"Civilised society doesn't just happen": The Animal, the Law and 'Victorian Values' in Kim Newman's *Anno Dracula*

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Abstract:
Unlike other neo-Victorian texts which revisit the Ripper murders, Kim Newman's 1992 novel *Anno Dracula* has been largely overlooked. This article reads *Anno Dracula* as a response to the politics of law and order in Thatcher's Britain, with a focus on the expulsion of particular sub-groups considered dangerous to the physical and political health of society. With reference to recent work by Giorgio Agamben and Jacques Derrida on biopolitics and animal life, I argue that through the figure of the animal, *Anno Dracula* both explores the process of exclusion which underpins Thatcher's ideal of "civilised society", and suggests the extent to which the violence of previous techniques for managing the life of a population persists in modern regimes of social discipline. Finally, this article also considers the contemporary significance of the invocation of 'Victorian values' at those moments where the boundaries of so-called civilised society are being drawn.

Keywords: Giorgio Agamben, animal, *Anno Dracula*, biopolitics, Jacques Derrida, law, Kim Newman, politics of exclusion, the Ripper, Margaret Thatcher.

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In a speech given not long after her first general election victory in 1979, Margaret Thatcher described the preceding winter of discontent as a "reversion to barbarism" during which "there can have been few in Britain who did not feel, with mounting alarm, that our society was sick – morally, socially and economically" (Thatcher 1979). In place of the "socialist" principles which she felt had led to this decline, Thatcher asked the electorate to put its faith in "the working of a market economy in a free society" (Thatcher 1979). Yet Thatcher's economic medicine was clearly insufficient when it came to halting this so-called "reversion to barbarism", since the period of her premiership continued to be troubled by massive social unrest. Rather than acknowledging the economic and political

explanations for this unrest, Thatcher's tendency, according to Simon Joyce, was "to impose a moral etiology on deviant behaviour", and to characterise the "ordinary citizens" of middle-class society as the victims of the poor and the "roofless" (Joyce 2007: 116-117). Besides drastic changes in economic policy, then, for Thatcher the solution to social decline lay in the return to a form of "firm and traditional government", which would "mount […] a real war against crime and against the criminal" (Thatcher 1979). Hence the birth of what Stuart Hall terms "the law and order society" of the Thatcher era, which he argues was established amidst a "moral panic" stirred up by the government's rhetoric "of 'good' versus 'evil', of civilised and uncivilised standards, of the choice between anarchy and order" (Hall 1988: 56). Even following her third election victory in 1987, Thatcher was still at pains to stress that "civilised society doesn't just happen" but "has to be sustained by standards widely accepted and upheld"; "All of us," she argued, "have a responsibility to uphold the civilised values which underpin the law" (Thatcher 1987).

One set of civilised values Thatcher had already invoked in this period can be found in her famous call for a return to 'Victorian values', and it is interesting to note that in the late eighties and early nineties, a number of authors turned to the Victorian period (and to its most notorious crimes) in their fiction as a means of exploring contemporary approaches to law and order and social breakdown. This is particularly true of those neo-Victorian texts which Elizabeth Ho classifies as "Ripperature" – "fictionalised accounts of the Whitechapel murders and Jack the Ripper" (Ho 2012: 28). Texts such as Alan Moore and Eddie Campbell's *From Hell* (1989-1996), Peter Ackroyd's *Dan Leno and the Limehouse Golem* (1994) and Iain Sinclair's *White Chappell, Scarlet Tracings* (1987) are often regarded as responding specifically to the politics of Thatcherism. Ho, for example, argues that in *From Hell* Moore and Campbell "create a nineteenth-century nightmare born out of the values admired by 'eminent neo-Victorians' such as Thatcher" (Ho 2012: 28); Alex Murray, in turn, asserts that Sinclair's novel constitutes "an investigation of the obscene underside of 'Victorian Values'" (Murray 2007: 73). While these texts have received considerable scholarly attention, Kim Newman's 1992 neo-Victorian Gothic novel *Anno Dracula*, which likewise returns to the Ripper murders, has been largely overlooked. In his afterword to the recently republished edition of the text, Newman describes the novel as an attempt "to mix things I felt about the

1980s, when the British Government made 'Victorian Values' a slogan, with the real and imagined 1880s, when blood was flowing in the fog and there was widespread social unrest" (Newman 2011: 455). *Anno Dracula* is the first in a quartet of books which, taking Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) as their starting point, imagine what might have happened if Stoker's vampire had succeeded in seizing control of Victorian Britain and its empire. The novel begins shortly after Dracula has married and "turned" Queen Victoria, with both the Queen and her new Prince Consort declaring themselves "much concerned with law and order" (Newman 2011: 127). Against the backdrop of a growing rebellion against the new regime, involving a cast of characters borrowed from history and from Victorian fiction, Jack Seward stalks the slums of Whitechapel as Jack the Ripper, murdering vampire prostitutes in a bid to complete the work he and Van Helsing began with Lucy Westenra after her sexual awakening at Dracula's hands.

Like Ripperature more generally, then, *Anno Dracula* points to the contradictions and ethical problems encountered in turning to the real and imagined Victorian era as a panacea for contemporary social and political ills. Moreover, by depicting the moment at which a regime changes, Newman raises questions concerning the creation of a 'civilised' society and the origins of its legal order. In its focus on prostitutes, drug addicts, homosexuals, immigrants, political dissidents, and the poor and unemployed, the novel considers the question of who must be excluded from a society in order for it to be regarded as 'civilised', a process of exclusion which in contemporary culture is intimately bound up with the notion of 'Victorian values'. As Kate Mitchell points out, "Thatcher used the term 'Victorian values' as a measure against which to identify the social ills of her milieu – a regulated economy, welfare dependency and the decline of the family", and, relatedly, to reassert "traditional and naturalised boundaries between normalcy and deviancy, morality and perversity" (Mitchell 2010: 48). Critics of Thatcher's government certainly noted its impulse towards identifying and expelling threatening sub-groups from the population. Hall, for example, comments on Thatcher's attempts to "expel symbolically one sector of society after another from the imaginary community of the nation" (Hall 1988: 8). Likewise, Alan Sinfield comments on the Thatcher government's repeated attempts to "outlaw sections of the population (disadvantaged sections, of course)", including "blacks and

'scroungers'" and the homosexual community, among many other "out-groups", who would "bear much of the brunt of such scapegoating in modern Britain" (Sinfield 1997: 348-349).

In this article, I want to read Newman's focus on the processes of exclusion bound up with the formation of "civilised society" in relation to contemporary thought on biopolitics and the animal, particularly that of Giorgio Agamben and Jacques Derrida. Biopolitics, defined by Mitchell Dean as "the administration of the processes of life of populations", is "concerned with matters of life and death, with birth and propagation, with health and illness, both physical and mental, and with the processes that sustain or retard the optimization of the life of a population" (Dean 2010: 117, 119). These concerns, however, involve "the division of life into sub-groups that will contribute to or retard the general welfare and life of the population", leading to

> the discovery among the population of the criminal and dangerous classes, the feeble-minded and the imbecile, the invert and the degenerate, the unemployable and the abnormal, and to attempts to prevent, contain or eliminate them. (Dean 2010: 119)

In *Anno Dracula*, Newman explores this biopolitical process of preventing, containing and eliminating threatening sub-groups through the figure of the animal – from vampires who shape-shift into rats, bats and wolves, to humans used as "cattle" for vampires (Newman 2011: 73), or those identified as sub-human criminals. The first section of this article will therefore focus on the novel's depiction of the role of the human/animal division in the production of the disposable lives of members of these sub-groups. The second section will consider the role of the animal in the novel's depiction of the origins and legitimation of law and civilised society. The figure of the animal is crucial in contemporary thought on biopolitics and law, because the animal is, as Cary Wolfe puts it, "before the law", both spatially, in the sense of standing before its judgement, and temporally, in the sense that the animal is "ontologically […] antecedent to the law" and exists prior to the enactment of the law's "originary violence", its decision on "who's in an who's out" (Wolfe 2013: 8-9). I will examine how Newman's focus on the depiction of the animal in the novel's Victorian

intertexts and on the process of "animalization" (Wolfe 2013: 10) inherent in biopolitical discourses such as degeneration theory and criminology allows him to explore the role of the animal in the politics of exclusion and the role of originary violence in the functioning of the law and order society. Finally, I will query the extent to which Newman's own invocation of the real and imagined Victorian period leaves *Anno Dracula* problematically entangled in the same decisions concerning the worth of human and non-human animal life.

1. An Ape with a Straight Razor

On a walk through Whitechapel pursuing clues in the Ripper case, Charles Beauregard, an agent of the Diogenes Club tasked with investigating the murders, speculates that the murderer might be "a simple madman […] possessed of no more purpose than an orang-utan with a straight razor" (Newman 2011: 204). Given that members of the press at the time of the murders occupied themselves by "fancying a renewal of Poe's *Rue Morgue*" (Duperray 2012: 169), this reference to Poe's tale is perhaps simply topical.

Yet I want to suggest that Poe's story has a wider significance in *Anno Dracula*, because as Peter J. Hutchings points out, 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue' concerns the very definition of crime and especially of murder, which is in turn bound up with the definition of human life. Hutchings notes that the definition of murder depends on two things: "the humanity of the killer and of the killed" (Hutchings 2001: 53-54). The humanity of the killer is certainly significant, as Derrida observes, in "classical and traditional" discourses on crime, which are underpinned by the idea that the experience of the Law "separates Man from Beast", because only man has the liberty to "obey or not obey the Law" (Derrida 2009: 102). Hence "crime, as transgression of the Law, would be proper to man" (Derrida 2009: 102), which is why Poe's detective will discover that no crime has been committed, because the killer is in fact an ape.

Yet I would suggest that the perceived humanity of the murder victim is equally significant to the definition of murder, because it determines which lives can be destroyed without the commission of homicide. Derrida draws attention to the common perception that "what is supposed to distinguish human cruelty or ferocity from all animal violence […] is that the cruel man attacks his *fellow*, which the animal supposedly does not" (Derrida 2009: 104). He remarks that the effect of this

"fraternalism of the 'fellow'" is that it "frees us from all ethical obligation, all duty not to be criminal and cruel, precisely, with respect to any living being that is […] other and other than man" (Derrida 2009: 104). "In this logic", he continues, "one is already exculpated of any crime toward any non-human living being" (Derrida 2009: 107). This conclusion has implications for all living beings, since, according to Derrida, "the worst, the cruellest, the most human violence has been unleashed against living beings, beasts or humans, and humans in particular, who precisely were not accorded the dignity of being fellows" (Derrida 2009: 108). These living beings experience what Wolfe, drawing on both Derrida and Agamben, describes as "a non-criminal putting to death", something which can be extended to any group that "falls outside the frame" of the law through being "marked by differences of race, or species, or gender, or religion, or nationality" (Wolfe 2013: 9-10). It is precisely this kind of non-criminal putting to death that is at issue in *Anno Dracula*. When considering the Ripper's choice of victims in the vampire prostitutes of Whitechapel, Beauregard remarks that the "question of the age" is "how much does a human being have to change before she is no longer human?" (Newman 2011: 313), and, by extension, what can be done to those who fall short of this mark.

Anno Dracula is thus concerned with the ways in which the disposability of a life is tied to its proximity with the non-human, but the novel also recognises that the definition of human life is constantly in flux. Indeed, just as civilised society doesn't simply happen, the human subject which functions as the source and object of society's laws and values likewise has to be constructed and maintained. Agamben describes this process in the context of the "anthropological machine" of *homo sapiens*, which functions "by isolating the non-human within the human" and then disavowing those non-human or animal elements in order to produce "the truly human being" (Agamben 2004: 37-38). However, this process of the separation of man from animal is never complete. Instead, this division constitutes "a mobile border within living man", an "intimate caesura" (Agamben 2004: 15). The truly human being which should be produced by the machine never appears; instead, this being is "only the place of a ceaselessly updated decision in which the caesurae and their re-articulation are always dislocated and displaced anew" (Agamben 2004: 38). What the machine actually produces is "bare life", which Agamben has elsewhere

equated with the life of the *homo sacer* or sacred man, an archaic figure in Roman law who is banned from the community and can be killed without the commission of homicide, but can never be sacrificed (Agamben 1998: 8). In other words, the anthropological machine produces life that can experience a non-criminal putting to death.

Unsurprisingly, then, the human/animal distinction is "never far from the mundane violence of everyday life" (Wolfe 2013: 10), perhaps not least because it has always been at work in the biopolitical division of life into sub-groups, which are held to "contribute to or retard the general welfare and life of the population", and in efforts "to prevent, contain or eliminate" such groups (Dean 2010: 119). *Anno Dracula* is interested in a number of late-Victorian discourses which use the human/animal distinction in this way, and Newman's novel incorporates various Victorian texts in which such discourses feature prominently. For example, *Anno Dracula* is particularly concerned with degeneration theory, which used the human/animal distinction (already rendered increasingly precarious by the theory of evolution) to identify threatening sub-groups. As with biopolitics, degeneration theory "facilitated discourses of sometimes crude differentiation" and "produced typologies of exclusion and inclusion" (Greenslade 1994: 2-3). The concept of degeneration thus operated as a kind of anthropological machine which, in conjunction with the idea of atavism, focused on the anachronistic return of "the beast in man" (Greenslade 1994: 72). Stoker's *Dracula*, the chief intertext of Newman's novel, is especially significant here, given that the vampire in particular was associated with a "reversion to lower states of animality" (Greenslade 1994: 18-19), and, as Nina Auerbach points out, *Dracula* also saw the figure of the animalised shape-shifting vampire truly come to prominence (Auerbach 1995: 86).

Moreover, Stoker's vampire is not only animalised but is also famously identified by Mina Harker as "criminal and of the criminal type", a diagnosis she makes with reference to the work of Max Nordau and Cesare Lombroso (Stoker 2003: 363). The discourse of criminology again functioned as a kind of anthropological machine which sought to identify those who posed a threat to the health of society by searching for visible signs of the non-human in the faces and physiology of criminals and deviants, in whom the atavistic and animal elements of life were thought to resurface. Newman explores these ideas in *Anno Dracula* when Beauregard is taken to meet a gathering of notorious criminals (including Arthur Conan

Doyle's Professor Moriarty and Charles Dickens's Bill Sikes) who are troubled by the disruption the Ripper is bringing to their "shadow community" (Newman 2011: 91). During this encounter, Beauregard observes that it is only Sikes, "pig-faced" and "burly and brutal", who is "the image of a criminal", despite there also being present "two of the three most dangerous men in the world" (Newman 2011: 91). Newman thus underlines the extent to which the judgements of criminology were bound up with the perception of social class (Sikes being the only 'common' criminal in attendance). The same point is also emphasised when Penny, Beauregard's fiancée, states her belief that because she and Beauregard are not "common", they will not be "twisted out of true" by "something beastly" when they choose to become vampires (Newman 2011: 124).

The idea of the 'wrong people' becoming vampires in the novel also highlights the close links between degeneration theory and the late-Victorian interest in eugenics, which involved "applying the techniques of animal breeding to human beings" (Hanson 2013: 2). Many eugenicists feared that degenerate traits were passed down through future generations, with "deformities" acquired during an individual's lifetime acting as a kind of contagion through the entire subsequent family line (Greenslade 1994: 152). In *Anno Dracula*, the vampires of Dracula's line are twisted out of true by something beastly because of his "polluted" blood, which is why Penny wishes to be turned by Arthur Holmwood, whose blood, from Lord Ruthven's line, is "simon-pure" (Newman 2011: 124). By contrast, many of the novel's vampires have been turned by vampire prostitutes, from whom one could buy immortality "for an ounce or two" of blood, and various characters thus comment on "the regrettable spread of vampirism among the lower classes" (Newman 2011: 72, 109). Interestingly, this late-Victorian anxiety concerning degeneration was still at work in the rhetoric of Conservative politicians in the latter decades of the twentieth century. For example, in a speech given in 1974, Sir Keith Joseph, one of the architects of Thatcherism, warned that "our human stock is threatened" due to the high proportion of children being born to "those least fitted" to be parents (Joseph 1974). These children, he argued, would become "problem children", the future "unmarried mothers, delinquents, denizens of our borstals, sub-normal educational establishments, prisons, hostels for drifters" (Joseph 1974). Joseph thus depicted the health of the population as under threat from those people who are supposedly breeding society's future

criminal element: "if we do nothing," he argued, "the nation moves towards degeneration" (Joseph 1974). These ideas were controversially echoed as recently as 2010 by the Tory peer Howard Flight, who described the removal of child benefit from the middle classes as mistaken because it meant that they would be "discouraged from breeding", while those on benefits would have "every incentive" to have numerous children (Flight qtd. in Watt 2010).

Moreover, Newman emphasises the role of the human/animal and civilised/savage binaries in theories of eugenics in a key chapter in which Beauregard, along with the elder vampire Geneviève, visit Doctors Jekyll and Moreau in order to consult them about the Ripper. Moreau argues that the shape-shifting vampires "are evolution run backwards, an atavism", and constitute "the first footfall on the path of regression to savagery" (Newman 2011: 219) – or perhaps, *pace* Thatcher, a "reversion to barbarism". Moreau and Jekyll seek a form of vampirism which would grant immortality without this "regression", and they see in Geneviève the ultimate eugenic goal of "humanity perfected" (Newman 2011: 219). When Geneviève questions how vampires would feed if all humans became vampires, Moreau responds, "as if pointing out to a dunderhead that the sky was blue", that they "would import Africans or South Sea Islanders […] or raise lesser beasts to human form" (Newman 2011: 221). Moreau thus assumes a natural distinction between what kind of life is worthy of being "perfected" and what kind of life is expendable, and he does so again along the line drawn between human and animal.

What Moreau's speech also hints at in the idea of raising lesser beasts to human form is the mobility of the border between human and animal – at the way in which what counts as human life at any particular moment is the product of "a ceaselessly updated decision" (Agamben 2004: 38). Moreover, Moreau's role as a vivisectionist brings the etymological basis of the noun 'decision' to the fore, since he literally cuts into and rearranges the bodies of animals into more 'human' shapes. But Moreau is not the only character making these decision/incisions along the human/non-human division. As the Ripper, Seward is also at work with his silver-plated post-mortem scalpel, and he invokes his authority as a doctor in the decisions/incisions that he makes over the bodies of the vampire prostitutes. He describes himself as "a surgeon, cutting away the diseased tissue" (Newman 2011: 212), which emphasises the decisive role of the medical

profession in the biopolitical production and removal of sub-groups considered dangerous to the health of society, a role which Thatcher perhaps unwittingly emphasised when she described the contemporary 'body politic' as "sick" (Thatcher 1979). In *Anno Dracula*, the exclusion of particular sub-groups manifests itself as a form of "cutting away" anything (or anyone) deemed to be "diseased" (Newman 2011: 212).

Seward is also uniquely placed to make this decision/incision, because, as Renfield points out in *Dracula*, Seward is a "medico-jurist" who embodies the authority of law as well as that of medicine, both of which he and Van Helsing invoke in their "operations of life and death" on the body of Lucy Westenra (Stoker 2003: 260, 176). A different female body is used in *Anno Dracula* to depict the decision-making powers of the medical and legal professions – that of the vampire prostitute Liz Stride, who, in a chapter entitled 'A Premature Post-Mortem', is brought to Toynbee Hall after being attacked by the Ripper (who also works at the Hall as a doctor). This victim, however, is still alive (or at least still undead), and she is laid out before the gaze of both the law (represented here by Inspector Lestrade and his constables) and of medicine (in the form of Seward). Already an outcast due to her poverty and profession, on the post-mortem table Liz Stride is also found to be lacking the attributes necessary to being considered human. For example, she can no longer reason, having lost her mind when "the human part" of her was "burned away" (Newman 2011: 195). Even more significantly, she can no longer speak, because her vocal chords have been severed by the Ripper's knife. She is thus unable to identify her killer, but, more importantly, she has lost access to that supposedly definitive characteristic of human life: language. In Aristotle's *Politics,* Agamben notes, it is only through language that one can become a member of the *polis* and thus gain access to politics and law. Whereas the animal can only make inarticulate sounds of pain or pleasure, in possessing language human beings alone have the ability to articulate "the just and the unjust" (Agamben 1998: 7-8).

Again, Newman's borrowings from nineteenth-century texts are significant here. In Poe's 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', for example, the ape's "fiendish jabberings" confuse witnesses into identifying the killer as a foreigner rather than an even more 'alien' animal (Poe 2003: 175). The link between language and law is likewise central to H. G. Wells's *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896), in which the "beast-people", having

gained language, perform what Edward Prendick describes as "the strange litany of the Law", in which they recite "a long list of prohibitions" to prevent them from lapsing into their prior animal state (Wells 2005: 59-61). The action of cutting is also important here. Under the vivisectionist's knife the beast-people have been remade, but the animal part is never conclusively removed by this surgery, and so they must continue to articulate the incisions/decisions – or what Agamben aptly terms the "intimate caesura" (Agamben 2004: 15) – that distinguish them from the animal. In the premature post-mortem in *Anno Dracula*, the surgeon's table is again the site on which the precarious border between human and animal is determined. Under the weight of the medical and legal gazes of Seward and Lestrade, Liz Stride begins to transform into an animal, into a "half-creature" and attacks her killer in this animalised form (Newman 2011: 198). Only Beauregard is able to see Seward's victim as "a human being, not a clue" and believes that she is "worth doing something for" (Newman 2011: 196-197). Nevertheless, he is forced to shoot her, to "put her out of her misery like a dog" (Newman 2011: 313), in one of the novel's many examples of the non-criminal putting to death experienced by those who fall outside the frame of human life and are thus considered disposable.

2. Hunting in Packs on Pall Mall

In *Anno Dracula*, these disposable lives, once they have been "cut away" from civilised society, are exiled to the slums of Whitechapel, especially to the fictional rookery of the Old Jago, "where the worst cases ended up, new-borns shape-shifted beyond any resemblance to humanity, criminals so vile other criminals would not tolerate their society" (Newman 2011: 282). Like the so-called sink estates of modern Britain's inner cities, where Thatcher noted "pedestrians fear to tread" (Thatcher 1987), the Jago is a place where "even vampires are afraid" (Newman 2011: 281). It is a place "before the law", not only because those who inhabit it are before the law's judgement, but also because the Jago represents the incursion of an anomic past into a modern 'civilised' city. *Anno Dracula* invokes depictions of London from a number of Victorian texts which focus "on the dark face of London, an unexplored and virtually impenetrable world of crime and poverty, that coexisted side by side with the throbbing heart of modernity" (Ascari 2007: 133). These "diurnal and nocturnal" sides of London were figured in moral (and colonial) terms as aspects of the conflict "between civilisation and the

primitive […] along an urban frontier at the very heart of the empire" (Ascari 2007: 133). Hence the frequent descriptions of the East End as an "exotic colony" (Ascari 2007: 135), a trend *Anno Dracula* revisits when Geneviève states of the Old Jago that "this was not England, this was a jungle" (Newman 2011: 282). In the urban Gothic texts of the Victorian period, these 'jungles' were the places where "half-human monsters" dwelled (Mighall 1999: 33), and Newman's novel picks up on this theme with the character of Carroty Nell, a new-born vampire prostitute who, becoming more and more wolf-like "with every moonrise", will soon have "to go to Africa and live in the jungle" (Newman 2011: 247) – in other words, to the Jago.

The figure of the animal, of that which is "ontologically antecedent to the law" (Wolfe 2013: 8), often surfaces when the origins of law and civilised society are called into question, and this is especially true of the wolf, which has a well-documented relationship with the history of politics and the state. Reflecting on the founding of Rome, amongst other myths, Derrida points out that "where man tells himself the story of politics" there is usually a wolf involved, particularly in the Hobbesian story of the transition from the state of nature (when "man is wolf to man") to the state of culture (Derrida 2009: 9). Agamben also emphasises the significance of the wolf in the history of law and politics. He traces the relationship between the *homo sacer* and the *wargus* or wolf-man, noting that the werewolf becomes synonymous with the figure of the bandit or outlaw who has been banned from the city of men (Agamben 1998: 104-105). The relationship between the werewolf and the outlaw is certainly evident in *Anno Dracula*, in which both the vampire prostitute Nell, who lives on the margins of society, and the Ripper are compared to werewolves (Newman 2011: 167). That Nell is described as being only fit for the jungle (or Jago) also underlines the connection between the werewolf and the anomic spaces that exist prior to and outside the law. Yet according to Agamben – and as Newman's novel makes clear – this "Hobbesian state of nature" is not "a prejuridical condition that is indifferent to the law of the city" but "the exception and the threshold that constitutes and dwells within it" (Agamben 1998: 106). Just as the human/animal division is never complete and must be ceaselessly refigured, so the founding of the city out of the state of nature is never achieved once and for all. Hence the werewolf comes to inhabit and represent this "zone of indistinction and continuous transition between man

and beast, nature and culture" (Agamben 1998: 109). In *Anno Dracula*, the city is inhabited by just such human/animal hybrids, who are "hunting in packs on Pall Mall" (Newman 2011: 18).

As Thatcher's rhetoric concerning the risk of a "reversion to barbarism" (Thatcher 1979) indicates, the precariousness of the boundary between the anomic state of nature and the 'civilised' state of culture was certainly at issue in the 1980s, during which there were numerous urban riots. Some of the worst violence occurred in the summer of 1981, during which, according to the subsequent Scarman Inquiry, the police "stood between our society and a total collapse of law and order on the streets" (qtd. in Stewart 2013: 96). These riots heralded the use of new and increasingly forceful police tactics on the mainland, including the first use of CS gas in Toxteth and the use of "snatch squads" in Manchester's Moss Side, a tactic previously only employed in Ulster during the Irish Troubles (Stewart 2013: 93). The increasing use of tactics from colonial spaces is something *Anno Dracula* recalls in the figure of Sir Charles Warren, a military man turned Police Commissioner who polices the streets of Whitechapel as though "in the thick of an African battle" (Newman 2011: 350). This shift from the use of conventional police tactics to more extraordinary measures during the 1980s, and the internment of offenders in extra-legal spaces – Willie Whitelaw, for example, proposed the use of army camps to hold those detained on charges during the riots (Stewart 2013: 94) – are also pronounced aspects of the period's legislation on terrorism (a growing problem in both the 1880s and the 1980s, not least where Ireland was concerned). Joe Sim and Philip A. Thomas argue that the government's enthusiastic approach to renewing the Prevention of Terrorism Act in 1983 was part of a broader "rightward shift towards increased authoritarianism and repression" (Sim and Thomas 1983: 71). They locate this trend in the move to make the "temporary" and "extraordinary" powers granted by the Act "more permanent, more ordinary and more central to the administration and practice of criminal justice in Britain" (Sim and Thomas 1983: 72). Moreover, they also suggest that this legislation involved the "criminalisation of certain groups", particularly "problem groups such as gays, nuclear disarmament campaigners, welfare recipients, nationalists, blacks and the Irish" (Sim and Thomas 1983: 71).

This shift towards the normalisation of emergency powers and the targeting of certain groups for criminalisation is again explored in *Anno*

Dracula through the figure of the wolf. Indeed, according to Derrida, this decision on "placing the other outside the law […] is always determined from the place of some wolf" (Derrida 2009: 96). This other wolf is Dracula, who is depicted as a wolf in both Stoker's and Newman's novels. Dracula's ascension to the throne in *Anno Dracula* heralds the return, under his "wolf's grin", of a "medieval legal system" founded on the sovereign power to take life and let live (Newman 2011: 174, 119). Dracula's animalised form emphasises what Derrida describes as the "uncanny reciprocal haunting" that takes place between beast, sovereign and criminal, in that all three are "outside-the-law" (Derrida 2009: 17). In the sovereign's case, this being outside-the-law takes the form of the unique sovereign privilege of suspending the law and declaring the state of exception. As Dracula's Prime Minister (John William Polidori's Lord Ruthven) puts it after Dracula's guards have been attacked by dissidents, "laws are dumb in time of war", and Dracula may thus declare a state of exception through an "Emergency Powers Act", with these "emergency regulations" swiftly becoming the norm (Newman 2011: 291, 315). This suspension of the law in *Anno Dracula* heralds the Gothic return of tyranny and of the archaic violence that founds the law and the city, but the right to wield this violence is limited to the sovereign or (in modern biopolitics) to the state. As Beauregard remarks when collecting his newly silver-plated sword (silver being one of the only means of killing vampires in the novel), "power is based, at bottom, on the ability to kill; thus the means of killing have to be available, if only to a select few" (Newman 2011: 150). According to Derrida, the criminal challenges the state's monopoly on violence (Derrida 2009: 17) – thus the Ripper, with his silver-plated surgical tools, will not be tolerated, unlike Beauregard with his silver-plated sword, which is supposedly at Dracula's service.

The state's monopoly on violence goes hand in hand with the ability to decide who is inside or outside the frame of the law. For Hutchings, "the discourse of crime […] is the state's reflection of its own foundational criminal violence, transferred on to its subjects, most of whom are its victims", and he concludes that "criminal subjectivity is thus the revenance of the state's own birth" (Hutchings 2001: 4). In *Anno Dracula*, this criminal subjectivity is extended at the whim of the sovereign to anyone who is "unable to come to an accommodation with the new regime" and its specific values (Newman 2011: 73). These people – including everyone

from suspected homosexuals to political dissidents – are removed to the novel's most obvious space of exception: concentration camps on the Sussex Downs. These camps, however, are not reserved for criminals alone, but can be stretched to accommodate anyone whose life becomes disposable before the law. Thus one politician proposes penning up "warm" humans alongside the dissidents and criminals incarcerated in the camps, where they could "serve as cattle for the vampires of breeding essential to the governance of the country" (Newman 2011: 73). The lives of these humans parallel those of many domestic animals in the text, particularly the live pigs "trussed behind the bar" in the Ten Bells pub, who "squealed and fought in their leather straps" during the process of having their blood slowly drained into pint pots for the pub's vampire customers (Newman 2011: 76). In juxtaposing these domestic animals with the "warm" humans incarcerated in the camps, Newman draws attention to the ways in which the anthropological machine produces both the exceptional violence of the concentration camps as well as the apparently "mundane violence of everyday life" (Wolfe 2013: 10), which one finds in the routine lives and deaths of domestic animals. *Anno Dracula* thereby suggests that these exceptional and mundane forms of violence, rather than 'civilised values', underpin the law, a law which exercises this violence in order to protect its carefully demarcated boundaries.

3. Victorian Values: One Nation and the Big Society

Of course, one could argue that the violence of the totalitarian regime depicted in *Anno Dracula*, carried out under a state of exception, is worlds away from the 'law and order society' of Thatcher's Britain and its modern biopolitical regime. Yet many of the measures for "waging a real war against crime" and disciplining society adopted by Thatcher's government can be seen to constitute what Hall describes as a "drift towards exceptional forms of control for exceptional times" (Hall 1988: 138). From the provisions of the Prevention of Terrorism Act supported by Thatcher's government in the 1980s to more recent UK legislation on terror, the idea expressed in *Anno Dracula* that "laws are dumb in times of war" seems to have found a home disturbingly close to the heart of mainstream British politics (Newman 2011: 291).[1]

Similarly, the process of animalisation depicted in *Anno Dracula* is part of the biopolitics of democratic as well as totalitarian states. As Wolfe

points out, the human/animal distinction "is a discursive resource, not a zoological designation", and one can thus find it at work in Britain's involvement in "the history of slavery, colonialism, and imperialism" (Wolfe 2013: 10). The use of this distinction as a discursive resource is also particularly stark in nineteenth-century approaches to welfare. Just as disposable humans are described as "cattle" in Newman's novel (Newman 2011: 73), so Jeremy Bentham once described paupers as "that part of the national livestock which has no feathers and walks on two legs" (Bentham qtd. in Dean 2010: 162). Bentham was a key figure in the development of biopolitical techniques for managing the lives of the poor in the nineteenth century, including, for example, his involvement in the 1832 Anatomy Act and the 1834 New Poor Law, which contributed, as Ruth Richardson puts it, to "the terrible stories of what was done to the poor before the days of the Welfare State" (Richardson 1987: xvi). If "welfare dependency" was, for Thatcher, one of the "social ills" which could be treated by a return to the values of the Victorian era (Mitchell 2010: 48), perhaps it was this disciplinary approach to poverty that appealed. What Newman's novel makes clear is that to invite the nineteenth century into one's politics is also to invite what Murray describes as "the obscene underside" of those same resurrected values (Murray 2007: 73), underpinned by those biopolitical discourses – degeneration, eugenics, criminology – which have their origins in the nineteenth century and which seek to produce an ostensibly 'civilised' society by assigning value to or withholding value from human and non-human animal life.

Besides the ethical issues raised when invoking the Victorian period as a source of moral values, *Anno Dracula* also points to the historical complications created by looking to the Victorian era for an alternative model of social care to the welfare state. Emily Robinson argues that Thatcher's embrace of nineteenth-century ideals was part of "a greater debate concerning the interpretation of the Industrial Revolution", one in which "Thatcher felt that the story of successful entrepreneurial progress had to be rescued from the social historians' accounts of oppression, poverty and class conflict" (Robinson 2012: 113). For Robinson, the implication of Thatcher's position "was that the poor were, despite the arguments of the left, better provided for by Victorian philanthropy than they now were by the welfare state" (Robinson 2012: 113). In *Anno Dracula*, Newman explores the limits of such Victorian philanthropy in his depiction of

Toynbee Hall, where both Geneviève and Seward work. Toynbee Hall is in fact a highly significant location in the history of the development of the welfare state. Joyce points out that although this institution was founded by private philanthropists, it became the training ground for "an entire generation of politicians and social legislators who would oversee the development of the twentieth-century welfare state" (Joyce 2007: 136), including William Beveridge, who worked there for a time as a subwarden. Joyce argues that the founders of Toynbee Hall came to see that private philanthropy was insufficient to meet the needs of the poor, an impression Geneviève articulates in *Anno Dracula* when she compares herself to "Sisyphus, forever rolling a rock uphill, losing a yard for every foot gained" (Newman 2011: 25). Thus, these private philanthropists eventually came to advocate "the centralized provision of health, education, and welfare relief" which would eventually culminate in the creation of the welfare state (Joyce 2007: 136).

According to Joyce, then, what the Victorians actually bequeathed to modern Britain was precisely that vast extension of state oversight of citizens' welfare which Thatcher objected to so strenuously in her speeches (Joyce 2007: 113-114). Likewise, Louisa Hadley comments on "the irony that Margaret Thatcher pursued a policy of decreasing state intervention whilst evoking the era that saw the first movements towards the establishment of the Welfare State" (Hadley 2010: 10). Indeed, Thatcher's invocation of the Victorian period is strikingly at odds with her insistence that (unlike socialist administrations) her government's creed "never set out to dominate the whole of life" (Thatcher 1989). As Hadley asserts, the Victorian era in fact saw the entrenchment of the ability of governments to "dominate the whole of life" through "the development of new techniques for documenting individuals", including "the establishment of regular censuses and registers of births, deaths and marriages" (Hadley 2010: 7). Although Hadley initially focuses on how these statistical innovations now enable people to access extensive information about their Victorian ancestors and thereby help to establish the earlier period's "physical presence in the present" (Hadley 2010: 20), she also notes the ways in which these new technologies for "identifying and documenting the individual" were linked to the monitoring of criminality and to the wider ability of the state "to account for its citizens" (Hadley 2010: 65). These new governmental technologies, part of a broader biopolitical agenda to

monitor the life processes of the population, were thus significantly linked to social discipline, and were equally central to the practices of the Thatcher government, whose "professed anti-statist stance acted as a cover", Joyce argues, for its willingness to be "ruthlessly centralizing and authoritarian" in its social policies (Joyce 2007: 121).

In contrast to the historically naïve uses of what Newman describes as the "real and imagined" nineteenth century (Newman 2011: 455) in political rhetoric, the expression of pronounced self-consciousness when invoking the past is often regarded as the hallmark of neo-Victorian fiction (see Heilmann and Llewellyn 2010: 4). Ho points to "Ripperature" in particular as a convenient site from which to establish a critique of Thatcherism and the uses of history because of its "ability to strike a delicate balance between heritage, as it is often packaged, and its potential to retain a catalog of hypocrisy, misogyny, violence, poverty and prurience often excised from the national past" (Ho 2012: 28). In *Anno Dracula*, Newman refuses to excise the "blood flowing in the fog" and the "widespread social unrest" from his treatment of the Victorian period (Newman 2011: 455), and he continually emphasises the violence encoded in those elements of the Victorian era most admired by the Thatcher administration, not least, as Ho points out, its imperial successes (see Ho 2012: 27).

Anno Dracula even makes a brief nod to the controversy surrounding the heritage industry when Seward, during one of his early murder sprees, notices "one of those cursed blue plaques" attached to one of Dracula's former residences (Newman 2011: 12). Yet for all this historical self-consciousness, what Newman describes as his "spot-the-reference" game in the novel is not so different from these "cursed blue plaques" (Newman 2011: 453). Newman's incorporation of elements from various Victorian texts and his implicit invitation to the reader to identify his sources allow him "to make the novel as much a playground as a minefield, and go beyond historical accuracy", but it also means that the novel takes the reader on a kind of heritage tour of Victorian fiction, not to mention a 'Ripper walk' of sorts, in which novels and characters are unmoored from their specific contexts and the reader can simply enjoy the general sense of 'pastness' derived from generic "gaslit, fogbound London romances" (Newman 2011: 453).

Furthermore, while the novel's palimpsestic intertexuality allows Newman to draw attention to those "dark spots" which narratives of the Victorian past tend to "gloss over" (Ho 2012: 27), there are also moments when the novel risks re-inscribing the same nineteenth-century discourses it seeks to critique. Newman's use of H.G. Wells's character Dr Moreau is a good example of this problem. On the one hand, the disgust displayed by Beauregard and Geneviève towards Moreau's belief in the disposable nature of certain lives considered to be closer to animal existence (especially as concerns non-white peoples) suggests that Newman includes Moreau as a means of critiquing the (bio)political implications of nineteenth-century theories of degeneration and atavism. On the other hand, the terms Geneviève uses to criticise Moreau include "ape-like" and "cave-dweller" (Newman 2011: 219, 224); hence her critique invokes the same human/animal and civilised/savage binaries that underpin Moreau's own views. Moreover, Newman depicts Geneviève's greatest advantage as her distance from the atavistic, shape-shifting, animal-vampire hybrids of Dracula's line. While they grow fur and wings and die in the attempt to shape-shift, Geneviève only occasionally wears "a beast-like mask", which, of course, she can remove at will, because unlike her degenerate counterparts, she is "of the pure bloodline of Chandagnac" (Newman 2011: 83-84).

Indeed, while the figure of the animal is used in the novel to interrogate the vulnerability of certain lives before the law, the animal also functions problematically as a figure of savage or barbarous violence, particularly through Newman's depiction of Dracula as a wolf and his association with the return of "barbarous times" (Newman 2011: 17). In his seminars on this very relationship between the beast and the sovereign, Derrida argues against the notion that "the value or exercise of sovereignty are merely disguised manifestations of animal force […] the truth of which is given to us by zoology, that is to say at bottom bestiality or barbarity or inhuman cruelty" (Derrida 2009: 14). Instead, he insists that we should attend to the "fragility and porosity" of such "oppositional limits" as those between human and animal, or nature and culture (Derrida 2009: 15-16). By employing the typical Gothic motif of the barbarous past returning to disrupt a supposedly civilised present, Newman explores the ways in which the violence of sovereign power lingers at the heart of modern regimes of social discipline, but the novel also tacitly re-inscribes the same binaries of

anarchy and order, and of civilisation and the savage which Hall argues were staples of the government's rhetoric in the 1980s (Hall 1988: 56). These binaries are also bound up with the definition of fully human life. As Kate Soper points out, Western thought "has been reliant on an implicit assimilation of the 'being' of humanity at large to the being of 'civilized' man", and she goes on to argue that "there is a legacy of this in the very discourses with which it criticizes the suppressions and abuses […] that have been perpetrated in the name of 'civilization'" (Soper 1995: 66). She concludes that "when Western society condemns its own 'savagery' or 'inhumanity', it does so from a perspective that has already conceptualized what it is to be properly human in the light of its own modes of comportment" (Soper 1995: 66). In maintaining these distinctions between the civilised and the savage, then, *Anno Dracula* risks making the same decisions and exclusions along the human/animal division which form the basis for the "civilised values which underpin the law" (Thatcher 1987).

Neo-Victorian texts in general and "Ripperature" in particular continue to play a significant role in contemporary British explorations of the origins and functioning of law and order and of the biopolitical techniques used to manage the life processes of populations. The BBC series *Ripper Street* (2012-2013), created by Richard Warlow, is a good example of this trend. Like *Anno Dracula*, *Ripper Street*, with its tagline "How do you keep the law in a lawless town?", refracts contemporary concerns over law and social discipline – including everything from terrorist attacks and torture to drug addiction and pornography – through the lens of the late-Victorian period and the Whitechapel murders in particular. Moreover, like Newman's novel, *Ripper Street* continues to worry at the divide between human and non-human animals. In an episode entitled 'Am I not Monstrous?', for example, the 'Elephant Man' (also a character in *Anno Dracula*) helps to investigate the murder of a woman with a tail-like protrusion at the base of her spine. One of the officers examining her body questions whether this makes her "less than human", to which another replies "we were all animals once, it is now said" (Shankland and Warlow 2013: 0:07:26-0:07:33). The episode turns on the question of whether it is right to eugenically 'breed out' deformities in the human race, just as *Anno Dracula* poses similar questions about "humanity perfected" (Newman 2011: 219). Once again, then, the Victorian period becomes the stage on which contemporary concerns over the relationship between law, politics

and biological life are played out; and once again, the human/animal distinction is at the heart of these concerns over the disposability of life.

More than twenty years after Thatcher was ousted and *Anno Dracula* was first published, the Victorian era also continues to play a significant role in political rhetoric. The Victorian distinction between the deserving and the undeserving poor has made a return in the Coalition government's rhetoric, as has the emphasis Thatcher placed on the merits of Victorian private philanthropy. The "Cameronite 'Big Society' project", Catherine Marshall and Stéphane Guy have recently argued, is a manifestation of the same "State-wary culture" which underpinned Thatcherism, and they suggest that David Cameron's promise of "a balanced budget and a containment of the State could be yet another embodiment of the Victorian ethic" in twenty-first-century British politics (Marshall and Guy 2014: 33, 29-30).[2] Meanwhile, like his predecessor Tony Blair, Ed Miliband has appropriated Benjamin Disraeli's 'one nation' concept for the Labour Party, a concept which incidentally also appears in *Anno Dracula* (see Newman 2011: 109).[3] What must be of interest to scholars of the neo-Victorian are the complex ways in which the Victorian era continues to inhabit the rhetoric used to demarcate the boundaries of society, and to decide which sub-groups either advance or retard its creation and health. Whether it is the 'big society' or 'one nation' being formed, this process will inevitably involve the originary violence of exclusion which underpins both the law and the 'civilised values' that uphold it.

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Notes

1. Global approaches to terrorism and especially to those detained on terrorism charges have also involved what Judith Butler describes as "the bestialization of the human" (Butler 2004: 78), particularly through techniques of incarceration and interrogation. For more on this topic, see also Dayan 2011.

2. For more on the legacies of nineteenth-century thought in Cameron's 'Big Society', see Boehm-Schnitker 2012.
3. For more on the origins of the concept of 'one nation' in Disraeli's *Sybil: or The Two Nations* (1845) and its role in contemporary political thought, see Seawright 2010. For more on its appropriation by Tony Blair and New Labour, see Clarke 2004.

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