The Palgrave Handbook of Steam Age Gothic

Edited by
Clive Bloom

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She is older than the rocks among which she sits; like the vampire, she has been dead many times, and learned the secrets of the grave…the symbol of the modern idea.

Walter Pater, The Renaissance (1873)

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Introduction: The Black Shadow of Doom

Clive Bloom

By the early 1830s the old school of Gothic literature was exhausted, but late Romanticism, emphasising as it did the uncertainties of personality and imagination, gave it a new lease of life. If Gothic is the literature of disturbance and uncertainty it now produced works that reflected domestic fears, sexual crimes, drug filled hallucinations, the terrible secrets of middle-class marriage, imperial horror at alien invasion, occult demonism and the insanity of psychopaths. It was from the 1830s to the end of the century that gradual changes to the whole culture of gothic sensibility would radically mutate. The old gothic of Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe now seemed quaint and antiquated, but its power of longevity was preserved in the subtle analogies found by late Georgian and Victorian authors who disguised their inspirations in new patterns of diablerie. How did these changes come about?

We are told nowadays, 'how imaginative' of you, how extraordinary to think such things. At school, parents are praised for their child's imagination. We express ourselves as projections into the world. Nowadays it is strange if people do not possess 'imagination'. 'What's wrong with you?' we say, as if the absence of imagination is a personal crime, a type of sin against the self. If I say that I have no imagination, it is seen as a failing rather like not being able to swim; something to be secretly ashamed not to possess. Use your imagination we say. Yet imagination is, as it is nowadays understand, inherently modern. To use imagination in the past meant that you were different and capable of wrong thinking—a loner and a heretic. The faggots and flames awaited. Only obey and you will be saved, as writers as different as the fifteenth-century monk Thomas a Kempis and the English revolutionary Gerrard Winstanley of the seventeenth century pointed out.[1] To imagine was to deviate and thereby fall into error, the error of religious heresy. Do not imagine. Imagination is a left hand path. This view changed in the eighteenth century and became a developed system by the nineteenth century. Edward Bulwer (later Bulwer-Lytton) summed up the evolving attitude to imagination as follows:

C. Bloom (✉)
London, UK

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> Our imagination kept rigidly from the world is the Eden in which we walk with God… We learn thus to make our dreams and thoughts our companions… We acquire the doctrine of self-dependence, self suffices to the self. In our sleep from the passions of the world, God makes Eve to us in our own breasts.[2]

The greatest and least acknowledged ideological change brought about by the French Revolution was that of the secular human being, now absolutely free of religious hierarchical thought, and that new type of human was determined by their inner 'imagination'. This imagination (or human will) was meant to be virtuous and that meant collective virtue accumulated to the self from its communal spirit (its patriotism). In charge of that spirit was the state or the communal collective, as theorised by Rousseau and politically evolved by the Jacobins. Those who didn't have this characteristic were aliens, no longer truly human and wicked 'counter-terrorists' who were attached to the ancient regime. Strangely, these ideas were attractive to Britons otherwise opposed to all things Gallic in origin. The combination of supposed Anglican traditionalism and bloody-minded individualism, which had grown out of sectarian Christianity and the growth of secularism made this new form of individuality highly attractive to thinkers and artists.

Nevertheless, the now 'isolated' human consciousness soon found its very reason for existence was because it *was* alienated from the collective state and therefore unique. This joined human existence to that of the transcendent whether supernatural or secular; the individual sense of self now contained its own sense of sublimity. The supremacy of the self was of paramount importance. This was a new religion of secular humanism. It would thus circumvent traditional religion and become virtuous by its alienation from the state or from sociological imperatives. Instead, such imperatives would be determined by the relationship between the self and pure nature. This connection would stabilise the alienated ego in the permanence of its natural surroundings rather than in the permanence of God's universe.

If, however, the imagination was merely internal and individual it had no way of connecting with other egos and could easily become hallucinatory and perverse and turn in on itself. In such a state there is no other world, but only the world of imaginative, therefore, internalised, terror. Hell was now the self. The Calvinist turn to the salvation of the self was also the turn into a cannibalistic and self-hating obsessional neurosis, or, at worst, mental breakdown. Freud made a living out of imagination. Jung made a living out of psychosis: the gothic mind. There are faculties that exists only in our imagination. This is our world.

This new world of the power of the inner self was heralded in Britain by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who led the way in the exploration of the imagination for his English speaking readership in his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), a work in which he proposed a new way of understanding the world. This was through pure imagination, which to Coleridge had the power to transform base reality and transcend material being. This 'new' world was opposed to the merely combinational aspects of our perception or 'fancy' and was a clear advance on Edmund Burke's idea of the sublime. Although this idea was possibly based on Hume and Kant, it now suggested both a solipsistic and self-referential mode of experience devoid of prior sensory perception and capable of a creativity devoid of the material presence of the world

and therefore of secondary combination. Coleridge summed up his views in his essay called 'On the imagination' (in the *Biographia*), in which he suggests that 'the primary IMAGINATION [sic] I hold to be the living Power and prime Agent of all human Perception, and as a representation in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM'. In other words, primary imagination is a god quality capable of producing *new* experiential moments in materiality, but out of space and time.

To get to the imagination one might use drugs or other hallucinogens, the point being to reconnect with the spiritual aspect of human existence. This was Coleridge's poetic solution to the loss of God which had taken place with the secularisation of French life amid the upheavals of the French Revolutionary period. Nevertheless, if you were to re-connect with the supernatural, and what amounted to a natural religiousness, there was nothing now to stop you simply imaging a reality that was at odds with your experience. In simple terms this might lead to a person imposing their imaginative space on others through perverse and hallucinatory desire brought on by mania or drug addiction, or both. Thus the scene was set for De Quincey's renunciation of Coleridge's abstention from drugs and recovery from drug addiction and the later explorations, by both poets and writers of alienated states of mind, which has lead right up until the twentieth century but especially clustered around the 1830s to the Edwardian period.

The first English writer to understand this contradiction and to become fascinated by it was Thomas De Quincey who published a satiric article in 1827 called 'On Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts' in *Blackwood's Magazine*. In it he proposed a 'Society of Connoisseurs in Murder' whose aim was to analyse the 'design, grouping, light and shade' and 'poetry' essential to study the 'great artists' of murder whose lives were eaten up by the secret passions of 'jealousy, ambition, vengeance and hatred'.

De Quincey's proposal, absurd though it seemed, suggested a new heightened interest in criminal psychology, the murders themselves creating a world only a fraction apart from normality, determined by secret passions harboured by us all. It was simply too 'vulgar' and unimaginative to knock someone on the head for his money bag. From now on there had to be 'sympathy' for the murderer rather than the victim.

De Quincey had been drawn to the subject by his fascination with the notorious Ratcliffe Highway murders which occurred between 7th and 19th December 1812. An unknown assailant had butchered two families, including their young children, beating them senseless and cutting their throats. John Williams was apprehended and charged, but hanged himself in prison before any proof could be brought. His body was buried with a stake in its heart at a crossroads near the scene of the crime. This interest in the psychological aspects of gothic mentality greatly influenced two of the most important gothic poets of the years from 1830 to 1850, Robert Browning and Edgar Allan Poe.[3]

The 'archaeological' origins of this state of the self may be traced to the beginnings of gothic poetry itself which had begun in the eighteenth century and accompanied the rise of gothic architecture. The poetry was partly the product of the rediscovery

of medieval history, exemplified in the building of Strawberry Hill House by Horace Walpole and partly an interest in what Walpole called ‘gloomth’, that mysterious half-understood world of shadows and bizarrerie which could be experienced from visits to ruins and graveyards and which was attached to that personal universe that the eighteenth century called sentiment. Sentiment or sensibility was an irrational and highly subjective emotional response to the sublime which itself inspired both terror and horror and could only be felt in extreme situations.

Gothic poetry emphasised this interior world and especially dealt with the feelings accompanying the attractions of fear and disorientation when faced with a universe devoid of the rationality preached by enlightenment thinkers. The best way to experience such feelings was to revisit the ruined world of the past in one’s mind, or to inhabit a supernatural world where God was no longer present or was so close as to create ‘terror’ and confusion.

Gothic literature was originally inspired by the world of Shakespeare, but gothic poetry had a slightly different trajectory. Memorial poetry of the time produced by the metaphysical poets, stripped of its word play and of its religious intention, soon became the memorial elegy as produced by Thomas Gray. This in turn led others to take a more sanguinary view of decay and the new vogue for ‘tour-ism’ sent crowds to ruins such as Netley Abbey, where they mused and wrote sonnets on the picturesque charms of death and decay.

Poets as different as Lord Byron and Susan Evance produced poetry on decay and ruination whilst novelists such as Ann Radcliffe incorporated poetry of meditations on the picturesque in her novel *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). Her own anodyne poems on nature (‘The Glow-Worm’) and scenery were accompanied by poems of dead brides (‘The Mariner’) murdered pilgrims (‘The Pilgrim’; originally ‘The Traveller’) and the mountain abyss (‘Storied Sonnet’) in which there is a decided hint of Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s later ‘Kublai Khan’.

Nevertheless, Byron was the most famous poet of gothic thrills for his generation, supplying vampires in ‘The Giaour’ and re-emerging himself as the fictional aristocrat Lord Ruthven in ‘The Vampyre’ (1819) written by his doctor John Polidori. Yet it was Coleridge whose influence was eventually the strongest. The French Revolution deeply influenced both Wordsworth and Coleridge and through its prism they discovered the sublimity of nature and nature’s resonance with human emotion in a world in which nature is supreme. Coleridge’s interest in the border ballad form, then current, led to the ‘The Rime of the Ancient Mariner’ (1795) in which the death of an albatross has to be atoned for by the sailor who has murdered the bird. The moment the mariner fixes his unknowing listener with his tale of woe and thereby curses him to repeat the story to the reader, became the spine of Mary Shelley’s tale of *Frankenstein* (1818).

It was the German writer Gottfried August Bürger’s poem of doomed love which was to become the most influential of all gothic poems. Bürger was the son of strict Lutheran parents and set to join the Church. He rebelled and his interest in law gained him a magistrate’s position whilst his interest in British border ballads led to him becoming a poet. His most famous poem ‘Lenore’ was translated into English by

William Taylor for the March edition of the *Monthly Magazine* in 1796 as 'Lenora' or 'Ellenore'.

The story follows Lenore as she waits for her William to return from the Crusades (changed from the Seven Year's War in the original). Her despair leads her to abjure God despite her mother's entreaties. Suddenly, in the night William, although clearly a spectre, appears on a steed and carries off Lenore in her night shirt to be his bride. At cock crow they plunge to earth, William returning to his tomb and Lenore left dying amidst the graves.

Walter Scott translated Bürger's 'Der Wilde Jager' as the 'The Wild Huntsman' and published it to great acclaim in Matthew Lewis's 'Tales of Wonder' in 1796, whilst Lewis himself produced a similar version of the ballad, which he called 'Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogene' in 'The Monk' (1796). 'Lenore' introduced the 'corpse bride', the girl who dies when she is about to marry, a character trait reproduced in Elizabeth in *Frankenstein* and Miss Haversham in *Great Expectations* (1860) and is still reproduced in films such as Tim Burton' s T*he Corpse Bride* (2005). The poem's most famous line, 'stil Denn die Todten reiten schnell' ('for the dead travel swiftly') was used by Bram Stoker in *Dracula* (1897) just before Jonathan Harker first encounters the Count.

Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) was the last great gothic novel of the Romantic period. It also set the tone for a different sort of gothic sensation. Instead of the horrors attendant on the supernatural world there was a greater attention to material fears made manifest by the cruelty of authority and the perversity of human nature. It was to human nature that the writers of the late Romantic gothic would turn their attention. Theirs would be a world where horror was not a consequence of violating nature, but instead would be a consequence of mental disturbance. Such mental disturbance was described and discussed by James Prichard in *A Treatise on Insanity and Other Disorders Affecting the Mind* (1835). He called the condition 'moral insanity', a term for those whose outward signs are perfectly normal, but who are insane within.

Prichard's diagnosis was based on the work of the French alienist physician Philippe Pinel. Pinel had categorised mental affliction into the categories of partial and affective, insanity. His concept of 'Manie sans délire' described a form of insanity that existed without delusion. In other words, it was a type of rationalised madness.

Robert Browning's great gift was for psychological monologues, a term applied later to the series of poetic narratives he created between the middle 1830s to 1842 when he published the collection, *Dramatic Lyrics*. Such monologues are interior conversations with the reader who is drawn into the mad world of the speaker to the point where they cannot escape the knowledge that is imparted, a technique invented years earlier by Coleridge in 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'(first version 1798).

'Porphyria's Lover' by Browning, which was written in 1836 and published in the January edition of the *Monthly Depository* (but without its present title), was an early attempt to understand the mind of a killer who yet believes he is a lover. It was reprinted in *Dramatic Lyrics* under the title 'Madhouse Cells'. The tale is told as Porphyria returns to her lover at night through a rainstorm. Although wet she sits next to the narrator and puts her arm around his waist and gently lays his cheek on her

bare shoulder. The eroticism is heightened by the dishevelled nature of her clothes and by her 'yellow hair' and 'white shoulder bare'. The narrator meditates on her absolute love for him and that at the moment of their silent clinch 'she was mine'. The reader might expect a kiss or vow of love from the narrator, yet what he does next is both shocking and inexplicable.

> … I found
> A thing to do, and all her hair
> In one long yellow string I wound
> Three times her little throat around,
> And strangled her.

The infantilised tone, 'I found a thing to do' and the use of diminutives such as 'little' suggest an innocence about the narrator's actions that speak directly of moral insanity. Indeed, he even rationalises the assumption that

> No pain felt she;
> I am quite sure she felt no pain.

However, murder now has no moral consequence as the poem pointedly finishes with the cynical 'God has not said a word!' It is no coincidence that Porphyria is a disease of the blood and skin which may lead to manic depression in sufferers. This hint at medical complications nevertheless, leaves a world where perverse desire (in this case possibly fetishistic sexual desire: Porphyria's hair) and the personal will of the narrator override spiritual elements and confuse moral certainties, replacing material reality with the inner disorientation consequent upon absolute loss of faith.

The same effect is to be found in the more famous, 'My Last Duchess' which was anthologised in 1842. It takes place in the corridors of the Duke of Ferrara's palace during 1564. The Duke is showing an ambassador around his picture collection whilst discussing his next potential bride. Everything is told in an urbane and disinterested tone created by the technique of enjambment which gives the poem a conversational voice the more to disarm its reader before the denouement.

The Duke begins the conversation by stopping at a portrait behind a curtain that he has drawn back, and points out 'his last duchess'. Sinisterly, he notices she is presented 'looking as if she were alive' and even more disturbingly that the ambassador is privileged to see what is shown. The Duke points out the way the painter has caught the 'half flush that dies along her throat', but this aesthetic detail sends the Duke off into a reminiscence regarding the duchess's perceived over familiarity with those around her and her apparent disregard of his gift to her of, 'a nine-hundred-years-old –name'. The Duke turns to his interlocutor and admits something in the duchess 'disgusts him'. It appears he has had her murdered, an action of so little consequence to him that he continues his tour oblivious to his revelation. The implication, however, is clear, the next duchess will meet the same fate and the Duke will continue with the same insouciant disregard.

Browning was the master of insidious intent. His exploration of perverse states of mind rationalised beyond sense was a symptom of mid-century concerns regarding

the nature of human consciousness in a world beset with existential doubts, social upheaval, rapid industrialisation and class conflict. It found its greatest expression in Alfred Tennyson's 'Locksley Hall' (1835, but published in 1842).

All of these conflicting problems seemed unwittingly to focus on women. Edgar Allan Poe, although an American, was influenced by the currents of British thought regarding mental hygiene and psychological well-being. In a series of his short tales, 'Berenice' (1835), 'Ligeia' (1838/1839) and 'Eleonora'(1842), Poe explored the nature of that male monomania centred on female body part fetishism, that he named 'the imp of the perverse'. It was Poe who first integrated previously written poems into his tales to give greater psychological insight into the characters and the way they experienced the world. It was also Poe who integrated assonance and sibilance into his prose to give it a dream-like feeling which Poe remarked had the effect of language and imagery recalled from reverie or the moment between waking and sleeping. This also made the sound and rhythm of his words resonate with emotions that, as he explains, cannot be quite brought to mind. Such word patterns and sounds are the triggers to emotional states that cannot be quite brought to mind. Thus from his tale 'Ligeia'

> There is no point, among the many incomprehensible anomalies of the science of mind, more thrillingly exciting than the fact –never, I believe, noticed in the schools - that in our endeavours to recall to memory something long forgotten, we often find ourselves *upon the very verge* of remembrance, without being able, in the end, to remember.

Ligeia occupies this dreamlike and hallucinatory world in which an un-named narrator sits with his dying wife (a wife who may be a hallucination brought about by opium consumption). She intones the poem 'The Conqueror Worm'. The poem concerns a 'theatre' of human woes where 'puppets' act out 'mimes' 'at [the] bidding of vast formless things'. The action of the poem is that of humanity (or, at least, sentient beings) manipulated by the mindless entities of a meaningless universe in an endless cycle of anarchy and chaos.

> That motley drama- oh, be sure
> It shall not be forgot!
> With its Phantom chased for evermore,
> By a crowd that seize it not,
> Through a circle that ever returneth in
> To the self-same spot,
> And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
> And Horror the soul of the plot.

Into this terrifying world crawls 'the Conqueror Worm' a fanged and gory entity to whom all must submit. Against this disaster Ligeia poses the overriding importance of the human will, all that is left of the spiritual possibilities of Coleridge's imagination. When Ligeia 'returns' at the end of the tale it is not merely because of the triumph of her will, but that of the narrator's, who literally wills her into life as the 'undead' out of the corpse of his second wife Rowena, and as with Browning, it is the fetish of her (raven) hair which is the symbol of her resurrection. The material presence of

the gothic vampire is here transformed into the corpse bride as a product of manic delusion.

Poe again made use of the incorporated poem in 'The Fall of the House of Usher' where 'the Haunted Palace' is a metaphoric description of Roderick Usher's mental decline, the gothic imagery of the poem's castle a perfect foil for the disintegration of the Roderick's mind where red eyes and a humourless laugh betray mental disorder.

> And travellers, now, within that valley,
> Through the red-litten windows see
> Vast forms, that move fantastically
> To a discordant melody,
> While, like a ghastly rapid river,
> Through the pale door
> A hideous throng rush out forever
> And laugh- but smile no more.

The poem most associated with gothic goings on is Poe's 'The Raven' (1845) whose central character (the raven itself) may have been suggested by Grip, the talking raven in Dicken's *Barnaby Rudge (1841).* The complicated rhyme scheme may have been further suggested after Poe reviewed the trochaic octameter poem 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship' by Elizabeth Barrett published in 1845. Regardless of its sources, the poem follows the incident of a raven landing on a bust of Pallas inside the door of a young scholar who is reading books of occult knowledge whilst mourning his lost love who is called Lenore (a clear reference to Bürger's poem). It begins,

> Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
> Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
> While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
> As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
> "'Tis some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
> Only this and nothing more."

The poem became an instant success as its theatricality made it a parlour performance favourite. It brought Poe fame, but little money, and created a host of parodies, remaining still the most famous gothic poem ever written. With its raven intoning the meaningless 'Nevermore', the public loved the mysterious nature of the work, so much so that Poe attempted to cash in on his success with an explanation of the poem's creation. Nevertheless, 'The Philosophy of Composition' (1846) did little to explain away the mysteries of what was intended. The main theme seems to be the perverse desire to both forget and remember a traumatic event, but transcending this the narrator's need to make sense of the raven's meaningless repetitions which suggests the loss of an irretrievable past. Beyond all this remains the attraction of the poem's mesmeric alliteration and its verbal dexterity both of which are formulaic and yet surprising.

Poe's work represents the end for gothic taste in poetry; although the taste for medievalised gothic poetry (through William Morris and many others) continued up

to the end of the nineteenth century, the work of Browning and Poe evolved into the work of decadents like Charles Baudelaire or symbolists such as Algernon Swinburne with poetry that catered for urban and perverse tastes unaccompanied by any interest in gothic trappings. Gothic poetry was finally sublimated into the imaginative world of the silent movie and European cabaret.

The new sensational prose melodramas of the 1850s onwards, kept much of the fabric of the older gothic and covered it with a new veneer. The medieval gothic fantasies of the first phase of gothic invention were replaced with country mansions and local squires with marital life being the central theme of a world filled with the dreadful secrets of a psychotic masculinity. The walls might be crumbling and the servants not to be trusted, but dark corridors, shadow filled passageways and haunted bedrooms still held a thrill, with settings of graveyards, moorland and empty heaths combined with ubiquitous thunder and lightning to set the scene. Such scenes were nostalgic for, and reminiscent of, the worlds of the first gothic writers. Whilst the world of aristocratic medieval privilege may have vanished to be replaced with an entirely new 'middle class' viewpoint, based on personal status, ownership of a wife's supposed fortune, and the sequestered and isolated manor house where the local and degenerate squire conceals his secret, the stories, nevertheless, still contained the essence of those elements of the 'thriller' invented by Ann Radcliffe.

The newer melodramas explored as well as re-invented the notion of the inescapability of stifling marriage, money and toxic masculinity. In a word, they were thoroughly domestic. The horrors these stories described may have been sensational, but they were also mundane and sordid. What was revealed would become the stock-in-trade of the gutter press and the divorce columns; tales of bankruptcy and of infidelity with lineages besmirched and reputations ruined; in other words, a world of social embarrassment rather than supernatural terrors.

Everyday horrors was clearly demonstrated in the new exhibitions at Madame Tussauds in London, now run by her the sons Joseph and Francis. The original rooms displaying the wax effigies of French revolutionaries and Napoleonic relics had been called the 'Separate Rooms' in the early 1840s and there was a separate charge to view. It was these rooms that a paper of the time advised 'ladies …not to enter'.[4] The rooms were soon popularly called 'The Chamber of Horrors', but the name did not catch on until 1846 when the satiric magazine *Punch* used the term. William Thackeray, writing in *The Sights of London* remarked,

> Should such indecent additions continue to be made to this exhibition the 'horrors' of the collection will surely predominate. It is painful to reflect that although there are noble and worthy characters really deserving of being immortalized in wax, these would have no chance in the scale of attention with thrice-dyed villains.[5]

Indeed, *Punch* suggested that 'there seems to be a sort of fascination in the horrible' amongst all classes.[6] The brothers remained undaunted and advertised the thrill of contemporary murder in their catalogue of 1851, the very same year that The Great Exhibition was showing the best of British craftsmanship.[7] Charles Dickens wrote about the Chamber of Horrors in *Household Words*, where he has a character exclaim, 'what a horrible place!'. Yet for Dickens the horrors were more terrible

because more mundane: 'What shall be said of the man who could stand at the door of the Chamber of Horrors *eating a pork pie?!*'[8] By the 1880s Tussauds had moved into its Marylebone premises and the Chamber of Horrors with it waxworks and collected memorabilia of murder was the central attraction. The Chamber was reputedly haunted, and a play called *The Whip* had a scene in the Chamber and a playbill offering a reward to those who dared to spend the night in its dungeon-like atmosphere. Mrs Lowndes' novel *The Lodger* (1913) about Jack the Ripper also ends in the Chamber of Horrors. The Tussaud brothers kept their eyes peeled for sensational events just like the sensationalist journalists of the day.

The public's glee in reading about or watching the salacious had been removed with the ending of public hangings in 1868, but the taste was supplied by cheap publications such as *The Illustrated Police News* which had a large readership from the 1870s and contained luridly printed illustrations with sensational stories of 'real life'. Thus are there stories of 'horrible crime' in Spain, the murderer 'still at large'; suicide by homemade guillotine; a woman decapitated by a train; an axe murder in Bristol; an eccentric Indian woman torn to pieces by her own cats.[9] Dickens's own journalistic interests included both gothic machinery and events, but he usually pastiched the genre or made it ironic. Miss Haversham is a clear example of both a living 'corpse bride' and a terrifying fireball ghoul based on real spontaneous deaths recorded in sensational news stories; the opening of *Great Expectations* (1861) is also clearly gothic as is *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). Dicken's knew that Christmas was the best time to sell the public spooky tales and *A Christmas Carol* (1843) combines both the nature of the haunted room and its cursed occupant with a sentimental commentary on social conditions. Nevertheless, the tale 'The Signalman' included in *All Year Round* in 1866, showed Dickens alive to the possibilities in haunted technology as well as having an ironic eye for older gothic sensation.

As well as dastardly deeds, from the 1840s to the end of the century the old supernatural and sensational gothic still held its own in the cheap 'bloods' and penny dreadfuls read by the 'lower orders', as well as the magic lantern performances at villages and fairs for those in the country whose literacy was limited or non-existent. With their gaudy covers, part works and cheap 'paperbacks' filled the hours of the poor and were both read and utilised in the privacy of the midden. Such books flourished, and it was their 'literary' influence combined with the new fascination with spiritualism that led to the revival of supernatural gothic in the 1870s. Nevertheless, older forms of Georgian gothic never went away. They were merely disparaged by the reading classes and consigned to the rubbish heap of the new world of Grub Street, commercialism and borderline impoverishment. Writing for money was simply vulgar and these writers were considered hacks.

With all that, it was writers such as James Malcolm Rymer whose 220 chapter part work, *Varney the Vampire* (serialised 1845 to 1847) was a catalyst for the continuance of vampiric horrors and whose work represents the nostalgia of later writers in the 1890s whose younger days were spent devouring cheap literature, just the same as Percy Shelley did years before with his forbidden 'blue' books. George W. M. Reynolds who worked alongside Rymer in the new fiction business, produced such shockers as *Wagner the Werewolf* (1847), a tales of curses and Faustian pacts

reminiscent of themes sixty years previous in the work of Monk Lewis. Rymer, or Reynolds, or both, of course, also produced the ultimate cannibal melodrama in a penny 'blood' set in the mundane settings of a barber's shop and a pie house: *The String of Pearls: A Romance* which appeared in Edward Lloyd's *The People's Periodical and Family Library* on 21 November 1846. This work, part comic nonsense, part a satire on Dickens, part a tale of unknown London, part faux disgust at the ultimate adulterated food, was not really a gothic work at all as it really has no obvious gothic settings, but rather it is a piece that took elements of the mundane (a barber and a cook) and demonised them; it was the very world of the everyday, outside Rymer's window, that was truly gothic. If the respectable gothic plays of the Regency had vanished and their scenery been dumped on bonfires by the 1840s, the spirit of gothic shivers was still alive in popular reading.[10]

The importance of the older Radcliffian style continued to linger in its influence during the 1840s. The peculiarly cramped and constricted atmospheres of the Bronte's novels, with their dark sexual hints, bleak moorland settings and touches of gothic supernaturalism certainly owed much to an earlier era whilst taking the genre on into new worlds of passion and female sensibility. Meanwhile Radcliffe was also an influence on one of the most popular writers of the mid-century, William Harrison Ainsworth who started life as an unsuccessful lawyer and ended up one of the most important of all the popular novelists of the century, a best friend of Dickens, a playwright, a magazine owner and a dandy. His first novel was the historical adventure romance *Rookwood* (1834) in which real characters enjoy fictional adventures. The book was a huge success, written, he tells us in 'the bygone style of Mrs Radcliffe'. Ainsworth had hit on a formula for reviving gothic thrills that lasted for thirty-nine novels and which spanned the nineteenth century (he died in 1882). His most significant novel is *The Lancashire Witches: A Romance of Pendle Forest* (1848), in which Jacobean history and Lancashire folk lore are mingled with fictional characters and scenes. The book not only harks back to Robin Hood, Maid Marian and 'the merrie men', a possible nod to Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (1819) but also includes the definitive description of a classic witches sabbat, with bubbling cauldron, incantations, old hags on broomsticks, spells and black cats, all enveloped in an hallucinatory and dreamlike atmosphere, things only seen 'repeatedly in dreams' as one character muses; 'We are all witches here' exclaims the aptly named Alice Nutter and all dedicated to 'Satan', who even appears in the tale as a disembodied voice.[11]

Ainsworth owed his novel to a more influential tale, that of *The Amber Witch* (*Der Bernsteinhexe*) which was written by the German novelist Wilhelm Meinhold in 1846 and purported to be the actual account of a witch trial (with sadistic torture, descriptions of partial nudity and a truly evil and salacious villain) set in the fifteenth century. The tale was so successful it was taken as fact and discussed as truth, but may have been influenced by James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824). Meinhold's story is placed in a mythic, but seemingly historical Germany of villages and peasants. The work was translated into English in 1846. It proved wildly successful, especially amongst intellectuals and artists. The Pre-Raphaelites painted its scenes and Philip Burne-Jones illustrated it; William Morris produced

its companion, *Sidonia the Sorceress* at the Kelmscott Press in a luxury edition (although it had already been translated into English in 1849 by Jane Francesca Egree, the mother of Oscar Wilde); William Vincent Wallace even turned the book into a successful opera. Thus, Ainsworth had his model of witchcraft, but so too did other writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell whose *Lois the Witch* first appeared in *All Year Round* during 1859 and is a tragedy set in seventeenth-century Salem.

Witches continued to be an intermittent international 'gothic' theme throughout the nineteenth century. Tennyson's poem the 'Lady of Shallot' (1832) influenced John Waterhouse's interpretation which he painted in 1888; the Witch of Endor was a favourite with Slavic painters such as Dmitry Martynov who painted a version of the biblical character in 1857 and Nicolai Ge whose own version appeared in 1875; as late as 1919, Rudyard Kipling wrote a poem called 'En-dor' about his lost son. What changed was the concept of the witch. From a woman wrongly accused or an old hag, witches had, by the end of the century become aetherial and wondrous symbolist sirens. In the last great witch tale, *The Witch of Prague* (1891) written by the American F(rancis) Marion Crawford, Unorna is a young beautiful and mysterious woman with exotic mismatched eyes who is able to subdue men by the use of hypnotism. She is not however gothic, but her surroundings in the 'dead' city of Prague, her peculiar friend Keyork Arabian and the fact that she shares a house with a living 'corpse' suggest an atmosphere reminiscent of JK Huysmans and foreshadowing German Expressionism. The witch was now a 'vamp', knowledgeable in the latest scientific ideas regarding the psyche rather than the supernaturalism of the occult.

Nowhere is all this taste for gothic thrills so marked than in the new magazines from the late 1850s onwards, Titles included *The Cornhill Magazine* at a shilling a month, *Macmillan's Magazine* from the same year. *Roundabout Papers* in 1860, *Temple Bar* also in 1860, *The St James's Magazine* of 1861, *London Society* in 1862, *The Argosy* in 1865, *Belgravia* in 1866 and numerous others, all of which thrived on the new literacy and all of which devoured new fiction.[12] The proliferation of part works, magazines and especially Christmas specials greatly increased the need for writers of gothic and ghost tales which remained the favourite diet of this type of reader, especially at Christmas time. These magazines needed stories of a certain length and shape and so the 'short story' was born. Such tales had to have a clear setting, clear characterisation, a beginning, middle and end, a startling climax, a ghostly revenant which had to interact with the characters which was intended to unsettle or frighten the reader, and be relatively short. This was a return to the ideas of Edgar Allan Poe in the 1830s. The stories, however, were not intended to be medieval. Thackeray saw the moment of change from the old world to the new in the advent of the railways and M. R. James pointed out many years later that,

On the whole (though not a few instances might be quoted against me) I think that a setting so modern that the ordinary reader can judge of its naturalness for himself is preferable to anything antique. For some degree of actuality is the charm of the best ghost stories; not a very insistent actuality, but one strong enough to allow the reader to identify himself with the patient; while it is almost inevitable that the reader of an antique story should fall into the position of the mere spectator.[13]

The new gothic was intended almost to be an 'anti-gothic', without the framework of the old context of medievalism. It embraced modernity and contrasted it with the fear of the return of the dead, the return of a repressed history belonging to a family, a place or a house. By the 1890s simple everyday life was to be the spur towards occult, supernatural and strange occurrences. Characters now chanced on each other in clubs, on trains, in lawyer's offices or in doctor's surgeries or they had just returned from imperial adventures or were worn out through commercial enterprise. Fifty years before Jack the Ripper, modern London was haunted by characters such as Spring Heeled Jack whose fiery appearance in London proper as well as its villages and suburbs occurred in 1839; but it was also haunted by the 'spectre' of communism as Karl Marx pointed out in *the Communist Manifesto* of 1848.

Spectral terminology and ghostly manifestations haunted every alley of the metropolis. London, the centre of empire, was the subject of numerous apocalyptic meditations, from Richard Jeffrie's drowned world in *After London* (1885), to William Morris's post-revolution world in *News From Nowhere* (1890), to HG Well's alien haunted landscape in *War of the Worlds* (serialised 1897) and to the ominous fantasy of annihilation that exists in the miasma that hangs over the capital in M. P. Shiel's *The Purple Cloud* (1901). Imperial collapse, sociological neuroses around worker's rights, anarchism, ecological changes, spiritualism and the occult, Darwinian evolution, criminality, sociopaths and homicidal murderers and the fear of modern medical science created the febrile atmosphere in which ghost stories and alien invasion (mostly from Eastern Europe) formed a symbiotic association.

As the magazines and journals increased in volume and middle-class reading habits became wider and more voracious, women writers realised the importance of financial stability and freedom. They were neither immune either to the vulgar lure of commercialism nor to that of the gothic. Margaret Oliphant, pouring out stories for to popular press was clear about her needs. 'I want money', in this she proved she was no mere possession of her husband, who had a poorer income, but an equal economic partner in the marriage.[14] Other women wrote for hard cash such as Mrs Charlotte E. Riddell whose husband proved to be a financial disaster. Her immense literary output, during a long career did not prevent her from dying in poverty. Riddell wrote short novels that might be serialised in one edition of a Christmas special, but she also wrote about those whom others neglected, the clerks and petty business men who were usually unmentioned in 'literary' books, not to mention gothic literature. Her short novel *The Uninhabited House* (1875) is a story of a haunted house and the problems of falling in love with a penniless solicitor's clerk; social commentary and supernaturalism. Riddell also produced one of the great collections of ghost stories in 1884 called *Weird Tales*. Riddell was joined by a legion of other women, from Elizabeth Gaskell to Mrs Henry Wood. There were many others such as Amelia Edwards (who wrote the short novel *Monsieur Maurice* [1873]), Rhoda Broughton, Louisa Molesworth, Violet Paget (Vernon Lee), Rosa Mulholand, Edith Nesbit and host of others.[15] Many of these women (as did male writers) wrote under different pseudonyms to avoid reader fatigue and to allow the exploration of themes only associated with one of their noms de plume. Many stories were written by amateur or semi-professional writers such as Lewis Lister or Raymund Allen for whom little

or no information is available or by 'composite' writers such as Mrs L. T. Meade and Robert Eustace whose identity remains shrouded in obscurity. The world of the magazine writer was highly competitive and unforgiving.

Yet these writers spawned numerous anthologies of the type of ghostly tale which has now inexorably become entwined with the idea of the Victorian era. In 1848 there was only one recorded example of a ghost anthology. This was by Catherine Crowe and called *The Night-side of Nature or, Ghosts and ghost-seers* (a ponderous reference, perhaps, to the work of Friedrich Schiller). By the 1850s there were four such anthologies, by Elizabeth Gaskell (1855), Dinah Maria Mulock (Mrs Craik; 1857) and again by Crowe (1858 or 1859). In 1851 Sheridan Le Fanu published *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery* which included 'Schalken the Painter'. The 1860s was a lean time with only two anthologies of note, one by Amelia Edwards (1865; three volumes) and one by M. E. Braddon (1867). It was in the 1870s that things changed. Between 1870 and 1879 there were ten new anthologies including Sheridan Le Fanu's highly influential *In a Glass Darkly* published by Bentley in three volume in 1872 and including 'Green Tea' and 'Carmilla'. There were also works by Amelia Edward (1873), Mrs Henry Wood (1874) and Rhoda Broughton (1873). By the 1880s there were ten anthologies including one by Arthur Conan Doyle (1889), whilst by the 1890s there were thirty-two including work by Rudyard Kipling (1890), Robert Barr (1892), Henry James (1893), Bernard Capes (1899) and Edith Nesbitt (1893). Between 1900 and 1910 there were at least twenty-four new titles including work by Richard Marsh (nd), W. W. Jacobs (1901, and the 1902 volume, *The Lady of the Barge* which included 'The Monkey's Paw'), Barry Pain (1901), Gertrude Atherton (1905), Algernon Blackwood (1907), Perceval Landon, whose *Raw Edges* included 'Thurnley Abbey' (1908), Edith Wharton (1910) and Edith Nesbitt (1910). The decade also included the most famous of all these anthologies, *Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* published by Edward Arnold in 1904 and written by M. R. James.

Americans were quick to understand the potential of the ghostly short story written for the magazines. Ralph Adams Cram produced *Black Spirits and White* in 1895 and Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper* in 1899. Yet the period was to find the defining voices of macabre literature in Ambrose Bierce, Francis Marion Crawford and Robert W. Chambers. Whilst all three acknowledged the influence of British writing they took the spectral tale in a different direction, one that looked to verisimilitude through newspaper reports (Bierce), English country house lore (Crawford) and graveyard thrills (Chambers). Bierce used newspaper reports of disappearances to create tales that make the American South and its landscape of abandoned plantation houses both unworldly and uncanny. It is Bierce who makes of disappearances and hauntings an America which is both surreal and inexplicable. What happens in Bierce happens without explanation, as if the veil of reality is merely a thin veneer covering modernity. In this he anticipates both American backwoods horror cinema and the extravagances of David Lynch. Robert W. Chambers borrowed the strange mythic landscapes of Bierce's Carcosa in the extraordinary stories which make up the *King in Yellow* (1895). Here, we find ordinary modern life literally haunted by a mysterious and terrifying 'other' existence written in a demonic play that cannot be read without driving the reader insane. It is the epitome of decadence and decay and

the colour of the popular press—yellow. Chambers's stories relate a metaphysical threat that implies an occult and hidden universe wholly satanic and unbending. It is ultimately to Chambers that we owe the pulp horrors of the 1920s and the most famous of unreadable books—H. P. Lovecraft's 'Necronomicon'.

The steady rise in ghost stories was the result in the growing obsession with theosophy and eastern esoteric thought, brought to Britain by the formidable Madame Blavatsky and centred on a 'secret' cult of higher spiritual beings based in Tibet. Its central theses were contained in Helena Petrovna Blavatsky's two volume work, *Isis Unveiled* (1877). The extraordinary reach of this fantastical new 'religion' of personal salvation and super humans affected many novels and influenced a great number of writers including Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *The Coming Race* (1871) with its subterranean Sphinx-like super beings. Bulwer-Lytton (plain Edward Bulwer until 1843 when he took his mother's name in 1843, inheriting as he did so her Hertfordshire home, Knebworth House, which he immediately gothicised) embraced Theosophy, spiritualism and the occult in a new form of paganism which grew into the secret magical societies at the end of the century. Indeed, his spiritual leanings had led him towards Rosicrucianism and the 'secrets' of Chaldean occultism, alchemy and astrology as early as the first mediums had emerged in New York State.

His gothic tales, which were just part of a vast and eclectic collection of writing that included social satire and science fiction, and embraced the (by the 1830s) Germanic clichés of Rhine maidens, corpse brides, robber barons, doomed love, ruined castles and physically deformed villains, nevertheless also concentrated on the inner mind, insanity, dreams, reverie and mind experiments. It was stories such as 'A Manuscript found in a Madhouse' published in the *Literary Souvenir* in 1829 which took the gothic story into the realms of the criminal mind and sexual psychopathology and foreshadowed the like of Victor Hugo's Quasimodo and 'Eric' the deformed maniac of Gaston Leroux's *The Phantom of the Opera*. Bulwer-Lytton combined this narrative theme with his tale of doubling, hallucination, mental illness and criminality called 'Monos and Daimonos' which he published in the *New Monthly* magazine in May 1830 and here we see the outline of narratives that would mirror the arguments put forward by De Quincey and be refined by Poe. Poe was hugely influenced by Lytton's early work as can be seen by his re-use of similar titles, his interest in perversity, in criminality and in mental illness. Moreover, Poe wrote to his friend T. H. White that Bulwer's gothic inclinations made, 'the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque; the fearful…into the horrible; the witty exaggerated into the burlesque; the singular wrought out into the strange and mystical'—a more perfect description of Poe's own work is hard to think of here. Yet, and also with a view to his own ideas perhaps, Poe continued, 'you may say this is bad taste, I have my doubts about it', a most ambivalent and ambiguous prevarication. In 1859 Bulwer-Lytton published 'The Haunted & [sic] the Haunters; or, The House and the Brain' in *Blackwood's Magazine*, following his intense experiments into telepathy and metal transference which the author undertook with the most famous medium of the nineteenth century, Daniel Dunglas Home. The tale is not merely one of the very first ghost stories, but it includes much of the author's musings on the nature of hallucination, mind transference, occultism and the relationship between the will and the imagination,

the unknown, inner world where space, time and distance vanish and where dreams reveal the possibilities of other better and truer worlds; a far cry from the inner voice that deceives of earlier times.

By the beginning of the twentieth century ghosts were *de rigeur* in the English landscape and P. H. Ditchfield's book, *The Charm of the English Village* (1908) praises not only the uniqueness of the English village, but the need for a good ghost in your manorial property. Indeed, he gets eloquent on the subject. Thus, he tells us, 'these ancient traditions, ghosts and legends, add greatly to the charm of our old houses'.[16] This led Peter Ackroyd to remark in his 2010 book on ghosts, that 'England is a haunted country'.[17]

By the late nineteenth century the English landscape, haunted as it was by ghosts had become ghostly itself. The landscape was alive with the spirits of other worlds; fairies and fairy folk and strange remnants from times gone by. In Bram Stoker's *The Lair of the White Worm* (1911) the main character, Adam Salton finds himself travelling through 'the heart of England' towards the Peak District where the very rocks and houses become uncanny worlds of lost and arcane prehistory and where monstrous serpents live in deep caverns under archaic stately homes. Time in Stoker stands still, as Roman, Anglo Saxon and Norman history blend into one and these into the prehistoric; all the history and myth of England and the empire coagulate in this strange landscape where black servants are 'simiam' degenerates haunting beautiful white women and where ancient serpentine and mythic 'worms' become strange erotic females bent of finding rich husbands!

Even more significant in the period was the rise of spiritualism which had originated with the supposed supernatural occurrences at the Fox household in Hydesville, New York State during 1848. It arrived in Britain as an American phenomenon with Marias B. Hayden in 1852 and caused a popular sensation in which the royal family were happy to participate. Queen Victoria may have continued an interest until her death in 1901. This new form of religiosity had originated with the Shaking Quakers, but had metamorphosed into a quite different manifestation of spiritual enlightenment by the 1840s and 1850s in the strange atmosphere of upstate New York.

The paraphernalia of the séance and the clairvoyant crossed the Atlantic in the 1850s and proved a convenient answer to the difficulties of Darwinism, but also a strange and comforting double of evolutionary theory. By the 1870s, the whole world of the darkened room, the séance cabinet, the clairvoyant, the flying apports, the strange music and the planchette was the most popular pastime of respectable middle-class bankers and by the end of the century of working-class labourers and their womenfolk too. The likes of Margaret and Catherine (Kate)Fox, Daniel Douglas [D D]Home (who could levitate) and the Bangs Sisters, Eusapia Palladino and Florence Cook (whose 'extraordinary' manifestations could walk and talk) soon became celebrities and every level of society, but beginning with the wealthy, soon had their own favourite medium. The exposure of fraudulent practice only made believers cling more closely to their favourite spiritual go-between. The world of the séance reached its height by 1874 and coincides with the rise of the traditional ghost story. It grows again in importance after World War One, to finally fade into a standard of spiritualist churches and wet afternoons, Madame Blavatsky turned into

Madame Sosostris the clairvoyant whose powers are diminished because of a 'cold' in T. S. Eliot's 'The Wasteland' (1922) and later became the butt of the brilliant buffoonery of Margaret Rutherford playing Madame Arcati in Noel Coward's 1941 comedy, *Blithe Spirit.*

Nevertheless, the cult of spiritualism took itself very seriously in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It argued that contact with the 'dead', mesmeric connection and kinetic operations were both scientific proof and religious assurance of an afterlife. The impact was immense, not only convincing writers like Doyle that the veridical ghost was a reality, but also convincing political movements such as the nascent Labour movement and the Suffragettes which were both heavily influenced by its message of material continuation and female spiritual independence. The phenomena spawned societies of investigators, all still active today. In 1862, a group of investigators from Cambridge University formed the Ghost Club, whilst in 1882 another group of high minded intellectuals from Oxford formed the Society for Psychical Research intending to apply scientific methods to the world of the supernatural; in 1884, William Stainton Moses, founded the London Spiritualist Alliance created with the practical purpose of allowing people to harness the new power. It is now the College of Psychical Studies which at one time had Arthur Conan Doyle as its president and Aleister Crowley renting a room.

The world of ghostly revenants and peculiar mesmeric influence (an invisible etheric fluid) was reworked in stories from the 1870s onwards in which strange dreams blended with everyday reality to create new liminal experiences. Wilkie Collins utilised these ideas in *The Haunted Hotel: A Mystery of Modern Venice* (1879) which combined a narrative of commercial enterprise with his stock-in-trade of murder and melodramatic secrets. In this case, one of the characters has a vision of a floating decapitated head which leads mesmerically to the solution of the family secret. The ideas were still being retailed by Arthur Machen in the twentieth century (see his story 'North').

Bram Stoker's *Dracula (1897)* is, in many ways, the climax, unrealised at the time, of the tendencies of the 1870s onwards combined with a nostalgia for an earlier form of gothic dimly remembered from childhood. It is influence by the rise of theosophy and Madame Blavatsky, by spiritualism, orientalism, occultism, the taste for mesmerism and malevolent ghosts (the revenant and the spirit).Its themes are those imperial neuroses outlined by Arthur Conan Doyle and H. G. Wells and it is concerned with those very issues which were featured in the popular press at the time of the creation of Stoker's novel (between 1890 and 1897). The book clearly owes its origins to the stories of Sherlock Holmes and the scientific studies into spiritualism undertaken by the Society of Psychical Research. It is also influenced by the urban gothic of London, the spectre of Jack the Ripper and of alien immigration into the East End. Stoker's concerns, like those of Walpole and Meinhold was to produce veracity for his fictional world. In his unpublished preface of 1898, Stoker joins many of the themes of the nineteenth century gothic story from mental alienation, to spiritualism, the alien threat to London and to Jack the Ripper.

> I am quite convinced that there is no doubt whatever that the events here described really took place….such strange happenings that neither scientists nor the secret police [does Stoker mean the Irish Special Branch?] can understand. The series of crimes has not yet passed from the memory…, which at the same time created as much repugnance in people…as the notorious murders of Jacob the disemboweller [or Jack the Ripper]…Various people's minds will go back to the remarkable group of foreigners who…[were] here in London….Both Jonathan Harker and his wife [Mina]…and Dr Seward are my friends….and the highly respected scientist [possibly a reference to Henry Sidgewick of the Society for Psychical Research or perhaps Sir William Crookes], who appears under a pseudonym [Abraham Van Helsing].[18]

The taste for vampires took almost the next forty years to grow into a cult. Stoker turned to more current horrors for his other books and short stories, the most famous of which, *The Jewel of the Seven Stars* (1903) was themed on the mythic world of ancient Egypt. Stoker's rise to popularity would be delayed until his death in 1911, others were luckier and enjoyed great success with supernatural tales in their own lifetime.

Dracula is supremely the book of nineteenth-century Western modernity from which the memory of repressed Eastern horrors have been erased, but not destroyed. Here we find the clash of civilisations in the figure of Dracula. As Jonathan Harker travels into Transylvania he muses that 'we [sic] were leaving the West and entering the East'. The world he is leaving is one of lawyer's clerks, real estate contracts, bicycles and dictating machines, shorthand and 'new women'; he enters a primitive world of eroticism and violence and mythic monsters. The West is also the world of modern thought and of modern criminal detection set in contemporary mental hospitals such as the Pitie Salpetriere in Paris under Jean-Martin Charcot (even if Van Helsing believes in mesmerism) Verisimilitude is not only contained in modern ideas but in real places such as Purfleet in Essex, Chicksand Street in the East End of London and Whitby. Yet it is America's masculine and modern cowboy culture as symbolised by Quincey P. Morris which represents the future which will defeat the repressed Eastern past of the vampire.

Dracula, too belongs to the modern world, and whether he is a werewolf or a vampire, a supernatural being or the Anti-Christ (blue flames and 'pentagrams'), he still has to consult his copy of Baedecker, make use of money, banks, lawyers and merchants as well as real estate and shipping agents. He must obey the rules of the world precisely because he is not a ghost but has material presence He may be 'Mr DeVil' but he still has to use modern transport and live in the contemporary world of the late Victorians.

Such is also the case with Richard Marsh's horrors. Marsh, whose real name was Richard Bernard Heldmann, was the author of over eighty tales, many of them 'boys own adventures'. Marsh published *The Beetle* in 1897, the same year as Dracula, but to much greater success. The story, like Stoker's, is part horror tale and part criminal thriller set in a recognisably modern London. Nevertheless, Marsh's premise is centred on the discovery of a secret Egyptian cult and the return of an Egyptian mummy in the heart of Hammersmith; the hero, a scientist, is working on a formula for poison gas! Marsh's celebrity and success led to another strange tale called *The Goddess: A Demon*, first serialised in *the Manchester Evening News* in 1900. It too