremendum, "'energy'" (Otto Idea of the Holy 23), which can be defined as the "will, force, emotional temper" (23) of the numinous.⁸ The numen is understood to be dangerous, having the ability and the perceived intent to inflict pain or death. The force of the numinous is durable and unstoppable, living and urgent, seeking, in the perception of the subject, consummation with and consequent annihilation of the subject of the experience.

For Otto, the element of tremendum also may indicate a negative experience of the numinous in which the "daemonic element is emphasized" (Varnado 15) and the "value elements" (35) are inverted. In the negatively numinous, the sacred aspects become profane and the awe and dread of tremendum increase to the point that fear reduces the individual to "horror and shuddering" (Otto Idea of the Holy 13). In order to explain his theory of the negative numinous, Otto draws on the work of Jakob Böhme, a German mystic of the early seventeenth century. Otto interprets Böhme as saying that "an understanding of God, and from Him of the world" (106) begins in man's experience of "the 'primal bottom', the supra-rational identification of good and evil in an Indifferent" (106). In its potential for both good and evil, the numinous as an indifferent entity demonstrates the "dual nature of deity itself as at once goodness

and love on the one hand and fury and wrath on the other" (106). In a footnote, Otto defines the "negatively numinous" as produced more by "mysterium horrendum" than by "mysterium tremendum" by virtue of the "mere potentiality of evil" (106-7) comprehended in an experience the numinous as the subject's perception that the event or figure has the ability to do harm. Though the negatively numinous figure or event is considered as opposed to the more positive power of the numinous as holy because of its potential for evil action against the subject, Otto still defines it as arising from the same fount of religious development as did mankind's perception of God. It is, therefore, through both the positive and negative attributes of the numinous that the individual may perceive the sacred once again as present in the world. The negative numinous includes the perception of such manifestations as demons and ghosts; however, Otto's discussion of the negative numinousness of these creatures does not link them necessarily to the profane in the human sense of being powerless, profane objects confronted by the power of sacredness. According to Otto, the profane is the quality of powerlessness and creatureliness the earthly being feels when confronted with the power of the sacred, whether that power is objectified as a heavenly being or as a negatively numinous lower form of the divine such as a ghost or demon – or, I would assert, a vampire --, which, by virtue of their numinousness, have some touch of the divine to them and, therefore, are objects of so-called value or power as opposed to the lack of power felt by the subject.

As a further quality of the numinous, the mysterious factors of the numinous are influenced by the element "fascinans" (Varnado 1), which can be defined as fascination, a quality of attraction through which the experience "entices the

imagination, awakening strong interest and curiosity" (Otto Idea of the Holy 28). Tremendum and fascinans combine in a "harmony of contrasts" (31); so, while the numinous is dreaded for its power to destroy the self, the subject of an experience of the numinous is also drawn into the experience in a kind of enchantment that "bewilders and confounds, ... that captivates and transports ... with a strange ravishment, rising often enough to the pitch of dizzy intoxication" (31), a kind of vertigo of the soul in which the subject fears the abyss below but cannot help but be drawn to take a step toward it.

According to Otto, the dawning of "religious consciousness" was the feeling of "daemonic dread" (Idea of the Holy 32) evoked by the awe-ful majesty of the mystery that the divine represented, but a part of the fascination of an experience of the numinous is that same mystery. Eventually, as Otto interprets religious history, human beings attempted "to master 'the mysterious'" (33), and even to identify themselves with it. In effect, individuals sought to lose themselves in the experience of the numinous in order to understand the mystery more clearly. To move closer to the divine, humans adopted certain "modes of behavior" (33), including "'magical' identification of the self with the numen... by means of various transactions, at once magical and devotional in character -- by formula, ordination, adjuration, consecration, exorcism...[and] 'shamanistic' ways of procedure, possession, indwelling, self-fulfilment in exaltation and ecstasy" (33).

From Otto's viewpoint, this transactional relationship with the numinous, though it exists beyond moral concepts in and of itself, creates a category of value from the feeling of the "'disvalue'" (Otto Idea of the Holy 50) of the self, society, and

"existence in general" (50) that the subject perceives in the experience of the numinous. The subject's perception of powerlessness and insignificance is not moral as such, but is a "feeling of absolute 'profaneness'" (51) which, if accepted, must, in turn, suggest a correspondent positive value for the more powerful representation of the numinous. Otto suggests that, through acknowledgement of feelings of profaneness, and through the resulting submissiveness in the face of the power of the divine, human beings began to perceive themselves as sinful in their own eyes and to look for ways to atone for that supposed sin. The subject feels the need of a "covering or shield" (54) against the possible wrath of the divine, a kind of "shelter from the tremendum" (54). This act of covering becomes a consecration in which the subject approaching the divine rises above his or her earthly, profane existence to be manifested as numinous and, therefore, prepared "for intercourse with the numen" (54). Atonement for sins is an act of covering, necessary due to the lack of value the sinner feels in relation to the value of the numen. "Defiled in [his or her] own eyes" (55), and longing to transcend the unworth which is inherent in the "self's existence as 'creature' and profane natural being" (55), the individual feels the need for what might be called proactive atonement; and the absence of worth felt in relation to the numinous becomes a moral value in terms of the individual's relationship with the divine.

In Todorov's schematic of the fantastic, uncanny, and marvelous, the fantastic can only exist in a moment of hesitation characterized in similar terms to the ambivalent feelings of fascination and fear that Otto attributes to an experience of the numinous. If one accepts Otto's definition of the

numinous, one might be tempted to interpret the numinous as fitting into Todorov's pure fantastic mode because the experience begins with a hesitant feeling due to the mysterious quality of that event. However, to continue in a condition of hesitation over the reality of the events would only produce hesitation in relation to the power polarities in the novel and, therefore, in relation to the formation of moral values and to the character's possible relationship with the divine in the end. I believe an experience of the numinous eventually must be perceived as real by the character and the reader in order that the anxiety and fear felt through the dynamics of power and powerlessness be at their greatest strength to lead the subject to a change of moral attitude. Therefore, the conviction that an experience of the numinous is real is necessary to acceptance of the action of the plot and to the evaluation of the moral stand the text puts forward in the end. Since an encounter with the numinous, particularly in the form of the vampire, cannot be explained by the laws that govern empirical reality, at some point in the plot, the reader and the main character in the text must accept that new laws control the manifestation, and that they simply do not understand the laws that govern the event. This shifts the conventions of the numinous into the realm of the marvelous; and the text employing numinous conventions, although informed by the experience of hesitation that characterizes the fantastic, must give way in some degree to realism's assertion of the authenticity of the account and to a more referential language of belief in the reality of the experience.

Otto's definition of the experience of the numinous also brings up the questions of how to reconcile the construction of a text through language with the idea that the numinous is indefinable and, therefore, inexpressible and of whether the divine exists and if belief in the divine is necessary to an experience of the numinous. Accepting Otto's definition of the numinous as indescribable and beyond language, yet recognizing that in a text the numinous must be described in language, we must conclude that just as in Todorov's theory of the fantastic, in literature an experience of the numinous would include references to feelings and thematic polarities. The feelings in the text employing the numinous conventions would include the mysterious, frightening, and fascinating elements of the numinous event or object and the thematic polarities such as power and powerlessness, life and death, and the sacred and profane, that question the character's belief in the existence of the divine. When the mysterious qualities of an experience of the numinous cause such dread that the character is filled with horror at the absolute power represented by the numinous and at the potential for harm perceived in that power, and when the fascination the subject feels toward the numinous event is not simple longing or curiosity, but a violent seductive urge to lose oneself in the numinous, and, thereby, to risk the immortal soul, the subject feels a sense of annihilation that has spiritual implications.

In Todorov's theory of the fantastic, hesitation is an end in itself; however, in relation to the numinous text, it is a means to an end – the examination of the character's and reader's ground of existence. In the

“harmony of contrasts” (Otto 34) that Otto defines as terror and fascination, we find what Todorov calls hesitation over the reality of the events. In this hesitation, as it is reflected in the numinous conventions, the reader may discover themes that reflect the polarities of sacred and profane, of life and death, and of power and powerlessness. The purpose of the numinous event, however, is not continued hesitation, but a challenge of the rational beliefs of the individual who sees this event as real but as controlled by laws beyond the scope of the empirical world; and this challenge sends the individual on a journey into the irrational side of experience to clarify the grounds of his or her spiritual existence.

The conviction that this experience is real brings up other problems in a discussion of the numinous. The relationship of the character to what he or she perceives to be a divine presence gives a clue as to where belief in the divine enters into a discussion of an encounter with the numinous. The purpose of this discussion is not to prove the existence of the divine, but to argue that initial belief does not necessarily matter for one to experience the numinous. The problem of God’s existence and its solution can be found in the hesitation the character feels about the reality of events. The hesitation produced by the sense of mystery over the reality of the events suggests the individual’s hesitation between total belief in the existence of the divine and the possibility that the divine does not exist at all. However, the important question is not whether the character or reader believes whole-heartedly in the

existence of a divine being, but how belief or disbelief influences that character's or reader's experience of the numinous.

In The Future of an Illusion (1927)⁹, Sigmund Freud argues that religion was “born from man's need to make his helplessness tolerable and built up from the material of memories of the helplessness of his own childhood and the childhood of the human race” (23).¹⁰ Freud posits the origins of religion to be in the sense of helplessness that primitive individuals felt in relation to the power of natural forces such as disease and death. He argues that to avoid the feeling of helplessness evoked by the forces of nature individuals banded together to create civilizations or cultures that would defend them against their feelings of helplessness. In order to reduce the anxiety they felt over their powerlessness, primitive individuals supposedly assigned human attributes to the forces of nature so they might approach them in the same manner of appeasement and influence as they did the more powerful humans in their human society. Freud argues that the origins of this action are in the “infantile prototype” (21), the sense of helplessness felt by the child in relation to the parents. For Freud, this is an ambivalent relationship characterized both by fear and by a sense of safety. The parents, especially the father, are feared because of their obvious power, yet they are also perceived as protective because of that greater power. As primitive individuals and societies recognized the power of the natural forces around them they turned the personified forces of nature into gods by giving them “the character of the father” (21). In terms of psychology, these attributes of

the divine, such as “wisdom, goodness, justice”, were eventually “condensed” (24) into the form of one God which Freud feels uncovers the relationship with the father behind every divine figure. Despite the fact that these attributes of the divine are often put forth as divine revelations by different civilizations in different epochs, the revelations themselves cannot be authenticated because they are based on individual experiences. Over time, Freud maintains, people discovered that scientific laws controlled natural forces; however, as the forces of nature were divested of their human attributes, the individuals still felt their sense of helplessness, now joined with a sense of longing for the lost father and the lost gods. Still, the individuals expected the divine powers to “exorcise the terrors of nature, ... [to] reconcile men to the cruelty of fate, particularly as it is shown in death, and ... [to] compensate them for the sufferings and privations which a civilized life in common [had] imposed on them” (22). When the divine failed in its tasks to rid individuals of terror and to reconcile them to their mortal fate, human “expectations [were] directed to the third function of the gods” and morality became “their true domain” (22).

Regardless of Freud’s argument that religion is born from and sustained by the feelings of helplessness felt by the child and by primitive individuals, he feels that the illusion of religion, the fiction of the system, is necessary to control the despair individuals might feel without it and to provide the moral structure that would not be present without it. Just as Kant, who was unsure of God’s existence, felt that individuals should live their lives

as though God existed, Freud seems to be indicating that regardless of whether the divine truly exists or not, one should live life as though it does in order to have a moral code by which to live.

The existence of the divine is truly a mystery to humanity; however the question of whether one should believe in the existence of the divine is really a moot point in terms of literary analysis. As Otto defines an experience of the numinous, it requires that the individual encountering the numinous perceive the experience as an objective reality; however, at the outset of the experience, it is not necessary that the person believe in God or any other manifestation of the divine for the person to perceive this manifestation as real. It is through the experience of the numinous and the resulting moral outlook engendered by that experience that the subject comes to view the event as representative of divine power. In Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere", the Mariner's belief has suffered from his isolation from traditional religion while he is at sea and from the crime he has committed against nature. Although his spiritual journey continues indefinitely since he must travel from place to place fulfilling his penance by telling his tale, he does end up transformed, with a new moral outlook, an outlook for which he wants the reader and the Wedding Guest to take his story as proof. In Stoker's Dracula, the religious beliefs of the British society, represented by the body of characters who search for and destroy Dracula, have been forgotten or, at least, compromised by the late nineteenth-century concentration on profit and professional advancement. The group ends up

where they began with no proof of the experience's truth because there was no real moral change in them. In Rice's Vampire Chronicles, Lestat has never believed in God, only in those who represent God. At the end of his tales, he ends up transformed; but his story is the only proof he will give to others of the truth of his experience because in the end he still is not sure of his beliefs. However, he has moved forward a little, no longer an atheist, he now might be labeled an agnostic.

The last question to be addressed is whether an experience of the numinous should be considered a purely psychological issue, a purely religious one, or a combination of the two. Since an experience of the numinous is by definition indescribable and, therefore, can only be suggested through the subject's reaction to the experience, the numinous, though essentially considered an ecstatic and revelatory experience of a divine presence in the world, may also be considered a psychological experience. In "The 'Uncanny'" (1919), Sigmund Freud addresses the emotional effect he calls the uncanny in psychoanalytic terms. Although he admits his research into previous studies on the subject was not as thorough as he might have hoped it to be, he attempts to clarify the features of the uncanny affect through an examination of the ambiguous definitions of heimlich that form the foundation of unheimlich or the uncanny. He follows this lexical discussion with an extended investigation of instances of the uncanny, particularly in literature. Asserting that the production of the uncanny effect "is undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror" (219), Freud

feels that what is feared in an uncanny situation is “a secret intention of doing harm, and certain signs are taken to mean that that intention has the necessary power at its command” (240). This idea leads him back to “the old, animalistic conception of the universe” in which people populated their world with “the spirits of human beings” (240). However, he also insists that many people confuse the definition of the word uncanny with what ever might “excite fear in general” (249) and underscores the inability to describe the uncanny and the feeling of hesitation by calling attention to the various and complicated definitions from which the term arose and finding that the meaning of the original German heimlich “develops in the direction of ambivalence” (226).

As hesitation must be present in Todorov’s theory of the fantastic, so Freud feels that for an event to be considered uncanny, the reader must be uncertain as to whether events are real or not; however, the focus must not be on the uncertainty but on the feelings evoked by it. He argues there must be a sense of helplessness, much like the feeling of helplessness one feels in some dreams. Freud feels that the frightening situations that one defines as uncanny can be traced back to what is familiar. However, for Freud, uncertainty must be present, and, therefore, the familiar cannot be recognized as familiar.

These familiar, yet unfamiliar, events are what Freud refers to as “residues and traces” of the “animistic stage in primitive men” (240) that has been outlined earlier in this introduction’s discussion of The Future of an Illusion (1927) and was developed also in Totem and Taboo (1913). The “uncanny experience occurs either

when infantile complexes which have been repressed are once more revived by some impression, or when primitive beliefs which have been surmounted seem once more to be confirmed" (249). However, "these two types of the uncanny are not necessarily explicitly separate experiences because the primitive beliefs most intimately connected with infantile complexes are in fact based on them" (249). Understanding of the root of these types of uncanny episodes also does not necessarily preclude belief that their content is based in reality. Freud argues that familiar events are repressed by the psyche and turned into feelings of anxiety that are then manifested as the uncanny when the event recurs in some form; and, for Freud, the event over which people experience the greatest degree of uncanny feeling is death. According to his theory, repression of the idea of our own deaths has changed very little since primitive times because of "the strength of our original emotional reaction to death and the insufficiency of our scientific knowledge about it" (242). He argues that religion posits life after death to ease those fears.

In literature, Freud feels, the uncanny depends for effect on the fact that the content of the text is not submitted to a test of reality. Readers accept the world the writer has created along with the assumptions of the characters in that world. If the writer depicts "the world of common reality...he accepts as well all the conditions operating to produce uncanny feelings in real life" (250). However, if the writer brings in events that would rarely, if ever, happen in fact, he is "in a sense betraying us to the superstitiousness which we have ostensibly surmounted" (250). Freud argues that people are essentially passive and indifferent to the real experiences of their lives and "are subject to influence of [their] physical environment" (250) but the

storyteller has a “peculiarly directive power” (251) over the readers and can create moods and emotions that lead them toward the uncanny.

In light of the uncanny’s ability to cause fear and hesitation in the character and in the reader, one might be tempted to assume that Freud’s theory is the same as Todorov’s. However, while Freud defines uncanny events as arising from repressed childhood memories or surmounted beliefs from the primal childhood of the human race, Todorov characterizes the uncanny as events that, however extraordinary and unexpected they might be, can be explained through reasonable means. Todorov does admit, though, that if one accepts that “primal experience is constituted by transgression” (48) one can accommodate Freud’s definition, regardless of the fact that it has not been proven. In accepting the possibility of Freud’s definition being true, Todorov also accepts that the fantastic text can be subjected to a psychological reading. Todorov argues that in Freud’s “study of uncanny” (149), psychoanalysis fulfills two tasks. As “a science of structures”, it “describes [the] mechanism ... of psychic activity” (149); and as “a technique of interpretation”, it “reveals the ultimate meaning of the configuration ... described” (149). This is precisely what Todorov’s theory of the fantastic attempts to do, to answer how the effect is caused and what it means. If we now draw a connection between Todorov’s theory of the fantastic and Otto’s theory of the numinous, we can see that Otto’s theory can be analyzed psychologically, as well as religiously, since Otto’s theory of the religious experience also deals with the effects of the experience and the resultant meaning of that experience. The meaning, however, is carried a step past the psychological into the realm of the spiritual because in Otto’s theory the thematic polarities, which in both

Todorov's and Freud's theories question the relationship of the reader and character to the world, interrogate the relationship of the reader and character to the divine.

Another psychoanalytic theory of literature and religion is Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection. In Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, Kristeva advances a theory of abjection that is akin to the theories of Todorov, Otto, and Freud. As a psychic act, abjection rejects whatever is deemed a threat to the identities of the individual self and the group to which the individual belongs. Kristeva argues that the object has no "definable object" (1), at least not one that can be imagined or named by the conscious self. The only "quality of the object" (1) that the object has is that it is "opposed to I" (1). In abjection, Kristeva finds ambiguity not only in the opposition of self and object, but also in the feelings of repulsion or fear and fascination that characterizes the opposition. For Kristeva, meaning is excluded in the opposition of object and I when "a certain 'ego' [the object] that merged with its master, a superego, has flatly driven it away" (2). However, Kristeva argues the object does not give in to oppression by the superego but continues to challenge it. Kristeva defines this opposition as "a brutish suffering that 'I' puts up with, sublime and devastated" (2) because the self imagines "that such is the desire of the other"(2).

The feeling of uncanniness that emerges from this sense of the other is greater than Freud's feeling of the uncanny; for Kristeva in this relationship "nothing is familiar" (5) and the self feels "radically separate, loathsome" and unrecognizable. Oppressed by "a weight of meaninglessness" (2), the self feels itself to be "on the edge of non-existence and hallucination, of a reality that, if I acknowledge it, annihilates me" (2). At this point of creatureliness, to borrow Otto's term, "abject

and abjection” (2) are protective shields against annihilation. Kristeva calls this feeling of abjection “a narcissistic crisis on the outskirts of the feminine” (209) and connects it to the child’s fear over the initial loss of the mother as an object of love and protection.

Kristeva defines abjection as “the other facet of religious, moral, and ideological codes on which rest the sleep of individuals and the breathing spells of societies” (209). These codes or systems of civilization are “abjection’s purification and repression” (209); however, according to Kristeva’s theory the return of the repressed facets of these codes is apocalyptic and represents our “religious crises” (209). For this aspect of her theory, Kristeva has borrowed from Freud’s argument that civilization’s systems, including religion, provide protection for the individual against the powers of nature and other human beings, and that, in turn, civilization also exerts privations on individuals which repress their actions. The only difference Kristeva sees between the abject on a personal level and on a religious one is that on a religious level we are no longer willing to have “a face-to-face confrontation with the abject” because “we have lost faith in One Master Signifier” (209). In our concentration on the everyday acts that keep our personal fears at bay, we have ignored the ultimate relationship of abjection – our relationship with the divine.

In literature Kristeva finds the “full power” of “religious imagination” (207), calling “all literature...probably a version of the apocalypse that seems...rooted...on the fragile border...where identities (subject/object, etc.) do not exist or only barely so – double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject” (207). For her, the meaning and power of horror is based on her theory of abjection,

representing human crises at a most intimate level; and “because it ... decks itself out in the sacred power of horror, literature may also involve not an ultimate resistance to but an unveiling of the abject: an elaboration, a discharge, and a hollowing out of abjection through the Crisis of the Word” (208). This theory has a great deal in common with Aristotle’s theory of catharsis through pity and terror, both feelings which cannot be articulated perfectly; and, indeed, Kristeva feels the writer composes in just such a condition, “being possessed by abjection, in an indefinite catharsis” (208).

The last psychoanalytic theory I would like to draw on in the discussion of whether the numinous should be considered purely psychological, purely religious, or both is Carl Jung’s archetypal theory. In a lecture “On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetry” (1966)¹¹, Jung argues that only “the process of artistic creation can be a subject for psychological study, but not that which constitutes its essential nature” (65). Similarly, he feels that religion can only be subjected to psychological scrutiny “in regard to the emotions and symbols which constitute the phenomenology of religion, but which do not touch upon its essential nature” (65). Jung labels as extraverted the type literature in which the writer’s “conscious intentions and aims” (73) are subordinated to the demands which the object [the work being created] makes upon him” (73). For him, works considered extravert give the reader “something supernatural that transcends our understanding to the same degree that the author’s consciousness was in abeyance during the process of creation” (75). The reader should expect “a strangeness of form and content, thoughts that can only be apprehended intuitively, a language pregnant with meanings, and images that are true

symbols because they are the best possible expressions for something unknown” (75-76). In Jung’s theory of extraverted literature, “what was a mere phenomenon before becomes something that in association with other phenomena has meaning And when we have seen all this we get the feeling of having understood and explained something “ (78).

Jung also argues that the author’s creative process is “subliminal until its energy-charge is sufficient to carry it over the threshold into consciousness” (78). However, consciousness does not necessarily mean assimilation, only perception. As perception, the work of the psyche “is not subject to conscious control, and can be neither inhibited nor voluntarily reproduced” (78). Jung feels that these subliminal ideas come not from the personal unconscious but from the collective unconscious, “a sphere of unconscious mythology whose primordial images are the common heritage of mankind” (80). Although Jung uses mythological terminology to describe his theory, it is remarkably close to Freud’s argument that repressed events are connected to primal experiences. For Jung, these psychic representations of primordial experience are “the instincts and archetypes” (80) which make up the “potentiality handed down to us from primordial times” (80). As a priori ideas, the experience of these representations can only be “ascertained...from their effects” and can only be reconstructed in the mind of the reader by “inferences drawn from the finished work” (81). The primordial archetype can be “a daemon, a human being, or a process – that constantly recurs in the course of history or appears wherever creative fantasy is freely expressed...[and] essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure” (81). The appearance of “this mythological situation ... is always characterized by a peculiar

emotional intensity” (81) so that the subject feels “an extraordinary sense of release, as though transported, or caught up by an overwhelming power” (82). At this moment, one is no longer an individual self, but has a sense of the racial memory of humankind. As such, the archetype represents the “participation mystique of primitive man” (82); and the author who gives form to these primordial representations “transmutes our personal destiny into the destiny of mankind, and evokes in us all those beneficent forces that...have enabled humanity to find refuge from every peril and to outlive the longest night” (82). For Jung, “the creative process...consists in the unconscious activation of an archetypal image, and in elaborating and shaping this image into the finished work” (82) that evokes “the forms in which the age is most lacking” (82).

In regard to the question of whether literature that foregrounds an experience of the numinous should be interpreted on psychological or religious terms, in another essay, “Psychology and Literature” (1966)¹², Jung argues that both psychological and aesthetic principles are “valued in spite of their relativity” (87) in the analysis of works of art and the artists themselves; however, he does differentiate between psychological and visionary modes of “artistic creation” (89). His description of the psychological mode has much in common with works of realism as defined by Ian Watt in The Rise of the Novel (1957). When writing a psychological novel, Jung maintains, the author uses “materials drawn from man’s conscious life – with crucial experiences, powerful emotions, suffering, passion, the stuff of human fate in general” (89). In this work there is very little for a psychologist to find that is not patently obvious to the average reader. In the visionary mode of literature, however,

“the experience that furnishes the material for artistic expression is no longer familiar...[but] something strange that derives its existence from the hinterland of man’s mind, as if it had emerged from the abyss of prehuman ages, or from a superhuman world of contrasting light and darkness” (90). For Jung, “the very enormity of the [primordial] experience gives it its value and its shattering impact” (90). He defines the primordial experience as “sublime, pregnant with meaning, yet chilling the blood with its strangeness” (90). Born from the “timeless depths” (90) of humanity’s primeval existence, the representations of this experience are “glamorous, daemonic, and grotesque” (90). The suddenness and strangeness of an experience such as Jung describes “bursts assunder our human standards of value and aesthetic form” (90).

For Jung, visionary literature can “rend the curtain that veils the cosmos...[and] exceed the bounds of our human capacities” (90), showing the reader visions of “other worlds, or of the darkness of the spirit, or of the primal beginnings of the human psyche” (90-91). When dealing with the visionary mode, the reader is “astonished, confused, bewildered, put on ...guard or even repelled” (91) by the author’s reminder of “the dark, uncanny recesses of the human mind” (91). The reader requires an explanation, a meaning, from these visionary experiences in literature; and it is not in the visionary material but in the experience that the material “serves to express” (92) that meaning is found. Jung admits that because of Freudian psychology’s influence, readers are inclined to believe that “highly personal experiences must lie behind all this phantasmagoric darkness, which would help explain that strange vision of chaos” (92), and why it appears that the writer is

“intentionally concealing the source of his experience” (92). Many times this inclination causes the reader to view this type of literature as “pathological and neurotic” (92), a reaction Jung feels is justified on one level as “the visionary material exhibits peculiarities which are observed in the fantasies of the insane” (92). Jung admits that one could easily interpret the events as pathological and “explain the strange images as substitute figures and attempts at concealment” (92). In the pathological interpretation of events, “the frightening revelation of abysses that defy human understanding is dismissed as illusion” (93); and the writer or poet is perceived as “victim and perpetrator of deception” (93). However, Jung’s argument for a psychological interpretation of literature begins not with the personal but with the “primordial experience” (93), taking it “as seriously” as one would the “personalistic” (93) experiences underlying more realistic literature, which, as Jung says, “no one doubts are real and important” (93). Regardless of how difficult it is to believe in the reality of a visionary experience without being labeled as having “distinct leanings towards the occult” (93), Jung feels that the visionary experience in literature “represents a deeper and more impressive experience than human passion” (94). He argues that the vision is genuinely symbolic – “real but unknown” (94). Although, we experience the known world with our senses, it is our intuitions that signal that we are in the presence of “unknown and hidden” events that have always been “mysterious, uncanny, and deceptive” (94). Sounding a great deal like Freud and Kristeva in his references to repression and to civilization as the protection individuals have erected against their fears of natural forces, Jung argues that visionary experiences are “hidden from man, and he hides himself from them out of

religious awe, protecting himself with the shield of science and reason” (95). For Jung, a sense of “the ordered cosmos” (95) protects the individual from “the fear of chaos that besets him by night” (95).

As part of the racial memory of humanity “repudiated...because of our fear of superstition and metaphysics, building up in its place an apparently safer and more manageable world of consciousness in which natural law operates like human law in a society” (95), Jung argues that “the primordial experience” is the source of a writer’s or poet’s creativity” (96). So indescribable is this experience that the writer or poet must turn to the “related mythological imagery to give it form” (96). Jung, like Freud, argues that “in dreams and mental disturbances psychic products come to the surface” (97). These psychic products “show all the traits of primitive levels of development, not only in their form but also in their content and meaning” (97). Jung sees the “manifestations of the collective unconscious” (97) in literature as compensatory in relation to the conscious attitude of the times. Representing the undeclared desires of the period, these manifestations become a kind of wish fulfillment that foreshadows “changes in the conscious outlook” (99) of the times. Jung defines an archetype as “neither good nor evil” (104). As such, it is “morally neutral...and becomes good or evil only by contact with the conscious mind, or else a paradoxical mixture of both” (104). The archetypes are only “activated by ... whenever conscious life becomes one-sided or adopts a false attitude” (104). When this happens, “these images ‘instinctively’ rise to the surface in dreams and in visions of artists and seers to restore the psychic balance whether of the individual or of the epoch” (104).

As a visionary experience, Jung writes, the “world of art is like a dream” (104), ambiguous in meaning. The reader participates in the meaning, which makes the meaning paradoxical and ambiguous, at once universal and individual. Jung treats the visionary experience as compensatory in that it thrusts readers into the abyss of primordial experience forcing them to participate in the re-balancing of the social psyche, as represented by both reader’s and character’s psyches, by confronting the demons of the abyss. As the reader identifies with the character in the visionary text, he or she must decide whether to believe in the reality of the event. Accepting that inclusion of an experience of the numinous would qualify a text to be visionary, I believe that in deciding that the events are real, the reader turns a psychological journey into a religious one by recognizing the feelings of powerlessness in relation to an absolute power that can be characterized as divine in some way. By realizing the spiritual implications of the danger the character faces in relation to the power of the numinous event or figure, the reader seeks moral meaning in that relationship. Since Freud, Kristeva, and Jung all see a psychological quality to religion, as well as to literature, I feel it is appropriate in this dissertation to approach the spiritual journeys of the characters, and of the imagined reader, as both psychological and religious transformations caused by an experience of the numinous in the form of the vampire.

The Numinous and the Vampire

In dealing with the numinousness, particularly of a negative nature, of the vampire figure, the question now becomes why should the numinous be manifested in a negative experience like an encounter with a vampire. The answer to that lies in the

idea that the Gothic genre posits the existence of the divine as problematic. If the numinous were manifested as a positive figure or event in the Gothic, the existence of the divine would be reinforced and not challenged. As a negative figure, the vampire better serves to question the character's search for transcendence and divine truth by arousing feelings of fear and fascination at the sense of divine mystery that the vampire represents. Transcendence is a liminal experience, an encounter at the threshold, where the individual reader must choose whether or not to give in to the potential of the mystery of the numinous. It is in these marginal features of the text where issues of divine truth and of faith and immortality come to the forefront, and where use of the vampire as a figure in literature can produce questions about the human condition. Individual readers experience the contrasting emotions of fear and fascination inherent in an encounter with the numinous and must seek their own answers to the moral and ethical questions of their existence.

As a literary figure, the vampire manifests Otto's definition of the numinous and causes hesitation and fear in the subject of the encounter in several ways. He is perceived by the main character as an objective presence and considered "wholly other" (Otto, Idea of the Holy 28); but, at the same time, the vampire is a mysterious figure. As something alien to the perception of the character encountering the presence of the vampire the figure evokes the dread of tremendum and the sense of overpoweringness and energy as a feeling that he intends to do harm on a spiritual level. The characters affected by the vampire's appearance recognize their own lack of power in relation to the vampire's power and feel a sense of helplessness. The quality of fascination as an element of the numinous also is reflected in the vampire

as the power to hypnotize and to seduce its victims. The main character perceives the danger of complete annihilation but still is drawn to the vampire.

Not only does the vampire itself manifest all the attributes of Otto's numinous; but as a character in the text the vampire also represents a character caught on the margins of existence, one who has passed beyond being human but has not crossed the threshold into death. To be a vampire is to be in a state of suspended transcendence, caught at the edge of both the physical and the spiritual worlds, an insider and outsider at once. Unlike the numinous qualities of other Gothic characters, such as ghosts or spirits, or even thoroughly evil human villains, the vampire's numinous nature and the danger he or she poses to the human characters in the text hinges on the fact that the result of the encounter with the numinous may not be simply pain or death, but something far worse, far more frightening. The negative quality of numinousness represented by the vampire causes even greater dread on the part of the observer because not only the life, but also the soul of the subject is in jeopardy. The victim faces the possibility of surviving an encounter with the numinous in the form of a vampire in a condition of hesitation, being caught forever on the threshold of spiritual release and human existence, of the sacred and the profane. The power in the negative numinousness of the vampire is that of a divine creature with evil potential, unlike Manfred or Montoni,¹³ however evil they might be, or even Frankenstein or Melmoth,¹⁴ who, despite their capacities of prodigious strength and seeming immortality, still do not have the power of the vampire to affect the relationship of the individual to the divine.

The numinous value, or sacred functioning, of the vampire myth lies in the influence that an encounter with the numinous has on the individual. In vampire literature, an encounter with a vampire works on both structural and thematic levels to produce, first, an effect or condition of perception which allows the reader, and perhaps the character, to experience a sense of powerlessness in the face of someone or some thing supernaturally powerful; and, second, through the feelings of fear and the accompanying themes of power and powerlessness, to reach an epiphany, a kind of catharsis of soul that brings the character to a new understanding of being-in-the-world. Those who come in contact with the vampire must question what it is to be human and mortal in this world; but the most important problem for all of the characters in the texts discussed in the body of this work is how does one relate to the divine in a world in which the divine may or may not be present, and in which faith may or may not be strong enough to vanquish the fear that the divine does not exist at all.

As a negatively numinous figure, the vampire serves as an example to the reader of what both the individual and the society can become when separated from the divine forces of the universe, but the vampire is more than simply an example of transgression and alienation. The use of the vampire figure in literature can increase an individual's awareness that the divine may not exist, but, at the same time, the vampire also provides the way in which the individual can affirm that existence, whether that affirmation comes through an understanding and acceptance of the mortal condition and a subsequent propitiation of the divine in light of that

acceptance, or through the ritual destruction of the vampire in order to restore what the main character or characters perceive as sacred order to their mortal world.

The Romantic Vampire

In Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere" the poet returns to the traditional conventions of the romance genre and to romance's more popular ballad form to tell a tale of marvelous events. However, although he uses more general human types to populate his ballad, I believe that the story represents an individual human experience of the Mariner's spiritual journey. While one may wish to interrogate the reliability of the narrator of this experience based on the reactions of other characters to him, on his sense of isolation from humankind, and on his reactions to the events, one eventually has to accept the event as true to the Mariner's individual perceptions. His physical self gives the best evidence of the truth of his tale.

While other Romantic poets, and even other texts of Coleridge's, offer a range of vampires to examine for Romantic tendencies toward individualism, in order to concentrate on the subject of the numinous in vampire literature, I have chosen, in chapter two, to focus my discussion of the Romantic vampire on the metaphorical use of that figure in the poem. In this chapter, I have relied on John Curtis Gowan's Trance, Art and Creativity as a foundational study of the process of numinous contact in which he discusses three levels of encounter between the individual conscious ego and the numinous. Here the ego is defined both philosophically and psychologically, as the conscious self experiencing the world through the senses and as the part of the psyche seeking to control the darker impulses of what Freud calls the id. Each level

of contact between the self and the numinous entails a reshaping of the individual's orientation to the reality perceived through the senses and can be identified by some loss of ego and, therefore, of some degree of control over the forces of the id. At the most primitive level the process of numinous contact may involve aspects of possession, hypnosis, and madness, which are characterized by involuntary loss of the ego; while the more controlled level of artistic contact incorporates an environment of myth, ritual, and archetype, where loss of control may or may not be voluntary. The highest level of contact is a sort of shamanistic, magical surrender of the self where the revelatory experience can be communicated to others in order to transform their view of reality.

While, for a poet like William Wordsworth, sublime nature provided a most revelatory path in a poem like "Tintern Abbey", for Coleridge and his *Ancient Mariner* the sublime seems only a threshold or door to the divine. A return to the numinous in the form of the more primitive Gothic past, superstition and the supernatural, and the sublime natural world gave Coleridge a way to interrogate the individual's relationship with the divine. In a poem like "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the most extreme sublime experience, contact with the numinous, gives supernatural, rather than natural, form to divine truth. An analysis of the *Ancient Mariner* as a vampire figure in Coleridge's text can demonstrate not only the relationship of the Romantic artist to his audience and his creative product, which James B. Twitchell proposes in The Living Dead, but also the numinous process through which the lone Romantic poet became the artist. Combining a psychological reading with a religious one, I believe that as the different levels of loss of ego are

experienced, the creative process can be characterized as a spiritual journey, first of isolation and alienation at the primitive level, then of reintegration as the subject of the numinous encounter moves through the artistic and creative modes. Once the artist has reached the creative mode the emphasis shifts to the relationship of artist and audience as the creative product is communicated to the listener or reader. At this point in the process, the audience of the tale must also encounter a manifestation of the numinous, first in the primitive mode of isolation as the hypnotic aspects of the artist and tale take hold of the imagination, and, finally, in the reintegrative artistic and creative modes as the audience makes meaning from what Gowan designates to be the pre-conscious images that are evoked by both the creative product and the artist. As meaning is made through communication of the creative product's message, the individuals who comprise the audience imitate the artist by effecting a transformation of their own cosmic understanding.

My discussion not only shows how these levels of numinous contact are variously exhibited in Coleridge's poem, but also analyzes how the negative numinousness of the vampire figure works as a positive example for revelation, transformation, and healing for the individual who feels separated from the divine. Although the Mariner perhaps has compromised his belief in God through his isolation from his home community and through his killing of the albatross, he has not lost his faith completely; and once he is confronted by the negative numinous in the form of Life-in-Death, he feels his longing to reestablish his relationship with the divine. The Mariner, as artist, subsequently reunites with the divine through the levels of artistic and creative contact with the numinous by creating an individual

"doctrine of salvation" (Otto Idea of the Holy 33) which he introduces into society as the tale of his experiences. By telling his story, he attempts to atone for his sins and creates a relationship with the divine. Though the Mariner is still an outsider as far as his fellowman is concerned, through both his outward appearance and his tale he serves as an example for the larger community, enabling humanity, one person at a time, to recognize its isolation from the divine and to attempt a reunion with the cosmos through acceptance of the moral of the his tale.

Vampires and Victorians

In chapter three, I have chosen to concentrate on Bram Stoker's Dracula. Not only is Dracula now considered a classic vampire text by virtue of Stoker's creation of the quintessential vampire, but the attitudes and ideas of the characters also represent the late Victorian mind-set in regard to several important issues of their day, including the importance of business and their own desires for advancement in society, the significance of their culture in their own minds, and their concern over what the influx of foreign cultures might do to that culture and to the competition for place in society. Juxtaposed against these fears is their need for belief in a God who seemed all too absent in their busy, upwardly mobile lives, and their resultant feelings of spiritual poverty in which they desired a reconnection with God, but had no real faith that it would or could happen.

With this novel, Stoker transforms the epistolary style of earlier, realistic novels, such as Pamela (1740-42) and Clarissa (1747-48) by Samuel Richardson, into the transcription of a Gothic nightmare whose multiple versions might raise doubt as to the reliability of any of the versions, despite Stoker's use of realism to describe

setting and characters. However, when Jonathan Harker finally realizes what the women of castle Dracula and Dracula himself represent, he feels the weight of the truth of the events that have transpired. Later, when Mina Harker transcribes all of the character's individual stories and combines them into one, acceptance of the situation as real must follow. Once she has put the events in perspective, the fears of the individuals become the fears of society; and, if society is to be protected, the individuals, now as a combined force, must use their powers to destroy the threat of Dracula and his women. In their search and destroy mission against the vampires, the individuals within the group call on their faith, imagining themselves to be crusaders, who must go on a more secular version of the spiritual journey to uphold what they value as sacred in British society.

Taking S. L. Varnado's essay "The Daemonic in Dracula" from Haunted Presence: The Numinous in Gothic Fiction (1987) as a base point, I employ religious historian Mircea Eliade's interpretation of Otto's numinous in his critical studies of world religions to illuminate the thematic, mythic patterns in Dracula. Varnado's discussion is based to a great degree on Rudolf Otto's Idea of the Holy and, more slightly, on Eliade's interpretation of Otto's work in the sacred and profane features of early religions; however, for this essay, his analysis concentrates on the emotions of Jonathan Harker as he succumbs to the qualities of the numinous that are manifested in Dracula's character. Although he interprets the story of Dracula as the "cosmic struggle between the opposing forces of darkness and light, of the sacred and profane" (97-98), he does little to illuminate how the thematic manifestations of the numinous as sacred and profane polarities reflect the beliefs of ancient religions or

how those themes are represented within the individuals and within the community of the novel. My discussion deals with the various representations of sacred and profane space and time within the text and leads eventually into a discussion of faith and belief and why it is important to late Victorian culture that the vampire be destroyed. As the humans in the text confront the numinousness of Dracula, they must also confront their own apathetic faith in God leading the characters to reenact mythic rituals in order to reestablish their relationship with the divine.

While there is artistry in the telling of this tale as there is in The Ancient Mariner, the salvation of the group in Dracula does not come through the penitential telling of a tale, but through another more primitive act, the resacralizing of their world through the ritual staking of the vampire. Although the Mariner and Dracula are both characterized as eternal wanderers and vampires, Dracula does not get to tell his story as the Mariner does; nor is he allowed to take part in the cosmic healing of society. As the negatively numinous vampire, Dracula is meant to be sacrificed so that society may continue on its already established course. Although faith does become an issue for the protective powers in the story, that faith serves the purposes of the humans, rather than the humans being employed in the service of the faith as the Mariner is in Coleridge's Romantic poem. At the end of the story, the reader is still left with a sense of the Victorian's lack of faith, as the heroes of the action seem to simply be reestablishing the more secular sacredness of their current nationalistic, profit-making, instead of reuniting with divine power and remaking their world in a more religious context as the Ancient Mariner does with his tale.

The Twentieth-Century Vampire

For chapter four, I have chosen to concentrate on Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles. In her stories of the vampire Lestat, Rice uses the autobiographical technique to provide an individual experience of the human condition through the eyes of the vampire. As individual memoirs and true histories of her vampire's life, these tales take a more realistic approach to the telling of the tale than either Coleridge's poem or Stoker's novel; and the ambiguousness and hesitation of the fantastic in her texts is less focused on feelings than the other two texts and more focused on the questions Lestat asks about who he is, what he is, and what his spiritual fate will be.

The difference between Rice's vampire Lestat and the vampires of earlier periods is that Lestat is clearly the hero of the story; and it is his search for divine truth with which the audience identifies. As the hero, Lestat is all too human, creating a world that mimics the one he has been banished from wherever possible. Unlike the Mariner and the main characters of Dracula, whose experiences of the vampire require them to fall back on a wavering belief in God, Lestat is an atheist. Regardless of his disbelief, however, his experience of the vampire, and of the vampire life, serves to underscore for him that the divine does exist in some form and that he is now alienated from it with no possibility of reunion in the afterlife.

However, there are similarities between the vampires, as well. Through the five books of the Vampire Chronicles that deal with Lestat's story, Lestat searches for the meaning of his existence in the history of vampires, in the human life he has left behind, and, finally, in a meeting between himself and God and the Devil. Like the

Mariner's story, Lestat's is one of moral dilemma. The question he often asks himself is how one continues to be good when one is so obviously evil because he is a vampire. Just as the Mariner seeks out only those who need to hear his tale and finds grace through the penitential telling of his story, Lestat does not kill indiscriminately, but looks for victims who have done evil, thinking that by doing so he might possibly negate his own evil in some way. In spite of his moral attitude, Lestat shares much with Dracula, also. While Dracula is perceived as evil by the heroes of Stoker's tale, his potential for goodness lies in his own heroic past. However, that past is overshadowed by his present desire to be the master of all and his need to survive by drinking blood. Lestat's heroic past, on the other hand, is what makes him moral, so that he must be a hero as a vampire. As a representative of divine power, Lestat is described in terms of angelic proportion and lives up to his god-like stature as he saves not only those he loves, but also the world, from death and destruction. In Memnoch the Devil, when Lestat finally meets both Satan and God, God produces a sense of guilt in Lestat, guilt that he would even consider becoming God's adversary. At the same time, he is tempted by Satan to join the forces of the rebels of heaven; but he refuses to serve either God or Memnoch and returns to earth. While the Mariner and the characters in Dracula tell their tales in hopes that no proof is needed, Lestat refuses to provide the proof -- a taste of the blood of Christ -- that would convince his fellow vampires of the truth of his tale. Instead, he leaves them with the statement that his individual account is all there is -- take it or leave it.

Transformations of the Vampire for a New Age

Employing the definition of the numinous as it was developed by Rudolf Otto in The Idea of the Holy, and expanding upon that concept with the use of several later examinations of the experience of the numinous, this dissertation has investigated the experience of the numinous in vampire literature. This study has explored how three writers in three different literary periods have used an experience of the numinous in the form of the vampire to convey a human sense of alienation from the divine and a desire to overcome that alienation by arguing that a textual experience of the numinous in the form of the vampire propels the subject of the experience on a spiritual journey involving both psychological and religious qualities. In the introductory section of this conclusion, a short summary of the arguments of each chapter is offered. The body of the conclusion treats the possible future of the vampire figure in literature with an overview of some of the more marginal subjects that have been finding a voice in vampire literature in the years since Anne Rice's Lestat brought everyone into the light. It is my hope that many more voices that are considered marginal will find articulation in the vampire literature of the new millennium.

NOTES

¹ Watt refers to René Descartes Discourse on Methods (1637) and John Locke's Essay Concerning Human Understanding (1690) in his discussion of realism and philosophy.

² For an in-depth discussion of the differences between oral and literate systems of thought and expression, see Walter J. Ong's Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word (London: Methuen and Co., 1982).

³ This essay is contained in both The Reader and the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation (Susan R. Suleiman and Inge Crossman, eds. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980) and in Genres in Discourse (Tzvetan Todorov. Trans. Catherine Porter. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁴ Published in 1975, Todorov's work was already being challenged a year later by the work of deconstructionist Jacques Derrida. He argues that since the structure of texts can not be submitted to exacting methods of interpretation, finding an authoritative meaning is impossible. Thus the creation of meaning from the text will always be problematic, and meaning will only be discovered in the differences and gaps in textuality. See Jacques Derrida's On Grammatology (1967) and Writing and Difference (1967).

⁵ This date refers to the year of publication for the text used in the writing of this dissertation. The original text in German first appeared under the title Das Heilige in 1917 and the English translation which the title in the text reflects was first published in 1923.

⁶ For an in depth discussion of the sublime as an eighteenth-century aesthetic theory, see philosopher Edmund Burke's A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful (1756). In his study he proposed to follow a psychological approach to alleviate the "confusion of ideas" (Burke Preface to First Edition 1) over what constituted the sublime and beautiful by seriously exploring human passions through "a careful survey of the properties of things which we find by experience to influence those passions" (Preface to First Edition 1). As Burke sees it, the human mind most often feels indifferent, and from this state of indifference the person can move into either a state of pain or pleasure. Burke divides those ideas which excite the passions and make "a powerful impression on the mind, whether simply of Pain or Pleasure, or of the modifications of those" (38) into two categories, dependent upon the focus of "self-preservation and society" (38), respectively. The passions excited by concern for self-preservation most often involve feelings of pain, danger and the possibility of death, which produce in the subject a state of astonishment "in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror" (57), filling the mind so entirely with the perception of an object that the mind cannot conceive any other. Burke regards the sublime as a phenomenon of power. For Burke, there is "nothing sublime which is not some modification of power" (64), and power most often arises in an exchange where "terror, the common stock of every thing that is sublime" (64) is felt at the possibility of pain or the danger of death. An object or person of superior power or strength is considered dangerous by those who are weaker because they fear that power or strength will be used against them or those they love. In addition to being of superior strength, to evoke the fear of the possibility of pain or death, the object of terror must be perceived as obscure in some way; for, if a person can ascertain the full extent of a danger, a great deal of the fear vanishes. Burke also catalogs concepts and aspects of nature which can produce sublime feeling, including aspects of privation such as darkness, solitude and emptiness which evoke feelings of mankind's essential loneliness, and features of dimension such as vastness, infinity and magnificence which draw attention to the littleness of the human being in the grand scheme of the world. Burke believed that through the contemplation of sublime nature humans could move to contemplation of God and their relationship with Him.

⁷ Otto incorporated ideas from Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason (1781) and Critique of Judgement (1790). From Kant, he draws the idea of the numinous as a priori knowledge obtained through experience. He interprets Kant as dividing judgements based on experience and knowledge from those based on logic and rational concepts.

⁸ Otto draws on the work of Johann Gottlieb Fichte in development of the idea of energy or will as a contributing element in the production of tremendum.

⁹ Original published in German as Die Zukunft einer Illusion.

¹⁰ See Freud's Totem and Taboo (1913) and the essay "The Group and the Primal Horde" (1920-22) in his collected works.

¹¹ This date refers to the reprinting of this article in The Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature. The essay originated in a lecture given before the Society for German Language and Literature in Zurich in May of 1922. Published in September of the same year in Wissen und Leben under the title "Über die Beziehungen der analytischen Psychologie zum dichterischen Kunstwerk" (Zurich, XV: 19-20), it was translated in 1923 by H. G. Baynes for the British Journal of Psychology under the title "On the Relation of Analytical Psychology to Poetic Art" (Cambridge, III: 3)

¹² This article was first published in 1930 under the title "Psychologie und Dichtung" in Philosophie der Literaturwissenschaft (Berlin).

¹³ In Horace Walpole's The Castle of Otranto (1764), the spiritual forces are arrayed against Manfred because his desires are profane – proprietary, greedy, and, eventually, incestuous. Although these forces have the power to frighten and even to kill, as they do Conrad, they are not supernaturally evil, nor are they capable of stranding him in spiritual limbo for eternity. Manfred's actions will do all that without spiritual intervention. Manfred's own human evil also has no supernatural power over his victims; his power is that of earthly despots. Likewise, in Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), Montoni represents a human evil. As a mortal man, he can only inflict shame or pain and death on the pure heroine of the tale and can only affect the spiritual as it is connected to earthly evil and to the heroine's perception of her own relationship with God.

¹⁴ In Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein (1818), it is a human desire for glory and knowledge that propels the action. Having already denied his spirituality in exchange for scientific progress, once Victor has created the creature and is faced with its numinousness, he feels powerless in its presence. However, the powerlessness stems not from the strength of the creature, but from Victor's own awareness that he has no spiritual connection. Having no supernatural powers, the creature can do nothing but kill him or make him suffer further pain by killing those he loves. Melmoth, in Charles Robert Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer (1820) also has no real spiritual power over his victims, despite his seeming immortality. In fact, he searches out those who are suffering in their mortal life on the chance that they will accept his offer and trade places in eternal damnation with him. However, he cannot make them accept his offer.

CHAPTER TWO

SURRENDERING THE SELF: THE NUMINOUS AND THE VAMPIRE IN COLERIDGE'S "THE RIME OF THE ANCIENT MARINER"¹

I considered the being whom I had cast among mankind, and endowed with the will
and power to effect purposes of horror, ... nearly in light of my own vampire
Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, Frankenstein²

During a lecture on the "General Character of the Gothic Mind in the Middle Ages" (1818), Samuel Taylor Coleridge explained how the sublime and numinous in Gothic art affect the human subject. Gothic art, he wrote, "entirely depended on a symbolical expression of the infinite, – which is not vastness, nor immensity, nor perfection, but whatever cannot be circumscribed within the limits of actual sensuous being" (Coleridge, Literary Remains, 68)³ and which "impresses the beholder with a sense of self-annihilation" such that "he becomes, as it were, a part of the work contemplated" (69). Coleridge's commentary on the effect of Gothic art is remarkably close to Rudolf Otto's description of the feeling of the numinous in The Idea of the Holy, in which he characterizes the numinous as inexpressible because it "completely eludes apprehension in terms of concepts" (5). Overwhelmed by the feeling of the numinous, the subject of the encounter is filled with a sense of "nothingness" (10) to the point that he or she seeks to identify more closely with the numen. The numinous in the form of the more primitive Gothic past, superstition and the supernatural, and the sublime natural world provided Coleridge with a way to interrogate the individual's relationship with the divine. In "The Rime of the Ancient

Marinere”, contact with the numinous on several levels propels the Mariner on a psychological and spiritual journey.

In this poem, Coleridge returns to the traditional conventions of the romance genre and to romance’s more popular ballad form to tell a tale of marvelous events. However, although he uses more general human types to populate his ballad, the story still represents an individual human experience. While one may question the reliability of the narrator of this experience based on the other characters’ reactions to him, on his isolation from humankind, and on dream-like feeling to many of the encounters, one eventually has to accept the event as true to the Mariner’s individual perceptions. His physical self and his power to hypnotize are the best evidences of the truth of his tale.⁴

Modes of Numinous Contact

In Trance, Art, and Creativity (1975), John Curtis Gowan, educational psychologist, researcher and writer in the fields of creativity and development, discusses the three illusions of space, time and human relationships that make up an individual’s perception of the empirical world and how the laws that govern the relationship of a human being to the world change when one is thrust into an altered state of consciousness by contact with the numinous.⁵ Space is comprised of the objects that make up the world around us; time, of the events that happen to or around us; and personality, of the human relationships we experience. The ego, which Gowan considers the conscious self, initially, is in denial as to the possible existence of any other state of consciousness. It is contact with the numinous element which causes an individual to realize that another mode of consciousness exists; and the

driving force behind a person's life becomes the desire to make a connection between the individual ego and the numinous. Here the ego is defined both philosophically and psychologically, as the conscious self experiencing the world through the senses and as the part of the psyche seeking to control the darker impulses of what Freud calls the id.

Gowan identifies three levels of contact between the ego and the numinous, which he terms trance, art, and creativity, respectively.⁶ Each of these methods of encountering the numinous involves some degree of loss of ego and includes a number of procedures productive of an altered state of consciousness in which there is some kind of relationship formed between the individual subject and the numinous and a degree of "dissociation or hair-raising uncanny affect involving awe or dread" (3). Trance mode is a primitive method of numinous contact, characterized by an involuntary loss of ego control; and it is in this mode that Rudolf Otto's concept of the mysterium tremendum and the wholly otherness of the numinous object with its "uncanny qualities of awe, dread, horror, and loathing" (Gowan 24) are most intensely experienced. Regardless of how primitive the experience might be in this mode, though, it often serves the purpose of healing and revelation for the individual. Under the greater ego control of the artistic and creative stages of numinous contact, however, encounter with the numinous is more tempered, as the uncanny qualities of the experience are veiled and the positive qualities of the experience emerge as creative products. These levels of contact are reflected in the poem as the Ancient Mariner's spiritual journey.

For Gowan, the process by which creativity evolves, both for an individual and for a species, is an odyssey through the three levels, from the primitive stage of dissociation that includes such influences as psychoactive drugs,⁷ trance and hypnotism, through the artistic phase of archetypes, dreams, ritual, myth and art, to the more meditative, creative level in which “intuition, transcendence, ecstasy, metamorphosis, and salvation” (Gowan 245) are ways of understanding and in which the knowledge of the numinous gained through these procedures can be communicated with others. When a person encounters a manifestation of the numinous, he or she moves from empirical reality to an altered reality and discovers in the journey a state of consciousness where “the larger laws which pertain to the metaphysical world ... are seen to operate” (12) and in which the universal connection of all things is understood. The subject in the primitive mode perceives the numinous with such dread and horror that conscious thought is impossible, while the subject of an artistic contact with the numinous element finds the numinous obscured and, therefore, “accessible aesthetically rather than cognitively” (Gowan 250). However, in the creative or communicative mode, which allows the artist to approach the numinous through individual creativity, the numinous appears as a less frightening feature of the “collective preconscious” (250).⁸ In a poem like “The Ancient Mariner”, an encounter with the numinous gives supernatural, rather than natural, form to divine truth; and the Ancient Mariner becomes not only artist, but also a representative of the numinous, a vampire, as well, in his act of identification and creation.

Metaphoric Vampires and the Numinous

To speak in terms of the numinousness of the vampire figure in “The Ancient Mariner” one must first justify the reading of the text as vampire literature; and to do this, one must realize, as James B. Twitchell writes in The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature, that “the Romantics ... rarely if ever wrote about vampires as vampires; instead the vampire was the means to achieve various ends” (38).⁹ In reference to reading “The Ancient Mariner” as a vampire text, Twitchell argues that “when Coleridge first sat down in 1797, he had planned to write a vampire poem” (146); however, in light of a note on “The Ancient Mariner” added to the 1800 edition of Lyrical Ballads by Wordsworth, Twitchell also believes that pressure from his friend William Wordsworth caused Coleridge to temper many of the more obvious resemblances to vampirism in later versions.¹⁰ Basing his reading of the text on the article “Coleridge’s Revision of ‘The Ancient Mariner’” by B. R. McElderry, Jr. and on John Livingston Lowes’ Road to Xanadu, Twitchell draws heavily on Lowes’ endnote references to underscore the probability that Coleridge had read information on vampire folklore¹¹ and makes a strong case for reading “The Ancient Mariner” as a vampire text by referring to the “almost ... totemic” (147) representation of blood in the text, the Ancient Mariner’s sucking of his own blood in order to speak, and the mesmeric effect of his eyes on his listeners.

Analyzing vampires in a Romantic context, Twitchell defines them to be more than “foamy-mouthed fiends with blood dripping from extended incisors” (Living Dead 3). Rather, he sees them as “participants in some ghastly process of energy transfer in which one partner gains vitality at the expense of another” (3). As

Twitchell interprets the Romantic period, two important characteristics of the Romantic movement were the relationship between the artist and “his inner self” (142) and his understanding of the exchange of energies “between artist, artifact, and audience” (142). In the Romantic period, the transfer of energy explicit in the vampiric act, a transfer which can be understood to include both the enervation felt by the victim and the obvious transfer of blood, often became an “elaborate metaphor” (142) for the more implicit energy exchange among artist, audience, and creative product. In this relationship the artist puts energy into the production of the creative work; and that energy is transferred to the audience as it listens to, reads, or otherwise experiences the artistic product. The audience then releases energy in reaction to the work and that energy is picked back up by the artist. In this respect, Twitchell defines the Ancient Mariner as a vampire figure representing a “surrogate artist ... who creates a work of art ... to be heard by an audience” (144), because, in Twitchell’s opinion, through the telling of the tale energy is exchanged between the Wedding Guest and the Ancient Mariner. Contact with the numinous involves just such a relationship, in which the subject of the experience suffers a weakening of the conscious self and loss of vital energy in the face of the stronger numinous object.

Using Gowan’s theory of numinous contact, analysis of the Ancient Mariner as a numinous vampire figure can demonstrate not only the relationship of Romantic artist, audience, and poem that Twitchell proposes, but also the numinous process through which the lone Romantic poet becomes the artist/prophet that Percy Bysshe Shelley describes in A Defense of Poetry (1821) as being part of eternity or the infinite through his poetry. As the different levels of loss of self are experienced, the

creative process can be characterized as a journey, first of isolation and alienation at what Gowan characterizes as the primitive level of contact with the numinous, then of reintegration as the subject of the numinous encounter moves toward insight through the artistic mode, and on to communication of his newfound truth in the creative phase. My discussion not only shows how these levels of numinous contact are variously exhibited in “The Ancient Mariner”, but also analyzes how the negative numinousness of the vampire works as a positive vehicle for revelation, transformation, and healing. As the use of the figurative vampire allows the poet to establish a connection between the vampire and the isolated self searching for a divine presence, the vampire in the poem not only shows humanity’s alienation from the divine, but also becomes a vehicle to reunite the individual and the divine through the process of artistic creation and communication.

The central discussion of this chapter involves an interpretation of the poem in terms of the Ancient Mariner’s numinous journey from alienation and disconnection to reintegration; however, the tale and the poem itself also evoke the various levels of numinousness for the audience and an examination of the audience’s numinous or spiritual journey deals with the hypnotic influence of the Mariner’s tale and the poem on the internal and external audiences, respectively. Final remarks treat the meaning of the numinousness of the vampire in the relationship between the artist, the poem, and the audience and how this relationship serves to reshape the relationship between human beings and the divine.

The Numinous Experience of the Ancient Mariner

As a representative of the Romantic artist, the Ancient Mariner journeys from the primitive, negative numinousness toward positive creativity and communication.

Isolated from the divine in the primitive stage through his dread at the mystery and power of the numinous vampire figure, referred to as Life-in-Death in later editions of the poem¹², and through his resulting loss of ego because of that dreadful power, the Mariner recognizes his need for a relationship with divine power and seeks a reunion in the artistic phase as he gains insight into his alienated state by experiencing the condition of Life-in-Death himself. Eventually, he attains a degree of reintegration with the divine, and to some extent with society, as in the creative stage he takes on the role of communicator carrying the cosmic message of divine unity to the community as he travels “from land to land” (line 619) in his search for those who must hear his tale. The Mariner is associated with the divine by becoming not only the artist/prophet, but also the numen/vampire. Through his penance and through his existence as vampire/artist he serves as the vehicle for the Hermit, the Wedding Guest, and the broader reading and listening audience to relate to a divine sense of the world. In the following discussion, I argue that the sublime experiences of the Mariner lead directly to an encounter with the numinousness of the vampire Life-in-Death. This experience of the numinous is important because, through it, he associates with the divine by becoming the artist and creating a tale that asserts a reunion with God. This tale then may help others to reestablish their own relationship with the divine.

“My Heart Beat Loud”: The Primitive Numinous and the Ancient Mariner

The first step on the Mariner’s spiritual journey takes place in the primitive mode of contact with the numinous and is characterized by a sense of alienation and isolation when the Mariner’s perceptions of space, time, and human relationships are

all called into question as he is thrust into an altered state of consciousness by the dreadful power of the mysterium tremendum. This alienation is suffered as isolation not only from his fellow men, but also from the divine itself. As the poem begins, the Ancient Mariner describes the beginning of his voyage; but when the kirk, the hill, and the lighthouse drop below the horizon, the Mariner and the rest of the crew suffer a kind of dissociation, leaving behind those things that orient them to their home country and, therefore, that signify what they perceive to be the reality of their world.¹³

However, although they travel out into the disorienting space of the open sea, as sailors, their reality also includes life on board ship. Until they reach the equator, they continue to experience what they perceive as the normal life aboard ship. The sun continues to rise and set when and where it should; and they have fair weather and a good wind to carry them southward. At this point, though, a storm rises which hurries them even further south into an unfamiliar region where they will experience a state of altered consciousness brought on by several dissociative phases, including the sublime conditions of physical isolation and sensory deprivation and, finally, dehydration. These conditions will lead the Ancient Mariner into a hallucinatory state in which he will encounter the vampire Life-in-Death.

The power of the sublime exists in the fear or dread felt at the possibility of danger or death and in the sense of helplessness this possibility evokes in the subject of the encounter. Although the sublime, like the numinous, is inexpressible in its essence, the feelings and the sense of helplessness can be described metaphorically. The Mariner's description of how "Storm and Wind" (line 45) drive the ship and its

crew "Like Chaff ... along" (line 48) signifies his sense of helplessness from the mysterious forces of nature and foreshadows the feelings he and the other sailors will share during their sublime experience in the Antarctic and what the Mariner will feel during and after his numinous experience with Life-in-Death.

The sublime seascape signals an entrance into an altered state both for crew and Mariner alike, as the ship sails into a region of both "Mist and Snow" (line 49) a place "wond'rous cauld" (line 50) in which "Ice, mast-high, came floating by" (line 51). As the primary actor in the tale, the Ancient Mariner is at the threshold of what Gowan terms the primitive level of numinous experience where the sublime features of the Antarctic world prepare him for his later encounter with Life-in-Death. His perception is characterized by a loss of orientation in a bleak, white world in which spatial and temporal coordinates are no longer trustworthy. His loss of a sense of reality and, therefore, his sense of peril, become deeper in the visually monotonous seascape formed by the vastness and magnitude of the ice flows in a region where neither "shapes of men ne beasts" (line 55) are encountered. Here he has no way to orient himself or to define himself, and so he is in danger of losing his sense of self-awareness.

As their isolation increases, the sailors hear what can only be considered sublime noises, also. The Mariner tells the Wedding Guest how the huge chunks and flows of ice "crack'd and growl'd, and roar'd and howl'd,/ Like noises of a swoond!" (lines 59-60)¹⁴ Edmund Burke's study of the sublime reveals that any sound which is excessively loud "is sufficient to overpower the soul, to suspend its action, and to fill it with terror" (82)¹⁵; and for the Mariner and the crew, the "repetitive and

monotonous stimulation” (Gowan 99) caused by these noises would tend to block other sounds and place the sailors in a sublime situation as their individual psyches became overwhelmed by the intensity of the experience. This situation then would isolate them further, not only from their sense of reality shaped by their previous sailing experiences, but also from each other as they find it more and more difficult not only to communicate, but also to concentrate and think coherently.

Due to their physical isolation and the intensity of their experiences in this sublime world, the sailors are overjoyed when a creature which they feel represents conventional reality, an albatross, joins them.¹⁶ The Mariner tells how “and an it were a Christian soul,/ We hail’d it in God’s name.” (lines 63-64). The sailors have not seen another living thing except each other for many days and have been inundated with sublime sights and sounds; and under these circumstances, it is not difficult to understand their need for contact with something they perceive to be an ordinary part of their world. Therefore, engaging in an act of interpretation, they greet the albatross as if it were a long lost Christian brother and view it as a good omen, even though its signification is ambiguous at best.

The bird has followed them for nine days when the Ancient Mariner kills it. According to most accepted interpretations, the Mariner kills the bird without reason.¹⁷ In the interpretation of the Ancient Mariner’s experience as a numinous encounter, however, the Mariner’s seemingly senseless act takes on another dimension. Violent action “is characteristic of ... ego excursion which deprives the subject of self-control, and superego excursion which deprives him of his judgemental capacities” (Gowan 52). Caught up in the sublime world of the

Antarctic, the Mariner gives in to an “unconscious impulse” (27) and destroys the bird because his isolation and experience of the sublime have dissociated him from normal reality, separating him from the more controlling attributes of his ego and superego, so that the deeper, hidden impulses of his id take over.¹⁸ In shedding the blood of the albatross, the Mariner commits the ultimate cosmic crime, draining the energy of the divine world.

Having moved away from the traditional religious community of his home, the Mariner is now further isolated from the divine through his destruction of the one object that offered a connection to the rational reality of the sailors, a living thing which he has already designated as representative of Christian faith and of connection to God. Because of his murderous act, he is now destined to navigate the altered state of consciousness to its numinous conclusion. Suffering the sublime solitude of being “the first that ever burst/Into that silent Sea” (lines 101-2) the Mariner and the crew reach the Pacific; but once they are there, sublime nature evokes a sense of the suspension of space, time, and ego. The Mariner describes how the breeze subsides and the sails droop listlessly for want of air and calls up a vision of their immovable ship caught in the uniformity and vastness of the becalmed sea around them. At the equator with the sun directly overhead, the sailors seemed to be suspended in time eternal as:

Day after day, day after day,
We stuck, ne breath ne motion,
As idle as a painted Ship
Upon a painted Ocean.
(lines 111-14)

While the equator seems to be an illusory coordinate, it is representative of the threshold of consciousness that the Mariner has crossed in his journey. Caught in these doldrums, the men “speak only to break/The silence of the Sea” (lines 105-6). In The Demon and the Poet: An Interpretation of “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner” According to Coleridge’s Demonological Sources (1983), Katherine Bruner Tave interprets this passage to mean that the men now neglect their prayers and, therefore, further isolate themselves from God. However, they are relating to each other as a community when they speak; and they now speak only in an attempt to overcome the sublime spell of the sea. Their isolation has become almost complete now, as the illusion of social interaction is shattered; but another factor now contributes to the weakening of the Mariner’s self as he moves closer to the actual experience of the numinous. The sailors all suffer from dehydration. The Mariner informs the Wedding Guest that though there was “Water, water, every where” there was not a “drop to drink” (lines 117-18).¹⁹ With “every tongue ... wither’d at the root” (lines 131-32), the men are all silent now from dehydration; yet they give the Mariner “evil looks” (line 135) and “Instead of the Cross” (line 137) the Mariner tells the Wedding Guest, the albatross was hung around his neck.

Sensory deprivation often leads to paranormal effects such as dreams and both visual and auditory hallucinations as subjects of the experience lose their spatial and temporal referents and enter a trance-like state where they feel as if they are in a mist, then find themselves “in a world of [their] own internal imagery” (Gowan 101).²⁰ In the poem, the sailors have come through the mist and fog and are now in a world where they can no longer orient themselves in time and space; therefore, their own

capacities for internal visualization and interpretation will take control. This level of their experience foreshadows a transition to the artistic level of numinous contact, where information is on a figural level, as some of the men “in dreams assured were/Of the Spirit that plagued us so” (lines 27-28). In these dreams they are told how the spirit has followed them nine fathoms below from “the Land of Mist and Snow” (line 130); and a sense of the sailors’ peril is obvious in the choice of the word “plagued” (line 128) to describe the spirit’s effect on their journey. They interpret their dreams as an affirmation of the existence of an invisible nature that somehow has control of their destiny; however, dreams are constructions and may be deceptive in terms of their interpretation of the meaning. It may very well be that their interpretation is a sublimated attempt to deny their collusion in the death of the albatross, by insisting that this fate is their destiny.

Dreams will become important later for the Mariner, also; however, at this point he still is caught up in a hallucinatory experience of the numinous. In the altered state of consciousness characterized by a hallucinatory episode, things appear real to the senses, but also exhibit a visionary quality in which “detailed fantasies” (Gowan 101), often involving archetypal or mythic figures which exist only in the person’s mind, are manifested.²¹ In the sky, the Mariner sees what appears at first to be “a little speck” (line 141) and then seems to be a “mist” (line 142) of some sort and then a clearer form, the shape of a ship, as it grows nearer.²² The Mariner’s experience now becomes a frightening contact with Otto’s mysterium horrendum, the horrifying negative numinous, in the form of both visual and auditory hallucinations. Still suffering from dehydration, the Mariner becomes absorbed in what he perceives

is the reality of his experience.²³ Unable to speak because of his parched throat, the Ancient Mariner bites his arm and sucks his own blood to speak; and he recalls that the crew grinned at this act and “all at once their breath drew in/As they were drinking all” (lines 157-58)²⁴ This is the second blood the Mariner has spilled; and, although it seems to be the blood of self-sacrifice given in order to apprise the crew of the nearness of the other ship, with this act of feeding on his own blood, the Mariner becomes his own vampire, and, therefore, his own victim. James B. Twitchell goes so far as to imply that the spilling of the Mariner’s blood might be what brings the ship to them and that the Mariner might be “a willing participant in some weird process” (147). Since Twitchell has pointed this out, I feel it would not be too far off the track to suggest that the Mariner has invited this vampiric figure into his mind, also, as a form of hallucinatory apparition, by biting himself. If this is so, it is not demons who mete out his punishment, as Katherine Bruner Tave has suggested, but he himself who, as both instigator and agent of his crime, is also the agent of his own punishment. Having reached the primal underworld of the psyche, with his ego weakened to the point of non-existence, the Mariner is now conditioned to embrace the vampire nature that lies within him and to recognize his state of alienation from the divine.

The skeleton ship approaches and his horror intensifies as he is faced with the negatively numinous figures of the woman Life-in-Death and her mate Death, the ship’s only inhabitants. The Mariner describes the vampire lady for the Wedding Guest, as he tells him,

Her lips are red, her looks are free,
Her locks are yellow as gold:

Her skin is as white as leprosy,
And she far liker Death than he;
Her flesh makes the still air cold.
(lines 186-90)

At this point, the two are dicing for the lives of the crew. Death wins the crew's lives, but the Ancient Mariner's life is forfeit to the lady. The Mariner once again is consumed with a sense of his own peril, the peril of a soul that is now under the control of the leprous lady. However, the archetypal character of the numinous comes to the surface as the Mariner faces the skeleton ship and the lady Life-in-Death. Through this encounter he will discover that cosmic laws prevail over mundane ones.

Having already sucked his own blood, at this point, the Mariner's characterization as a vampire will be further strengthened as he gradually becomes like the lady Life-in-Death. It is through the taking of his own blood that the Mariner leaves himself vulnerable to a metamorphosis into the numen as he becomes the vampire; and it is through this transformation that he will understand his own isolation from God due to the murder of the albatross.

As the crew dies one by one, the Mariner is further isolated from the world, "alone, alone, all, all alone,/Alone on the wide wide Sea!" (lines 224-25). The kinesthetic impression of the two hundred crewmen's bodies hitting the deck one by one "With heavy thump" (line 210) and the Mariner's perception of each death as an auditory reminder of his sin, as he connects the departing of each soul from its body to the "whizz of [his] Cross bow" (line 215) might be considered sublime sounds since they put his "soul in agony" (line 227) underscoring the numinous quality of his experience and the magnitude of his sin. The Mariner's reflection that in life the dead

men had been “so beautiful” (line 228) juxtaposed against his awareness that only he and what he considers a “million million slimy things” (line 230) of the sea continue to live seems to indicate that he still values human contact and makes his isolation even less bearable. Unable to look at the creatures crawling on the “rotting Sea” (line 232) he refuses the interaction that their existence provides and, in effect, denies a relationship with them. Moreover, when he looks at the deck, all he sees are the dead bodies of the crew, who can no longer provide a relationship that might connect him to the real world of the senses. The only place left to look is “to Heav’n” (line 236); but heaven offers no consolation, either. Even with his eyes closed, the Mariner can find no solace, for in his mind all he can see is the sublime horizon, the unending expanse of “the sky and the sea, and the sea and the sky”²⁵ signifying his continued isolation from both the visible and invisible worlds. Until now the Mariner has been on a psychological journey involving a loss of the self; however, at this point in his journey, the Mariner will begin the religious part of his journey, his reintegration process, making meaning for himself out of his numinous experience.²⁶

“A Spring of Love”: The Artistic Mode of the Mariner’s Numinous Encounter

One makes contact with the numinous in the artistic mode through mediums such as dreams,²⁷ archetypes, rituals, and works of art; and, therefore, the meaning of the numinous in this mode is both ambiguously personal and universal at once. However, this level involves more conscious control as the individual seeks to understand and articulate the experience of the numinous on a more intellectual level; and through a desire to make meaning comes a more clearly identifiable interpretation

of the recognition of the isolated condition in which the person lives and of the need for a divine presence in human life.

It is at this point in the poem, as Tave interprets it, that “Life-in-Death becomes not just a demon-tormentor but a physical, tangible reality in the person of the Mariner himself” (90). In terms of the numinous, however, the Mariner does not contain the power of the archetypal figure of Life-in-Death quite yet; he has not become the numen. When he tries to pray, only a “wicked whisper” (line 238) comes out, making his “heart as dry as dust” (line 239). Rudolph Otto makes reference to the subject of an experience of the numinous feeling as though he or she is “dust and ashes” (9) before the power of the numinous; and at this point, the Mariner is realizing his lack of value and power and his insignificance in the universe. In response to his feelings of insignificance, he begins to feel a sense of personal responsibility for the deaths of the men, but not yet for the albatross.

This scene, however, is a turning point for him because as he watches the water snakes this time, he sees them with a different perspective. Where before all he saw was their difference from humanity and their grotesque nature, now he sees them as “happy living things” (line 274). In fact, because they are the only other living things within his world beside himself, he feels a greater connection to them, and through them a connection to the cosmos which he had denied when he killed the albatross earlier. Unable to articulate their beauty consciously, the Mariner does so unconsciously. He tells the Wedding Guest, “A spring of love gushes from my heart,/ And I bless’d them unaware!” (lines 276-77).²⁸ This involuntary blessing is the Mariner’s first attempt to represent his understanding of his connection with the

universe; and just as a spring of water is a natural occurrence in the wilderness, the Mariner's spring of love is a natural phenomenon of his true feelings. Up to now, the Mariner has not been able to pray, but now he can. Though he attributes his ability to bless the snakes to the pity of his "kind saint" (line 278) I believe it is his intuitive blessing of the creatures which forms a psychic bond between his consciousness and the life force of the universe, giving him the ability to pray. This blessing is significant in that the Mariner's hidden impulses are now of a more benign nature, and he may now begin his journey of reintegration back to an ordinary state of consciousness in which the self has more control over reality and in which his dissociation from the cosmic pattern will be less as he interacts on some level with society in order to bring his message of cosmic unity to the community of man.

As the Mariner prays, the albatross drops off his neck into the sea; and at this point in his experience, his bodily discomfort is relieved in two ways, by sleep and re-hydration of the body. The Mariner's rest is more than normal sleep; it is the kind, he says that "slid into [his] soul" (line 288). This sleep has archetypal overtones²⁹ as the Ancient Mariner dreams of dew; and when he awakens, it rains and his body is able to be re-hydrated, lessening the control of the altered state of consciousness on him. On the artistic numinous level, the Mariner's dream of rain represents the wish-fulfillment of a tortured soul, who desires above all a moment of cleansing and baptismal blessing which will wash away his guilt.³⁰

At this time, the Mariner enters into another altered state, but one of lesser dread than his experience of Life-in-Death and the skeleton ship. After he is

refreshed with rain, he seems to suffer from a state bordering on a delirium trance, a state in which he feels disconnected from his own body. He recalls:

I mov'd and could not feel my limbs:
I was so light, almost
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed Ghost.
(lines 297-300)

In this stanza, as Tave interprets it, the Ancient Mariner is caught up in another case of wish fulfillment, showing his desire to die as the others of the crew have done; but I believe this passage indicates that he is lost in a trance³¹ that will take him into the creative phase of contact. A feeling of lightness, common in an attack of delirium whether drug-induced or from the effects of illness, can signal the onset of a "mystical experience" (Gowan 85); and it must be remembered that the Mariner has been soaked through in the rain and, in his fatigued and overwrought state, may be physically ill. Soon after this experience he has what can be interpreted as a mystical experience as he hears the two voices that speak of his crime, his punishment, and the fact that he "penance more will do" (line 414). From the information that he gains from their conversation, he discerns what his fate will be.

The Mariner's hallucinatory experience continues as he becomes aware of a roaring sound that shakes the sails, and above him in the sky, the colors of the Aurora Australis or Southern Lights flow in whirling and spiraling patterns. It begins to rain again and the ship now moves under the impulse of what appears to be a supernatural wind. The dead men move also, groaning and rising from the deck in the throes of a primitive possession trance.³² Twitchell characterizes the crewmen as "'revenants'" or "'still living dead'" (Living Dead 149), whose bodies have been reanimated by

spirits;³³ In terms of the Mariner's fate, however, one might read the reanimation of the crew as foreshadowing the Mariner's future isolation. Though the corpses of the crew, including the Mariner's nephew who works alongside him, pull at the ropes together, they do so with "limbs like lifeless tools" (line 331), and they do not speak or look at him. The Mariner, though once again part of the community of the crew, is still in isolation from the crew and even from family, as he will be when he is returned to his home country and begins to pay what may be the eternal part of his penance.

On the other hand, the Mariner is also the only one who is fully alive at this point, as he reassures the Wedding Guest that though the others died, his "body dropt not down" (line 223) and that though he was surrounded by the dead for seven days, he "could not die" (line 254) himself. He is also the only one, it seems, who has seen the illusions of time, space, the self, and human relationships shattered through his experiences, and who has seen beyond the veil into the cosmic reality of the world and survived; so, the actions of these possessed crewmen may indicate the way the inhabitants of the world should be viewed. The people who need to hear the Mariner's tale may be, in the final analysis, those who are so caught up in their everyday activities that they move through life like dead men walking, prisoners of the illusions of time, space, and the human relationships within a prescribed social system.

The quality of the Mariner's experience of the numinous is changing at this point in his journey, reaching toward a creative stage that might lead to his reintegration into society through communication of his experience to others.

However, his experience of the numinous is not finished. At the higher level of numinous contact in the creative mode psychedelic experiences often are “accompanied by the hearing of celestial music, apparently played at a distance, and sweeter than any mortal music” (Gowan 125); and in the poem, at dawn, as the crew drops their arms and clusters around the mast, the Mariner hears sweet sounds emanating from their mouths. The sound of their voices seems to circle in the air and then dart upward toward the sun, returning again, each voice at times alone and sometimes mixed with others. First the Mariner thinks he hears a skylark’s song and then the songs of “all little birds” (line 349) together. Next, he thinks he hears the sounds of all the instruments, then a lone flute and “now ... an angel’s song” (line 354). When this music ceases, the sails make “A pleasant noise till noon” (line 357) a noise which the Mariner likens to “a hidden brook” (line 358). This intense sensory experience of the Mariner’s foreshadows his next hallucinatory encounter with the numinous.

The ship has moved on “Slowly and smoothly” (line 380) at the impulse of the underwater spirit; however, at noon, the sails go slack and movement of the ship is arrested for the few moments that the sun is directly overhead at the equator. Then, “like a pawing horse let go” (line 394), the ship bounds away over the waves. The blood rushes to the Ancient Mariner’s head with the sudden force of movement and he falls “down in a swoon” (line 397), unconscious for a time and then once more passing into an altered state of consciousness as the ship moves on at seemingly supernatural speeds. In terms of contact with the numinous, as the Mariner’s sense of time seems shattered by the fast movement of the ship bounding over the waves, his

mental processes work to recover the material from his unconscious and to facilitate the creative organization of the ideas that the two voices speaking have put into his mind.

As the Mariner now enters the creative phase of the numinous, both auditory hallucinations and transcendent, meditative experiences become important to his level of awareness. In this mode of communication, he represents the artist who must attempt to organize the insights of his experience into a coherent story. In the poem, the Mariner hears voices talking of his sin and his penance, almost as if they were an "externalization of conscience" (Gowan 27), because of his sense of personal responsibility for the deaths of the albatross and the crew.³⁴ Incapacitated by his fainting fit or trance, the Mariner hears and, as he characterizes the experience, "in [his] soul discern'd" (line 401) two disembodied voices speaking of his punishment for killing the harmless albatross. The first voice indicates that the bird had "lov'd the man/ Who shot him with his bow" (line 410); and now added to the heinous nature of the Mariner's crime in his own mind is the perception that the bird had loved him. The voices then relate how he has done penance and will do more for his sin.³⁵ Once the spirits have finished speaking, the Mariner's trance begins to abate, he awakens from his trance, and the ship slows to normal speed. The dead men all stand together on the deck, fixing the Mariner with "their stony eyes" (line 441) which glitter in the light of the moon; and the Mariner is entranced by them. Once again, it seems, the Mariner's sense of personal responsibility for their deaths is underscored by his incapacitation. As he tells the Wedding Guest,

The pang, the curse, with which they died,
Had never pass'd away:

I could not draw my een from theirs
Ne turn them up to pray.
(lines 443-46)

In the face of this reminder of his sin, the Ancient Mariner is completely paralyzed, and his isolation from God and humanity is emphasized. However, the spell comes to an end; and the only act that remains for the Mariner is to return to his own country. Yet, now that he has returned to “living life”³⁶ (line 400), his perception of empirical reality is changed. The expanse of ocean now looks different as he tells how he “look’d far-forth, but little saw/Of what might else be seen”(line 449). Once he has come out of his altered state of consciousness, the Mariner is a changed man who,

Like one, that on a lonesome road
Doth walk in fear and dread,
And having once turn’d round, walks on
And turns no more his head:
Because he knows, a frightful fiend
Doth close behind him tread.
(lines 451-56)

In terms of a process of contact with the numinous, the Ancient Mariner has journeyed from the isolation of the primitive numinous through the artistic level of contact with the archetypal fiend, the vampire Life-in-Death, and now is back in what he feels is ordinary reality ready to communicate his awareness of the true reality of the cosmos.

Yet, the numinous is not finished with him. The Mariner sees the crew’s bodies lying flat and lifeless on the deck, but with “a man all light, a seraph-man” (line 517) standing on each corpse to serve as signals to the community on land. Soon the Mariner hears the sound of oars, “the Pilot’s cheer” (line 528), and the Hermit singing “godly hymns” (line 543). At this sound, he suddenly is filled with

hope that the holy man will be able to shrieve his soul and “wash away/The Albatross’s blood” (lines 545-46). However, he is not to be forgiven for his sin so easily; having moved into the creative phase of numinous contact, he must communicate what he perceives to be the moral of his journey to an audience.

The Audience’s Contact with the Numinous

The creative phase of numinous contact allows the communication of the experience to others and, therefore, is based in language. At this stage, the Mariner has encountered the primitive numinousness of the vampire Life-in-Death and has recognized his isolation from God. In his insight into his own alienation from the divine, he has discovered his need to reunite with all of nature, both visible and invisible. Having identified with the numinous object, he will affect others on all three levels of numinous contact as he passes this insight on to others through his ritual penance, the telling of the tale, and through his hypnotic influence upon his audiences.

An examination of the audience’s experience of the numinous must take into account the effects that the events in the poem and the Mariner himself have on two separate audiences: the poem’s internal audiences -- the Hermit, Pilot, Pilot’s boy, and Wedding Guest, who in the telling of the tale becomes the primary internal listener; and the external audience, comprised of those contemporaries of Coleridge who heard the poem recited by him or read the poem³⁷ and those later audiences who, not having the privilege of hearing Coleridge’s rendition, have only read the poem. To understand the audience’s reaction to the numinous on a primitive level of contact, one must look first at the direct influence that the Mariner has on the internal

audience, which in the narrative of the tale involves the physical and mental reactions of the Pilot, Pilot's boy, and Hermit and the actual induction of a trance state in the Wedding Guest for the length of the tale. A discussion of the creative contact the audience has with the numinous covers the hypnotic effects of the Mariner and of the poem, this time as an indirect influence, introduced into the tale and poem itself by the artist's use of poetic techniques, which work not only on the Wedding Guest as he listens to the tale, but also on both reading and listening audiences from Coleridge's time onward. The last analysis concerning the audience deals with the creative numinous level and the communication of the moral of the story for internal and external audiences alike.

"I Moved my Lips": The Numinous Mariner Speaks

As the Pilot, Pilot's boy, and Hermit approach the side of the ship, a sound rumbles from deep in the ocean and is manifested as the waters of the bay open in a whirlpool, and the ship and dead bodies of the crew sink. The body of the Mariner stays afloat, however, and is taken into the Pilot's boat. At this point in the story, the Ancient Mariner has made a full transition to the creative level of numinous experience where he will be able to communicate his story to others. The Mariner has now become a representation of the numinous, metamorphosing into a likeness of Life-in-Death. According to Tave, "the sight of the Mariner is not enough to cause physical harm and mental disorientation to his fellows"; and it is the "possessing demon" (127) that causes the harm. However, as he is the numinous object now, the sight of the Mariner is sufficient to cause harm on a primitive level. He is a revelation of their own mortality as they sense their own powerlessness in relation to

his numinous power. He moves his lips and the Pilot shrieks in fear and falls down in a fit. The Hermit raises his eyes to heaven and prays; and as the Mariner takes the oars, the Pilot's boy goes "crazy" (line 598). Because of their contact with him, the Pilot and the Pilot's boy, unprepared for the mysterium horrendum of the Mariner, fall victim to the primitive dread of the numinous and suffer a complete loss of the self. On shore, the Hermit can hardly stand, so enervated is he by his experience. His languor is a reaction to the horrendum that is a quality of the negatively numinous Mariner, as the Hermit's self is weakened but not lost completely.³⁸ The Mariner has become the vampire and, as such can do harm; however, at this level, his vampirism also becomes the vehicle through which the community of man can reunite with the divine.

Although he has become isolated from God through his killing of the albatross, the Ancient Mariner has not lost faith and, therefore, seeks redemption from the Hermit; but redemption is not to be. He must pay his full penance for his sin, and that penance is eternal excommunication.³⁹ However, the Mariner is allowed some sense of reconciliation. Through the creation of the tale and through its ritual telling, he can interact with society, if only for the time it takes to tell his story. As the Hermit then asks the Mariner "What manner man art thou?" (line 610), he invites the first telling of the tale, just as the victim invites the vampire to enter into his life. The Hermit's question is the catalyst for the Mariner's penance as he makes his confession for the first time⁴⁰; and the Mariner suffers "a woeful agony" (line 612) which forces him to begin his tale.

However, the Mariner's transformation to numen not only means that he is the numinous object, but also that he is the message itself, artist and creative product both. The Hermit has instituted the ritual telling of the Mariner's tale; and the act has now become sacramental in character, a "doctrine of salvation" (Otto Idea of the Holy 33) for himself and others. In telling his tale, the Mariner expresses his relationship to the numinous and brings order and unity to the empirical world. Since the result of the Mariner's numinous encounter is that he now exists in a more eternal time that embraces past, present, and future, there is a ritualistic, cyclic nature to the numinous experiences in the poem as the Mariner, who has had his encounter with Life-in-Death, tells his story to his various audiences. As the wave of his need to tell his story builds, vanishes, and builds again, the Mariner must continue moving, like a wandering disciple "from land to land" (line 619) searching for the next audience who must hear his parable. In communication of the numinous, the sacramental quality of the tale acts as a buffer between humanity and the numinous, allowing enough of the numinousness through to teach the lesson to the listener, but not enough to cause the Hermit, or his later audience, the Wedding Guest, to react as the Pilot and the Pilot's boy had done.

"I Fear Thee": The Wedding Guest and the Mariner's Primitive Numinousness

Like the Mariner, the Wedding Guest must suffer a process of isolation and hopefully reintegration with society in order to gain insight into his loss of a divine relationship and to reestablish that relationship. His experience with the Mariner is his path to that relationship. However, the Wedding Guest perceives him as a "grey-beard Loon" (line 15), implying that he is a lunatic. Suggesting that he is mentally

unstable, the Wedding Guest brands his tale as untrustworthy; and the Mariner clearly exists outside the Wedding Guest's range of normal personal relationships, despite his willingness to interact on some level with the Mariner, as he offers him an invitation to the celebration if he has a "laughsome tale" (line 11) to tell. In spite of his reaction to the Mariner, the Wedding Guest's brush with the numinous, as well as the numinous encounter for the larger reading audience, both then and now, is in the meeting with the Mariner and in the Mariner's strange tale. Because the Wedding Guest's experience of the numinous, like the Mariner's before him, involves a reorganization of the concepts on which the individual's view of reality is based, the Wedding Guest eventually must accept the reliability of the tale in order to gain insight into his own definition of reality and his own relationship with the cosmos. He must accept the Mariner at face value because the Mariner himself, in respect to both his appearance and his powers, represents the best evidence that the events of the tale actually took place. To gain insight into his separation from the divine, he must be isolated from society by the primitive numinousness of the vampire in the form of the Ancient Mariner. Once he has heard the tale of the Mariner, he can approach the numinous on the artistic level as he faces the archetypes of his own psyche which the Mariner and his tale bring to the surface; and through the insight into his own psyche he then can reintegrate with the divine on a creative level.

For the Wedding Guest, the hypnotic effect of the Mariner's tale and of the Mariner himself will draw him into the world of numinous contact. In "On the Voluntary Power which the Mind is able to exercise over Bodily Sensation" (1790), an article in volume two of Manchester Memoirs, Thomas Barnes states that "in

general, whatever fixes the mind in INTENSE THOUGHT, or rouses it to STRONG PASSION, makes it less sensible to organical impression" (453). This is particularly true in the case of strong emotions such as fear, which bring about a "momentary pause of sensation" (454). The resultant trance state is a reorganization of reality in which the fixing of attention to the numinous experience isolates and reforms the mind of the subject and allows them to see reality differently. The Wedding Guest must go through his own process of isolation by being drained of energy as the Mariner was by the vampire Life-in-Death. When the Ancient Mariner arrests the attention of the Wedding Guest and directs it toward himself and his tale, he does so through a kind of hypnotic trance.

In the hypnotic trance, stimulus of the senses is restricted as the attention of the subject becomes fixed through the use of repetitious stimuli, and an emotional connection between the subject of the trance and the effector of the trance is established. The Ancient Mariner acts much as a hypnotist would, decreasing the influence of the "external stimuli" (Gowan 71) of the wedding feast and its "merry din" (line 8) on the Wedding Guest in order to fix his attention. This, in turn, produces an emotional relationship between the two of them, which, in this case, involves both fear and fascination as the numinous power of the Mariner acts on the Wedding Guest.

As a supernatural agent, the vampire figure of the Mariner fixes the Wedding Guest's attention in three ways.⁴¹ First, he "holds him with his skinny hand" (line 13), attempting to share his vision with the Wedding Guest through his touch.⁴² Then the Mariner "holds him with his glittering eye" (line 17)⁴³, a more powerful source of

power for him. Coleridge makes the Mariner's hypnotic ability even more clear as the Wedding Guest tells the Mariner "For that, which comes out of thine eye, doth make/My body and soul to be still" (lines 364-65).⁴⁴ Last, the Mariner mesmerizes the Wedding Guest with his voice. In order to tell his tale, he is given "strange power of speech" (line 620), the power to speak in different tongues so he can communicate in the language of those who must hear the story.

The Mariner's penance is to tell the story; and the telling of it is an attempt at unstressing or releasing the psychic tension built up by the mind's confrontation with the numinous element. This strange power of speech gives him the words to describe his experience, to release the psychic tension or energy built up through his numinous encounter by communicating his message to others. As a result of these three hypnotic means, "the Mariner hath his will" (line 20) and the Wedding Guest "cannot chuse but hear" (line 22) his story. This fixing of attention decreases the amount of sensory stimuli for the Wedding Guest, just as the sublime features of the Mariner's journey limited his connection to reality, but does not block it altogether. Throughout the telling of his story, the Mariner renews his control of the Wedding Guest with a repetition of these hypnotic methods whenever the outside stimuli of the noise of the celebration or the fear of the Wedding Guest at this numinous encounter becomes too great and threatens to pull him back into normal sensuous reality.

At this point, also, the Wedding Guest, as the Hermit before him had done, entreats the Mariner with a question that triggers the Mariner's confession. "Why look'st thou so?" (line 79) is the same kind of query as the Hermit's "What manner man art thou?" (line 610) in that it asks the Mariner to explain himself and to do so he

must repeat his story.⁴⁵ The Mariner once again must take responsibility for the “hellish thing” (line 89) he did and confess he shot the albatross. Here, the Mariner seems to be in an agitated trance state, under the control of deeper impulses; and the sin he committed and the numinous event he experienced as a result of it are now what give him his identity, purpose, and the ability to communicate his tale. The confession becomes a reenactment of his sin, an acceptance of fault, and recognition of his alienation from society, from nature, from God, and from himself. However, it also becomes a vehicle for others to recognize their own crimes against the divine and their ensuing alienated condition. To gain this insight is to discover a need for a stronger relationship with the divine and a need to change one’s life.

As the vampire Life-in-Death, the Mariner has the power to drain his audience’s ego and transport him outside of conventional reality. Through the telling of the tale, as the Mariner recalls his experience, the Wedding Guest’s rational state of consciousness is shattered, and, from this point on, he is thrust into an altered state of consciousness by the Ancient Mariner’s tale. As the Mariner tells the Wedding Guest how the crew died one by one, the Wedding Guest articulates his fear; but the ancient man assures him he did not die. This, however, should not be reassuring at this point, since he has already told the Wedding Guest how the two spectres diced for the lives of the men and Life-in-Death won his. At this point in his personal experience of the numinous, the Mariner had entered the artistic level where the archetypal pattern of his experience could be visualized and organized into meaning; and it is at this point in the tale that the Wedding Guest must enter the artistic mode of numinous contact also in order to find meaning in the Mariner’s tale and the

numinousness of the Mariner himself. As he signifies his fear of the Mariner, who he perceives as “long, and lank, and brown,/As is the ribb’d Sea-sand” (lines 218-19) he connects the Mariner to nature on an archetypal level by connecting him to the sea. As the archetype Life-in-Death, the Ancient Mariner has become a part of the cosmic pattern that for the Wedding Guest is still a mystery and, therefore, evokes fear.

“Of Sense Forlorn”: The Creative Numinous, the Poem, and the Audience

Art is a way in which an individual gives a sense of validity and truth to the internal visions of his psyche; but archetypes have a fluid character and only obtain meaning in relation to the individual ego and its reaction to the numinous experience. The artistic numinous is necessarily more veiled than the primitive contact and is apprehended on a personal level through the character of the work itself. As the story-teller, the Mariner has reached the creative level where, having perceived his numinous experience in archetypal form, he can produce a structure which will make them available to the Wedding Guest and other audiences through the ritual telling of the tale. At the level of creative numinous contact, several influences are at work to put the audience in the right frame of mind to accept the numinous direction of the story; and, like the Wedding Guest before them, they are hypnotized and isolated from society for the time it takes to read or listen to the poem and to have the message communicated to them.

In Hypnotic Poetry: A Study of Trance-Inducing Technique in Certain Poems and its Literary Significance (1930), Edward D. Snyder proposes the idea that some poems, The Ancient Mariner among them, exert a psychological power over the audience through their ability to induce a light trance-like state. The audience’s

understanding of these poems happens on an affective, rather than an intellectual, level. Calling this particular species of poem “spellweaving” (1), Snyder sets out to establish what characteristics of these types of poems produce the hypnotic state in the both the reading and listening audiences. In order to produce a clinical hypnotic state, the subject must be a willing participant and the subject’s attention must be fixed, most often through the use of rhythmic, monotonous sound such as a clock ticking or verbal suggestions in the form of “a simple phrase” (26) which is repeated in the same monotonous manner as the ticking of the clock. The “concealed artistry” (2) which makes these poems hypnotic involves “a technique which uses physical and psychical stimuli” (22), such as a hypnotist might use on a subject, to fix the attention and block other sensory input which might produce mental activity non-productive of the emotions and thoughts that the poet desires to elicit from the audience.⁴⁶ Relative to the production of a hypnotic state, the artistic features of “The Ancient Mariner” include: a “vagueness of imagery” (42), or ambiguousness of vision, as Todorov would characterize it; the production of a state of fatigue or eye-strain; the form of the poem itself; a repetitious rhythm of meter, sound, and phrasing; and the power of suggestion.

The ambiguousness of vision that Snyder refers to as being conducive to the production of a trance state can be found in the poet’s formation of characters that “have such soft, shadowy outlines that one may fill in the details to suit one’s fancy” (42). The Mariner’s descriptions of the dream-like state under which he hears the voices, and in fact, the entire prospect of the poem as hallucinatory produce a sense of ambiguousness that corresponds to Snyder’s insistence that the “imagery” (42) of

hypnotic poetry must be vague. Even the figure of Life-in-Death, though described with the seemingly specific details of red lips and golden hair, is ambiguous until meaning is assigned to her because she is an archetypal vision from the Mariner's psyche. One might even say that the overall idea of the plot, of a ship sailing into unknown waters into an unknown experience, allows for a figurative use of language that is vague in its ambiguousness. The unknown in which the sailors find themselves, both in the Antarctic and in terms of the spiritual realm they seem to have been blown into by the storm, is sublime; and, as for Burke, anything sublime is essentially vague and obscure, so for Otto the numinous is considered mysterious because of its obscurity. Therefore, the obscurity of the seascape, where no one has sailed before, provides a mysterious quality that carries the audience along through the numinous events.

The second feature that Snyder argues is important in production of a poem's hypnotic quality is fatigue or eye strain. Edmund Burke's study of the sublime claims that a sound or sight is sublime as it acts on the ear or eye to cause fatigue; and this physical fatigue then causes the mental fatigue that Snyder feels places the subject in the proper mental situation to be hypnotized. In the case of "The Ancient Mariner", Coleridge's use of ambiguous or archaic wording, the contemplation of which taxes the brain and eye, if one is reading, to the point of fatigue, help to produce a state in which hypnosis can take place. Snyder maintains that the use of words like "eftsones" (line 527) "gramercy" (line 156) and "swound" (line 60) and the overall archaic wording and spelling of such words as "cauld" (line 150) for cold and "ancyent" (line 1) for ancient and the use of specialized expressions such as the

seafaring terminology “broad as a weft” (line 83) to describe the look of the sunset, fatigue the mind because the mind tires when it tries to figure out and assimilate the meanings in the short span of time it takes to read the line of poetry.

In terms of the organization of the poem itself, S. L. Varnado claims that a “frame structure, with its arrangement of a-tale-within-a-tale, dissipates the sustained building of numinous feeling” (40); but, in the case of “The Ancient Mariner”, as narrator of the tale, the traditional structure of the ballad is a way of approaching the numinous events in order to gain more control in the artistic mode and, most importantly, a way of building the psychic tension that produces the hypnotic state. In organizing the poem with the Mariner’s telling his tale to the Wedding Guest, Coleridge could build the tension between the audience and the poem by having the audience learn gradually of the Mariner’s horrifying experiences with the numinous. By including in his tale the reactions of his earlier audiences, the Pilot, the boy, and the Hermit, the Mariner, as hypnotist, is able to plant suggestions in the mind of the Wedding Guest, and through him the external audience, as to what the reaction to the numinous should be and also to suggest what lesson the audience should learn to survive the numinous contact. In terms of the poem itself, in writing The Ancient Mariner, Coleridge chose to appropriate and manipulate the ballad form, a narrative style that in earlier times was primarily oral and often used for the more supernatural and folk subjects.⁴⁷ In the ballad’s meter and rhythm, rhyme, and refrains, Coleridge and, as surrogate artist, the Mariner found techniques that would create hypnotic influences on the audience. These techniques include the use of the iambic foot in

alternating tetrameter and trimeter lines, of end-stopped lines with a primary stanzaic rhyme scheme of abcb, and repeated sounds, phrases, and refrains within the text.

Coleridge believed the audience should willingly give up their attention to the world around them for the course of the poem and should be carried along by the poem, not simply out of “curiosity, or by a restless desire to arrive at the final solution; but by the pleasureable activity of mind excited by the attractions of the journey itself” (Biographia Literaria 196). To carry the audience pleasurably along on its journey, Coleridge chose the iambic foot of one unstressed and one stressed syllable, respectively, as the poem’s primary meter. Snyder finds the iambic meter to be most amenable to the stimulus of a hypnotic state since it most closely parallels the half-second time intervals of a metronome set to induce clinical hypnosis in a patient. Take, for example, the lines the Mariner speaks once he has the attention of the Wedding Guest. Having fixed the attention of his chosen audience with his touch and his eye, the Mariner seeks to hypnotize him with his voice and formally begins his tale with this iambic stanza:

The Ship was cheer’d, the Harbour clear’d --
Merrily did we drop
Below the Kirk, below the Hill,
Below the Lighthouse top.
(lines 25-28)

To establish even more strongly the hypnotic flow of the poem, Coleridge also manipulates the number of metric feet per line, employing tetrameter and trimeter in alternating lines. As the repetition of the alternating stressed and unstressed syllables creates an expectation in the listener, so does the repetition of the length of line in terms of metric feet; and Snyder finds the tetrameter line to “have the parallel almost

perfect to the stimulus of rhythm used by the hypnotist” (40). The “harmonious pattern of sound” (16) produced by the overall rhythm of iambic feet in alternating tetrameter/trimeter lines is like the human heartbeat and lulls the listener as hypnotically as the sea. However, in the use of a primarily iambic pattern of stresses, as well as in the alternating rhythm of the lines, the “balance or near balance between troughs and crests” also provides an “intensity of expression” (Shapiro and Beum 34) characteristic of deep feelings, so that the audience is not only lulled into a hypnotic state by the rhythm, but is also open to the suggestion of the deeper feelings that the words of the poem words elicit, underscored as they are by the same iambic rhythms that lulled the audience into quiescence in the first place.

Order and pattern fix the attention of the audience; and, heightened by the emphasis drawn to the repetition of sounds by the end-stopped lines, the rhyme scheme of the ballad, in which the second and forth lines of the quatrain rhyme, gives Coleridge’s poem another hypnotic rhythm, this time of sound. According to Edmund Burke, the sound of words can affect the soul of the listener without raising a vision in the listener’s mind. Poetry might even “lose a very considerable part of its energy” (170), if specific representations “were the necessary result of all description” (170). Although Coleridge does alter the rhyme pattern occasionally to suit a particular emphasis or to accommodate a larger stanza, in terms of the creation of a hypnotic effect, his primary use of the abcb rhyme scheme focuses attention, much as the iambic foot repeats a rhythm of stressed and unstressed sound, by providing the audience with an alternating rhythm of repeated sounds, the repetitions of which are near enough to each other to build an expectation in the ear and eye.

Part I of the poem shows how the Mariner produces a hypnotic state in the Wedding Guest; and in the telling of the tale, in order to fix the attention of the audience, Coleridge, and the Mariner, not only use the rhythm and rhyme techniques mentioned earlier, but also occasionally use internal rhyme and repetition of phrasing, as in the line “The Ship was cheer’d, the Harbour clear’d” (line 25), which lulls the audience by underscoring both the rhythm and rhyme and, therefore, increases the hypnotic hold on the audience.

As features of internal rhyme, the techniques of alliteration and assonance also focus the audience’s attention. The repetitive character of these two techniques, involving consonant and vowel sounds, respectively, causes the audience to pause on the words and to feel the mood the poet is trying to create. As the expectations of the audience are awakened and then gratified, this internal rhythm of sound pulls the audience unconsciously and pleasurably further under the control of the poem. If one looks at the two stanza example below, in which the Wedding Guest is being hypnotized by the Mariner, one sees the use of alliteration and assonance which work together to create a melodic effect on the audience.

He holds him with his skinny hand,
Quoth he, there was a Ship --
“Now get thee hence, thou grey-beard Loon!
“Or my Staff shall make thee skip.”

He holds him with his glittering eye –
The wedding-guest stood still
And listens like a three year’s child;
The Marinere hath his will.
(lines 13-20)

The repetition of long consonantal sounds, as in the use of the letters n and m and the letter combinations of ng and ds, and ns, which create the longer z sound at

the ends of words, give the stanzas a droning, humming quality akin to the quality of the hypnotist's voice as he induces a trance with the repetition of a particular phrase. The poet's repeated employment of such voiceless sounds as s, sh, th, and ch, along with liquid and sonorous sounds, as in "glittering" and in the repetition of the w and m sounds create a melodic, whispering, confessional atmosphere for the poem. Along with the sense of whispered confession, the repeated use of the h sound produces an almost breathless feelings of "fatigue ... [and] wonder" (Shapiro and Beum 11). The feeling of fatigue works directly on the audience as it places the listener or reader in a state conducive to the other hypnotic effects of the poem; the wonder, on the other hand, is part of the suggestiveness of the hypnotic poem itself, as part of the purpose of a spellbinding poem is to create a sense of wonder in the mind of the audience. Along with the alliteration, the assonance of the lines, in the repetition of the long and short vowels sounds adds to the melodic affect. The two stanzas previously quoted are representative of Coleridge's use of alliteration and assonance to create a melodic and hypnotic rhythm of sound that will fix the attention of future reading and listening audiences just as the Mariner's rendition of them in the tale fixes the Wedding Guest's attention and allows him to experience the numinousness of the Mariner and his story.

In Part II of the poem, the atmosphere of the confessional continues as the Mariner tells the Wedding Guest of the attitude of the crew over his killing of the albatross; but the alliterative rhythm changes as the ship is becalmed. In the sixth stanza, the explosive d sound emphasizes the abruptness with which the ship stalls on the ocean and the prevalent sibilant s sounds signify the breathlessness of the

doldrums where no air fills the sails and where even the sailors themselves might find it hard to breath and, therefore, to speak, as the Mariner tells the Wedding Guest “we did speak only to break/ The silence of the Sea!” (lines 105-06).

Throughout Parts II and III, the Mariner has told the Wedding Guest of the sublime horror of being becalmed on the ocean, of his numinous experience with Life-in-Death, and his isolation from the crew because he cannot die. By Part IV, the Wedding Guest is fearful, and, if Coleridge has done his job correctly, so is the external audience for the poem, though on a lesser level than the Wedding Guest. In terms of the Wedding Guest’s numinous experience with the Mariner, in this section of the poem, the repetitious sound of the Wedding Guest’s refrain “I fear thee” (lines 216, 220) not only articulates his fear of the Mariner, but also acts like the hypnotist’s repetition of words to suggest that emotion to the external audience. The incantory attributes of the refrain contribute to the poem’s power of suggestion, the last property of importance to a discussion of the hypnotic value of poetry.

“A Sadder and a Wiser Man”: The Power of Suggestion and the Moral of the Story

The hypnotic qualities of the poem act on the audience so that the listener’s memory of the piece is enhanced and the poem continues to work on the mind long after the initial experience of it is over. As the Wedding Guest’s refrain of fear works to suggest the same emotion to the audience, the power of suggestion is also important in making the meaning of the poem. The poet creates a mood in which the audience, once hypnotized, accepts without hesitation not only the most fantastic events and characters of the narrative, but also the moral of the tale; and the power of

suggestion in the poem induces some action or thought on the part of the audience, some recognition of the message.

Passing on the message of unity from his numinous encounter, the Mariner tells the Wedding Guest how his “soul hath been/Alone on a wide wide sea:/So lonely ‘twas, that God himself/Scarce seemed there to be” (lines 630-33). In the extreme isolation suffered by the Ancient Mariner, he has been isolated from the divine and now realizes that “sweeter than the marriage feast” (line 634) is the experience of community in God, walking to the church to pray with a company of fellow human beings, “Old men, and babes, and loving friends/And Youths, and Maidens gay” (lines 641-42). The Mariner would like to be part of the community of man again, but he exists in a state of suspended transcendence, caught at the edge of the mortal and spiritual worlds, an insider and outsider at once because of his sin against the cosmic community.

At best, by his own example and through the hypnotic nature of his tale, the Mariner can suggest this to others, and perhaps save them before it is too late. In the most obvious moral of the tale, he tells the Wedding Guest:

He prayeth best, who loveth best,
All things both great and small:
For the dear God, who loveth us,
He made and loveth all.
(lines 647-50)

Only through love of all his fellow creatures can he take part in the communitas of the cosmos, as well as the smaller community of man, and not be left lost and wandering in a nightmare land as the Ancient Mariner is. However, the moral is not as simplistic

as the stanza implies. For the external audience, the moral of the story includes the questions asked by the Wedding Guest and the Hermit.

In the poem, the Wedding Guest, as the Mariner was before him, and as audiences have been after him, is drawn away from the temporal and spatial reality of everyday life and into an alternative reality where an encounter with the numinous will reveal not only the existence of the divine, but also humanity's place in the larger cosmic pattern of life represented by both the visible and invisible natures of the universe. However, on the level of what Gowan refers to as personality or human interactions with other people, the Wedding Guest, like the Hermit before him, must interact with the Mariner in order to learn his lesson. As the Hermit had done, the Wedding Guest asks the right question of the Mariner -- what has made him the way he is. The importance of their respective questions to themselves, and to future audiences, as it should have been to the Mariner before he shot the albatross, is What manner of man are you? The Mariner's answer is to tell a tale of the kind of man who is caught up in the mundane, empirical realities of life and not aware of the invisible nature of the universe and his ultimate connection to it. Not governed by the fact that everything in the universe is connected, the Mariner sinned against nature and, therefore, against God without even thinking; and the audience understands that he pays the ultimate price for his sin.

The Mariner's answer to these questions changes the internal audience of his tale. The Wedding Guest leaves bridegroom's door "like one that hath been stunn'd./And is of sense forlorn" (lines 655-56). This sense that the Wedding Guest has lost is the same sense of the rational world that the Mariner had lost earlier in his

experience of the numinous on his journey. Now having had his numinous experience in the form of the Mariner and his strange tale, the Wedding Guest will wake the next day “a sadder and a wiser man” (line 657)⁴⁸, aware that the empirical reality in which he lives is illusory, and that the only true reality is that of the cosmic community.⁴⁹ Monsignor Luigi Giussani calls this sense of sadness the “fundamental characteristic of a life lived with awareness” (51) of humanity’s destiny. Having been given a vision of the consequences of his mundane existence, the Wedding Guest must attempt to balance his mortal reality with the spiritual by turning toward more sober, serious pursuits.⁵⁰ The same is true of the external audience. If they have made the connection between the events and characters of the tale and the moral quatrain, they have, in their turn, asked the same questions as the Hermit and Wedding Guest; but they have asked these questions of themselves, since they have discovered in their hypnotic experience of the poem that they are both the Wedding Guest and the Mariner, subject and numinous object, audience and artist.

The Metaphoric Vampire as Numinous Experience

In “The Ancient Mariner”, the numinous figure of the vampire not only demonstrates humanity’s essential spiritual alienation, but also serves as a vehicle for the eventual reunion of human and divine. As the artist’s primitive numinous experience produces representations of the numinous, these figures are interpreted artistically as part of his own psyche. Through his ritual approach to their numinous power, the archetypes are then translated on a more controlled, creative level into meaning and understanding for the subject and for the future audience; and through the creative work produced in this process, the artist gains energy from the audience’s

reaction and is restored or revitalized. The Mariner's separation from God becomes obvious as he encounters the numinous on the primitive level of contact. Having been isolated from empirical reality by the sublimeness of the seascape through which the ship sails, the Mariner suffers such a loss of self that he kills the one living thing that connects him not only with the ordinary world of the senses, but also with God. Isolated from the empirical realities of space and time and from relationships with other humans, and alienated from the spiritual world because of his crime against the cosmos, the Mariner only realizes his state of alienation through his numinous encounter with the vampire. As a psychic vampire, the numinous figure Life-in-Death drains the Mariner's energy without drawing a drop of real blood; but the Mariner himself has drawn blood literally on two occasions before he even meets the nightmare lady. In taking the albatross's blood and his own, he has become both vampire and victim, before Life-in-Death could ever effect the change in him. Because of these acts of blood-letting, he is thrust into a numinous experience in which his loss of energy to the vampire figure Life-in-Death will trap him in a state of suspended transcendence, isolated from both the physical world and the spiritual realm.

However, his eventual transformation into the numinous vampire through the taking of his own blood allows him to become part of the cosmos. The reestablishment of his relationship to the divine, which begins on the artistic level with his recognition of the meaning of the vampire archetype, depends upon his creative use of that figure to communicate the cosmic message to the world. His telling of the tale is a way to gain energy, and, in gaining it, to regain control of his

own ego and to establish contact with the divine on a higher creative level of understanding. As he does this, he not only reactualizes himself as human, but also pushes back for a moment the sense of meaninglessness in his life by serving as a communicator of the divine message of unity.

The energy transfer between artist and audience through the artifact does more than just give the Mariner energy, however. The energy loss keeps the audience in a state of weakened ego where they can encounter the vampire figures of both the female Life-in-Death and the Mariner on the artistic level of numinous contact. One hopes that in perceiving both figures as representations of their own alienated state, the audience can approach creatively the truth of their existence; and although neither the Pilot nor the Pilot's boy is able to rise above the primitive numinous experience of their meeting with the Mariner in order to bring that knowledge to the conscious level so that they might change their lives, the Wedding Guest and the Hermit do rise to a higher understanding of their encounters. Both experience the primitive level of the numinous in the vampire figure of Life-in-Death and in the form of the Mariner as he stands before them telling his tale. At this level, as audiences, both lose energy to the Mariner's artist; but both gain energy in the form of truth from the encounter, also. As vampires, both the figure of the Mariner and that of Life-in-Death represent the condition of living death and remind the Hermit and the Wedding Guest that life lived completely in the contemplative world or in the illusory world of the senses is only a living death. The Mariner's penance for the crime of earlier alienation will help to repair the rift between the cosmos and the community of man, as for the audience his tale underscores the sense of alienation and meaninglessness in all people who have

not managed to balance the personal and the cosmic and allows them to recognize their need and reactualize their connection to the divine.

In terms of the reunion of human and divine, though, the energy exchange of which Twitchell speaks is more complicated than simply the relationship of artist and audience. That the artist needs replenishing should tell the reader that there are other vampires somewhere in the mix. Not only is the artist a vampire, but the artistic product and the audience take on vampire characteristics, as well. To discuss imagination in Coleridge, Sharon Jones Schellinger appropriates Nietzsche's representation of the veiled dancer as the truth that is hidden, but that the artist continually seeks despite the veils that fall away in the dance. (Preface xi) This representation works just as well for the audience, too, since every artist is at first an audience of the mystery of the numinous. Like the vampire, the artist cannot relate the feelings of a primitive numinous experience directly because by nature it is inexpressible, but also because the audience would be overwhelmed by it, as the fates of the Pilot and the Pilot's boy show so well. In order to achieve creative understanding of his work, the artist first clothes the mysteries he has seen in his imagination in metaphysical veils like dreams, archetypes, and rituals, sending his creation out to dance and reveal the mystery slowly. In the process of revelation, the psychic energy builds, and, as parts of the truth are revealed, the audience is first mesmerized and then enervated by the experience, "caught up and embraced by the enchantment" (Preface x) of the mystery before them.

However, the tale itself can also drain the audience in its own way as the audience recreates the numinous encounter in their own psyches through the hypnotic

qualities of the work. In reading or listening to the poem, the external audience reactualizes the numinous and the vampire in themselves as well, by recreating the text and the Mariner in their minds. In this way, the vampire is born again in the audience, as both text and artist; but this vampire, like the Mariner, who has shown a consciousness of his fault in the telling of the tale, has a potential for good in reminding the audience that reality lies in the connection with all things. The audience receives something in return for their loss of energy. Through the artistic numinous and the same hypnotic techniques which the artist has used to give life to his creative work, the external audience, like the Wedding Guest, moves to the creative level of numinous contact, becoming a numen/vampire through identification with Life-in-Death and the Mariner, gaining energy from an understanding of the meaning of the tale and poem, and through that understanding also gaining insight into the human need to maintain a relationship with the divine. Through identification with the artist and the text, as well as with the internal audience represented by the Wedding Guest, the external audience receives knowledge, truth, understanding of the world and their role within it, and a renewed energy based on their reunion with the divine.

NOTES

¹ The text used in this chapter's discussion is the original 1798 version as published in Martin Gardner's The Annotated Ancient Mariner (New York: Bramhall House, 1965). However, citations will be made by line rather than page. Also, to alleviate the confusion that varied spellings might cause, when referring to the character and the poem's title, I have chosen to use the original spelling of the poem only in the title of this chapter and when referring to a specific quote within the text. Otherwise, I will refer to the name of the character and the poem in its more modern spelling.

² Shelley's Frankenstein shows several clear influences from Coleridge's "The Ancient Mariner." Not only does the frame of the story allow Victor to tell his story of sin and retribution to the sailor Walton, but also Shelley makes it clear in chapter one of volume three that Victor views the creature and the fear and guilt he engenders as a weight equal to the Mariner's albatross. Then, in chapter five of the same volume, Victor paraphrases the Mariner again in speaking of what he has suffered and what he has yet to suffer because of his sin; and in chapter seven, he echoes the Mariner's speech on the gentleness of sleep. However, the most obvious of references which Shelley makes is early in the novel, in chapter four of volume one, just after Victor has given life to and then repudiated his creation. As he roams the streets of Ingolstadt afraid he will meet the creature around each corner he turns, he is overcome by alternating fits of weakness and frenzy; and he quotes the passage from "The Ancient Mariner" in which the Mariner walks "in fear and dread" because he has seen the fiend that follows him and now has knowledge of the danger he faces.

³ This lecture is reprinted in Coleridge's Miscellaneous Criticism (ed. Thomas Middleton Raysor. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936). The notes on this lecture were taken by Coleridge's friend, Joseph Henry Green.

⁴ See Harold Bloom's "Internalization of Quest-Romance" (Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism. Harold Bloom, ed. New York: W. W. Norton, 1970) for a discussion of how the Romantic writers and poets internalized the quest or journey plot of earlier romances.

⁵ In Confessions of an English Opium-Eater, Thomas De Quincey, a contemporary of Coleridge's and fellow opium user, describes how the sense of space and time "were both powerfully affected" (234) in his opium dreams. In the description of his dreams, De Quincey tells how buildings and landscapes took on Piranesian impressions of the vastness and magnitude of space such as "the bodily eye is not fitted to receive" (234). Time also appeared to expand so that he "seemed to have lived for seventy or a hundred years in one night" (234) and even at times beyond the limits of human duration. Both Coleridge and De Quincey found the series of fantastic drawings of prisons entitled "Carceri d'Invenzione" by Italian engraver and architect Giovanni Batista Piranesi (1720-1778) to be accurate representations of the sensations of expanded space and time felt under the influence of opium.

⁶ Harry Stack Sullivan originally coined the terms prototaxic, parataxic, and syntaxic to identify these modes of numinous contact in The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry, edited by Helen Swick Perry and Mary Ladd Gawel. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953).

⁷ In The Milk of Paradise: The Effect of Opium Visions on the Works of De Quincey, Crabbe, Francis Thompson, and Coleridge, M. H. Abrams establishes Coleridge's opium use before and during the production of "The Ancient Mariner." Drawing on letters, journal entries, reminiscences of acquaintances, and the existence of parallels between the attributes in Coleridge's poems and those of other poets who were definitely influenced by opium, Abrams traces Coleridge's use of the drug as far back as 1791. According to his research, it appears that the poet used opium consistently until 1796 and that there were "definite proofs of addiction" (28) in March, November, and December of that year. Abrams feels that the "sudden metamorphosis of technique ... and Coleridge's use of the supernatural theme" (36) point to the influence of the drug on Coleridge at this time in his career. Abrams also mentions the distinct possibility that Coleridge was given opium in the form of laudanum as a child because he was by all reports a sickly child, as well as a sickly adult. Later studies which contain discussions of Coleridge's opium use include Rosemary Ashton's The Life of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Critical Biography (Oxford, Eng.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), Molly Lefebure's Samuel Taylor Coleridge: A Bondage of Opium (New York: Stein and Day, 1974), Alethea Hayter's Opium and the Romantic Imagination (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), Elisabeth Schneider's Coleridge, Opium and Kubla Khan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), and R. C. Bald's "Coleridge and The Ancient Mariner: Addenda to The Road to Xanadu" (Nineteenth-Century Studies.

Edited by Herbert Davis, William C. DeVane, and R. C. Bald. New York: Greenwood Press, 1968; Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1940).

⁸ Gowan prefers the term collective preconscious to Jung's collective unconscious because his research shows that "this aspect of the psyche can sometimes be available to the conscious mind" (250).

⁹ Twitchell, a professor of English at the University of Florida, specializes in romantic literature and the connection between popular culture and adolescent violence. These interests have led him to write not only The Living Dead, but also Dreadful Pleasures: An Anatomy of Modern Horror (1985), in which he maintains that the horror film is a tool of sexual socialization for the adolescent audience.

¹⁰ Twitchell calls this note, which details the defects of Coleridge's poem, "rather patronizing" (158) and draws attention to the fact that he is not the first critic to feel this way about Wordsworth's note. His research shows that critics such as Lowes, Empson, and Pirie have all found the note indicative of Wordsworth's probable disapproval of the poem.

¹¹ Lowes has established that Coleridge had read volume two of Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester and assumes that Coleridge would also have read the third volume, containing an article by John Ferriar on "On Popular Illusions and Particularly of Medical Demonology"¹¹ in which he summarizes the work of several earlier authors on the nature of the occult, including vampirism. Although Coleridge's reading of volume three is only speculation, Twitchell reiterates Lowes' opinion that Coleridge hardly could have passed up this text in his reading on the supernatural. Both Lowes and Twitchell also note that Coleridge's habit of verifying his sources probably would have led him to follow up on this article by reading the Voltaire and Calmet sources summarized by Ferriar in the original.

¹² Although in the first edition of Coleridge's poem the female figure is not named, for purposes of clarity, this figure will be referred to as Life-in-Death within the dissertation.

¹³ In Katherine Bruner Tave's The Demon and the Poet: An Interpretation of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" According to Coleridge's Demonological Sources (1983), she carries Lowes' Road to Xanadu study a step further. Feeling that his work showed only "how source material was transformed into poetic images" (1) and that many times he missed the implications of Coleridge's reading on the subject of the supernatural, she believes an interpretation according to these demonological sources can explain "many of the poems more obscure, single incidents and ... lead to a comprehensive interpretation of the work as a whole" (2). Tave maintains that to understand the poem, "one must consider the realm of the supernatural together with the realm of the spiritual" (48). In her interpretation, therefore, the spiritual realm represents the good and the supernatural realm, the evil; and both the Ancient Mariner and the Wedding Guest suffer crises of faith through the struggle between these forces of good and evil. For her, the Mariner's journey is away from "established spiritual guidance" (50) and, later, possessed by evil demons for his role in the albatross's death, he causes despair and a loss of faith for the Wedding Guest. Tave calls attention to Penn Warren's interpretation of this stanza as indicative of the allegorical qualities of the poem and its sacramental vision – the church being a representation of the spiritual community of man; the hill, an emblem, like Calvary, of the Christian's salvation in Christ; and the lighthouse, a figure of salvation and safety for Christians at the end of life. In his essay "A Poem of Pure Imagination: An Experiment in Reading," Robert Penn Warren discusses crime, punishment, and reconciliation as one of the two main themes of the poem. For the complete discussion, see the essay in Selected Essays of Robert Penn Warren (New York: Random House, 1958, 1966). Reprinted in condensed form in Twentieth Century Interpretations of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (Edited by James D. Boulger. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969). Also, in "The Nightmare World of 'The Ancient Mariner'", Edward E. Bostetter argues that the end of the poem does not reveal Penn Warren's interpretation of a sacramental vision of the world, but instead provides the reader with the figure of an "eternally alienated Mariner alienating in his turn the Wedding Guest" (70).

¹⁴ In The Annotated Ancient Mariner, Martin Gardner footnotes swoound with the explanation that a person recovering their consciousness after a swoon or fainting fit "apparently experiences a sudden jarring onrush of sounds" (46). In Road to Xanadu, Lowes discusses the terrifying sounds recorded by early sailors in the ice-bound regions of the globe, mentioning one particular account of sailors reporting how they felt "'a great swoounding and dazeling in our [their] heads'" (135) after subjection to the cold and the sounds of the ice flows constantly cracking and grating against each other.

¹⁵ Burke attributes the power of sound to the fact that the parts of the ear struck by sound vibrate under its influence and produce a tension in accordance with the "nature and species of the stroke" (140). If the sound is loud, it strikes strongly upon the ear, creating a great degree of tension. If this loud sound is repeated often enough, "the repetition causes the expectation of another stroke ... and that expectation itself causes a tension" (140). As this tension builds each time the sound is repeated, the body's reactive tension produces in the mind a sublime situation which verges on physical pain.

¹⁶ In "The Mariner's Nightmare," a chapter in Paul Magnuson's *Coleridge's Nightmare Poetry*, Magnuson relates Coleridge's "musing on the characteristics of dreams" (59) in 1805 to the "distempered dreams" (59), such as the Mariner has. Coleridge remarked in his journals how in this type of dream "all the realities about me lose their natural healing powers" (Coburn *Notebooks*, 2557) Magnuson states that "the stabilizing realities" represented by normal sensation are what Coleridge referred to as "the Sanctifiers, the Strengtheners" (Coburn *Notebooks*, 2543) of the will, the things that kept man grounded in reality. For Magnuson, the albatross is a "sanctifier" (59) because it represents that "one recognizable reality in the unfamiliar world" (59).

¹⁷ In his *Annotated Ancient Mariner*, Gardner goes so far as to say that the Mariner commits the "ultimate ... crime of murder" (51) and calls it a "premeditated, wanton act of cruelty" (51) perpetrated on a friendly and harmless creature. According to A. M. Buchan, in "The Sad Wisdom of the Mariner," the Mariner's act of killing the albatross imperils both "sanity ... and the moral law" (96) because it is an "irretrievable evil" (96). However, though the act of murder itself cannot be reversed, Otto finds that the sacred is not irretrievable; and though the Mariner has sinned, his ritualistic telling of the tales reminds the listener of the sacred quality of life.

¹⁸ According to D. W. Harding's essay "The Theme of 'The Ancient Mariner,'" the Mariner experiences feelings of "depression and the sense of isolation and worthlessness" (53) that are almost pathological; and, as a result, he must "find a crime which, in its symbolic implications, is sufficient to merit even his suffering" (54).

¹⁹ Coburn connects entry 1383 – "Inopem me copia fecit" – in Coleridge's *Notebooks* to this passage of "The Ancient Mariner" and links it to the story of Narcissus and Echo in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Book III. In this tale, Narcissus discovers that what he desires most, himself, is what he cannot have. If one looks at the other tales of Book III, one can see that Coleridge may have gotten inspiration for his becalming of the Mariner's ship from the tale following that of Narcissus. In the tale of Bacchus and the pirates, the pirates unknowingly commit a crime against the gods by taking Bacchus hostage, and Bacchus becalms the ship and turns the sailors all into creatures of the sea as punishment. The one sailor who attempts to stop the crime is allowed to live and sail the ship to port. Coleridge's library contained the 1801 edition of the Garth/Dryden translation of *Metamorphoses*. See Ralph J. Coffman's *Coleridge's Library: A Bibliography of Books Owned or Read by Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1987. 156).

²⁰ According to Thomas De Quincey, Coleridge most likely had the germ of an idea sometime earlier than the composition of "The Ancient Mariner" for "a poem on delirium, confounding its own dream-scenery with eternal things, and connected with the imagery of high latitudes" (*Collected Writings* 145). It also has been well documented that "The Ancient Mariner" originated in the dream of Coleridge's friend John Cruikshank's, a dream of a "skeleton ship with figures on it" (Lowes 251). That there were other archetypal patterns that might have influenced Coleridge in the making of this poem. Lowes also establishes, including in his discussion the figures of Jonah, Cain, Falkenburg, and the Wandering Jew.

²¹ In the aforementioned article "On Popular Illusions," Ferriar's summary of *De Spectris* (1570) by Lavater, a Zurich theologian, finds that "solitude and silence will always produce apparitions" (75). Ferriar sites a particular example from *De Spectris* of how "unwary sailors" (76) were "deceived by spectres in Norwegian seas" (76).

²² Tave maintains that "the precarious balance between the forces of the 'normal' universe and those of the demonological realm" (81) is shattered at this point in the Mariner's experience, and that the Mariner is "plunged deeper and deeper into a cosmos where the supernatural holds sway and the natural is helpless" (81). In her interpretation, the ship, as the albatross before it, is simply a glamour or magical spell produced by the demons that inhabit the region in order to mete out punishment to the Mariner.

²³ Under normal circumstances, the brain's "scanning of sensory input inhibits hallucinatory activity" (Gowan 119). However, when, under circumstances of extreme isolation and sensory deprivation, the amount of sensory input is diminished greatly, "the organizing effect upon the screening and scanning mechanism then decreases" (119) and allows deeper memories stored in the brain to surface.

²⁴ Gardner's opinion is that "they drew in their breath as if they were drinking water" (62), but it may just as well be the blood of the Mariner they were drinking.

²⁵ In *Romantic Horizons: Aspects of the Sublime in English Poetry and Painting, 1770-1850* (1983), Twitchell again discusses "The Ancient Mariner", this time in terms of the sublime, making no reference to vampires whatsoever. Twitchell sees the Mariner's experience of Burnet's invisible natures mentioned in the poem's epigraph as a sublime encounter, taking place on the horizon, between the sky and sea. For Twitchell, the epigraph expresses the purpose of the sublime, which is to enlighten and change humanity's view of itself and the universe. As "the visual icon of romantic liminality" (90), the sea "extends beyond the limits of the senses, ...ineffable, ...[and] boundless" (90); and the only spatial reference for the Mariner is the horizon, which Twitchell sees as the threshold dividing sea from sky, the earthly world from the world beyond. Since the "ordering of the cosmos is analogous to the ordering of the psyche" (93), the murder of the albatross "disrupts the harmony at the vortex between levels of consciousness" (91). For Twitchell, to experience "the world at the horizon" (100), with its hosts of angelic and ethereal spirits, is to experience the sublime.

²⁶ In *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry: Psychological Studies of Imagination*, Maud Bodkin discusses "The Ancient Mariner" as an example of the rebirth archetype and includes a discussion of several archetypal features of the poem. Bodkin associates the rebirth theme with the archetypal night sea journey proposed in Jungian psychology. This archetypal pattern involves juxtaposed impressions of ascent and descent, movement and transfixion, as the hero descends into his own psychological hell and eventually rises up out of it a changed person. The Mariner's yearning after the moon she interprets as the beginning of his rebirth, seeing in the moon's beauty "the movement toward deliverance" (49) because once he has contemplated the moon, the Mariner blesses the water snakes and can then pray. The narration of the story itself she sees as "a psychical sequence of emotional energy-tension and release" (Bodkin 48). Based on a belief that "the physical wind, and the breath in man's nostrils, and the power of the Divine Spirit, were aspects hardly differentiated" (35), Bodkin sees the Mariner's "ship driving before the wind" (35) during good weather as expressive of "happy surrender to the creative spirit" (35). However, for Bodkin, after the Mariner has shot the albatross, representations of the blood red sun and sea and the stagnation of the becalmed sea with its host of slimy inhabitants fill the tale. In these images Bodkin finds feelings of terror and "shrinking disgust" (44) and a sensation of drained energy. These feelings signify a "downward movement ... toward quiescence or toward disintegration and death" (69); and at this point in her interpretation, Bodkin calls on Freud's principle of the "death instinct" (69) to explain the poem. The Mariner's downward spiral toward death continues as the spectre ship arrives with its ghastly crew of two and through the deaths of the Mariner's crewmates.

Concerning the figure of the Mariner, Bodkin refers to Lowes' study in which she says he finds that "demons, spectre-barks, and eternal wanderers alike" (56) belong to man's racial memories. She likens the crime of the Mariner to those of Cain and the Wandering Jew and calls it "a crime against the sanctity of a guest" (57). Bodkin finds the "refusal, or violation, of fellowship" (58), which this crime signifies, to be a refusal of "the Kingdom of Heaven" (58), the same crime which "the archetypal figure that, behind and beneath all these, haunts the imagination" (58).

²⁷ If one looks at Coleridge's "Pains of Sleep" (1803), one sees that he is suffering through a primitive phase of the numinous in his opium dreams, as he records a "fiendish dream" of "deeds to be hid which were not hid," and how with "powerless will/Still baffled, and yet burning still" he felt "desire with loathing strangely mixed" (Coleridge *Complete Works*, Vol. 1:389-90). As a numinous experience, triggered by the use of opium, Coleridge's frightening dream calls to mind Otto's discussion of the numinous, in which feelings of powerlessness and dread in the face of the mysterium tremendum are combined with an element of fascination, so that the numinous, though it frightens, draws man closer to the rapture at its center. In Abrams' opinion, the opium dreams led Coleridge to his line of study, and the detailed imagery gleaned from this research was "fused in the heat of his imagination" (39) to be consciously utilized later in the poem of his mariner. In this regard, Abrams sees the artist as alchemist, his mind the transforming agent through which the raw materials of his

opium reveries and his research were "metamorphosed in the crucible of dreams" (40) to form an archetypal tale not only of individual crime and punishment, but also of universal sin and salvation.

²⁸ In The Philosophy of Literary Form (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), Kenneth Burke interprets this passage as ambiguous, because the watersnakes themselves are ambiguous. Not taking the blessing at face value, he feels that the act of blessing is somehow connected to a kind of gap between one's desires and one's fate.

²⁹ In this sleep, Bodkin sees an almost reincarnative quality in that the Mariner "wakes renewed, as though by death" (69). In the storm that brings rain to the Mariner, she sees a Jungian archetype of "pent-up energy" (48) released by prayer. This storm, Bodkin feels, signifies the Mariner's unconscious "creative function" (73) and leads not only the Mariner, but the wider audience as well, to the understanding of the meaning behind the experience: "that the beauty of life is revealed amid the slime, that the glory of life is renewed after stagnation, that through the power of speech the values achieved by life are made immortal" (81).

³⁰ In his early journals (Coburn Notebooks, 44), Coleridge writes of a slave who dreams of "imaginary freedom" and who, realizing he is sleeping and may wake from this dream soon, "contrives to slip into a deep pool where he can neither touch the bottom nor swim to the surface." Coburn notes that this transcription of Coleridge's is "of interest as an indication of his awareness thus early of the wish-fulfillment element in dreams" formulated by Freud a century later. For a further discussion of wish-fulfillment in dreams, see Sigmund Freud's The Interpretation of Dreams (New York: Avon, 1965), originally published as Die Traumdeutung (Leipzig and Vienna, 1900), and first translated into English by A. A. Brill (London: George Allen and Co.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1913).

³¹ Both the mystic and the drug user experience a singular sensation of weightlessness during their numinous experiences, a sense of floating on air, in which the subject is focused on the feelings of the upper areas of the body, most particularly, those of the head; and in "Ode to the Departing Year," written in late December, 1796, which Abrams' sites as proof that the poet was using opium before the composition of "The Ancient Mariner", Coleridge writes:

My ears throb hot; my eye-balls start,
My brain with horrid tumult swims;
Wild is the tempest of my heart;
And my thick and struggling breath
Imitates the toil of death!

(Coleridge Complete Works, Vol. 1:160)

In this passage, one can see evidence of Coleridge's preoccupation with the lightness of the body and with the sensations of the upper body. Coleridge's dedication to the poem, written to Thomas Poole, speaks of his illness just before the composition of the poem and excuses the poem as having been written "amidst inconvenience and distraction, in sickness and in sorrow" (Coleridge Complete Works, vol. 2:1113). Here Coleridge is quoting Dr. Johnson's Preface to Dictionary of the English Language (1806). Although this poem also was written under the duress of illness, Coleridge was most likely using opium at the time, since it was his habit to use the drug for relief in times of illness; and, since the delirium of severe illness evokes similar numinous affects on the brain as drug use, at the time this poem was written Coleridge may have been suffering a numinous encounter in double doses, from the effects of pain and illness and from the drug used to alleviate the pain.

³² In the involuntary state of a possession trance, the person affected is believed to be controlled by some supernatural means and, in his altered state of consciousness, may exhibit two phases of possession, one characterized by violent physical movement and the other by a catatonic condition which resembles a coma. The first outward sign of a possession trance is a convulsive movement of some part of the body or a sudden articulation of sound such as a hiss or groan, which signify the inward loss of control in the subject.

³³ Tave also establishes the possession of the dead bodies as possible, but she qualifies this possession. According to her interpretation, the possessed live body would retain all its normal physical abilities but must perform any action required by the possessing entity. The possessed dead body, however, would not retain any of the physical capabilities it had in life and, therefore, would only be able to perform the task required by the possessing spirit. For this reason, she writes, the crew's bodies do not speak or move their eyes and only work at their accustomed tasks.

³⁴ Anne Williams, author of *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*,³⁴ interprets this passage as the “appearance of the superego, unconscious parental voice of ‘right’ and ‘wrong’” (195).

³⁵ In his essay “The Ancient Mariner,” Humphrey House sees the Mariner’s plight as a “crisis of extreme isolation, with the frustrated desire for death” which eventually leads to “recovery and redemption” (61). On the other hand, in his article, “The Mariner and the Albatross,” George Whalley interprets the isolation of the Mariner as a “state of sin” (77) which both wanderers, Coleridge and the Mariner, suffered. In addition, the second volume of *Manchester Memoirs*, read by Coleridge, contains an article by Reverend William Turner, “An Essay on Crimes and Punishments,” that delineates the nature of punishments which fit the crimes perpetrated. Turner states that as the Deity is “of a spiritual or mental nature” (300) so the punishments inflicted for crimes against God also may be of a mental nature and quite possibly will continue “as long as their subject, the mind” (300). The punishment imposed by society might be as harsh as “perpetual imprisonment, or exile, and death” (300); however, Turner finds there are “those divines ... who contend, that every sin, being an offence against an infinite being, is deserving of an infinite and eternal punishment” (309). The Mariner’s sin is a spiritual one against nature and the cosmic unity of all things in the universe, so he suffers the “infinite and eternal punishment” (309) of living death and isolation from society. Burke calls “the total and perpetual exclusion from all society ... as great a positive pain as can almost be conceived” (43) and finds that the idea of death can hardly be more terrible; and indeed, the Ancient Mariner would clearly prefer death.

³⁶ Twitchell connects the Mariner’s reference to “living life” with vampirism by asking “Is there some other kind?” (147), implying that the other kind of life would be the living death of the vampire.

³⁷ His contemporaries might have read this poem in the original or in one of its many revisions in *Lyrical Ballads* (1798 and 1800), *Sibylline Leaves* (1817), or Coleridge’s *Poetical Works* (1834).

³⁸ Tave characterizes the Hermit as balanced socially and religiously, because, while he sometimes seeks the company of mariners, he also lives “in accord with the natural world” (123) and the spiritual one. In addition, she feels he is “free ... from the horrible internal struggle which the Mariner faces as penance – the struggle with evil for his identity and his soul” (123). Twitchell, however, interprets this passage differently. He sees the Hermit as “slightly tainted” because the “rotted old oak stump” (149) that he uses as a cushion is more suited to an “altar for a Druid” (149) than a “man of God” (149). The Hermit, he says, is too eager to reach the ship, and when he does instead of shrieking the Mariner, he makes the sign of the cross, which Twitchell reminds the reader is “anathema to a vampire” (149). In this regard, I tend to accept Twitchell’s interpretation over Tave’s, because if the Hermit is without sin, so to speak, why must he be the first one who needs to hear the tale?

³⁹ Murder is considered a canonical sin and therefore requires a penance of equal weight like excommunication or death.

⁴⁰ In *A Drug-taker’s Notes*, R. H. Ward records that during the fourth drug experiment he had visions of himself as man hanged for murder. In identifying with the murderer, he perceived that he had “become the worst” (143) of men; and in so identifying himself, he realized that there was “no difference between him and any man who commits murder” (143). He saw this realization as a positive interpretation of the vision because he was then no longer the murderer but the scapegoat, the sacrifice for atonement, carrying the guilt and accepting the punishment on behalf of other men. In some ways this is the fate of the Ancient Mariner. Though the crew does at first blame him, they soon change their minds and decide he was right to kill the bird, making them accomplices to his crime. For this they die, but as the murderer of the albatross, the Mariner carries the guilt for that crime and suffers the punishment for it. However, he also may carry the crew’s guilt and suffer a degree of their punishment in his eternal penance, just as he later takes on the Hermit’s and the Wedding Guest’s guilt through the re-telling of his story.

⁴¹ In “On Popular Illusions and Particularly of Medical Demonology” (1790), a text in the third volume of the *Manchester Memoirs* that Lowes feels Coleridge must have been aware of in light of his readings from volume two, the author John Ferriar discusses the supernatural powers of the eye, summarizing the treatise *De Fascinatione* by Sennertus, an early German philosopher and physician, who writes of the three ways witches were believed to be able to injure people, “*per visum, vocem, et contactum*,” (48) by sight, voice and touch.

⁴² The theories of Franz Anton Mesmer are of interest in relation to the Mariner’s ability to calm the Wedding Guest with his touch. His research into the existence of a power he called *animal magnetism*

during the last half of the eighteenth century caused him to argue that this power could be used to cure various illnesses that had never before been affected by medical procedures or medicines. His system of mesmerism involved a kind of laying on of the hands along with application of a magnetic force; however, his experiments showed that results also could be obtained at a distance by simply pointing and concentrating on a particular area of the body. He claimed that the power of this magnetic force could also be concentrated with the use of mirrors or sound. Mesmerism, as this power soon came to be called, is now referred to as hypnosis and is widely used in the management of various conditions. (See Mesmerism: The Discovery of Animal Magnetism. Translated by Joseph Bouleaur. Edmonds, Washington: Holmes Publishing Group, 1998.)

⁴³ In "The Power of the Eye in Coleridge" Professor Lane Cooper discusses the "power of hypnotic fascination" (78) in the Ancient Mariner's eye in relation to Coleridge himself. In a letter to her friend Mary Hutchinson in June, 1797, Dorothy Wordsworth remarked on the ocular power of Coleridge's eyes, which she wrote showed "every emotion of his animated mind" (de Selincourt 169); and borrowing an expression from Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream (V, i), she noted that his gaze had "more of 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling'" (169) than she had ever seen in anyone else's. Cooper also calls into evidence "The Color of Coleridge's Eyes," an essay by John Louis Haney, in which Haney draws together the comments of acquaintances of Coleridge, describing his eyes variously as "keenly penetrating" (Haney 424), "luminous" (426), and "actually glittering" (425). In addition, John Sterling, a student of Coleridge's, recorded how, in his first interview with the poet, Coleridge's eye had a "glare in it, a light half earthly, half morbid" (Armour and Howes 345); this was "the glittering eye of the Ancient Mariner" (345).

If there was potency in Coleridge's gaze, his voice must have held some fascinating power, also. Dorothy remarked in the same letter that if "you hear him speak for five minutes" (de Selincourt 169), you forget his "plain" (169) appearance. Moreover, Coleridge seems to have been a sublime talker. Thomas Carlyle characterized the audience of Coleridge (himself included) as having been "swamped near to drowning in this tide of ingenious vocables, spreading out boundless as if to submerge the world" (54-55); but he admitted his willingness to listen on despite the near drowning. Hearing Coleridge preach in January, 1798, William Hazlitt also described the poet in sublime terms, how his voice

'rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumes,' and when he came to the two last words, which he pronounced loud, deep, and distinct, it seemed to me, ... as if the sounds had echoed from the bottom of the human heart, and as if that prayer might have floated in solemn silence through the universe.

(Armour and Howes 243)

This is the voice that captured the hearts of the faithful as a preacher; and this is the voice that wove the spell of the Ancient Mariner on listening audiences.

In regards to the poem itself, Charles Lamb, in a letter to Wordsworth in January, 1801, on the publication of the new edition of Lyrical Ballads, noted in defense of Coleridge's poem that he "was totally possessed with it for many days" (Marrs 266) after first reading it. It is interesting to note that Lamb attributes the power of "The Ancient Mariner" to its evocation of "the state of a man in a bad dream, one terrible peculiarity of which is, that all consciousness of personality is gone" (266). It is not surprising then that Coleridge, with his power of eye and voice and his fiendish opium dreams, came to identify closely with the figure of the Mariner, particularly after his voyage to Malta in 1804. Coburn connects several journal entries in the second volume of Coleridge's Notebooks to his increasing identification with the Mariner figure. (See notes 1913 and 1996.) However, identification had begun almost immediately after the production of "The Ancient Mariner." In September, 1798, only a few weeks after publication of the poem, Coleridge left for Hamburg, Germany, on his first sea voyage. In letters written home during the journey, he refers to how the sight of his "native land retiring" (Biographia Literaria 309) from his view beyond the horizon called forth an "ardent prayer" (309) and mentions in association with the disappearance of land "the kirks, churches, chapels, and meeting-houses" (309) of his country. This reference is very like the words of the Mariner as he describes the ship leaving port. Again, in the same letter, he records seeing a duck swimming and "how interesting a thing it looked in that round objectless desert of waters" (319); here Coleridge is disappointed that the ocean's vastness does not seem to live up to the expectations he had built in his

mind (and in the poem?), exclaiming how the “feeling of immensity” (319) he had expected turned out to be instead a “narrowness and nearness, as it were, of the circle of the horizon” (319).

⁴⁴ Gowan records that a seer in a vision often displays catatonic traits – his “eyes are fixed, and the eye-lids sometimes reverted” (33), which may explain the power of the Mariner’s “glittering eye” over his audience.

⁴⁵ Do all his audiences, as in The Fisher King legend, have to ask a question such as this in order to hear the rest of the tale and to heal the Mariner, if only until the next man who needs to hear the tale comes along?

⁴⁶ Though Snyder finds that, in regard to the spellbinding poem, a “strictly silent reader” (16) will gain much less hypnotic value from the reading of the poem because he does not hear the sounds of the words spoken, a “silent yet auditing” (35) reader, who hears the sounds in his head as he reads to himself or who perhaps reads aloud to himself in a low voice, can expect to self induce the hypnotic state, if on a lower frequency level than the audience who actually hears the poem recited by a reader with the full weight of artistic power in his voice and physical presence.

⁴⁷ Gardner annotates the poem as containing repetitions of “the traditionally mystic numbers 3, 7, and 9” (38) and calls attention to the fact that in this regard the poem itself is mystical, having seven parts.

⁴⁸ In *A Drug-taker’s Notes*, R. H. Ward records that a feeling of sadness overcame him during his third experiment and connected this sadness with a perception that everything about him seemed “nondescript and dull” (116). In addition, he had visions, complete with olfactory hallucinations, of himself as a dead body in a charnel house. These visions of death he associated with the “sinful humour” (118) and negative emotions of self-pity he had felt earlier, attributing his sadness to the drug-induced cosmic realization that “everything’s dead” (122).

⁴⁹ In “The Sad Wisdom of the Mariner,” A. M. Buchan argues that the Wedding Guest wakes the next morning “sadder and wiser” (96) because he has been “plunged into an utterly bewildering world ..., a world of action without reason or justification” (96) and, therefore, is rightly terrified.

⁵⁰ Sadness is akin to soberness and seriousness by definition.

CHAPTER THREE

RECREATING THE WORLD: THE SACRED AND THE PROFANE IN
DRACULA

In her book Dracula: Between Tradition and Modernism (1998), Carol A. Senf characterizes Victorian citizens as looking "Janus-like ... in two opposing directions" (6). While many people looked forward to the new century and to further progress, Senf writes that others looked "nostalgically to the past, a period that they believed (my italics) contained a clear synthesis of moral, religious, artistic, political, and social thought" (6).¹ For many individuals, faith became a secular matter of production, consumption, and profit margins; and nature, once an example of God's rational design for the world, seemed more of an arena "red in tooth and claw" (Tennyson, In Memoriam 176) in which humans competed with each other for the Darwinian glory of survival of the fittest. As many late nineteenth-century individuals came to understand how so many other species had lived and died out during the past millennia, they also had to accept their own mortality as a species; and this realization called into question traditional religious promises of redemption through Christ, leaving many individuals in a condition of spiritual poverty characterized by doubt. However, the fact that men were divided over whether the alleged progress of the present time or the simpler ways of the past were best for society both morally and religiously seems to show that Victorian Britons were struggling to find some spiritual quality in their lives. Questions about the presence

of the divine in their lives caused by their religious doubt led many late Victorian individuals in search of answers to the divine mystery. Many hoped the answers to their questions would ease the doubts they had about faith. In the spirit of this quest, during the last decades of the nineteenth century, many Victorians, such as Bram Stoker, turned toward the occult in search of a reunion with divine mystery. While Stoker would not have been aware of the numinous as such, since Otto had not yet coined the word when Stoker was living and writing, his family history seems to indicate that he would have understood the feeling. Charlotte Stoker, Bram Stoker's Irish mother, regaled the sickly child with tales of ghosts and of the Irish banshee, whose keening cry, it was said, "presaged imminent death" (Roth 2) in the family. With this oral tradition as part of his early upbringing, Stoker would have been well versed in the qualities of non-rational experience. However, as an adult Stoker also would have been aware of the mystical side of pagan religious belief through his acquaintance with several people who practiced the art of magic. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, many turned to metaphysical organizations like the Golden Dawn, a secret society whose mandate was to establish connection between the divine within man and the divine within the cosmos through the practice of magic, ritual, and the occult sciences, and the Society for Psychical Research, whose search for a numinous connection with the divine took place on a scientific level with the study of occult phenomena in nineteenth-century culture.² According to Barbara Belford's recent biography, it has been rumored that Stoker was a member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a group whose purpose was the "practice of ritual magic" and "examinations of the dark side of life" (213). She notes that this rumor, though

widely received, is unsubstantiated, although he did have many friends who belonged to the organization and might have learned the secrets of the society from them, despite their pledge of silence on the subject. Further evidence of Stoker's awareness of the effect an experience of the numinous might be found in his personal reaction to Henry Irving, whose reading of Thomas Hood's "The Dream of Eugene Aram" Stoker described in terms reminiscent of hypnotic power of the Ancient Mariner, saying "so great was the magnetism of his genius, so profound was the sense of his dominancy that I sat spellbound" (Belford 73). At the end of the reading, Stoker reportedly collapsed in apparent hysterics in the face of Irving's spellbinding power; and it is this power to hypnotize that becomes an integral part of the vampire's arsenal of supernatural weapons in Stoker's novel.³

Published in 1897, Dracula reflects the attitudes and ideas of the late Victorian period in regard to several important issues of the day, including the importance of professional and social advancement, the significance of the British culture in the minds of nineteenth-century Britons, and the concern over what the influx of foreign cultures might do to that culture and to the competition for place in society. Juxtaposed against these attitudes is the sense that in Dracula faith has taken second place to the professional advancement of many of the characters. As the men and women of the novel are confronted by the numinousness of the vampire, the search for salvation becomes more important; however, they approach their spiritual quest more as a committee than as individuals. Perpetuating the sacredness of their own cultural world view, when that view is threatened, they seek to fortify the crumbling foundations of it through the resacralization of its secular sacredness, rather than

through an actual reunion with the divine on a higher level of spiritual awakening that might be signified by a change in their world view.

With this novel, Stoker transforms the epistolary style of earlier, realistic novels, such as Pamela (1740–42) and Clarissa (1747–48) by Samuel Richardson, into the transcription of a Gothic nightmare whose multiple versions might raise doubt as to the reliability of any of the versions, despite Stoker's use of realism to describe setting and characters. However, when Jonathan Harker finally realizes what the women of castle Dracula and Dracula himself represent, he feels the weight of the truth of the events that have transpired. Later, also, when Mina Harker transcribes all of the character's individual stories and combines them into one, acceptance of the situation as real must follow. Once she has put the events in perspective, the fears of the individuals become the fears of society; and, if society is to be protected, the individuals, now as a combined force, must use their powers to destroy the threat of Dracula and his women. In their search and destroy mission against the vampires, the groups calls on their faith, imagining themselves to be crusaders, to go on a more secular version of the spiritual journey to uphold what they value as sacred in British society.

While in "The Ancient Mariner" grace came through the individual act of telling a penitential tale, the salvation of the group in Dracula is gained through a more primitive and community-based act, the resacralizing of the British world through the ritual staking of the vampire. As a Romantic artist, the Mariner is healed as his numinous encounter reshapes his cosmic attitudes and brings him back into a conditional relationship with the divine. He then proceeds to heal society on an

individual level, one person at a time, through the telling of his personal story of salvation which, in turn, reforms the cosmic understanding of those who must hear the tale and reunites them with the divine.

However, instead of forming a relationship with God and remaking the world in a more cosmic context on an individual level, as the Ancient Mariner has done, the group in Dracula works in corporate fashion, a small committee of dedicated men (and one woman) banded together for the good of the larger British community. In Dracula, the vampires seem more representative of the individualism of the Romantic ego that the Mariner defines than do the human forces. Like the Mariner, Dracula is a figure of the numinous condemned to wander eternally; unlike the Mariner, however, Dracula is not allowed to tell his story and can take no active part in the healing of society. In Stoker's novel, the human characters are in power, despite Dracula's divine power, because they control the narrative. Rather than reshaping their cosmic awareness to bring society once more into the presence of the divine, the powers of the sacred British system see themselves as protectors of the already established cultural system. As protectors of society, they take control of the numinous situation and destroy the thing they deem dangerous to it, the negatively numinous vampire. Shuddering at the thought of the numen's divine embrace, the Victorian committee's actions reaffirm the secular interpretation of the sacred that is a consequence of their nationalistic, business-oriented society by reestablishing the accepted order of their world.

Using S. L. Varnado's article "The Daemonic in Dracula" as a foundation, I employ religious historian Mircea Eliade's interpretation of Otto's numinous to

illuminate the thematic, mythic patterns in Dracula. The main examination of the novel deals with the various representations of sacred and profane space and time within the text. However, inherent in the numinous experience is a wish to believe in God and the possibility of reunion with the sacred, leading the characters to engage in mythic rituals in order to establish their relationship with the divine; and as the characters in the text confront the numinousness of Dracula, they must also confront their own apathetic faith in God. Therefore, this analysis leads eventually into a discussion of faith and belief and why it is important to the late Victorian culture that the vampire be destroyed.

In Haunted Presence: The Numinous in Gothic Fiction, S. L. Varnado utilizes Rudolf Otto's philosophy of the non-rational to argue that "the mysterium tremendum et fascinans, with its associated categories of the sacred and the profane" is at the heart of both the "purpose and aesthetic value" (1) of Gothic literature. Applying Otto's theory of the negative numinous, in "The Daemonic in Dracula," Varnado argues that Bram Stoker's novel "dramatizes the cosmic struggle between the opposing forces of darkness and light, of the sacred and profane ..., sweeping racial, geographical, even ontological counters in its wake" (97-98) and that, therefore, the characters in the story are figurative representations of "traditions, cultural forces, and races of people of Europe and Asia" (98). In accordance with his interpretation of the opposition of good and evil in Otto's definition of the negative numinous, Varnado reads the sacred in Dracula as "benign" (108) and the profane as evil. While his analysis has much merit,

due to the perceived evil of the vampire characters in the text, he does not explain what universal principles are behind the cosmic conflict in the novel. However, employing religious historian Mircea Eliade's critical studies of the sacred and profane helps illuminate the mythic patterns in the text and demonstrates why it is important that Dracula be destroyed.

Also drawing on Otto's investigation of the non-rational, Eliade defines the numinous as threshold or journey experience, a "boundary situation ... man discovers in becoming conscious of his place in the universe" (Images and Symbols 34) and describes the polarities of sacred and profane as "two existential situations assumed by man" (17) in relation to the cosmos. Impelled by dread, Eliade argues, the subject of an encounter with the numinous feels a sense of "profound nothingness" (Sacred and Profane 10), acknowledges the non-reality of his earthly existence as a feeling of profaneness that is in opposition to the sense of absolute reality that surrounds the sacred. This feeling of powerlessness causes many individuals to seek ways to resacralize the world. Eliade defines two ways in which the religious person might recreate the world as a sacred cosmos: spatially, by projecting four horizons from a central point or forming a symbolic vertical axis through a central point to above and below earth; and temporally, by ritual repetition in imitation of the gods creating the world from the body of a primordial being. The primordial being is most often characterized as a serpent or dragon; and, in Eliade's study of world religions, this being defines metaphorically the chaos which existed at the beginning of time when the

world was formed, and which exists again each time the world loses its sacredness. For the proponents of the primitive religions Eliade studied, this primordial chaos often is experienced as a condition that must be vanquished so that order may be instituted in or restored to a society. For Eliade, a feeling of the numinous and a resultant yearning to be close to the divine are evoked thematically through the opposition of the sacred and profane, divine order and primordial chaos. In Dracula this theme is carried out on several levels as the conflict between vampire and living human becomes a reenactment of a mythic ritual in order to preserve the sacredness of the British world.

"Transylvania is not England": Sacred and Profane Space

According to Eliade, all "space is not homogeneous" (Sacred and Profane 20) but is perceived as either sacred or profane, order or chaos. Manifestation of the sacred reveals a fixed point or center where a person may have "direct contact" (40) with absolute reality; and all spaces outside this center are profane, "without structure or consistency, amorphous" (20). To transform profane into sacred space, individuals recreate the habitations of their immediate world, from their countries and cities to their houses and even their bodies, by visualizing a sacred center; however, this point then becomes a threshold point where the profane may also reveal itself. In Dracula, sacred and profane spaces, in opposition and intruding upon one another, are represented by England and Transylvania and the individual habitations and characters associated with them, so that both sacred and profane seem fluid and change qualities depending upon the influence of Dracula.

Sacred and profane space are represented initially by the polarity of West and East, England and Transylvania. Jonathan Harker's first diary entry records the impression that he is "leaving the West and entering the East" (Stoker 1)⁴ as he travels to Transylvania. Although England is considered the "polar opposite of Transylvania" (Varnado 105) and the "rational center of the novel, the realm of reason, science, practicality, order, [and] common sense" (105), Victorian Britain may represent more than rationality in its opposition to Transylvania. If, as Eliade writes, every primitive religious individual considers his or her own world consecrated space with the world outside it unconsecrated; and if, as he also states, colonization is a method of consecration of profane space, then one might see Britain's exploration and colonization of other more primitive countries as a consecration of profane space by a country that considers itself in possession of a stronger sense of the sacred.

In a speech before the House of Commons in 1850, Charles Adderley spoke of colonization as the "destiny" (32) of the English people and of the former motives of war and commerce, which once had been behind the English proclivity toward imperialism, as being replaced by "a motive higher than either" (32). From this motive, which Adderley articulated as "the desire of spreading throughout the habitable globe all the characteristics of Englishmen -- their energy, their civilization, their religion and their freedom" (32)⁵, it is not difficult to infer that, through the belief of most Englishmen in the superiority of their culture and in their right and duty to expand their world, the country of England itself acquires a higher dimension of meaning and can be interpreted as the sacred center of the British Empire.

Yet, for people belonging to many of the early religious systems analyzed by Eliade, a belief existed that at the limits of any sacred microcosm lies profane space, a "dangerous region of the demons, the ghosts, the dead and of foreigners -- in a word, chaos or death or night" (Images and Symbols 38), which threatens the cosmos with destruction, regression, and chaos.⁶ In Dracula, the chaos of profane space is represented in several ways. As Harker begins his journey, he describes Transylvania in terms of watery chaos, as the "centre of some sort of imaginative whirlpool" (Stoker 2)⁷ of superstition; and later Dracula characterizes it as "the whirlpool of European races" (28). Further representations of the circle⁸ also show up repeatedly during Harker's confusing journey from Borgo Pass to Dracula's castle. Wolves howl around him "as though they were following in a moving circle"; and soon, a "living ring of terror" (13) surrounds him as the wolves gather about the coach and menace him while the driver is off searching for the blue flames he and Harker have seen flickering in the darkness. Once Harker is in the castle, the whirlpool becomes a "sea of wonders" (Stoker 18) for him; and Britain is described in chaotic terms as Dracula tells Harker that it is the "whirl and rush of humanity" (20) in London he seeks to experience.⁹

Harker records in his diary that on crossing the mountains through the Borgo Pass it "seemed as though the mountain range had separated two atmospheres, and that now we had got into the thunderous one" (Stoker 9).¹⁰ For Otto, the power of the numinous lies in the subject's realization of the possibility of death and his fear of the mystery of existence beyond that death; and as Dracula will remind Harker, "Transylvania is not England" (21). Instead, as "one of the wildest and least known

portions of Europe" (1), Transylvania is a nether world of superstition and death, a place which Harker will later characterize as a "cursed land where the devil and his children still walk with earthly feet!" (53). In Transylvania, Harker will be confronted with the destructiveness of profane space and "a whole world of dark and dreadful things" (357) in the form of the living dead. Language fails him as he journeys into a world of "queer dreams" (2), a Babel of "queer words" (6) spoken by the numerous nationalities. The odd behavior of the peasants protecting themselves from the evil eye and their insistent offerings of various superstitious and religious objects of the Catholic faith also leaves the Protestant Harker uneasy, hesitant and wondering, open to the eventual experience of the numinous in the form of the vampire. Having ventured into the chaotic zone of Transylvania, he must recognize that beneath his rational, empirical façade he stands powerless in relation to Dracula.

Harker's journey has embodied the chaos of the East as opposed to the order of the West. However, Stoker also develops the Transylvanian landscape as a model of sacred and profane space within itself. According to Eliade, the cosmos may be recreated by projection of an imaginary axis that extends vertically above and below the horizon point. The central point of this axis mundi is considered the communication point between heaven, earth and the underworld; and in Harker's description of Transylvania one can see the representation of an axis mundi. The road which he and his fellow passengers travel winds in and out of "the green swelling hills of the Mittel Land" (Stoker 7) which rise toward the Carpathian Mountains. This middle land Harker describes in words reminiscent of earthly paradise, full of "forests and woods" and "a bewildering mass of fruit blossom --

apple, plum, pear, cherry" (6), all carpeting the green grass with their petals. Suddenly, one of his companions, crossing himself in reverence, directs Harker's eye to "the lofty, snow-covered peak of a mountain", which seems to rise right before them. He refers to this mountain as "'Isten szek!' [or] 'God's seat!'" (7).¹¹ In this passage, it is clear that the peasants operate in this earthly middle ground in touch with a God whose abode is the peak of this lofty mountain and with the underworld in the form of Dracula's castle, and Dracula himself, to whom they show a particular aversion. Although Dracula's castle is not technically under ground as one might expect a representation of the underworld to be, and although the coach and its passenger must ascend to reach it, the castle signifies the underworld because the burial crypts far below the earth are Dracula's resting place. It is, however, in its representation as a threshold or horizon that Transylvania itself becomes important as a site of the numinous. From the middle land of earthly existence Harker must cross the threshold into the hell of Dracula's castle and face the probability of physical death without hope for a spiritual afterlife.

Chaos at the Center: Ruins and Madhouses

According to Eliade's research, many religious people recreate the imago mundi by settling a country or establishing a city and also construct their homes by imitating the patterns of the cosmos; therefore, "cosmic symbolism [can be] found in the very structure of habitation" (Sacred and Profane 53). As the sacred can be represented in a house, the profane also may be represented in this way. Dracula's castle "like other 'haunted castles' in Gothic literature... stands as a symbol of the mysterium tremendum" (Varnado 101). However, the castle itself produces only

feelings of uneasiness in Harker, not the level of fear or dread that the mysterium tremendum is capable of evoking. Although the uneasiness Harker feels when confronted with the mystery of Transylvania and its people does grow stronger once he is in the castle and has met Dracula, it only becomes the full blown dread of the mysterium tremendum once he is assured of the horrible existence and the mysterious power of the vampire.

If Transylvania represents profane space, Dracula's castle represents the vortex of chaos. The castle is a maze of corridors, rooms, and locked doors, which for Harker come to illustrate his lack of knowledge and, therefore, his powerlessness in the presence of Dracula. As the guest of Dracula, Harker lives a "strange night existence" (Stoker 25) in which his imagination runs wild, producing even more anxiety. Within this realm of chaos, Harker attempts and fails to find some kind of order and safety. Although he feels safe upon first entering the one room he finds unlocked in the castle, his feeling, based upon what he imagines about the former occupants of the room, is illusory. Then, after he has experienced the horror of the "weird sisters" (48), he looks upon his own room in the castle as "a sort of sanctuary" (40); however, at the center of chaos, true sanctuary does not exist. At the mercy of these "devils of the Pit" (53), Harker lives in fear of death, wondering how he can escape from the danger of the vampires.

Up to this point, Harker's experience in Dracula's castle has been more of an uneasy sense of danger; however, once he has met the vampire women, he suffers the horror that characterizes Otto's definition of the numinous in its negative aspect. This feeling causes him to fall to his knees in prayer, insisting that, if he dies at the hands

of the vampire women, he will be spiritually ready. At this point, he apprehends the sacred in its positive character. As it rises, the sun strikes the "top of the great gateway" which he can see from his window; and it seems to him "as if the dove of the ark had lighted there" (46), pointing the way to safety. Like Noah in his ark, Harker is delivered from his "sea of wonders" (18) to a new birth, a second creation of the world from watery chaos. After the cataclysmic events of the previous days, Harker's fear dissipates, and he realizes that he must take action to save himself. He must risk death by imitating Dracula, climbing out over the precipice of the castle to escape. Though, like many men, he dreads the unknown "Hereafter" (46), Harker's "need is more desperate still" (46). Desperation and fear of being turned into one of the Un-dead makes the choice of possible death a necessity for Harker. In the end, it seems, he prefers the unknown and hope for a spiritual life to the decidedly purgatorial existence of vampirism. He climbs down the wall as Dracula has climbed and escapes the castle.

In the primitive systems of religion studied by Eliade, profane space is commonly represented as having no fixed point of reference; and this amorphous and neutral space will erupt in the heart of seemingly sacred space when Dracula lands at Whitby, England, bringing with him a chaos that will threaten an already shaky English order. The sun will set with a vengeance on the British Empire when he arrives.¹² If discovery or projection of a sacred center is equivalent to the creation of the world, as Eliade posits, then Dracula's invasion of England becomes a de-creation of the sacred, extending chaos to the religious institutions and habitations of the population. Just as houses are considered as forms of the imago mundi, holy sites and

sanctuaries are considered even more so because they are sanctified religious structures and, as such, are supposed to be “proof against all earthly corruption” (59); however, in the potentially profane world of England, holy sites and sanctuaries are no proof against Dracula.

Since, as Eliade argues, no place exists exclusively as sacred or profane, Dracula has always had his own privileged places, sanctuaries as it were, to which he can retreat. For centuries, his sanctum sanctorum has been his Transylvanian castle and the tomb deep beneath it in the old chapel; however, when he decides to travel to England, he must make use of more portable sanctuaries. Harker records his understanding that the vampire can “only rest in sacred earth” (Stoker 297), information which he learns from Professor Van Helsing's reference to the belief that the graves of “great men and good women” (241) of the Dracula family have made “sacred the earth where alone this foulness can dwell” (241). Although Wolf notes that he finds no “folkloric or historic antecedent” (Essential Dracula 354) for Professor Van Helsing's observation, the precedent does exist in Eliade's research of primitive religions. Eliade argues that many primitive people felt a sacred connection to the earth because they believed their original ancestors came from it; and Dracula also partakes in a more profane way in the “religious experience of autochthony” (Eliade, Sacred and Profane 140), which is “the feeling ... of belonging to a place” (140), of having a connection with the native soil of one's own land. Dracula's autochthonic connection with the earth of his native land is represented by the fifty boxes of “friendly soil” (Stoker 31) which he has shipped to England to serve as sanctuaries for him.

However, in Britain, Whitby Abbey, the estate of Carfax, and the insane asylum also represent types of sanctuary, which have been rendered profane and, therefore, provide other privileged places for Dracula. In the chapter "Sacred and Desecrated Space: The Cathedral and the Ruin in the Gothic Novel," in The Cartographers of Hell: Essays on the Gothic Novel and the Social History of England, Alok Bhalla argues that the foundation of the "religion and religious institutions" (72) represented in Gothic novels lies in the "economic, political and cultural conditions of a given society" (72). With reference to Rudolf Otto's Idea of the Holy, Bhalla argues that the cathedral and the ruin do not "create sacred space where the 'numen' is experienced in the profane world" (73). Although he concedes to Eliade's finding that the cathedral is sacred space, and agrees with Eliade's assertion that the sacredness of the cathedral allows the worshipper to "make a 'religious valorization of the world'" (74)¹³, he makes a more pessimistic argument that the cathedral produces only "the agonized recognition of the irrecoverability of that moment when there existed a magical and sacramental relationship between man and god" (79). He describes the Gothic ruin as "a place without a centre" which holds no promise of a "return to a divine origin" (74) and characterizes the Gothic ruin as "a region of moral and spiritual desolation, a desecrated space tainted with sin and corruption" (79). As such, these places represent a world "without any spiritual meaning or purpose" (80) which for the characters in Dracula may be indicative of the time in which they live. However, Bhalla has missed an extremely important point. For both Eliade and Otto, spiritual value is not irretrievable; the feelings of unworthiness felt by the person who has encountered the sacred cause the person to recognize his longing to reclaim the

sacred and to seek out ways to do so. The Gothic ruin only indicates that mankind has failed in his responsibility to maintain and renew the sacredness of his world; it does not represent the sacred as irredeemable. In Dracula, the ruins in England are a sign that humanity must change or be caught up in the chaos of a profane life, which is perceived by many religious people to be a living death with no promise of spiritual release.

Whitby Abbey, once a religious sanctuary, is now a ruin, "'destroyed by the Danes in the year 867'" (Wolf 84) and is purported to house the ghost of a "white lady" (Stoker 62).¹⁴ Even the parish church standing between Whitby Abbey and the town of Whitby itself is surrounded by a ruined graveyard in which "part of the bank has fallen away, and some of the graves have been destroyed" (63). According to Mr. Swales, the gravestones also are "simply tumblin' down with the weight o' the lies wrote on them"; and "nigh half of them" have no body in them at all since the men were lost at sea. The old man tells Mina Murray that "the memories of them bean't cared a pinch of snuff about," (65) much less being held sacred by the living. One grave in particular belongs to a suicide; and it is here that Dracula takes shelter when he arrives in Whitby. This grave is a privileged place for him, since in vampire folklore a person who committed suicide was considered susceptible to becoming a vampire.¹⁵ However, the suicide's grave is also a logical hiding place for Dracula because the disrepair of the graves and the lies that have been written on the them suggest the absence of true sanctity in British society.¹⁶

When the novel's action moves on to Purfleet, outside London, the intrusion of profane into sacred space becomes even more apparent. As in primitive religious

belief, structures may take the cosmos as a “paradigmatic model” (Sacred and Profane 45), Carfax may be considered an imago mundi. The estate purchased by Dracula represents the world in two ways, as a structure of habitation and as a representation of intersection. Harker's description of the estate to Dracula refers to the derivation of the name Carfax from “Quatre Face, as the house is four-sided agreeing with the cardinal points of the compass” (Stoker 23). Moreover, in Eliade's study, an intersection is considered a sacred representation of the world. As the human universe stretches out from the sacred center “toward the four cardinal points, the village comes into existence around an intersection” (Sacred and Profane 45). Carfax can be perceived as an imago mundi because it is situated at a crossroads in Purfleet. Though Harker only describes the house as being on a “by-road” (Stoker 23), the structure aligns with the four compass points.¹⁷ However, this estate is now a model of chaos, abandoned and in ruins. Harker tells Dracula that Carfax is comprised of an ancient keep with an “old chapel or church” (23) and several additions made haphazardly over the generations. The high wall surrounding the property “has not been repaired for a large number of years”, and the iron parts of the gate are “all eaten with rust” (23). These descriptions of Carfax suggest a lack of order and also a lack of the responsibility that the English society should have taken for the sacredness of its habitations.¹⁸ The fact that Dracula will now inhabit this place shows that the profane has invaded the symbolic center of the Victorian world; yet this center is empty and in ruins because the British people have neglected the sanctity of their own space.

At this place of intersection, Carfax is not the only sight of profane activity. Here is another residence, an insane asylum owned by Dr. John Seward. Although by the late nineteenth century the stereotypical madhouse had evolved into a hospital atmosphere with a more humane approach to the care and cure of patients, the insane asylum in Dracula should still be considered more a center of chaos than of order.¹⁹ As a "private lunatic asylum" (Stoker 23), it also may be associated with the profane side of existence in the economically oriented British culture.²⁰ Furthermore, the opposition of sacred and profane space is seen in the isolation of the asylum from the so-called normal community. By locating the asylums outside the city, the foreignness or "'otherness' of the insane was emphasised by their geographical separation from 'normalcy'" (Mellett 46); and in Dracula, Harker assures the Count that the asylum "is not ...visible from the grounds" (Stoker 23). This isolation will give Dracula access to the lunatic Renfield and, later, to Mina (Murray) Harker when she is left in the asylum by her husband and the other men, ostensibly to protect her as they all go in search of Dracula.²¹ Like Harker in Dracula's castle, Mina is isolated from the outside world and from the additional knowledge that the men are gathering on the danger Dracula poses to them all. Her isolation and ignorance of knowledge indicates a lack of control in chaotic space; Mina has been placed in a vulnerable and profane position in relation to Dracula's great power. The asylum offers her no sanctuary, no safety; and while the men are out searching for his hiding places, there is no one to stop Dracula from making Mina one of his vampire women.

Good Women and Great Men, Demons and Lunatics

Eliade maintains that when primitive individuals perceive the world as a creation of the gods, they apprehend themselves as a part of that creation and discover within themselves "the same sanctity ... [apparent] in the cosmos" (Sacred and Profane 165). This discovery, he argues, causes them to assimilate the cosmic patterns of the world into individual life and reproduce the cosmos on a human scale. Therefore, for Eliade's primitive individual, the human body can be considered as either sacred or profane; and "passing beyond the human condition finds figural expression in the destruction of ... the personal cosmos" (177). In Dracula, the characters represent the opposition of sacred and profane space on a personal level. However, as a group, a large part of what they come to represent is the sacred order of the cosmos, at least the British cosmos.

Good Women

As the main female characters in the novel, Lucy Westenra and Mina Murray represent the sacredness of such institutions as society and family; yet both women have the potential to become profane. As a representative of British womanhood, Lucy rather typifies the Victorian New Woman in several ways.²² She is a woman who wants to marry three men; and this sexually rebellious attitude places her squarely on the side of the profane and makes her susceptible to Dracula. Once she is a vampire, she is perceived as a "foul Thing" (Stoker 213) with Lucy's physical body but without her soul, a demon Lucy who roams the lonely domain of Hampstead Heath²³ preying on children.

Unlike Lucy, Mina Harker is considered "practical and ambitious" (Varnado 105) and dreams of helping her husband with his work. This description may align Mina with the rational; however, she demonstrates even more strongly that she is allied with both the sacred and profane. Mina is characterized as wife, mother, and sister in relation to the men in the story, all sacred familial relationships. However, she is also described in religious terms. Professor Van Helsing's description of her as "one of God's women" (Stoker 188) resembles the standard description of a nun's relationship to God; and, after she has exchanged blood with Dracula, she is described in even more exalted terms, as displaying "the devotion of a martyr" (290) when she vows to die before she would hurt any of the others. However, Mina is allied with Eve when she gives Professor Van Helsing a shorthand copy of her diary to read, excusing her wish to astonish and puzzle him by laying the blame on "some of the taste of the original apple that remains still in our [women's] mouths" (Stoker 183). Identifying herself with Eve, she has characterized herself as transgressor and so is a suitable victim for Dracula, as Lucy was for different reasons.

After the exchange of blood, however, Mina recognizes herself as "unclean" (296) and profane; but she has no power to recreate herself again as sacred. Soon she begins to feel a strange sense of freedom and becomes more affectionate with Harker than usual. Although Lucy and Mina may represent the rational and the sacredness of English society, Dracula's penetration of them both with his fangs may be interpreted as a penetration of chaos into heart of the personal cosmos and, through them, into the center of the sacred British cosmos. It will be up to Mina's husband and the others to

resacralize the bodies of both Mina and Lucy and the world of England with the death of Dracula.

Great Men

If one looks at the relationships between the men, one can see the beginnings of the group structure that will be brought against Dracula. Dr. Seward, Morris, and Holmwood have formed strong ties of friendship through sharing adventures in the Marquesas, South America, and Korea. Dr. Seward, Holmwood, and Professor Van Helsing, in their turn, share the same kind of connection, and more so, because Dr. Seward saved the life of Professor Van Helsing by sucking the poison from his wound after Holmwood accidentally injured him. As comrades in danger, these men have already formed a community within the larger social structure, participating in a relationship which honors the sacredness of life, friendship, and duty, among other things; and these are the men who become the foundation of the forces of the sacred to which later will be added Jonathan and Mina (Murray) Harker.

Arthur Holmwood's name also aligns him with the sacred in two important ways. First, the name Arthur brings up the obvious connection with King Arthur, a fifth-century British hero of both historical and mythic proportions, whose leadership consolidated the tribes of Britain to repel its enemy, the Saxons.²⁴ Then, the surname Holmwood establishes further his connection with the sacred. Holmwood is another name for the holm-oak, a bush often defined as the holly because of resemblances in the foliage; and the holly is a sacred plant signifying "death and regeneration" (Walker 406). In relation to the meanings of holly, in his study The Golden Bough, Sir James Frazer found the mistletoe plant to be connected with divinity as it was

considered supernatural, growing on oak trees as it does without benefit of roots in soil. As the only aristocrat in the group, Arthur Holmwood represents something of the divine himself in his connection to the heroic nobility of the legendary king, who it is foretold will be resurrected when England is in desperate need of him; and, in his act of staking Lucy, he is the sacred agent of death and resurrection for her.

Moreover, the group's connection with the sacred is apparent in other characters as well. As a newly made solicitor, Harker is now a member of the middle class, serious about his new duties. In the rational world these attributes are admirable; but in the non-rational world they will avail him little. Once Harker crosses over into Transylvania, his journey becomes a rite of passage, and he becomes the initiate. When subjected to the mysterious actions and words of the peasants, he is ignorant of their true meaning and so is only uneasy; but as he gathers knowledge of Dracula and the three women, the horror of both his own and society's fate nearly paralyzes him. After his escape from the castle and the female vampires, he suffers from brain fever, his hair turns white overnight, and he is reported to be raving "the secrets of God" (Stoker 103). To some extent, although he seeks to deny his knowledge, once he survives his ordeal in Transylvania, he is a wise old man figure because he has immediate experience of the vampire, which Professor Van Helsing, for all his knowledge, does not have; and his foreign journal, in turn, becomes for the others a narrative of initiation into the numinous.

However, despite the fact that he has no direct experience of the vampire, I believe Professor Van Helsing's role is the most important in the group. As the oldest of all the men, Professor Van Helsing represents a kind of father figure to the younger

men. His experiences of the world are far greater than those of the other men; and he has his Catholic faith and his knowledge of medicine and of folklore as weapons to combat Dracula. As a metaphysician and the leader of the band of men who will destroy Dracula, Professor Van Helsing represents the sacred in the role of warrior priest, as a St. George, leading the fight against the evil dragon of chaos. Dr. Seward, Holmwood, and Morris join Professor Van Helsing, as they had in earlier years, eventually drawing Jonathan and Mina Harker into their ranks, to become a force in service of the sacred.

Demons

If Professor Van Helsing is the good father figure, leading his band of children in a sacred ritual, Dracula is the evil father who has some of the same characteristics as Professor Van Helsing but who has turned them to the service of evil. As a representation of the negatively numinous, Dracula embodies both sacred and profane space. Dracula embodies some of the aura of the sacred hero; he is, as he tells Harker, the "heart's blood" (Stoker 29) of his people. It is widely believed that Stoker at least partially patterned Dracula after Vlad Tepes, a ruler of Wallachia in the 1400s, who, according to historic documents, used impalement as a form of punishment, and sometimes as a source of entertainment. If accounts of Tepes are true, one might rather interpret the connection of Dracula to him as a signification of the profane; but, despite these reports, Tepes was not and is not considered a monster in his own country. To this day, he is considered a hero for driving the Turks from the borders.²⁵ It is this interpretation of history that connects Tepes and Dracula as heroes and allows Dracula to represent sacred space.

Dracula also has at his control what appear to be divine powers – to control the animals and the weather, to turn to motes of dust or bats, and to read minds. Although these powers would seem to ally him with the sacred, they represent Eliade's description of profane space in several ways. Dracula reacts with horror both to religious objects and to articles representing a more superstitious approach toward danger, such as garlic, mountain ash, and wild rose²⁶ that are folk remedies meant to protect the intended victim or dispatch the vampire; and his abilities to shape-change, become invisible, and read thoughts demonstrate his profane nature because they are not ultimate powers. His shape-changing and invisibility are limited to night time and noon; and his ability to read thoughts is contingent upon his first having a blood link with the person through an act of vampirism. Furthermore, as the living dead, Dracula represents a man whose personal cosmos has been destroyed, who has passed "beyond the human condition" (Eliade, Sacred and Profane 177). He is and is not human at the same time -- both a man and a "monster" (Stoker 51), a hero of the wars against the Turks and a "criminal, and of criminal type" (342), according, as Mina Harker says, to Nordau and Lombroso.²⁷ Once a living, breathing human, he is now a daemonic corpse; still of human form, he now is characterized as having a "marked physiognomy" (Stoker 17), with physical, rather than spiritual, immortality, prodigious strength, and uncanny powers of metamorphosis and control of animals and people.

These are not the only qualities of Dracula that make him profane, however. He is foreign; and, as a foreigner, Dracula may represent the British fears of colonization by other countries and/or cultures.²⁸ In many of the more primitive

religions that Eliade researched, colonization is considered a form of creation of the world and, as such, is always considered a consecration (Sacred and Profane 32); therefore, as the creator of a "new order of beings" (Stoker 302), Dracula will, in effect, colonize and consecrate England to the profane. Dracula penetrates to the sacred center of the British Empire and brings chaos into an already partially desacralized world characterized by industrialism and profit making, but because Dracula is a vampire, his destructive power also means desacralization of the human body. Although the vampire cannot procreate in a normal human fashion, he creates by destroying, taking over an already existing body and turning it into the living dead and an already existing universe and returning it to primordial chaos. His creations all have the same attributes and desires; and all are parasites living off the blood of a human host, just as Dracula does. In light of the parasite/host relationship between vampires and humans, the forces of the sacred fear Dracula's ability to be "father or furtherer of a new order of beings" (302) because his way will lead to a profane, parasitic existence for all of them. It is this fear that produces the sense of extreme powerlessness and dread in the human subjects as they realize death as a vampire will result only in an amorphous and perverse version of mortal life.

The images of chaos are even stronger when applied directly to the body of the vampire. In England, in her memorandum to Professor Van Helsing and the others, Lucy Westenra tells of the visit of Dracula that precipitates her mother's death through descriptions of chaos resembling those Harker had used earlier to portray Transylvania. Dracula arrives as "a whole myriad of little specks" (Stoker 143) which seem to blow in through the window broken by the wolf; then, these specks are

further described as "wheeling and circling round like the pillar of dust that travelers describe when there is a simoon in the desert" (143). A simoon is a hot, dry wind laden with sand that sweeps across the deserts of Africa and Arabia during the spring and summer months. Of Arabic derivation, from the word samm, which means to poison, the word is particularly apt to describe the entrance of Dracula, especially in light of the earlier revelation to Mina by Sister Agatha about Harker's almost premonitory ravings of "wolves and poison and blood" in the throes of the "violent brain fever" (99) induced by his stay at Castle Dracula. The pillar of dust that Lucy describes also has implications of the danger Dracula poses. In The Land Beyond the Forest, which Stoker read while researching Transylvania²⁹, Emily Gerard discusses Roumanian superstition, including a reference to the whirlwind as denoting "that the devil is dancing with a witch, and whoever approaches too near to the dangerous circle may be carried off bodily to hell" (197). This description of the whirlwind has dangerous implications for Lucy. Struck with fear, she cannot avoid the phenomenon that is Dracula. Like the whirlwind in Gerard's example of Roumanian superstition, the destructive and chaotic space that is Dracula will eventually carry Lucy off to the underworld of vampirism.

Figures of chaos prevalent in the description of Transylvania as profane space extend to the characterization of the vampire women as well. At the castle, the second time Harker is confronted by the vampire women they are described first as dispersed matter, "quaint little specks floating in the rays of moonlight" (Stoker 44), and then taking more solid shape, "like the tiniest grains of dust ...they whirled round and gathered in clusters in a nebulous sort of way" (44). Later, near the end of the

novel, Professor Van Helsing and Mina see the vampire women form out of the "whirling mist and snow" (368) of the Transylvanian landscape.³⁰ If vampires can form solid flesh from a whirling mass of particles on air, they can be understood to have the power to disperse from solid form into that same chaos -- amorphous, undetectable, and dangerous. If the vampire's ability to shape change shows its divine character, in the vampire, the numinous object has become a chaos of whirling, floating obscurity and matter. These descriptions of whirling, wheeling, circling substance taking form as the vampire indicate that the fate of those who are transformed to vampires will be dissolution into the chaos before creation.

Renfield, the Lunatic

Perhaps the most complicated character in the novel, Renfield, the lunatic, evokes both the sacred and the profane in various ways. In his desire for immortality, Renfield seems to suffer from a form of religious mania in which, as Dr. Seward puts it, "he will soon think that he himself is God" (Stoker 100). In Book II of

Degeneration, Max Nordau argues that mysticism is a form of "religious delirium" (45) and a "principal characteristic of degeneration" (45). Mysticism is, he writes,

A state of mind in which the subject imagines that he perceives or divines unknown and inexplicable relations amongst phenomena, discerns in things hints at mysteries, and regards them as symbols, by which a darker power seeks to unveil or, at least, to indicate all sorts of marvels which he endeavors to guess, though generally in vain. (Nordau 45)

Renfield's preoccupation with blood as the symbol of life and with the coming of the "Master" (100), who will bestow upon him immortal life, seems to echo Nordau's definition of mysticism as a degenerative mania.³¹

Eliade describes the profane individual as one for whom "the universe does not properly constitute a cosmos -- that is, a living and articulated unity; it is simply the sum of the material reserves and physical energies of the planet" (Sacred and Profane 93-4); and this description seems to have implications in the novel. As Dracula feeds on the blood of living humans, Renfield feeds on insects, spiders, and birds, totting up their numbers in his little book as if the sum of them will give him a greater and longer life. He even goes so far as to stab Dr. Seward in the wrist with a dinner-knife and then lap up his blood from the floor. However, Eliade also proposes that most primitive humans had an obsession with recovering the world as it was in the beginning. This obsession is characterized by a thirst for sacredness; and in light of this, Renfield's mental problem could also be interpreted as allying him in some respects with the sacred. In Will Therapy and Truth and Reality³², psychoanalyst Otto Rank argues that, while "the more normal, healthy, and happy" (250) person willfully accepts the empirical world as reality, the neurotic suffers "not from a painful reality but from painful truth" (251) because, spiritually, the neurotic sees "through the deception of the world of sense, the falsity of reality" (251).

In Rank's understanding of the psyche, the individual cannot survive without illusions, "not only outer illusions such as art, religion, philosophy, science and love afford, but inner illusions which first condition the outer" (250). If the average person has adapted the individual will to accept the truth which society sets forth as reality, the neurotic person's focus on self-consciousness is a denial of that will and a refusal to accept what society deems reality. The moment an individual begins see through the false reality created by society, the willfully created reality is destroyed;

and the person's relationship to the world of the senses changes. In refusing to accept a willfully created reality, the neurotic shares a deeper sense of the world with Eliade's religious individual, who sees the earthly world as illusory and the mystical world of the gods as the true reality. If one considers Renfield's insanity as a denial of his own will in response to the more powerful will of the numinous object Dracula, then one might also read his mental state as a spiritually true perception of the world. His preoccupation with blood then might be examined as an attempt to reproduce the sacred reality of the world.

According to Eliade, "ritual cannibalism ... is the consequence of a tragic religious conception" (Sacred and Profane 106), in which sustenance is "not given in nature", but is "the product of a slaying" (103), and in which blood sacrifice helps religious individuals re-actualize their relationship with the cosmos. In Dracula, cannibalism takes place each time the vampire feeds, whether it is Lucy or the other female vampires feeding on the children, or Dracula himself feasting on the sailors, Lucy, or Mina. Participation in this kind of cannibalism seems to be entered into for the most obvious of motives -- the sustenance gained allows the vampires to survive.³³ Even one of the humans, Dr. Seward, has partaken of blood when he sucked the wound of Professor Van Helsing to save his life. However, the most insistent ritual of cannibalism is demonstrated in Renfield's zoöphagous behavior. His connection with the world, his sense of being, depends upon blood; and he even goes so far as to try to convince Dr. Seward that "his salvation" (Stoker 70) hangs upon his getting a cat or even a kitten. He is a "life-eating maniac" (70), with a "method in his madness" (69). According to Sir James Frazer's studies of early

cultures in The Golden Bough", many primitive individuals believed that ingesting the flesh of animal or human gave them the attributes of that entity. If the entity happened to be divine, the individual believed he or she would acquire some part of those divine powers as a result of the act. For Renfield, "the blood is the life" (234); and he is counting up increments of life with every fly, spider and bird, hoping through this blood sacrifice to gain immortality.³⁴ It is the potentiality for evil inherent in Dracula that stains Renfield's attempt at salvation, because his salvation will be only physical, if he receives the immortality the vampire is prepared to give.

"Truly there is no such thing as finality": Sacred and Profane Time

Eliade's study proposes that, in the perception of various worldviews, time, "like space, is neither homogeneous nor continuous" (Sacred and Profane 68) and, as such, encompasses the sacred and profane as existential situations for humans. Sacred time is posited as "primordial, mythical time made present" (68) through periodic repetition of sacred rituals and myths, and is, therefore, eternally recoverable, and effectively non-temporal, outside human time. Profane time, on the other hand, is believed to be "continuous and irreversible" (Images and Symbols 57) and of finite "temporal duration" (Sacred and Profane 68). While Eliade considers the non-religious person to be aware of his or her existence only within the profane time of a life circumscribed by birth and death, he believes religious individuals perceive themselves as living within both sacred and profane time, aware of their existence in finite time but returning periodically to sacred through reenactments of sacred rituals. For Eliade's religious individual, the eternal present of the mythical event makes possible the profane duration of time; and the year is the temporal

dimension of the cosmos, circular in nature with a beginning and end, yet infinitely renewable each year with the cosmic rhythms of seasons, days, and nights.

“In this matter dates are everything”

As Mina Harker attempts to put together the entries of all the participants into a comprehensive narrative in Dracula, she records in her own journal her feeling that "in this matter dates are everything" (224); and chronological order must guide her transcription of events. In the novel, the sacred calendar is of first importance. The action begins on May first and ends November sixth. May first is an important date on the sacred calendar for several reasons. Not only does May Day celebrate spring's regeneration of the land, it is also a day of celebration in honor of Saint Walpurgis.³⁵ The evening before, however, is significant to a discussion of Dracula, since that evening is Walpurgis Night, a night, Sir James Frazer maintains in The Golden Bough, when witches and all evil spirits are said to have great power. It is also the time of Beltine (Beltane) in Ireland, the beginning of summer and renewal. November, particularly the first week, is important as Hallowtide, the season of All Saints; and November first is All Saints' Day, the Christianized version of Samhain, which in Irish legend, is the "beginning of the dark season ..., especially associated with the dead and the underworld" (Ó hÓgáin 403). Samhain celebration was held on October 31, All Hallows' or All Saints' eve, and was considered a propitiatory gesture in response to the "threatening and warlike ...powers of destruction" (Sjoestedt 69) which characterized the intrusion of the spirits into the earthly world.

The idea behind the pagan celebration of these days seems to be "that crucial joints between the seasons opened cracks in the fabric of space-time, allowing contact

between the ghostworld and the mortal one" (Walker 372). In pre-Christian Celtic belief, a retaliatory relationship existed between the mortal and immortal worlds, which not only allowed the spirits to threaten mankind at this time, but also allowed humans to enter their world and "to attack in their turn those mysterious dwellings which for one night lay open and accessible" (Sjoestedt 72). According to research by folklorist Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, in Irish folklore and myth "many of the supernatural adventures of heroes ...are said to have taken place at this time" (403). Whether one uses pagan feast days or their Christianized counterparts as a time frame in which to map the events in the novel, it is clear that the plot of Dracula takes place within a cyclic, sacred calendar of summer and winter, birth and death, with the possibility of a cosmic rebirth for the forces of the sacred and their society when Dracula is killed. Harker ventures into Transylvania as the fabric of time and space is rent in May and helps Dracula to take up residence in the world of men. Once loosed upon the world, Dracula cannot be driven back across that border between the two worlds until the next tear in the fabric is effected during Hallowtide or Samhain.

The cyclic nature of days and nights also is important in a discussion of sacred and profane time. While the human characters live their day from sunrise to sunset, Dracula's daily span is inverted. His earthly life has been profaned by his vampirism and is now a perversion of human life. Many humans perceive death to be a return to the womb of the earth (Sacred and Profane 140); however, Dracula is profane so he can not rest peacefully. Although, he is seen a few times during daylight, he is generally constrained to rising at sunset and returning to his bed at sunrise. In Transylvania Dracula manages to invert Harker's time schedule. He keeps Harker

talking all night, manipulating him into conforming to his own inverted time schedule; and soon Harker's "strange night existence" (Stoker 25) wears on him, increasing his uneasiness. Harker records how his diary seems like the beginning of the "Arabian Nights" where everything must "break off at cockcrow -- or like the ghost of Hamlet's father" (30). Like Hamlet, Harker cannot know if his experience is real or not. Once he is in Transylvania, he is plunged into the abyss that separates sacred and profane time, where primitive evil haunts the night and daylight is the only sanctuary.

For Eliade, the temporality of the human condition is defined as a "'historical situation'" (Images and Symbols 58). As a representative of the rational West, Harker lives in historical time and tries to place his destination Transylvania in an historical context. To this end, he searches for information on the area in that icon of historical artifacts, the British Museum, but can find no map which gives "the exact locality of the Castle Dracula" (Stoker 1). However, he does gain some information on the history of the area and on the traditions and superstitions of the inhabitants. Time, though, becomes much more urgent and more personal as Harker begins his journey. Leonard Wolf notes that "the clock is the unacknowledged monitor of the action to come" (1); and as Harker travels to Transylvania, he seems to move back in time, to travel outside of time. However, here the clock time of Great Britain is irrelevant; the cycles of seasons and of sunrises and sunsets dictates the actions of the people. Transylvania is a place of late trains³⁶, and early coaches, as the driver of the public conveyance hurries through Borgo Pass, hoping to miss meeting Dracula's coach. Once Harker has exchanged the public coach for Dracula's private one, his journey is

confusing as time seems to repeat itself. The coach seems to cover the same ground repeatedly; and, as midnight approaches, his superstitious fear becomes even more prevalent because of his experiences. After midnight the driver, who is Dracula himself in one of his manifestations, stops the coach often, leaving Harker alone while he goes into the darkness where they have seen blue flames flickering. As these stops are "repeated endlessly" (Stoker 12), Harker is not sure whether he is dreaming or their repetitious movement is real.

When Dracula and Harker finally arrive at the castle, Harker notices that the great carved stones of the edifice are "much worn by time and weather" (Stoker 14). However, time within Castle Dracula seems to stand still. The furniture and bed hangings are "centuries old, though in excellent order" (19); and Harker records that he saw something like them in Hampton Court, but there they were worn and frayed and moth-eaten" (19). Later, as Harker tells Dracula that his estate Carfax dates "from all periods back ... to medieval times" (23), the audience is given its first clue about Dracula's great age. He replies to Harker that he is "of an old family", used to old houses. A house, he maintains, "cannot be made habitable in a day; and, after all, how few days go to make up a century" (23). In the case of the vampire's immortality, the number of days it takes to make a century are not many in relation to the endless nights spent in the service of survival.

The next night Harker questions Dracula about the history of Transylvania and records that Dracula speaks "of things and people, and especially of battles" (Stoker 28), leaving Harker feeling as though Dracula "had been present at them all" (28). Dracula explains this away by calling it pride of house and name which a boyar

feels and then gives Harker "the whole history of his country" (28). His is a history both sacred and profane, including, as it does, tales of how the Szekelys and Dracula himself were born out of blood-drenched colonizations by Icelandic tribes and by the Huns and of the heroism of rulers who continually drove back the Turks and shook loose the "Hungarian yoke" (29) of oppression. However, this history also includes legends of the "blood of those old witches, who, expelled from Scythia had mated with the devils in the desert" (29). Dracula's history has lost its significance, however. His legendary and historical associations, though greater than that of "the Hapsburgs and the Romanoffs" (29), are far in the past; and as Dracula says "the warlike days are over ...; and the glories of the great races are as a tale that is told" (29-30).

By May 15th, Harker's fear has increased greatly; he knows himself to be a prisoner and has seen the Count's lizard-like descent from a window of the castle. Harker's empirical mind calls for facts and exploration and he finds himself in a room he romantically imagines was the part of the castle occupied "in bygone days" (Stoker 35). Here he juxtaposes against the history of the long dead occupants of the room the fact that he is sitting at their writing table, using shorthand, a method of transcription which "is nineteenth century up-to-date with a vengeance" (36). Yet, the incongruity of his actions in this old place makes him aware of living in both sacred and profane time as he writes "unless my senses deceive me, the old centuries had, and have, powers of their own which mere 'modernity' cannot kill" (36). On first entering this room in Dracula's castle, Harker had felt a sense of the history of the place and a closeness to the inhabitants of the castle because of the history he

imagined for the woman who once might have used the writing desk in the room; however, this sense of the past soon turns profane as he encounters the vampire women. The historical time, which he perceives in his imagination, does not exist; it is not recoverable.

Later, Harker awakes in his own bed; and the next day's journal entry recaps his experience with the vampire ladies, an experience that he cannot identify as dream or reality. However, the evidence supports his belief that the experience was reality when he discovers his watch is not wound as he is "rigorously accustomed" (Stoker 40) to doing before bed. A few days later, the urgency of time is brought home to Harker with a finality that is horrifying. Dracula requests that he write three letters post-dated for June 12, 19, and 29, each indicating his progress toward home. At this request, Harker records "I know now the span of my life" (41). Harker is to be left at the mercy of the vampire women when Dracula leaves for England.

"Time is on my side"

At this point the novel's action moves on to England. Dracula lands at Whitby where Mina Murray and Lucy Westenra are on holiday. He has done his homework, having discovered much more about England than Harker did about Transylvania, from English magazines, newspapers, and books on such subjects as "history, geography, politics, political economy, botany, geology, law -- all relating to England and English life and customs and manners" (Stoker 19). Dracula's history and the profaneness of the time that delineates his existence can now include England.

Here the ruins of Whitby Abbey and later Carfax represent profane time, historical and irrecoverable, both places dating from far in the past.³⁷ However, it is

here that the span of a lifetime is brought to the forefront again. In Whitby, Mr. Swales, the old man whom Mina and Lucy meet at the seat where a suicide is buried, sensing his "time must be nigh at hand" (Stoker 74), talks to Mina of how long he has lived. Indicating that "a hundred years is too much for any man to expect" (74) to live, he tells Mina that he smells death on the wind and that if the "Angel of Death" (74) were to come that very night, he would be ready to go. Mr. Swales is allied with the forces of the sacred in his belief in the immortality of spirit; however, the death he has sensed on the wind from the sea is Dracula.

Unlike the mortal Swales, Dracula has lived centuries beyond the "hundred years" that Swales feels is "too much for any man to expect" (74), and because of his extended existence, he is a representative of profane time. Eliade claims that the profane individual has a "pessimistic vision of existence" (Sacred and Profane 107) because the end of linear time is death. For this person, Eliade posits repetition has no religious meaning. When repetition is no longer "a vehicle for reintegrating a primordial situation, and hence for recovering the mysterious presence of the gods, that is, when it is desacralized, cyclic time becomes terrifying" (107). In its terrifying aspect, cyclic time is perceived as "a circle forever turning on itself, repeating itself to infinity" (107), as the references to the whirlpool and the nebulous shapes of the vampire in the novel demonstrate. Dracula's life goes on year upon long year as he is resurrected only bodily within historical time frames. As a figure of the negatively numinous type, Dracula seems outside time in a way, because he lives forever. However, he is caught in history and cannot recover sacred time. For Dracula, there is no renewal because there is no death. Therefore, time means nothing to Dracula;

true death is not for him. As he tells Professor Van Helsing and the others, time is on his side, and his revenge upon them can "spread ... over centuries" (306).

Eliade claims that for a non-religious person time constitutes the deepest existential dimension linking life from beginning to end, but a religious individual refuses to live solely in the historical present. For him or her, the cosmos is a model for other kinds of doing and creation; and repair of the cosmos through ritual is a religious act, an "imitatio dei" (88) in which the object repaired becomes a "mythical archetype" (88). With each original act associated with the creation of the cosmos, according to Eliade, religious individuals believe they have the opportunity to transfigure their existence and renew their connection to the sacred and their place in the cosmos. By virtue of this eternal return to sources of the sacred, human existence appears to be saved from nothingness and death. The important point here is that modern secular individuals live within a sense of empirical, linear time that is considered by many religious men to be profane. However, traditional, more religious people claim to live within a sense of sacred time that is cyclical, recurring periodically to reconstitute the cosmos.

Sacred time is demonstrated near the beginning of the novel, when on his journey Harker sees the people worshipping at the shrine by the side of the road. They cross themselves in a "self-surrender of devotion", seeming to have "neither eyes nor ears for the outer world" (Stoker 8). Harker seems to be a profane man because he lives in profane time and space as represented by Victorian Britain's seeming concentration on profit and promotion; but later, after Harker learns the truth about Dracula's castle, he attempts to connect to sacred time as he surrenders to a

need for spiritual intervention. Having seen the vampire women for the second time and realized that Dracula means to leave him to them, he throws himself on his knees in prayer; and the next morning, rising for what he feels is his last day, he again sinks to his knees "determined that if Death came" (50) he would be ready.

Once the action of the novel moves to England, the idea of spiritual surrender is suggested by Mr. Swales who indicates his readiness to face Death by raising up "his arms devoutly" (74), his lips moving as if in prayer. Also, as Lucy Westenra is dispatched to the spiritual world, Professor Van Helsing reads the prayer for the dead over her; and later, once Mina Harker is turning into a vampire, she asks for this same prayer to be read, as if her funeral were taking place at that moment. Sacred time is also manifested in the novel when Professor Van Helsing states of Mina that "good women tell all their lives, and by day and by hour and by minute, such things that angels can read" (184). Profane time, however, is "to be dreaded" (314) by the humans in the text. Time presses for Harker who thinks of the "minutes and seconds so [preciously] laden with Mina's life and happiness" (292) that are passing so quickly while he and the other men discuss what to do about Dracula. Bitten by the vampire for the third time, Mina is in "worse than mortal peril" (288) because her soul, as well as her body, is in danger.

Eliade claims that "in the experience of sacred time" (Sacred and Profane 65), a religious person can apprehend the cosmos "as it was in principio, that is, at the mythical moment of Creation" (65). In rituals, as in the myths that generate them, the individual attempts to make contact with what is perceived as the absolute reality of the sacred and, in so doing, the individual hopes to transcend the profane condition of

a historically oriented existence, reuniting with cyclical time and returning to an originating moment in the renewal of the cosmos out of chaos. The historical reality of the human characters in Dracula is superseded over time and through knowledge of what Dracula represents by a sacred reality; and the human characters become a force for the sacred, recreating their world with the death of the vampires. However, as a force of the sacred, they perceive their duty to God as a duty to protect British social values.

"A duty to do": Reenacting the Ritual

In Dracula: Between Tradition and Modernism, Carol A. Senf describes Harker's diary as a chronicle of "underlying prejudice against practically everything foreign" and sees in it a growing sense that what Harker finds "exotic" at the beginning of the journey soon becomes "suspect and ultimately evil, as Harker changes from tourist to patriot" (36). According to her reading, Dracula is a foreigner whose invasion is feared by the men of England "during a period in which England was intent on preserving her colonial holdings and may even suggest the fear of reverse colonization" (37); and Harker's patriotic reaction against helping him to colonize England, when echoed by the others, becomes a communal pledge to "destroy all that threatens their beliefs" (37). However, Harker's reaction to Dracula's monstrosity is patriotic only in so far as he wishes to preserve his England. While patriotism is a sacred duty on a nationalistic level, if one looks at the composition of the band of men who destroy Dracula, patriotism is too narrow a concept for what these men are doing. Although England is the sacred center of Harker's world, one must not forget that Morris is an American, a frontiersman in the tradition of Jim

Bowie. Since, during the Victorian period, England and America were two of the most important countries in the Western world, linked through a common language and an industrialized economy, they might both be considered sacred in the eyes of their citizens, and the pledge which Harker and the others make to destroy Dracula is a pledge to save not just England, but also the world, from chaos.

As representatives of cosmic sacredness, Professor Van Helsing and the others have become aware of the non-rational or numinous, and through that awareness they have come to recognize the more profane side of themselves and to understand their obligation to society. In the novel, the Victorian sense of duty takes on both profane and sacred natures, acquiring a sacred dimension of meaning when duty to business becomes the higher duty to "rid the world of such a monster" (Stoker 51) as Dracula. In Transylvania, both Dracula and Harker tend only to business. For Harker "duty [is] imperative" (5); as a newly made solicitor sent to Transylvania to complete the sale of property in England to Count Dracula, Harker's responsibility is the business of his firm. However, duty takes on a sacred character in England, when Professor Van Helsing must convince the others of their responsibility to return the Un-dead Lucy to the proper condition of bodily death and spiritual life and to rid the world of Dracula. It is at this point that the second method Eliade posits for transforming the profane world into a sacred one becomes important in the novel, as the forces of the sacred set out to destroy the transformed Lucy.

Eliade argues that most primitive religions believed that the gods had to slay and dismember the marine monster or primordial being to create the world from it; and to recreate the human world as sacred space, the individual must imitate this

ritual. Many primitive, religious societies believed in imitating the gods even when the act "verged on madness, depravity, or crime" (Sacred and Profane 104). In Dracula, although the desecration of graves and bodies, and even the crime of house-breaking which the men must commit in order to fulfill their purpose, may seem like "unhallowed work" (Stoker 200) to them, yet it is holy work in defense of the sacredness of human life and English society. For Professor Van Helsing, he and the other men are like "old knights of the Cross" (320), who should look upon themselves as "ministers of God's own wish: that the world, and men for whom His Son die, will not be given over to monsters" (320). The crusade of the forces of the sacred is likened to Christ's bearing of his cross for world sanctification "in obedience to His Will" (297). The forces of the sacred are seen here as men of Christian faith. However, Eliade argues that, although of a sacred nature, Christianity is also a religion "sanctified by the incarnation of the Son of God" (Sacred and Profane 72) and, therefore, "historically conditioned" (111). As such, Christianity may be seen to demonstrate a new dimension of the presence of God in the world, which Eliade terms salvation history; and the sacred and profane meet at this point. In Dracula, the forces of the sacred must imagine themselves to be crusaders for the holy cause of their own historically-based religion in order to validate their actions in resanctifying the world within their more modern value system; and they call upon God to defend a social view of the cosmos predicated on duty and profit. However, regardless of the fact that they must imagine themselves as soldiers of God acting out of a sense of solemn and sacred duty, they are still repeating an age old pattern of recreation of the world in order to beat back chaos from the borders of their world.

To reconsecrate their world, the men must first kill and dismember Lucy Westenra. Professor Van Helsing tells Holmwood that he has "a duty to do, a duty to others, a duty to you, a duty to the dead" (Stoker 206-207); and that obligation is to stake her through the heart, cut off her head, and fill her mouth with garlic. At the tomb of Lucy, as Professor Van Helsing reads the prayer for the dead over her undead body, he counsels Holmwood to "strike in God's name" (216), in order that Lucy's soul might be redeemed from Dracula's power and that she might find the peace he has promised. After Lucy's death is accomplished, the men will take on another sacred duty, that of purifying Dracula's coffins and destroying him. As the men had done earlier "'for Lucy's sake'" (238), they kneel in a circle together and, "holding hands", pledge to be "true to one another" (297) and to save Mina Harker from the same terrible fate. However, when Dracula's existence in England is threatened, as his sanctuaries are found out and his boxes of earth are purified with blessed wafer, he retreats to the safety of his own country; but the forces of the sacred are not to be stopped. They follow Dracula back to the origin of chaos in Transylvania.

Devils, Dragons, and Dragon-slayers in the "heart of enemy country"

Since whatever space the religious person inhabits is considered a sacred cosmos, according to Eliade's study, attack from outside the cosmos threatens to desacralize it, to turn it to chaos. Attacks are, therefore, in his estimation, equivalent to "ruin, disintegration, and death" (Images and Symbols 39); and, in many world views, enemies are considered to be "demons, and especially ...the archdemon, the primordial dragon conquered by the gods at the beginning of time" (Sacred and Profane 47). In Dracula, the foreign chaos of Dracula has invaded England, attacking

the human characters and turning their cosmos to chaos, and the only way to restore the sanctity of their world is to destroy the vampire. To this end, the forces of the sacred become dragon slayers, risking all to penetrate to the "heart of the enemy's country" (Stoker 354) and kill the primordial dragon, Dracula.

Devils and Dragons

Eliade maintains that "the conception of the enemy as a demonic being, a veritable incarnation of the powers of evil" (Images and Symbols 38) is an idea which has survived through time³⁸; and Otto connects the feeling of horror inherent in an experience of the negative numinousness of demons to the fury of Lucifer and his status as a fallen angel. "'The devilish'" (Idea of the Holy 106), he maintains, has some part of the divine in it, yet is opposed to it by having a "potentiality of evil" in its divine wrath. If one looks at Dracula's history, as he tells it to Jonathan Harker, one can see that he is connected to the devil through the history of his blood ties with the Szekelys who are said to have come from Scythian witches mated with devils and with the blood of the Berserkers brought into his land by the marauding Ugric tribes of Iceland (Stoker 28).

However, Dracula is represented as both a dragon and devil in other ways. He is affiliated with both, first when Harker has reached the eastern side of Borgo Pass and records that "it seemed as though the mountain range had separated two atmospheres, and that now we had got into the thunderous one" (Stoker 9). This affiliation becomes clear if one looks at Emily Gerard's work in reference to local superstitions about weather. In her recording of local Roumanian superstitions, she finds a connection between thunderstorms and the legend of the "scholomance, or

school, supposed to exist somewhere in the heart of the mountains and where the secrets of nature, the language of animals, and all magic spells are taught by the devil in person" (198). According to legend, at the end of the course of study, one of the ten students would be required to remain with the devil as an assistant to help him "in 'making the weather' -- that is, preparing the thunderbolts" (198). Gerard also records how the peasants believe that "a small lake immeasurably deep, and lying high in the mountains to the south of Hermanstadt, is supposed to be the caldron where is brewed the thunder, under whose water the dragon lies sleeping," (198) in fair weather. To wake the dragon is to invite the storm. In the novel, Professor Van Helsing relates some of the history of Dracula to the others, including his connection with the Scholomance and the dealings which Dracula's family had with "the Evil One" (Stoker 241) who taught the dark arts there.

Moreover, the last leg of Harker's journey to castle Dracula begins from the hotel in Bistritz on May fourth, "the eve of St. George's Day" (Stoker 4)³⁹, a day in honor of St. George, "soldier-martyr" (Baring-Gould 93) and legendary dragon slayer.⁴⁰ In The Essential Dracula, Leonard Wolf notes that in the legend of this saint "the dragon represents Satan" (8), as it does in Dracula, since in the Roumanian tongue "Dracul ... means both 'dragon' and 'devil'" (8). Some of the names bandied about by the peasants on the coach with Harker are "'Ordog' -- Satan" and "'vrolok' and 'vlkoslak'" (Stoker 6), which Wolf, referencing Montague Summers' research, annotates as having the same meaning as "vârcolac" (Wolf 10). Summers describes the vârcolac as "a third type of vampire ...thought to be an extraordinary creature which eats the sun and moon and thus causes eclipses" (306). As eclipses, as well as

other such natural, but misunderstood, phenomena, in early times were thought to be omens presaging the end of the world, Wolf notes that "in Serbia, Bosnia, Bulgaria, and Slovenia, the peasants beat on pots and pans to keep the dragon Vrkolak from swallowing the sun" (10)⁴¹; and in her article "The Vampire in Roumania," Agnes Murgoci includes in her recounting of the *vârcolaci* the moral that "some say that God orders the *vârcolaci* to eat the moon, so that men may repent and turn from evil" (25).⁴²

Wolf also draws attention to folklore's connection of buried treasure with dragons; the source of this connection, he feels, can be found in the ancient practice of burying heroes in caves or barrows along with treasures for the afterlife and the fact that snakes find burial caves and barrows suitable habitations.⁴³ Though, in Dracula, the sites of buried treasure are easily located because of the blue flames, the treasure is not so easily obtained because of the powers of evil that roam the land on St. George's eve. However, it is clear that Dracula has the ability to find the valuables cached underground. Upon his arrival at the castle, Harker first notices treasure in the form of the "table service ... of gold, ...so beautifully wrought it must be of immense value" (Stoker 19). He also assesses the furniture, curtains, and bed hangings to be "of fabulous value" (19). Later, when Harker climbs into Dracula's room looking for a key to help him escape, he finds "a great heap of gold in one corner -- gold of all kinds, Roman, and British, and Austrian, and Hungarian, and Greek and Turkish money, covered with a film of dust, as though it had lain long in the ground" (47). He realizes that none of the money is "less than three hundred years old" and discovers "chains and ornaments, some jewelled, but all of them old and stained" (47). As the

dragon guarding the treasure, Dracula also has an advantage in finding and appropriating it for his own purposes.

From Dracula, Harker learns not only of the treasure buried in the "friendly soil", but also of the soil being "enriched by the blood of men, patriots or invaders" (Stoker 22). In the early history of the region, men "of the Dracula blood" led the fight for freedom; but now "the warlike days are over" and "blood is too precious a thing in these days of dishonourable peace" (29-30). For Dracula, the days of honor are over, and blood is precious to him now only as it can continue his own life. He has no more wars to fight; his heroic past is only "a tale that is told" (30), not a tale that he feels can be recreated, so he has lost his cosmic connection and become profane. Only his battle fury is left, turned into a struggle for survival instead of dedicated to a larger more sacred cause for society. Again, later, in England, the characters representing the sacred learn that blood is precious through Renfield's preoccupation with the food chain and his repeated assertion that "the blood is the life" (141). Then, as Lucy Westenra suffers from the bite of the vampire, it is the blood of brave men that she needs. To save her, Holmwood "would give the last drop of blood" in his body (121); and Professor Van Helsing, Morris, and Dr. Seward eventually are called upon to sacrifice their blood for her, also; however, it is Dracula who gets all of this blood in the end when he finally makes Lucy Westenra a vampire. Moreover, Morris gives his life's blood in the destruction of Dracula, sacrificing himself to regenerate society and save Mina Harker's from a vampire's existence. The dragon Dracula guards the treasure of monetary riches which English society values so much for the power which it provides; but the forces of the sacred find that

they also must value the treasure of more spiritual forces. A victory over the primordial dragon is a victory over chaos, a victory over the material profane life ruled by the value of riches by the forces of the spirit.

Dragon-slayers

According to Eliade, "struggles, conflicts, and wars for the most part have a ritual cause and function", where repetition of the conflict is in "imitation of an archetypal model" (The Myth of Eternal Return 29) for creating the cosmos through violent means. Sacrifice is made in order to sanctify the world anew as an imago mundi; and a ritual death is required for the resacralization of society. The forces of Western sacredness imitate the gods when they kill and dismember the profane Lucy Westenra in a bloody ritual, impaling her in her coffin with a sharpened stake, then cutting off her head, and filling her mouth with garlic. The female vampires at the castle all are dispatched in the same way, as a primordial dragon should be; however, Dracula is destroyed differently. Harker cuts Dracula's throat with his "great knife" and "at the same moment Mr. Morris' bowie knife plunged into the heart" (Stoker 377).⁴⁴ However, the effect is the same; the cosmos is once again restored to sacredness. Eliade writes that "the true sin is forgetting" (Sacred and Profane 101) what happened in the beginning of time; and the story of Mina's courage which at the end the men vow to tell young Quincey Harker when he is old enough to understand is a sign that they will not forget, but will pass that knowledge on to him, making him capable of recovering sacred time for future generations.

"In dread is need of belief": Faith and the Numinous

Eliade argues that "death is often only the result of ... indifference to immortality" (Images and Symbols 56), indifference to the sacred.⁴⁵ Therefore, the vampire is a threat to the characters in Dracula on both a physical and spiritual level, because they are indifferent to his sacred qualities. He represents what humanity can become if its faith in God and sacred duty to the cosmos are not taken seriously and periodically maintained. However, since the foundations of religious faith had been called into doubt over the decades of the nineteenth century, many people of the late Victorian period could not confidently turn to traditional religious beliefs for relief from their spiritual crisis. This is true of the characters in Dracula, who create their own brand of sacredness based on social, economic, and political values and draw on the occult only to reestablish that world in the face of the vampire's threat to their society and to themselves.

Eliade's study of early religions argues that "it is the experience of death that renders intelligible the notion of spirit and of spiritual beings" (Occultism, Witchcraft, and Cultural Fashions 34); and for many religious individuals, he maintains, death is not the end of life, only the beginning of another mode of existence. Drifting into the unknown darkness, the person seeks to conquer death by transforming it into a rite of passage, the beginning of a new spiritual existence. In initiatory contexts, death signifies passing beyond the profane, unsanctified condition to an experience of the sacred and the responsibility of being human. Numinous dread is felt in anticipation of death and is, therefore, an initiation into the human condition. Through death, it is supposed, a person changes from body to spirit; and, likewise, in the experience of

possible death "man becomes aware of his own mortality" (35), the reality of his physical presence in the universe. In confronting the numinous, a person is confronting himself or herself; the profane side of the person's personality with all its worldly desires comes under scrutiny in its conflict with a spiritual yearning for eternal life. The value of the numinous experience is sacred truth, a higher understanding of the human relationship with the gods and of an innate yearning for faith in an afterlife.

The humans in Dracula struggle with the mystery of vampirism and the ontological truth it reveals; and it is faith that in end gets them through their ordeal, regardless of the fact that what they are protecting is a historically-structured sacredness. The dread that the forces of the sacred feel at the numinous experience of the vampires reaffirms their need for faith in a spiritual existence. As they all strive to understand the meaning behind the mystery of Dracula, the "mystery of life and death" (Stoker 192), Professor Van Helsing tells Mina that despite the facts of the case which she has transcribed from Harker's journals, she "will need all [her] faith" (218) to deal with the situation before them. Then, on the way back to Transylvania in pursuit of Dracula, his former journal showing the way for the others, Harker writes "it is in trial and trouble that our faith is tested -- that we must keep on trusting; and that God will aid us up to the end" (289). They put their fates in God's hands, as "drifting reefwards ... faith is our [their] only anchor" (310) in the chaos of a sea of troubles. Their modern belief in science and the industrialized world must give way to a reliance on older traditions. Professor Van Helsing tells the other men that when they catch up to Dracula they must trust "to superstition ... at the first; it was man's

faith in the early, and it have its roots in faith still" (328). Belief in their own God gives them the courage they require to face the negative numinousness of Dracula; trust in the traditions and superstitions of earlier times, when there was no doubt of God's presence in the world, gives them the tools and the power to recreate their world.

Eliade argues that to experience sacred space and time is to reveal a longing to reactualize the primordial situation of creating the world. In his analysis of early religions, Eliade found that many people believed that sacred space and time was renewed each year with the rebirth of the land; and when each new year began, chaos had to be overcome once more. So, too, would this be true on a larger scale at the end of a century or a millennium. Humanity's terror of each new century or new millennium may be perceived as a terror of chaos and the possibility of death without renewal. The longing to live in the presence of the gods then may be expressed as an unquenchable thirst for being, a need to exist as a spiritual entity as well as a physical one. This thirst for being may be manifested as the individual's will to take responsibility for the sacredness of his or her own society, as Professor Van Helsing and the others do when they seek out Dracula, risking possible nonexistence and dissolution into chaos and death to imitate the gods and return their profane world to sacred space. As numinous fiction, Dracula is a story of salvation, of initiation into the sacred, despite the fact that their sacredness has a secular slant. In the negative numinous experience of the vampire, the humans evaluate their own evil potential and their longing for reaffirmation of a spiritual future because the chaos of the unknown, the chaos of living death, is too frightening.

NOTES

¹ For another discussion of Dracula as "symptomatic of the late Victorian frame of mind" (77) see Malcolm Smith's "Dracula and the Victorian Frame of Mind" published in Trivium in 1989.

² In 1888, the secret society known as The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was formed by William Wynn Westcott, a Rosicrucian Freemason. Known members include William Butler Yeats, Algernon Blackwood, and Aleister Crowley, among others. The Society for Psychical Research was created in 1882 by a group of scholars from Cambridge University, London, and other nearby cities in order to discover "whether some of the strange and unacceptable events – telepathy, clairvoyance, foreknowledge – had any basis in fact" (Sidgwick Foreword v). As nearly as possible a systematic and scientific method of collection, authentication, and analysis was followed; and in 1886 the information gathered by Edmund Gurney, Frank Podmore, and Frederic W. H. Myers was published in two volumes as Phantasms of the Living. This text was later abridged by Eleanor Mildred Sidgwick and published in 1918.

³ See biographers Daniel Farson, Harry Ludlam, Phyllis A. Roth, and Barbara Belford for descriptions of the incident.

⁴ This and all future references to Dracula are from the World's Classics paperback edition published by Oxford University Press in 1983.

⁵ Adderley's speech was made at the second reading of the Australian Colonies Bill on February 18, 1850.

⁶ In Horror and the Holy: Wisdom-Teachings of the Monster Tale, Kirk J. Schneider examines the sacred in several horror tales in spatial terms, as either "constrictive [or] expansive" (7). Arguing that Dracula is hyperconstrictive due to Harker's feelings of fear and the representations of imprisonment in the text, he fails to account for the representations of chaos that are an important cause of Harker's fear.

⁷ In The Land Beyond the Forest, Emily Gerard's discussion of Roumanian superstition includes a reference to the whirlpool as a place to be avoided because it is considered the residence of a water spirit "the cruel waterman who lies in wait for human victims" (200).

⁸ In Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction, Joseph Andriano states that the "circle is ... the most pervasive archetypal symbol in Dracula" (113) with the sacred circles formed by the heroes of the novel in opposition to the unholy circles of the vampires represented by the "whirlpools, vortices, and circles within circles" (114).

⁹ Later in the novel, the chaos of the vampire is juxtaposed against the order of the sacred as Professor Van Helsing and his band of men work to save Mina. When Mina has been partially turned to a vampire by Dracula and wears the circular imprint of the Sacred Wafer on her forehead as a sign of her profaneness, Professor Van Helsing places a "Holy circle" (369) of the blessed wafers about Mina to protect her from the female vampires. Furthermore, at the climax of the novel, it is a "ring of men" (376), Jonathan Harker, Quincey Morris, Arthur Holmwood, and Dr. John Seward, who do their sacred duty by ridding the world of Dracula.

¹⁰ Leonard Wolf annotates this passage in The Essential Dracula, noting that Stoker is informing the reader "that Harker is passing from the civilized to the primordial; from the known to the unknown" (14).

¹¹ In Eliade's study of world religions, an extremely common representation of the abode of the gods is "a Mountain...situated at the Centre of the World" (Images and Symbols 42).

¹² As Dracula arrives in England aboard the Demeter, Stoker reminds the reader of Dracula's connection to Coleridge's Mariner. The wind dies and the stormy seas are replaced by a dead calm; and Mina remarks, quoting the Mariner, that the only ship visible, a foreign ship, seems "as idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean" (76).

¹³ Bhalla quotes Eliade's Sacred and Profane, p. 23

¹⁴ Brewer's Book of Myth and Legend (J. C. Cooper, ed.) defines the 'white lady' as a "kind of spectre, the appearance of which generally forebodes death in the house" (301). Leonard Wolf, in The Essential Dracula (an annotated version of Dracula, New York: Plume/Penguin, 1975) and Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu, in their The Essential Dracula (annotated version of Dracula, New York: Mayflower Books, 1979) all note that the 'white lady' of Whitby Abbey is thought to be the ghost of St. Hilda, the first abbess of Whitby monastery in the seventh century.

¹⁵ Montague Summers, in The Vampire: His Kith and Kin (reprinted as The Vampire, 1991), mentions this fact, as does Leonard Wolf in The Essential Dracula.

¹⁶ In Whitby, there exists the same polarity of West and East that Harker had noticed on his travels to Transylvania. The suicide's grave and the death seat above it are on the East cliff, while the town and the hotel where Mina and Lucy are staying are on the West cliff. Once Dracula has brought Lucy under his influence, he can invade the town and her rooms at the Crescent and eventually move even further west to her home at Hillingham, near London.¹⁶ Lucy's surname Westenra also allies her with the west, interpretations, according to Leonard Wolf, identifying her name "symbolically as 'Light of the West' (71). Most interpretations call attention to the displaced "r" to give the reading "Western" to Lucy last name. However, Wolf notes that her name has been interpreted as a derivative of 'Lucifer' and mentions Mark M. Hennelley's suggestion in his article "Dracula: The Gnostic Quest and Victorian Wasteland," that her name stands for "the principle of right light" (71). However, there is a further interpretation that can be given. According to Christopher Frayling's Vampires: Lord Byron to Count Dracula, Stoker had E. A. Wallis Budge's The Mummy: Chapters in Egyptian Funereal Archeology (1893 edition) in his library at the time of his writing of Dracula, and Frayling lists this book as "relevant to the writing" (346) of the text. In light of the information in this book, one might interpret Lucy's last name as divided into the syllables West-en-Ra, 'en-Ra' most often translated in the Budge book as 'of the Sun'. Her name might then be interpreted as 'Light of the Western Sun' which would associate it with sunset, thereby identifying her even more strongly with the vampire who can only rise from the grave at sunset.

¹⁷ Additionally, according to Leonard Wolf, in The Essential Dracula, The Oxford Dictionary of Etymology defines Carfax as "a place where four roads meet, especially as a proper name" (31).

¹⁸ In The Essential Dracula, Leonard Wolf also makes an interesting point that Carfax is a perfect choice for Dracula's English lair because suicides were by tradition buried at crossroads.

¹⁹ Dr. Seward's reference to the use of the strait waistcoat and to the chaining of Renfield in order to restrain him indicate that he is still making use of earlier methods and mechanics for keeping patients in a condition more like prisoners than sick people. According to Andrew T. Scull's Museums of Madness: The Social Organization of Insanity in Nineteenth-Century England (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), both strait waistcoats and chaining were methods used in the early eighteenth hundreds to restrain patients.

²⁰ Private asylums arose as business ventures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and had to make a profit in order to survive; therefore, the doctors in charge not only became the "arbiters of mental normalcy" (McCandless 341), but also had a monetary stake in diagnosing someone as insane.

²¹ In the early eighteenth century, Daniel Defoe alleged "that men often disposed of unwanted wives" (McCandless 339) in private asylums. Elaine Showalter's The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980 (New York: Random House, 1985) contains an interesting study of the treatment of women diagnosed as insane during the nineteenth century.

²² For more information on the New Woman and the role of sexual freedom in Dracula, see: C. F. Bentley's "The Monster in the Bedroom: Sexual Symbolism in Bram Stoker's Dracula" (Literature and Psychology 22 (1972): 27-34); Phyllis A. Roth's "Suddenly Sexual Women in Bram Stoker's Dracula" (Literature and Psychology 27 (1977): 113-21); and John Allen Stevenson's "A Vampire in the Mirror: the Sexuality of Dracula" (PMLA 103 (March 1988): 139-49).

²³ In Literary England, David E. Scherman and Richard Wilcox refer to Hampstead Heath as "an expanse of wasteland" (plate 48) within the confines of the London suburbs. According to data in Henry Mayhew's London Labour and the London Poor, prostitution was prevalent there. (Mayhew 266) Highwaymen also found this spot particularly attractive for their activities, and the Spaniard's Inn, on the edge of Hampstead Heath, where Professor Van Helsing and the others dine, was the setting for Alfred Noyes poem "The Highwayman."

²⁴ The connection between Holmwood and King Arthur takes on a tripartite pattern if one takes into account the association of Irish hero Finn MacCumhal (alternative spelling: Fionn MacCumhaill) and King Arthur. Finn was the leader of a band of men called the Fianna, who, according to historical and folklore research, were a "band of warriors" (Nagy 20) most often characterized in early texts as social outcasts who survived by "hunting and warring" (18). As outlaws, these men functioned "outside or on the margins of the tribal territory or community" (18). However, through time and the telling of the tale, the character of Fionn and the Fianna was transformed; and they came to be perceived as the

champions and protectors of Ireland. Many experts in Celtic literature find a bond between King Arthur and Finn, considered in their respective folklores to be heroic, cultural figures and leaders of bands of men who protect their respective lands from enemies. Legend has it that both are also spirited away at their deaths to a "hidden place" (MacKillop 7) where they slumber until their people need them again; and Finn is often described in later tales as the "Irish Arthur" (63). In light of the connection between these legendary heroes, it seems probable that Stoker combined them in the character of Holmwood, both by naming him after King Arthur and by incorporating the story of Finn in the repeated references to bitter and sweet water in the text. (See pages 170, 202, and 213 in Dracula.)

In Gods and Fighting Men: the Story of the Tuatha De Danaan and of the Fianna of Ireland, Lady Augusta Gregory retells the tale "The Hospitality of Cuanna's House" which Stoker most probably was familiar with from his Irish childhood. One day Finn MacCumhal and his friends, Oisín, Caoilte, Dairmid, and Lugaidh's son are hunting with their hounds on the summit of Caim Feargall. Suddenly, they spy a giant carrying a pig on his back and attempt to speak to him. A druid mist rises and hides the road and the giant. When the mist clears, they discover a house with two wells near it. On the edge of one well is an iron vessel; on the other is a copper vessel. At the house the occupants, including the old man who owns the house, welcome them; but soon Finn becomes thirsty. Caoilte is sent by the owner of the house to bring water from "whichever of the wells you will choose" (264). He brings water in the copper vessel, which Finn drinks. This water tastes like honey while Finn is drinking it, but it turns to gall in his stomach, causing "fierce windy pains and signs of death" (264). Caoilte is sent out once again and this time brings water in the iron vessel. When Finn drinks this water, it tastes of "bitterness" (264); but afterward, he feels better. The old man explains that the two wells represent "Lying and Truth; for it is sweet to people to be telling a lie, but it is bitter in the end" (266). By the same token, though the truth may taste bitter when first heard, in the end it is sweet. It may be this idea that Stoker is trying to impart when he puts the phrase about bitter and sweet water in Professor Van Helsing's mouth. For Holmwood, as for all of them, the truth of Lucy's existence as a vampire may be bitter in the beginning, but later, after the men have returned her to a more blessed state in death, memory of her can be sweet again.

²⁵ According to research done for their book Dracula, Prince of Many Faces: His Life and Times, Radu R. Florescu and Raymond T. McNally, history professors and Dracula experts with several books on the subject to their credit, found that through Romanian folklore Vlad Tepes became a national hero on the order of America's George Washington. The Romanian oral tradition characterizes him as "a law-upholding statesman who is implacable in punishing thieves, liars, idlers, or people who otherwise cheated the state" (216). As a "rational despot" (216) he attempted to "centralize his government by killing unpatriotic anarchical boyars" (216) and his exploits were believed by the people to be socially and morally right. Another article of interest on Vlad Tepes is Grigore Nandris' "The Historical Dracula: The Theme of His Legend in the Western and in the Eastern Literatures of Europe" (Comparative Literature: Matter and Method, A. Owen Aldridge, ed. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1969: 367-96).

²⁶ The other coach passengers give Harker garlic, wild rose, and mountain ash (rowan), which in primitive superstition have powers over the vampire.

- (a) Emily Gerard writes that Roumanian superstition calls for the mouth of a suspected vampire to be filled with garlic, in addition to the cutting off of the head as a precaution against vampirism. (185) As an agent against plague and various supernatural evils, in Romania garlic is used both to detect the vampire and to prevent attack. Vampires living in community (living vampires) can be detected by their reluctance to eat garlic; and on both St. Andrew's and St. George's eves windows and doors are anointed with garlic to keep vampires away. Cattle are even rubbed with garlic or fed garlic to protect them.
- (b) Gerard also found that it was "usual to lay the thorny branch of a wild-rose bush across the body to prevent it leaving the coffin" (186). Montague Summers records that in Saxon superstition in Transylvania on St. George's Day it was customary to place branches of the wild rose bush on the gates of the yard to keep out witches (309).
- (c) The mountain ash is a member of the rose family, alternately named the rowan tree. It was customarily planted in churchyards and at door of houses and barns to protect people and animals from evil spirits. (Melton, J. Gordon. The Vampire Book: The Encyclopedia of the Undead.

Detroit: Visible Ink Press, 1999) In The White Goddess, Robert Graves writes that "in Danaan Ireland a rowan-stake hammered through a corpse immobilized its ghost" (167).

²⁷ Max Nordau (1849-1923) was a Hungarian physician and disciple of Caesar Lombroso whose most famous work was Degeneration, published in 1892, a work which argued that culture had deteriorated and retrogressed, and that criminals, prostitutes, the insane, and artists were degenerate types. Lombroso (1836-1909), known by many as "the father of modern criminology" (Wolf 403), argued a theory that the congenital criminal is an aberrant mental type, a reversion to the primitive.

²⁸ Discussions of the fear of reverse colonization in Dracula can be found in chapter five of Carol A. Senf's Dracula: Between Tradition and Modernism (New York: Twayne/Prentice Hall, 1998) and in Stephen D. Arata's article "The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization" (Victorian Studies 3, no. 4 Summer 1990: 621-45)

²⁹ In Christopher Frayling's Vampires: Lord Byron to Count Dracula, he reproduces sections of Stoker's research notes from Emily Gerard's book. Stoker's working and research notes for Dracula are housed at the Rosenbach Museum in Philadelphia.

³⁰ Joseph Andriano's book Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction contains a discussion of the female vampires or lamiae of Dracula and their ability to shape-change from solid form to the chaos of dust and swirling snow and vice versa.

³¹ Within the text, however, the evidence for diagnosis of Renfield as a religious maniac comes because he does not distinguish between Dr. Seward and the attendant, treating them both with "haughty" (Stoker 110) disregard. Because Renfield does not differentiate between the rank of doctor and attendant, Dr. Seward feels the lack of proper respect for his station and draws the analogy that the "real God taketh heed lest a sparrow fall; but the God created from human vanity sees no difference between an eagle and a sparrow" (110). However, Renfield's own analogy of the bride and bridesmaids shows that he recognizes the difference in importance of people. Attempting to draw Renfield out by talking of his spiders, Dr. Seward is surprised when Renfield shows no interest in them. Renfield's answer is "the bride-maidens rejoice the eyes that wait the coming of the bride; but when the bride draweth nigh, then the maidens shine not to the eyes that are filled" (111). In The Essential Dracula, Leonard Wolf notes that "the spiders are represented by the bride-maidens who are eclipsed by the coming of the bride" (133). If Dracula is to be the bride, Renfield is cast in the role of groom, according to Wolf; and "Dracula's murderous visit to Renfield takes on the meaning of a macabre consummation of a monstrous wedding night" (133). Certainly, the bride-maiden-spider analogy works; however, I believe that the bride-maidens are also Dr. Seward and the attendant, both of whom Renfield says "don't count now" (Stoker 110) because his "Master is at hand" (110).

³² Will Therapy and Truth and Reality were first translated by Jesse Taft and published as separate texts in 1936.

³³ In Voyage of the Beagle (1839), Charles Darwin comments on the primitive land of New Zealand being "the centre of the land of cannibalism, murder, and all atrocious crimes!" (313). This description reminds one of Jonathan Harker's description of Transylvania.

³⁴ Wolf notes that the expression "for the blood is the life" is part of a proscriptive passage of the Bible which forbids the eating of the blood in order to "differentiate the god of the Israelites from that of neighboring peoples such as the Babylonians and the Assyrians who allowed human sacrifice" (181).

³⁵ According to canonical history, St. Walpurgis was an 8th century English nun whose missionary work took her to Germany where she eventually "became abbess of Heidenheim" (Cooper 299), and whose name became confused in legend with the pagan fertility goddess Waldbourg. Through this mix-up Walpurgis Night became associated with the activity of witches and even vampires. On this night, Bohemians are said to have placed branches of "hawthorn and wild rose around stables to entangle them and frustrate their evils" (Bunson 278). However, Barbara G. Walker states that there were no records of this particular abbess, so she probably was a "Christianization of the pagan Goddess of Walpurgisnacht, the orgiastic festival of the springtime sacred marriage" (1058). According to her research, Heidenheim was a "double monastery ... during the 8th century" (1058) and these "double monasteries largely perpetuated the pagan traditions of the 'colleges' of priests and priestesses living together under a female ruler, and apparently carrying on the ancient sex rites under a thin veil of Christian-pagan syncretism" (1058). As additional evidence, she cites the fact that Heidenheim's literal meaning is "home of the heathens" (1058). Although the date of celebration in honor of St Walpurga was changed to February to discourage her celebration being confused with the pagan one, Walpurgis

Night remains the primary festival night of witchcraft. Walpurgis Night also is associated with Goethe's Faust, a play in which an aged scholar, Faust, makes a deal with the devil Mephistopheles in order to gain all knowledge and experience. In part one of the play, Goethe uses the Walpurgis Night celebrations of the witches to illuminate the chaos that characterizes Mephistopheles and his dwelling place in the underworld; and in part two, as Faust searches for Helen of Troy, Goethe sets the action against a Walpurgis Night festival from classical Greece. Stoker's Dracula originally opened with a chapter that takes place on Walpurgis Night. The deleted chapter was later published under the title "Dracula's Guest" and its plot is reminiscent of Le Fanu's earlier story Carmilla.

³⁶In The Essential Dracula, Leonard Wolf notes that a "journey from Klausenberg to Bistrita ... took four and three-quarter hours" (4) under normal circumstances; however, Harker's trip took twelve hours, putting him in Bistritz "eight hours late" (5).

³⁷Leonard Wolf notes that Horne's Guide to Whitby lists the "Monastery of Streonshalh ... founded in the year 658" (84) as the religious house from which Whitby Abbey eventually was born.

³⁸In Vampires in the Carpathians: Magical Acts, Rites, and Beliefs in Subcarpathian Rus', Pëtr Bogatyřev, Russian folklorist and ethnographer, argues that "belief in sorcerers, vampires, and forest spirits is reinforced by the fact that the Church also teaches about the existence of the Evil Spirit, the Devil" (137), causing people to meld their notions of folk spirits with their concept of evil.

³⁹According to Montague Summers, "the power of vampires, witches and every evil thing" (Vampire in Europe 312) is strongest on the eve of St. George's Day;

⁴⁰The Eastern legends of St. George, both Christian and Muslim, refer mostly to his suffering for religion; however, the Western myth incorporates a fight with a dragon whose depredations were destroying the town of Silene in Lybia. Tribute was first paid in animals, then in human lives as the supply of animals was depleted. Finally, the king's daughter was chosen as tribute, taken to the lake, and offered up to the beast. As George passed by the lake, he saw her weeping. Discovering what had caused her fear and sadness, he vowed to save her. As the dragon rose from the water, George made the sign of the cross, recommended himself to God, and went to fight the beast. His prowess with the sword so mesmerized the dragon that George was able to tie the princess's girdle about its neck and lead it into town. Through this miraculous feat, George converted and baptized thousands of men, women, and children; then he cut off the head of the dragon. (See Baring-Gould's Curious Myths of the Middle Ages.)

⁴¹Wolf's information on this point comes from Dr. F. S. (Friedrich Salomo) Krauss's Volks Glaube und Religiöserbrauch der süd Slaven (Münster: Druck und Verlag der Aschendorffschen Buchhandlung, 1890). Other publications by Krauss on the subject of vampires include an essay on Yugoslavian vampires, "Vampyre im südslawischen Volksglauben" published in Globus, issue 61 (1892), and "Südslawische Schutzmittel gegen Vampyre" published in Globus, issue 62 (1892). A translation of this essay by Johanna Jacobsen and Alan Dundes is included in The Vampire: A Casebook, edited by Alan Dundes (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1998).

⁴²As recently as the second week of August, 1999, the news reports of an imminent full solar eclipse observable over Romania noted the unease of its citizens, who, though they understood the scientific process of eclipses, still were influenced by the early legends and were frightened that the eater of the sun would let loose the forces of darkness to roam freely in the world.

⁴³One would also be tempted to think of the story of Beowulf in this regard also, especially since Beowulf comes to us from primitive oral tradition.

⁴⁴Although there has been a lot of speculation over the decades as to whether Dracula truly died at the hands of Jonathan Harker and Quincey Morris, one must believe he did. While the classic tools for dispatching the vampire were not used in Dracula's case, the Kukri knife which Harker uses on Dracula is a ferocious instrument of death, much like a machete in its size and form with a curved double-edged blade, known for its ability to shear through small tree trunks with ease. With any degree of force behind it, the Kukri knife would shear the head from the body in one stroke. Moreover, the Bowie knife that Morris carries is almost as formidable a weapon as the Kukri. With a length of fifteen inches from end to end and a double-edged blade, it would be a suitable weapon with which to stake the vampire.

⁴⁵Eliade draws this conclusion on looking at the legend of Parsifal and the Fisher King. The aged king, who alone knows the secret of the Holy Grail, is suffering from a mysterious illness that also affects the world around him. Though his doctors try to cure him, and though various knights arrive

seeking news of his health, the King remains ill. His home and the countryside around him also suffer; the palace is crumbling, the trees are barren of fruit, and the springs are drying up. Then Parsifal, shows up and articulates the most important point: where is the Grail. Once he asks this question, all nature is rejuvenated, and the world is miraculously transformed. Eliade interprets that it was indifference to the sacred that had caused the world's and the Fisher King's decline. See also note 45 in chapter two on "The Ancient Mariner." The Hermit and the Wedding Guest are not indifferent to the Mariner and ask the right question to elicit his tale. The tale, in turn, helps to heal the society, just as the Fisher King's world is healed by Parsifal's question.

CHAPTER FOUR

EROS AND THE THANATOTIC HERO: ANNE RICE'S VAMPIRE CHRONICLES

There are only three great puzzles in the world, the puzzle of love, the puzzle of death, and, between each of these and part of both of them, the puzzle of God. God is the greatest puzzle of all. (Niall Williams, As It Is in Heaven 3)

In The Culture of Narcissism, cultural historian Christopher Lasch maintains that during the nineteen-sixties and seventies America suffered a “crisis of confidence” (Preface xiii). Distrust in “American institutions of authority---school, church, government, the family itself” (Magistrale and Morrison 2) was thought to have produced a society of despairing individuals “haunted not by guilt but by anxiety” (Lasch xvi). Lasch argues that this anxiety characterizes a spiritual alienation caused by a loss of faith in society’s ability to construct a system that could “confront the difficulties that threaten to overwhelm it” (xiii). Psychologist James B. McCarthy, author of Death Anxiety¹, defines this spiritual alienation as an anxiety characterized by a fear of death that “often takes the form of scientific misgivings about the reality of God’s existence or a disbelief in the possibility of life after death” (1). In response to this anxiety, as many sixties and seventies-decade individuals questioned what it means to transcend death, they seemed to have been searching not only for a reconnection with God, but also to have been seeking reassurance that He exists at all.

In the afterword of the paperback edition of his book, first published in 1991², Lasch updated his evaluation of twentieth-century culture, maintaining that the eighties saw little change in American society's response to the breakdown of its social structures, and finding that a great contingent of society still approached the world in a selfish and self-absorbed fashion. The nineties, however, according to Lasch's argument, were a time of change. Although the presumption of asserting change for the entire decade of the nineties from the perspective of the beginning to the decade makes his assertion more of a prediction, it is his change of focus in his own definition of narcissism that is important to this discussion. Earlier he had focused his thesis on the secondary narcissistic tendencies characterized by disappointment of desires, and had defined the twentieth-century individual as suffering from "a feeling of inauthenticity and inner emptiness" (239), and as having trouble connecting in the world; however, as he continued to research the subject after the original publication of The Culture of Narcissism, he found that Sigmund Freud had defined the concept of narcissism in two ways: primarily, as a longing for Nirvana or eternal life; and secondarily, as self-love. In primary narcissism, Lasch saw "the pain of separation" (241) which he described as the foundation of the human fear of death from birth onward; and his new definition of narcissism took on a more spiritual tone with his new definition of it as "a longing to be free from longing" (241) and a seeking for "everlasting life" (240). Characteristically, this longing takes the form of such an extreme spiritual alienation that the alienated person not only doubts the existence of God, but also feels that if God does not exist then the after life may not either, or if it does it must be simply a further extension of existence here on

earth and yet another eternal alienation from God. In reaction to this fear that neither God nor the afterlife truly exists, the dilemma of much of twentieth-century society became how to invest a transitory life with meaning. Lasch felt the nineties-decade desire for everlasting life to be distinguished by “a revival of ancient superstitions, a belief in reincarnation, a growing fascination with the occult, and the bizarre forms of spirituality associated with the New Age movement” (245); and his characterization seems to have been born out.

Writing at the end of the nineties, in “The Future of Faith,” an article for New Yorker, John Updike also argued that twentieth-century society was searching for a spiritual path. Despite his insistence that in America faith was holding its own, and that “God and the afterlife do well in polls, clocking affirmative ratings of around ninety per cent for belief in God and eighty per cent for the afterlife” (84), he cites a study done by University of Arizona sociologist Mark Chaves, writing, “belief in the afterlife is going up, even as church attendance drops” (84). Updike attributed the drop in church attendance to the religious person’s easy access to “home study and the Sunday-morning religious shows” (84), as well as to the wide variety of religious books and New Age mystical texts available at the local bookstore. However, whether one adhered to the traditional religious practices of their church or experimented with some type of New Age spirituality, the fact remains that in the nineties people were searching for an inspired and spiritual path toward meaning in their world.³ Psychologically, these quests for personal spirituality might be perceived as attempts to control the anxiety that society felt at its perceived alienation

from the world of the spirit and to repress the fear of death which that alienation exacerbates.

For Ernest Becker, author of The Denial of Death, our innate fear of death is a “biological and evolutionary problem” (Becker 16) with a foundation in our animal “instinct of self-preservation” (16). The main focus of this kind of individualism is an insistence on the primary value of one’s own existence. In order for a person to function in any way normally in the everyday world and to keep his identity intact, Becker feels that he must repress his fear of death by denying an awareness of his dependent situation and of his true human fate. One denies death by constructing a reality that defends against the fear, allowing for a “creation of meaning” (7) that will provide the significance craved by the individual. Since a given society usually decides how its people transcend death according to the structure of its predominant religious beliefs, if those beliefs are questioned, that particular social system no longer has the power to confront its existential problems or to defend its constituents against their profound fear of death. Questioning the existence of God or the possibility of eternal life brings the natural human fear of death to the surface in the individual; and as a result, the breakdown of the social system of religion is often accompanied by a disintegration of other social systems, as well.

Becker defines the urge toward death or Thanatos as an urge toward the truth of destiny, death. To deny that destiny, a person counters his thanatotic impulses with Eros, an urge toward life, meaningfulness and creativity. As Becker interprets this psychological problem, the human mind, caught between the two urges, Thanatos and Eros, creates a fiction of heroic authority to give meaning to life and, thereby, to

deny the death-urge. These systems of authority include structures such as family, society, religion, myth, and even history. According to Becker, human beings deny death by creating a “manageable world” (23) through organization of these authorities which function much like psychological defense mechanisms to protect them from fully realizing their mortal condition. Lasch and Becker both argue that twentieth-century society questioned the structures of cultural authority; however, the heroic systems of authority seemed to have failed twentieth-century humans with a frequency not experienced in earlier centuries. The reason for this, according to Becker’s analysis, is that in the last half of the century, the young people no longer perceived any chance for heroic action in the structures that their culture provided for them. (Becker 6) Without the traditional heroic avenues open to them, human beings must look for other ways to create meaning or re-create the old ways with a new structure.

Of the human urge toward life through heroism, William James writes in Varieties of Religious Experience that “pain and wrong and death must be fairly met and overcome in [the] higher excitement” (363) of “wild and heroic” deeds. The human “instinct for reality ... has always held the world to be essentially a theatre for heroism” (364); and it is in heroism that James feels human beings perceive “life’s supreme mystery” (364) to be hidden. James defines this “metaphysical mystery” (364) as our innate understanding that “he who feeds on death that feeds on men possesses life supereminently and excellently, and meets best the secret demands of the universe” (364). The heroic individual, then, might be defined as one who, by

facing his fear of annihilation and making meaning from it, devotes his life to a search for “higher meaning” (Becker 268), both socially and cosmically.

The “metaphysical mystery” (364) of which William James writes may be found hidden in the human relationship with death. When the defense mechanisms used by a person to suppress anxieties of annihilation fall short of their intended purpose, reality may intrude and “fear of death emerges in pure essence” (Becker 23). This pure essence can be found Rudolf Otto’s numinous concept. A fundamental part of the experience of the numinous is the confrontation with death that the subject undergoes. In an encounter with the numinous we human beings gain an immediate sense of our creatureliness and dependence in the presence of an absolute power. The dread or fear we feel helps us to see the true reality of our existence, our limited power and our place in the universe. As one experiences fear in the face of the supernaturally powerful numinous object, one must recognize mortality on a personal level and face the inevitability of death in the possibility of physical annihilation due to the force of the numen.

In the numinous encounter, the subject is caught between the urges of Eros and Thanatos. Fascinated and excited by the urge toward death, which draws one toward numinous contact, yet dreading the idea of death, the subject counters fascination with a fear of annihilation and an urge toward life and meaning. It is in the ambiguousness of a position between dread and fascination that the subject of the numinous encounter finds the capacity to create meaning from fear. In an attempt to survive the reality of the numinous encounter, to master or control the mystery and dread of the numen, a person searches for ways to create moral meaning out of the

experience, and, thereby, to deny the promise of death which life holds. Therefore, terror of death can be understood to lead to heroic action on the part of the subject, as the reaction to the numinous encounter for the healthy mind is to create systems of action that will help to repress the fear that threatens to overwhelm it. To repress the fear of death is to deny it and, therefore, to deny the power of the numinous in order to function on a daily basis in the world.

Vampires Are Us

In an interview for Quadrant conducted by Katherine Ramsland, best selling author⁴ Anne Rice articulated that her intent in writing her novels has been to “describe reality through fantasy” (Ramsland Anne Rice Reader 56). The reality she wishes to describe is, of course, our human reality; and to this end, she argues that her vampire novels are “not just about vampires” (“A Message from Anne Rice”). Instead, she sees the vampire as representative of the human condition in all its physical and spiritual implications. For her, vampires are a “natural metaphor for us, for our affluence, our powers ...” (King Interview).⁵ The vampires in Rice’s novels are “outsiders, creatures outside of the human sphere who can therefore speak about it --- the way Mephistopheles could speak about it to Faust” (Ramsland Anne Rice Reader 61). Rice admits her own obsession “with the idea of whether or not we have a God ... [or] a personal Devil” (King Interview) or afterlife and sees her characters, as surrogate humans, exploring such troubling issues as “the mystical relationship in our lives between life and death and the larger moral definitions of good and evil” (Hoppenstand and Browne 5).⁶ Her characters speak to twentieth-century readers because they suffer the same feelings of ambiguity that humans do in terms of these

issues; and Rice feels “that the immortality of her creatures is especially pertinent” for the late twentieth century because “we’re all living longer” (Mathews and Beachy 75).

As late twentieth century society looked toward the millennium the questions that Anne Rice put into the mouths of her characters also became important in an apocalyptic sense. As her vampires search for reassurance that there is a God and an afterlife and good in the world, so, too, it seems, did the humans of the last three decades of the last century ask these same questions in the face of their fears about their spiritual future. In having her characters ask questions about the existence of God, the Devil, and the afterlife, Rice says she is asking questions that concern her in her own life and, hopefully, the lives of her readers. She sees her writing as a “deep ... search for truth” (King Interview) and wants her readers to “soul search” (Gumbel Interview). Rice is of the opinion, rightly I believe, that, over and above the entertainment value of her fiction, this soul searching is what her readers want from her books.

In an interview with Bryant Gumbel on the publication of Memnoch the Devil, Rice admitted that there is a “heavy religious tone and a very serious one” to her work and called Lestat’s story “a spiritual journey” (Today Show Interview). For her, “vampires ... have always been spiritual explorers” (King Interview); and, as such, “the vampire represents somebody who’s transcended time and transformed himself into an immortal and becomes like a dark saint -- a being with all the powers that transcend the corruptible.”⁷ He represents the longing for immortality and freedom...” (Ramsland Anne Rice Reader 65).⁸ As the transcendent object, the

vampire represents the negative numinous; and, therefore, the vampire is inherently, ambiguously indifferent and of both good and evil potential.⁹ For this reason, Rice's vampires can serve as the heroes of her tales, heroes whose search for a higher meaning makes them vehicles for a discussion of both the universal issue of human transcendence and its concomitant problem of the ever-changing definitions of good and evil. While representing the numinous,¹⁰ Anne Rice's vampires also represent human beings, with all the questions we have about what it is to be human. They are the heroes of their stories and work in the same ways as other heroic individuals to deny their own deaths and to make meaning of their lives. The question that the numinous leaves Rice's protagonists with is the same one we are confronted with: how do we balance our awareness and acceptance of the absoluteness of death with an urge toward life and meaning?

In her stories of the vampire Lestat, Rice uses the autobiographical technique to provide an individual experience of the human condition through the eyes of the vampire. As individual memoirs and true histories of her vampire's life, these tales take a more realistic approach to the telling of the tale than either Coleridge's poem or Stoker's novel; and the ambiguousness and hesitation of the fantastic in her texts is less focused on feelings than the other two texts and more focused on the questions Lestat asks about who he is, what he is, and what his spiritual fate will be. The difference between Rice's vampire Lestat and the vampires of earlier periods is that Lestat is clearly the hero of the story; and it is his search for divine truth with which the audience identifies. As the hero, Lestat is all too human, creating a world that mimics the one he has been banished from wherever possible. Unlike the Mariner

and the main characters of Dracula, whose experiences of the vampire require them to fall back on a wavering belief in God, Lestat is an atheist. Regardless of his disbelief, his experience of the vampire, and of the vampire life, serves to underscore for him that the divine does exist and that he is now alienated from it with no possibility of reunion in the afterlife.

Rice's vampire shares many similarities with the vampires of Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and Bram Stoker's Dracula. In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Coleridge's structure involves a tale that must be told and the main characters include the teller of the tale, the Mariner, and his audience, the Wedding Guest. In Rice's novel, Lestat takes on the role of the eternal wanderer, telling his stories via the print media rather than orally. The theme is also much the same, since Lestat the vampire kills without thinking of the consequences. When he is finally faced with his crimes, in the form of his victims souls, he must change his moral outlook and conclude that human life should be respected.

In Anne Rice: A Critical Companion, Jennifer Smith considers that the similarities between Stoker's Dracula and Rice's vampire novels include the fact that both authors play with the concept of free will in the vampire's "choice of evil" (Smith 13), thus making the vampire figure more human. In addition, drawing on Nina Auerbach's writings on vampire literature, Smith finds that Rice's vampire also shares an "aversion to closeness with living" (13) with Dracula¹¹ because they turn those to whom they feel close into vampire. However, I feel that Lestat is different from Dracula for precisely this reason: that he needs to understand his place in both the earthly and spiritual worlds results in a desire for a meaningful life and this desire

draws him into situations where a closeness with the living is not only unavoidable, but also necessary.

Lasch defined his seventies narcissistic individual much as one might a vampire: “acquisitive in the sense that his cravings have no limits” (xvi). Although “he does not accumulate goods and provisions against the future, in the manner of the acquisitive individualist of nineteenth-century political economy, ... [he] demands immediate gratification and lives in a state of restless, perpetually unsatisfied desire” (xvi). However, by the dawn of the nineties his definition of narcissism came to include the individual’s desire for immortality on a spiritual level. Like Lasch’s twentieth-century individual, Rice’s vampire Lestat does not desire “to inflict his own certainties on others but to find a meaning in life” (Lasch xvi). The character of Lestat in Rice’s Vampire Chronicles¹² may become a numinous hero as a vampire, but since he also represents the human condition, he carries questions about the existence of God, the afterlife, and good and evil from his human life into his vampire existence. Caught between his fear of death and his numinousness as a representation of Death, he copes with both conditions by searching for meaning in his life. In the story of Lestat one can see that he is on a journey from selfish narcissism to a more primary kind which is a search for spirituality as raison d’être. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the spiritual journey of Lestat, his confrontations with the numinous, how the various established cultural authorities have failed him, both as a human and as a numinous figure, and how he tries to resolve the question of his existence by reconstructing these cultural authorities within his new existence and remaking meaning in his eternal afterlife as a vampire.

Lestat's Spiritual Journey

In "Toward an Adult Spirituality," an article for America, theologian William J. O'Malley delineates five stages that characterize a spiritual journey. They are: a "sense of the numinous" (342); the need to understand the numinous experience; the desire to become an "honorable human being" (342) in the face of that understanding; "the hunger ... to reach beyond the limits of time and space" (342) to the higher reality of the soul; and the "drive to expend what little life" (342) one has in a transitory world in the service of both humanity and the divine. Once Lestat's social and cultural structures have broken down, he experiences the numinous as the first step on his spiritual journey; and as he attempts to understand the nature of his experience, he wrestles with the question of good and evil, in effect, asking himself what kind of honorable person he possibly could be as a vampire. When the questions grow more complicated, delving into whether God and the Devil exist, and whether there is an afterlife, Lestat attempts to discover whether as a vampire he still can experience the higher transcendence of the soul. In the tales of Lestat, one sees a quest that takes him not only around the physical world, but also back into the realm of mythology and ancient religious worship. Then, in Memnoch the Devil, the last of Lestat's tales, one can see a kind of "apocalyptic spirituality" (Strozier and Flynn 74) at work. This is a story, which like many of the traditional apocalyptic texts, has its narrator "ascending to heaven" and revealing the "secrets of the celestial realms and their inhabitants" and "of the course of history" (74); and at the end, Lestat does resolve to live his life without drinking human blood, which is to say, in an honorable fashion and in service of other human beings.

In order to understand how an experience of the numinous affects the life of the vampire Lestat, one must begin with some background on his mortal life and how the cultural authorities that have helped him repress his innate fear of death have failed him, leaving him dissatisfied, in despair, and, therefore, vulnerable to the numinous contact with the vampire. The cultural authorities that have failed Lestat in his mortal life include family and religion, which might be designated in his case as a belief in God. These two structures that would normally provide meaning for a human being are intertwined in his life and the one, belief in God, fails him because the other, his family, did. In response to their failure, Lestat creates his own structure based on an aesthetic of goodness that he hopes can produce the meaning he craves. Lestat's mortal history begins before the French Revolution; and in his recounting of childhood, one sees a young boy who seeks to invest his life with meaning and goodness, and whose family denies him that opportunity at almost every turn. Sent to school at the local monastery when he is twelve years old, Lestat discovers that he loves the monastic life – the rituals, the many books in the library, the hymns and the work that “never ceased “ (Vampire Lestat 31). These things give meaning to his life, and Lestat wants to be “enclosed forever with people who believed I could be good if I wanted to be” (31). In comparison to the monastic life, Lestat sees his home as “chaos” (32); the family is poor, hungry much of the time, and everywhere about them is “dirt and decay” (32), while the monastery is “clean and orderly” (32).

When his father refuses his request to enter the monastic life, his mother gives him two mastiff puppies and his first musket and horse. As he breeds and trains his dogs, he also becomes the hunter of the family; and with this new purpose in his life,

he gains more confidence in himself. At home he wants to make changes, “restoring the vineyards or replanting the neglected fields, or ... making the tenants stop stealing” (33); but no one else is interested. Lestat is a young man who wants excitement and to have life mean something. He needs to feel he is affecting the passage of life and wants more than “the change of the seasons and the idle talk of past glories” (33). He wants to affect the present and the future; but the unchanging world of his home life is a world in which he can “affect nothing” (33).¹³

The realization of this fact wears on the young man; and, when he is sixteen years old, a “troupe of Italian players” (Vampire Lestat 33) visits the area and puts on a play that enraptures Lestat with its “vitality” (33). He resolves to run away with them and become an actor. On stage with the other players Lestat feels “ecstasy” (34); but his brothers find him and bring him home once again. The attitude of the male family members this time is that Lestat’s desire to become a monk at twelve was “excusable. But the theater had the taint of the devil” (35). Already, by the age of sixteen, Lestat is caught between God and the Devil in his desire for some meaning in his life other than the chaos of his family. Once again, his mother buys him a rifle and a new horse; but he is still bitter. Feeling he will never escape his home life, he falls deeper into “despair” (35). However, despite his despair, he does take more command at home, making the servants and tenants do what they are told, and providing the family with food. These tasks give him satisfaction and some meaning in his life, but overseeing the estate is really an unproductive path for him.

Since he is the youngest son of the Marquis, Lestat has “no claim to the title or the land, and no prospects” (Vampire Lestat 23), and, of course, will not inherit the

estate he works so hard to improve. As far as he can see, since the family has thwarted him in his bid for the church and for the stage, he has no way to order his life. He has no desire to make meaning by conforming to any particular path his family might chose for him; having been “born restless – the dreamer, the angry one, the complainer” (23), he is the one who refuses to accept life as it is presented to him. He finds no meaning in history and feels that talk of past wars and “the days of the Sun King” (23) is useless. As it was in Dracula’s case, so it is for Lestat. The old heroic days are gone; and the hero must learn to survive in the new order, the new society. Being “the hunter” (23) of the family is at least “a noble occupation” (23) which can provide his life with some meaning, if not the grandly heroic one he has envisioned.

At twenty-one years of age, however, Lestat has a chance at grandly heroic action as he goes in search of a wolf pack that has been attacking the family’s sheep. As he recalls the event, he “wanted a good battle with the wolves” (Vampire Lestat 25). However, the pack turns out to number eight instead of the five he had expected. The starving wolves have no fear of him; but at the first sound of howling, Lestat feels terror. Although some of the wolves are destroyed in the first minutes of the ensuing battle, Lestat’s dogs and his horse are soon dispatched by the remaining ones; and, when he sees them die, Lestat realizes the danger of the task he has taken on himself and the possible consequences for himself if he fails. This is Lestat’s first hint of the numinous, as his confrontation with the wolves becomes a confrontation with a power quite probably stronger than him, at least in numbers and ferocity; in facing the possibility of his own death, he must face the reality that he is mortal.

In a running fight, Lestat kills the rest of the wolves, gaining the nickname Wolfkiller; but this heroic act only isolates him further from his family. With his dogs and horse dead, and his brothers by turns disbelieving and jealous of his act, he closets himself in his room for days, suffering from despair and hatred, and dreaming of killing all his family. This was the way he felt on the mountain with the wolves, and now he does not know if he is Lestat or a killer. His identity is being called into question by his brush with death; and his mother counsels him that he is both “killer and man” (Vampire Lestat 38). However, he does not have to “give in to the killer” (38) inside himself; he does not have to shoulder “the burden of murder or madness” (38) to be free. Lestat is overcome by the implications of what his mother has told him. He had always felt he could not be “a good human being and fight them [the men of his family]. To be good meant to be defeated by them” (38-9). Until that moment Lestat had felt that goodness only existed in what his family sanctioned as acceptable behavior; and that kind of goodness was not acceptable to him. With his mother’s words, he realizes that he might find some other “more interesting idea of goodness” (39) on which to hang his identity.

Lestat’s philosophy of goodness is articulated in more detail when he becomes a friend of Nicolas de Lenfent. During one of their conversations, he confesses that he has “always had a secular mind” (Vampire Lestat 46) and that none of his family had ever truly believed in God, although they attended mass out of a sense of duty. Even at the monastery, he had not believed in God, only in the monks. Lestat’s belief lies in the existence of goodness, not Godness. “Actors and musicians – they’re saints to me” (51), says Lestat, not religiously speaking, but in terms of heroic

character and action, because they “won’t accept a useless lie, just because they were born to it They work, they sacrifice, they do things...” (52) to make something better of themselves. “There’s sanctity” (52) in that, “and God or no God, there is goodness in it” (52). For Lestat, “chaos [is] the meaninglessness of day-to-day life” (55), and acting holds that chaos at bay. He is afraid, however, that “even when we die we probably don’t find out the answer as to why we were ever alive” (55).¹⁴ If the meaninglessness of life goes on forever, so will the despair one feels at the recognition of his own meaninglessness. This despair makes Lestat shudder and behind everything he sees death, “real death, total death, inevitable, irreversible, and resolving nothing!” (57). He begins to question everyone around him as to whether they believe in God or not; and even nature holds no beauty for him because it can decay and die. From then on he sees the world differently; there is always “darkness lurking, the sense of our frailty and our hopelessness” (59). Lestat feels he “can live without God ... can even come to live with the idea there is no life after” (72); but he cannot survive a world without “the possibility of goodness” (72).

Lestat’s early life is spent in turmoil. The family structure which should have supported his search for meaning as a youth fails him: first, by not providing a religious structure or a belief in God; and second, by not allowing him to enter the monastery or act on the stage. His need for some doctrine in which to place his faith and his need for meaning have caused the young man to produce his own value system, a doctrine of goodness, in which he sees himself in opposition to the men of his family. Not allowed the outlets he desires, he is left with only his family life to provide the significance he craves. However, the middle ground of family life, taking

care of the estate and protecting the family's assets, is barren ground for him also. His encounter with the wolves, though heroic and meaningful, leaves him in despair because he has faced death and now must question his own identity. Unable to deny his mortality anymore, he is faced with questions about the existence of God and about how to invest his life with meaning. In despair because he is not in denial about death any longer, Lestat is now at the threshold of an experience of the numinous.

A Sense of the Numinous

William J. O'Malley defines the "sense of the numinous" (342) much like the sublime, calling it "the ability of the soul to quicken" (342) and describing it as the awe one feels in the presence of God. For him, it is a "pre-supernatural stage" (342) comprised of "a sense of wonder, awe, quest" (342) for higher understanding. O'Malley's definition of the numinous also includes the idea of death. Death is the only reality humans can count on for the future; and so confrontation with the idea of death results in "the constant call of the seeking soul There's got to be more than this!" (343), more to life. If we increase the sublime and numinous senses of which O'Malley speaks to the level at which Otto speaks of them, to the point where death is not only contemplated, but also is an imminent possibility, particularly if that possibility is embodied in an entity that is as negatively numinous as the vampire, we find that Lestat's mortal life is in grave jeopardy. While the attitudes of Lestat as a human makes him susceptible to a numinous encounter with the vampire, because they show a chink in the armor of faith and belief, his vulnerability is increased greatly when he faces death. The fear and despair Lestat feels during and after his

brush with death in the battle with the wolves causes him to question his identity and his ability to be good. He will now face death at the fangs of a more powerful entity; and the questions of existence he asks will cause him to embark on his spiritual journey.

Lestat's experience of the numinous begins when he travels to Paris with his friend Nicholas to make his way in life by acting on the stage. To Lestat, acting on the stage is good; and this is how he resolves to make meaning in his mortal life, which he feels he must live without belief in God or in an afterlife. However, once on stage in Paris, Lestat begins to see a face in the crowd, a "very white and strangely clear" (Vampire Lestat 73) face; and this presence knows about Lestat killing the wolves and about the cloak lined with wolf fur that Lestat wears. Then, one night, Lestat hears the name Wolfkiller and is filled with fear. During the night the figure comes into his room and spirits Lestat away to a tower in the country. Calling on God for help when he recognizes the figure as a vampire, he fights for his life to no avail and is bitten anyway. Lestat is in a position of helplessness, much like Freud describes in "The Uncanny" or Kristeva defines as abjection in Powers of Horror. Powerless in the arms of the vampire, Lestat cannot reject or deny the threat the creature poses, and he calls on God, a cultural figure of great mystical power, to aid him. However, since he has never truly believed in God's existence, God is not there to answer his prayers. In this situation, also, Lestat's doctrine of goodness does not help him any more than it helped him with the human adversaries that he felt his brothers and father to be.

His confrontation with the vampire gives Lestat feelings of both “rapture” (82) and fear. However, these feelings are much more intense than the rapture he felt on stage or the fear he felt in his battle with the wolves; and Lestat is caught between the fascination and terror of the numinous encounter powerless before the divine will of Magnus, the vampire. On the second meeting with the vampire, he fights again “for [his] soul this time” (88) and is overcome again. In a dreamlike vision, he sees the vampire Magnus, a mortal and powerful alchemist who had captured a sleeping vampire and was drinking its blood. To Lestat, this “theft of immortality” (Vampire Lestat 89) made of the alchemist “a dark Prometheus stealing a luminescent fire” (89); and Lestat, drained to the point of death, must ask Magnus for that fire of life, his vampire blood. Magnus’ words make the experience like a religious ritual. Mimicking Jesus’ words to the disciples at the Last Supper, Magnus calls his blood “the wine of all wines” (89) and ritualizes Lestat’s conversion with words of communion. “This is my body, this is my blood” (89; St. Luke: 22 KJV), he intones. When Magnus takes him into his arms, Lestat says “he [Magnus] seemed to be filled not with blood but with love for me” (89); and, although Lestat tries to resist, when Magnus slits his own wrist and forces him to drink, his “thirst” (89) finally is “quenched and dissolved” (90). God has no meaning now; if he ever did for Lestat, “He was part of some dull and dreamy realm whose secrets had long ago been plundered” (92). The rapture of this new vampire’s sense of the world is all that matters to Lestat. For him, “this was the pulsing center of life itself round which all the complexity revolved” (92). Lestat feels he has found the meaning of life. His eyes have been opened to the “mystery and incongruity of the world” (O’Malley

342); however, this epiphany is not a spiritual one, only an aesthetic one. In the first moments of his vampire existence, Lestat finds his “innate hungers of the human spirit” (343) fed not by the presence of a God he never believed in anyway, but by a sense of love that he feels from Magnus. For him, this is all there is; this is all there needs to be. This is the mystery of the world. Lestat now has an aesthetic of love to bolster his aesthetic of goodness as a way to place value on his experiences; however, aesthetics are based on feelings and not on moral attitudes. Since Lestat represents the human condition, he will bring the moral dilemma about the meaning of his life into his vampire existence.

The Desire to Understand the Numinous Experience

In his study of the spiritual journey, O'Malley argues that humans have the “potential to go beyond the dumb animal acceptance of things-as-they-are, to ask why things aren't as they should be” (343). As Otto explains this desire, it involves wanting to pierce the mystery of the divine and to find our true meaning in relation to that mystery. Beneath the overwhelming capacity of the numinous experience lies the deeper matter of value and meaning of which we humans must attempt to make sense in order to survive the encounter without despair. However, in Otto's theory of the numinous, that meaning often is predicated on what we lack. Lestat feels that beyond the rapture and mystery of his newly acquired vampire existence there must be some deeper meaning and value. To discover this deeper context, he looks to his maker for answers to his questions about life as a vampire and the meaning of his existence; and when Magnus does not provide the answers he seeks, Lestat attempts to impose his own value on the situation. To impose meaning on his vampire

existence, Lestat reverts to his aesthetic of goodness and answers the questions of who and what he is according to a personal code of living.

In an experience of the numinous, meaning is made through the dynamics of power and powerlessness, but Lestat is now the powerful numinous entity. What makes him feel powerless is his lack of knowledge about what the experience of being a vampire should be for him. Sensing that vampirism is full of “some deeper lesson” (Vampire Lestat 92), Lestat is disappointed when all that Magnus teaches him before he commits vampire suicide is to stop feeding before the heartbeat stops and that sun and fire can kill a vampire. Lestat had hoped his creator would provide more support in his newfound existence than a couple of warnings about how a vampire can die. Never having felt close to his mortal family, and having ignored the possibility of God's existence, now Lestat is left alone again, abandoned by his vampire father, overwhelmed by fear and a need to know what this experience means. First, much like the Ancient Mariner, overcome by that fear of death which characterizes the element of tremendum in the numinous encounter, the self-proclaimed non-believer Lestat feels his fall from grace and calls on the God, or any higher power out there in the cosmos, for help. He prays “to the Blessed Mother, to the saints” (97) and whispers “the Aves over and over” (97) until his words become “those inarticulate pleas we make to all that is powerful, all that is holy, all that may or may not exist by any and all names. Do not leave me alone here. Do not abandon me.... Do not let me fall even farther than I have already fallen this night....” (97). However, Lestat's prayers will not be answered on this night, as they were not on the first night of his experience of the vampire, because he never truly believed in God or

any spiritual entity in the first place. What Lestat always believed in was the power of good and, now, the power of love; and the personal morality of these will be the only salvation for him in the years to come. However, he must also learn some lessons about what it means to be the numinous one – the one who has the power and the will to destroy or to save depending on his whim.

As he sleeps at sunrise, he is reminded that there is some deeper meaning to his new existence. In a “strange dream of Magnus stealing [his] blood” (Vampire Lestat 104); but there is “something more ... something important” (104) in this dream; and as Lestat interprets it, is “about theft, treachery, about surrendering to no one, not God, not demon, and never man” (104). In response to his dream, he enters a church and handles the ciborium, discovering that “no power” (113) lies in either the church or its contents. What he will learn from this experience is that he must depend on his own will to survive; however, as a result of this experiment, his disbelief in God is reiterated, because he seems to be the only powerful entity in the church. As he realizes his power, he is filled with pleasure. Unfortunately, however, there is no meaning in feelings themselves, whether of fear or pleasure, love or goodness, so he still has the problem of finding some meaning in his new life. In response to this need, he reverts to his mortal belief in goodness and love as codes by which to live.

Since Lestat had no understanding of God’s existence before he became a vampire, the solution to his existential dilemma must be personal rather than spiritual. He must be loved, and he must feel he is a good person. That he kills to survive simply is a fact of life to him. Beyond that he is sure he can attain the goodness that he attempted to find in his mortal existence. Not able to connect with God in the

hour of his greatest need, and isolated from his family and friends, Lestat must make his own choices in order to live with his new status as vampire. He finally is in a position to do whatever he wants with his time and resources; and he decides to continue to move among mortals and to experience everything he can with his newfound power. Then, as an extension of that choice, he realizes that if he can interact with mortals, he can live among them as if he were still human, also. Carrying his desire for goodness and love into his vampire life, Lestat determines to keep his human contacts with family and friends intact through the act of doing good for them with the riches he has acquired as Magnus' vampire heir. For Lestat, this is acceptable behavior for a vampire because it is what he wants to do; however, in the long run this system of meaning will not be enough to lay his questions of existence to rest; he must know what he is, also.

Living as an Honorable Man

In the human search for life's meaning, O'Malley argues, one must "take possession of one's own choices" (343). It is the will to live that keeps one alive; and it is also the will to make your own decisions about life that gives life meaning. In making choices about how to live, one develops a system of values that will give structure and direction to life. Understanding "what life is" (344) is not enough, however, because death is always there at the end with all its mystery. If we humans have no hope that there is some existence beyond this earthly life, we have no hope of answering the question of why we are here on earth. However, just as understanding life is not enough, neither is "immanent morality" (344) enough for most people to make meaning in their lives. Most people need reminding that a Supreme Entity,

some divine being, is in charge of the world. Lestat must find a way to reconcile his vampirism with his desire to live as an honorable man; and as a non-religious man, Lestat reconciles himself to vampirism by carrying over his desire for goodness and love into his new life. However, since “immanent morality” (344) is relative and often not enough to give true meaning to life, his views of what constitutes goodness must change.

In Danse Macabre (1981), Stephen King argues that morality “lies ... in the hearts and minds of men and women of good will” (402). He defines morality as “a codification of those things which the heart understands to be true and those things which the heart understands to be the demands of a life lived among others ... [in] civilization” (403). For King, immorality lies in “lack of care” (403). However, there are also two dangers to subscribing to a natural morality as the true meaning of life: first, the personal morality replaces the higher spiritual quest through which man evolves into a being deserving of immortality; and second, personal morality is relative and may change at any time at the will of the individual, so that what the person desires becomes more important than what salvation requires. Although Lestat has established a moral meaning for his life, although he tries to live as a honorable man by helping those mortals whom he loves and by re-creating the family he has lost, when those acts fail to give his life value, he must change his views of what defines goodness. In order to discover what constitutes goodness in the life of a vampire, Lestat decides to search out other vampires for the history of what it is to be a vampire. What he hopes for is to be reassured that his doctrine of goodness is not in

vain; so the answers to the questions of who he is and what he is rest on the results of this search.

On first becoming a vampire, Lestat had made a conscious choice to take only “the scum of Paris” (Vampire Lestat 135) for victims, in order to retain the goodness that was important to him in his mortal life, and that he felt might be lost to him as a vampire. However, later he begins to look at that decision as an attempt to carry the “paltry morality” (135) of a human into his vampire existence, “seeking to be saved in spite of it all” (135). This he now perceives as “madness” (135) and “a sublime idiocy” (135) in which he set himself up as “a righteous partner to the judges and executioners of Paris who strike down the poor for crimes that the rich commit every day...” (135). Now, the system of dealing with his transformation by taking only the blood of evildoers no longer works for him. He feels that he needs to experience the stronger rapture just as he had felt when Magnus had shared his blood with him. He needs that divine fire in his veins; and he is aware that his earlier victims had been “strong wine...in chipped and broken vessels” (135). However, once he sees his friend Nicholas again, he feels himself to be in the presence of “the priest with the golden chalice in his hands, and the wine inside it was the Blood of the Lamb” (135).

When Lestat finally gives in to his desire for innocent blood, though, it is by killing a beggar woman and her child. Through this act, he discovers again the “rapture” (Vampire Lestat 142) of the love he felt when Magnus passed on the Dark Gift to him. As he tells his readers, “before I’d had all the ecstasy that rape could give. But these victims had been taken in perfect semblance of love. The very blood seemed warmer with their innocence, richer with their goodness” (142). Having now

gone against his earlier doctrine of goodness by taking innocent blood instead of the blood of evil people, and having even taken that innocent blood within the walls of a cathedral, Lestat tells the world,

I knew my vision of the garden of savage beauty had been a true vision. There was meaning in the world, yes, and laws, and inevitability, but they had only to do with the aesthetic. And in the Savage Garden, these innocent ones belonged in the vampire's arms. A thousand other things can be said about the world, but only aesthetic principles can be verified and these things alone remain the same. (143)

In this act of vampirism against innocent humans, Lestat senses that the "last barrier between [his] appetite and the world had been dissolved" (143) and rationalizes his need for blood as an aesthetically beautiful act of love and, therefore, of goodness. Lestat has been living by aesthetic principles only, because they can be verified through feelings, while spiritual meaning cannot be verified except by a faith, which unfortunately is something Lestat has always found in short supply. So, instead of the Garden of Eden, Lestat's world is a Savage Garden where survival of the fittest rules and innocence is strong wine to a vampire alienated and alone. For Lestat, blood represents more than life; it represents the meaning of life – love and goodness; but with the act of taking innocent blood, Lestat has now managed to adapt his morality to accommodate his desires of the moment.

He continues to rationalize his acts as goodness; and, when his dying mother, Gabrielle, arrives in Paris, he makes her a vampire not only to save her from a lingering death, but from death itself. His first rationalization for making her a vampire is that he cannot bear the thought of her in a grave for eternity. However, in the back of his mind is also the possibility of having a family again as a mortal man would. One again, Lestat's desires are predicated on what he has lacked in the past;

and these desires will control his definition of what is good. As a vampire, he desires the love of a family because a family who loved him is what he felt the absence of when he was a child. However, Gabrielle had never fulfilled all his desires or needs, even when he was a mortal child; and she will not now, either. Vampirism is a personal experience; and Gabrielle has a different personal agenda than her son. Her death gives her the freedom to fulfill her own desires; and as a vampire, she lives as though she is going to die soon, trying to experience everything she can. While Lestat wants the “quiet” (Vampire Lestat 169) of their tower sanctuary, where he can live his life as if he were still human, she only wants “experiment, adventure” (169). She also finds Lestat’s desire to keep his mortal connections with friends and family hard to understand because, as a vampire, she feels “utterly cut off” (179) from her past. Lestat’s answer is indicative of his need for love and his insistence on making his own choices in life. His feeling is that even as a vampire one needs love, and he tries to make her understand that he did what he wanted in staying near those he loved. Doing what he wants, making his own choices, has always been important to Lestat, even as a mortal child, but he finds it hard to understand that Gabrielle might want the same right to make her own choices.

Lestat’s will and his need to live his life as he chooses become even more clear when he and Gabrielle meet the Parisian vampires who have been stalking them. Believing they “serve Satan” (213), these vampires curse Lestat and his mother as “profaners ...[and] outlaws...who dared to enter the house of God” (186); and they fear that the defiant ways of Lestat and Gabrielle will “bring down the wrath of God” (213) on all of them because they were made “in defiance of the covenant, and in

defiance of the Dark Ways” (214). The coven is also angry at Lestat for compounding the sin of his birth by seeking “the comforts of the hearth, strictly forbidden” (218) in the society of mortals. To restore order to their existence, the members of the coven want to destroy Lestat and Gabrielle. Their leader Armand articulates the philosophy of this coven: that vampires “walk the earth as all evil things do, by the will of God, to make mortals suffer for his [His] Divine Glory” (219). Lestat did not seek out these vampires to learn of his nature from them, and he feels that they have nothing to give in terms of philosophy of vampirism. Armand then calls on his vampires, as well as Lestat and Gabrielle, to “love one another” (200), telling Lestat that only he and others like him can rid Lestat of “the loneliness” (201) he suffers. In this respect, he is tempting Lestat with what he senses Lestat wants most -- love. However, Lestat disagrees with Armand’s philosophy, insisting that it “is founded upon a lie” (219), and refuses his definition of love. He tries to explain to Armand that “the mortal in [him], the vulnerable one” (223) wants meaning; but he does not realize that his meaning is simply different from Armand’s. Armand and his band of vampires have a history of religious belief from their human lives and, so, form the meaning of vampirism from that belief. Thus they see themselves as vehicles through which God’s wrathful side, his potential for what mortal’s perceive as evil, is shown to the world. Since Lestat never believed in God, he has no trouble not believing in the Devil, either. However, Lestat also wants the meaning of vampire life to fit what he wants it to be, what his preconceived ideas of value were in his mortal life. He is looking for validation at this point in his existence, not for a meaning that may contradict his already established set of values.

While Lestat seeks a sense of his new existence that will enable him to retain his humanness, these Parisian vampires subscribe to the belief that their inhumanness gives them meaning. In these malevolent vampires, believing themselves the chosen of Satan, Armand posits a society with meaning, where only the strong survive. Armand warns Lestat that living in the mortal world can cause despair for the unchanging vampire as the ages and the mortals change; but “your own immortal kind is your protection, your salvation” (230), as are “the ancient ways ... which never changed!” (230). Then an old woman of the coven warns Lestat that if a vampire lives among mortals too long, “he grows irresistibly to love mortals! He comes to understand all things in love” (Vampire Lestat 230). Finally, the vampire cannot “bear to take a life” (230) or to cause humans to suffer. If this happens, only madness or suicide will “ease his pain” (230); but Lestat disagrees once again. His value system is based on love and on his desire to be human again, so he has continued to live among mortals. He has loved mortals “from the first nights” (231), he tells her, and feels that the “essence of the Dark Gift” (231) is that love.

Lestat’s moral value system of love and goodness is stronger than Armand’s philosophy of evil because Lestat’s will to make his own choices is driving his moral outlook, and Armand’s will has been given over to Satan’s control. Lestat will not accept any answer that does not fit with his own value system, because any realization that he had been wrong about the value of his life would mean that his life was meaningless and that, as he told Nicholas when he was mortal, would be chaos. His answer to Armand’s philosophy of a vampire’s place in the world, therefore, is that good and evil are both relative concepts. Lestat tells Armand that “forms of

goodness change with the ages” (Vampire Lestat 227) and so do the forms of evil. In a secular age, nothing is sacred; and a “new age” (228) calls for a “new evil” (228). To find meaning for himself in the world, Lestat sees himself as that new evil – “the monster who looks exactly like everyone else” (228). However, this is simply his will controlling how he approaches his new nature. While the vampires of the Paris coven have a background of belief in God and, therefore, must find their own meaning within that construct of belief, Lestat is once again able to go his own direction and give meaning to his existence on a personal level. Still, what he would like to find is a group of vampires who reflect his own value system, because then he would know he was right in choosing goodness and love over evil.

The next step in Lestat’s quest for a value system among vampires that reflects his need for goodness involves a search for the history of vampires. However, this search will not result in final answers for him, either. Armand’s tale of Marius, his maker, and of Those Who Must Be Kept, the mother and father of all vampires over whom he watches, starts Lestat on a journey throughout the world in search of the “Children of the Millennia” (Vampire Lestat 317) in the form of Marius and his charges, a journey that finally takes him into Egypt. It is in Egypt that Gabrielle finally leaves him to make her own way. However, Marius finally finds him; and he and Marius begin to travel together as Marius tells him the story of his own vampire birth and life and of the making of the mother and father of all vampires, Akasha and Enkil, from the Egyptian rulers Isis and Osiris. When Lestat finally is brought into the presence of Those Who Must Be Kept, Akasha stirs from her long sleep and eventually offers Lestat her blood to make him stronger. While

this act does give him a connection to his history as a vampire, its results will later complicate his moral decisions.

What Lestat might hope to gain in the way of meaning from Marius' story is that in the beginning vampires were good, and, therefore, could be again in his lifetime; and this does seem to be the substance of Marius' history of vampires, who began as "benevolent rulers" (Vampire Lestat 442), and whose legacy was perverted later by those who destroyed what Marius had built and who captured Armand and turned him toward Satan. In the end, however, Marius cannot tell Lestat the secrets of the universe, "who made the world or why man exists" (379), or even why vampires exist; but he can tell him his own personal experience in hopes that the knowledge of what happened to him can help Lestat to survive. However, he warns Lestat that "when I've given all I have to give, you will be exactly where you were before: an immortal being who must find his own reasons to exist" (379-380). This is precisely where Lestat began, as the master of his own fate, the ruler of his own will, seeking to formulate a value system that would provide the significance he craved and still craves. No one can give him answers because the spiritual search he is on is personal and meaning is, therefore, also personal. On this journey a man, or a vampire, must find his own way home.

Lestat's spiritual journey eventually takes him to Louisiana where he meets Louis de Pointe du Lac and makes him a vampire. Despite his new knowledge that vampires did indeed once embody goodness, and despite his disagreement with Armand over vampire philosophy, and his insistence that he is the new evil in the world, Lestat has now reorganized his own value system so that when he meets Louis

he considers vampires to be part of God's "divine plan" (Interview 83) in their ability to carry out cosmic retribution and salvation. However, just as Lestat had trouble accepting Armand's philosophy that vampires serve Satan with God's dispensation in order that mortals might suffer for the glory of God, Louis has trouble accepting Lestat's philosophy. Lestat is put in the position of a father with a recalcitrant child. Louis, however, is like Armand, trying to reconcile his human religious beliefs with his new vampire existence. Making another attempt to build a family structure, and hoping that the family will keep Louis submissive to his will, Lestat makes a child he calls Claudia into a vampire; but this family structure only lasts a human lifetime of sixty-five years before Claudia decides to rebel and convinces Louis to help her kill Lestat.

The Hunger for a Higher Reality of the Soul

Having survived the attempts of Claudia and Louis to destroy him and the despair of a vampire who has lost the meaning of his existence and, therefore, his will to live, Lestat now sees his search for meaning as the quest of a hero. As William James writes in Varieties of Religious Experience the world is an arena for the hero; and it is in heroism that he feels human beings discover the mystery of life. As a hero's quest, however, Lestat's spiritual journey will "reach beyond the limits of time and space" (O'Malley 342) to a reality of higher consequence, a higher reality of the soul.

The last time Lestat was above ground was 1929; and in the "dream state" (Vampire Lestat 4) of his "underground" (4) existence, in which a vampire "ceases to drink blood and...just lies in the earth" (4), he has observed the world above him

through the voices he heard “as a mortal does in sleep” (4). Through this somnolent education, he has begun to understand “the caliber of the changes that the world had undergone” (4). Over time he becomes “self-conscious” (5); and thinking about the things he has heard, he realizes he is alive and “starved for living blood” (5).

“Back in action” (Vampire Lestat 7), with his strength greater than before, Lestat finds that “the dark dreary industrial world” (7) of 1929 is gone; and “the old bourgeois prudery and conformity [have] lost their hold on the American mind” (7). This new world of 1984 New Orleans reminds him of “old days, before the great middle-class revolution of the late 1700s” (7). People are dressing more freely, showing their individuality; and yet “prior centuries were [are] being recycled” (8). In the arts, and even the language, he can see a combination of old and new; and more importantly, Lestat discovers that in the 1980s “the Christian god [is] as dead as he had been in the 1700s. And no new mythological religion [has] arisen to take the place of the old” (9). In the activism of the people, who argue over capital punishment and abortion, and seek to wipe out such evils as hunger and pollution as zealously as earlier societies had fought against “witchcraft and heresy “ (9), Lestat sees a “secular mortality as strong as any religious morality I [he] had ever known” (9). Even sexuality has been “stripped” (9) of its “religious overtones” (9); and “procreation and venereal disease” (10) seem to be “under control” (10). In this “sinless secular morality, this optimism” (10), Lestat finds a new and “brilliantly lighted world where the value of human life was [is] greater than it had ever been before” (10). In this twentieth-century world, the people make meaning for themselves in a secular way, just as Lestat the young mortal had before the French

Revolution, and as Lestat the vampire has chosen to do since his transformation. While Lestat has loved mortals since his change, he now feels a kinship with these mortals that is beyond that love because they show the same willfulness that he has always shown. He understands their motivations much more than he ever did Louis', or even his mother's, and certainly more than those of the vampire Armand and his band. His dilemma seems to be over – the meaning of his existence is clear. In the twentieth century, he can seek meaning in being the new evil for a new age, just as he told Armand he was doing over a hundred years before.

As he watches the movie Apocalypse Now, he is struck by the fact that “horror and moral terror ... have no real value” (10) or place in the twentieth-century world. Nor does “pure evil” (10). This means that Lestat, as a vampire, then has “no place” (10), other than in “the art that repudiates evil – the vampire comics, the horror novels, the old gothic tales – or in the roaring chants of the rock stars who dramatize the battles against evil that each mortal fights within himself” (10). In this “stunning irrelevance to the mighty scheme of things” (10), Lestat sees cause for despair, at least for “an old world monster” (10); but he is a monster who changes with the age. His answer to the despair these new age attitudes might bring on is to create a secular meaning for his existence by becoming a rock star and a famous author. Like the secular answer to the old-world prophet or the new-age television evangelist, Lestat plans to bring other vampires “into the light” (10); but he will do it with his participation in the band Satan's Night Out and by publishing his story as earlier Louis had in Interview with the Vampire.

Lestat is still something of a rebel for whom “old rules” (Vampire Lestat 16) do not exist; and he wants to bring together the vampires he has “known and loved” (16) and wants “mortals to know” about them. In effect, he wants vampires to invest life with meaning, to be visible; and he wants to be the hero, the one to “lead them into the truth of it” (17). In exposing himself to the mortal world and the hidden world of other vampires to the light of publicity and fame, he might cause “a great and glorious war” (17); but Lestat wants to live heroically. “How could I not love it, the mere idea of it? How could it not be worth the greatest danger, the greatest and most ghastly defeat? Even at the moment of destruction, I would be alive as I have never been” (17). This is the feeling one gets from an experience of the numinous; in facing death, one finally feels more alive than ever before, because one is no longer indifferent to the world. Death heightens the senses, so if one is not denying death anymore, but instead embracing the possibility, one becomes intimately aware of the joys and sorrows of life, and of the meaning of life. Like James’ hero, Lestat is willing to risk death to find meaning. He joins the band, Satan’s Night Out, offering them fame and fortune in order to be able to articulate his vampire nature instead of hide it; and to instigate some response from other vampires, he writes his story. These acts give meaning to his existence; and he finally becomes the hero he always has seen himself to be and has desired to be.

In Queen of the Damned, Lestat articulates even more clearly than before his need to be a hero. He describes himself as “the vampire who would have been a hero and a martyr finally for one moment of pure relevance ...” (4-5). Calling himself the “James Bond of vampires” (8), he invites the reader once again to share in his heroic

exploits. Admitting that he has brought disaster with his past attempts to reconcile his human values with his vampire existence, he still finds it unacceptable to walk in the shadows of life. “It’s the risk that fascinates, the moment of infinite possibility” (6) that “lures” (6) him on to continued immortality. That moment of possibility is the numinous, the moment when he was faced with the vampire Magnus and the possibility of immortal life. To prolong that feeling of rapture, that moment when all is risked for the reward of higher understanding, he now must do to others what was done to him. However, he needs more than the simple act of survival. For vampires and humans alike the blood is the life, and regardless of the rapture Lestat feels when he feeds, blood is not enough to provide meaning in life. He finds this meaning in his interaction with others, both humans and vampires. Although, in Queen of the Damned, Lestat is “just a player” (Ramsland Prism 294), the several narratives by other older vampires come together in the end at the spectacle which he has engineered to bring the vampires out into the open. Through the various narratives, Queen of the Damned tells a story that encompasses the birth of the vampires and the history of various branches that have formed through the ages. The story culminates in a mythic, universal struggle between the forces of creation and destruction represented by the two strongest female vampires.

Akasha, the mother of all vampires, has destroyed her mate Enkil and come to Lestat in the United States. As a figure of destruction, she represents “the dark side of the feminine” (Ramsland Prism 296) and now is plotting to kill most of the male vampires and mortal men and to make slaves of those who are left alive. Her intent is to become the “divine meaning-maker” (Ramsland Prism 300), ruling the world under

laws of her own making. Having given her blood to Lestat a hundred years before, she now expects to enlist his help with her apocalyptic scheme. Since he sees in her global plan something of his own personal desire to do good, he accepts her offer to be her consort and helper, at least at first. Akasha thinks that with the completion of her plan she will have “transcended history” (Queen 399) and brought an end to the seemingly “endless cycle of human violence” (399). However, free will must be destroyed to do that. In this new Edenic existence, only she will “define goodness ... [and] peace” (401). Forgetting that the world she sees is the one she has selected to see and not the whole reality of existence, she refuses to acknowledge the changes that have been wrought over time as humans evolved and attempted to repair their previous mistakes. Although Lestat initially helps her by killing the men on the island of Lykanos, he eventually realizes that while his plan had been to motivate people toward goodness, hers is simply to destroy those she perceives as evil. However, Lestat’s personality signals that there is more to his refusal of her plan than simply wanting to be good. He is, after all, still a rebel who makes his own choices and guides his life according to his own will. Losing his free will to someone like Akasha would mean that he would give up his own value system and lose his chance to be a hero, also. To keep his will and value system intact, and to remain a hero, at least in his own mind, he leaves Akasha and joins the vampire forces ranged against her under the control of Maharet, a powerful witch from Akasha’s past. Akasha had turned Maharet into a vampire in revenge for her having sent the demon that transformed her and her husband Enkil to vampires. In joining with the other

vampires against Akasha, Lestat will learn another lesson about his search that will propel him on another path in his quest for meaning.

The group under Maharet's leadership pleads with Akasha to spare humans. Trying to convince her that they are not the enemy, Maharet tells her that it is the "irrational ... the spiritual when it is divorced from the material ... from the lesson in one beating heart or one bleeding vein" (Queen 409) that is the enemy. Lestat again refuses to go with her, reminding her "we're not angels ... we are not gods. To be human, that's what most of us long for. It is the human which has become myth to us" (411). Where once he thought of himself as a dark god, striking down evil as God does, he no longer feels that way. He has begun to think that what will give meaning to his life is to strive to be human again, to find, as Maharet has suggested, the spiritual and material wedded into one. Maharet's words echo Mircea Eliade's argument that a religious man lives in two existential situations; the profane world of empirical reality and the sacred world of spiritual faith. Once again, this is something Lestat never had as a child, since his family provided no religious upbringing and even went so far as to deny him a chance at spiritual meaning when he sought to join the monastery.

In the battle that ensues, Akasha is killed and Mekare, Maharet's twin sister, becomes the head of the new coven of vampires that have chosen to protect the mortal world from destruction. However, Lestat is still plagued by the questions of goodness and meaning as he was when first made a vampire; and he realizes finally that what Marius had tried to tell him so long ago was that everyone, humans and vampires alike, "wrestle forever with those questions" (Queen 431) to which there are

no simple solutions. He will never settle for life in the shadows, however, because a hero never does; and he refuses Marius' request that he destroy the manuscript of his latest exploits. Humanity, he tells Marius, will only think this story is fiction as humans had when both Interview and Vampire Lestat were published, and "that's how it should be" (422). He feels now that there is no room for vampires or God or the Devil in the life of humans. Instead, they should be a "metaphor" (422), helping humans to find meaning in their own lives. Lestat is now moving in the direction of higher meaning – of becoming that meaning for others, just as the Ancient Mariner became his own message by becoming a metaphorical vampire.

At this point in his existence, Lestat seems to have given up on finding meaning either through power or through the secular rapture of rock music. He tells Louis he has no "designs on Western civilization" (439) or even on his two million rock fans. His need is simple: to break the rules as he has always done, to find the fascination and the rapture in taking risks, in the pleasure of the individual experience. Nothing has changed. He still is the one who must have everything his own way; however, in speaking to Akasha of how all vampires want to be human again, Lestat has set himself up for his next heroic adventure.

In The Tale of the Body Thief, Lestat, the self-proclaimed "man of action" (4), the "James Bond of vampires" (6) discovers what it is to be human again. Knowing he cannot be forgiven as a vampire, he still likes saving innocent lives by taking those of the evil humans who prey on them; and at the beginning of the story he is tracking a serial killer. As he takes the killer's blood he sees the man's past, the cadavers of the old men and women who were his victims "floating in the current"

(22), tumbling “against each other without meaning” (22). While he might make the connection at this point between himself and the serial killer, Lestat does not see himself as that kind of cold-blooded, calculating killer. His own murders have meaning for him, since he feels he is protecting humans from evil. The blood is the life for human or vampire, and Lestat says “I wanted to be human, and feel human” (23). However, the evil victim’s blood has never been enough to make this happen. Giving in to his need for more innocent blood, he kills the serial killer’s victim, also; but even that now leaves him unfulfilled. The goodness and love he used to feel when drinking innocent blood no longer are enough to give him the rapture he craves. Lestat now must face the fact that he needs more than blood, however innocent that blood might be, to give himself a reason to survive.

Concluding that he cannot save his soul “through art or Good Works” (Tale 39), he is more depressed than usual. “Sick and weary” (28), he travels to London to say farewell to Talbot and tells him he has “figured a way to end it” (43). He feels he should have died the day he battled the wolves; and in the Gobi Desert he plans to fly as close to the sun as he can just before sunrise; then, when it is too late to retreat, the sun will rise and he will be burned to death. He does this and falls to the earth, burnt but still alive. The stronger blood of Akasha has saved him; and now he is tanned “almost like a man” (55). However, he is not the man he wants to be. With no rapture left in his life, he is in despair, as Armand had warned him might happen; but because of Akasha’s powerful blood, now he cannot go out to die as other vampires have in the past. Immortality truly has become a curse for Lestat, unless he can find a way to change and revitalize his life through new meaning. Therefore,

when Raglan James approaches him and proposes that they exchange bodies, Lestat is tempted. He can become mortal again for a while; and this is what he wants most: “to be human again” (Tale 99) “innocent and alive” (100). His search for a confirmation that he has a soul takes him back into the body of a human being where he attempts to find the combination of spiritual and material of which Maharet spoke.

Once he exchanges bodies with Raglan James, however, his experience of being human does not live up to his memory of it. He is no longer so heroic or so rebellious as a human. Instead, Lestat concentrates on the physicalness of this experience -- the cold, the sweat, the itching, the bleeding, the pain of a full bladder; and, right away, he decides he hates his human body “to the marrow of these human bones” (Tale 177). He is disgusted by his mortal needs to eat, to defecate, to urinate; and even having sex does not fulfill him the way the blood drinking did. Now, without his vampire perspective, humans appear to him as “common ... utterly worthless” (190) things; and mortal life is “nothing but abysmal struggle and trivia and fear” (193). Mortality has no value to him, like it did when he was above it all and when humans had value because they had life and gave him life. As he had felt that the Parisian vampires had wasted their immortality, so he feels that mortals have “wasted our [their] lives in foolish preoccupation” (193). However, when he wakes up in the morning to see his first sunrise in centuries, he perceives his human life differently. It is the “biblical promise which had gone unfulfilled for two hundred years” (195) and “worth all the trials and the pain” (195) of mortality. Sunrises are not enough to give his life meaning, since they represent only an aesthetic enjoyment of the moment. The beauty of a sunrise may fill him with awe, love, and even a sense

of goodness; but it cannot relieve him of his physical pain or give him back the power he had as a vampire.

In fact, his mortal pain increases, as he is struck with pneumonia. This illness does, however, lead him to someone who can teach him what being human means. Taken to the hospital where he faces the possibility of dying, he begins to hallucinate that he sees Claudia and tells the nun Gretchen who is nursing him that he is a vampire. He also tells her that he “can’t bear to be quiet and be nothing” (Tale 233) while mortals create and accomplish so much in their lives. He feels that to accomplish anything, to be the hero of his story, he must be immortal; and he wants his immortal life back. While not believing his story of being a vampire, Gretchen tries to convince him that he came into the mortal body as Christ did for the same reason: for “redemption” (235). To her, redemption is in the small acts, and in her life these are the heroic acts. It does not matter if she affects the world in the larger scheme of things, only that she changes someone’s life on a personal level. What one does to help others is what matters in the end. She tries to convince him that he did good when he made Claudia and Gabrielle vampires to save them from death, and that doing good is to “transcend doubt and something ... something perhaps hopeless and black inside” (247). This is what Lestat is looking for in his hopelessness – reassurance that goodness can transcend despair and give life meaning. Lestat has decided, however, that he wants to be immortal again; and finally he manages to re-inhabits his own body. He has had his chance at salvation in the human body and refused it; but he has learned something along the way. Lestat finally realizes that finding meaning as a human is no different than finding meaning as a vampire; from

his experience as a human, he learns vampires and humans can all waste their lives in trivial pursuits. From Gretchen he learns that salvation is in the small acts of kindness done for others.

Most religious humans subscribe to a belief that good words and faith will get one into Heaven. However, these same simple truisms cannot give Lestat the answers to the question that he has avoided for so long. Goodness and evilness, being relative concepts, cannot give him anything but relative answers to his questions of whether he is a good person or not. Lestat must finally struggle with whether his goodness as a vampire ensures him a place in the afterworld or not. In Memnoch the Devil Lestat will finally seek the answers to his questions of good and evil and divine grace in the afterlife as he takes on the role of the cosmic hero who enters both Heaven and Hell in search of the ultimate higher meaning.

In the Prologue to Memnoch the Devil, Lestat tells his audience that he has “set for [himself] the task of being a hero in this world” (Memnoch 3). He adds, “I maintain myself as morally complex, spiritually tough, and aesthetically relevant” (3) because, as he says, he has “things to say” both about being a vampire and about being human. Through his experiences, he has come to realize that humans and vampires have the same souls; and neither truly knows “what it means to die” (3). In fact, becoming a vampire is the ultimate denial of death in an acceptance of physical immortality. As a hero, Lestat is “searching desperately for the lesson, and for the song and for the raison d’être” (3); he wants to understand why he exists, and, like the Ancient Mariner, he wants his readers to understand, also.

Lestat's lesson will come from an experience of the numinous again; but now that he represents the numinous himself, whatever divine figure opposes him must appear even more powerful than he is. The powerful entity that finally confronts him turns out to be the Devil himself. Lestat overhears a fragmented conversation between God and the Devil; and, without understanding all the words, he knows they are arguing about him. As he listens to them talk, he feels the "fabric of life ripping" (Memnoch 15) and thinks the devil has come for him. Worried about his fate at the hands of the Devil, he tells his friend David that his "views are changing" (106), that "the atheism and nihilism" (106) he subscribed to in his earlier life now seem "shallow, and even a bit cocky" (106). To add to his anxiety, the ghost of one of his victims has charged him with the responsibility of watching out for his daughter Dora, an evangelist in search of revelation; and so, Lestat's life has taken on some meaning after all. He also reminds himself that he has Mojo, the dog he inherited from his time inside the body Raglan James had inhabited. Although he laughs at the thought of resisting the Devil "on account of a flesh-and-blood dog" (109), he gives relevance to the possibility by deciding that stranger things have happened to humans. Still, these reasons to think his life has meaning are mundane; they do not provide for the higher meaning of the spirit that he requires. Lestat's spiritual journey must take him to a realm where he can confront his fears for his soul in order for him to find the true meaning of his existence and to make true moral meaning from his experiences. Despite his own supernatural power, once more Lestat has been affected by an experience of the numinous; but this time the initial fear is not dissipated in the rapture, as it was when Magnus turned him into a vampire. This time, his fear over

the fate of his immortal soul cannot be assuaged by a feeling of love; and no aesthetic of goodness can help him deny the danger in which he perceives his immortal soul to be. Lestat is terrified at the thought of the Devil coming for his soul, because, if the Devil were to take his soul, he would have an answer to the question of where he belongs in the spiritual scheme of things; and this answer would not be one Lestat would find acceptable, because it would not validate his own sense of value and meaning. Like Jonathan Harker in Dracula Lestat is aware that the span of his life may be over. For him, though, this realization is more problematic because, if the Devil claims his soul, the act would be a sign that he was wrong all these centuries.

Lestat's cosmic journey begins when the Devil finally visits him. At first Lestat is surprised that the Devil appears, not as "some monstrous angelic being ... resembling more a Mesopotamian demon than an angel" (Memnoch 3 i), but as an "Ordinary Man" (115); but despite the innocuous appearance of Memnoch the Devil, Lestat is reduced to tears at the thought that the Devil wants his soul. However, Memnoch wants more than that. He has been watching Lestat for centuries; and he wants Lestat to help him in his battle with God. The Devil offers Lestat a chance "to turn your [his] life from aimlessness and meaninglessness" (136) into meaning by helping win the "crucial battle for the fate of the world" (136). As the Devil often does, he tempts Lestat with precisely what Lestat has desired all these centuries – meaning in his life; what a temptation, an offer he cannot refuse. If he helps the Devil, he will be a hero of cosmic proportions. However, his main reason for accepting the Devil's proposal is his hope that he will discover once and for all what the meaning of his existence is. Lestat has now taken up Louis' quest, in his need to

know whether he serves God or the Devil. If he can have assurance from God that despite his disbelief there is a place for him in Heaven, then he will be reassured that his life has value regardless of his vampire nature.

In the spirit of an apocalyptic text, Rice has Memnoch propose that Lestat accompany him to Heaven to talk to God; and when Lestat tells Dora, the television evangelist, of the Devil's offer, she encourages him to do it. While he is talking to God, she wants him to ask what God wants of humans, because, as she tells Lestat, "it's not that God is dead in the twentieth century. It's that everybody hates him" (Memnoch 161); at least, she thinks that they do. So, Memnoch and Lestat visit Heaven; and when he finally approaches God, he is overcome by the numinous and feels he is "on the verge of death" (169). The will that had made him immortal, that had sustained him through countless years as a vampire, is in danger of completely overwhelmed as he is embraced by God. Yet, when Memnoch pulls Lestat away into the whirlwind again, Lestat is left in "utter agony" (169), bereft of God's presence. Having now experienced belief in God as he encountered Him as an objective presence in Heaven, Lestat must now endure the loss of God when he is taken from His presence. Although he does not feel the same level of alienation from God that Louis or Armand did as religious men turned vampire's, Lestat still suffers the sadness of loss. However, the fact that God knows his name, and that as God's children even Lestat the vampire and Memnoch the Devil seemingly can enter Heaven at will, fills Lestat with excitement and hope, despite his realization that salvation cannot be that easy.

To give him the rest of the story, Memnoch continues his campaign to enlist Lestat by showing him the angels fall from grace, the earth through all its history, and all the terrible things that have happened since creation, blaming all of them on God's indifference to humanity. When Lestat is shown the crucifixion of Christ, he is offered the Blood of Christ and drinks from Christ's wounds; he is also given a veil with Christ's blood on it, Veronica's Veil, which he keeps with him as he travels into Hell with the Devil. In Hell, Lestat is confronted by his dead victims and urged to "learn" (Memnoch 315) about what evil he has done. He cries out for God's help but realizes that his cries cannot be heard anymore than the incessant cries of the dead whose only excuse seems to be that they "did not know" (315) the consequences of their actions would result in their being consigned to Hell. Lestat has never realized his own indifference to consequences, just as he did not see his own parallel with the serial killer in his last adventure. Now he does not want to face his own guilt over what he has become and what he has done in making other vampires like Nicholas and his mother, Louis and Claudia. With the examples of the death of Christ and the souls of his own victims in Hell before him, Lestat understands that salvation is a difficult state to attain. One does not simply live a life of personal goodness and love, but, like Christ, must be willing to give up their life in service of another's salvation. However, Lestat's vampire divinity offered no salvation to the innocents he took; they have ended up in Hell with no hope of getting God's attention, let alone of getting into Heaven. If his victims ended up in Hell, Lestat must realize that his place is there with them eventually. Like those souls in Hell, Lestat also must realize that he has ignored the consequences of his actions as a vampire. In maintaining his

moral doctrine of goodness and love that served him as a mortal, and in not searching for a deeper meaning to life, he has settled for earthly morality over a spiritual meaning.

Accused by his victims, his own words coming back to haunt him, Lestat refuses the Devil's offer. However, his refusal is not due to his desire to become one of God's chosen. Feeling that God is "blind" (Memnoch 317), and that both Memnoch and God are "mad" (317), Lestat escapes from Hell; and although he loses an eye in the encounter, he does manage to keep hold of the Veil. On his return to earth, Lestat brings back his story and the Veil to Dora and his friends; but he tries to tell them all that the Veil is no proof of his experiences or of the existence of God or Christ. He is ambivalent about what he has seen because the Devil was his guide and the Devil could have been lying about it all. Armand and Lestat end their relationship where they started in Paris, arguing about whether vampires serve God or the Devil; and Lestat reasserts his belief that "we have conceived better rules" (331) of personal morality than either the Devil or God could offer. His belief that personal doctrines of goodness and love are better than the rules offered by either side of the cosmic equation indicates that he has given up on salvation for himself, or rather, rejected it. In the end, the consensus of the group to whom he has told his story is that even the ultimate experience of meeting God and the Devil cannot give one spiritual surety. However, when he gives the Veil to Dora, she is overcome by the revelation of God's face appearing on it. Despite her despair at the possibility of never knowing for sure that God exists, she still believes in Him. For Lestat, however, the Veil is no proof of his experience; it is only a piece of cloth with what appears to be blood in the image

of Christ on it. Lestat himself cannot be entirely sure the whole experience was real; and the one proof he has – Christ’s blood in his own veins, he will not offer to them. Although Armand asks him for a taste and assures him that he would know the blood of Christ when he tasted it, Lestat refuses. He does not want to put the reality of his experience to the test because living with the possibility allows him to continue to live with his relative morality as a foundation. Although Lestat warns them all that his story is no proof of truth, nor is the Veil, when Armand sees God’s face in the Veil, he falls to his knees in awe. As humans rush to see the revelation of the Veil, vampires also come into its presence and are convinced by the sight of it that redemption lies in immolating themselves. Armand is one of the first to walk into the fire to his death; and, though Lestat is anguished by this act, he still is caught between a desire to believe and his will not to believe.

The Desire to Expend One’s Life in Service to Mankind

Through his visits to Hell and to Sheol and the visions of human history the Devil has provided for him, Lestat has come to value humans for their faith in the divine and their struggle to survive in an indifferent world watched over by an indifferent God. While, in his adventure within the human body of Raglan James, he came to despise humans and mortality for their waste of their lives, he now sees the struggle they have gone through because of the indifference of God. Though Lestat refused to take either side in the cosmic battle, he did bring the Veil back, and the miracle of the Veil itself gives “a new infusion of blood into the very religion that Memnoch loathed” (Memnoch 341). Lestat, however, feels that he has served a God he still hates by bringing back the Veil and is angered by his unintended collusion.

However, then he receives a note from Memnoch and is led to believe that all along he was “Memnoch’s servant; Memnoch’s prince” (351). He is no happier about this turn of events than he was about unintentionally helping God with the miracle of the Veil. However, Lestat is a changed vampire now, despite his hatred of both God and the Devil, and resolves never to “take a human life” (348) again as long as he lives. He has made his decision finally about how to live an honorable life; and his service to mankind will be a vow to resist consigning another victim to Hell. He finishes his tale with a message to his readers that is much like Marius’ earlier warning to him: this is his experience and the breadth of his knowledge and that is all there is.

Still “the hero of [his] own dreams” (354), Lestat wants to “pass now from fiction into legend” (354); but what has been his message to the world of humans? His message seems to be that the answers to questions about the nature of good and evil, whether God exists, whether there is an afterlife, and what we can do to ensure that our lives have meaning both while we are on earth and after we are gone, do not lie within the artificial constructs that deny the true reality of human existence, or with the knowledge of others, vampires or humans, we expect to give us easy answers. The true spiritual journey takes place within us; and the potential for meaning in life lies also within a constantly seeking soul, searching for something more than rational reality can give. Meaning lies in the will to search for that meaning and in the will to make one’s own choices about how to live and what life means and what death means. To develop a system of morality based on love and goodness helps an individual to survive in the short term; but to give the system of personal morality a more cosmic meaning, one must make the spiritual choice to live

in a reality of higher consequences by serving mankind and assuring their salvation, instead of our own. However, one can never truly be sure of the reality of the spiritual quest or the answers it provides except as they are represented by the individual experience. Lestat does not ask the others to believe in his experience because he knows that the way to spiritual knowledge is the individual journey of discovery. The spiritual quest is a personal journey; and the answers gained at the end are just as personal and will only hold up to scrutiny of our own hearts. In the end, all we can offer someone else who is searching for spiritual meaning is what Lestat offers his friends and his readers: “this is what I know! This is all I know” (353). Believe it or not, as you choose; but perhaps, the knowledge of this one individual journey can help others along their own path to spiritual knowledge.

NOTES

¹ Originally titled Fearful Living: The Fear of Death. Other books dealing with death anxiety, written by McCarthy, include Death anxiety, intrinsicness of religion and purpose in life among nuns and Roman Catholic female undergraduates (Ph. D dissertation, 1974) and Adolescence and character disturbance (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1995).

² The text of this afterword, "The Culture of Narcissism Revisited," was originally published in The World and I, February 1990.

³ A trip to the local Barnes and Noble or Border's Books can give one spiritual overload of a sort. Available to guide one's spiritual journey are books on mediumship, hypnotism, palmistry, runes, magic, and tarot, as well as on any number of ethnic paths to enlightenment.

⁴ A perusal of a dozen or so interviews from varied sources seems to indicate that the critics usually pan her work. While a few of the reviewers found her work to be interesting and intelligent, the majority of comments were less than enthusiastic. Although Michael Rogers gave her third Vampire Chronicles book, Queen of the Damned, a good review, calling it "quality fiction written with care and intelligence" (101), in a review of The Tale of the Body Thief he described the book "by far the weakest" (216); and a few years later in a review for Memnoch the Devil he called the book's plot "ridiculous" (96), as does Brad Leithauser in his review in New York magazine. (Brad Leithauser. Fear of Horror. Review of Memnoch the Devil. New York July 24, 1995: 44-45). Moreover, although he does give her a good review overall, David Gates calls her discussions of the existence of God and the Devil in The Tale of the Body Thief "eye-glazing" (62). However, regardless of the reviews, Rice's work sells extremely well. Her first book of The Vampire Chronicles, Interview with the Vampire (1976) was not immediately successful, but her second volume, The Vampire Lestat (1985) hit the bestseller list in its first week of publication. Queen of the Damned, her third in the series, became a number one bestseller its first week out and stayed there for seventeen weeks. (Gelder 108). Her popularity is also evident in the long lines at booksignings, the great number of websites and chat rooms devoted to her and to her books and their main characters. Despite the fact that some fans disapprove of the level of commercialism that her work generates, they seem to overlook it when a new book arrives on the scene or when it is time for the annual Halloween ball sponsored by Anne Rice in New Orleans. By 1993, her books had sold one hundred and fifty million copies worldwide, and as John Hockenberry stated "every seven seconds someone buys one of her books" (Hockenberry Interview). In addition, the first movie made from one of her books, Interview with the Vampire grossed approximately "two million dollars" (Rose Interview) in its theater run.

⁵ In a book review for New Republic, on the publication of Rice's first novel, Interview with the Vampire, Edith Milton disagrees that the vampires are metaphors for the human condition. She states that she likes the idea of the vampire serving as a "metaphor for the beast within, for the loneliness implicit in our animal nature, and for the fear that because we are animals the dead will reach out to claim whatever our guilts tell us is already rightfully theirs" (29). However, Milton seems to disapprove or at least to have missed the implications of Rice's use of the vampire figure, writing that she "gets away from all that" (29). Louis is a good vampire and not the least lonely, having, in Milton's estimation, a host of vampire friends and lovers. Another trouble she sees with the story is that if Louis is an alienated vampire, he would not be granting the interview. She had hoped, she writes, that "Louis' self-torment over his blood-compulsion might be informed by the human conflict between the need to kill and the fear of killing; that Louis ... might be given a *raison d'être*" (29); but as she interprets the text he was not. Milton describes this work as an erotic novel only and a badly written one to boot, calling it not just "silly" (30), but also "pernicious" (30) and dangerous because it melds "the salacious and the sadistic" (30).

⁶ Rice sees her writing as a "mystical experience" (Rose Interview) and feels that her work allows her to come to a higher understanding of the world and what it is to be human in it. In her writing she is "seeking after the ... surety of immortality that I had when I was a Catholic child" (Rose Interview)

⁷ See "Let Us Prey: Religious Codes and Rituals in The Vampire Lestat" by Aileen Chris Shafer in The Gothic World of Anne Rice. (Ed. Gary Hoppenstand and Ray B. Browne. Bowling Green: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1996. 149-161) for an in-depth discussion of how Lestat challenges religious rules.

⁸ In her interview with John Hockenberry, Anne Rice confessed her own desire “to be loved and never forgotten I want to be immortal” (Hockenberry Interview)

⁹ In a book length series of interviews with Michael Riley, Anne Rice talks of immersing herself “in the history of religious ideas and the history of religion” (159) to research her vampire novels. She adds that she was “particularly engrossed in the work of ... Mircea Eliade” (159) and lists Karen Armstrong’s A History of God and Jeffrey Burton Russell’s books on the Devil among other texts read. (See Conversations with Anne Rice: An Intimate, Enlightening Portrait of Her Life and Work. New York: Ballantine, 1996). Armstrong’s History of God is a study of how Judaism, Christianity, Islam have not only influenced each other, but also how they have affected how God is perceived. Russell’s books include The Devil: Perceptions of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity (1977), Satan: The Early Christian Tradition (1981), and The Prince of Darkness: Radical Evil and the Power of Good in History (1988), all published by Cornell University Press.

¹⁰ Raised in the Catholic faith in New Orleans, Anne was confronted by evidence of the numinous every day as she went to mass before school. At church the images of saints and stories of miracles, as well as the ever present miracle of transubstantiation, surrounded her and influenced her young mind. In addition, Anne recalls how she was raised by a mother who gave her a “sense of limitless power” (Ramsland Prisms 46). However, Anne says she also had an extreme fear of death from early in life; and when her mother died, and then later her young daughter Michelle, and she could do nothing to save either one, she lost her faith and began to wonder if there were even an afterlife. Her vampire books were the way back to some kind of belief in a higher power and an afterlife.

¹¹ An expanded discussion of the similarities of Rice’s work to various works in the genres of horror, gothic and fantasy can be found in Jennifer Smith’s Anne Rice: A Critical Companion (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1996). Also, a discussion of both Stoker’s Dracula and Rice’s Vampire Chronicles is included in the chapter entitled “Development of the Byronic Vampire: Byron, Stoker, Rice” by Kathryn McGinley which is published in The Gothic World of Anne Rice (eds. Gary Hoppenstand and Ray B. Browne. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Press, 1996).

¹² The books of the Vampire Chronicles that will be dealt with in this chapter include: Interview with the Vampire, The Vampire Lestat, Queen of the Damned, The Tale of the Body Thief, and Memnoch the Devil. Since Memnoch, Rice has written another chapter in the Chronicles with her novel The Vampire Armand (1998); and she is presently working on the story of Marius which should be published in 2001.

¹³ See “Living with(out) Boundaries: The Novels of Anne Rice” by Lynda and Robert Haas (A Dark Night’s Dreaming: Contemporary American Horror Fiction, edited by Tony Magistrale and Michael A. Morrison. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1996) for a discussion of Lestat as social outsider. The article discusses how Rice revises the elements of history and identity to represent the postmodern individual as one without spiritual hope, as one who must continually search for identity in order to survive.

¹⁴ Anne had a similar epiphany in college at Berkeley. She had been smoking pot and suddenly had this insight that “we might not even know when we died what this [existence] was all about” (Ramsland Prisms 100). Like Lestat, she was devastated by this revelation, because she had hoped that at death would come some higher knowledge and understanding of what life had been about.

CHAPTER FIVE

TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE VAMPIRE

This dissertation has examined the experience of the numinous in vampire literature written by both British and American authors over the course of the last three centuries. To explore the idea that the figure of the vampire has served to convey a human sense of alienation from the divine and a desire to overcome that alienation, this study has argued that a textual experience of the numinous in the form of the vampire causes at least one of the characters in the literary work to embark on a spiritual journey involving both psychological and religious qualities, and that through identification with that character's journey the reader also may begin to understand the value of his or her existence in the world and to negotiate a new relationship with the divine.

In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Samuel Taylor Coleridge portrays an individual's journey away from traditional religious systems to the higher understanding signified by the cosmic relationship of human and divine. Separated from his God, as well as from humanity, the Mariner suffers through the experience of a numinous contact and evolves into the numen/artist who can carry the lesson of his experience to others, and, thereby, bring them the message of how to reestablish the divine in their own lives. In his representation as the Romantic artist, the Mariner allows the primitive numinous to come to the surface as he creates his tale for the

audience who is in need of the lesson embedded in it. Although considered a negative numinous figure because of his hypnotic influence over people, and because of his haggard and frightening appearance, the Mariner is nevertheless a vehicle for revelation and transformation. As such, he is a kind of cosmic hero, who has visited the underworld of the negative numinous and returned with a higher understanding of the human place in both the spiritual and earthly worlds.

A century later, many Britons still were searching for a relationship with the divine. This search often led them to occult practices for answers to the divine mysteries, but at the same time, they feared the influence that the primitive occult might have on their larger society and on their families. Although in Stoker's novel the vampire's isolation from the world is much like the Ancient Mariner's, in Dracula, it is the anxieties and fears of the humans that the story chronicles. The committee of heroes in Stoker's novel choose to approach the numinous of the vampire not as something that might be integrated into their lives, but as something that must be destroyed to maintain the already established order of their times. To conquer their anxieties and fears, they strengthen the constructed Victorian reality of their society and deny the numinous its rightful place in their lives by taking away its power, by destroying Dracula. While the Mariner serves the divine by becoming a vehicle for reconnection with it, the humans in Dracula serve themselves and their larger society by denying the divine a place in their secularized world; and while the Mariner answers the question of the human place in the world by positing the unity of all things under God, the humans who destroy Dracula answer the same question by

choosing to believe in the righteousness of their own established secular power which they perceive as sacred.

During the twentieth century, the cultural systems that had given meaning and structure to the lives of humans seemed to be shifting more than ever due to the rapid increases in technological and scientific advancements. Families and societies also seemed more fragmented; and for many people traditional forms of religion no longer served as a vehicle for divine faith. In Anne Rice's Vampire Chronicles, Lestat represents the human condition; and through his adventures, Rice shows the reader the anxiety of the twentieth-century individual over his inability to construct a system that will satisfy his desire for life and meaning, his awareness of his ultimate fate of death, and the ambiguity of the larger moral issues of good and evil. Like the humans he represents, the vampire Lestat is on a spiritual journey, searching for meaning to deny his fear of death and to alleviate the anxiety that his questions about existence produce in him. Lestat's search for answers evolves over several adventures to an understanding that meaning is complicated and found only within ourselves. From Lestat's experience, we readers are expected to learn that we are in charge of whether we believe in God or not, of whether we believe in an afterlife or not, and of whether we wish to be good or evil; but the most important thing to understand is that regardless of how one answers these questions of existence, life on earth has moral meaning only in how one relates to others and in how one accepts the responsibility of being human. However, Lestat wants to be a hero in the world; so, if in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and Dracula the sin is in forgetting our sacred connection with the world, then in Anne Rice's vampire novels the sin is in being a forgotten part

of that world. For Rice's vampires, especially Lestat, the sin lies in having no meaning in life and, therefore, nothing for which to be remembered.

While, in most senses of the word, the Mariner does serve as the hero of his tale, having a voice and taking action, albeit involuntarily, to create meaning in the world, Dracula is in no way considered the hero of his tale. He has no real voice in the novel and the change that his presence can bring to the British world is not the kind the Victorian society of the novel desires. In Rice's novels, however, Lestat is definitely the hero of his tales; and in representing the human condition, he underscores for the rest of us that meaning in life comes from our confrontation with the terror of death through the numinous and from the resulting questions about our existence. Although Lestat is much like the Mariner in his moral dilemma, his journey is more like Dracula's because he does not question his role in the world at first. Motivated as he is by free will, just as Dracula appears to be, the world is what he wants it to be or he will make it so. Yet, by the time Lestat has lived more than two hundred years, he is changing. Nothing that he has done to make meaning in his life has worked, and he ends up full of questions about the existence of God and the role of good and evil in the world. His hero's quest becomes a search for the possibility of transcendence and salvation. Lestat finds only ambivalence in his search for meaning, because, as he learns, salvation is not an easy state to attain, after all. However, despite the fact that both the Mariner's tale and the tales of the group of human characters in Dracula reflect their individual experiences of the numinous, at the end of their respective tales the Mariner and the human characters of Dracula articulate the importance of the community in spiritual or sacred issues. In the

Vampire Chronicles, however, Lestat is much the rebel and the loner, despite his seeming need to create a vampire family; and, as such, he underscores the modern American position of individual choice and free will as the only acceptable moral and spiritual stand.

At the end of a century and, particularly, at the end of a millennium, many people suffer anxiety about the future. They perceive the end of that segment of time as a threshold on the other side of which lies the unknown; and psychologically, people recognize this threshold as the possible end of time and, therefore, the end of human history. While there is always the possibility that one will join the ranks of God's angels when crossing that threshold, there is also the possibility of finding oneself on the edge of the abyss, and that nothing is all one can expect to find on the other side of that fateful midnight.

At the ends of each of the three centuries, and the one millennium, which have encompassed the literature I have chosen to discuss in this dissertation, the ambivalence of expectations as to what the new century might hold has allowed writers to employ the numinous in order to address the fears of their respective societies. The questions produced by the fears and expectations of people at the end of each of the three centuries are much the same. The ambivalence of possibilities at this gateway of time leads many people to question whether God exists, whether there is an afterlife of any consequence, and what good or evil will influence the passage over if there is one. The difference between centuries lies in how these questions are answered by each society. The literature I have chosen to use as representative of the vampire as numinous figure in each period is also representative of how many of the

people of that period answered the questions their fears about the end of time produced.

Fear is a universal emotion: fear of alienation, of abandonment, of death; and as the technological advances of the late twentieth century and the newly entered twenty-first century isolate us further from personal contact, spirituality is the key to meaning, as it was at the end of each century before. The vampire figure can serve to make meaning for us, as it has in other centuries, because vampires and humans will both survive until the end of time; and neither knows when that will be. Having survived the threshold of time we twenty-first century humans must find a new spirituality to serve as a guide for the new century. This new spirituality, signified, I believe, by a resurgence of belief in angels, should show us that we have faced the death of time and survived, and that the numinous is, therefore, within each of us.¹

Transformations of the Vampire

In his discussion of the origins of the Gothic, Fred Botting, lecturer on Romanticism at Lancaster University, finds “the term ‘Gothic romance is more applicable than ‘Gothic novel’” (24) because the description of Gothic as a romance connects its origins to its progenitors: “medieval romances, the romantic narratives of love, chivalry and adventure, that were imported from France from the late seventeenth century onwards, and the tales that in the later eighteenth century were classified as ‘Gothic’” (24). In Botting’s estimation, these early romances “blurred boundaries between supernatural and illusory dimensions and natural and real worlds [and] loosened the moral and rational structures that ordered everyday life” (28). While many of the Gothic tales that were written over the last three centuries can be

interpreted as positing “an order based on divine or metaphysical principles that had been displaced by enlightenment rationality, a way of conserving justice, privilege and familiar and social hierarchies” (47), in order to represent the established systems of culture, the Gothic genre had to “exceed the boundaries of reason and propriety” (47). In this way, Botting argues, the Gothic is meant to “interrogate, rather than restore, any imagined continuity between the past and present, nature and culture, reason and passion, individuality and family and society” (Botting 47).

In its interrogative aspect, Gothic literature is a literature of thresholds, where both character and reader face the anxieties and fears of human life and of the times in which they live. However, the messages of the Gothic are ambivalent at best, for the answers to the questions brought up by the anxiety and fear felt by the characters, and through them by the reader, are only found within the individual. Botting’s study of the history of the Gothic maintains that as the Gothic romance became internalized, the sublime landscape that was a common convention of the genre came to signify the inner state of the character, and by extension the reader who identified with them. This individual experience of the character puts him or her outside society and results in a quest for a way to be reintegrated. For Botting, “the romance quest provides the structure of a male fantasy of sacred, immortal power of its originary values restored in the present by violent, sacrificial energy” (Botting 154).²

In the twentieth century, Botting argues, the “Gothic is everywhere and nowhere” (Botting 155); and in that ambivalent space “ideas of human individuality and community ... are sacralised” (Botting 157) through the “loss of human identity and the alienation of self from both itself and the social bearings” (157) which are the

foundation of the individual's sense of reality. In this ambivalent space, then, the position of realism that the truth of any experience "can be discovered by the individual through his senses" (Watt 12) becomes problematic as one realizes that, if experience is judged through the individual's senses, each individual must have his or her own version of that particular experience. Tzvetan Todorov's theory of the fantastic speaks to this multiplicity of versions as a lack of interpretability that creates a chaos in the imagination of the individual. Gothic literature is characterized by its multiplicity of interpretations, which I feel is aptly represented by the many faces and forms the vampire has taken and, hopefully, will continue to take in that literature.

The Future of the Vampire in Gothic Literature

The vampire was invited into the pages of British Romantic literature by writers like Samuel Taylor Coleridge. His readings, not only of early eighteenth-century treatises such as Traité sur les Apparitions des Esprits, et sur les Vampire (1746) by Benedictine abbot and religious scholar Dom Augustin Calmet, but also of the German Schauermärchen or horror tales which grew out of the continental interest in the existence of the vampire, were to influence the Gothic literature of nineteenth-century Britain. From such poetic parentage as Heinrich August Ossenfelder's "The Vampire" (1748), Gottfried August Bürger's "Lenore" (1773) and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's "The Bride of Corinth" (1797) were born the first of the British Romantic vampires: Robert Southey's "Thalaba the Destroyer" (1797); Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "Christabel" (1797-1801) and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1797-1817); John Keats' "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" (1819) and "Lamia" (1819); Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley's Frankenstein (1818) and John Polidori's The

Vampyre (1820).³ Out of the literary bloodlines of the Romantic vampire then was born their Victorian offspring, created by prose writers who, like Shelley and Polidori, had come under the spell of the glittery-eyed fiend and his lovely, pale sisters. One need only read the serialized Varney, the Vampire⁴ (1847), Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre (1847), or Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights (1847) to realize that the vampire was thriving in early Victorian Britain. He, and she, would continue to propagate and evolve in the later decades of the nineteenth century with works like J. Sheridan Le Fanu's "Carmilla" (1872) and Bram Stoker's Dracula (1897). Nor have they given up the ghost as yet, but have emigrated to America along with countless other British and continental citizens, where they have continued producing blood-thirsty progeny from Edgar Allan Poe's "Berenice" (1835) and "Ligeia" (1838) to the end of the twentieth century and beyond with works such as The Vampire Tapestry (1980) by Suzy McKee Charnas, the various novels of the vampire Count Saint-Germain by Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, the prolific novels of Poppy Z. Brite, Brian Lumley, Paul F. Wilson, and, of course, the Vampire Chronicles series of Anne Rice (1976-1998), whose new vampire series New Tales of the Vampires carries on the tales of the older vampires who appeared as supporting characters in Vampire Chronicles, to name only a few of the offerings in the ever-increasing field of vampire literature.

In the post modern Gothic, it is the "play of fear and laughter" (Botting 168) that characterizes the "escalating anxiety" (Botting 169) over how the individual fits into social constructs as reflected in literary constructs; and the question for this conclusion is what will the role of the Gothic be in the first decades of this new

millennium. A return to the psychological theories of Freud, Jung, and Kristeva discussed in the introduction may provide a clue to where the postmodern Gothic may be heading in this new century. All three of these theories define the sense of otherness caused by the horror of the uncanny, visionary, and abject feeling of helplessness as in some way sacred because of its mysterious power. For Freud, the uncanny's mystery is part of its qualities of secretness, of hiddenness from public knowledge. Human fear of otherness is a narcissistic fear that what we see reflected in the other may be what we really are. Freud's theory of the uncanny is based on repressions of fears of castration or on surmounted primitive beliefs resurfacing in the human psyche. That these repressed ideas are secretly familiar frightens us because these impulses or ideas are considered unacceptable within the wider cultural codes of society. Jung's theory of psychology maintains that visionary literature, such as the Gothic, provides the reader with a "vision of other worlds, or of the darkneses of the spirit, or of the primal beginnings of the human psyche" (90-1). He also argues that in the visionary mode of literature "we are reminded of ... dreams, night-time fears, and the dark, uncanny recesses of the human mind" (91). Jung echoes Freud in his insistence that these visions frighten us because they represent hidden impulses of the human mind that are considered unacceptable, and have been considered so since the earliest of times. Kristeva's theory articulated in Powers of Horror relates the sense of sacredness in the horror of the other, even more clearly than either Freud or Jung, as a sense of helplessness, abjection, and oppression. She asks "who ... would agree to call himself abject, subject of or subject to abjection?" (209). Arguing that cultural structures, such as society, family, and religion, are the codes by which we

deny or repress our sense of abjection, she maintains that no one would want to admit that they are powerless. To admit that one is helpless diminishes one in his or her own eyes. Recognition of the repressed sense of abjection is apocalyptic for the individual and that is where the horror lies.

Stephen King defines terror as the emotion that arises when one suffers “a pervasive sense of disestablishment; that things are in the unmaking” (9). He argues that social contact is an illusion, albeit a necessary one. “Feelings of love and kindness, the ability to care and empathize” (12) are all we can know of the spiritual world while we are still alive. “Horror, terror, fear, panic: these are the emotions which drive wedges between us” (13), which isolate us and make us feel alone in the world. To handle real horrors of the world we make up fictional ones through which we can have a cathartic release of our feelings. In the late twentieth century literature, particularly in the novels of Anne Rice, one sees that the Gothic is exploring the individual experience through the perspective of the isolated individual.

For this conclusion, to discuss the transformations of the vampire, I would like to treat the subject of that sense of powerlessness the isolated individual feels. In the past the self seems to have reflected the ideas behind the social systems that helped to create it; however, in the Gothic, these social forces are always problematic. In the horror of the Gothic of the last decades of the twentieth century, one sees the beginnings of an examination of problematic areas, most often dealing with issues and voices that have been considered marginalized and unacceptable in earlier periods and societies. These marginalized issues include lesbian and gay culture, women’s issues, and issues of race. Identification with the characters is the key to

understanding any issue represented in literature; and, when an author invites identification and understanding through a character considered other, the stifled and repressed voices that each of us hide within are given prominence over the idealized, socially controlled ones. Each of the author's discussed in the following pages attempts to give the power of articulation to a marginalized voice of twentieth-century society through identification of the reader with the dilemma of the vampire.

In an introduction to the paperback edition of Jeffrey N. McMahan's Somewhere in the Night: Eight Gay Tales of the Supernatural (1989), Jewelle Gomez, author of The Gilda Stories (1991), writes,

imagine the darkness, that unknowable place we've been taught to fear. The Dark – a planet, a universe. A condition so terrifying that even dark people are made the object of our loathing Horror stories have always lived in the dark, in those fearsome places we've been taught to hate. Yet writers are continually drawn to them. (1)

We are drawn to the darkness because the darkness illuminates. For Jeffrey N. McMahan, the darkness of the Gothic turns a spotlight on the complexities of the gay world in its context as underground to the outwardly heterosexual world.

In the title short story of his collection, "Somewhere in the Night; Cruising with Andrew," McMahan's protagonist, a gay, boutique night clerk and vampire named Andrew, faces the dilemma of his condition with a humor as sharp as the switchblade he uses to dispatch his victims. Andrew sees his new vampire status as an "altered, enriched and deprived" (20) existence. The ambiguity of this description does not escape him as he accepts the positive side of vampirism in having eternal beauty and the negative side of never being able to experience "showers and garlic bread and sunlit beaches" (20) again. Andrew is a vampire with a conscience that

feels the weight of the consequences of his kills and his relationships. His “unquenchable dilemma” (21) is always whether to make someone he is attracted to into a vampire; and he agonizes over whether the man of his dreams, at least that night’s dream, is worthy. When he meets Brett, who is “compelling” (22) and beyond beautiful, once again this dilemma comes to the foreground. There are, after all, responsibilities in the kind of commitment it takes to make a vampire. However, these responsibilities are never existential or spiritual as they are with Rice’s vampires. For Andrew, the dilemma of making another vampire is connected to the idea of living with another person, problems any human being might experience with the possibility of commitment looming. These problems include having to get another coffin and dirt and get it past mortals into the apartment, the annoyance of disrupted routines, and the possibility of not being able to have wild parties anymore. McMahan’s protagonist also underscores the problem of gay relationships in a society that is more often than not vehemently and violently heterosexual. So, regardless of whether the person is so beautiful he may deserve to cheat the process of decay, Andrew’s dilemma is always whether a person to whom he is attracted actually deserves the kind of dedication to change that he would have to make. To make his decision easier, he looks for “disgusting habits” (26) to convince him not to make the effort another’s immortality would require. Brett, however, loses his bid to become a vampire when he makes obvious to Andrew that he knows what Andrew is and that he wants the ruthless power that the vampire represents. When Andrew realizes that this desire is what motivates Brett, he feels Brett already acts like a vampire and wonders how many victims Brett has “devoured” (28) in his mortal lifetime. That

Brett “derives the pleasure of his existence from all pain – from all death” (28) seals his fate; and Andrew chooses to end Brett’s existence with the switchblade to ensure that Brett will not become a vampire in more than just attitude.

In Vampires Anonymous (1991), McMahan brings back Andrew in a full-length novel, but this time Andrew has a friend Pablo with whom he is living. However, Andrew still has his problems. Andrew and Pablo have been forced from their comfortable apartment into a wanderer’s life because Eddie Cramer, policeman, and Steven Verruckt, bartender and vampire hunter have been stalking them from city to city. To add insult to Andrew’s injured social life, Pablo has decided the vampire’s life is not for him and joined Vampires Anonymous. In the course of the novel, Andrew and Pablo go their separate ways; and Andrew forms a relationship with another vampire named John. Together they take in a vampire child to form their own family unit, an “anti-nuclear family” (252) as Andrew calls it; and the reader is left to believe they lived happily ever after.

Daughters of Darkness: Lesbian Vampire Stories (1993), edited by Pam Keesey, brings together ten stories of female vampires including “Carmilla” by J. Sheridan LeFanu and the original short story behind Jewelle Gomez’s The Gilda Stories. Keesey maintains that “the first vampires are equated with the destructive side of the goddess” (7) and that “vampires are like goddesses, associated with cycles of life, death, and rebirth” (7-8). Nevertheless, she argues vampires are more often “associated with blood and death and dangerous sexuality, again aspects of the goddess”, but features that today are seen as “oppressive” (8). According to Keesey the vampire as goddess, or the goddess as vampire, is connected historically to the

Judeo-Christian philosophy of evil because the figure of the goddess “embodied all that was evil” (8) in that philosophy, being “female, sexual, pagan” entities who “embraced death as part of the cycle of life” (8).

Keesey traces the appearance of lesbian vampires in nineteenth-century British literature to Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Christabel” (1817), a text she argues “clearly condemns homosexuality love between women” (8). She calls “Carmilla” (1871) “the most famous and influential lesbian vampire story” (9), but again admits that it condemns the lesbian relationship. In Dracula, also, she finds more to credit a homosexual interpretation than otherwise. Although she recognizes that “popular mythology” accepts the foundations of the character Dracula as Vlad Tepes, Hungarian prince-hero of the fifteenth century, she feels the activities of the novel are more likely based on the life of Elizabeth Bathory, a sixteenth century Hungarian countess, who was convicted of torturing and murdering hundreds of young women. Rumor has it, Keesey explains, that Elizabeth Bathory used their blood to rejuvenate herself. Interest in the lesbian undertones of the Gothic stories that she mentions in the introduction, and a recognition that there were not many lesbian oriented stories in anthologies of vampire literature led Keesey to bring together the stories in her volume. The vampire tales offered in this anthology all involve “female vampires that have sought out one-to-one relationships with other women” (16); and most were written by lesbian writers for a lesbian audience. However, they do investigate the point where sexuality and violence come together; and, at this point of convergence, I feel any woman, lesbian or straight, married or unmarried, can find some measure of

identification. An example of one of the stories can give an idea of the kind of issues that these stories investigate.

In “dracula retold” the author, zana, retells Bram Stoker’s classic tale; interestingly enough all in lower case type, perhaps to indicate the sense of helplessness the female in the story feels. As this tale unfolds, we learn that Lucy is Jonathan Harker’s wife. Harker is “a duddy all-american-boy type” (19) who works as a real estate agent; but Lucy married him anyway because she was young and thought marriage would be “a bit of an adventure” (19). A month into the marriage, however, Lucy is bored with an adventure that is “limited to experimenting with recipes from her card file” (19). Then, a moving van arrives next door and Lucy watches “muscular moving wimin” carry in crate after lavender crate of household goods. Later, Jonathan informs her that “an eccentric old biddy ... a foreigner ... by the name of dracula” (19) has bought the house. The next day, when Lucy takes lemonade and cookies over to welcome her new neighbor, she finds the lady reading “sexual politics” and is “a little unnerved” (19). Lucy cannot understand why an old “womon” (19) would be reading about sex, or what sex and politics have to do with each other. Regardless, the afternoon is a pleasant interlude for Lucy as they talk of “cookie recipes, the neighborhood, the institution of marriage, and wimen banding together to smash the patriarchy” (19). That night, Lucy cannot sleep well, and ends up on the couch, in order not to disturb Jonathan. There she has “a strange dream” (19) of a black cat coming to her window. Once she invites the cat in, it transforms into ms. dracula, whose eyes mesmerize Lucy as she bends over her at the couch. The next day Lucy wears a scarf around her neck and forgets to fix Jonathan his

breakfast. A week goes by, a week in which Lucy refuses her husband's "sexual advances" (20); and, finally, Jonathan consults psychiatrist Dr. Van Helsing, who gives him items that will prove what ms. dracula is. Once he has proven what she is, Jonathan is to release the women from their 'unnatural compulsions' (20) by "driving [his], uh, stake into her" (20). Jonathan is no match for these women, however. Ms. dracula calls her sisters to her, and the group of women turn him into a ladybug. The women then form a community in the country where they spend their time "discussing vegetarianism, non-monogamy, and whether converting all men to ladybugs would upset the ecology" (22).

Another novel, Jewelle Gomez's The Gilda Stories (1991), examines the dynamics of race and class, gender and sexuality, within a vampire fantasy that extends from the time of slavery in the Southern United States to a period two hundred years later when much of the natural environment has been destroyed. The organization of the female group of vampires is based on their views about what is important in life rather than on the power acquired by banding together, or on the abilities of each member of society to contribute to the larger cause or code system. In this vampire novel, blood drinking becomes a shared, almost sacramental, event, instead of a vicious act of survival.

In 1850, the first Gilda saves a girl child from being raped by a white man. Gilda has taken in many girls over the years, but this one becomes special to her immediately; and she christens her Girl. Eventually, after Girl grows to adulthood, Gilda transforms her into a vampire, with her permission, of course. Giving Girl her own name, she leaves the band of women, so she can "embrace ... freedom" (32) by

finally seeking her death; but before she goes she elicits Girl's pledge to "pursue only life, never bitterness or cruelty" (43).

In the futuristic last chapter of the novel *Girl/Gilda* and her family of vampires have retreated from a society plagued by drugs and violence, a society in which vampires are hunted for their powerful blood. The environment has been so devastated by human consumption that it is a virtual wasteland; and the "psychological impact of having no distant future to contemplate [is] staggering" (235), as Girl/Gilda tells the reader. In this final chapter, the main characters journey to Machu Picchu to escape the violence and devastation and to be free from the threat of the Hunters who want their blood. Like McMahan's portrayal of family in *Somewhere in the Night*, this family structure is also anti-nuclear, but it is also progressive in that it brings together those who share a philosophy of non-violence and love in a kind of spiritual, utopian vision of female existence.

Sisters of the Night (1995), edited by Barbara Hambly and Martin H. Greenberg, is an anthology of stories about female vampires, written by both men and women. In the introduction, Barbara Hambly argues that the vampire's ability to use "sexuality and desire as a lure, to summon and incapacitate their victims" (n.p.) is at its most powerful in the female vampire who "absorbs and destroys the lover" (n.p.). However, in the course of putting together the book, she found that "to the timeless feminine cultural archetypes of Maiden and Mother, Lover and Crone, have been added PTA Member, Bimbo, Alien, and things that cannot even be seen or defined: trolls, angels, the smell of blood behind your shoulder in the dark" (n.p.).

“Madeleine”, Barbara Hambly’s own contribution to the anthology, shows what happens to a vampire that acts irresponsibly. This is the story of a female vampire that preys on young, male victims. She likes to stalk them for weeks, if she can, watching them and listening to them. One night she decides that her next victim will be a young man named Philip who lives with Olivia, a woman several years older than him. While Olivia is out of town, Madeleine takes Philip’s blood over the course of two nights, eventually killing him. When she goes one night to his grave, she meets Olivia, who seems to know who and what she is. Olivia curses Madeleine by telling her that as she has “taken their blood, and ... their lives ... uncaring” (53) of consequences, she will now be “fully aware” (53) of what she has taken. The next time Madeleine takes a victim’s blood, she realizes that Olivia’s curse has come true; she now can hear the conversations that her victims had in their lives. Unfortunately, from Madeleine’s point of view, most of these conversations are boring. After several nights of this torture, Madeleine seeks help from the vampire who made her, Count Sazerac, but he is of little help. First, he advises her to drink only from animals; but the conversations still plague her. Then, she is laughingly told by his latest consort that she should pick a priest for her next victim, so that, if she had to listen to conversation afterward, it would be at least be Mass she heard. Her only other alternative, the Count advises her, is to drink only the blood of mutes. Because of the curse, however, Madeleine begins to take responsibility for her kills by thinking first about whether she wants to go through eternity listening to this person’s inane conversations; but her sense of responsibility has come to late. She is

tormented constantly with the voices; and in a disoriented state, stumbles out into the sunlight and dies.

Another story in the anthology shows the female vampire as a compassionate representative of death and, also, as a mother. In "Sister Death", Jane Yolen's female vampire is a figure of Lilith, the biblical vampire said to be the first wife of Adam. The vampire's name is Belilah, which she says means night. Belilah tells how she became a vampire accidentally. It was never about "the blood" (271), she says. The first time she tasted human blood, it was the blood of Abel, killed by his brother Cain in a quarrel over sheep and her. After the murder of his brother, Cain threw Belilah face down in the dirt soaked with his brother's blood and raped her. The dirt that she swallowed during that encounter was filled with Abel's blood. Later, Cain accused her of killing his brother and she went to prison. There she cursed God for his indifference to the plight of women and vowed never to die, "but to live to destroy the man who would destroy [her]" (272). During the night before her scheduled execution, the devil visited her in her cell and offered to save her in return for sexual favors. When she refused his offer, he transformed himself into a vision of God, but she refused to lie with him all the same. The devil then cursed her with eternal life and a desire for blood. The death of her fellow man, he told her, would bring her no pleasure in her eternal future. Later that night she was "inexplicably" (273) freed from her prison to begin to live out the curse. Now, she takes her sustenance "from the dying children, the true innocents" (274), from those who have been ill-used, are deformed, or those who have been destroyed by natural or man-made forces. These souls, she says, she sends to God. Her only companion is the Angel of Death.

However, she would like to be with her own child. She met this child as she and the Angel of Death flew above the Holocaust death trains, he taking the souls of the dead and she, their blood. Belilah asks, “What are Jews that nations swat them like flies? That the Angel of Death picks their faded blooms? That I drink the blood, now bitter, now sweet of their children?” (275). The child she found for her own was standing rebellious in the gas chamber; and, when she saw Belilah, she called her mother. Belilah picked her up and carried her away: and now, after five thousand years of blood drinking, she would like “a mother’s span with [her] child” (277). If she can have this, she says, she will serve God again as she had before until the end of time. She hopes God cannot be so cruel that he would part her from the child she so recently found.

In the introduction to Night Bites: Vampire Stories by Women, edited by Victoria A. Brownworth, Brownworth and Judith M. Redding argue that “anyone can become a vampire simply by being in the wrong place at the wrong time, befriending the wrong person, choosing the wrong lover, offering hospitality ... to the wrong houseguest (or being offered hospitality by the wrong host)” (ix). They interpret Rice’s novels as a blend of “vampire myth with the politics and paradoxes of postmodernist nihilism” (xiii) and argue that, in most vampire fiction, women are represented as either “innocent victim or bloodthirsty victimizer” (xii). As an anthology of vampire stories written entirely by women, Night Bites offers “a feminine and feminist perspective on the genre – the vampire myth as viewed through the female gaze” (xiv). The problems of women in modern culture – motherhood,

adolescent rebellion, domestic violence, and homelessness – are all treated in this anthology.

In the tale “They Have No Faces”, Meredith Suzanne Baird tells the story of vampires who are considered “superior beings walking the earth in search of beauty and harmony” (14). These beings also eliminate any evil that enters their world. Lydia and Art, a couple whose long marriage is suffering from his neglect and violent nature, travel to Romania in search of the tourist version of the legend of Dracula. There, Lydia hopes, they can heal their troubled marriage. A few days into the tour, Lydia is approached by Ivan, who offers to take her and her husband on a better tour. He will show them the world of “real vampires” (6), he promises. Lydia is overcome by his hypnotic and seductive manner and convinces Art to accept the offer. Ivan proceeds to take them far into the countryside, where they spend the night in a cottage. When Art gets drunk and insults Lydia’s age and looks, Ivan tells her the story of the superior race of vampires, for whom his family has worked for generations. He tells her that his people “value women of certain years” (11) because their blood and their lives are “rich with memories and emotions” (11). These vampires, or Old Ones as he refers to them, have lived their eternal lives “in grace and harmony with their surroundings” (11). They have wisdom; and they choose who will enter into eternal life with them. The only fault they have, Ivan tells Lydia, is that they must have blood to survive. When their need for blood is so great that they can no longer control it, their faces blur; and only their mouths and eyes are left as recognizable features. In the end, Ivan leaves Lydia and Art for the Old Ones to feed on; however, while he asks that they make Lydia one of their own, he seals Art’s fate

by telling them to “savage” (17) him. Once again, this band of vampires is seen to have its own code of justice, and of living in harmony with their world; and the female character is reminded of her value and power, despite the oppression she felt under her husband’s care.

In the first century of the new millennium, the question remains: how do we human beings make meaning to give ourselves cosmic significance. The use of the vampire figure in our literature may provide a clue in our search for significance. In his book Dreams of Millennium: Report from a Culture on the Brink, Mark Kingwell maintains that “the vampire is the millennial standard-bearer” (284) because that literary figure combines “gory mortal threat with profound, even insistent, erotic appeal” (284). The vampire can seduce, as well as frighten; and, just like humans, the vampire has the ability to become whatever it chooses, whatever form will obtain for it what it wants most in life. As the shape-changer that it is, in literature, the vampire figure contains the possibility of being whatever we want it to be, also: warning, enemy, mirror of ourselves. The first years of this new millennium are designated as an Age of Aquarius bringing enlightenment and transcendence (Prophet 15), so perhaps the new vampire, whoever he or she might be, and whoever’s hand might pen his or her story, will take a page from Lestat’s many adventures and show us the way to meld the spiritual and material of a twenty-first century vision into a cosmically significant whole that has the power to reunite us with the divine in its true essence and to give the marginalized voice a resonance that can be heard. If the writers of the twenty-first century take their cue from Anne Rice and the newer writers previously discussed in this chapter, they will use the vampire to illuminate not only the spiritual

conditions of humanity, but also those systems of culture that break down when the spiritual side of life is not providing the support it should. Hopefully, in this new century, the vampire can serve as an interrogator of the outsider's point of view, not only for questions about the human relationship with the divine, but also for questions about the more earthly aspects of our lives such as society, gender, race, and family, which are all influenced by our relationship with the divine.

NOTES

¹ A renewed belief in angels can be seen in the popularity of such television programs as Touched by an Angel and in the publication of such books as Arielle Ford's Hot Chocolate for the Mystical Soul: 101 True Stories of Angels, Miracles, and Healings (New York: Plume/Penguin, 1998), and its sequels, More Hot Chocolate for the Mystical Soul (1999) and Hot Chocolate for the Mystical Teenage Soul (2000).

² For a further discussion of how the romance genre became internalized, see editor Harold Bloom's "The Internalization of Quest-Romance" in Romanticism and Consciousness: Essays in Criticism (New York: W. W. Norton, 1970).

³ In the introduction to the 1831 edition of her novel, Mary Shelley relates how she and Percy Shelley, John Polidori, and Claire Clairmont were visiting with Lord Byron at his home, Villa Diodata, in Geneva during the summer of 1816, and how one rainy evening as their conversation wandered they began to discuss a series of German horror stories they had come across in a French translation. This conversation led to Byron's challenge for each of them to write a horror story; and out of that challenge was born both Polidori's The Vampyre and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, as well as a fragment of a tale by Byron.

⁴ Authorship of Varney has been attributed to both Thomas Pecket Prest and James Malcolm Rymer. See E. F. Bleiler's notes on the authorship of the text in Dover's edition of Varney and Louis James' Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850 (London: Oxford University Press, 1963) for their respective discussions.

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