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Eustress, Vampires, and Vicariousness Revisited... (A continuation from last issue)

As I have stated, the paradox which prevails whereby more people are "talking" dark forces up, down, and sideways, but fewer than ever are actually *living* as night people, provokes valid speculation. I would say that the moral or message here is that when everybody's talking, very few are doing. And like most hobbies and hobbyists, more time is spent comparing notes with other aficionados, than in enjoying the hobby per se.

The direct relationship to eustress should be explained. In a puritanical society filled with the sort of fears and guilts that have become security in and of themselves, real displeasure ensues when there is a confrontation with the truly outré or bizarre. It's fun to be scared, so long as it's in a safe place and the outcome is predictable. For example, a person can enter a movie theatre and see a horror film (at a reasonable hour, of course--there are hardly any more all-night theatres). After the film ends, no matter how frightening, there is the safety of the exit and "normal" life outside. Amusement parks have always served the same purpose and the roller coaster is designed to allow for "daring" fun-fear. By contrast, the unexpected or unsecure experience, no matter how trivial, can be terribly unsettling.

Perhaps one of the main reasons for nocturnal non-involvement is the omnipresent factor of vicariousness. It is easier (and presumably safer) to live out nocturnal fantasies through the aforementioned spate of horror films. This readily overlaps into the alien worlds of science fiction and gothic romance. These vicarious outlets abound in every facet of popular culture, be it comic books, music, or parapsychology. Wherever there are indications of the dark side of human experience which can adapt to vicarious expression, the "real thing" will be shelved. It has often been observed that those who talk about sex the most, do the least. It is certain that the same principle applies in other areas.

Again, we must realize that there is nothing "morally wrong" with vicariousness. Only when it compounds, rather than relieves frustration is it harmful to a true individualist. And it helps if the vicarious one recognizes his own vicariousness, though no one else need be the wiser. Many of the most esteemed business and professional people have built their entire reputations on what are not seen as vicarious outlets.

A thin line exists between vicariousness and sublimation. Both are forms of substitution. One who is vicarious substitutes another's life for his own--he lives off of someone else's identity. What he cannot or will not be, he finds in another person and assumes that role, usually secretly. When he becomes downright imitative, he is no longer vicarious, and must sink or swim, according to his ability to mimic.

If we are plagued with an age of "sameness," it is because so many people are content to be imitations of a handful of basic types. Hence, there is a shortage of real "characters." A character is not a creature of mediocrity, and if he is imitative, his mimicry is so outlandish that he becomes a travesty.

A paradox of today's society is a desire for safety, anonymity, and security on one hand and a lust for recognition, applause, and individuality on the other. As things have worked out, the result for most is in living in a herd while pretending through vicariousness to be someone else. The dilemma is not so much in the drone life of the herd, but in the limited selection

of role models. Any costume party amplifies the last statement. Costume shops will tell you what characters there is a run on, and certain vicarious role models are always in greater demand than others, when the protective lid is blown off for a masquerade.

Among the insane, there are those who thumb their noses at vicariousness, preferring to wear the shoes of their role models heavy-footedly. That's why, depending upon the period, nut houses are likely havens for Napoleons, Jesus Christs, Hitlers, and in recent years, Lucifers. Somewhere in between the herd-person and the Napoleons exists those who have worked their vicariousness into gratifying sublimation. Again, we are confronted with a shortage of "types," due to popularity ratings and media saturation leading to sameness. Have you ever noticed how most plainclothes cops look and act like the ones on TV police shows? Which came first? The answer should be obvious. Oscar Wilde was astute when he proclaimed his famous reversal: "Life follows art." He only went halfway, though. Most people are scoring the dubious honor of being human double redundancies. They are *imitations* of a life which is an art form--an artificiality--to begin with. In short, they are *imitations* of a *fabrication*.

Sublimation in its purest form is often self-realized, but generally not. Flagrant examples abound. A foot fetishist becomes a shoe salesman; a necrophile, a mortician; a prostitute, a sociologist; a meddler into intimacies, a priest or psychiatrist; a racketeer, a "legitimate" businessman. The list grows quite long. I knew a young guy who was studying to be a mortician many years ago. People always got around to the question, after much verbal detouring, "Why do you want to be a mortician?" The reply was, "Because I like to play with dead bodies." That is what is known as "pulling the rug out from under."

Beauty Lies in the Eyes of the Merchandiser: Or, How to Turn a Silk Purse Into a Sow's Ear

Perhaps one of the reasons for the awful sameness that has become a social disease, is a decline in what could loosely be called "aesthetics." Guidelines (both figuratively and literally) are governed by function in preference to form. Not since the Victorian era (excepting but-standing kitsch) has function followed form. Then, a design or motif came first, with an article evolving from it. An example is a buffalo turned into a hat rack. Another is an Egyptian tomb serving as a real estate office. Essentially, a pleasing form would become exactly what functional item the user or consumer had in mind.

Remember the way space ships used to look in the days of Buck Rogers and Flash Gordon? I still have an old toy rocket ship, complete with portholes, graceful tailfins, and fenders covering the landing wheels. Now that grim reality has made spacecraft far different in appearance, merchandisers have further exaggerated purely functional images. Whatever is "newer" thus becomes further removed from aesthetic (and impractical) versions. Spaceships look like electric typewriters instead of typewriters being designed to appear like rocket ships.

Instead of such trivialities as symmetry, balance, the "Hogarth curve of beauty," decisiveness of angles, and pleasing combinations of same, chaotic and asymmetric "functional" designs abound. Just look around you. A TV set of 1955 had its screen, cabinet and controls symmetrically arranged, usually a large knob on either side of a row of smaller ones centered beneath a screen, likewise centered in a box. A perfect example of function following traditional form. Eventually, electronics engineers realized that modifications in design were indicated to facilitate more efficient circuitry placement and accessibility for service. Out went the form, in came the function. True to proper merchandising techniques, "newness" of form was exploited--the consumer equating efficiency with aesthetically pleasing form. The ultimate effect was to be that the exaggerated functional prevailed as the height of beauty.

This ass-backward system has even reached into the realm of standards of human visual attractiveness. There is high regard for persons who *look* like efficient, well-oiled, unembellished machines, and many, in their quest for acceptance, strive to attain that assumed ideal of beauty. If it could be shown that physical aberration was desirable because it fulfilled a functional purpose, that malformation would become physically attractive. And it could, if there was money to be made from it.

No wonder kids have no aesthetic sense. They build models of spacecraft that look like electronics parts, play on vehicles that resemble earth movers, listen to music (where decibels replace tune) emanating from what look like diathermy machines, etc. That is *not* evolution.

Few objects in our world are designed to provide new concepts. Most are "improvements" over old. Right now, we're dealing with whether or not the so-called improvements--though aesthetically uglier--are not touted as more beautiful. If that is so, and it seems to be, then we have become aesthetically and culturally more impoverished.

How does a Satanist beat the system or stay ahead of the game? How does one have cultural fun at others' expense? Like this: Review and, if necessary, relearn the standards of beauty which brainwashing has reversed. Chances are good, all of those things will be much cheaper to obtain than popular functional items (people included). Realize that something can be both beautiful and functional, but consider whether you might have thought so five years ago. A perfect example: cars were thought spartan and ugly if there was not sufficient chrome trim embellishment. Such "economy" models were the bottom of the line--and the cheapest to buy. *No one* would drive a car with *painted* bumpers. Now, "blacked out" models of automobiles cost extra. Cameras with shiny metal bodies always cost more than black ones. The opposite has become the rule. Don't confuse function with form. If you want the most functional, appreciate it for just that. *Don't let your taste in line and form be extinguished by an overemphasis on the beauty per se of a functional thing.*

Sneaking Up...

As most of humanity waits nervously for 1984 and Orwell's enslaved society, they cannot realize that, true to all principles of manipulative magic, 1984 has been around for quite some time. The irony is that by the actual year so feared, things will have eased up in the sameness department. The social revolution of the sixties made way for the *real* Orwellian era of the seventies, the most lackluster conformist decade of the century. An era wherein fewer alternatives and more sameness prevailed than any other in recent history. A decade of apathy and Hobson's choice, of lost identities and a half-handful of role models. A period of contrived conformity and strained egalitarianism, of slave-like obedience to the Now, battling desperate yearning for nostalgic yesterday.

Well, hold on to your jeans, kiddies (by the end of this decade, they'll be OUT) and take heed. 1984 holds more variety in life styles than ever. Speaking of jeans, "designer" models are a step forward, and now they come in straight or flared, tight or baggy, with all kinds of different little tags on the pockets.

Women have rediscovered plumage (maybe they heard it is, in nature, a male attribute) and are starting to wear dresses and fancy grown-up shoes again. How strange, that it used to be a dilemma for one woman to encounter another wearing the identical dress or hat. During the Orwellian period from which we are emerging, a woman felt alienated if she *wasn't* wearing the same thing as her sisters. Sameness equated to solidarity, not loss of individuality. Very Orwellian manipulation. It matters not, whether 1984 or any other year. If manipulation of large masses of people is to be effected, it must be done while providing them with a future point of concentration--an "if" or a "when." They must be preparing for the sky to fall while they are presently being fleeced. They must be kept busy with worry about how bad things might get, while the worst is being done.

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I think the recent presidential election was a success. The record low voter turnout provided evidence of strong dissatisfaction. The winner knows he must try harder because of it. The Bornagainites showed their true colors and deserted Jimmie when Reagan said the right things. The stupid fanatics would reject Reagan just as fast and I'm sure he knows it. If it weren't for Carter's evangelism, they would not have had a voice in the first place. To be validated and endorsed by the President of the U.S. gave them the green light and changed them overnight from "Jesus Freaks" to respected "Born-again Christians" with a political bloc.

Personally, I have a good feeling about Reagan, something I could never get with Carter. All politicians are actors. Maybe there's something slightly more honest about one who has done it professionally. Mainly, I am sick and tired of seeing a show of presidential informality and jes' folks/down home symbolic leadership. On Huey Long it worked. On Jimmy Carter it didn't. Or maybe I'm evaluating an almost lost quality that occasionally creeps to the surface. It's called intelligence.

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(Entire contents by Anton Szandor La Vey)

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