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From Crisis to Compensation: Reinventing Identity and Place in the Sideshow and the Laboratory

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Abstract: Examining the ambivalent place of the sideshow and the laboratory within Victorian culture and its reimaginings, this essay explores the contradiction between the narratively orchestrating role and peripheral location of the sideshow in Leslie Parry's *Church of Marvels* (2015) and the laboratory in NBC's *Dracula* (2013–2014), reading these neo-Victorian spaces as heterotopias, relational places simultaneously belonging to and excluded from the dominant social order. These spaces' impacts on individual identity illustrate this uneasy relationship. Both the sideshow and the laboratory constitute sites of resignification, emerging as "crisis heterotopias" or sites of passage: in Parry's novel, the sideshow allows the Church twins to embrace their unique identities, surpassing the limitations of their physical resemblance; in *Dracula*, laboratory experiments reverse Dracula's undead condition. Effecting reinvention, these spaces reconfigure the characters' senses of belonging, propelling them to places beyond their confines, and thus projecting the latter's heterotopic qualities onto the city. Potentially harmful, yet opening up urban space to include identities which are considered aberrant, these relocations envision the city as a "heterotopia of compensation": an alternative, possibly idealized, space that reifies the sideshow's and the laboratory's attempts to achieve greater extroversion and visibility for their liminal occupants, thus fostering neo-Victorianism's outreach efforts to support the disempowered.

Keywords: *Church of Marvels*; crisis heterotopia; heterotopia of compensation; identity; laboratory; NBC's *Dracula*; neo-Victorian city; place; sideshow

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1. Introduction

The ethical impetus to engage with the Victorian past in order to rescue the disempowered and disenfranchised of the nineteenth century from oblivion, and thus make, even in retrospect, amendments for their predicaments has recurrently been read as a defining feature of neo-Victorianism (Gutleben 2001, pp. 124, 168; Sanders 2006, p. 19; Kohlke 2008, pp. 11, 13). Space, too—namely the setting that hosts neo-Victorian narratives—inscribes this agenda, seeing that marginal characters, rather than being restricted to specific locations, are instead afforded freedom of movement. Instances of social mobility, moves to different cities, the crossing of national borders, escape from incarceration, and the trespassing of supposedly out-of-reach territory, frequently within a domestic environment, suggest that neo-Victorian characters defy the compartmentalization of space that traditionally characterizes Victorian spatial arrangements, and traverse multiple different kinds of spaces. All of these types of movement reflect Michel Foucault's observations concerning the changing appreciations of space in Western thought since the seventeenth century. Crucially, writes Foucault, the possibility of "an infinite, and infinitely open space" highlighted by Galileo's work makes clear that "a thing's place was no longer anything but a point in its movement, just as the stability of a thing was only its movement indefinitely slowed down" (Foucault 1986, p. 23). On this account, progressively, "extension was substituted for localization" as the notion of emplacement, associated in the Middle Ages with fixed and stable hierarchies that supposedly revealed the rightful place of things, gave way

to the notion that any site is "defined by relations of proximity" (Foucault 1986, p. 23). It is these very relations that eventually reveal the texture of space as "a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein" (Foucault 1986, p. 22). This conviction also informs contemporary appreciations of place. Thought of as a more intimate, hence personal, and subjective apprehension of space, place is also comprised, in the modern, mobile and globalized world, of a series of interactions and interrelations that attest to its multiplicity, openness and constant transformation, rather than fixity and constancy (Massey 1994, pp. 5, 121; Cresswell 2002, pp. 20, 26). Neo-Victorian fictions exemplify these views, precisely because the navigation of different spaces, the move from one place to the next, and its attendant lurking conviction that stasis is only temporary, necessarily renders different locations as parts of the same network, rather than designating them as self-contained compartments that preclude and/or obliterate movement and connection. Consequently, neo-Victorian characters contest the possibility of ever keeping a place for everything and everything in its place, and, by extension, challenge the authority of any power relations predicated upon spatial confinement and containment.

Drawing on these underlying assumptions, this article examines the ways in which two neo-Victorian spaces, namely the sideshow in Leslie Parry's novel *Church of Marvels* (Parry 2015) and the laboratory in Cole Haddon and Daniel Knauf's television series *Dracula* (Haddon and Knauf 2013–2014), create the presuppositions for their occupants' movements, thus highlighting relations between different spaces and their seemingly secluded inhabitants, and compromising borders and boundaries. Seeing that both sideshow performances and scientific demonstrations simultaneously evoked wonder and skepticism in the Victorian era, these spaces placed their practitioners at the intersection of marginality and social acceptance. This ambivalence is further accentuated in the neo-Victorian narratives considered here, as the sideshow and the laboratory are crucial for the development of the plot but occupy a peripheral place in the texts' settings. Central, at the same time as they are tangential, both spatially and in terms of the practices they promote, these spaces emerge as heterotopias. They are, in Foucault's definition, "counter-sites", being at the same time "absolutely different" from other hegemonic spaces of society and yet manifesting this difference by means of reflecting back on, or referring to those same spaces (Foucault 1986, p. 24). In the texts under examination, the tensions entailed in the relational distinctiveness of the sideshow and the laboratory impact on individual identity. Constituting sites of transformation and resignification, these heterotopias allow their inhabitants to reinvent themselves, and subsequently propel the protagonists towards spaces that were originally thought of as unattainable. Respectively, these counter-sites allow the Church twins to embrace their individual identity beyond the confines of their physical resemblance, and leave the liberal, yet protective, terrain of Coney Island to face exposure and vulnerability in Manhattan, and enable Dracula to revert to a more human mode of existence, and thus surface in London in broad daylight. Hence, the sideshow and the laboratory facilitate these characters' passage from liminality to visibility, and accordingly extend their support of identities previously thought of as aberrant to the city, transforming urban spaces into a site that partakes in neo-Victorianism's call for tolerance and inclusion.

2. (Neo-)Victorian Sideshows and Laboratories

Exploring the inconsistencies transpiring from the idiosyncratic place that the sideshow and the laboratory occupied within Victorian culture, this section attempts to ascertain the relational identity of these spaces and provide a starting point for their designation as heterotopias. On this ground, it also examines the processes of reappraisal and expansion initiated in the sideshow and the laboratory, in order to illuminate the ways in which these heterotopias shape individual identity. Respectively representing a popular form of entertainment and the progress and modernity the Victorians prided themselves on, the sideshow and the laboratory were, nonetheless, controversial terrains. Associated with difference and innovation, the practices and practitioners they hosted could not fit into ready-made—hence benign and non-threatening—categories, instead requiring new

and alternative ways of thinking about and making sense of the world. Such innovation, however, was not incontestably embraced, thus engendering an amalgam of marvel and admiration, as well as doubt and dismissal concerning the perception of these spaces in the public imagination.

Paralleling the bodily explorations of sideshow performances to the promising experiments conducted in a laboratory, Brenda Assael notes that as circus performances displayed "the artist's spectacular body in motion"; they "served as a laboratory of sorts for investigating human potential" (Assael 2005, p. 2). Significantly, Assael distinguishes between the circus, which "featured the body in terms of skill", and the freak show that focused on "abnormalities such as birth defects" (Assael 2005, p. 2). Nevertheless, as the Church of Marvels, the titular theatre of Parry's novel, hosts both extraordinarily skilled and non-normative bodies, it is useful to think of the sideshow as absorbing the shared implications that afforded both the circus and the freak show a distinctive place within Victorian culture. Indeed, Rachel Adams remarks that both these attractions offered their visitors the opportunity "to confront, and master, the most extreme and terrifying forms of Otherness they could imagine" (Adams 2001, p. 3). The clearly delimited and, hence, distancing space of the stage and/or ring marked "the assumption that there is a permanent, qualitative difference between deviance and normality" (Adams 2001, p. 6), which conveniently draws a line "between self and society", namely between the transgressive, extraordinary performer and the socially sustainable audience (Assael 2005, p. 10). However, this distinction is never absolute, precisely because the gaze, the very mechanism of consuming a sideshow performance, registering difference and distinction in the audience's consciousness, is never unidirectional. Therefore, although sideshow performances may be attended for their potential to offer an alienating experience, namely "a reassuring *disidentification*, in which the spectator recognizes her difference from the body onstage", Adams goes on to argue that "the sideshow is more often a space of identification, in which the viewer projects her own most hidden and perverse fantasies onto the [performers] and discovers them mirrored in [their] gaze" (Adams 2001, p. 9, original emphasis). Consequently, the sideshow confronts the audience with the inconveniencing realization that the comforting differentiation between freak and normal is void, as these designations "may slide unsteadily into one another", causing "the logic of identity politics, and the irreconcilable problems of inclusion and exclusion that necessarily accompany identitarian categories" to collapse (Adams 2001, pp. 9, 10). Seemingly sustaining, while in effect conflating the distinction between the Self and Other, the sideshow and its performers acquire an ambivalent place at the intersection of acceptance and ostracism.

Church of Marvels registers this peculiarity geographically, locating the sideshow on Coney Island. "Easily accessible from Manhattan and yet far enough away to provide an escape from the city" (Berman 2003, p. 15), Coney Island started to develop as a locus of uninhibited entertainment during the 1870s, namely at the very time when "New York was securing its position as America's financial, industrial, and cultural capital" (Immerso 2002, pp. 3–4). Arguably, then, Coney Island acquired a heterotopic quality both due to its simultaneously distant and accessible location, and its distinct role that, nevertheless, reflected and was apparently necessitated by the developments and changes undergone by the city. The contradictory responses that the flourishing of Coney Island elicited possibly express its contingent, though not necessarily comforting, difference from New York. Indeed, while its shows were celebrated for glorifying "speed, motion, and the unfettered human body", Coney Island was also described as "Bedlam" (Immerso 2002, p. 4), or even "'Sodom-by the Sea', as *The New York Times* called" it (quoted in Berman 2003, p. 17). While for some it was "the symbol of the best of America's democratic nature, welcoming all regardless of race, social class, gender, or ethnicity, [. . .] for others [Coney Island was] a sight of blighted dreams, representing the excesses of capitalism, hedonism and urban decay" (Parascandola n.d., n.p.). Close enough to allow for the realization of dreams and the satisfaction of desires, and yet at a safe enough distance to offer a naively

reassuring renunciation of the shortcomings of progress, Coney Island exemplified the fluctuations of heterotopic space, simultaneously functioning as New York's beautifying mirror and deformed reflection.

These contradictory appreciations are aptly illustrated in Parry's novel, considering that the celebrated qualities of Coney Island constitute the steadfast values that prevail in the sideshow, but contrast the uncertainty and/or uneasiness with which audiences consume its performances. Neo-Victorianism reclaims the Victorian freak show, and freakery in general, as fertile ground for the exploration of self-determination, agency and resistance, rather than as exclusively synonymous with abuse, exploitation, or oppression (Orr 2017, p. 98; Pettersson 2016, p. 187; Davies 2015, pp. 6, 15). Crucially, the neo-Victorian freak show and/or circus emerges as an ambivalent space precisely because its exceptional performers oscillate between a reiteration of the limitations and confinement of Othering, and the need to debunk such constraints in order to represent a fully fledged subversive subjectivity (Pettersson 2017, pp. 171–72, 174; Douglas 2014, p. 4). Reminiscent of neo-Victorian novels such as Angela Carter's *Nights at the Circus* (1984) and Rosie Garland's *The Palace of Curiosities* (2013), both of which seek to expose the social constraints of freakery with a view to empowering their female protagonists, *Church of Marvels* clearly spells out the assumptions that underlie neo-Victorian convictions about the potential of the sideshow.[1] Under the direction of its founder, Friendship Willingbird Church, the Church of Marvels embodies the connotations of serenity, admiration, and wonder enshrined in its name. The theater becomes an actual sanctuary for orphaned individuals with "exotic" bodies, such as "Georgette, the dancer born with four legs" or "Aldovar, the show's half-man-half-woman", offering them a home where they are celebrated as "*unique*" and "*singular*", as "real human marvels", rather than being stigmatized as "freaks" or "grotesqueries" (Parry 2015, pp. 25, 35–36, original emphasis). In Friendship's caring and protective family, difference is accepted and valued, and this is the very principle by which Friendship raises her twin daughters, Belle and Odile. Significantly, the girls' physical resemblance does not extend to their corporeality, as "[u]nlike Belle, with her lithe and pliant acrobat's body, Odile had a permanent crook in her neck and a slight curve to her spine" (Parry 2015, p. 25). Belle rises to fame, with her proneness "*to flights of passion*" recognized as "some kind of artistic right"; Odile is initially trapped within a brace that keeps her away from the stage, and makes her think that, in her case, any sign of a passionate temperament is "the mark of a weak constitution" (Parry 2015, p. 29, original emphasis). Friendship, however, counters Odile's disappointment and rejection of difference: "*It's just the way you were born*", she says, "*You're unique*", invalidating Odile's insistence on unfavorable comparisons (Parry 2015, p. 25, original emphasis). The Church of Marvels makes difference a synonym of complementarity, coexistence and concurrence, inviting respect and acceptance rather than exclusion, and providing a space which establishes an embracing, but not homogenizing, community that fosters the development of individual identity.

Nonetheless, the fact that the sideshow is located on Coney Island problematizes Friendship's endeavor. For its unconventional members, the Church of Marvels is a safe haven that exemplifies the democratic spirit of Coney Island. For the audience, on the other hand, the sideshow is a fascinating, rather than appalling, spectacle precisely because it is spatially framed within the Coney Island theater, which becomes, in this way, the only possible, and hence supposedly rightful, place for Friendship's family. Although its corporeality places this community of sideshow performers outside the status quo, its emplacement within the theater distances it from, and renders it impervious to, the marginalization it would otherwise suffer. Thus, the sideshow addresses a crucial question concerning the potential of heterotopic space. Foucault distinguishes between different types of heterotopias and the functions these come to serve. One such example is "heterotopias of deviance", namely, spaces that function as "instruments of normalization" because they are intended to "discipline the bodies of those who do not conform and insulate them in order to prevent them from harming the smooth continuation of hegemonic power relations" (Heynen 2008, p. 317). In contrast, there are also "heterotopias of illusion"

or those "places of wish fulfilment that offer possibilities for subversion, heterogeneity and excess", and can therefore constitute "possible sites of resistance" (Heynen 2008, p. 317). In *Church of Marvels*, however, the sideshow's principles, its location, and the audience responses it triggers suggest that it is a heterotopia that *conflates* both of these functions, therefore facilitating the promotion of neo-Victorianism's reformatory objectives and vindicating agenda. The sideshow emerges as a neo-Victorian heterotopia because it endorses acceptance by encouraging an alternative—that is, relational—way of thinking about the limits of the Victorian status quo.

To be more precise, by exposing the circumscribing societal frameworks that difference was—and still is—confronted with, the sideshow highlights the uneasy encounter, rather than an absolute conflict or juxtaposition, between normativity and alterity. As the attendance of sideshow performances is consciously chosen, this voluntary meeting entails a grain of tolerance that can, in principle at least, spark the critical exploration of the premises that determine the presuppositions of integration within (Victorian) society. Indeed, the sideshow attracts "hundreds of awe-struck men and fainting women every week" (Parry 2015, p. 35), implying that audiences are willing to overlook their disturbance, and to experience discomfort in exchange for being thrilled. This self-indulgent request precludes empathy, though. When Odile is injured while performing her act, at the sight of her blood, a woman in the audience fervently proclaims, "this entire place [is] *the devil's playground*", declaring, by demonizing it, the sideshow's liminality and distance from civilized society (Parry 2015, p. 33, original emphasis). In this sense, then, within the novel's nineteenth-century setting, the sideshow's heterotopic quality is constantly reaffirmed. Reflecting the audience's irresoluteness regarding acceptance and rejection, the sideshow points to the long way society has yet to go, and proves that the balance between approval and alienation is fragile and precarious, as the sideshow easily shifts from being a hub of admiration to being an incubator of aberrance.

Similar considerations about expulsion and integration, acknowledgement and repudiation, composed the profile of the Victorian laboratory. The laboratory exemplified the way in which nineteenth-century scientific—and technological—innovation was a development with which the public consciousness had still to familiarize itself. Given that the workings of science were not always lucid, and hence, easily comprehensible, responses to science and technology oscillated between amazement and consternation, frequently equating scientific demonstrations with magic-like spectacles (Ioannidou 2018, pp. 191, 196; Miller and Taddeo 2013, p. xvii; Clayton 2000, pp. 187, 189). Though they impeded transparency, such spectacles reached out to larger audiences, making—for instance, through their investment in flamboyant demonstrations of the wonders of electricity—a major contribution towards the curbing of concerns and fears about the safety of the technology that would most determinedly transform "the nature of civilized life" in the course of the nineteenth century (Gooday 2005, p. 150). Still, the Victorian consciousness remained torn vis-à-vis scientific matters, a stance that was certainly informed by the uncertainty and mistrust evoked by the figure of the scientist. As pioneered by Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and further explored in late-Victorian literary works such as Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) or H. G. Wells's *The Island of Dr Moreau* (1896), the scientist often became disassociated from benevolence (Evans 2009, p. 13), and was reconfigured as "an inhuman and amoral torturer, a dabbler in dark arts, performed for the most part in [. . .] gothic laboratories", these "immoral institution[s] of a powerful and invisible science" (Willis 2006, pp. 212, 218). These associations burdened scientists with the task of "subvert[ing] the Frankensteinian image of the laboratory scientist" in order to gain public acceptance and state support to advance their research (Willis 2006, p. 210). Significantly, this undertaking, which would disassociate scientists and laboratories from the sinister isolation attributed to them, came at a time when the professionalization of science was deemed necessary due to "France and Germany's determination to strike out ahead of Britain in all matters scientific" (Willis 2006, p. 209). Confronted with this unsettling reality, the Victorian scientific laboratory had to be reinvented as a space "dedicated to

labour, to transparent research cultures, and to public approval", even though this change risked sacrificing the scientist's freedom and "heroic determination to succeed against all odds", which emanated from the "private" space of "the non-professional years", when the laboratory "had been part of the domestic spaces of individual scientists" (Willis 2006, p. 209). Whether aimed at the acknowledgement of the scientist as a respectable and active member of society, or intended as an act of recruiting science in the struggle for Britain's self-affirmation against its competitors, this revamping invites an appreciation of laboratories "as *interstitial* entities, drawing their value and meaning from the people and institutions with which they were juxtaposed, opposed, and integrally networked" (Gooday 2008, p. 786, original emphasis). As approval and the determination of the purpose—and even the necessity of the existence of such a site—comes from outside, the laboratory becomes part of "a wider social canvas" (Gooday 2008, p. 786), emerging, like the sideshow, as being constituted at the very intersection of the practices it hosted and the reception it enjoyed.

These tensions attest to the designation of the laboratory as a heterotopia, seeing that it relates to the wider context of Victorian society in spite of its exclusion therefrom, manifesting scientific progress as a determining characteristic of the era, but presenting, in doing so, the incredulity and skepticism this progress provoked. The necessity of changing the laboratory's place and constitution within society further enhances its heterotopic qualities, echoing Foucault's observation that "an existing society can make an existing heterotopia function in a very different fashion" (Foucault 1986, p. 25). This shift ensures both the laboratory's relevance to and participation in the changing society of the nineteenth century, opening up the possibility of it reflecting the new trepidations and discontents that progress would bring about. In this case, the need for the transformation of the laboratory from a private into a public space reflects that its "heterotopic character [. . .] also flows from its dual set of spatial relations: the social (connected to the visitor) and the epistemic (connected to the expert inhabitant)" (Smith and Agar 1998, p. 10). Seemingly accessible, because it can be entered by the visitor, the laboratory nevertheless remains obscure, precisely because it cannot straightforwardly expose the workings of the scientist's pursuits to the layperson. Hence, it displays "a system of opening and closing that both isolates [it] and makes [it] penetrable" (Foucault 1986, p. 26), becoming a site determined by the coincidental occurrence of incompatible, though paradoxically not mutually exclusive, social relations.

The axis on which *Dracula*, created by Cole Haddon and Daniel Knauf, refocuses the plot of its source material, Bram Stoker's 1897 novel of the same name, reflects these concerns about safety, morality, accessibility, and the dichotomy between participation and exclusion. Recasting Dracula as Alexander Grayson, "an American industrialist", the series opens with a "demonstration of his latest technical marvel" taking place at his London residence, Carfax Manor, and attended by the upper classes of metropolitan society (Shill 2013a, S.1, Ep.1, 00:03:28–33, 00:10:56–00:11:01). Using "power drawn from the magnetosphere, [. . .] harnessed and amplified by my scientists and technicians, I give to you free . . . safe, wireless power", announces Grayson to his guests, who see the light bulbs they are holding start to glow (Shill 2013a, S.1, Ep.1, 00:12:02–06, 00:12:13–28, original pause). Admiration, puzzlement, and disbelief are evident in the guests' reactions. Creating an atmosphere of awe and wonder, Grayson's presentation is praised for its theatricality, and is assumed to be a performance of "magic tricks" that requires, yet cannot possibly be granted, a plausible explanation (Shill 2013b, S.1, Ep.2, 00:24:27). Although Grayson's pragmatic clarification that "neither magic, nor trickery [were] involved" but "[s]imply science, physics and technology" (Shill 2013b, S.1, Ep.2, 00:24:12–15) shifts the focus from the enthralling workings of magic to the impressive potential of science, it problematizes the exploration and exploitation of the latter. The dazzling prospects that science opens up to the world are actually undermined, because in the electric power room in the basement of the mansion, the generator—called the "resonator" throughout the series—emits powerful and growingly incontrollable sparks that, as Grayson delights in the amazement he evokes

in his audience, start to damage the adjoining equipment and cause excruciating burns to the technicians who operate it. The clandestine incident of this malfunction indicates the need to learn how to master science in order to prevent it from being destructive. This imperative entails, however, a sense of domination and manipulation, and, hence, reveals the more sinister side of scientific experimentation. Grayson's scientific pursuits and technological aspirations are, in fact, committed to progress and advancement only insofar as they allow him to execute his revenge plot against the Order of the Dragon, the secret organization commanding the crusaders who murdered Vlad Ţepeş's wife and turned him into Dracula in the past, and which now represents the corrupt political and capitalist elite of the nineteenth century. Reflecting Victorian socioeconomic preoccupations, Grayson's scheme utilizes electromagnetism to attack the Order's conviction that "oil will fuel the next century", and to enable him, who had been wronged in the past, to "control the future" in their stead (Shill 2013a, S.1, Ep.1, 00:20:46–53).

The instrumentalization of science as a means of domination and vengeance situates *Dracula* among a broader tendency within neo-Victorian fiction to associate science and technology with villainous acts intended to usher in the world of the future, a trope which the genre employs to address both the ambivalent status of nineteenth-century science and contemporary concerns about scientific and technological applications (Ioannidou 2018, pp. 188–90, 197). In this vein, the power dynamic effected between Grayson and his adversaries echoes Victorian concerns about the association of science with immorality, as these were played out in the contested, private space of the laboratory. Trying to enhance his leverage over the Order, Grayson aims at public approval, planning to demonstrate his technology in the city. However, the Order interferes with his plans, transforming the utopian promise of an extraordinary event and an easy victory for Grayson into a dystopia of disease and death. Instigating a surge of food poisoning in the city, the Order manages to cancel the demonstration, having the police invade the venue of the demonstration, declaring the event "a threat to public safety" and confiscating the "infernal machine", the resonator (Kelly 2014b, S.1, Ep.7, 00:38:26, 00:39:05–07). As the conflict culminates towards the end of the series, the Order revokes the directive that had placed the demonstration venue in quarantine. Misled to believe that this is achieved by means of his influence, Grayson proceeds to reschedule and advertise the event anew. This time, however, the Order tampers with the resonator itself, which ultimately explodes, turning the venue and the streets around it into a postapocalyptic landscape of debris and carnage.

Secretly manipulated, the poisoning, the quarantine, and then the explosion succeed in first isolating and thereafter literally and dramatically expelling the laboratory, the public space of the demonstration, from its urban surroundings, thus reiterating its liminal and controversial status. This destructive incident draws attention to another aspect of the conflict between Dracula and the Order, which, on account of Grayson's nationality, becomes an instance of international competition, offering an interesting twist on the series' source material. The complexity of Stoker's tale has lent itself to various allegorical interpretations, among them Stephen D. Arata's reading of *Dracula* as addressing the fear of "reverse colonization" (Arata 1990, p. 623). As the Romanian Count invades the "civilized" Britain from the more "primitive" Eastern Europe at a time of vulnerability, namely the *fin de siècle,* when the nation is experiencing its "decline [. . .] as a world power", the vampire's poignant incarnation of "the marauding, invasive Other" confronts Britain with "its own imperial practices [which are now] mirrored back in monstrous forms" (Arata 1990, pp. 622–23). This is clearly the case in NBC's adaptation too, seeing that, in the pre-credit sequence of the third episode, the series screens the punitive ritual performed by the Order to transform its rival into a vampire under the pretext of Ţepeş's renunciation of God. Significantly, though, masquerading as an American, Grayson's Dracula invades London from the West, confronting Britain with a calamity of its own making, a vampire created as such, in order to punish, control and subjugate the dissenter, as Ţepeş was himself "master huntsman in his native land", that is, a vampire slayer, before "he defied the Ordo Draco, was excommunicated by the Church and found guilty of heresy" (Kelly 2014a,

S.1, Ep.8, 00:11:07–09, 00:11:22–27). Wielding science, however, Dracula has surpassed his makers.[2] On account of the lucrative experiments it hosts, the laboratory—alongside more stealthy practices such as blackmail—establishes Grayson's authority, enabling him to infiltrate the decision-making circles of the ruling classes by becoming the head of the British Imperial Coolant Company, which promotes the Order's interests in oil. In this way, Grayson triggers the Order's retaliation, as its members seek to appease the uneasiness they experience due to the threat of financial ruin posed by Grayson's machinations. Inscribing, as well as projecting, these conflicts, the laboratory oscillates between concealment in the basements of Grayson's mansion and the public revelation of the destabilizing influence it exerts on established balances. It verifies, then, its quality as an ambivalent heterotopic space that is simultaneously detached and adjacent, participatory and withdrawn, liminal and focal.

3. Crisis Heterotopias and the Redefinition of Identity

Emphasizing the tensions which are typical of the relationship between the sideshow and the laboratory and Victorian society, the preceding discussion defined them as heterotopias. Their idiosyncratic status and the fact that their inhabitants are socially controversial proves that "the presence of the Other" is indispensable to "the construction of *different* spaces and embodied identities", as Anke Strüver suggests (Strüver 2004, p. 121, original emphasis). This distancing and alienating factor prevents the sideshow and the laboratory from emerging as incontestable spaces for the celebration of "difference and resistance" (Strüver 2004, p. 123). However, it is precisely because difference and resistance are not unequivocally and complacently acknowledged that the sideshow and the laboratory are actually capable of addressing the injustice, inequality and exclusion entailed in their ambivalence. This becomes clear in the potential that these heterotopias realize for the Church twins and Grayson/Dracula. According to Saverio Tomaiuolo, these characters ultimately prove that "deviance" constitutes "an integral part of the social system", because it is an attribute that validates "stable, and shared, cultural values and norms, [and] promotes social cohesion", but, paradoxically perhaps, also "encourages social change and evolution" by urging "societies to modify their regulations and to evaluate the existence of alternative cultural, moral and ideological perspectives" (Tomaiuolo 2018, p. 6). The sideshow and the laboratory exemplify these contradictory, though clearly interconnected, functions by emerging as "crisis heterotopias" for the protagonists, namely as spaces hosting "individuals who are, in relation to society and to the human environment in which they live, in a state of crisis" (Foucault 1986, p. 24). This expands, however, beyond the assumption that such spaces are occupied by marginal or deviant individuals.

Crisis heterotopias are, in fact, the very crossroads that individuals find themselves at when they encounter the prospect of a passage between different stages of physical and/or personal growth and the transformation this entails. Highlighting the pertinence of this type of heterotopia to neo-Victorianism's intents and purposes, *Church of Marvels* and *Dracula* mark this transition through their protagonists' movements, which challenge their sense of place and compromise these characters' initial perceptions of their identities. Crucially, both the Church twins and Grayson/Dracula are originally assigned identities that were consistent with the contentious heterotopic space of the sideshow and the laboratory, and were therefore socially ambivalent. Consequently, the crises they undergo constitute a departure from stereotypical appreciations of subjectivity and a step towards the individual growth granted by the possibility of alternative emplacements. Documenting the contradictory implications of these characters' tentative social positions, namely both the exclusion of marginality and the prospect of integration, the sideshow and the laboratory emerge as neo-Victorian crisis heterotopias that endorse their inhabitants' change of status, granting them new identity traits, and enabling them to overcome the barriers and limitations entailed in socially predetermined understandings of place and identity.

Both texts examined here structurally indicate the idiosyncratic location and redefinition potential of crisis heterotopias establishing the sideshow and the laboratory as stepping

stones for the development of the plots and the trials of the characters at the very beginning of their narratives. *Church of Marvels* opens with a prologue, one of the only parts of the novel, alongside the epilogue, which is narrated in the first person by Belle, who is literally silent throughout the rest of the novel. Confiding background information to the reader that clarifies aspects of the plot, the prologue and epilogue reflect on the novel from its very fringes. Structurally excluded, as it is placed outside the sequence of numbered chapters that comprise the main body of the novel, and narratively ostracized, as it provides insights that the other characters ignore, Belle's narration textually acquires the qualities of heterotopic space, featuring the defining, though invisible, clues that entangle previously unrelated characters in life-changing developments. Because of Belle, Sylvan, the night-soiler who finds her baby, Alphie, the transgender woman who was supposed to adopt it, and Odile will all experience the crisis that will grant them a new sense of identity and place in the world. The quest towards this acquisition becomes the backbone of the plot, gradually weaving together the stories of these different characters that alternate as the focal points of the novel's chapters. Setting up its narrative as being comprised of interdependent, but seemingly autonomous, strands, the novel textually appropriates the relationality of heterotopic space, resonating, as the plot progresses, with the workings of the sideshow that permeate all of the novel's storylines affecting the protagonists. These are fittingly presented in the heterotopic space of the prologue, in which Belle reminisces on her mother telling her that

> [a]ll great shows [. . .] depend on the most ordinary objects. [. . .] A kitchen knife. A bulb of glass. A human body. That something so common should be so surprising—why, we forget it. We take it for granted. We assume that our sight is reliable, that our deeds are straightforward, that our words have one meaning. But life is uncommon and strange [. . .]. So on stage we remind them just how extraordinary the ordinary can be. This, she said, is the tiger in the grass. It's the wonder that hides in plain sight, the secret life that flourishes just beyond the screen. For you are not showing them a hoax or a trick, just a new way of seeing what's already in front of them. *This*, she told me, *is your mark on the world. This is the story that you tell*. (Parry 2015, pp. 2–3, original emphasis)

Besides being a self-reflexive revelation of the novel itself as Belle's act of storytelling and narrative signification, this recollection also seals the resignifying potential of the sideshow. Projected onto the novel's plot, the workings of the sideshow ground the protagonists' stories on the premise that place and identity are receptive to transformative crises and transitions.

This process of redefinition is already underway at the beginning of the novel, and is actually initiated by the fire that destroyed the Church of Marvels, taking Friendship's life and triggering Belle's departure for Manhattan. The destruction of the theater, which Belle caused by accident, links the sideshow to the history of Coney Island, in which "[f]ire was a regenerative element", allowing for its constant re-creation (Immerso 2002, p. 8). Similarly, in the novel, the fire destabilizes Belle's sense of place, and thus provokes the sideshow to test its regenerative potential beyond its protective confines. After the fire, Belle recalls in the epilogue, "I had no home that made sense to me anymore" (Parry 2015, p. 293). However, the torturing question—"*Where do I even belong?*" (Parry 2015, p. 304, original emphasis)—that Belle struggles with reaches further than her obvious feelings of grief and guilt. When Belle discloses her pregnancy to her mother, the latter, fearing heredity, confesses that Belle and Odile had been born conjoined. Their separation was the only way to ensure their survival, and, hence, a place in the world. Coney Island, however, loses the nurturing qualities it had borne, as Friendship also reveals that the girls were adopted. Rendering emplacement into misplacement, Friendship's confession is perceived as an act of betrayal which accentuates Belle's displacement. This is further intensified because her pregnancy confronts her with the social norms that the theater protected her from: being unmarried, she becomes an outcast, and shamefully thinks of herself as "worse than a freak" (Parry 2015, p. 299). In order to disentangle herself from her predicament

and resolve her identity crisis, Belle leaves for Mrs. Bloodworth's in Manhattan, to meet her mother's friend who rescued the conjoined foundlings, separated them, and arranged their adoption. Essentially, Belle engages in a quest to rediscover herself; she seeks a safe and reassuring space during her pregnancy, and a site of transition that can ensure her reinstatement within society, which she believes she can achieve by putting her baby up for adoption in turn.

A liminal space in its own right, Mrs. Bloodworth's operates beyond strict social standards, expanding the heterotopic qualities of the sideshow. Housed in an apothecary's shop above subterranean passages leading to vault-like gambling parlors and opium dens, Mrs. Bloodworth's is "more than just a house of unwed mothers" (Parry 2015, p. 147), precisely because Mrs. Bloodworth does not merely support unfortunate women by helping them to terminate their pregnancies. She also arranges for the babies to be adopted, and provides shelter to those children who are abandoned or born with deformities. Thus, Mrs. Bloodworth's functions as a heterotopic site of passage that, to borrow Kevin Hetherington's words, can accommodate "all things displaced, marginal, novel or rejected, or ambivalent" (Hetherington 1997, pp. 46, 33), and can subsequently infuse a new identity into its inhabitants, as unwanted babies find a new home, and their mothers become reintegrated within society. Still, Belle has to strive to reverse her social expulsion, as she experiences the rigidity and intolerance of nineteenth-century norms. Staged to resemble a scene of birth, and in this way assuage Alphie's suspicious mother-in-law, the delivery of Belle's baby to Alphie results, due to a miscalculation, in Belle's mutilation by Alphie's mother-in-law, and Belle and Alphie's subsequent incarceration in an insane asylum on Blackwell Island. From Mrs. Bloodworth's promising crisis heterotopia, Belle will find herself in a containing "heterotopia of deviation" (Foucault 1986, p. 25), which threatens to fix her—as well as Alphie's—identity and conduct as deviant and in need of reform. In this light, then, by rejecting the asylum as their legitimate place when they escape from it and return to the city, Belle and Alphie render their incarceration a mere passage in their acquisition of place and the formation of their identity. Thus, they neutralize the impact of normalizing space and preserve the prospect of resistance that is, as the sideshow suggests, crucial for neo-Victorian heterotopias and the alternative modes of emplacement they seek to envision.[3] The novel's ending points to the feasibility of such an endeavor, as her acquaintance with Belle helps to abate Alphie's inner conflict concerning her gender identity. "*You have two spirits* [. . .]. *Most in this life only have one*", propounds Belle, echoing the open-minded ethos of the sideshow, thus helping Alphie realize that the "world apart" to which she had "longed to be spirited away" in childhood was, in fact, "one she had carried with her all along: it was her own heart, and it still beat" (Parry 2015, p. 286, original emphasis). Hence, despite the disillusionment to which her shattered marriage leads her concerning social acceptance, Alphie is able to reconcile "the two beasty shadows wrestling inside her, fighting for possession of her body and mind", and pointedly evokes sideshow iconography to reimagine them as being "high up on trapezes, colorful as birds, reaching for each other's hands as they flew through the air [. . .]. And when they touched, there in midair, she was whole" (Parry 2015, p. 286). Overcoming her socially inflicted insecurity, Alphie is finally at ease with herself.

In order to protect her sister from the discomfort she experiences after their mother's disclosure, Belle conceals Friendship's confession and emphasizes the significance of place, insisting on its manifestation in Coney Island. Hence, the closing remark of the only letter she sends her sister: "*And you must believe, no matter what, that you are where you belong*" (Parry 2015, p. 24, original emphasis). However, the image imprinted in Odile's memory since the fire and her sister's departure is one of displacement, as she remembers the tigers' escape from the burning theatre, and their harrowing, but dignified, passage to the sea. Covered in flames, the tigers escape towards their death, a possibility that Belle echoes in her letter too, as, uncertain about childbirth, she implies that she might not write again. Despite remaining in a familiar location, Odile realizes that her sense of place is compromised, because this location is now void of meaningful bonds to other people.

Reflecting on her decision not to follow Belle immediately upon her departure, Odile recalls how, after the fire, she was enmeshed not only in "[h]er own grief" but also in "[a] sense of responsibility. She was anchored to Coney Island—it was her life" (Parry 2015, p. 171). While Belle's letter reflects this reaction, Odile feels increasingly alienated, qualifying her sister's remark: "*You must remember*, her sister had written, *you are where you belong*. But she was wrong, Odile thought—they belonged together" (Parry 2015, p. 38, original emphasis). In a sense, Odile's reinterpretation accentuates the value of place irrespective of a stable location, transforming it into a sense of community with other people. Triggering Odile's disquieting probe to find her sister in the unknown and menacing city, which threatens to make their separation permanent, this realization calls forth Odile's bravery and strength of character, two qualities she did not believe she possessed, but which now allow her personal growth.

Throughout her wandering through the city, Odile's determination is actually contrasted with the frailty of her body and the physical pain she experiences due to her musculoskeletal disorders. Evincing a personal decision, her subjection to this detrimental quest becomes a liberating experience that allows Odile to surpass the limitations of her outward resemblance to her sister, which are all the more painful due to their distinct corporealities. As Odile ignores the fact that she and Belle were conjoined, she also does not know that before they were separated she was "[t]he smaller one [. . .] bent and curled beneath her sister, growing listless and weak by the hour. Her spine was twisted and soft, her body hunched unnaturally" (Parry 2015, p. 302). Consequently, although her almost instinctive urge to reify her sense of belonging by means of a reunion with her sister could initially be read as a disparaging reaffirmation of her dependence on Belle, Odile's quest for reunification ultimately eradicates her self-deprecating appreciation of her identity, and allows her to gain a sense of self-esteem and confidence. Proving, through her courage, her sister's conviction that she "[has] *always been the brave one,* [. . .] *the strongest of all*" (Parry 2015, p. 23, original emphasis), Odile is eventually able to accept Belle's inexplicable decision not to return to Coney Island. Odile relocates to this familiar terrain with Sylvan who, introduced to the singularity of Coney Island and forming an increasingly stronger bond with Odile, is finally able to acquire the sense of belonging that his lack of knowledge about his origins, and the ensuing indeterminacy of identity, had deprived him of. Having ensured a sense of place for Belle's baby when he decided to engage in a quest to locate her mother, Sylvan in now able to confidently pursue a different emplacement for himself too, one, indeed, that is chosen, and therefore clearly registered in his consciousness. The same process applies to Odile also. Reluctant to join her sideshow friends who plan to leave for the winter, Odile starts to come to terms with the independence entailed in the distressing realization that "the ones [she] loved would find their own way home" (Parry 2015, p. 289). Though, for Odile, home remains identified with Coney Island, she is about to embark on a new life that, though still unspecified, will resignify a familiar location as a site for the acknowledgment of her newly acquired sense of self. Whatever they will actually be, Odile's choices will, in all probability, realize her mother's views on uniqueness and individuality, allowing Odile to fully perceive the liberatory and nurturing potential of the sideshow.

Being an adaptation, *Dracula* is by definition also premised on an appreciation of identity as malleable and re-negotiable, as denoted by Dracula's new disguise and his backstory that draws on previous adaptations, most notably perhaps Francis Ford Coppola's film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992), rather than Stoker's novel alone (Abbott 2017, pp. 202–5; Poore 2017, p. 13).[4] In this sense, by adding yet another layer to the seemingly inexhaustible adaptability of Dracula's story, NBC's version consolidates the plasticity and malleability of the tale, a quality that is, after all, always already entailed in the inspiration that Stoker drew from earlier sources when designing his legendary protagonist (Miller 1999, p. 190). Set in a Romanian tomb, the pre-credit sequence of the first episode shows Van Helsing, whose family has also been murdered by the Order, performing a ritual that awakens Dracula from what seems to have been a very long hiatus. The ancestral site becomes a space of

temporal conflation, seeing as Dracula, who was forced into his monstrous, undead state in the fifteenth century, now finds a new 'place' within the nineteenth century. The scene takes place in a geographically distant location, and is neither resumed nor referred back to after the opening credits. However, it aptly points to the series' episodic structure, which—as is also the case in *Church of Marvels*—emphasizes the relationality of the narrative. The fact that the unity of the plot depends on sequential progression and necessitates the junction of the seemingly self-contained spaces of different episodes projects the heterotopic qualities of space onto the series' textual structure. This narratively disjointed sequence places Dracula at the center of the plot, and effects spatio-temporal continuity, because Dracula's reawakening and subsequent move to London collapse both the distinction between past and present and the compartmentalizing and delimiting potential of geographical borders. Signifying the irreversible termination of life, the tomb is a heterotopia that effects a permanent disruption in time (Foucault 1986, p. 26). Paradoxically, the tomb featured in *Dracula*'s opening enhances its heterotopic quality by reversing the finality of death and enabling further temporal disjunctions. These will be hosted by the laboratory which, as a site in tune with the modernity of the Victorian era and located in London, will become the equivalent of the tomb in the series' main narrative thread. In much the same way that the tomb cannot contain the vampire's undead condition, therefore questioning his imposed role and position in the world, the laboratory will emerge as a neo-Victorian crisis heterotopia, a "[site] of resistance and transgression" (Hetherington 1997, p. 36), that is, of retrieval and reinstatement that will become a conduit of Dracula's reinvention and crossing of the boundaries between life and death, and by extension, also between past and present.

Apart from the domination that Grayson seeks to achieve through the economic exploitation of geomagnetic energy, his scientific pursuits are also directed towards his own personal gain. Towards the end of the first episode, Grayson explains his attraction to Europe, "the Old World", whose

> people seek the new wherever they can. [. . .] I, myself, am descended from a very old family. But my mind, always fixed on the future, I surround myself with things that speak to both [the past and the future]. [. . .] You see, we're on the precipice of a great change. We have it within ourselves to redefine our species. [. . .] That is what I've come here to accomplish. In order to facilitate in that evolution. Give nature a helping hand, so to speak. (Shill 2013a, S.1, Ep.1, 00:27:55–00:28:14–51)

In light of later plot developments, Grayson's words acquire a double meaning. First, and quite predictably so, the evolution he talks about refers to his plan to increase the population of vampires in London, so as to ensure the support he needs to destroy his enemies. Most importantly, however, he refers to his own evolution, his scheme to transcend, even if only partially, his undead condition and regain human capacities, namely the ability to endure sunlight. Although, strictly speaking, this will add another supernatural dimension to Dracula's hypostasis, seeing that the vampire will be able to surface in daylight, the effect is achieved by manipulating processes that are distinctly natural, and equipment that has a humanizing effect. "I want to walk in the sun like any other man", Grayson states emphatically, to which end Van Helsing, who has joined forces with his nemesis against their common enemy, concocts a solar "vaccine" (Goddard 2013, S.1, Ep.3, 00:19:07–10, 00:19:16). In order to be effective, the inoculation requires Van Helsing to employ "the resonator to generate voltage to a pair of electrical paddles, then apply them to the subject's chest and attempt to jolt the heart into beating", subsequently administering "a massive injection of the serum" (Murphy 2013, S.1, Ep.5, 00:14:52–00:15:10). Turning the resonator into a colossal defibrillation device in order to restore Grayson's heartbeat and increasing the potency of the serum in order to ensure its uninhibited channeling to the whole body, Van Helsing succeeds in drawing Dracula from the shadows. Alluding to Frankenstein's experiments and the iconic scene of the creature's birth in Shelley's novel, Van Helsing's life-imbuing procedure aligns nineteenth-century and neo-Victorian visions of laboratory

space as an intermediary between life and death. The laboratory is further employed as a site of reanimation in John Logan's neo-Victorian TV series *Penny Dreadful* (Showtime/Sky Atlantic, 2014–2016), where Victor Frankenstein repeatedly succeeds in reversing death and restoring life, but admittedly fails, like Shelley's protagonist, to ensure the seamless social integration of his progenies, a promise that—albeit briefly—Van Helsing is able to deliver. Prefigured in Frankenstein's laboratory, but transcending the limitations of its practices, Van Helsing's laboratory achieves a favorable balance for the contested terrain of Victorian scientific space. In this way, Grayson manages to temporarily disorient his enemies' suspicions as to his true identity, and briefly to attend a midday meeting, which, however convincing, nevertheless burns his skin.[5] Subsequent tests increase his resilience to sunlight to a maximum of four hours, a time that Grayson exploits to spend time with Mina Murray, the reincarnation of his dead wife. Though clearly facilitating both his revenge scheme and his romantic pursuits, these encounters realize the impact of the laboratory as a crisis heterotopia: they indicate Grayson's break with his prescribed position and the potential of a transition to a socially viable status, precisely because they render the undead Dracula extremely time-conscious, allowing him, in a sense, to recover some aspects of his humanity.

When Grayson is brought as a test subject to the hidden, private place of the laboratory, Van Helsing's secret experiments enhance Dracula's public presence, reconfiguring both the latter's identity and the places he is entitled to occupy. "Your infusion has changed me. I feel . . . reborn. A man once more", Grayson confesses (Kelly 2014b, S.1, Ep.7, 00:07:37–44, original pause), confirming that his undead condition is frequently a source of "self-loathing" for him (Abbott 2017, p. 205). Reluctant to identify as a vampire, Grayson refuses to conscript his supernatural powers to achieve a drastic attack on the Order, and insists on regaining his human capacities and living as a human, causing discord between him and Van Helsing. Warning Grayson that he is deceiving himself, Van Helsing—who is growing impatient after the cancellation of the public demonstration—takes matters into his own hands and devises his own revenge plan against the Order. As Grayson, then, is no longer useful to him, Van Helsing destroys the laboratory, burning his notes and spilling all of the substances he used to prepare the vaccine. Revealed in this scene as a mad scientist who revels in his destructive fury, Van Helsing, whose "researches had taken place in secrecy", and who, reflecting the Victorian controversies around the private practice of science, was throughout the series "checked only by [his] own conscience and abilities" (Willis 2006, p. 209), once more condemns Dracula to eternal darkness. The series closes with Van Helsing revealing Grayson's true identity to Jonathan Harker and promising to disclose the way in which he can destroy him. Dracula's name is the last word that is uttered in the tenth episode, trapping Grayson within his malevolent vampiric hypostasis. However, as the series emphasizes that Grayson's "villainy" is contingent, and, hence, "has to be measured against that of the vigilantes who are hunting him" (Poore 2017, p. 13), this entrapment seems both inadequate and misleading. Being played and manipulated, rather than being himself the sole puppet master, Grayson/Dracula is once again placed in an ambivalent position. Through his condemned struggle for integration and belonging, Grayson incarnates the tensions that render the (neo-)Victorian laboratory a heterotopia: in effect, he embodies a conflict between the suffering of injustice, the weakness of vindictiveness, and the need for vindication that cannot ever be resolved within the narrative universe of the series, seeing as the show was cancelled after the first season.

4. Conclusions: The Compensating Space of the City

Instigated by the practices fostered in the sideshow and the laboratory, the alternative prospects of emplacement fathomed and/or experienced by the Church twins and Grayson/Dracula prove that, as heterotopias, these spaces "organize a bit of the social world in a way different to that which surrounds them. That alternate ordering marks them out as Other and allows them to be seen as an example of an alternative way of doing things" (Hetherington 1997, p. viii). Warranting the characters' reconfigurations of their identities,

and their move to or emergence in the city, the enactment of this ordering suggests, in turn, that the heterotopic qualities of the sideshow and the laboratory are projected onto the open, urban environment of the Victorian metropolis, offering a utopian glimpse of New York and London as spaces of tolerance and inclusion. In this way, these cities live up to their status as symbols of the composite social fabric of the nineteenth century; however, in a sense, they do so by subverting the shortcomings that such a texture necessarily entails. As the result of industrialization and its ensuing urbanization, the configuration of nineteenth-century society resulted in strict stratification and a respective spatial organization based on segregation. In contrast, the neo-Victorian textual cities examined here prove open to the outsider, and pose few or no restrictions to the spaces this figure is allowed to occupy; hence, the metropolises emerge as "heterotopias of compensation", as they transform into "a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as [their initial appreciation] is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled" (Foucault 1986, p. 27). In *Church of Marvels* and *Dracula*, then, New York and London emerge as heterotopias precisely because, eventually, they "hold the promise of a city in which the other is accommodated—a city of plurality and heterogeneity" (Dehaene and De Cauter 2008, p. 8). Such heterotopic cities effectively resolve crises and acknowledge that singularity, rather than barring individuals from society, promotes their acceptance.

Reconfigured through the sideshow and the laboratory, namely through spaces that it appends and absorbs even as it expels them, the city becomes an idealized site of resonance, underscoring not only its heterotopic but also its neo-Victorian qualities. Its function as a host for the exceptional body of the sideshow performer and Dracula's reanimated dead body reflects back on the sideshow and the laboratory, rendering them prisms for the acknowledgement of two crucially interrelated aspects of neo-Victorian texts: namely, their endeavor to reinstate the marginalized and disempowered as recognizable and recognized members of Victorian society, which is, of course, made possible by the very devotion to the quest of unearthing, revitalizing, and ultimately restoring their stories. However, as the foregone analysis suggests, this process is always informed by the norms and standards of the Victorian era, which determine, even in their reimagined guise, the mechanisms of belonging and exclusion. Consequently, neo-Victorian heterotopic space performs a complex function. In view of the tensions surrounding the appreciation of the sideshow and laboratory, the textual heterotopia underlines the precariousness of any authoritative claim as to which spaces qualify as constituents of the social fabric, asserting that even those that are cast out as deviant are, in fact, complementary. It follows, then, that a neo-Victorian response to heterotopias precludes their unproblematized dismissal, or the aspiration to reclaim and subsequently reform these spaces as sites that affirm the restoration of social order. Victorian fiction registers this possibility as a means of manifesting the rigidity of nineteenth-century attitudes towards transgression: the invasion of Jekyll's laboratory at the end of Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*—namely of a space where the sinister, yet liberatory, rebirth of Jekyll as Hyde made a statement against the oppressiveness of social constraints, but eventually led to containment and death—is a fitting example in this respect.

In contrast, as I have argued here, neo-Victorian fiction adopts a more sympathetic stance towards heterotopias, exploring the empowering potential of exclusion which, paradoxically, allows for its contestation. By extension, because heterotopias such as the sideshow and the laboratory allow their inhabitants greater mobility, they exert a positive influence beyond their walls, and also urge the city to realize its full potential. Being a place where "the lights burn ever brighter, but [. . .] cast the darkest shadows" (Parry 2015, p. 5)—not only a site of hope and possibility, but also of danger, disillusionment, and suspension—the city inscribes contradiction in its very texture. It emerges, thus, as a heterotopia par excellence (Macauley 2000, p. 11), challenged to live up to this complexity, rather than to subsume its promises to its perils. In this respect, then, neo-Victorian narratives like the ones examined here seek to confirm Roy Porter's poignant observation that "[c]ities [constitute] social laboratories in the making of modernity [. . .], where the past shapes the present and the present moulds the future [. . .]. Change is the essence"

(Porter 1994, p. 5). It is the pledge of lenience, tolerance, extroversion, and inclusion entailed in this changeability that ultimately shapes the terrain of the neo-Victorian city to host "an attentive, non-violent meeting of the other, taking alterity into account without erasing the differences that it implies, and actively enlarging our consciousness" (Ganteau 2015, p. 173).

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Notes

1 An earlier version of the discussion of identity and place in *Church of Marvels* was presented at The Hellenic Association for American Studies (HELAAS) conference 'The Politics of Space and the Humanities', held in Thessaloniki on 15–17 December 2017.

2 The link attempted here between Arata's argument and *Dracula*'s take on international relationships refers back to the previous section and Willis's observation on scientific development as a means of leverage for international competition in the Victorian era. Nevertheless, because of this association, the series also lends itself to a reading through the lens of Empire. Enabling a critical confrontation with the flaws of the past, this approach further enhances the quality of the laboratory as a neo-Victorian heterotopia in the series, revealing it as a space that concurrently inscribes advancement and trauma.

3 For Belle in particular, her escape from the asylum constitutes a powerful act of resistance not only in terms of emplacement but also in terms of self-determination. Alphie's mother-in-law's opposition to Alphie's marriage to her son and exposure of her false pregnancy violently culminates in her cutting out Belle's tongue, possibly to protect her son from the stigmatization he might suffer due to the exposure of Alphie's secret. In the asylum, the women's identity is determined by those who commit them; hence, Alphie has her husband's surname tattooed on her collarbone, while Belle is given a tattoo that reads "*Orchard Broome*" (Parry 2015, p. 96, original emphasis). Belle is named after the address from which she was taken, as her identity is not known to her persecutors and she cannot speak for herself. However, Belle's identity does not remain determined by this traumatic incident that binds her to social control and confinement. As her escape from the asylum and return to the city enables her reunion with her baby, Belle names her daughter Orchard Broome, resignifying the words that have been indelibly engraved on her body. This act subverts the loss of place she experienced, transforming it into an instance of recovery that allows Belle to stay in the city at the end of the novel and confidently inhabit urban space.

4 Giving motive to Dracula's actions, namely his wish to avenge the death of his wife, Coppola's film reconfigured the Count as a rather "tragic figure [. . .] defined by a romantic longing" (Abbott 2017, p. 202), as is also the case with Grayson. In this sense, Stoker's archetypal villain was redefined and "reinvented", incarnating two popular types of contemporary villains, namely the "sympathetic villain" and the "villain hero" (Poore 2017, pp. 13, 19). This "defiance of categorization" renders Dracula a prototype character for "the definition of a villain [as] someone who will not *stay put*: in one category, one identity, in one period" (Poore 2017, p. 22, original emphasis). This crossing of boundaries is also characteristic of the monster (Poore 2017, p. 22), and Dracula does, to some extent at least, always assume this role within the narrative. Arguably, in light of Grayson's justified resentment and attempt to overcome the vampiric curse the Order imposed on him, the series thus invests in neo-Victorianism's employment of the "monster" as "a subtle metaphor for social exclusion" and the "cogent policies of discrimination" (Tomaiuolo 2018, p. 19).

5 The fact that the mechanics of the body promise, and subsequently deliver, Dracula's temporary and precarious escape from the limitations of the vampire's nocturnal hypostasis suggests that, for as long as it lasts, Grayson's exposure to daylight allows him to "exist in a haze of probability" (Coolman 2014, n.p.). Interestingly, this brief point where contradictory and mutually exclusive possibilities overlap, and hence uncertainty arises as to the subject's state, constitutes a fundamental axiom of quantum mechanics (Coolman 2014, n.p.). Though concrete observation and measurement are generally relied upon as a means of reaching a definitive conclusion that can validate one possibility over another, recent experiments, notably Frauchiger and Renato Renner's variation on Schrödinger's cat, proposed the possibility of contradictions in the interpretation of results, a fact that highlights the importance of perspective (Castelvecchi 2018, pp. 446–47; Ananthaswamy 2018, n.p.). In this sense, then, it could be argued that, in parallel to the assumptions of quantum mechanics, *Dracula*'s exploration of the prospect of being both alive and dead at the same time offers a fitting scientific analogy for the deciphering of the workings of neo-Victorian fiction. Indeed, although the genre's subject matter, the Victorian era, is past and gone (hence physically dead), its fictional revival restores it to life, and does so in a way that, both among different neo-Victorian texts and at the intersection between the Victorian and its reconfiguration, makes multiple and potentially incompatible possibilities available at the same time. The particular outlook of each of these versions is, of course, dependent on the standpoint from which they return to the Victorian past, and the agenda they seek to promote.

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