



## ARTICLE

Received 1 Nov 2016 | Accepted 13 Jul 2017 | Published 22 Aug 2017

DOI: 10.1057/palcomms.2017.83

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# Realism, horror and the Gothic in *Dracula* and Thomas Hardy's "The fiddler of the reels"

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**ABSTRACT** Thomas Hardy (1840–1928) and Bram Stoker (1847–1912) were contemporaries as well as members of the same literary circles (Hardy often attended performances at the Lyceum Theater, which Stoker managed). The two are rarely compared, however, because Hardy is generally regarded as a writer of realistic fiction and as a poet while Stoker is remembered as the writer of *Dracula* as well as other Gothic works even though he actually wrote more romances. Realism, Horror and the Gothic in *Dracula* and "The Fiddler of the Reels" points to the fact that these two works are representative of the kinds of fiction created at the end of the nineteenth century and that both writers comment on the times in which they live. Specifically, both adapt a trope from traditional balladry, *The Daemon Lover*, to reveal that the forces of the primitive past continue to lurk beneath their progressive and confident present and emerge to influence the present. Their emphasis on the continued power of the past serves to criticize the overconfidence that was common at the turn of the twentieth century when England dominated the world in science, economics and industry. What the two writers created, however, is quite different, and exploring Hardy's "The Fiddler of the Reels" and *Dracula* moves beyond these two works to reveal the extent to which the realistic fiction of the nineteenth century came to incorporate Gothic tropes and materials without becoming fully Gothic, as well as the fact that the Gothic often explores real social problems. Moreover, examining these two works also reveals how knowledge of science led to the emphasis on horror rather than terror in the Gothic of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Of particular relevance to students of the Gothic is the way this article explores a critical period in the evolution of the Gothic and points to the fact that the Gothic became increasingly domesticated at this time, a trend that continues to the present day. Students of Hardy's fiction will be especially interested to read this exploration of a story that is rarely discussed even by Hardy experts, and students of *Dracula* will gain an additional appreciation of the fact that Stoker was influenced by what was happening around him when he wrote his best-known novel.

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So: terror on top, horror below it, and lowest of all, the gag reflex of revulsion .... I recognize terror as the finest emotion ... and so I will try to terrorize the reader. But if I find I cannot terrify him/her, I will try to horrify; and if I find I cannot horrify, I'll go for the gross-out. I'm not proud. (Stephen King, *Danse Macabre*, 1982)

When he had told her these fair tales,  
To love him she began,  
Because he was in human shape,  
Much like unto a man. And so together away they went  
From off the English shore,  
And since that time the woman-kind  
Was never seen no more.

("James Harris, The Daemon Lover",  
*Child's Collected Ballads*, no. 243)

**H**orror and the Gothic, topics on which much has been written but on which—with the exception of a brief period from 1784 (*The Castle of Otranto*) to 1831 (*Frankenstein*)—there is little agreement. Although written fifty years ago, Ellen Moers's (1976) definition is a clear and succinct place at which to begin this discussion, which focuses on the evolution of the Gothic as horror has replaced terror, and realism has replaced the fantastic:

In Gothic writings fantasy predominates over reality, the strange over the commonplace, and the supernatural over the natural, with one definite auctorial intent: to scare. Not, that is, to reach down into the depths of the soul and purge it with pity and terror (as we say tragedy does), but to get to the body itself, its glands, muscles, epidermis and circulatory system, quickly arousing and quickly allaying the physiological reactions to fear. (90)

Moers's emphasis on the visceral aspects of fear rather than on the awe-inspiring, spiritual, or even transcendent elements of that emotion definitely gets to the heart of what most scholars think of as Gothic and even touches on horror. Her definition, which focuses on early Gothic works rather than on works from the turn-of-the-nineteenth century and later, associates the Gothic with fantasy rather than a more realistic presentation of the world, however, and also omits other common characteristics, including the use of conventional characters (in particular the persecuted maiden and the brooding Byronic villain), the use of architectural details (especially ruined castles and abbeys that evoke the distant past), and the on-going debate about the difference between terror and horror. The relationship between the Gothic and horror is central to this special issue, but Anne Radcliffe's posthumously published essay, "The Supernatural in Poetry"<sup>1</sup> argues for the superiority of terror: "Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them" (1826: 149–150). Contemporary writers like Stephen King tend to agree with Radcliffe (1826) though King confesses that he uses horror, and readers and viewers might argue that horror dominates contemporary Gothic literature, film and television, and even video games.

The following discussion of *Dracula* and a seldom-discussed short story by Thomas Hardy (1996), "The Fiddler of the Reels," explores a pivotal moment in the evolution of the Gothic from a mode associated with fantasy and terror towards its current emphasis on the horror that comes from wallowing in the visceral aspects of reality. Arguing that the Gothic since the turn of the twentieth century focuses more on horror than

on terror, it speculates on some causes for that shift in perspective.

One obvious question that readers might ask is "Why these two stories?" *Dracula* is a natural, of course, since it is generally mentioned in discussions of the Gothic as a mode and is regarded as the epitome of fin de siècle Gothic. On the other hand, Hardy's connection to the Gothic is more tenuous, and even people who study his use of the Gothic<sup>2</sup> rarely discuss "The Fiddler of the Reels." However, the increasing realism of the Gothic is important in its evolution, and looking at "Fiddler" reveals a largely realistic story that includes some Gothic tropes without becoming Gothic. Andrew Radford (1999) looks at its "carefully constructed historical framework" (75)<sup>3</sup> while Martin Willis's (2012) thoughtful essay, "Victorian realism and the Gothic: Objects of terror Transformed"<sup>4</sup> examines the connection between the Gothic and realistic fiction, and Willis's emphasis on George Eliot reveals the degree to which even that master of realism sometimes adapts Gothic tropes. Moreover, the two representative works demonstrate that Hardy and Stoker, who were contemporaries (Hardy lived from 1840 to 1928, and Stoker from 1847 to 1912), shared anxieties about the world in which they lived. No longer confident in England's national dominance or in the power of industrialism and science to create a better world, the two writers coincidentally adapt an iconic figure from traditional ballads, the demon lover, to represent those anxieties. While Stoker's (1998) characters give homage to the power of technology—trains, typewriters, and telephones—to dominate and ultimately destroy *Dracula*, a supernatural creature who remains rooted in the medieval past, Stoker's conclusion suggests that the primitive power associated with the past is not so easily conquered. Dwarfing the humans who return to Transylvania is the castle, a potent representation of the past. Furthermore, both *Dracula* and Hardy's demon lover are capable of seducing modern characters. It's possible that *Dracula* remains at the end of the novel, and sightings of Mop suggest that he and his daughter continue to seduce listeners with their primitive music.

Both works are also products of the 1890s. "The Fiddler of the Reels" was written quickly when *Scribner's Magazine* invited him to contribute to a special number that was published to celebrate the 1893 Chicago World's Fair. *Dracula* was published in 1897, but *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula*<sup>5</sup> reveals that "the earliest dated Note was written on 8 March 1890" (4). While the two writers apparently never met, they operated in the same social and literary circles, with Hardy an occasional guest at the Lyceum Theater when he was in London.<sup>6</sup>

The following discussion will focus first on points of similarity in the two works and then move to differences in the two, with the primary intention of demonstrating that writers may have different reasons for using Gothic tropes. This strategy is similar to what Willis reveals in his discussion of George Eliot: "[U]sing the Gothic does not turn realist fiction into Gothic writing. Rather, it is the reverse. Realism assimilates the Gothic mode and makes it part of a larger realist project" (26–27). Assimilating material from the Gothic does, however, allow Hardy to explore issues of concern to himself and his contemporaries and to play on their fears.

One of the most obvious similarities is that, like the earliest Gothic literature, both works feature young women as central characters. Unlike the persecuted maidens of early Gothic fiction, however, these young women are no longer sequestered at home. Instead, because both writers were aware of the sexually and intellectually liberated New Woman of the period, their characters walk openly into situations where they encounter dangers in the form of mysterious strangers. Seduced by these exotic foreigners, they leave their homes only to experience the negative consequences of such actions. Stoker suggests latent or subconscious

promiscuity when Lucy confesses to her friend Mina, “Why can’t they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? But this is heresy, and I must not say it” (91). Courted by three men, Lucy chooses Arthur Holmwood (His title after the death of his father, Lord Godalming, suggests his affiliation with the forces of good just as her name suggests light and identification with Western culture). While sleepwalking in Whitby, she encounters Dracula who eventually turns her into a vampire. That she meets Dracula in a state of unconsciousness somewhat absolves her from guilt, and her soul is saved when Arthur and the other agents of goodness assemble to end her vampiric existence by driving a stake through her heart. Hardy’s youthful heroine, Car’ine Aspent, is merely seduced away from her fiancé by the eponymous fiddler’s “heart-stealing melodies, to her discomfort, nay, positive pain and ultimate injury” (139). His surname “Ollamoor” suggests his amorous disposition as well as his foreign ancestry. Instead of turning her into a monster, though, Mop merely abandons her to raise their daughter alone. Four years later, after Car’line has married, Mop kidnaps their daughter, and the pair is never heard from again. Not only do both works adapt the familiar Gothic storyline of young women haunted by mysterious foreigners, but both resemble the Child ballad cited at the opening in which a dark and brooding stranger seduces a young woman to leave her home and family. In Car’line’s case, however, the demon lover is a human being, and she merely suffers social opprobrium and nervousness, not damnation. In fact, Radford points to the narrator’s “use of scientific imagery and contemporary medical research” (76) to characterize her situation.

If the Gothic, as Moers’s definition reveals, is about what frightens a particular group, both Stoker and Hardy reveal that changing roles for women concern readers and that death and disease are also part of their readers’ consciousness. *Dracula* features a supernatural monster whose touch brings death and, in Van Helsing’s words, a fate worse than death:

“But to fail here, is not mere life or death. It is that we become as him; that we henceforward become foul things of the night like him—without heart or conscience, preying on the bodies and the souls of those we love best. To us forever are the gates of heaven shut. (276–77)

Stoker also reminds his readers of more mundane examples of death. Both Mina and Jonathan Harker are orphans whose parents had died long before the story opens, while Peter Hawkins, Jonathan’s mentor and employer, dies soon after Jonathan returns to England. Arthur’s father dies shortly after his engagement to Lucy. Lucy’s father is dead when the novel opens, and her mother suffers a fatal heart attack when the escaped wolf Berserker breaks into her home. These diseases are ordinary physical ailments, but many of the London scenes take place in Dr Seward’s private mental asylum. “The Fiddler of the Reels” focuses on Car’line’s nervous hysteria, which Hardy describes in the clinical terms of the day:

The next evidence of his influence over her were singular enough, and it would require a *neurologist* to fully explain them .... she would start from her seat in the chimney-corner as if she had received a galvanic shock, and spring *convulsively* towards the ceiling; then she would burst into tears .... Her father, knowing her *hysterical* tendencies, was always excessively anxious about this trait in his youngest girl, and feared the attack to be a species of epileptic fit. (140–41)

With the exception of vampirism, which is obviously an extreme supernatural condition, both works rely on realistic physical ailments and demonstrate the degree to which physical

and mental illness as well as death are a frightening part of the human condition.

As is appropriate for a time when the British Empire was beset and besieged both from within and without, both works depict xenophobia. Stoker’s justifiably famous opening of *Dracula* reveals Harker’s reservations about travelling to the East, which he describes as primitive: “The impression I had was that we were leaving the West and entering the East” (31). “I read that every known superstition in the world is gathered into the horseshoe of the Carpathians, as if it were the centre of some sort of imaginative whirlpool” (32). “It seems to me that the further East you go the more unpunctual are the trains. What ought they to be in China?” (33). These reservations are the observations of a tourist outside his “comfort zone,” and Harker does not suspect his host of being anything but a peculiar human being until he sees him crawl face down the castle walls. At this point, Harker rebels at the thought of bringing this foreign threat to England:

This was the being I was helping to transfer to London, where, perhaps, for centuries to come he might, among its teeming millions, satiate his lust for blood, and create a new and ever-widening circle of semi-demons to batten on the helpless. The very thought drove me mad. (84)

By contrast, Hardy’s eponymous villain is human rather than supernatural though even this realistic work retains a hint of Mop’s magical traits as well as his foreignness:

Many a worthy villager envied him his power over unsophisticated maidenhood—a power which seemed sometimes to have a touch of the weird and wizardly in it. Personally he was not ill-favoured, though rather un-English, his complexion being a rich olive, his rank hair dark and rather clammy—made still clammy by secret ointments. (138)

Despite the narrator’s use of words like “weird” and “wizardly,” the story nowhere suggests that Mop is anything but human, however.

Both Hardy and Stoker reveal their shared fears, and both works also incorporate characteristics associated with the Gothic, including indirect narration. While *Dracula* is justifiably famous for Stoker’s use of multiple narrators as well as his incorporation of newspaper clippings and diaries, fragmentary bits of the story that force both the central characters and the readers to assemble what is happening like a jigsaw puzzle, “Fiddler” begins with a retrospective account of an historical event, the Great Exhibition, and then explores the lives of three individuals whose lives were impacted by those events. What’s important here is the level of mystery, for neither the avuncular narrator nor his rustic listeners is truly privy to the thoughts of the three characters whose lives they appear to document or even to what happens to Mop and his daughter once he kidnaps her.

While the earliest Gothic stories take place either in the distant past or in remote locations, David Punter and Glennis Byron (2004) insist that one characteristic of Victorian Gothic is “the modernity of its setting” (230),<sup>7</sup> and both *Dracula* and “Fiddler” bring mysterious events close to home. Beginning in Transylvania, *Dracula* is set in towns and cities that its English readers would have known, including London, Whitby, and Exeter. “Fiddler” also takes place in London and in several of Hardy’s South Wessex locations, Stickleford, Mellstock, and Egdon. Riquelme (2000) comments on Hardy’s domestication of the Gothic:

By not displacing his narrative to a distant site, Hardy participates in the domesticating of the Gothic that is

evident as well in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Dracula*. All these writers bring the Gothic home. As O'Malley says explicitly, instead of being foreign, the Gothic has become all too familiar: "The Gothic as a genre has collapsed into the contemporary novel, because the Gothic, indeed, has come home to England." (595)

Even though Hardy and Stoker domesticate the Gothic, both *Dracula* and "Fiddler" seem to be aware of the importance of architecture as an embodiment of the past. *Dracula's* ruined medieval castle looms over the opening and the conclusion of the novel while Seward's private asylum is located next to the ancient property that Harker locates for *Dracula* in London:

The estate is called Carfax, no doubt a corruption of the old *Quatre Face* ... The house is very large and of all periods back ... to medieval times for one part is of stone immensely thick with only a few windows high up and heavily barred with iron. It looks like part of a keep, and is close to an old chapel or church. (54)

The architecture in "Fiddler" is more mundane and consists of private dwellings though the name, Crystal Palace, on which Ned works might be said to evoke the medieval past so often evident in early Gothic literature. By the time Hardy's story was published, though, that modern palace of glass and iron had been moved to the suburbs, and the area on which it was built had been converted to museum spaces. Indeed, all the characters in Hardy's story might be described as haunted by the recent past in the form of the Great Exhibition, with which Hardy's avuncular narrator opens his story:

"Talking of Exhibitions, World's Fairs, and what not," said the old gentleman, "I would not go round the corner to see a dozen of them nowadays. The only exhibition that ever made, or ever will make, any impression upon my imagination was the first of the series, the parent of them all, and now a thing of old times—the Great Exhibition of 1851. (137)

The Great Exhibition represented England at the height of its industrial and imperial power, and Hardy's narrator looks back nostalgically to a more comfortable and prosperous time when England led the world in manufacturing and art and when most of its citizens were invited to observe that glory. However, Hardy reveals himself to be less confident about this kind of progress by linking Mop to more primitive forces (represented by his sexual power over women and his association with pagan music) and by revealing his dominance over the progressive Ned whose work on the Crystal Palace identifies him with industrialism. Dull and mechanistic, Ned is ultimately ineffective even in his chosen field, and he loses twice to Mop whose music seduces Car'line into abandoning her love for both her fiancé and her daughter. Even though Hardy's narrator emphasizes the prevailing belief in progress that was associated with the Great Exhibition, Hardy reveals that something more primitive exists simultaneously with the values of these modern people. That Mop triumphs underlies the power of the pagan past in the same way the presence of *Dracula's* castle at the conclusion to the novel suggests the undying power of the medieval past. The suggestion that Mop and his daughter may have immigrated to America may also be a warning to the United States, at the time of "Fiddler's" publication becoming a world power.

So far this discussion suggests that both Hardy and Stoker are using their fictional creations to address concerns that their readers would have shared, including anxiety about the

vulnerability of women, worry about the foreigner, and fear of atavism and degeneration. Nothing so far has touched on the link between the Gothic (1996) and horror, but this connection will illustrate what distinguishes the Gothic from realist works that employ Gothic material. The connection is definitely present as scholars such as Botting and Allison Millbank<sup>8</sup> have noted, but merely pointing to the extent to which the Gothic is woven into the realistic novel is insufficient. One of the first scholars to address the connection between the Gothic and realism as well as one of the first twentieth-century scholars to take the Gothic seriously is Leslie Fiedler (2003) whose classic *Love and Death in the American Novel* emphasizes the importance of both the Gothic and horror to the American literary experience:

In our most enduring books, the cheapjack machinery of the gothic novel is called on to represent the hidden blackness of the human soul and human society. No wonder our authors mock themselves as they use such devices .... However shoddily or ironically treated, horror is essential to our literature. It is not merely a matter of terror filling the vacuum left by the suppression of sex in our novels, of Thanatos standing in for Eros. (27)

Fiedler (2003), who points to the importance of addressing difficult subjects, is correct to focus on realism's willingness—perhaps eagerness—to explore what is unpleasant, painful and fear inspiring about individual and social life, and its focus on the material reality of people's lives rather than on their spiritual aspirations. Thus, realism tends to feature Emma Bovary's disappointment in marriage, her tawdry affairs, and gruesome death as well as the gross physical details of Ivan Ilyich's cancer, and Pap Finn's abusiveness. Knowing what might drive these unpleasant circumstances into full-blown Gothic horror will help discriminate the Gothic from realism, however.

Martin Willis's excellent essay focuses on the relationship between realism and the Gothic:

This chapter will investigate the Gothic within Victorian realism on the basis of this key principle: that it is not *where* the Gothic might be found that is important, but *why* it is found there, what it is employed to do, and under what conditions it achieves this. If we begin to uncover at least a few of the different epistemologies of realism where the Gothic has an influence this will allow us to develop a much deeper understanding of the generic relationships between realism and the Gothic. (17, Willis's emphasis)

Flaubert, Tolstoy, Twain and Hardy too confront readers with unpleasant and inescapable realities: The ordinary humans in this realist fiction suffer from a variety of physical and mental illnesses as well as from poverty and unemployment. Romantic love does not transport them beyond their ordinary circumstances; family members and friends are indifferent to their suffering; the people who should love and protect them are often responsible for their suffering (and may even take gleeful delight in it); and even loving individuals are powerless to protect those they love from harm.

In addition, while earlier literature and art had sometimes reminded viewers and readers of the pains of the flesh, such *memento mori* were generally created within a religious or heroic context that also encouraged the search for something beyond mere material existence. Physical death was unavoidable, but there was something beyond—either immortality or glory—that is no longer in evidence in realism. The Gothic at the end of the nineteenth century and after goes one step further and focuses on

the most graphic, painful and degrading aspects of death, disease and sexuality. While students of the Gothic get a foretaste of this horror as early as Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), in which the monk Ambrosio learns that he had killed his mother and committed incest with his sister shortly before he is hurled to the rocks by Lucifer. Moers quotes Mary Shelley who said that "she intended *Frankenstein* to be the kind of ghost story that would 'curdle the blood, and quicken the beatings of the heart'" (91), in other words, a tale that evokes both terror and horror. At mid-century Edgar Allan Poe is also an expert at evoking horror. The narrator of "Berenice" confesses that he may have dug up the body of his fiancée when he discovers a box of blood-stained teeth. And of course there is always the vampire, that creature from the grave who nonetheless returns to impact the living. The existence of the vampire is a reminder of things worse than death and disease, it seems.

As the Gothic has evolved, it has become more dominated by horror, as Kelly Hurley (2002) argues in "British Gothic fiction, 1885–1930," observing that "the modernist era is the extended moment during which, perhaps, the genre known as Gothic metamorphoses into horror" (194). Botting (1996) provides a succinct overview of some reasons for this transformation that took place during the period when Stoker and Hardy were writing:

Darwin's theories, by bringing humanity closer to the animal kingdom, undermined the superiority and privilege humankind had bestowed on itself. Along similar lines, the work of criminologists like Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau attempted to discriminate between humans: some were more primitive and bestial in their nature than others. Anatomical, physiological and psychological theories were brought to bear on identifications of criminal types, those genetically determined to be degenerate and deviant. Atavism and recidivism, the regression to archaic or primitive characteristics, dominated constructions of deviance and abnormality. (137)

Often writers used this scientific language to depict the real horrors they saw, and many of the horrors reveal that nineteenth-century confidence in science, technology and rationalism was illusory.

Looking once again at "The Fiddler of the Reels" and *Dracula* reveals a critical difference between the Gothic and realism as well as reveals the extent to which Gothic writers took advantage of the exploration of the horror of ordinary human life. Thus "The Fiddler of the Reels" is an example of realism that incorporates some Gothic details while *Dracula* reveals the horror that had been part of the Gothic since its inception. As Willis argues, it's important to consider why a realist writer might focus on sad, uncomfortable, or even grisly details. Hardy demonstrates that being human can be painful and reveals the extent to which vulnerable people are often hurt. Even while attempting to resist Mop's power, Carline succumbs to her erotic impulses and winds up pregnant and abandoned, and she later succumbs to alcohol and perhaps once again to her uncontrollable attraction to Mop. The result is that her former lover kidnaps their child while the man who had rescued both her and that child is frantic at the loss. Readers can relate to Ned's uncontrollable grief but would not be horrified by it. They would merely see such pain as part of the human condition. Mental illness, pregnancy outside marriage, the threat of unemployment, and the loss of a child are ordinary, painful situations to which readers can relate, and "The Fiddler of the Reels" focuses on raw physical pain rather than on reservations about the characters' spiritual

futures. His characters are creatures of the flesh rather than intellectual beings.

Stoker's characters are also creatures of the body though Stoker creates situations to which his narrators respond with revulsion. A good example is Jonathan Harker's first encounter with Dracula:

The mouth ... was fixed and rather cruel-looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth; these protruded over the lips .... For the rest, his ears were pale, and at the tops extremely pointed .... Hitherto I had noticed the backs of his hands as they lap on his knees in the firelight, and they had seemed rather white and fine; but seeing them now close to me, I could not but notice that they were rather coarse .... The nails were long and fine, and cut to a sharp point. As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal. (48)

The emphasis on the teeth and ears is reminiscent of Darwin's *Descent of Man*, which often explores links between humans and animals though Stoker spends proportionately more space on disgusting smells, an emphasis that distinguishes his writing from the plausible physical detail in evidence in realism. It's a relatively subtle distinction though. Harker encounters the three vampire women in Dracula's castle and is initially intrigued by their voluptuousness until he detects "a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood" (69). Because Dracula is rarely on stage, readers see him less through his relationships with the other characters than through the odor of a corrupt and moldering body that he leaves behind. At Carfax, Harker describes the experience: "But as to the odour itself, how shall I describe it? It was not alone that it was composed of all the ills of mortality and with the pungent, acrid smell of blood, but it seemed as though corruption had become itself corrupt" (290). While the odors (and also Dracula's lack of language, pointed ears, and sharp, canine teeth) remind readers of Dracula's connection to animals, Stoker's descriptions of Lucy remind readers that she, like the women in Dracula's castle, is a predator:

The sweetness was turned to adamant, heartless cruelty, and the purity to voluptuous wantonness .... At that moment the remnant of my love passed into hate and loathing; had she then to be killed, I could have done it with savage delight .... With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone. (249)

In almost every case, the humans are frozen with either horror or revulsion on their encounter with the vampire, revulsion that reinforces the fact that the vampire is a creature only of the material body. Reminding his followers that humans have souls as well as bodies, Van Helsing warns that the vampire threatens its victims' souls, but the emphasis in *Dracula* is almost entirely on the bodies of the threatening supernatural forces. Immortal, yes, but creatures entirely associated with the earth in which their bodies were buried.

Stoker's emphasis on the horror associated with the body thus takes readers beyond the horror of *The Monk* whose eponymous character is still thinking of his soul or even of Poe's more horrifying stories, which frequently connect necrophilia with romantic love, physical pain with punishment. It also reveals what distinguishes the horror associated with *Dracula* from Hardy's realism. Hardy's "Fiddler" reveals human characters

whose lives are definitely limited to their material existence. There is no transcendent possibility for Carline or for Ned, but their limited lives are sad rather than horrifying. *Dracula* on the other hand immerses readers in the looks and smells of mere animal existence and reminds them there is nothing beyond. Darwin linked humans to the animal world and consistently rejected a separate act of creation for humans. As a result of both biological and psychological inquiry, people at the end of the nineteenth century were no longer confident in any kind of transcendence, and this lack of confidence becomes a pivotal point in the Gothic's transition from terror to horror. The Crew of Light believes in its triumph over *Dracula*, but Stoker probably did not. When they return to the site of their supposed victory, *Dracula's* castle looms over them, a poignant reminder that everything he represented remains. No matter what humans may hope for, they are constrained by their animal bodies.

This essay has used Hardy's "Fiddler" and *Dracula* as a means to study the evolution of the Gothic and its connection with horror. In the process, it has also argued that the Gothic at the end of the nineteenth century was connected to realism though it is certainly not synonymous with it. Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* as well as Richard Marsh's *The Beetle* and Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* also take place in domestic settings their readers would have found familiar. As the nineteenth century transitioned to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the Gothic continues to be set in familiar locations and to be identified by horror rather than with terror. If it were possible to extend this essay into a full exploration of the connection between Gothic and horror, it would of necessity need to examine far more than these two works, and it would certainly need to look at the evolution of what causes fear in people today. One example, though, points to the continued evolution of the links among Gothic, realism and horror, and that is the shift from the vampire who uses seductive language to woo his or her victims to the zombie, a creature that is little more than a dead body with a need to satisfy physical hunger. While Stoker gives *Dracula* little to say, his vampire retains elements of his former humanity, including the wish to fit in among the crowds in London and his pride in his heroic past. That humanity is no longer part of the zombie's condition at least as it is presented in *The Walking Dead* and *Fear the Walking Dead* franchises. Merely a lumbering monster and the host for whatever bacteria or virus is responsible for his condition, the zombie is no threat to his victims' souls. In fact, the only threats to their humanity lie in other humans and the possibility that they may become violent predators as well. Meanwhile, readers and viewers are aware that the zombie apocalypse is set in the cities of today, whether London, Los Angeles or Atlanta.

What produced this change? The earliest Gothic literature featured a limited cast of characters (often confined to family members) and had them interact in deserted landscapes that emphasized the influence of the past over the present. Supernatural events and people (sometimes explained) were common. By the end of the nineteenth century, the fantastic events and exotic settings were often replaced by frightening situations in domestic settings with which readers could identify. Fear is an essential component of the Gothic, but the source of that fear differs enormously. Hurley, who writes on the horror of Gothic bodies, observes that the Gothic emerges during periods of genuine psychic crisis:

The Gothic is rightly, if partially, understood as a cyclical genre that reemerges in times of cultural stress in order to negotiate anxieties for its readership by working through them in displaced (sometimes supernaturalized) form. (2002: 194)

Those fears originated in the changes that were taking place in the patriarchal family as the absolute power associated with fathers began to erode and later became fear of the stranger with whom one might rub elbows in overcrowded cities where people of all cultures interact. Hardy and Stoker thus chose a figure from traditional literature, the monster "in human shape/Much like unto a man" to reveal the undying and highly seductive power of an ancient past that exists simultaneously with a future that on the surface is totally unlike that ancient past. Lulled into complacency about the future through the Great Exhibition (or the World's Columbian Exhibition) and confident in future technological developments like trains that run predictably and telegraphs that communicate quickly and reliably, Stoker's contemporary readers nonetheless fear a darkness lying beneath the surface. Indeed this fear of atavistic forces appears in other turn-of-the-century literary works, including Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and Machen's *The Great God Pan* as well as in "The Fiddler of the Reels" and *Dracula*. The horrors depicted in these works are poignant reminders that the past is always with us even though Stoker emphasizes Gothic horror and Hardy features plausible human behaviour. Similar fears continue to dominate twentieth and twenty-first century literature and popular culture as well. Readers today may be more sophisticated, but fear being dragged back into the swamp from which enlightened humanity so recently emerged.

## Notes

- 1 "On the Supernatural in Poetry. By the Late Mrs. Radcliffe," *The New Monthly Magazine* 16, 1 (1826), 145–152.
- 2 Brigitte Hervoche-Betho (2001), "Seminal Gothic Dissemination in Hardy's Writings," *Victorian Literature and Culture* (2001), 451–467; James F. Scott, "Thomas Hardy's Use of the Gothic: An Examination of Five Representative Works," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 17 (1963), 363–380; John Paul Riquelme, "Introduction: Toward a History of Gothic and Modernism: Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett," *MFS* 46 (2000), 585–605.
- 3 Andrew Radford, "Thomas Hardy's 'The Fiddler of the Reels,'" *The Thomas Hardy Journal* 15 (1999), 72–81.
- 4 Martin Willis, "Victorian realism and the Gothic: Objects of terror Transformed," in Andrew Smith and William Hughes (eds.), *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*. Edinburgh UP: Edinburgh, 15–28.
- 5 *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula: A Facsimile Edition*. Annotated and Transcribed by Robert Eighteen-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller (2008). Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2008.
- 6 Hardy biographer Michael Millgate (1982) mentions that Hardy rubbed elbows with Stoker's employer, the actor Henry Irving, and also refers to Hardy's life-long fascination with the theatre ... He wrote to Irving to get seats for *Romeo and Juliet* for Emma and himself on their way home from Liverpool" (228). He also describes Hardy's friendship with "Irving, Ellen Terry, George Alexander, Ada Rehan and other leading theatrical figures of the day" (333). Stoker is known for handling Irving's correspondence, but the only real evidence that the two were in contact came in 1907, years after "Fiddler" and *Dracula* were published, when, after Irving's death, Stoker turned to full-time writing to earn a living and wrote to Hardy to request an interview. Hardy declined, but—according to Stoker biographer Barbara Belford—explained, "If I were to be interviewed there is nobody whom I should prefer than yourself for performing the operation" (311).
- 7 David Punter and Glennis Byron, *The Gothic*. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004.
- 8 Allison Milbank (2002) "The Victorian Gothic in English novels and stories." *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*. Ed. Jerrold E. Hogle. Cambridge: New York, 2002. pp. 145–166.

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### Data availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no datasets were generated or analysed during this study.

### Additional information

**Competing interests:** The author declares no competing financial interests.

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**How to cite this article:** Senf C (2017) Realism, horror and the Gothic in *Dracula* and Thomas Hardy's "The fiddler of the reels". *Palgrave Communications*. 3:17083 doi: 10.1057/palcomms.2017.83.

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