

UNIVERSIDAD COMPLUTENSE DE MADRID
FACULTAD DE FILOLOGÍA



TESIS DOCTORAL

**The animal within: an ecocritical approach to the Gothic
supernatural hybrid in the fin de siècle**

**El animal interno: una lectura ecocrítica del monstruo
híbrido en el gótico finisecular inglés**

MEMORIA PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE DOCTOR

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Madrid

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A Thesis submitted by **Aurora Murga Aroca** for the Degree of
Doctor in Literary Studies in the Complutense University of Madrid

Supervised by **Dr Eduardo Valls Oyarzun**

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Para mi familia, amigos, profesores y para la versión de mí que comenzó a escribir esta tesis.

The critic is he who can translate into another manner or a new material his impression of beautiful things. The highest, as the lowest, form of criticism is a mode of autobiography.

Oscar Wilde

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Abbreviations

The title of the following works by Oscar Wilde has been abbreviated as follows:

CA: “The Critic as Artist”

DG: *The Picture of Dorian Gray**

DL: “The Decay of Lying”

SM: “The Soul of Man under Socialism”

* Given that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a primary source, it is only referenced using the abbreviated form when the context does not clarify which of Wilde’s works the quote comes from.

Abstract

This thesis approaches the *fin de siècle* supernatural hybrid from an ecocritical perspective, focusing on the role that the binary human/animal plays in the construction of monstrosity. It demonstrates that not all turn-of-the-century Gothic narratives portray the hybrid from an ecophobic angle of fear and rejection of the animal-other and the animal-self. Just the opposite, this dissertation shows that there are proto-ecocritical renditions of all types of Gothic hybrids that query the negative connotations associated with animality, ranging from external, abject monsters to invisible inner ones. To prove this hypothesis, the dissertation studies four main supernatural agents: the monster, the pagan god, the ghost and the double.

This thesis also argues that the story's overall visual angle greatly determines the ecocritical view from which the hybrid, the normative character, and their interactions are portrayed. The narratives that tend to hold sight as the only trustworthy epistemological human sense adhere to a Cartesian perspective of identity. They regard sight and reason as 'human', and the body and its senses as animal, and present the possession of a 'rational soul' or ecophobic 'moral compass' as the key element that distinguishes humans from non-human animals. Finally, the influence of the supernatural hybrid is presented as an all-pervasive phenomenon that reduces protagonists to animal behaviour. Presenting the influence of the hybrid as forced and inevitable frees the influenced subject from any sort of guilt, and successfully displaces the threat of the animal within out into an external other.

On the other hand, the stories which adopt a more spectacle-like or embodied visual approach reveal human sight and mind as equally capable of irrationality, and depict the body and its senses as legitimate, epistemological media. They present animality as inherent and harmless, and influence as an exchange for which success a certain invitation is required. In other words, they suggest that there needs to be an initial latent animality in the so-called victim in order for the hybrid's influence to stir change. Most significantly, proto-ecocritical narratives shift the blame from animality itself to its repression, suggesting the acceptance of the animal within as the remedy to becoming a monster.

Key words: Ecocriticism, Gothic Fiction, fin de siècle, identity, British fiction

Resumen

Esta tesis estudia la figura del híbrido finisecular desde un punto de vista ecocrítico ya que se centra en el papel que juega el binarismo humano/animal en la construcción de la monstruosidad. Su principal objetivo es demostrar que no todas las narrativas góticas de finales de siglo representan al híbrido desde el miedo y el rechazo a la animalidad ajena y propia. Al contrario, este trabajo prueba que hay todo tipo de híbridos góticos que cuestionan las connotaciones negativas asociadas con la animalidad. Para probar esta hipótesis, analizo cuatro agentes sobrenaturales: el monstruo, el dios pagano, el fantasma y el doble.

Así pues, la perspectiva visual que adopta cada historia contribuye a definir el ángulo ecocrítico desde el que se representa tanto al híbrido como al personaje normativo y las interacciones entre ambos. Aquellas narrativas que suelen definir el sentido de la vista como el único epistemológicamente fiable tienden a representar la identidad desde una perspectiva cartesiana y ecofóbica. Por tanto, mientras que la vista y la razón son considerados *humanos*, el cuerpo y el resto de sentidos son animales, y por ende, inferiores. En estas historias, la posesión de un ‘alma racional’ o *brújula ecofóbica* se considera clave para distinguir a los seres humanos de los degenerados. Finalmente, la influencia del híbrido se presenta como una fuerza imparable que reduce al protagonista a un comportamiento animal. Esta representación de la influencia como un fenómeno inevitable libera al sujeto influenciado de cualquier tipo de responsabilidad sobre sus actos, por lo que se desplaza la amenaza de la animalidad propia hacia un agente externo.

Por otro lado, las narrativas proto-ecocríticas revelan que tanto la vista como la razón son parte del cuerpo animal y, por tanto, son capaces de irracionalidad. Así, arguyen que todos los sentidos son medios epistemológicos igualmente legítimos. El fenómeno de la influencia es representado como un intercambio cuyo éxito depende de la participación activa del sujeto influenciado. En otras palabras, para que la influencia del híbrido cause cambios en el comportamiento de los personajes se requiere la presencia previa de cierta animalidad en la denominada víctima. Finalmente, estas narrativas desvinculan la animalidad de la degeneración y la describen como un elemento inherente e inocuo. En su lugar, sugieren que la monstruosidad es el resultado de la represión sistemática de lo animal, por lo que el remedio contra la degradación social radica precisamente en la aceptación del animal interno.

Palabras Clave: Ecocrítica, ficción gótica, siglo XIX, identidad, literatura británica

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a comparative study of the figure of the supernatural hybrid in a series of *fin de siècle* Gothic novels, novellas and short stories. The Gothic hybrid has traditionally been analysed as an embodiment of all nineteenth century's anxieties regarding the progress of civilisation and identity corruption. This thesis approaches the hybrid from the premise that the backbone to all of these anxieties, and the binary distinctions that support them, is the eerie and blurry division between animals and humans. The end of the nineteenth century has been characterised as a moment of prolific scientific and artistic innovation, a transitory period from Victorianism to Modernity. Given the period's demographic, economic, scientific and medical shifts, the redefinition of what constituted a modern British subject became a central preoccupation (Plunkett 1-19). Darwin's treatises on the origin of the human species were central to this renewed interest. His discoveries contributed to the destruction of the previous "[comfortable] anthropocentric worldview" (Hurley, "British Gothic Fiction" 195). They revealed the modern human subject to be dependent on the environment and connected to animals, particularly primates, from which humans were said to have evolved (Ballesteros 256). This threatened to replace the biblical concept of a unified, fixed human identity for a mutable, fluctuating and animal notion of the self. As a result of such revelations, concerns about the potential regression of western civilization became a target, not only of scientific and medical discourses, but also of literary ones (Hurley, *The Gothic Body* 56).

Reason and self-awareness were deemed as the key elements that distinguished "the human from the non-human animal" (Gagnier, *Individualism* 6). As a consequence, people were submitted to intense external and internal scrutiny in order to distinguish healthy subjects from degenerate ones. Identifying and containing the influence of the atavistic individual was regarded as essential to avoid a generalised devolution and to guarantee the safe unfolding of progress. Whereas reason was considered a human characteristic, animality was, in turn, labelled as a sign of inferiority and atavism. Legitimised by famous doctors and criminologists such as Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau, the presence of any animal-like feature in a person's physiognomy was considered an irrefutable sign of their hybridity and degeneracy.

Discourses regarding identity, degeneration and visuality became intertwined, and pervaded, not only the medical sciences, but also fiction. Gothic narratives, particularly,

“became a kind of fictional laboratory” where authors could “[probe] the boundaries between body and mind, [...] the normal and the pathological, [...] the animal and the human” more freely (Taylor 17). Supernatural hybrids became a key figure in *fin de siècle* Gothic as they allowed for early commentary on a post-Darwinian reconstruction of human identity. They are ideal figures to hypothesise and illustrate the effects that a potential retrogression towards animalistic stages could have on the modern subject.

Most Gothic criticism reads the hybrid as the embodiment of contemporary anxieties regarding identity corruption and, consequently, presents it as a disruptive agent that aims to hybridise British subjects. The main goal of this thesis is to demonstrate that not all Gothic narratives portray the *fin de siècle* hybrids from a place of fear and rejection. There are indeed some stories that approach the hybrid from a more benevolent and proto-ecocritical perspective. Instead of presenting the human-animal monster as a threat, these stories question and dismantle the negative connotations associated with the terms ‘animality’ and ‘hybridity’. In order to distinguish between ecophobic¹ and ecocritical works, it is essential to analyse each narrative’s visual approach. I argue that those narratives that tend to hold sight as the only trustworthy epistemological human sense follow a Cartesian perspective of identity. Consequently, they regard the sense of sight as the most objective human sense, and the body as animal, inferior, and in need to be scrutinised and policed by reason and morality. On the other hand, the writings which adopt a more spectacle or embodied approach question vision’s objectivity and reveal that human sight and mind are also capable of irrationality, and so, of animality. Therefore, they are more inclined towards a depiction of the body and all of its senses as legitimate epistemological media, equally capable of interpreting the world. These narratives can be considered proto-ecocritical because they allow for an alternative understanding of animality as a harmless and inherent aspect of the modern subject, and entail a greater challenge to Cartesian and ecophobic definitions of identity.

This thesis demonstrates the existence of proto-ecocritical narratives among the *fin de siècle* Gothic production by applying a combination of visual studies and ecocriticism to the study of the human-animal hybrid. In doing so, it draws attention to the artificial and biased nature of certain binary concepts rooted in the ‘human’ versus ‘animal’

¹ This thesis borrows Del Principe’s definition of ecophobia as the fear stemming “from humans’ precarious relationship with all that is nonhuman” (1). Particularly, given that this thesis focuses on the human-animal dichotomy, the term ecophobia is here used to define the feelings of rejection and fear that characters feel when confronted with animality, their own and others’.

hierarchy. Ecocriticism is a relatively recent critical theory that encourages the revision of the foundations of western philosophy, literature and art. It arose in the 1990s and, since then, has focused on human versus non-human interactions (Keetley and Wynn 1). Its status as a theoretical framework within the humanities has been contested, since an ecocritical outlook theoretically aims at disentangling the anthropocentric cognitive dualisms that initially gave birth to humanism (Iovino 54). However, critics like Iovino argue that there is no such confrontation between humanism and ecocriticism since both are “ethical visions of culture” (54). It could be argued that ecocriticism is actually more of a ‘revision’ given that it aims at analysing and deconstructing the culture-nature binary. Ecocriticism is thus an “‘evolved’ form of humanism” since it aims at substituting the established dualistic worldview for one which acknowledges complexity and difference without the need of establishing a hierarchy (55).

An ecocritical reading of identity allows for the reconstruction of the concept of the ‘human’ by rejecting the existence of an ‘other’,² or less human, more animal subject. The human-animal binary has in fact been used to deem certain groups of people as not-quite-human, such as mentally and physically disabled people or people of colour. An ecocritical approach to the concept of humanity dismantles these culturally ingrained binary oppositions, and consequently disproves the legitimacy of the established conception of ‘normality’. Moreover, in light of the current ecological crisis, a revision and reconstruction of the concepts of ‘humanity’ and ‘animality’ from a decentralising, non-anthropocentric perspective could also help to prompt a much needed change in the hierarchical power relations by which humans relate to non-humans (Past and Amberson 1).

Ecocriticism is “an inclusive culture of difference”, and literature and the audio-visual arts are the perfect means by which to raise awareness of the need of a new ethical and epistemological outlook on life and identity (Iovino 55). An ecocritical reading of *fin de siècle* Gothic fictions can greatly contribute to this necessary terminological reconstruction. As mentioned above, the nineteenth century is characterised by the anxiety of a potential animalisation of civilisation. As a consequence, Gothic fictions became populated by hybrid creatures – half human, half animal, half male, half female – such as vampires like Dracula, metamorphous priestesses such as the Woman of the Songs in *The Beetle* or the Pan-like Helen Vaughan, Vernon Lee’s Snake Lady, or the

² The term ‘other’ referring to a foreign, antagonist entity and, in this thesis, an abhuman or animal creature, will be hereafter written without quotes unless its meaning cannot be easily discerned by the context.

duplicitous Mr Hyde. The potential hybridity of these turn-of-the-century Gothic creatures tends to be represented in one, or several, of the following manners: an animal body, an animal or non-rational mind, or an overall supernatural, mystic identity. This coincides with Iovino's claim that animal inclinations in humans are traditionally associated with disabled or damaged bodies, altered mental conditions, or what she calls the "wilderness of the 'more than human'", that is, the mystical subject (55-56).

Although the construction of the modern monster is immersed in ecophobic discourses of fear and rejection of the animal, scholarship on the Gothic monster has traditionally approached the fragmentation of human identity from an anthropocentric point of view (Keetley and Wynn 3). This thesis attempts to revise the hybrid monster from a non-anthropocentric, or at least, an anthropocentric-critical perspective. Applying an ecocritical lens to the Gothic hybrid is significantly fruitful for this purpose since it allows for the deconstruction of animality's negative connotations, and thus questions the very definitions of the concepts 'animal' and 'human' (Ferri-Miralles 318). Furthermore, it helps name possible sources for the modern subject's alienation from nature and animals, and, more interestingly, from their own animality.

The first attempt at an ecogothic analysis is attributed to Simon C. Estok's article "Theorizing in a Space of Ambivalent Openness: Ecocriticism and Ecophobia" written in 2009 (Keetley and Wynn 2). In this article, Estok argues that the hatred or fear towards the non-human is "as present and subtle in our daily lives and literature as homophobia and racism and sexism" (Estok 208). After Estok, two new books and some articles have continued to apply an ecocritical approach to Gothic texts. This is the case of Smith and Hughes' publication, *Ecogothic*, a collection of thirteen essays dealing with the relationship of humans versus their environment. Although this book is a great contribution to ecocriticism, for the purpose of this thesis, the 2014 *Gothic Studies*' issue edited by David Del Principe is of more interest. Rather than dealing with the nature-humanity dichotomy, Del Principe's issue is more oriented towards the ecogothic approach that this project adopts, as it includes the relations between animals and human, and there are readings where the human body is seen as animal and a source of fear and disgust (Keetley and Wynn 3).³

³ Ađın's article entitled "A Gothic Ecocritical Analysis of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*" also follows this approach, and analyses the modern subject's fear of animality and the animal within. It particularly deals with Stoker's *Dracula*, analysing how the novel reflects on the fear of animality fed by Darwin's revelations of the proximity between humans and non-human animals.

Given that, according to Miralles, “animal studies have been less prevalent in ecocriticism than discourses about place”, it is my intention to contribute to this less explored line of investigation with the present dissertation (317). This thesis draws from the understanding of ecocriticism as the critical analysis of the relation between humans and the non-human, diverting however from the study of nature or place, and focusing on the human versus animal dichotomy. Therefore, the term ecophobia is in this thesis equated to fear and rejection of the animal, but further expanded to also comprehend feelings of fear and rejection against the animal self.

In order to comprehend the origin of self-ecophobia or fear of the animal within, it is essential to revise the foundations over which the concepts of human and animal are constructed. Scholars such as Lynn White and Alan Bleakley identify that the first dualism upon which the world has been structured is the divide between nature and culture. Reason was held as the distinguishing element, the proof of the more evolved, superior identity of the human versus the non-human (Buchanan 265). This first distinction led to the creation of a system of hierarchical pairings in which the first element only acquires meaning when compared to its “inferior and alien” other (Coupe 119). In fact, reason, or the lack thereof, not only helped differentiate animals from humans, but also normative human subjects from degenerate ones, prompting the construction of other binary oppositions, such as the man-woman, adult-child, or mind-body. The Cartesian split that defines humans as divided into a machine-like body, and a human soul or mind is also embedded in the nature-culture, animal-human dualisms. In Orning’s words, “the cogito not only made the human the sole rational being, it also split the human internally” (3). Apart from establishing the human as its sole possessor, reasoning also divided the human experience. The rational mind, the cogito, was established as the only trustworthy creator of knowledge. Therefore, imagination, irrationality and the bodily senses were rendered obsolete and unworthy (Orning 4).

This human-animal binary dates back to the Classical world,⁴ but was consolidated during the Renaissance (Lalvani 5; Orning 7).⁵ Descartes took the distinction between the

⁴ The Latin definition of human already marks a clear distinction between the human animal and the rest of the animals, as it states that “humans are the animal rationale, the animal that has reason”. However, this assumption dates even further back, as the Latin definition is a reinterpretation of the Greek “zoon logon echon”, or the animal with a rational discourse. Thus, the assumption that humans are “more than just “animal”” based on their capacity to rationalise or speak was already present in the classical world (Buchanan 265).

⁵ In her work, Orning historicises the human-animal binary by contrasting how humanity coexisted with the monstrous and the supernatural before the Renaissance, and how this changed during the era of Reason.

animal and the human to the extreme, depriving animals of any potential intelligence. For instance, he argued that animal noises were not intended for communication, but were automatic sounds that lacked any meaning, equating animals with machines (Senior 61). The human animal did possess an intelligent language, on the other hand, a characteristic used to further stress human's superiority. Language placed humanity closer to the "divine", rather than the animal, and granted humans the ownership of a soul (Buchanan 265). This established a clearer difference between humans and animals or "soulless beasts", and led to the conception of the body as machine-like, animal, and foreign (Gross 2-3). Humans were split into a cogito or "rational soul", and a "sensual body" responsible for all irrational, passionate and evil acts. It thus was the task of the mind or soul⁶ – the human side– to govern and control the animal body (Buchanan 265-66).

Orning and Bleakley have also established a relationship between this identity split and the acceptance of a visual and reason-led perspective in the arts and sciences that distinguishes between objects – non-human creatures – and subjects – human beings. For Descartes, objective perception could be attained only through the single inner eye of reason, with the rest of the senses being considered untrustworthy inasmuch as bodily, and so animal (Lalvani 13-14). As a consequence, the human observer is given the privilege of being the only animal capable of attaining an objective vision of the world (Lalvani 14). Nature, animals and the human body, on the other hand, were regarded as "divine texts" in need of coding and decoding (Lalvani 8-9).

Vision became a "powerful ideological agent in the construction [...] of certain notions about truth and reality" (Smajic 1109). This is what Lalvani calls "ocular epistemology" or the understanding of seeing as thinking (1). Not only the church, but also the emerging sciences of the Western world, used faith in the "self-transparency of

Her analysis is of great interest for the development of this thesis. However, she focuses on society's assimilation of "freaks", or in other words, "real", corporeal, living people who were perceived as monsters, whereas my work concentrates on the analysis of literary monsters, and their cultural contribution to the maintenance of the human-animal split.

⁶ In *Discourse On Method*, Descartes concludes that his identity is solely reduced to his capacity to think. In other words, that his ability to see and interpret the world is what defines his humanity and existence, rather than his body. Depending on the version of Descartes's text, this thinking "substance", the cogito, is described as being either a rational "soul" or a "mind". For instance, Laurence J. Lafleur's translation quoted in Orning goes as follows: "this ego, this soul, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body" (224); whereas in Infomotion's version, the text says "'I', that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body" (Descartes 14). Many of the Gothic texts analysed in this thesis also refer to a rational soul or mind as the key that ensures their humanity, and distances their identity from their animal body. Hence, when the terms rational soul or mind are used in this thesis, they refer to Descartes's concept of the cogito.

the object” to create meaning (Lalvani 1). During the nineteenth century, science and technology were used to seek “control of the physical world” by means of the established “faith in the objectivity of [the] knowledge” acquired through observation (Gagnier, “Wilde and the Victorians” 19). This scrutiny was not only applied to animals, but also to the human body, especially the body of those specimens which were already considered less-than-human (DeMello 16). Women, for instance, were significantly affected by the identification of the body with animality, as they were thought to be closer to the animal.⁷ Therefore, it was expected of women to control, and subdue their animal body in order to preserve the scarce humanity they supposedly had. One way of doing so was through hunger, as it was thought that the less bodily matter they had, the closer they were to being ‘human’ (Silver 9-20).

The connection between vision, objectivity and control did not only affect animal and female bodies. During the nineteenth century, all bodies were reduced to “images and representations” on the grounds of their potential animality (Lalvani 1). The objective was to categorise bodies in terms of their usefulness for the development of society. This categorisation contributed to the maintenance of the established utilitarian morality and allowed for the growth of capitalism (Orning 83; Lalvani 29-30). According to utilitarian precepts, human beings were directed by “two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure”. Pleasure was obtained from producing something which would not only benefit the individual, but “augment the happiness of the community” (Bentham 128-129). Consequently, good actions were those that contributed *productively* to one’s society. Bodily and individual desires, on the contrary, were considered detrimental. The body needed to be subjected to the impositions of the mind, thought to be governed by a ‘natural’ morality of productivity and self-sacrifice (Plunkett 123). Hence, those subjects whose minds lacked this ‘natural’ tendency, and whose actions went against the common productive good were considered less human, deviant, insane, criminal, and thus persecuted by medicine and law (Lalvani 29-30).

Bentham’s words reverberated in the works of the criminologist Cesare Lombroso, who claimed that ‘born criminals’ could be easily recognised by the presence of certain physical signs on their faces and bodies that he referred to as stigmata (Hurley, “British

⁷ DeMello Margo has written about the existent parallels between the control and the violence exercise over animals and over women’s bodies: “Pornography [...] reduces the female-animal body into meat that is consumed literally and metaphorically” (26).

Gothic Fiction” 197). Lombroso’s works gave scientific validation to the idea of the body as a text that could reveal the subject’s degree of ‘humanity’ or, in other words, ‘enlightened’ morality. In fact, most of the stigmata that signified a lack of ‘reason-based’ morality were associated with the animal world. For instance, having a bird-like nose or a simian prominent jaw was considered a sign of atavism or animalism and, therefore, proof of the subject’s sub-human condition (Hurley, *The Gothic Body* 93).

Therefore, a sight-based or surveillance perspective⁸ goes hand in hand with an ecophobic understanding of identity, as it supports the distinction between the visible animal body and the human mind (Lalvani 19). This alliance between surveillance and ecophobia is present in many *fin de siècle* Gothic texts. When a Gothic text follows a surveillance approach to identity, the supernatural creature’s hybrid tendencies are made visually obvious by incorporating a series of animal characteristics to their bodies. These characteristics are intended to provoke feelings of revulsion and rejection that alert the protagonists, or normative subjects of the antagonist’s dangerous animal tendencies. Despite its prominence, this is not the only visual and ideological approach to the *fin de siècle* supernatural hybrid. As many critics, such as Smajic, Lalvani and Mitchell explain, the nineteenth century was actually undergoing a visual and epistemological crisis. The decline of theology and metaphysical philosophy, together with the new psychological discoveries that revealed sight as another subjective sense, gave rise to a physiological and embodied visual perspective: the regime of the spectacle (Smajic 1110).

A spectacle perspective draws attention to the subjectivity of vision, and of the mind. It rejects Descartes’s “egological gaze” and places vision and mind within the body and dependant on the body. Phenomenological philosophers like Merleau-Ponty argued for the need to abandon this “camera obscura”, this alienated, incorporeal cogito, from where humans were supposed to approach the world and the other, and plunge into the

⁸ The concepts of a surveillance and a spectacle regime are borrowed from Michel Foucault’s theories on the new disciplinary mechanism that came with capitalism and modernity: the regime of surveillance. According to him, surveillance is a system based on “permanent registration” that reduces people into binary categories such as “mad/sane; dangerous/harmless; normal/abnormal” (196-199). The perfect example of this regime is Bentham’s Panopticon, a prison designed for the constant observation of inmates with the idea that the mere knowledge of their constant visibility would grant “the automatic functioning of power” (201). Foucault contrasted surveillance with the spectacle, a system which, according to him, belonged to “antiquity”, a past time when public life and a sense of community were more predominant (Foucault 216).

physical world by means of the physical self, the body. Against an objective epistemological vision, an embodied or spectacle outlook blurs boundaries between the visible and invisible, subject and object, self and other (Lalvani 20-21). According to a spectacle perspective, and given that it questions the cogito's or mind's infallibility, supernatural phenomena can be interpreted as the product of "delirium, hallucination, and reverie" (Lalvani 176). In other words, this approach allows for an alternative interpretation of monstrosity as it suggests that animality might actually originate in the eyesight or mind of the haunted subject rather than in the body of the revenant. A spectacle approach highlights vision and reason's potential for misperception and irrationality and reveals that they are just as unreliable as the rest of bodily senses (Lalvani 195-196).

Within the spectacle's regime, vision and reason are embodied, dependent upon a particular subject and, hence, potentially biased. The reading of animal-like physical stigmata as 'evil' is thus revealed as a non-objective conclusion, since this interpretation is rooted in and contributes to the maintenance of a specific ideology. Physical characteristics and biological differences are objective facts. However, the meaning assigned to them depends on the witness' own biases. A spectacle approach to the hybrid other reveals that sight and reason can also be unreliable and subjective epistemological sources by evidencing that the interpretation of the data they withdraw ultimately relies on a human subject.

Avant garde and dissident movements such as Aestheticism and Decadence opted for a spectacle perspective when portraying the supernatural hybrid since these movements question Cartesian perceptions and promote a more fluid concept of identity (Lalvani 194; Plunkett, et al. 151-152). In fact, they positioned themselves against utilitarianism and the idea of a natural morality, and argue for a body-centred conception of the self (P. Cohen). Walter Pater, the founder of Aestheticism, stated that a subject's self-development relied on their capacity to experience as many pleasurable sensations as possible (Pater 189). Rather than demonising the body and its senses, Pater gives them epistemological value and legitimises them as contributors to the subject's progress. Decadent writers went a step further as they regarded artificial, sordid and perverse experiences as equally valid stimuli for the development of the subject (Denisoff, "The Productivist Ethos" 80). Therefore, there are *fin de siècle* writers, artists and thinkers that went against "the banality [...] of the productivist culture", and argued for the necessity

of an embodied identity that recognised non-rational urges as “equally worthy pursuits”, and necessary for the subject’s personal development (Denisoff, “Decadence and Aestheticism” 36-37).

Decadent artists and dissident philosophers, such as Nietzsche, went against the utilitarian morality and set of values that alienated humans from their hybrid, animal identity (P. Cohen). They argued that, far from being ‘natural’, morality was something constructed, artificial. If this is to be true, morality would also be malleable and open to reinterpretation and change. Through their art and criticism, decadents defended “higher ethics” that would allow the individual “the freedom to submit to their desires, wherever these may lead” (Allen 392). After all, according to Nietzsche, only when humans free themselves from the “the illusory harmful division introduced between body and soul”, will they become “truly positive moral agents” (Daigle 242-43).

For Max Nordau, physician and psychologist, however, the art and mere existence of decadents and aesthetes endangered the future of civilization. From his point of view, their decadent lifestyle could propagate like an illness among the rest of the population, leading society towards atavism. For Nordau, influence worked as a contagion inasmuch the modern subject was defenceless against the received input. Consequently, in order to avoid society’s decline, the deviant subject needed be contained, and their works of art were to be avoided. In fact, Nordau directly pointed towards contemporary writers and philosophers, such as Nietzsche and Wilde, as degenerates and threats to society in his book *Entartung* or *Degeneration*.⁹ According to Nordau, only those writers and artists whose lifestyle and production agreed with the established morality should be allowed to exercise their influence over society, since theirs would have a positive impact on people (536-541).

Against Nordau’s one-sided portrayal of influence, decadent and aesthetic writings hint at a certain agency on the influenced subject’s part. They reflect how in order for influence to instigate real change, it must act upon something the subject of influence is already interested in or inclined towards. In other words, to provoke a change, influence needs to touch “some secret chord” within the subject’s mind (Wilde, DG 16-17). Decadents and aesthetes reject any kind of imposition, and argue for an embodied

⁹ Oscar Wilde is studied within the chapter ‘Decadents and Aesthetes’ (Nordau 296-337), whereas Friedrich Nietzsche is analysed in chapter V, which bears his name (Nordau 415-472).

conscience to be embraced. For these members of “outlawed thought”, the greatest danger for the progress of civilization was not succumbing to our animal nature, but, precisely, the systematic denial of its existence (Dellamora 530). Instead, they argue for the acceptance of an embodied identity which recognised human beings as necessarily hybrid, fluid, and animal. Therefore, some of these *fin de siècle* decadent and aesthetic narratives can be considered proto-ecocritical. They reject the established Cartesian morality and represent humans as irremediably hybrid, thus contributing to dismantle the negative connotations surrounding the animal and animality. Furthermore, some of these narratives suggest that allowing the ‘animal within’ a voice does not necessarily trigger social degeneration but that it might actually be the only solution to avoid western civilisation’s future stagnation.

From an External to an Internal Threat: The Monster, the Pagan God, the Ghost and the Double

Given the variety of visual, philosophical and artistic standpoints available in the late nineteenth century, it is surprising that most criticism on Gothic fiction reads the supernatural hybrid as an embodiment of social anxieties. Kelly Hurley’s *Gothic Bodies*, for instance, constitutes a thorough study of the Gothic abhuman monster from this perspective.¹⁰ Hurley’s analysis focuses on physical monstrosity, that is, visual and external abhumanness. This thesis, however, widens the scope by incorporating invisible or non-corporeal supernatural entities into the analysis of hybridity. The a-corporeality of certain supernatural creatures, such as ghosts, and the liminal nature of others, like the double, suggest that the presence of the human-animal monster might actually be the result of an *internal* haunting, a product of the subject’s mind.

This thesis also argues against Hurley’s claim that in *fin de siècle*, “narrative energy, especially in the Gothic, is ever on the side of abomination” (“British Gothic Fiction” 206). In fact, the main purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate that there are gothic narratives that portray the supernatural hybrid from a proto-ecocritical and sympathetic perspective. Similarly, I also disagree with her generalising statement that: “it should be clear that the modernist Gothic did not just manage cultural anxieties. It aggravated them, delineating the fluid and chaotic form of the modern abhuman subject with both hysterical nausea and speculative interest...” (“British Gothic Fiction” 206). Against this, I argue

¹⁰ Hurley studies abhumanness in relation to contemporary sciences in a wide range of Gothic fictions, some of which this dissertation also considers.

that the Gothic supernatural hybrid is not always represented as an abominable and threatening scapegoat for the anthropocentric, patriarchal world order. There are narratives analysed in this dissertation in which the supernatural hybrid is a malleable figure used to question, reconstruct and expand the limits of human identity, and integrate the animal in it.

In order to prove the existence of proto-ecocritical Gothic narratives, and their connection with a spectacle approach to identity, I apply a close reading to the portrayal of the supernatural hybrid and compare it to how normative characters are depicted. This allows one to discern the visual and ecocritical perspective by which identity is approached. There are three main sets of questions that I take into consideration to determine each narrative's understanding of humanity and hybridity, and whether the criteria followed responds to an ecophobic or a proto-ecocritical perspective of identity. I firstly focus on the narrative's general visual approach, paying close attention to the different strategies used and whether they respond to a Cartesian and ocularcentric¹¹ view or to a vaguer, more complex, spectacle or embodied one. I then proceed with a close reading of the hybrid versus the normative character, paying special attention to how their bodies and their senses are represented versus their minds or souls. Is the body animalised? Which senses are presented as reliable epistemological sources, and why? What is the role of the soul in the conforming of identity? Does it define humanity? These questions are essential for the development of this analysis, since they reveal whether identity is approached from a Cartesian or ecocritical approach. As previously introduced, when the body and its senses are generally represented as inferior and unreliable inasmuch as animal, the narrative adopts a Cartesian and ecophobic perspective of identity. On the other hand, those narratives that opt for the integration of the body, its needs and senses within the subject's identity follow a proto-ecocritical approach because they question the negative connotations surrounding animality.

Finally, I focus on the representation of the phenomenon of influence as another key element in discerning the narratives' overall visual and ecocritical perspective. Presenting influence as all-pervasive removes any blame from the influenced subject. This contributes to the portrayal of the monster as an external and powerful element that

¹¹ The term 'ocularcentric' is borrowed from Lalvani, who uses this term in *Photography, Vision and the Production of Modern Bodies* to describe Descartes's approach to vision and knowledge (20-21). I will also use this term to refer to the favouring of sight and vision when approaching the body of the animal other in certain narratives.

forcefully reduces characters to animal behaviour. On the other hand, when influence is reflected as a two-way phenomenon for whose success a certain invitation from the victim is required, it becomes more of an exchange than an imposition. In this case, influence is motivated from the inside, since it shows how there needs to be an initial hybrid inclination or latent animality in the so-called victim in order for influence to actually stir a change. Therefore, the stories that portray influence as an active exchange hint at an internal origin for the supernatural animal hybrid.

However, is the external hybrid always presented as a visibly recognisable monster? Is the influence of the visible monster always portrayed as a dehumanising and unavoidable imposition? Does an inner approach to influence always ally with an invisible and insider supernatural hybrid? I argue that this is not necessarily the case. Although the text's main visual perspective determines its main ecocritical approach, neither the visual nor ecocritical viewpoints establish the type of hybrid creature the narrative is allowed to depict. In other words, there are spectacle and proto-ecocritical approaches to the hybrid monster, as well as Cartesian and ecophobic ones to the ghost or the double. This thesis shows that it is possible to portray all kinds of supernatural hybrids from either a visual or an ecocritical perspective. To prove so, I apply these research questions to four main supernatural agents, from more to less external; the monster, the pagan god, the ghost and the double.

Therefore, the main criteria for the selection of works to be analysed in this thesis was the necessary presence of the above-mentioned hybrids as the stories' antagonists. Apart from that, I have paired at least one work that has traditionally been discussed as approaching the supernatural hybrid from a traditional, Gothic-realist perspective with another story that renders the hybrid from a more *avant garde*, Aesthetic or Decadent one. As previously introduced, those works written by decadents and aesthetes are more likely to depict the animal-self from a more empathetic perspective given that their very movements questioned Cartesian and deterministic constructions of identity (Plunkett, et al. 151-152). Finally, the last factor that determined the selection of works was the writers' sex. Given that women were among the most affected by the criminalisation of animality due to their already animalised position in the social imaginary, I considered it vital to contrast a woman's approach to the supernatural hybrid with those of male writers. More specifically, I wanted to analyse and contrast a woman and an aesthete's portrayal of hybridity against male writers who are typically categorised as conservative.

Hurley provides a list of Gothic authors who deal with the human-animal hybrid in “British Gothic Fiction”. In this list, she includes names such as Algernon Blackwood, Arthur Conan Doyle, H. Rider Haggard, M. R. James, Rudyard Kipling, Vernon Lee, Arthur Machen, Richard Marsh, Robert Louis Stevenson, Bram Stoker, and H.G. Wells (190). Among all of these writers, only one is a woman: Vernon Lee. Vernon Lee is the pseudonym that the female author and aesthete Violet Paget had to adopt in order to enter into the “strongly male-gendered field” of art, history and literary criticism (Evangelista, “Vernon Lee and the gender of Aestheticism” 91). Curiously enough, Lee is one of the few authors that are not analysed in Hurley’s *The Gothic Body* and she is just briefly mentioned in her chapter for the Cambridge Companion, “British Gothic Fiction”. I thus decided to include Lee in the conversation as representative of a female and potentially dissident perspective on hybridity and animality. In fact, her Gothic stories deal with many, if not all, of the hybrid figures at stake in this thesis, such as the monster, the ghost and the pagan god.

Another writer who challenged conventions and definitions of normativity was Oscar Wilde, and thus I have selected his portrayal of the double to be read against Robert Louis Stevenson’s one. In fact, according to Karschay, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* “can be read as an early plea for the re-evaluation of deviance and normativity” (207). Lee and Wilde share similar interests and tropes; first, because they both belong to the same artistic movement and share similar aesthetic principles; and second, because they both challenge societal conventions of womanhood and manhood in their writings and personal lives. Both writers insist on keeping their characters and plots “enwrapped in mystery” and indeterminacy (Lee 37; Karschay 199), and both writers were sentimentally and sexually attracted to people of their same sex (Evangelista 91). Hence, since they are expected to share a similar view concerning the portrayal of the supernatural hybrid, I chose some of their Gothic renditions of the hybrid Other to be compared against a selection of *fin de siècle* Gothic authors that most scholars, and particularly Hurley read as never siding with the “abomination” (British Gothic Fiction” 206).

The first chapter focuses on the external monster. Particularly, I study the presence or absence of ecophobia in *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, *The Beetle* by Richard Marsh, and *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* by Vernon Lee. Supported by the idea that visibility equals truth, the monster is often deemed non-human on the basis of their animalistic appearance and behaviour. This justifies and allows normative, male characters to persecute and eliminate the external degenerative threat, thus granting a return to

normalcy. Although this is the case in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, Vernon Lee's representation of the hybrid Snake Lady complicates the ecophobic identification of bestiality with animality. In this story, the influence of the female hybrid is highly beneficial for the development of Prince Alberic, the protagonist. In turn, the Prince's degeneration and death are motivated by the irrationality and brutality of those characters representing reason and authority. Therefore, *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* contradicts stereotypes built around animality and humanity, questions their objectivity and encourages a revision of identity labels.

Pagan gods in Vernon Lee's 'Dionea' and Arthur Machen's 'The Great God Pan' are presented as otherworldly revenants, ghostly reminders of western civilization's animistic past. They have elements in common with both the monster, and the ghost. Like the monster, Pan and Venus have clear animal-like physical characteristics. Moreover, they come from a foreign country, Italy, like *Dracula* and *The Beetle*. What makes pagan gods even more threatening are their ancient origins, which date further back than those of the monsters analysed in chapter one. They come from a time at the verge of civilisation, a time when the difference between nature and culture, pre-history and history was blurry, and people were more in tune with their hybridity. Furthermore, they have an insider status given that the Greek and Roman civilisations are considered to be the foundation of western culture. Pagan gods represent a step further in the internalisation of the animal other since they reveal the presence of atavism at the heart of Western society.

With ghosts, the boundary between non-humans and humans becomes even blurrier. Ghosts tend to be invisible creatures, which posits a question about the reliability of sight as creator of knowledge. In fact, ghosts were traditionally interpreted as illusions provoked by a particular state of mind or a faulty eye component. Therefore, seeing ghosts constitutes a displacement of the external monsters into the eyes or the mind of the ghost-seer. Interpreting ghost sightings as caused by a failure of either vision or reason acknowledges the presence of irrational and animal forces within the human mind and sight. Not only does the ghost posit questions about the unreliability of all bodily senses, including the privileged sense of sight, but it also reveals human reasoning as imperfect and bound to inaccuracy (Orning 85). This makes the hybrid ghost a potential internal threat, originated in the mind or sight of the ghost-seer. Yet, as is the case with the rest of supernatural hybrids, there is not one single approach to the ghost. For instance, M.R

James's ghost are hybrid creatures rather than spirits and, as such, they have more in common with the monster of the first chapter than with their counterparts in Lee's narratives. In fact, although some of Lee's ghosts manage to become corporeal, their tangibility is never confirmed, so that the reader is left wondering whether they are real or "of the imagination" (Lee 39).

The double is the most unsettling of all of the supernatural entities, as it represents the complete internalisation of the hybrid monster. They reveal that animality is not just present in the body, but that it can take hold of the subject's whole identity. In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the doppelgänger is both human and a gentleman, regardless of how atavistic they look and behave. Dorian Gray and Jekyll belong to the upper classes, Dorian being an aristocrat and Jekyll a doctor. Hence, the *fin de siècle* doppelgänger demonstrates that animality lurks from within even the most civilised of subjects. They reveal the simultaneous and indivisible presence of rational and animal impulses within the modern subject. In fact, in both narratives, the destruction of the animal double leads to the death of the rational one. Doubles are thus the ultimate threat to a Cartesian and ecophobic view of identity, since they graphically illustrate the impossibility of dividing the modern subject into an animal body and a human mind without killing them in the process.

An ecocritical and visual oriented analysis of these four Gothic supernatural entities reveals the alienation caused by anthropocentric, reason-centred constructions of reality, and emphasises the need to revise the established definitions of human identity. In fact, these nineteenth century perspectives on reality, identity and gender roles still haunt the twenty-first century's mentality, demonstrating that we are not free from our own ghostly visitations. For instance, the favouring of reason over animal impulses still affects the construction of current definitions of masculinity and femininity. Women bodies are still seen as definers of their excessive sexuality or animality, whereas men are portrayed as capable of successfully repressing and sublimating their animal instincts when desired. Moreover, the twenty-first century is immersed in a surveillance perspective. In the last two centuries, surveillance has been established as the main visual approach to life, thanks to both traditional and new media. Now, more than ever, appearances are controlled and mediated so that a subject's physique is made stand as a representation of their personality, success and sanity.

However, as predicted by some decadent artists and philosophers at the end of the nineteenth century, ignoring and repressing animals and the animal within has definitely dragged us closer to disintegration and degeneration. Anthropocentric conceptions of the world that sustain that the human and, more specifically, some 'normative' humans, are superior to the rest of living beings are responsible, not only for the spreading of racist, supremacist, sexist, classist and homophobic discourses, but, ultimately, they are also responsible for the future destruction of the planet we all inhabit.

The low level of priority given to urgent matters such as climate change and global warming reflects the disregard for other beings that an anthropocentric order entails. Applying an ecocritical lens to Gothic texts helps reflect on the artificiality and biased nature of certain established conceptions, such as those of 'animal' and 'human'. Moreover, some of the analysed narratives present the acceptance of the animal within as a solution, or rather, *the* solution to avoid becoming a monster. Rather than blaming animality for the degeneration of civilisation, these narratives present repression of the animal within and without as the actual source of individual and societal decline. Therefore, a study of the reshaping and reframing of modern subjectivity at the turn of the nineteenth century helps reflect upon the artificiality of truth constructs such as human identity, animality or hybridity. The reconciliation of humans with their own embodied animal identity could constitute an important step in de-centralising humans and acknowledging the agency of other beings. After all, as Darwin already revealed two hundred years ago, humans are as reliant on the environment as on their own bodies to survive and prevail.

1. The Human-Animal Monster

Monstrosity in the *fin de siècle* is directly linked to animality: the more animal, the less human a subject becomes. Despite this seemingly obvious correlation, the monster-animal relationship has received little critical attention in literary studies until recently, as Ortiz-Robles highlights in his 2015 article ‘Liminanimal’ (10). Within Gothic studies, the monster’s animality has tended to be read as a metaphor for its depraved sexuality or its racial difference, but rarely has it been contextualised within actual concerns about the unfathomability of animal identity and the potentiality of an actual human-animal hybridity (Ortiz-Robles 10-11). Ortiz-Robles argues for the need to read “the monster” in connection with Darwin’s treatises and the impact that the randomness of natural selection had over Victorian’s positivist and utilitarian ideas on progress and civilisation (11). Not only were humans exposed as susceptible to returning to more primal stages of evolution in Darwin’s treatises, but also the rest of the animals were revealed as capable of developing a more complex intelligence. This knowledge strongly complicates the ecophobic and Cartesian concept of human identity deeply rooted in people’s consciousness since the beginning of western civilisation by which humans are at the top of the chain of beings: the superior animal. Yet, the main response to these discoveries in literature, scientific discourse and philosophy was denial and the categorical reaffirmation of the difference and supremacy of humans over the rest of the animals. In order to defend this hierarchy, it became important to identify the human subjects who presented symptoms of a less evolved nature. The possession of animal characteristics, whether physical or psychological, became a sign of the subject’s monstrosity or degenerate nature not only in fiction, but also in scientific and philosophical discourses.

Two of the most relevant medical men whose work contributed to the understanding of animality as degeneracy were Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau. Within a scientific framework, the presence of the animal could allegedly be objectively determined, following the scientific method. Thus, ocular epistemology and ecophobia became allies in the identification of the degenerate subject. For both these men of science, any visible physical feature that resembled an animal was understood as an undeniable proof of the subject’s inner criminality. Lombroso’s works did, in fact, aim at proving that criminality was a biological phenomenon: the consequence of being born with a less evolved, more animal identity (Hurley, *Gothic Body* 92-93). Moreover, he argued that these ‘born criminals’ could be easily distinguished by analysing the presence of certain animal

stigmata: visual warnings of their lesser humanity (Hurley, “British Gothic Fiction” 198; Lombroso, “Criminal Man” 553). This led to the creation and publication of many racial, class and gender caricatures in which the supposed inferiority of some people was visually represented by associating them with certain animals: snakes and felines with women, or apes with Irish people, for instance (Ortiz-Robles 12).

The criminalisation of the animal-like subject did not rely only on their physical appearance, but their behaviour was also tracked down. From a surveillance perspective, animality was not only determined by the subject’s physical appearance, but also by their irrational behaviour. This led to a monitoring of both the body and the mind of the modern subject. Morality became a synonym for humanity, since many thinkers regarded it as a mechanism guided by “reason” and “law” destined to help the subject distinguish between good and evil (Bentham 128). Many thinkers, like Nordau, consequently viewed morality as something innate rather than culturally constructed. Nordau considered that morality was based on “scientific truth”, and that there was, therefore, only one true, human morality, one that guided people towards the unselfish pursuit of “what is ‘useful’ in terms of the progress of the species” (Mosse xxii). In other words, a utilitarian morality. In the context of fears of societal decadence, the possession of the right moral compass was promoted as the key that distinguished the healthy from the degenerate subject. Individual pleasure was regarded as animal and it needed to be avoided for the subject not to descend to an animal-like identity. This reminds of Descartes’s distinction between humans and animals on the grounds of the latter’s lack of a rational soul or moral conscience. In fact, Nordau diagnosed the subjects whose behaviour did not follow the ‘natural’ established morality with “Degeneration and Hysteria”, arguing that this made them more animal, and so less human (Nordau, *Degeneration* 15).

A priori, the portrayal of the hybrid Gothic monster would seem to subscribe to this sight-based surveillance perspective, as *fin de siècle* monsters were characterised by an obvious animal-human hybrid body. This explains why most Gothic criticism has tended to interpret all hybrid monsters as ecophobic representations of identity. However, this thesis aims precisely at demonstrating that monstrosity is not always represented from an ocularcentric perspective in turn-of-the-century Gothic fiction. In fact, there are some proto-ecocritical narratives which subvert the usual negative connotations surrounding

animality, asking the same question as Ortiz-Robles: “why should the animal be monstrous?” (13).

This chapter compares the surveillance portrayal of the hybrid in Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* and Richard Marsh’s *The Beetle* with Vernon Lee’s aesthetic and spectacle oriented tale, *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady*. All three narratives are concerned with the potential future degeneration or stagnation of society, particularly the role that damaging influences may have on the modern subject’s identity. Moreover, they also share the presence of a hybrid creature with clear animal characteristics whose influence provokes a series of changes in the protagonists’ personalities. However, the way they approach the hybrid and its influence is completely different. Against *Dracula* and *The Beetle*’s surveillance perspective, *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* adopts a spectacle approach that subverts the established negative connotations surrounding animality. Lee’s narrative manages to include the two approaches to the hybrid analysed in this thesis, embodied in the characters of Prince Alberic and his grandfather, the Duke Bathalsar Maria. The Duke shares the Crews of Light’s surveillance and ecophobic perspective, whereas Alberic approaches the Snake Lady from a place of sympathy. Moreover, Lee’s narrative does not explicitly take sides or offer a final explanation of the hybrid woman’s identity, as *The Beetle* and *Dracula* do. Instead, it lets the unfolding of events speak for itself, given that the plot constantly contradicts the characters’ initial assumptions and subverts traditional symbolic associations.

Vernon Lee would have been a good candidate for a diagnosis of “degeneration and hysteria” according to Nordau and Lombroso, as she was a writer and art critic associated with Aestheticism. Aestheticism and Decadence were two literary movements that purposely went against utilitarian morality, approaching life and identity as “something fluid [and] transitory”, rather than fixed and innate. Moreover, they included the body and its senses as valuable epistemological sources, arguing that personal growth was also reliant on “feeling and bodily experience” (Plunkett 151-52). Ultimately, as a female writer of “strong personality and strongly held opinions” (Maxwell and Pulham, “Introduction and Notes” 10) who had to assume the masculine pseudonym of Vernon Lee to be taken seriously among male literary elites, Violet Paget’s approach to the hybrid was bound to be different to that of Marsh and Stoker (E. Cohen 1; Evangelista, “Vernon Lee and the Gender of Aestheticism” 91).

This first chapter begins by determining each story's general visual approach, then proceeds to analyse how they portray the hybrid other. The narratives' visual approaches greatly determine their degree of ecophobia, since a surveillance perspective produces an ecophobic rendition of the hybrid, whereas a spectacle one leads to a more sympathetic portrayal. Finally, the representation of normative characters is also analysed since the narratives' visual approach also determines how the protagonists are depicted. A thorough character analysis demonstrates that there are Gothic stories that do not approach the human-animal monster from an ecophobic perspective, but whose understanding of human identity can be, instead, regarded as proto-ecocritical.

1.1 Meagre Facts or Dry Facts? Vision, Reason and the Portrayal of the Animal Hybrid in *Dracula*, *The Beetle* and *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady*

These narratives' alliance to either a surveillance or a spectacle approach is strongly tied to their different narrative structures and styles. On the one hand, *Dracula* and *The Beetle* make use of several narrative strategies to imbue the events told with as much veracity as possible (Ortiz-Robles 17). The most noticeable one is the use of several first-person narrators, among whom there are doctors, detectives, professors and scientists. This not only presents their experiences as collective, but the reliability of the narrators seems to further guarantee the objectivity of their testimony. Apart from that, these novels also provide readers with "authentic" proof, such as journal extracts, newspaper fragments or letters, thus demonstrating their reliance on visual cues to increase the viability of the events narrated. Their reliance on sight and reason as producers of objective, undeniable evidence translates into a preoccupation with providing readers with reliable witnesses and authentic proof. These narratives' stylistic choices are influenced by their visual approach, and so is their portrayal of the human-animal monster.

Among the plethora of characters and narrators in *Dracula*, there is a scientist, Dr Seward, a solicitor and his wife, Mr and Mrs Harker, and Van Helsing, a doctor and philosopher. All of them together combine the powers of science, medicine and law. On the other hand, in *The Beetle*, there are four main narrators: Robert Holt, a former gentleman and current beggar, the scientist Sydney Atherton, Marjorie Lindon, the wife-to-be of the politician Paul Lessingham, and the detective Augustus Champnell. Both

investigating teams have thus the backing of science and law in their crusades against the human-animal.

In *The Beetle*, the reliability of the whole tale ultimately rest upon Champnell's shoulders for several reasons. First, his is the only reliable, on-time and first-hand account available, since the other three are constructed *a posteriori*. Moreover, Holt and Marjorie's credibility is further compromised. Robert Holt does not actually tell his story, but it is constructed by compiling "the statements which Holt made to Atherton and to Miss Lindon" (Marsh 275). Marjorie's contribution, on the other hand, was written compulsively and half-consciously during her psychological treatment after her encounter with the Beetle. The credibility of these reports is therefore compromised, since the first one is a counterfeit and the second the product of a moment of madness or mental alteration.¹² Yet, Holt and Marjorie's narrations are ultimately validated by Champnell, whose role as the detective endows him with the necessary authority to authenticate all of the evidence provided: "the tale has never been told, but I have unimpeachable authority for its authenticity" (Marsh 274).

Despite the narrative's alliance with the scientific method, the last paragraph in Champnell's Case Book questions the extent to which data collection and scientific observation are a successful means for the production of true knowledge:

So far as I am personally concerned, experience has taught me that there are indeed more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy, and I am quite prepared to believe that the so-called Beetle [...] was – or is, for it cannot be certainly shown that the thing is not still existing – a creature born neither of God nor man. (276)

Science – or philosophy – is not trustworthy and omnipotent, since there is some phenomena that it cannot explain. The ending is also open, to a certain degree, as although evidence of the destruction of the Beetle's lair is offered, its human or animal body is never found, and so the creature's death cannot be completely certified. This leaves an open door for a return of the hybrid monster.

Dracula's plot evolves in the opposite direction. The Count is presented as an extraordinary mystery at first, and as the narrative progresses, he is increasingly deprived

¹² Suspicion of madness is a strategy used in literature to question a character's reliability, which makes Marjorie's account a dubious piece of evidence (Margree 75-6).

of his supernatural aura and finally reduced to the category of animal and born criminal. Stoker's intention to emulate and remain as loyal to the scientific method as possible is actually stated in the very prologue (Auerbach and Skal, "Preface and notes" 5). In it, some anonymous source guarantees that "all the records chosen are exactly contemporary", and that "all needless matters have been eliminated" in an attempt to make this story "stand forth as simple fact" (5). *Dracula* takes the pretension of veracity more seriously as all first-person accounts are said to be written or even recorded in real time and by the actual people involved. Moreover, this novel also includes more documents and visual proof than *The Beetle*. Apart from Mina, Lucy, Harker and Dr Seward's diaries and journals, *Dracula* also includes letters, pages from reputable newspapers, and even the script of Van Helsing's phonograph diary. Therefore, the novel presents sight and reason as producers of objective knowledge, confirming its surveillance approach.

Similar to *The Beetle*, however, *Dracula*'s closing "note" questions the validity of all of the evidence collected during the hunt for the Count. When Harker removes the papers from their secret vault, he reports:

We were struck with the fact, that in all the mass of material of which the record is composed, there is hardly one authentic document; nothing but a mass of type-writing, except the later notebooks of Mina and Seward and myself, and Van Helsing's memorandum. We could hardly ask anyone, even did we wish to, to accept these as proofs of so wild a story. (326)

These men realise that, after all of their constant gathering of "facts, meagre facts, verified by books and figures [...] of which there can be no doubt", most of their documents consist of their own personal accounts of the events (Stoker 35). Thus, the entire reliability of their story relies on the degree of trust that potential readers would be willing to place in them and in their authority, rather than the facts collected. Yet their belief in vampires persists, based on the faith that their own reasoning and sight can objectively decode reality. Instead of questioning the scope of the scientific method, as Champnell does in *The Beetle*, Van Helsing completely disregards the need for definite evidence by stating, "we want no proofs; we ask none to believe us" (327). Despite using science and technology to determine the vampire's identity and hunt him down, the novel's final

remark recalls religious faith as it requires the Crew of Light to have blind faith in their own eyesight and mental capabilities.¹³

Against *Dracula* and *The Beetle*'s obsession with "meagre facts" and first person narrators, *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* is an aesthetic, highly symbolic fable told by an omniscient storyteller (Stoker 35). Instead of trying to present the events as true, Lee's story is openly artificial, set in the past, and in the fictional land of Luna, Italy. Moreover, the prologue states the tale's complete disregard for facts, given that what actually concerns the narrator is precisely what lies beneath "dry historical fact[s]" (Lee 183). The exact date when the Duchy of Luna becomes extinct matters little, as what interests the omniscient narrator are the events that propelled its destruction. Contrary to Stoker and Marsh's fact-dependent, surveillance narrative, Lee's story approaches the events from a spectacular angle, one in which the characters' interpretation of the events is key for the development of the story.

Given that a spectacle perspective questions the objectivity of visual signs, *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* has the potential to subvert, or at least challenge, the ecophobic assumption that contact with the animal is detrimental for the subject. In fact, this narrative questions the meaning attached to certain symbols, such as the binary opposition of sun and moon, nature and civilisation. Traditionally, the moon is associated with nature, and so, with irrationality and degeneration, whereas the sun is the symbol of masculinity and reason. Despite the Snake Lady being associated with the moon, and the Duke and his palace with the sun, the narrative challenges the meaning behind those symbols, since it is the Duke's actions that bring about the degeneration and extinction of the Duchy of Luna. The hybrid's death does not equate to the management of the threat. Instead, it is the Snake Lady's assassination that actually prompts both the Duke and Alberic's mental degeneration and death, leaving the Duchy without an heir. The ending corroborates the importance of understanding the prologue's warning about the unreliability of facts and symbols and the need to look beneath them if one wants to comprehend the actual "strange story of Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady" (Lee 183)

¹³ The "Crew of Light" was coined by Christopher Craft to refer to the group of respectable citizens that haunt the vampire in *Dracula* with the help of the enlightened powers of science and medicine (445).

1.2 The Hybrid: Visible and Invisible Animality

Given their shared narrative and visual approach to the hybrid, *Dracula* and *The Beetle* use similar ecophobic strategies to deprive the monstrous hybrid of a soul or humanity: the more animal they seem, the less human they are. Their alliance with a surveillance perspective is quickly established as both novels present readers with an early, detailed, physiognomic and phrenological description of the supernatural hybrid. Jonathan Harker writes an exhaustive report of the Count's facial and physical features in his journal as soon as he has a chance to observe him closely:

His face was strong [...] aquiline, with a high bridge of the thin nose and peculiarly arched nostrils; with lofty domed forehead, and hair growing scantily round the temples, but profusely elsewhere. [...] The mouth [...] was fixed and rather cruel looking, with peculiarly sharp white teeth [...]. For the rest, his ears were pale and at the tops extremely pointed; the chin was broad and strong, and the cheeks firm though thin. The general effect was one of extraordinary pallor. (Stoker 23-24)

If contemporary readers were up to date with Lombroso's theories, they would have felt as uneasy as Harker did in the presence of Dracula, since all of these features were considered signs of the subject's fierceness and atavism. A disproportionate skull, protruding jaws, strange ears, and any physical characteristic that resembled an animal in general, particularly monkeys, dogs or birds of prey, were among the typical physical abnormalities that gave 'born criminals' away, according to the criminologist (Hurley, *The Gothic Body* 93; "British Gothic Fiction" 197). Therefore, the novel presents Dracula as an animal-like potential 'criminal' much before Van Helsing arrives to help diagnose and label the Count.

Similarly, contemporary readers of *The Beetle* should have been aware of the Arab's potential non-humanity from an early point, as Holt provides a detailed description of the creature's "supernaturally ugly" appearance within the first chapter (16):

The cranium, and, indeed, the whole skull, was so small as to be disagreeably suggestive of something animal. The nose, on the other hand, was abnormally large; so extravagant [...] it resembled the beak of some bird of prey. A characteristic of the face – and an uncomfortable one! – was that, practically, it stopped short at the mouth. [...] This deformity – for the absence of chin amounted to that – it was which gave to the face the appearance of something not human – that and the eyes [...]. I felt they could do with me as they would; and they did. Their gaze was unfaltering, having the bird-like trick of never blinking... (Marsh 16-17)

Holt's thorough account of the Arab's features demonstrates that this novel also uses physiognomy and phrenology to highlight the Arab's potential animality. Moreover, this

fragment establishes a clear link between deformity, animality and repulsion. The Arab's possession of a smaller than average skull is seen as indicative of the subject's animality, which in turn provokes an instinctive reaction of disgust in the observer. Therefore, both novels establish their hybrid antagonists' animality early on by means of a Lombrosian physiognomic study, and alert readers and protagonists alike to the hybrid's potential degeneration.

These creatures' criminality is not only hinted at visually. Their behaviour and animal abilities are also presented as proof of their monstrosity. Dracula, for instance, is presented as being extraordinarily strong for a man of his age. He is also improperly impulsive for a man of his rank and is overcome by recurrent fits of "demonic fury" (Stoker 31). Similarly, Holt notices that the Beetle seems to always be "overwhelmed by his own feelings" (Marsh 24). Struggling to command one's emotions was seen as another sign of inferiority and animality, as it meant that the mind or reason was not strong enough to control the impulsive nature of one's animal body. In fact, Holt also remarks that the "the muscles of [the Beetle's] face were working as if they were wholly beyond his own control" (Marsh 24), revealing that the hybrid's body moved on its own, without the control of its owner. This lack of self-restraint is eerie for both Harker and Holt as, from their Cartesian and ecophobic perspective, to be human, one's mind needs to be always in control of the body. Otherwise, the subject is dangerously leaning towards a more human-animal, and thus inferior, identity.

In fact, it is when Dracula's behaviour matches his animal appearance that Harker's feelings about him turn from scepticism to utter terror:

But my very feelings changed to repulsion and terror when I saw the whole man slowly emerge from the window and begin to crawl down the castle wall over the dreadful abyss, face down, with his cloak spreading out around him like great wings. [...] I saw the fingers and toes grasp the corners of the stones [...], and by this using every projection and inequality move downwards with considerable speed, just as a lizard moves along a wall. (Stoker 39)

In this fragment, Dracula demonstrates not only that he is able to literally move like a lizard, but also, he is able to perfectly replicate the way monkeys grab onto bricks with their toes, and he even resembles a bat when his cloak falls over his head like two black wings. This scene reveals that in addition to *seeming* animal, Dracula is also able to *behave* like an animal. This is what confirms Harker's suspicions about Dracula's

potential non-humanity, and consequently turns his feelings from uncanniness to complete “repulsion and terror”.

The ultimate step in the complete destruction of the carefully drawn distinction between humans and animals in these two novels comes with the revelation of these two creatures’ metamorphic quality. The Arab can take the shape of a Beetle at will, and Dracula can transform himself into a bat, a wolf or dog. Not only do these hybrids look animal and behave animalistically, but they can also literally *become* animal, which fully confirms their non-humanity and monstrosity in the eyes of the protagonists.

Their monstrosity is further highlighted by associating their powers of transformation with the female principle. For instance, Dracula’s metamorphic ability takes place under the influence of the moon, a symbol traditionally associated with women (Dijkstra 340). Moreover, Dracula is also associated with felines, such as the panther or the lion,¹⁴ animals typically used for the representation of the *femme fatale* or animal woman (Dijkstra 289-294).¹⁵ This and other evidence in the novel hint at Dracula’s gender hybridity and present the Count as a feminised monster who, in lacking the “civilising’ rays of the male sun [...], reverted to the predatory nature of the animals” (Dijkstra 340). Gender hybridity and specifically femininity are linked with animality in Stoker’s novel, as the more female-like Dracula is, the more animal he becomes.

The correlation between animality and womanhood is made even clearer in *The Beetle*, where the Arab’s ability to transform into a beetle and its female sex are simultaneously revealed:

I saw him taking a different shape before my eyes. His loose draperies all fell off him, and, [...] they issued [...] a monstrous creature of a beetle type. The man himself was gone. [...] ...and in less time than no time, there stood in front of me, naked from top to toe, my truly versatile oriental friend. One startling fact nudity revealed [...]. My visitor was not a man, but a woman, and, judging from the brief glimpse which I had of her body, by no means old or ill-shaped either. (Marsh 109; 111)

“The man himself” disappears not only because he becomes a beetle, but also because its naked body reveals that the Beetle was never a man, but a woman. There are a few

¹⁴ “There was something so panther-like in his movement- something so unhuman, that it seemed to sober us all from the shock of his coming. [...]; but the evil smile as quickly passed into cold stare of lion-like disdain” (Stoker 266).

¹⁵ There are other hints that have been traditionally interpreted by critics as signs of Dracula’s feminine traits. For instance, the scene in which he forces Mina to feed from tends to be associated with a usurpation of the typical female functions of “breeding and bleeding” (Mulvey-Roberts 83; Craft 458).

previous suggestions of her potential female nature; nevertheless, as Holt doubts on several occasions whether he is in the presence of a woman or a man. His surveillance perspective makes him dismiss the idea on the grounds of the creature's ugliness, and remarks that, if it ended up being a woman, it must be one who had "yielded to her depraved instincts as to have become nothing but a ghoulish reminiscence of womanhood" (Marsh 24). Holt's statement reveals two key assumptions about womanhood, monstrosity and the connection between the two. This affirmation shows that Holt considers that women naturally possess "depraved instincts", suggesting that they are inherently more animal-like than men. Moreover, he directly links monstrosity to women's lack of restraint, as the moment they "yield" to their instincts, that is, their bodily, animal desires, they lose their already scant humanity and become ghoulish creatures or monsters.

Darwin's *The Descent of Man* asserts the supposed inferiority of women, and their status as the 'other' sex is discussed in a great number of medical, criminal and scientific studies, such as Lombroso's *The Female Offender* (Hurley, *The Gothic Body* 97; Dijkstra 211). All of these helped construct an image of women as unstable and less evolved beings, who were more prone to irrational and atavistic behaviour than men because, in Lombroso's words, "in figure, in size of brain, in strength, in intelligence, [women were] nearer to the animal and the child" (Lombroso, "Atavism and Evolution" 48). Moreover, New Women's claims to economic and intellectual independence fuelled a proliferation of studies on women's nature that aimed to establish a model of female normalcy (Botting 138; Hurley, "British Gothic Fiction" 199). As a result of this, assertive and thus 'masculine' conduct in women was catalogued as deviant and monstrous (Stott 23; Youngs 28). Active, independent, and especially sexually self-assured women were seen as "dangerous backsliders", since their disruption of gender binaries would ultimately lead men and the whole species onto "the road to destruction" and "sappy effeminacy" (Dijkstra 216, 211).¹⁶ Therefore, gender hybridity, the presence of masculine behaviour in women and also the presence of feminine behaviour in men, becomes yet another sign of the subject's potential animality, and monstrosity. Ecophobia and misogyny become interconnected in the portrayal of the *fin de siècle* hybrid other, a connection that is

¹⁶ "The road to progress was masculine aggression, the road to destruction sappy effeminacy" (Dijkstra 211).

present, not only in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, but also in many, if not most of the Gothic fiction of the period, including the narratives at stake in this thesis.

Above all, *Dracula* and the *Beetle*'s sex and species hybridity is the embodiment not only of animality, but of all of the contemporary fears regarding the potential regression and degeneration of western society. For instance, although *Dracula* has been brilliantly identified as a representation of the entire animal kingdom by Ortiz-Robles (14), I argue that he actually stands for nature as a whole. In fact, he is not only capable of controlling, behaving, and transforming into different animals, but also of taking the shape of mist and dust and commanding "the storm, the fog, the thunder" (Stoker 211). Based on his connection with these natural phenomena, it can be concluded that *Dracula* stands for the mysterious and terrifying powers of nature in its entirety.

Dracula and the *Beetle* therefore stand for a dissuasive example of the consequences of random evolution for the modern subject (Ascari 74).¹⁷ In fact, once their supernatural aura is removed, they are presented as specimens of an ancient hybrid human-animal species of which they are the only survivors. In fact, there are many hints that these creatures' longevity and antiquity stretches back to pagan times. For instance, when *Dracula* talks to Harker about Romania's history, he not only mentions medieval times with remarkable familiarity, but also he goes so far as to mention the names of ancient tribes, and pagan Nordic gods, such as Thor and Wodin, thus suggesting that he might have been alive for longer than Van Helsing estimates (Stoker 33).¹⁸ The Arab, on the other hand, is directly connected to the ancient Cult of Isis, a sect that also dates back to the Egyptian pagan era. Therefore, both hybrids' origins seem to date back to a time too close to prehistory for comfort; that is, a time when clear distinctions between humans and animals were not as established. These two hybrids are thus the remnants of a past when there was not such a clear cut distinction between animals and humans (Denisoff,

¹⁷ As Ascari says in his book, *A Counter-History of Crime Fiction*, rather than a supernatural monster, *Dracula* is finally presented as a "freak of nature", the consequence of random devolution: "drawing on his contemporaries' faith in the power of science to explain what was once perceived as supernatural, Stoker presented *Dracula* as a freak of nature and as a criminal rather than as a devil to be 'exorcised'" (Ascari 74). They supernatural qualities are dismissed by means of scientific or biological explanations.

¹⁸ Van Helsing explains that the Count must be "that Voivode *Dracula* who won his name against the Turk, over the great river of the very frontier of Turkey-land", that many scholars have associated with Valde Tepes or Vlad Drăculea (212). He also argues that he survived until the nineteenth century thanks to a pact with the evil one that had transformed him into a vampire or "wampyr" (212).

“The Dissipating Nature”).¹⁹ This past proves not to be completely surmounted, as in their arrival to Great Britain when they manage to drag some of the protagonists towards a more animal, and thus monstrous, identity.

As a response to the hybrid’s threat, the main concern of these novels is to restore a clear distinction between the animal and the human, between normative and degenerate subjects, in order to prevent the potential future decline of civilization. Thus, apart from visually identifying the other by means of their animal appearance and behaviour, human subjects are ultimately identified by their possession of a moral and ecophobic soul. The concept of soul in *Dracula* and *The Beetle* is reminiscent of Nordau’s concept of morality to a great extent, as he also portrays morality as an inherent quality that allows humans to distinguish between ‘good’ and ‘evil’, evil being the selfish pursuit of one’s animal desires (Nordau, *Degeneration* 260).²⁰ Morality and ecophobia are thus linked to the concept of soul, both in *Dracula* and *The Beetle* and in Nordau’s utilitarian precepts. Moreover, they all establish the individual’s absence of a soul as the key element that distinguishes the ‘Un-Dead’ - the ego-maniacs, mystics and vampires - from healthy subjects (Nordau 259). Moreover, inasmuch as the possession of a rational soul grants the characters’ humanity, the soul in these narratives is also an equivalent to Descartes’ cogito. Therefore, the monsters lack thereof transforms them into animals, irrational creatures. This can be seen in Harker’s remark that he is “the only living soul” in *Dracula*’s castle (Stoker 30-31), that is, the only human being, a suspicion that is later confirmed by *Dracula*’s lack of a reflection in the mirror (Auerbach and Skal, “Preface and notes” 31). Similarly, the moment Lucy fully transitions into a vampire she is referred to as a “foul Thing which had taken Lucy’s shape without her soul” (Stoker 190). This shows how humanity is linked to the subject’s possession of a soul because the moment Lucy’s soul leaves her body, she is no longer regarded as a fellow human but a “foul Thing”. In other words, once the subject has abandoned the established ecophobic morality, adopting a hybrid identity, they are no longer considered human. The possession of a soul or moral compass is thus understood in *Dracula* as the core element that forms

¹⁹ As Denisoff clarifies, Greco-Roman paganism complicates the nineteenth-century anthropocentric and “speciesist” concept of humanity, since this proto-religion preached respect and reverence for “other animals and life forms” (“The Dissipating Nature” 434).

²⁰ “The ego-maniac of this kind is no longer merely insensible to good and evil, and incapable of discriminating between them, but he has decided predilection for evil, esteems it in others, does it himself every time he can act according to his inclination, and finds in it the peculiar beauty that the sane man finds in good” (Nordau 260).

the subject's humanity and identity, as the moment they do not follow the established morality, they are regarded as soulless monstrous "things".

This correlation between morality, soul and humanity is also present in *The Beetle*, where Holt places human identity entirely in the soul and brain of the subject. For Holt, his identity, "the I, the ego", as he says, resides entirely in the brain (Marsh 20). Since reason was the key element that separated beasts from humans (Buchanan 265), the subject's human identity is understood as residing solely in their 'brains', the body being completely irrelevant for the development of the subject's identity. Not only that, but Holt also portrays the body as animal, inferior to the mind, and potentially dangerous for the subject's human identity. This can be seen when he reflects on how fast the "descent" in his manners and behaviour was once hunger and the rest of primal needs took over: "... work of any kind would have been welcomed, so long as it would have enabled me to keep body and soul together. [...] how easy is the descent!" (18). Holt's statement subscribes to a Cartesian concept of identity, as it divides the human subject into an animal body and a human soul, and argues that in order to keep them together, the soul or human half needs to be in constant control of the animal body. Moreover, Holt's words also reflect how a Cartesian concept of human identity is ultimately fuelled by ecophobia, since the supremacy of the body over the soul is equated to the subject's "descent", thus representing the body as inferior and dangerous inasmuch as animal.

Contrary to *Dracula*, however, *The Beetle* seems to recognise the presence of a soul in the animal-like Priestess: "I said to myself that this could be nothing human – nothing fashioned in God's image could wear such a shape as that. [...] the soul of something evil entered into me in the guise of a kiss" (Marsh 20). Even if Holt labels the Priestess as non-human, he also acknowledges the presence of an "evil" soul in her kiss. If soul equals morality, an evil soul would therefore stand for an evil morality, one that goes against the established precepts of selflessness and restraint: a body-centred, animal morality. Even if *The Beetle* does not portray the supernatural hybrid as soulless, it does establish a clear distinction between possessing a human and a non-human soul. Inasmuch as the non-human soul is categorised as 'evil' on the grounds of the hybrid's animal qualities, this novel is also drawing on an ecophobic reading of identity.

The analysis of the Gothic supernatural hybrid in these two novels confirms that a surveillance perspective leads to an ecophobic portrayal of human identity that not only

affects the hybrid, but also divides the protagonists' identity into a human "ego" and an animal body. The monster in these novels stands for the representation of a pre-modern, animalistic version of the human animal: a reminder of the randomness of evolution, and of the protagonists' irremediable animality (Bleakley).

The hybrids' threat resides in their capacity to turn apparently sane, healthy subjects into hybrid beings like them. *Dracula* and *The Beetle* are therefore represented as catalysts of people's inner degeneration, suggesting that the victim's weakness and their lack of self-control and restraint play a key role in the contagion of animality as well (Karschay 160). In fact, according to Nordau, there were certain individuals whose brain centres had been damaged by the rapid changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution, and who had consequently developed a contagious nervous disposition that made them disregard the maintenance of social order and the common good (Mosse xxi). Renfield, the madman, Lucy, the animal woman, and Holt, the impoverished gentleman, the effects the hybrid has on weaker natures exemplify to some degree.

This fear of the contagious nature of animality translates into an obsession with drawing a clear line between the animal and the human in order to justify the persecution and extermination of the hybrid subject. Thus, in order to prevent the hybrid other from creating an "ever widening circle of semi-demons", a group of English gentlemen with a "good, unselfish cause", the identification and annihilation of the human-animal monster, will unite (Stoker 53-4, 71). The portrayal of the hybrid in *Dracula* and *The Beetle* proves that approaching identity from a surveillance and Cartesian perspective necessarily creates identity binary oppositions fuelled by ecophobia. As a consequence, anyone who does not conform to the established definition of 'human' is immediately labelled as a non-human monster, a category that justifies the persecution and extermination of the non-normative, hybrid subject.

On the other hand, *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* does not reach any specific conclusions regarding the Snake Lady's humanity or lack thereof. This short tale tells the story of a young prince, heir to the imaginary House of Luna in Italy, who spends his solitary childhood contemplating a Gothic tapestry representing Alberic the Blond and Oriana. Alberic grows up loving the tapestry and the lady in it, so that when his nurse removes the chest of drawers that hid the woman's skirt and reveals Oriana's snake tail, the lad is neither horrified nor repulsed. His grandfather, the Duke Balthasar Maria, on

the other hand, is disturbed by this revelation, as he is scared of snakes. Consequently, he orders that the immoral tapestry be changed for a biblical scene of female respectability and male unrighteousness – the story of Susanah and the Elders. When Alberic discovers the change, he is far from pleased, and in a rage fit, cuts the image to pieces. Alberic's irrational reaction triggers his grandfather's decision to send him to the abandoned Castle of Sparkling Waters as a punishment. However, this ruined castle turns out to be the home of Oriana, the Snake Lady represented in Alberic's beloved tapestry.

The introduction of the characters already suggests that rather than presenting readers with a one-sided approach to the hybrid, as *Dracula* and *The Beetle* do, Lee's aesthetic story offers two different approaches to the animal other, embodied in the Duke and his grandson. Moreover, the narrative also offers two possible versions of Oriana's legend: one told by a storyteller, and another by a priest. From the Christian priest's perspective, Oriana is a "demon [...] or witch, malefica or stryx" who has been transformed into a snake for "her sins", thus connecting outer appearance and inner animality (Lee 210). He adds that this "evil creature", "being of the nature of fairies, cannot die unless her head be severed from the trunk", which recalls Van Helsing instructions on how to kill a vampire (Lee 212). Hence, for the priest, Oriana is another version of a female vampire: a dangerous and animalising creature whose influence will corrupt Alberic's soul.

Against the priest's tale, the narrative presents readers with another version of the legend that offers a different explanation of Oriana's hybrid identity. According to the mysterious storyteller, Oriana is not a demon, but a fairy, a creature that, although supernatural, does not carry as much negative connotation. Moreover, the storyteller states that Oriana's transformation into a Snake was not motivated by her behaviour, but that she was "condemned for no fault, [...] by envious powers" (Lee 207). This version directly contradicts the priest's surveillance view of identity, as it maintains that the Snake Lady's animal appearance is not a reflection of her inner animality, but that she has been assigned those animal characteristics by an unknown third party as an undeserved punishment.

Hence, the storyteller's story unburdens Oriana from any responsibility for her animality, and challenges the objectivity of ocular epistemology. This version of Oriana's legend reveals animal stigmata as artificial signs of degeneration, rather than a real

reflection of a subject's actual degeneracy. Having been assigned by jealous mysterious powers, animal stigmata are rendered meaningless and obsolete. This completely undermines the priest, *Dracula* and *The Beetle's* Lombrosian and surveillance approach to hybridity. *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* suggests that the perception of animality might not lie in the body of the hybrid, but in the eye of the biased observer. Lee's story flips the responsibility as it exonerates the scrutinised subject. At the same time, it places the animal within the mind of the prejudiced observer who, in Wilde's words, "see[s] the object as in itself it really is not" (CA 986).

Given that it questions the connection between the animal and degeneration, *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* complicates the interpretation of the role that animality plays in the construction of identity. Hence, although there are several clues hinting at Oriana's hybridity, their ultimate interpretation relies on their contextualisation within the plot. For instance, both the Gothic origin of the tapestry and the Lady's medieval attire already establish Oriana as coming from a time of superstition and irrationality. Moreover, her exuberant dress that "had that collar like a lily, and a beautiful gold chain, and patterns in gold [...] all over the bodice" (Lee 186-87) is also indicative of her atavism, as an excessive "love of dress and ornaments" was a sign of degeneration according to Lombroso (Lombroso and Ferrero, *The Female Offender* 165). Of course, the ultimate confirmation of her hybridity is the discovery that "instead of a skirt", the woman in the tapestry "ended off in a big snake's tail, with scales of still most vivid [...] green and gold" (Lee 187).

Snakes are highly symbolic animals in most cultures. More specifically, and drawing from Greek and Christian mythologies, snakes have been traditionally used to refer to the sinuous beauty and the dangerous influence that women can have upon men. The correlation of snakes with women is based on several alleged common characteristics between this animal and women's nature. For instance, the shedding of the snake's skin is associated with women's cyclical nature, and their "sinuous movement" is linked to women's innate seductiveness (Teillard, qtd. in Cirlot 287). Above all, the snake's supposed vicious nature stands for the merciless viciousness that the animal woman is capable of. There are indeed many examples of snakes being associated with evil women throughout history, such as Eve, the first temptress, Lilith, Adam's first mate, or the Gorgon, to name a few (Dijkstra 305; Cirlot 286).

Moreover, the Snake Lady's ancient origin and hybrid identity are hinted at by her very name, Oriana, which results from mixing the names of the Greek deity Orion and the Roman goddess Diana. However, her association with Diana highlights Oriana's potential for destructive, but also compassionate, behaviour, as the myth of Orion's death reveals. Diana, who was one of the most skilful hunters of classical mythology, saw Orion's head in the distance as he was crossing the seas by foot, thanks to his huge height. Not recognising him, and wanting to impress Apollo, Diana shot her bow and killed Orion. The end of the myth, however, acknowledges Diana's pain and grief in discovering Orion's dead body. Moreover, she asks Zeus to allow Orion's figure to remain forever in the sky in the shape of a constellation that bears his name (Giménez 217). Understanding Oriana as an embodiment of Diana, Orion's myth would be acknowledging her irrationality, but also highlighting her compassionate and thoughtful nature.

The identification of Oriana with Diana is further reinforced by their shared attributes and imagery, a strong connection with the moon, and with nature.²¹ In fact, Oriana's home, the Castle of Sparkling Water, stands in the story as an embodiment of the powers of the moon and wild nature. The choice of blue and white colours to describe the place supports this hypothesis. Alberic reports finding a "marble staircase which flanked [a] white house" whose windows' white pillars perfectly framed the image of "the sea, deep blue, specked with white sails" (193-94). Apart from the choice of colours that resemble the white moon in the dark blue sky, those references to the sea can also be interpreted as yet another lunar hint, as the moon is traditionally associated with the sea due to its influence over the tides. Lastly, the narrative also reveals that the Snake Lady can only regain her human shape for an hour at sunset, that is, when the sun disappears, and the moon starts to rise. Given that the moon is traditionally connected to irrationality, imagination, and the female principle, the narrative seems to be representing the Snake Lady as a *femme fatale*, and her castle as the realm of animality, degeneration and liminality (Cirlot 214).

Because *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* is a spectacle-oriented narrative, however, characters, symbols and visual cues are unstable. They need to be contextualised within the plot, as the unfolding of events constantly contradicts and refutes early

²¹ Diana is, in fact, the goddess of the moon and wild nature, apart from the hunt, and she was represented holding a snake as a token of her metamorphic qualities (Cirlot 386).

assumptions. This is achieved through the character of Alberic, whose negligent upbringing renders him unable to recognise any of the stigmata and evidence that constantly warn readers of the Snake Lady's potential hybridity or degeneracy. Alberic's complete lack of prejudices makes him the only character able to see the object as it actually is, as his ignorance drives him to approach the hybrid from a place of sympathy (Wilde, CA 986). Alberic's unbiased perspective is what allows the narrative to question the association of animality with evil, and hybridity with monstrosity.

Despite being introduced as a punishment and the moon's realm, Alberic is pleasantly surprised when he discovers that Sparkling Waters is the materialization of his adored and mourned Gothic tapestry:

It had battlements, a drawbridge, a great escutcheon with the arms of Luna, just like the castle in the tapestry. Some vines, quite loaded with grapes, rose on the strong cords of their fibrous wood from the ground to the very rood of the town, exactly like those borders of leaves and fruit Alberic had loved so much. [...] And- could it be true? – a little way further up the hill [...] white creatures with pinkish lining to their ears, undoubtedly [...] *rabbits*. (Lee 192-193)

Everything Alberic admired and loved in his tapestry comes to life when he arrives at Oriana's castle. Rather than being scared, Alberic is excited to finally see real and living animals instead of the Red Palace's marble replicas of monkeys and rhinoceroses. Contrary to Harker and Lessingham's assertions, Alberic does not feel threatened or uneasy while in the realm of the hybrid, just the opposite: he feels truly free and happy for the first time. Hence, although traditional symbolism points towards Oriana's moon castle as a "realm of the senses, [...] of darkness, of sex, of bestial desires" (Dijkstra 340), Alberic's experience proves that the chaotic and wild atmosphere of the castle can actually be liberating, especially when compared to the stifling atmosphere of his grandfather's palace.

This way, *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* subverts the negative connotations associated with the moon and nature. Moreover, the final portrayal of the Snake Lady obtained through Alberic's unbiased eyes directly contradicts the assumption that snake-women are necessarily evil temptresses. Instead, Oriana turns out to be a loving and nurturing Godmother whose influence not only does not corrupt the prince, but contributes to his physical and psychological development. The story's spectacle perspective draws attention towards the artificiality of visual cues by portraying characters that contradict all Cartesian and binary oppositions available, as the Snake

Lady's caring personality refutes the idea of the animal other as evil, and the emissary of reason, the Duke, is ultimately revealed as the cruellest of all characters.

Contrary to *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, however, the narrative does not reach any definite conclusion as to the Snake Lady's human or animal identity, nor her possession or lack of a soul. As established in the introduction, Lee's spectacle story is not worried about "dry [...] facts" (Lee 183), but about what lies beneath them. Consequently, and although certain clues are given, the narrative does not provide any categorical claim or explanation to help readers interpret symbols or characters other than the ending of the story itself. This follows Lee's premise that for ghost stories to haunt the reader's imagination successfully, they need to remain mysterious. The Snake Lady remains, thus, wrapped in mystery right from her appearance in the tapestry, where her figure and the knight's are so "pale and faded" that they seem "like ghosts, sometimes emerging then receding again into vagueness" (Lee 186). The same happens with the narrative itself, as after each piece of information about Oriana, Lee manages to plunge the character back into the mist of undefinition by means of the narrative's constant contradictions and uncertainties. Yet the only moment Oriana's voice is heard in the narrative is when she assures Alberic of her corporeality: "Do not be afraid [...] I am not a ghost, but alive like you" (Lee 202). Not only does the Snake Lady present herself as an alive creature, not an un-dead revenant, but she also highlights that she is just "like" Alberic. It can be argued that in this statement Oriana is reclaiming her right to be regarded as an equal to Alberic, and thus reclaiming her humanity.

Finally, against the contagious monstrosity of the animal hybrid in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, Lee's tale presents a portrait of the animal woman as harmless and even beneficial. Alberic is, to some degree, another hybridity-inclined character that Lombroso and Nordau would have classified as an easily corrupted, weaker individual. Yet, contrary to Lucy or Renfield's example, Alberic does not experience regression towards atavistic and animal behaviour under Oriana's tutelage. Instead, his decline and final death are triggered by his grandfather's irrational demands, and final execution of his pet snake, which turns out to be Oriana herself. Whereas in *Dracula* and *The Beetle* the annihilation of the hybrid grants catharsis and resolution, in *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* the death of the animal woman is what prompts the extinction of the House of Luna. Shortly

after the mutilated body of a woman is found in the spot where the snake was killed, both Alberic and his grandfather die, and with them the future of their Duchy.

Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady demonstrates that there is a different approach to the hybrid in *fin de siècle* Gothic fictions, one that questions the dangers of an animalistic identity by presenting hybridity as harmless, or even beneficial for the subject's soul. Lee's story subverts traditional associations of animality with degeneracy by means of its aesthetic and spectacle-oriented narrative. The comparative analysis of these three representations of the animal-human monster reveals how the stories' visual approaches – surveillance or spectacle – are strongly connected to their ideological bias. *Dracula* and *The Beetle*'s surveillance approach, with its faith in ocular epistemology, approaches identity from an ecophobic perspective, in which the presence of any animal physical or behavioural characteristic was a synonym of degeneration and monstrosity. On the other hand, the ecocritical analysis of *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* demonstrates that there were critical voices within the period whose different views of morality and identity prompted a sympathetic portrayal of the hybrid. By applying a spectacle-oriented narrative style, Lee's story manages to blur and question the assigned meaning that certain symbols have, so that the Snake Lady Oriana cannot be easily categorised as either human nor monster despite her evident human-animal hybridity.

The comparison of these three Gothic narratives proves that a story's overall visual and narrative perspective is what determines whether the monster's identity is portrayed from a place of ecophobia, or from a sympathetic, and so proto-ecocritical perspective. The narratives' visually based approach to identity does not only affect the representation of the animal-human monster; it also shapes their portrayal of the human subject. Thus, one must analyse the different representations of the normative human subject before reaching any conclusions. If animality equals monstrosity, the necessary question is, what is the key element that makes a protagonist human?

1.3 Haunted Subjects: Fear or Desire

As representatives of the normative, human subject, the protagonists of these stories stand in contrast to the monstrosity of the hybrid animal other. Analysing the haunted subjects is also key in determining the angle from which identity is portrayed, since they are supposed to be the embodiments of humanity, that is, the norm against which the monstrous animal is compared. All three narratives present rational, enlightened men as

opposed to the hybrid, feminised animal: the Duke and his statesmen in *Prince Alberic*, and two groups of scientists, doctors and detectives in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*. It seems that all of the stories at stake place a group of reputable men, with faith in ocular epistemology and the scientific method against the irrationality and animality of the hybrid monster.

I have decided to use the term coined by Christopher Craft, Crew of Light, to refer to the groups of respectable citizens in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, as they share their faith in knowledge, science and medicine as the legitimate means to chase and defeat the monster (Craft 445). Moreover, both Crews of Light require the help of a detective figure to lead their quest for enough data and visual proof to diagnose the hybrid as non-human. In *Dracula*, Van Helsing is put in charge due to his many scientific professions. He is a “philosopher and a metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day”. Apart from that, his “iron nerve, [...] indomitable resolution, [and] self-command” further guarantee his eligibility for the role of lead investigator (Stoker 106). In *The Beetle*, it is Augustus Champnell who takes the lead, a professional detective who is introduced as “an experienced man of the world, who has been endowed by nature with phenomenal perceptive faculties”, and whose reliability is compared to that of a doctor.²² Both Van Helsing and Champnell are presented as the perfect people to “unmask [the hybrid] and hunt him out” based on their faith in facts and visual cues to unravel the mystery and dissect the hybrid monster (Stoker 168).

These Crews of Light need to gather enough facts and witnesses to successfully discard the possibility that the hybrid might be a hallucination, the product of a mental alteration or eyesight failure. Once they have gathered enough data, and the verification of several reputable sources, the corporeal, physical existence of the hybrid is confirmed. It is then when Van Helsing proclaims that “there are such beings as vampires; some of us have evidence that they exist. [...] the teachings and the records of the past give proof enough for sane peoples” (Stoker 209). According to Van Helsing, therefore, the data collected from past occurrences, together with their own testimonies should be enough proof for “sane people” to believe in the existence of vampires and follow their example.

²² “... no-one ever does come to me until they are compelled. In that respect I am regarded as something worse even than a medical man” (Marsh 193).

In their crusade against the monster for the common good of society, Van Helsing and Champnell seem to be embodiments of Nordau's "normal man, with his clear mind, logical thought, sound judgement, and strong will", who aims at preventing the propagation of the hybrid's "atrophy of the notion of duty and morality" among healthy or sane subjects (Nordau 541; 536). Hence, against the monster's liminality, both novels employ a surveillance attack that aims at dissecting and labelling the hybrid's identity by means of sight and reason. Science and civilisation are presented as superior forces to the hybrid's atavistic supernatural powers, of which they are gradually stripped, until both the vampire and the Priestess are reduced to the category of born criminals (Ascari 74).

Once the monster leaves its place of origin and ventures to the British Isles, its mystic powers are progressively neutralised. This can be appreciated in the first encounter between the Priestess and Atherton in *The Beetle*, as the scientist is described as immune to the hypnotic powers of the ancient creature:

It happens that I am myself endowed with an unusual tenacity of vision. I could, for instance, easily outstare any man I ever met. Yet, as I continued to stare at this man, I was conscious that it was only by an effort of will that I was able to resist a baleful something which seemed to be passing from his eyes to mine. [...] I could understand how, in the case of a nervous, or a sensitive temperament, the fellow might exercise, by means of the peculiar quality of his glance alone, an influence of a most disastrous sort, which given an appropriate subject in the manifestation of its power might approach almost the supernatural. (Marsh 100)

Atherton is presented as an outstanding reasonable man, whose role as scientist endows him "with an unusual tenacity of vision" that allows him to better and more objectively decode both reality and individuals. He is consequently able not only to detect the presence of something "baleful" in the Beetle, but he is also able to resist it. In other words, Atherton's superior reasoning and objectivity ultimately render him immune to the Beetle's hypnotic powers. Hence, science is presented as the key element that marks the difference between the hybrid and the modern British subject, and on which the Crews of Light final victory depends.

However, in that same paragraph Atherton also clarifies that for people of "nervous" or "sensitive temperament", exposure to the Beetle might exercise a "disastrous" influence (Marsh 100). He is thus recognising the existence of certain weaker individuals within society who are vulnerable to the hybrid's animalising influence. This statement establishes a difference among civilised subjects as it suggests that some of them

are already more irrational, and thus naturally inclined towards a more animal identity. A surveillance approach also subjects the human to an ecophobic scrutiny by which modern subjects are divided into normative humans and lesser humans.

Dracula and *The Beetle* agree in placing women among these lesser humans. In both novels women turn out to be more easily influenced by the monster, which supports Lombroso's conception of women as inherently animal-like. According to the criminologist, women were like "big children",²³ so they would always retain the "fund of immorality" typical of childhood (Lombroso and Ferrero, *The Female Offender* 151;216; Hurley, *The Gothic Body* 97-98). Consequently, all women were potential 'born criminals', to use Lombroso's terms. Although their evil instincts usually remain dormant, "when they are awakened and excited", women transform into worse 'born criminals' than men (Lombroso and Ferrero, *Female Offender* 151). Women were thus considered society's "weak spot" through which degeneration could invade the already declining society (Stott 23).

This no doubt the case of Lucy Westenra, who, despite looking like the typical upper class Victorian woman, enjoys an idle life style of "picture-galleries and [...] walks and rides in the park", has some latent transgressive traits that make her the Count's perfect victim (Stoker; Auerbach and Skal, "Preface and notes" 56). The most commonly quoted evidence for her active, and so abnormal, sexuality is her feelings of "exultation" in being proposed to by three different men in a single day, which makes her a "horrid flirt" (Stoker 59). Moreover, Lucy confesses to Mina that she trains in front of a mirror to prevent men from reading her intentions through her facial expressions. Not only does this practice confirm her coquetry, but it is also a challenge to ocular epistemology. Hence, there are hints in the narrative that suggest her inclination towards the animal.

Several clues suggest that, rather than completely changing her identity, Dracula's bite only frees Lucy's animal side (Karschay 160). The Crew of Light regards Lucy's sudden sleepwalking as a symptom of the vampire's influence but, as Mina clarifies, this is "an old habit" of Lucy's that only resurfaced after Dracula's kiss (Stoker 72). This suggests that Dracula's influence has its limits, as it cannot completely change the

²³ "And women are big children; their evil tendencies are more numerous and more varied than men's, but generally remain latent. When they are awakened and excited, they produce results proportionately greater" (Lombroso and Ferrero, *Female Offender* 151).

personality of his victims. Instead, his power consists in removing the Cartesian barrier that separates the human mind from the animal body, hybridising his prey. Hence, Dracula's kiss gradually transforms the repressed Lucy who dreamt of marrying several men into Lucy the active vampire who demands a kiss from her *fiancée*. These behavioural changes are also accompanied by some physical ones, as Lucy's fair hair becomes dark, her strength increases, and her teeth become "positively longer and sharper than usual" (Stoker 139). In other words, Lucy gains an outer animality to match her inner animality. This ratifies the Crew of Light's faith in ocular epistemology, as it allows them to diagnose Lucy as a vampire. Dracula's influential spell is portrayed as a kind of mental disease that affects individuals whose nature is already predisposed to deviance, as is the case with women (Karschay 158-161).

The malleability of women at the hands of the monster is represented by having all three women in these novels suffer certain physical and behavioural changes under the hybrid's influence. Apart from Lucy, Marjorie Lindon in *The Beetle* has her hair cut by the Priestess, who also dresses her in male clothes.²⁴ Bearing in mind that any indication of gender hybridity was seen as a sign of regression, these changes in Marjorie's appearance are proof of her animalisation (Dijkstra 212-213). However, like Lucy, Marjorie presented some 'masculine' behaviours prior to the Beetle's kidnapping and forced cross-dressing. Her political involvement and her defiant attitude towards men, especially her father, seem indicative of Marjorie's potential gender transgression. She has actually been identified as a New Woman figure by some critics, such as Margree (71-72). It thus seem that the Priestess has a similar effect over Marjorie as Dracula over Lucy. She exploits Marjorie's inherent hybridity rather than implanting foreign instincts in her.

In fact, Margree also interprets Marjorie's kidnapping as a strategy for the narrative to punish her initial transgressive behaviour (74). For instance, the kidnapping proves Marjorie wrong by contradicting her claims that she has her "imagination [...] strictly under control" (Marsh 124), as during the kidnapping she becomes a scared, easily hypnotised woman, who quickly becomes a puppet in the Beetle's hands. In other words, the unfolding of events reveals that although Marjorie might be "the least hysterical of

²⁴ By Jove! I shouldn't be surprised if they were Holt's. [...] – can have sent Marjorie Lindon, the dainties damsel in the land! – into the streets of London rigged out in Holt's old togs!" (Marsh 241)

young women”, she is still a woman, and as such, needs the help of male rescuers (Marsh 125). Hence, *The Beetle* also displays an ecophobic construction of the female human identity, since even though Marjorie does not become a monster like Lucy, she is portrayed as weaker and less rational than her male counterparts. Moreover, both *Dracula* and *The Beetle*’s plots manage to force these women back into normative femininity either by violently forcing them to adopt a submissive role, as in Lucy’s case, or by depriving them of their independence and mental sanity, as in Marjorie’s. After three years in a mental asylum trying to recover from her traumatic experience with the Beetle, Marjorie finally becomes Lessingham’s wife, thus fitting into one of the very few acceptable social roles available for women.

Mina Harker’s is a slightly different case from Lucy and Marjorie’s, as she is actually presented as the embodiment of normative femininity in *Dracula*. In fact, she is the one against whom Harker measures Lucy and the female vampires: “Mina is a woman, and there is nought in common. They are devils of the Pit!” (Stoker 55). Curiously enough Mina, unlike Lucy, is not the image of a typical Victorian lady. Instead, she is a woman who has embraced, within limits, the social and economic changes of the period. However, her work as “assistant schoolmistress” does not exceed the boundaries of respectability, as any “child-centred” occupation was considered appropriate for a woman (Stoker 55; Auerbach and Skal, “Preface and notes” 55). Similarly, her interest in learning shorthand and typewriting was an acceptable intellectual endeavour since they are oriented towards becoming a “helpmate” for her husband to-be. In sum, as Auerbach and Skal suggest, in her balance of new duties and old morals Mina is the embodiment of the “moderate” modern Victorian woman, which Stoker presents as the new ideal for nineteenth century womanhood (“Preface and notes” 55). As long as she puts her “man’s brains” to the service of society, or in this case, the Crew of Light (207), Mina is not monstrous. In fact, she even positions herself against New Women, ridiculing their yearning for independence and initiative.²⁵ Ultimately, what defines Mina as a woman

²⁵ Mina ridicules New Women and their fight by imagining a future in which men will not be allowed to propose, instead, women will actively propose to their fiancés, “But I suppose the New Woman won’t condescend in future to accept; she will do the proposing herself. And a nice hob she will make of it, too!” (Stoker 87).

rather than a hybrid is her “woman’s heart”,²⁶ which makes her regard all the Crew of Light as “the baby that some day may lay on [her] bosom” (Stoker 207; 203).

However, Mina is also bitten by the vampire, and experiences physical and behavioural changes. For instance, she becomes “very, very pale [...] and so thin that her lips were drawn away, showing her teeth in somewhat of prominence” (Stoker 257). This warns readers of the possibility that her teeth will eventually grow, and that she will transform into a vampire. Moreover, she shows other vampire symptoms. Like Lucy, she becomes lethargic and sleepy to the point that the Crew of Light fears for her integrity: “the lethargy grows upon her, and [...] Van Helsing and I are not satisfied. [...] If this change should come, it would be necessary to take steps!” (291). This feared change never comes, however. Unlike Lucy, Mina tries to resist the vampire’s influence.

In fact, the key element that distinguishes Mina from Lucy is her strong fear and rejection of the vampire. The moment she is bitten and forced to drink Dracula’s blood, Mina rubs her lips “as though to cleanse them from pollution” (252), and she shouts in desperation when she discovers that a sacred wafer has the power to burn her skin: “Unclean! Unclean! Even the almighty shuns my polluted flesh!” (259). What ultimately saves Mina from becoming a vampire is her strong ecophobic instinct, which she shares with the rest of the Crew of Light. In fact, her fear of the three female vampires relieves Van Helsing: “my heart with gladness leapt like flame; for oh! the terror in her sweet eyes, the repulsion, the horror, told a story to my heart that was all of hope” (Stoker 317). Mina’s fear of becoming an animal is such that she begs the Crew of Light to assume the “manly” task of killing her in case she falls “into the hands of the enemy” (Stoker 287). Instinctive ecophobia is thus portrayed as the key element that separates Lucy from Mina, or the human woman from the human-animal monster. This, together with her selflessness, self-sacrifice, and her motherly spirit makes Mina “one of God’s women fashioned by His own hand to show us, men and other women that there is a heaven where we can enter, and that its light can be on earth” (Stoker 168-169).

As Van Helsing remarks, Mina’s example is indeed directed to women, but also to men, for some of the male characters are affected by the monster’s influence. In fact, two

²⁶ “Ah, that wonderful Madam Mina! She has man’s brain – a brain that a man should have were he much gifted – and a woman’s heart. The good God fashioned her for a purpose, believe me, when He made that so good combination” (Stoker 207).

of the main characters of these novels, Jonathan Harker and Paul Lessingham, fall temporarily under each hybrid's control. The hybrid does not directly attack or force these men into submission, but uses trickery and deceit to lure them in.²⁷ Thus, both Harker and Lessingham enter into the hybrid's realm "freely and of [his] own will" (Stoker 22); they are portrayed as being initially tempted by the hybrid. When Harker meets the three beautiful vampire women, he confesses, "I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (Stoker 42). Lessingham, on the other hand, enters into a suspicious café, probably a brothel, following the delicious voice of the Woman of the Songs, and stays there for hours, listening to her, "entranced" (Marsh 195). Contact with the hybrid woman temporarily causes these men to lose their reason, and their bodily desires take control of their actions. Hence, both men are revealed as possessing animal desires, and thus being inclined towards a hybrid identity.

However, instead of recognising attraction to the hybrid as coming from within, both these characters and the narratives displace the blame onto the tempting woman. For instance, Lessingham argues that the Woman of Songs possessed a supernaturally entrancing voice that combined with her touch "had [...] a magnetic influence" (Marsh 196). Consequently, she left him motionless and unable to contradict her wishes. Harker also feels paralysed when he is confronted by the female vampires' active sexuality, which makes him passive in return, as he lies "looking out under [his] eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation", unable - or unwilling - to move, waiting for the contact of the vampire's sharp teeth against his "supersensitive skin" (Stoker 42-43). The vampire mouth²⁸ and the Priestess' song have the same effect on these two men: they remove their volition and freeze them, placing them in a passive role improper for men. In Lessingham's words, the female hybrid "emasculates" and animalises her male victims by awakening their animal desires (Marsh 200). These masculine women usurp the active and penetrative role of men and emasculate them by reducing them to the passive role (Craft 445).

²⁷ Dracula dresses himself as a coachman and leads Harker into his castle, whereas Lessingham is lured to a "sort of café" by the beautiful voice of the Woman of Songs, what recalls the magnetic powers of the mythological siren (Marsh 194).

²⁸ The effects of the "Vampire Mouth" are reminiscent of certain folk tales about the vagina dentata inasmuch as both have the powers of castrating or feminising men (Dijkstra 294). Understanding evolution as a gradual change towards a complete distinction and polarization of the sexes, the "Vampire Mouth" is threatening because it "equivocates [...] the easy separation of the masculine and the feminine" (Dijkstra 212-213; Craft 445).

Apart from women, the effeminate Dandy or hybrid male became the other main subject of scientific classification (Kaye 53). Thus, while portraying women as the weak spot through which degeneration spreads, the novels also show that the hybrid has similar, if not identical, effects on both sexes. Exposure to the hybrid other awakens repressed animal desires in the victim, male or female, who becomes hybridised in return. Furthermore, there are hints in both novels of the hybrid's success in making these men succumb to temptation. *The Beetle* provides enough evidence to conclude that Lessingham is, to some degree, sexually abused by the Woman of Songs, as, for instance, he wakes up naked next to her, and after she fills his "mouth with kisses" (197). Similarly, when Harker faints after being confronted by the three vampire women and wakes up in his bed, his clothes have been arranged next to him, which suggests that someone undressed him before putting him to sleep. Despite the fact that evidence of a possible vamping of Harker is not as clearly stated as in the Woman of Song's seduction of Lessingham, Paul James Emmet argues that it is Dracula who places Harker in bed, and that it is also he who vamps Harker, not the three female vampires, given that he reclaims ownership over Harker the night before (Stoker 43).²⁹ Moreover, when Harker surprises the Count in his coffin later, he is filled with fresh blood. Bearing in mind that Harker is the only living human being in the castle, Emmet concludes that he is the only option available for the Count to feed upon (118).

Yet, although men are also vulnerable to the hybrid's attack, they are able to escape the animalising influence on their own, without external help, unlike Mina or Marjorie. Despite their initial attraction, they quickly experience horror and disgust too. Harker proclaims that "nothing could be more dreadful than those awful women" (Stoker 44), and Lessingham emphasises "the sense of horror and of loathing" he feels when the Woman of Song kisses him (Marsh 197). Like in Mina's case, it is this instinctual ecophobic reaction that prompts the men's flight, and saves them from completely succumbing to the hybrid's wishes. Harker crawls down the castle walls even if it means having to imitate Dracula in order to get away from those "devils of the Pit" (Stoker 55),

²⁹ In the 1899 edition published in America, Dracula asks the three vampire women to wait until the following day, for Harker was his that night: "Tonight is mine" (Emmet 118) (Auerbach and Skall, "Preface and notes" 52). In his 2018 article, Emmet also suggest that there was, in fact, certain collaboration from Harker, who might have been looking to be vamped by Dracula, as he rendered himself vulnerable despite Dracula's warnings. Emmet sees Harker's recklessness as reflective of his desire to be vamped by another male (119).

whereas Lessingham manages to flee after failing to kill the Woman of Songs, who eludes death by transforming herself into a “monstrous beetle” (Marsh 201).

The fact that the Woman of the Songs is the same woman who later arrives in London to haunt Lessingham is not explicitly established in the narrative, but their shared transformative abilities and her hatred and resentment towards the politician suggest so. Dracula also follows Harker to England and, although he only vamps women while on British soil, men are still his ultimate target: “Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine” (Stoker 267). Even if they manage to physically escape from the hybrid’s grip, the monster can still haunt these men either by physically travelling to Britain, or by means of their traumatic memories.

Ecophobia plays a dual role in these narratives. Even though it warns characters against the dangers of the hybrid’s company, fear is also the key element through which the monster reduces the characters to their most frantic, irrational, and thus animal behaviour. Apart from the immediate effects of hysteria and panic, the encounter with the hybrid also has long lasting effects on characters. For instance, after their exposure to the hybrid, Harker and Lessingham are left in a state of “semi-imbecility” that lasts for days. Interestingly, in this liminal state in which their reason is rescinded, they too are not regarded as fully human. In fact, both protagonists undergo mental and physical treatment in order to become “as other men” again (Marsh 202). Even when they have recovered, the memories of those traumatic times still manage to induce frantic and unreasonable behaviour in them. Lessingham screams “in an agony of terror or pain” whenever he hears the word ‘beetle’ (Marsh 44). Although Harker does a better job at repressing his memories, he also confesses that he “felt impotent, and in the dark, and distrustful” until Van Helsing confirms the non-humanity of the Count, which helps him justify what happened at Dracula’s castle (Dracula 168). Therefore, not only desire, but also fear has the potential to strip people of their reason, situating them closer to the animal according to a Cartesian approach to identity.

Yet, it is the characters’ capacity to feel this instinctive fear against the animal that distinguishes hybrids from humans in these novels. This can be better seen when comparing Mina Harker and Lucy Westenra. Contrary to Mina, Lucy remains passive in the face of the vampire attacks because she does not experience a high enough degree of fear to trigger an active response. Although she acknowledges having a vague feeling of

fear, the sensations she reports experiencing during Dracula's attack seem more pleasurable than terrifying:

I have a vague memory of something long and dark with red eyes [...] and something very sweet and very bitter all around me at once; [...] my soul seemed to go out of my body and float about the air [...] and then there was a sort of agonizing feeling, as if I were in an earthquake. (Stoker 94)

Rather than repulsion, what Lucy feels upon being bitten by the vampire strongly resembles an orgasm: "a sort of agonizing feeling", like "an earthquake". Moreover, during this moment of pleasure, her body takes control of her identity, and her soul is temporarily expelled: "my soul seemed to go out of my body and float about the air". The ease with which the vampire influences Lucy and neutralises her soul shows that hers is not as strong as that of rest of the characters', since it does not alert her against the vampire. Instead, her bodily desires soon take over and she becomes a hybrid human-animal woman.

Once Lucy's soul has left her body for good, she transforms into a strong, voluptuous creature who is not interested in maternity and demands kisses from her *fiancée*: that is, a female vampire. From that moment, the Crew of Light no longer considers Lucy human, but a "foul things of the night [...] without a heart or conscience" (Stoker 209). The presence of an instinctual reaction of visceral ecophobia against the hybrid is thus connected to the possession of a human soul or moral compass (Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* 88). On the other hand, the lack of a strong enough soul or morality is what propels Lucy's transformation into a vampire. In losing her soul, her humanity, Lucy is deprived of an identity and called a "thing". This extreme dehumanisation, even objectification, of the animal other is what justifies her subsequent rape and murder masked as the ritual needed to end the vampire's life.

In order to turn this "foul Thing" into "God's true dead", the Crew of Light needs to stake her in the heart, and then proceed to cut her head off and fill her mouth with garlic (Stoker 192-93). Arthur, who would otherwise have become Lucy's husband, is the one to perform Van Helsing's overtly sexual and violent ritual, which has been read by multiple critics as a "therapeutical penetration" (Craft 454): he looked like the "figure of Thor as his untrembling arm rose and fell, driving deeper and deeper the mercy-bearing stake, whilst the blood from the pierced heart welled and spurted up around it" (Stoker 192). It is after Lucy is reduced to a passive sexual role that she is considered to be herself

again, “with her face of unequalled sweetness and purity” (192; Craft 455-456). ‘Dead Lucy’ represents the passive and obedient woman who finally surrenders to her husband. She also allows the men to plainly read in her face “the traces of care and pain and waste” (Stoker 192), thus yielding to the established morality and the visibility of vice at last.

Dracula and *The Beetle* are thus “cautionary tales” for men, but especially women, about the dangers of flirting with a hybrid identity (Dijkstra 348). Despite placing a certain degree of responsibility on the victim, the hybrid ultimately stand as the true propagator of degeneracy, as they either force their influence on to their victims by deception, or feed on individuals whose souls are already weak. Both novels divert the potential internal threat of inherent hybridity onto an external agent, as it is easier to deal with a foreign monster rather than to assume that the modern subject’s animality comes from within. This is what Roth calls “projection and denial”. The consequences of succumbing to one’s desires are placed on to the seducer or temptress rather than on the sinner: “it is not we who want the vampires, it is they who want us” (415-16).

Against the pervasive animalising influence of the hybrid, *Dracula* presents in Mina Harker a benign influence. Mina’s influence is also presented as all-invasive, and its effects can be better seen in the changes she causes in Mr Renfield. Her mere presence is capable of touching “some chord” within the man that results in a temporary cancellation of his madness and he becomes a “polished gentleman” again (Stoker 206). This positive influence is also presented as subjective and reciprocal since for Mina to be able to transform Renfield into a gentleman, there already needs to be a side of him that used to be that gentleman. Although a certain invitation from the influenced subject is necessary, both damaging and benign influences are also portrayed as “unconscious” exchanges (Stoker 206). Being unconscious, the victim has little control over the process, which removes the blame from the subject and places it on the influencer. To avoid the spread of hybridity and guarantee the survival of modern civilisation, the exercise of a different kind of influence, a positive, humanising one, becomes necessary, together with the elimination of the hybrid subject.

Science and reason are the tools the Crews of Light use to catalogue and corner the hybrid. Science and law allow the protagonists to remove the hybrid’s supernatural aura and reduce them to the role of Lombrosian ‘born criminals’. Mina concludes that “the Count is a criminal and of criminal type. Nordau and Lombroso would so classify him,

and *qua* criminal he is of imperfectly formed mind” (Stoker 296). Similarly, Atherton also refers to the Beetle as a mere criminal, a “thief”, and warns her that London is not “dog-hole in the desert” (Marsh 101). In fact, from the moment these hybrids set foot in Great Britain and place themselves “within reach of the pains and penalties of the law” their powers gradually dwindle, whilst the Crews of Light’s powers increase:

We have on our side power of combination, a power denied to the vampire kind; and we have the resources of science; we are free to act and think; and the hours of the day and the night are ours equally. [...] We have self-devotion in a cause, and an end to achieve which is not a selfish one. (Stoker 210)

They have science on their side and fewer restrictions than the hybrid, as the Crews can work in a team against the hybrid’s individuality, a result of their selfish behaviour, as theirs is a common, good cause. In other words, not only are they stronger than the monster because of their superior intelligence, but also because of their shared utilitarian moral compass.

Against the hybrid’s preaching of “absence of discipline” (Nordau 560), The Crews of Light defend the established utilitarian morality of discipline and self-control as the only way towards progress. As Nordau remarks:

They wish for self-indulgence; we wish for work. [...] Society has for its first premise, neighbourly love and capacity for self-sacrifice; and progress is the effect of an ever more rigorous subjugation of the beast in man, of an ever tenser self-restraint, an ever keener sense of duty and responsibility. (Nordau 560)

Reason and morality are the key elements that guarantee the Crews of Light’s victory against the animal within and without, emphasising once again the superiority of the human over the animal, the soul or cogito over the body, and the need to maintain the Cartesian walls to allow “an ever more rigorous subjugation of the beast in man”.

Dracula and *The Beetle* portray both monstrosity and humanity from the same ecophobic approach, thus confirming this thesis’s hypothesis that a surveillance approach allies with an ecophobic, and therefore Cartesian, understanding of identity. These two novels equate animality with degeneracy, and defend its visibility by matching the character’s inner animality with an animal appearance and behaviour. However, this surveillance scrutiny not only affects the hybrid, but the protagonists are also divided into a human soul or mind and an animal body that is in constant need of policing. Reason, science, but especially the possession of an ecophobic soul are promoted as the key

elements that divide humans from animals, and these British characters from the less evolved Romanian vampire and Egyptian Priestess. The repression and extermination of the animal other, and the animal within are presented as the necessary means to guarantee civilisation's progress.

In *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* there is also a group of men who identify with enlightenment and reason, constituted by the Duke Balthasar Maria, Alberic's grandfather, and his statesmen: the Jesuit, the Dwarf and the Jester. Although they do not use the powers of science and technology against the hybrid, as Lee's story is set in the eighteenth century, the Duke, his palace, and his advisers are presented as the embodiments of reason and civilisation against Oriana's wilderness. The Duke is introduced as "a prince of enlightened mind and delicate taste" who disliked medieval art and literature due their display of "improbable events" (Lee 184). In other words, the Duke rejects imagination and irrationality, and privileges reason, which suggests that he shares the Crews of Light's surveillance perspective. Moreover, his hatred of snakes and fear of the devil confirm that he also shares their ecophobia.

The Duke is presented as the complete opposite of Oriana, an antagonism confirmed by the purposeful contrast established between their residences: Sparkling Waters and the Red Palace. In the same way that Oriana and her castle share many characteristics and symbols, the Duke and the Red Palace are "the personification and visible manifestation of each other", according to Alberic (Lee 189). Against the lunar-induced powers of the Castle of Sparkling Waters stands the embodiment of the sun, the Red Palace, with its "brilliant tomato-coloured plaster [...] against the blue of the sky" (Lee 189). The sun has been traditionally identified with the masculine principle in art and literature, and has been used to represent reason, "reflexion, good judgement [and] will power" (Cirlot 219). The palace's decoration corroborates both its identification with the sun and the link between the star and enlightenment, as, for instance, there are busts of the Twelve Caesars placed in every window. The choice to decorate the palace with Caesar's statues is not arbitrary. These is a reference to Greek and Roman eras, which are regarded as the cradle of western civilisation. Hence, these Caesars are intended to establish a clear difference between the wilderness of Sparkling Waters, and the civilised atmosphere of the Red Palace. Similarly, against the wild vegetation and diverse fauna of Sparkling Waters the Palace's gardens are extremely orderly and symmetrical, and no living animal is allowed

in them. Nature is thus submitted to Reason's will in the Red Palace, establishing a hierarchy by which humans are superior to nature and can thus control it at will.

The Red Palace and Sparkling Waters and their owners are therefore represented as binary oppositions: nature, animality and apparent anarchy on the one hand, and enlightenment and civilisation on the other. However, *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* manages to subvert these symbols' traditional interpretations by means of the character of Alberic. In fact, the peculiarities of Alberic's upbringing make him another potential hybrid figure. Despite growing up in the realm of civilisation and culture, Alberic does not receive any formal education due to his grandfather neglect and indifference. Hence, he remains oblivious to all classical and biblical mythology that would have warned him against the dangers of coexisting with snake women. Instead, he grows up with his nurse and his Gothic tapestry, full of wild flora and fauna, as his only references. As a result, when Alberic grows up he is not only unafraid of animals, but deeply interested in them (Lee 188). Similarly, when he discovers that underneath the cross that covered the lower half of the tapestry's beautiful woman, there was a "green and gold [...] snake's tail", he is not scared or repulsed, but loves the Lady "only the more" (Lee 187- 188). Once in Sparkling Waters, moreover, he reacts with sympathy instead of fear when confronted by "a long, glittering thing [he] recognise[s] to be a snake", allowing the cold animal to take shelter under his sleeve (Lee 195).

Against *Dracula* and *The Beetle*'s defence of ecophobia as an inherent and defining characteristic of the human soul, Lee's narrative draws attention to the decisive role that environment plays in the configuration of the subject's visual perspective and morality. Not having been informed about the supposed cruel nature of snakes, Alberic approaches the creature with sympathy and understanding, and even wonders why certain people, like his grandfather, should "feel such hatred towards any living creature, particularly towards a kind which [...] was perfectly harmless" (Lee 203). Curiously, this establishes a direct opposition between Alberic and the Harkers' son, Quincey, as Dracula closes with Van Helsing's promise that: "This boy will some day know what a brave and gallant woman his mother is.[...] later on he will understand how some men so loved her, that they did dare much for her sake" (Stoker 327). In other words, Van Helsing guarantees that the Crew of Light will teach - or indoctrinate - Quincey about the existence of vampires, so that when he grows up, he can easily recognise the presence of the animal in those who

approach him. Contrary to Quincey, Alberic is raised in complete ignorance of the negative connotations that animals, and especially snakes, have, so that when faced with one he is neither scared, nor disgusted, but simply curious. *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* draws attention towards the key role that education plays in shaping the subject's visual and ideological approach to his/her and other's identities. Hence, the narrative ultimately questions ecophobia as an inherent element within the human soul, rather an acquired one.

Moreover, despite his lack of ecophobia, Alberic does not experience any kind of retrogressive changes to his appearance or personality, as was the case with Lucy or Marjorie. This further challenges *Dracula* and *The Beetle*'s portrayal of fear of the animal as the key element that distinguishes normative subjects from weaker individuals, as Alberic manages to preserve his human identity in spite of his lack of warning system. It can be argued, however, that this very inclination and attraction towards the animal points towards Alberic as a potential degenerate: one of those people with a weaker nature, making him easier to corrupt. Alberic presents enough stigmata to alert contemporary readers about his potential degeneracy, such as his hybrid gender appearance: "his figure was at once manly and delicate, and full of grace and vigour of movement. His long hair [...] fell in wavy curls, which seemed to imply almost a woman's coquetry" (198). Manly and beautiful, Alberic's figure resembles that of the Dandy, whose preoccupation with beauty and fashion was regarded as a sign of degeneration (Kaye 53; Collins).³⁰ Moreover, the story also portrays Alberic as prone to passionate expressions of utter terror and unstoppable rage, behaviour that highlights his gullible, irrational, and so potentially animal nature. In fact, it is due to a rage fit during which he destroys the tapestry his grandfather hung in exchange for his beloved Gothic one that Alberic is punished with exile to Sparkling Waters.

Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady is, however, characterised by subverting initial assumptions and, rather than punishment, Sparkling Waters turns out to be liberation for Alberic. Far from degenerating under the Snake Lady's influence at the Castle of Sparkling Waters, Alberic finally receives the formal education his status requires. Against the neglect suffered at the hands of his grandfather, Oriana provides him with

³⁰ Furthermore, there are some critics, such as Stetz, among which I include myself, who see in Alberic a reference to a particular Dandy figure: that of Oscar Wilde, and in Alberic's imprisonment and tragic ending a reference of Wilde's fatal sentence at Reading Gaol (Stetz 117).

books in classical mythology and literature, thanks to which he becomes a “precocious young scholar” (Lee 199). Curiously, therefore, Alberic becomes enlightened under the influence of the moon rather than the sun. This fact undermines the idea that imagination and reason, or animality and humanity, necessarily cancel each other out, showing that they can coexist with no damaging consequence for the hybrid subject. Alberic’s example rejects polarising conceptions of identity and shows that hybridity can actually be beneficial for the subject.

Lee’s narrative not only subverts the negative connotations of animal and moon imagery, but also questions the positive qualities associated with reason and the sun. Alberic confesses that “he had always hated both his grandfather and the Red Palace”, and that, despite popular agreement on how “magnificent” the palace was, he could not help but feel overwhelmed, uneasy and terrified by its brilliant colours and artificiality (Lee 188-189). Alberic’s eerie feelings in his grandfather’s palace are similar to Harker, Lessingham and Holt’s uncanny impressions while at the hybrid’s household, with the obvious difference that this time the oppressive feeling comes from being under the sun’s influence. Through the character of Alberic, Lee’s narrative manages to portray civilisation and reason as potentially stifling when imposed onto a subject by force. Against the oppressive atmosphere of the Red Palace, Sparkling Waters offers Alberic a hybrid realm: a combination of freedom, imagination, and also education and culture.

Knowledge and education are in fact major preoccupations of this story. They are presented as key for the development of the subject, but also as potentially dangerous. For instance, in the same way that the Duke and his statesmen are scared of snakes, Alberic is afraid of a certain type of knowledge, particularly one surrounding the nature of the Snake Lady. He purposely avoids asking questions about Oriana to either his nurse or his Godmother because he has the “strange certainty that the knowing would be accompanied by evil” (Lee 204). In contrast to the Crews of Light’s obsession with the accumulation of knowledge and facts, Alberic seems more comfortable remaining in the dark about hybridity. Situating ‘evil’ in the knowledge of certain stigmata rather than on the hybrid itself subtly suggests that the appreciation of evil might not come from the observed subject or object, but from the observer’s biased approach. Fearing that knowing about snakes might compromise his love for the beautiful woman in the tapestry, Alberic chooses to approach snakes and women by means of sympathetic imagination, thus

forming his own ideas based on his direct experience. Alberic's example demonstrates that ecophobia is not an innate defence mechanism, as *Dracula* and *The Beetle* suggest, but an acquired one. Through Alberic, the narrative rejects both the idea of morality as natural, and refutes the idea that an ecophobic morality is the key element that distinguishes humans from human-animal subjects.

However, when Alberic grows older, "a change [begins] to take place in him"; he experiences "a restless, miserable craving to know all" (Lee 204). It is at this moment that he demands information about the Snake Lady's legend from two different sources: a storyteller and a priest. He is then informed about the story of his ancestors, the first and second Knights of Luna, and their encounters with the Snake Lady Oriana. Both of his namesakes kiss the snake three times in an attempt to break Oriana's spell but are unable to do so, as neither of them are capable of remaining loyal to her during a ten-year span, the requirement Oriana needed to be allowed to be human again. Although the narrated events are the same, the storyteller and the priest portray the hybrid from very different perspectives. While for the first Oriana is an unfairly condemned fairy, for the second she is a demon who haunts the Luna family looking for a young knight to corrupt. As Alberic suspected, therefore, the knowledge of Oriana's story is accompanied by evil. He is now aware of the supernatural, hybrid nature of his Godmother, and he is left to choose which version to believe: the priest's and escape, or the storyteller's and attempt to break Oriana's spell.

When Alberic interrogates the priest about Oriana, he argues that this knowledge would be key for the "welfare of [his] soul" (Lee 209). Yet once he is informed of the supposed demonic nature of his godmother, he decides to take it upon himself to liberate her. This reveals that Alberic does not consider his soul to be at risk when in contact with the animal. Just the opposite: its salvation depends on accepting, loving, and attempting to liberate the Snake Woman from her unfair punishment. Alberic's attitude towards the Snake Lady is reminiscent of Keat's *Lamia*, a poem that also tells the story of a hybrid female figure with a serpent face and human mouth, whose transformation depends on the love of a human man. Alberic's attitude recalls the poem even more, as like *Lamia's* lover, he is also capable of seeing the animal other in a positive, desirable light: "Her head was serpent, but ah, bitter-sweet!" (Keats 59). Moreover, in contrast to his two ancestors, and *Lamia's* lover, Alberic is not repulsed by Oriana's snake figure, nor does he call her

a “serpent” (Keats 305). The unfolding of the events seem to confirm Alberic’s approach since accepting Oriana’s hybrid identity does benefit his soul: he continues to become a “youth of excellent morals, courage, and diligence”, thanks to her teachings (Lee 217).

In sum, *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* presents a spectacular portrayal of animality, as it does not assign any fixed meaning or connotation to the term. Animality is neither beneficial nor destructive on its own. Its effects upon the subject depend on whether they approach hybridity from a place of sympathy or fear. Through Alberic’s example, this story shows that accepting and being in contact with one’s animal desires and needs does not lead to degeneration and criminality. Instead, it suggests that embracing the animal within might be the key to better, more successful personal development.

On the other hand, the Duke and his statesmen approach both the animal other and the animal within from a place of fear. They regard imagination as inferior and privilege reason and vision as the only human and trustworthy means through which to decode reality. This can be seen when the three statesmen visit Alberic expecting to see him miserable and impoverished, and are surprised to see that the Prince has all his needs met. Despite the implausibility of the situation, they reject magic as a possible explanation, since they are above those “foolish beliefs”. They try to find logical ones, only trusting “the evidence of [their] own eyes in the matter” (Lee 201; 198). These men trust ocular epistemology and dismiss imagination which, together with their fear of snakes, reveals them to share the same surveillance and ecophobic approach as the Duke, and Stoker and Marsh’s Crews of Light.

At the same time, however, these men use their so-called superior reasoning for selfish and morally questionable purposes. The Jester, the Dwarf and the Jesuit all use their “subtle statecraft” to try and win Alberic’s affection in case the Duke dies (Lee 196). Moreover, the Duke also prioritises his own desires, namely the construction of a sepulchral chapel, over the wellbeing of the Duchy of Luna and of his grandson. He attempts to force Alberic into an unwanted marriage with the aim of obtaining the money necessary to continue his architectural endeavours. When Alberic politely but resolutely declines, as he wants to remain faithful to Oriana, the Duke is surprised, even “terrified”, as nobody has opposed his desires so vehemently until then (222). Instead of accepting

his grandson's decision, the Duke proceeds to try to bend Alberic's will, first by peaceful means, and then by violent ones, until he ends up imprisoning and isolating him.

Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady portrays the emissary of reason and his advisers as selfish authoritarians, completely contradicting *Dracula* and *The Beetle*'s association of enlightenment with the pursuit of "good, unselfish cause[s]" (Stoker 71). Instead, Lee's narrative demonstrates that reason and knowledge can also be used for selfish purposes. This questions the objectivity of surveillance and scientific discourses, as it suggests that its conclusions might not be as unbiased as they seem. For instance, if animal stigmata are revealed as empty of meaning *per se*, what is the interest behind the scientific and pseudo-scientific studies that present the hybrid subject as monstrous? Who benefits from repressing the Animal other with the pretext of containing their degenerative influence?

In fact, the portrayal of influence as a pervasive and invading force is also refuted in *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady*. Whereas in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, influence is presented as an irremediable force upon weaker natures, Alberic is proof that this is not necessarily the case. Neither the Duke's "direct influence" nor his "indirect persuasion or coercion" trigger any type of reaction in the young man (Lee 222). Instead, the success of influence ultimately relies on the subject's active embrace of the input given:

... it was useless trying to act upon the Prince by means which did not already affect him; instead of clumsily constructing a lever for which there was no fulcrum in the youth's soul, it was necessary to find out whatever leverage there might already exist. (Lee 222-23)

For influence to succeed, there needs to be some "fulcrum", some previous interest within the subject's soul. Otherwise there will be no change. This presents influence as a much more active exchange than the other two novels suggest, one in which its success or failure actually depends on the 'influenced' subject. In other words, in Lee's narrative influence does not consist in implanting new ideas in someone's mind, or corrupting someone's soul, but it consists in activating or encouraging traits that are already present in the subject. To be fair, Stoker and Marsh's narratives also recognise that the presence of certain hybrid tendencies in the subject facilitate the exercise of influence, but they ultimately present influence as a synonym of contagion: an "unconscious" phenomenon over which the subject has little or no control. In *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady*, on the other hand, Alberic is not presented as a passive victim, but as an active agent who is

able to resist imposed or unwanted influence and to embrace it when it triggers his curiosity.

Alberic is consequently capable of disregarding the priest's ecophobic rendition of Oriana, and dismisses his grandfather's unsympathetic requests. As "threats and blandishments were all in vain", the Duke and his advisers proceed with more radical methods: they imprison Alberic and increasingly deprive him of his possessions (Lee 224). In spite of all of this, Alberic persists. The Duke and his men interpret the prince's stubbornness as a sign of betrayal, and as proof of his "deranged mind", and "devilry" (Lee 226), but all who could visit him before his death affirmed that he was "in perfect possession of his faculties" (Lee 227). In other words, in the same way that Oriana is assigned the role of Snake Woman by "envious powers", Alberic is labelled as a "rebel", a "wizard", and a "madman" only because he refuses to follow unjust authoritarian impositions over whom he should or could love (Lee 226). *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* confirms, therefore, that the assignment of labels such as degenerate, madman, or monster by enlightened authorities are hardly ever objective. Instead, they spring from selfish interests.

The narrative portrays the Duke and his fear of difference as the actual culprit for Alberic's and the Duchy's degeneration and ultimate extinction. This narrative portrays fear, rather than animality as the true force that reduces people to irrational, cruel behaviour. This is ultimately represented in the Duke's assassination of Oriana. In seeing Alberic's tame grass snake, the Duke jumps in terror and screams, "The Serpent, The Serpent!" (Lee 226). The Jester crushes "the head of the startled creature", and the Dwarf gives the snake another "two cuts with his Turkish scimitar" (Lee 226). Before leaving the cell after this terrible act, the Duke kicks the Snake Lady's "mangled head" and laughs, showing his extreme cruelty and complete lack of empathy (Lee 227). The representatives of reason are thus portrayed as the actual monsters by revealing their inherent savagery and self-interested purposes.

Reason and enlightened morality are portrayed as damaging when forced upon the subject, as Alberic's decline and final death shows that "the deterioration of the soul" is the result of the continuous limitations, isolation and final murder of his animal lover, rather than by contact with the animal (Dellamora 533). Moreover, instead of presenting the death of the hybrid as cathartic, the solution to degeneration, in *Prince Alberic and*

The Snake Lady the death of the hybrid is what ultimately propels the tragic ending and extinction of the Duchy of Luna. After discovering “the body of a woman, naked, and miserably disfigured with blows and sabre cuts” in the place where the snake was killed, not only Alberic’s mental state, but also the Duke’s begins to deteriorate. Alberic dies within a fortnight, and after some months of “excess of debauchery”, the Duke dies too (Lee 227).

Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady presents all of its characters as potentially hybrid, since they present certain animal-like or irrational behaviours. However, animality is only damaging when it is feared, neglected and repressed. On the other hand, when the animal other is approached from an unprejudiced and sympathetic perspective, not only is its influence not degenerative, but it can be beneficial, as Alberic’s example proves. Consequently, Lee’s narrative goes against Nordau, *Dracula* and *The Beetle*’s view of the ‘genius’, the different or hybrid as an enemy of progress that needs to be removed from society to guarantee its survival. Lee’s narrative instead suggests that it is precisely the isolation and silencing of the rebellious, hybrid individual that would lead civilisation to sterility and destruction (Dellamora 539).

Degeneration comes not from the embodied development of the subject’s identity, but from the selfish restrictions society imposes on certain individuals, like Violet Paget herself, who did not fit within the established categories of normalcy. *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady* manages to subvert the negative connotations of animality and hybridity, arguing for the embrace of the animal within and without as a matter of “welfare for the soul”. On the other hand, it presents ecophobia and intransigence as the forces responsible for the future decline of western society. The analysis of this narrative confirms this thesis’s hypothesis. It proves that an aesthetic and spectacle-oriented style leads to a proto-ecocritical portrayal of the hybrid other: one in which negative connotations around animality are questioned and deconstructed, while an authoritarian and biased use of reason and knowledge is vilified.

1.4 Conclusion: Degeneration or Deterioration?

This chapter’s analysis of the hybrid monster reveals that, contrary to traditional criticism on the Gothic genre, there were indeed stories that offered a non-ecophobic rendition of the human-animal monster. The comparative study of monsters and haunted subjects in Stoker and Marsh’s novels against Lee’s aesthetic fable also corroborates this

thesis's main hypothesis: that the angle from which the animalised subject is portrayed ultimately relies on the narrative's main visual approach to identity and life. Although these two novels' endings are open to some extent, and they manage to reflect the potential for hybridity of most, if not all, of their characters, *Dracula* and *The Beetle* are more inclined towards a surveillance perspective. They align with an ocularcentric understanding of life and identity by which the outer appearance of the subject is a reflection of their inner identity. Not only do they apply a Lombrosian scrutiny to the hybrid monster, but their protagonists are also divided into normative and 'weaker' subjects on the grounds of the presence of animal features or behaviours. Similar to Nordau's *Degeneration*, these novels divide the human subject into a human soul, or moral compass, and an animal body, and argue that in order to remain human, protagonists need to repress and police their animality. Otherwise, their animal half would take over and they would become "ghoulish reminiscences" of humanity: hybrid monsters (Marsh 24).

Dracula and *The Beetle* are therefore a threat inasmuch as their presence at the heart of the most advanced of nations could lead to the contagion of their hedonist, selfish, and so inferior and animal tendencies among civilised British subjects. Influence is thus portrayed in these narratives as an unconscious, irremediable phenomenon that awakens the animal within the civilised subject, over which they have little or no control. This removes responsibility from the subject to a great extent, since influence is portrayed as overpowering and unavoidable. At the same time, however, it also reveals that a certain degree of collaboration from the subject is needed, even if it is done unconsciously. That is, the monster does not have the power to completely transform its victims into something they are not, instead it hybridises the subject by removing the Cartesian barrier that separates the mind from the body.

Against the monster's pervasive negative influence, these two narratives present a benign counter influence that defends the established utilitarian morality of discipline and self-control, and the maintenance of the Cartesian wall between humanity and animality as necessary for the progress of humankind. Reason, morality and especially the presence of instinctual ecophobia or a natural rejection of the animal are promoted in these novels as the key elements that distinguish humans from non-human monsters. The subjects in possession of an ecophobic soul are able to resist and elude the tricks and lures of the

hybrid monster. The Harkers, Lessingham and Marjorie are a good example of this as, although they are controlled by the human-animal monster at some point, they are alerted of the presence of the animal in time by their own visceral reactions. On the other hand, characters such as Lucy Westenra or Renfield are easily manipulated and controlled by the hybrid monster due to their lack of an ecophobic – and thus, fully human – soul.

Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady, on the other hand, not only goes against surveillance and deconstructs animality's negative connotations, but it also rejects *Dracula's* and *The Beetle's* assumption of ecophobia as an inherent part of human morality. Contrary to Stoker and Marsh's novels, Lee's story is written in an aesthetic style that explicitly establishes its artificiality, and proclaims its disinterest in objectivity and "dry [...] facts" (Lee 183). This spectacle-oriented premise is what allows this tale to subvert traditional negative interpretations of animal visual signifiers. Apart from the unfolding of events and the myriad of contradictions it displays, the character of Alberic is key in shaping this spectacle-like narrative. Contrary to his grandfather and his fear of snakes and the devil, Alberic's negligent upbringing renders him ignorant to traditional associations of animality with evil. Consequently, he approaches the Snake Lady from an unprejudiced and sympathetic perspective. Alberic's example demonstrates, first, that ecophobia is not something innate, but acquired through education, and second, that the interpretation of animal stigmata as evil is not completely objective and scientific, as it responds to a previously learnt set of prejudices.

This is further supported by the development of the story, since Oriana, the Snake Lady, is finally revealed as a harmless creature whose influence is beneficial for Alberic, rather than damaging. Moreover, although the narrative includes a Judeo-Christian version of the Origin of Oriana's curse that blames Oriana's animality on her sins, Alberic and the narrative itself seem to ally with the alternative version given by the storyteller. The storyteller's version argues that Oriana was transformed into an animal by "envious powers" for no particular reason (Lee 207). This explanation subscribes to Oscar Wilde's maxim that sin, or in this case, animality, lies not in the object itself, but in the eye of the prejudiced observer, who "see[s] the object as in itself it really is not" (CA 986). Hence, *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* reveals that, rather than natural, animal stigmata are artificially constructed and imposed onto the non-normative subject by mysterious powers. This challenges surveillance's faith in the visibility of vice, as it shows that the

outer appearance does not reflect the personality of the subject, but mirrors the observer's prejudices instead.

Although *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* also portrays beneficial and detrimental kinds of influence, the nature of the influential exchange itself differs from Marsh's and Stoker's novels. For instance, despite Alberic's evident hybridity, he is not described as an easily influenced, passive victim, as Lucy Westenra or Holt are. Instead, he is capable of resisting the Duke's attempts at forcing an unwanted marriage upon him. Contrary to the other two novels, Lee's narrative does not portray influence as an unconscious phenomenon, since the influenced subject has a certain degree of control over the development of their personality. Moreover, the difference between detrimental and beneficial influence rests not in the origin, animal or enlightened, of the influence itself, but on whether this is externally imposed or naturally embraced by the subject. For instance, the Snake Lady's influence does not have a degrading or brutalising effect on the prince, just the opposite, as under her supervision he becomes a skilled, cultured, and fit young man. On the contrary, what prompts Alberic's decline is his imprisonment in the realm of reason, and the final assassination of his hybrid friend, Oriana. Hence, a beneficial influence is any influence that comes naturally to the subject, whereas an unwanted imposition upon the subject's identity development will always be detrimental, independent of its origin. In other words, the modern human subject could grow to be an accomplished and healthy individual as long as their animal desires and needs are not socially forbidden or stigmatised.

Moreover, Alberic's example illustrates that embracing the animal within, demolishing the Cartesian wall, is not equal to the complete annulment of the subject's reasoning or cultural knowledge as, despite growing up in the realm of imagination and nature, Alberic still has access to an excellent education. However, fear, specifically, fear of the animal, does reduce the Duke and his statesmen to savage and irrational behaviour. Hence, this story portrays ecophobia from a completely different angle than *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, as rather than being the key to maintaining a human identity, fear and rejection of the animal is what ultimately reduces people to their most savage behaviour. Setting up walls to isolate either the hybrid other or the animal self is what actually leads to irrationality and barbarism. In fact, in *Prince Alberic and The Snake Lady*, the death of the hybrid monster is precisely what triggers both the Duke's and Alberic's death,

condemning the House of Luna to stagnation and extinction. Eliminating “the rebel, the wizard, the madman” does not guarantee progress, it hinders it (Lee 226-227).

Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady, published in 1896, seems to be a literary re-enactment of Vernon Lee’s article “Deterioration of Soul” published a year earlier in the *Fortnightly Review* as a response to Max Nordau’s *Degeneration* (Maxwell and Pulham, “Introduction and Notes” 182; Dellamora 543). In this article, Vernon Lee combats Nordau and Lombroso’s biological reading of what she refers to as “deterioration” instead of degeneration, and argues for the need to read the individual’s imperfections, as she calls them, from a sociological standpoint. She suggests that these imperfections are not inherited and not readable in people’s physical appearance, but they are the result of isolation and social rejection (Lee, “Deterioration of Soul” 74; 83).³¹ This can be seen in Alberic and Oriana, whose deterioration is not caused by their animal, non-normative nature, but by the imposed isolation and unfair classification they receive by means of “envious powers” (Lee 207).

In her essay, Lee also addresses the dangers of secluding the rebels or geniuses from the rest of society on the grounds of their potential criminality. In fact, this is the point in which she disagrees most strongly with Nordau and Lombroso, as she regards the comparison between actual criminals and *fin de siècle* dissident artists and thinkers as biased and preposterous. According to Lee, these “madmen” and “wizards”, such as Carlyle, Tolstoy or Nietzsche³² are responsible for many “splendid achievements [...]”, while their blunders and exaggerations are largely caused by the stupidity of their neighbours” (Lee 226; “Deterioration of Soul” 90). Once again sin or degeneration are not placed in the works of these people, but in the rest of society’s interpretation. However, Lee is very clear in pointing out that, although Lombroso and Nordau’s work

³¹ In her article, Vernon Lee argues that deterioration of the soul does not always come from the body and its needs, in the same way that the body does not always reflect the subject’s deterioration. Instead, she suggests that more attention should be paid to the role that society plays in marring its own citizens: “Spiritual imperfection may be due, as I propose showing, to causes other than bodily; and the criminal or anti-social person need not resemble in other points either a child or a savage” (74). “And it is the chief fault of Nordau’s book [...] that his mania for limiting degeneracy to the second half of the nineteenth century [...] confines the causes of degeneracy to merely physiological disturbances, and diverts the attention from what I should call sociological causes of deterioration, namely, the undue pressure on the individual of social habits, routines, and institutions” (Lee, “Deterioration of Soul” 83).

³² The name of Oscar Wilde is not mentioned in “Deterioration of Soul”, but as Dellamora notices, this article is as much a reflection on Wilde’s fate after his trials for “gross indecency” as it is a response to Nordau (529-530). In fact, as already mentioned, *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* has also been interpreted as a re-enactment of Wilde’s fate by Stetz, an expression of sympathy on Lee’s part. After all, she might have been aware that “the stones cast at him were directed at anyone who violated bourgeois sexual norms”, including herself (Stetz 117).

seem to exculpate the philistines or normative subjects from possessing hybrid “anti-social and morbid tendencies”, they are not free from “imperfections” (99). According to her, the only difference between the hybridity of one and the other is that the imperfections of philistines “are confined within the limits of laws and customs” of the majority (99):

Are religious bigotry, social snobbishness, official corruption, industrial grabbingness, tolerated vice, parental and conjugal tyranny, due to exceptional degenerate individuals or to the normal mass? *What if the standard, the norm is low?* [...] Inquire into cases of infraction of social laws: have those who infringe them been dealt with wisely? Are the laws they break [...] unselfish, all wise laws, particularly framed in view to their happiness? In a word, *does society not produce its own degenerates and criminals*, even as the body produces its own diseases, or at least fosters them? (Lee, “Deterioration of Soul” 99)³³

In other words, law and even science can also be used to justify and validate selfish and unjust purposes. This is also reflected in *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady*, as the character of the Duke and his statesmen, embodiments of reason and enlightenment, prove to be moved by selfish motives. Hence, as exemplified by Oriana, it may be argued that there are cases in which the very laws that condemn criminals are the ones that “create” them via stigmatisation and vilification of certain, potentially harmless, personal traits.³⁴

Finally, Lee suggests that this fear of the animal other, ecophobia, in many cases responds to “class prejudice” or exacerbated “national feeling”, biases which in Lee’s opinion correspond to “accumulated [...] spiritual degeneracy” (Lee, “Deterioration of Soul” 100).³⁵ Lee turns the discourse of degeneration back to their prejudiced proponents, while demonstrating, through the character of Alberic, that a lack of prejudices leads to a more empathetic and organic understanding not only of the other, but also of oneself. Furthermore, Alberic’s embodied, intuitive and imaginative exploration of the self does not drive him towards atavistic behaviour, just the opposite. This demonstrates that the acceptance of one’s and others’ hybridity does not pose a threat to the individual nor

³³ My emphasis. Lee questions the fairness of certain laws and the way they are applied to those who are found guilty, which seems to be another indirect reference to Wilde’s case (Dellamora 533). In these paragraphs, she seems to wonder whether the Amendment Act of 1885 was made “in view to [the subject’s] happiness” given that it forces homosexual people to hide and repress part of their identity. Most importantly, she also seems to suggest that Wilde was not “dealt with wisely”, as he was not only publicly humiliated, but sentenced to two years in prison at hard labour over a sexual preference (Lee, “Deterioration of Soul” 99).

³⁴ This has also been noticed by critics, such as Sanna, who states: “Legislation thus created the deviants and transgressors it was going to seek and punish as much as the medical profession created the pathologies it was about to cure” (23).

³⁵ In fact, from a very early point in her essay, Lee classifies Nordau as a degenerate, his book as “pestilent rubbish” and his “theories as insane ravings” (Lee, “Deterioration of Soul” 73).

society. Similarly, in “Deterioration of Soul”, Lee concludes that every individual should be left to “scrutinise and select among the tendencies and notions of others: scrutinise and select more carefully still among the tendencies and notions he may find in himself” freely (100).

Lee’s narrative and essay therefore go against the utilitarian and ecophobic portrayal of the hybrid present in most of the Gothic productions of the time, including *Dracula* and *The Beetle* (Dellamora 534). Thus, this chapter shows that finding a different approach to identity the monster in *fin de siècle* Gothic fiction is indeed possible. Instead of establishing rejection of the animal and maintenance of the Cartesian wall between body and soul as the only remedy to avoid personal and social deterioration, *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* preaches acceptance of one’s animal, imperfect tendencies. Similarly, against *Dracula* and *The Beetle*’s promotion of isolation of the hybrid as the solution to contain their contagion, Lee’s writings ask for “the vampire kind” to be allowed the “power of combination” (Stoker 210). According to “Deterioration of Soul” as well as *Prince Alberic*, it is only by permitting geniuses to share thoughts and experiences with other of their kind would general “sterility” and intellectual stagnation be avoided (Lee, “Deterioration of Soul” 88).³⁶ Isolating and exterminating the hybrid other would not guarantee progress, since, according to Lee, “it is only the individual, the eccentric, nonconforming, rebellious individual, who can, in the long run, save the majority” (“Deterioration of Soul” 100). This is also stated in *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady*, where the death of the hybrid is what propels the Duchy’s doom.

In sum, the portrayal of the hybrid in *Dracula* and *The Beetle* proves that approaching identity from a surveillance perspective necessarily divides the subject into an animal-like body and a human soul, thus alienating the human subject from part of their own identity by means of ecophobia. Moreover, by promoting this ecophobic response as an inherent reaction, this approach also promotes self-policing. In these two novels, the modern subject is not only submitted to public scrutiny, but also to internal regulation. Repression of the animal within and without is encouraged as the way to avoid a prompt societal decline. On the other hand, Lee’s personal and artistic tendencies towards a more flexible conception of the self and of art and literature contribute to a

³⁶ Dellamora reads in Lee’s demand for “the *marriage of true minds*” and the need for a “queer comradeship of outlawed thought” (Lee, “Deterioration of the Soul” 88; 92) a coded reference to the ostracism that the homosexual community was been condemned to, especially after the Wilde’s trials in 1895 (Dellamora 543).

portrayal of the Gothic monster that goes against this ecophobic portrayal of the hybrid. Rather than as a defence mechanism, her story presents ecophobia, intransigence and rejection of the animal self and other as the true cause of deterioration. Against the ecophobia of *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, Lee's narrative constitutes an anti-Cartesian and proto-ecocritical construction of the human-animal monster on the grounds of its acceptance of imagination and the animal within as beneficial and worthy of pursuit for the development of the subject's identity.

2. Greco-Roman Gods: Pagan Visitations

Among the many revenants that haunt *fin de siècle* Gothic fiction, Greek gods stand out as one of the most common. Critics, such as Patricia Merivale, Stefano Evangelista, Denis Denisoff and Mark. C De Cicco, have written about these ancient deities and their recurrent presence in British literature taking into consideration, for instance, the different ways in which Pan has been represented since the Renaissance.³⁷ This dissertation, however, focuses on the return of pagan gods at the end of the nineteenth century, and analyses them in connection to the rest of the supernatural hybrids involved in this study.

Pagan gods have received less critical attention in Gothic studies than the monster or the double; however, De Cicco stresses the significance of the figure of Pan in the conversation around identity, visibility and animality that monsters take part in. He does so by establishing a connection between Pan and other supernatural hybrids, such as vampires or zombies, on the grounds of their common “boundary-bending” nature (“The Queer God Pan” 1). Developing De Cicco’s argument, this chapter suggests that *fin de siècle* representations of Greek gods should be considered supernatural hybrids and therefore incorporated into this thesis’ critical conversation.

In fact, I argue that gods represent a step further into the internalisation of the animal than the monster does. Contrary to the vampires and zoomorphic Egyptian creatures of the first chapter, classical gods are emblems of Greek culture, considered as the cradle of Western civilization (Evangelista, *British Aestheticism* 8). Their sudden irruption in nineteenth-century imagery could be then considered an inner threat since, after all, they act as reminders of the animistic past of the most advanced civilisation. Moreover, their diluted corporeality exacerbates their threat, because it forces people to consider an inner explanation for the sighting of pagan gods. Gods pose similar questions to ghostly apparitions, since both viewers of ghosts and gods undergo an internal battle to determine whether these creatures are tangible or hallucinations. Therefore, the figure

³⁷ In her book *Pan the Goat-God: His Myth in Modern Times* and her article “The ‘Death of Pan’ (Victorian Literature), Merivale explores the different adaptations suffered by the Greek god throughout British Literature. De Cicco writes about the persistence of the Pan-like figures in *fin de siècle* literature in his article “More than Human: The Queer Occult Explorer of the Fin-de-Siècle” and in his thesis dissertation “The Queer God Pan and His Children: A Myth Reborn 1860-1917”. Evangelista, on the other hand, tackles the different treatment that Greek gods and Hellenism received within Aestheticism in his book *British Aestheticism and Ancient Greece: Hellenism, Reception, Gods in Exile*. Finally, Denisoff’s article on decadent paganism and its connection to current ecopagan discourses entitled: “The Dissipating Nature of Decadent Paganism from Pater to Yeats” has been of great help for the development of this chapter.

of the pagan god supposes a greater challenge to ocular epistemology than the abject monster, since it suggests that the animal might actually nest in the modern subject's mind or sight. Ultimately, the antiquity of pagan gods also magnifies their threat, since it places them dangerously close to the line that separates history from pre-history, and the human from the non-human, animal hominid.

As Aron Worth discusses, nineteenth-century historians had to confront the possibility of a historical reassessment that connected modern humans with their pre-historic ancestors.³⁸ Language, more specifically, written language, was used as the key measurement that distinguished the “ahistoric *hominid*”³⁹ –, the human-animal – from articulate, cultured and so “historical humanity” (Worth 218; Orning 3). This argument was used by some historians to avoid acknowledging humanity's connection to pre-historic hominids, opting for a fusion of scientific and biblical historical notions to establish the beginning of “proper” history in a specific time and place: the Middle East and the year 4,000 BC. There were, however, certain historians who questioned the accuracy of establishing such clear-cut historical and identity boundaries. Instead, they were in favour of embracing a “deep” or abyssal concept of history which would fuse “nature and culture [...], hominids, early humans, and modern humans” (Worth 2018-219).

These debates on the origins of humanity were also tested and probed in Gothic fiction.⁴⁰ The irruption of pagan gods in *fin de siècle* imagery does indeed suggest that the pervasive presence of a premodern spirit still haunted modern Western society, thus, blurring the limits between atavism and civilisation. Paganism, being a “spiritual tradition founded on the powers of nature”, questions and blurs the distinctions between humans and the rest of the animals, since it is based on the “animist” principle that “all natural things (including flowers, rocks, humans and insects) have forms of vitality that are worthy of respect (Denisoff, “The Dissipating Nature” 434). Moreover, pagan literature

³⁸ “Arthur Machen and the Horrors of Deep History”, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 40, Cambridge UP, 2012, 215–227.

³⁹ My italics.

⁴⁰ Among the works dealing with primitive or hybridised versions of human or humanoid creatures, are most of H.G. Wells stories, such as ‘The Time Machine’, and also some of Arthur Machen, like ‘The White People’. These narratives have not been included in the present project, since its focus is on *supernatural* hybrid figures, lacking H.G. Well's hominids, the supernatural or mystic component required. However, I believe that applying this thesis's ecogothic and visual approach to H. G. Wells's stories would result in a plethora of interesting and innovative readings, which would, without a doubt, be an interesting critical thread to follow in the future.

is characterised by its many stories about human-animal metamorphoses, revealing that Roman and Greek peoples were aware and accepting of the presence of “animal qualities within” human beings. Moreover, these animal qualities were not necessarily described as evil or inferior, but could be considered as both negative and desirable, such as “strength or cunning”, for instance. According to Joyce E. Salisbury, Romans and Greeks’ conception of human identity as hybrid is rooted in these cultures’ “belief in a continuum of life that linked human and animal” species, a concept which did not survive the Middle Ages (13).

Greek deities are hybrid creatures, divine and animal, sensible and impulsive, embodiments of both cultural concepts and natural phenomena. This is the case with both deities in this chapter: Aphrodite/Venus and Pan. On the one hand, Venus is the goddess of beauty and love, which are social and cultural concepts. On the other hand, she also stands for the needs and desires of the body, and has animals – doves – and plants – roses and myrtle – as symbols (Grimal 12). Pan’s hybridity is even more evident, since he is literally half-goat and half-man. Similar to Venus, Pan has both a civilised role, as protector of shepherds and cattle, and a nature-related one, as the god of woods and the wilderness. Moreover, both deities are known for beckoning the instinctual, animalistic side of people: as gods of fertility and sexuality, they stirred feelings of irrational desire, and, in the case of Pan, irrational fear (Ruiz de Elvira 98-99). This chapter focuses particularly on the representation of these two deities in Arthur Machen’s ‘The Great God Pan’ and in Vernon Lee’s ‘Dionea’, revealing how, despite their thematic similarities, the narratives approach hybridity from very different standpoints.

The memory of the sensory-driven and animalistic pagan past of Western civilisation resulted in a tendency to portray Greek deities as threatening in *fin de siècle* fiction (Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God* 154). This is the case in Arthur Machen’s ‘The Great God Pan’, where the irruption of the pagan god into nineteenth-century London society results in a series of inexplicable suicides. Paradoxically, however, classical culture was also seen as an emblem of progress. From the Romantic period onward, the interest in Roman Classicism yielded to the study of Greek culture and history. In Germany, the study of Greek philosophy, literature and language became requisite in humanistic studies curricula. This contributed to shaping the thinking of influential German philosophers, such as Goethe or Hegel. It was precisely through the reading of such philosophers that Hellenism arrived in Britain, where Romantic poets transformed Greece into an ideal

land, a symbol of artistic and personal freedom. Interest in Greek culture persisted throughout the Victorian period, only “purged of its frank paganism, sensualism, and revolutionary energy”. Its controversial history was transformed into a non-threatening narrative about the origins of democracy, enlightenment and rationalism (Evangelista, *British Aestheticism* 7-9).

The Aesthetic and Decadent movements, on the other hand, rekindled the uncomfortable side of Hellenism by reclaiming the aesthetic and philosophical value of its hybrid pagan gods. Aesthetes and Decadents went against the previous selective, and so Cartesian, concept of Greece that had transformed it into an emblem of reason and progress. Instead, they framed Greece’s history and culture as necessarily hybrid. Aestheticism did not approach the study of Greece and the Greeks from an antiquarian perspective. Instead of scrutinising the remaining fragments of Greek’s history, Aestheticism’s founder, Walter Pater, proposed a creative reconstruction that attempted to make sense of the fragments by filling in the gaps through artistic imagination. Pater’s aestheticism acknowledged ‘deep’ history as a source not of fear, but of sublimity, possibility and liberation (Evangelista, *British Aestheticism* 4-12). As Pater’s disciple and Aesthete, this is the angle from which Vernon Lee approaches the representation of Venus in ‘Dionea’, imbuing her version of the goddess with a dual personality, threatening and liberating at the same time, and, above all, sublime and unattainable.

Moreover, as Dennis Denisoff has recently suggested, Aestheticism’s and Decadence’s approach to paganism can be connected to ecocritical concerns.⁴¹ As illustrated in this dissertation so far, decadent writings tended to promote the idea of an embodied subject, a “physical thinker”. Giving the body and the senses the legitimacy to grasp the natural environment can be understood as proto-ecocriticism, inasmuch as it complicates the human-animal division, presenting a hybrid conception of identity (Denisoff, “The Dissipating Nature” 339-441). Once again, Lee’s ‘Dionea’ reflects on this aspect of Aestheticism by applying it particularly to the forging of an alternative female identity which rejected the established Cartesian roles of Angel or Demon in

⁴¹ Dennis Denisoff has recently been investigating the various similarities between what he calls the ‘decadent neo-pagan movement’ and current ecopagan philosophies. According to Denisoff, this movement was not restricted to the literary realm, but there were some who saw a way of creating a different approach to life, identity and more importantly, to nature through pagan religion (“The Post-Human Spirit” 351). For more on the connections between nineteenth century paganism and current ecocritical concerns and theories, consult Denisoff’s articles “The Post-Human Spirit of the Neopagan Movement” (2016) and “The Dissipating Nature of Decadent Paganism from Pater to Yeats” (2008).

favour of a hybrid, embodied concept of womanhood. Against 'The Great God Pan's depiction of the animal, specifically of the animal-woman, as source of degeneration, 'Dionea' presents repression of the animal as the true harbinger of civilisation's doom. Ancient Greece, thus, became a plastic tool in Decadent literature, being portrayed either as an idealised realm to explore and give free rein to alternative identities, or as a reminder of the atavistic forces in need of policing within the subject's identity.

2.1 Beyond the Veil: Visual perspective in 'The Great God Pan' and 'Dionea'

This complex tangle of attitudes towards Greece and its gods produced contrasting portrayals of Gothic pagan deities such as Lee's Aphrodite in 'Dionea' and Machen's Pan in 'The Great God Pan'. Pan and Venus are analogous figures, nevertheless, since both are historical hybrids. They possess a mixture of animal and cultural attributes, and both are gods of fertility and sexuality. Moreover, Lee and Machen's stories are equally inspired by Heine's 'The Gods in Exile' (1853–54), a story which reports that pagan gods had gone in disguise among the populace after Christianity was established in Europe. Greek and Roman gods were then regarded as demons whose beauty and delightful singing and dancing could lure "to apostasy unsteadfast Christians who had lost their way in the forest" (Heine 1). Plutarch's narration of the death of Pan was interpreted by some as a symbol of the ending of paganism and the triumph of the true faith; and Pan came to either be identified with Christ, or represented as the anti-Christ (Merivale, "Death of Pan" 1; De Cicco, "The Queer God Pan" 22).

Arthur Machen's 'The Great God Pan' reveals that Pan was not actually dead, or at least that he was un-dead. In fact, in Machen's narrative, Pan is closer to being a ghost than a tangible being. He only materialises at the end, existing as an invisible and threatening presence for the majority of the novella. In Vernon Lee's 'Dionea', however, Aphrodite takes the form of a common girl, a shipwreck survivor who arrives on the shore near San Massimo in Italy, therefore remaining closer to Heine's original idea. Contrary to Machen's Pan, Lee's Venus is not a ghost, but a living, corporeal entity whose divinity is camouflaged by her human form.

Despite these differences, both stories deal with the return of ancient pagan forces hidden under the veil of human appearance. At first glance, it seems they share the common aim of drawing attention to the unreliability of sight and appearances to raise awareness about the existence of an invisible and neglected side of reality. However, the

manner in which each narrative approaches the nature of said veil and what lies beyond it varies significantly and is deeply rooted in their contrasting visual and ecocritical standpoints. Although these two stories make use of similar decadent themes, they use different aesthetic and narrative strategies, and adopt an overall opposing visual approach to identity, what leads to different perspectives on animality and hybridity.

Despite its decadent themes and its publication as part of the John Lane Keynote series,⁴² the narrative style, visual perspective and philosophical standpoint of ‘The Great God Pan’ differ significantly from those of most decadents and aesthetes, including Vernon Lee (Denisoff, “A Disembodied Voice” 191-92). In part, this divergence is rooted in Machen’s influential Anglo-Catholic upbringing, which shaped his philosophic and literary views to a great extent. Against the rationalism typically promoted by protestant Christianity, Machen’s writings’ “sole goal [was] to restore the sense of wonder and mystery into [the] perception of the world” (Valentová 215). For Machen, Decadence, symbolism and occultism were merely tools to bring about a sense of ecstasy. According to him, it was only when material life was abandoned that one could contemplate the otherwise invisible, mystic reality (Valentová 215-216).

There was, indeed, a connection between Decadence and Catholicism, since, for decadents, the Catholic aesthetic of excess and its ritualistic nature were a source of inspiration; and the religion and artistic movement shared a search for mystical and ecstatic experiences. From a decadent philosophic standpoint, the invisible side to reality was usually made to stand for the unacknowledged forces lurking within the individual; whereas for Machen, it stood for the forgotten otherworldly powers of heaven and hell. Hence, in ‘The Great God Pan’, this desire to lift the veil of appearances responds to the wish to restore religious awe and wonder and get rid of mundane visible reality. (Valentová 215-217). Despite making use of Decadent themes, ‘The Great God Pan’ seems to have more of a religious agenda, rather than a Decadent one. However, this complicates the categorization of Machen’s story into a specific artistic movement as well as its easy classification within a surveillance or spectacle regime.⁴³ ‘The Great God Pan’

⁴² John Lane was the publisher in charge of the journal *The Yellow Book*, which was considered the decadent journal *par excellence* (Fox 58).

⁴³ There is in fact some controversy over whether to consider ‘The Great God Pan’ as a decadent text. On the one hand, scholars such as Merivale, Fox, Denisoff, Lovatt, and MacLeod argue in favour of considering it decadent on the basis of its publication, Machen’s connection to and admiration for other decadent authors, and the obvious influence and references to Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (Merivale 159; Lovatt 21; Fox 59; MacLeod 120-121). On the other hand, other critics such as Milbank or Valentová question the categorization of ‘The Great God Pan’ as a Decadent text. For Milbank, for instance, Machen is more of a symbolist than a decadent, as the narrative is ultimately attempting to lift the veil that

demands a thorough analysis of its narrative style and characters' approach to the hybrid, in order to determine whether the story adopts a surveillance and Cartesian perspective, or an embodied and spectacle one.

On the other hand, Lee's involvement with the aesthetic movement is undeniable, and so 'Dionea' is easier to categorise in terms of its style, adherence to genre and visual approach. For instance, although Dionea is also placed at the center of a mysterious atavistic spell, her appearance never fully reveals her true, supernatural identity. This story plays with appearances and assumptions, allying with a spectacle perspective. This makes Dionea not only unsettling for the characters in the story, but also for the scholars attempting to define her identity. For instance, Jane Thomas sees Dionea as an androgynous figure resulting from the fusion of characteristics from Dionysus and Venus (263-265). She bases her argument on the name Lee gives her goddess, and on the similarities between Dyonisus and Venus, as both are gods of desire, fertility and ecstasy (Thomas 267). Despite her resemblance to Dyonisus, other critics such as Catherine Maxwell and Stefano Evangelista see in Dionea a clear reincarnation of Venus Aphrodite (Maxwell, "From Dionysus" 262-63; Evangelista, *British Aestheticism* 84).

Merging male and female names is not a strange thing in Lee's stories. As seen in the first chapter, the Snake Lady's name, Oriana, is a combination of the pagan gods' names Orion and Diana. This fact seems to support Thomas's interpretation of Oriana as an androgynous hybrid, as christening her otherwise unnameable, gender-bending characters with a male/female name combination was a common practice for Lee. Androgynous or not, Dionea's potential for hybridity is already implicit in her name, and further established by the dual nature of the goddess Venus herself. Venus is not only known as the goddess of love, but also as "the Goddess of Death in Life" due to her terrible wrath and the ritual sacrifices involved in her worship (Maxwell, "From Dionysus" 264). Therefore, Dionea is as likely to be represented from either a nostalgic or a sinister perspective as the great god Pan.

separates the material, the symbol, from the invisible truth lying behind it: its meaning (Milbank 276). Last but not least, Machen's own renunciation to the movement also supports the reading of his texts as outside the decadent movement, since he declared that Decadence was a "passing phase" (Lovatt 29), or in his words: "a storm – in a doll's teacup" (Machen *Autobiography* 238).

2.1.1 Lifting the veil: Can you *see* the gods?

Associated with evil and feared by most characters, Machen's Pan is a sinister version of the god (Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God* 154). Merivale regards the story's use of the Pan figure as a failure, arguing that Machen "smothered" the initial theme by having Pan be a shadow that only opens and closes the narrative. I would argue, however, that Pan is not at all absent from the narrative, but that he constitutes a pervasive and invisible force that permeates throughout the whole story: in other words, a ghost. Similarly, Helen Vaughan's degeneracy is more dependent on Pan than Merivale might admit.⁴⁴ Not only does she have some Pan-like characteristics, but she works as an intermediary or pagan priestess, introducing characters to the sight and knowledge of Pan.

'The Great God Pan' is narrated by an omniscient narrator, and its protagonists are all members of the upper classes, among which there is a doctor and scientist, Raymond, a business man, Mr Clarke, a flâneur, Mr Villiers and an amateur antiquarian, Mr Austin. Their class, and especially Raymond's profession, imbues them with a great degree of reliability. The novella tells the story of Raymond's attempt to perform a lobotomy that will allow his ward, Mary, to 'see the Great God Pan'. The operation fails, but nine months later Mary gives birth to Helen Vaughan who, as an adult, cuts a swathe of evil through London society. Told by multiple narrators, 'The Great God Pan' details Helen's life and eventual downfall. For most of the story, Machen's Pan is undead and invisible, a symbol of "the most awful, most secret forces which lie at the heart of things". However, Villiers warns Austin about the fact that "all symbols are symbols of something", suggesting a real, tangible dimension to Pan:

We know what happened to those who chanced to meet the Great God Pan, and those who are wise know that all symbols are symbols of something, not of nothing. It was, indeed, an exquisite symbol beneath which men long ago veiled their knowledge of the most awful, most secret forces which lie at the heart of things [...]. Such forces cannot be named, cannot be spoken, cannot be imagined except under a veil and a symbol, a symbol to the most of us appearing a quaint, poetic fancy [...]. But you and I [...] have known something of the terror that may dwell in the secret place of life, manifested under human flesh; that which is without form taking to itself a form. (Machen 135)

This remark is essential for understanding 'The Great God Pan', since Villiers' reflection on the nature of symbols establishes a lens through which the apparent contradictions of

⁴⁴ Merivale affirms that Helen Vaughan "is no more specifically Pan-like than are any of the diabolical Fatal Women of the nineteenth-century Romantic Agonies" (Merivale, *Pan the Goat-God* 165).

Machen's story can be interpreted. Villiers definition of symbols is in itself a paradox, since although he presents symbols as a veil, a metaphor. He also argues for their potential to become something tangible, real, "taking to itself a form".

On the other hand, Raymond's perspective seems to be in conflict with Villiers's since, for him, visible reality is but "dreams and shadows". By approaching reality as an unreliable veil that hides the "real", unmediated "world" Raymond is negating the capacity of symbols to ultimately reveal what lies beyond them (10). In the end, this emphasises the unreliability of the human eye, since it argues that it cannot decode certain aspects of reality. Curiously enough, Raymond also establishes sight as the only bodily sense potentially able to perceive the hidden "spirit world" (15):

I do not know whether any human being has ever lifted that veil; but I do know, Clarke, that you and I shall *see* it lifted this very night from before another's *eyes*. [...]... the ancients knew what lifting the veil means. They call it *seeing* the God Pan. (Machen 10)⁴⁵

Even if it seems that Raymond questions ocular epistemology, he ultimately privileges sight as the only sense through which truth can be attained. Moreover, he specifies that "certain cells [...] in the grey matter" of the subject need to be rearranged if he or she is to see Pan, thus establishing the connection between mind and vision supported by ocular epistemology (Machen 11). Therefore, even if Villiers and Raymond contradict each other at first, Raymond's experiment finally grants sight the possibility of lifting the veil, thus ultimately supporting a surveillance perspective.

Raymond's experiment on Mary is indeed intended to allow her to look into the "spirit world" (15). Yet, this surgery can also be interpreted as some kind of sexual ritual or initiation. Raymond's glittering knife reminds of *Dracula's* stakes, as it is also used to puncture Mary's skin and open a "wound" in her skull through which the god Pan could enter (Machen 25). This sexual reading is further backed by the fact that, being a god of fertility, together with Aphrodite and Eros, "sexuality has long been an integral aspect of Pan imagery". Pan was occasionally represented in mosaics or murals as possessing "a monstrously oversized erect phallus", which attested to both his animalised sexuality and his monstrosity (De Cicco 19). It is not surprising, then, to find sexual implications in the initiation necessary for characters to see Pan, starting with Mary.

⁴⁵ My italics.

In order to perceive the Pan-like reality beneath human appearances, characters' bodily desires need to be awakened. Only then can characters perceive the terrifying reality hidden under their human guise: the animal that still lurks within. In other words, being introduced to Pan or seeing Pan stands for a sexual awakening that necessarily confronts characters with the pre-rational forces that lie beneath the veil of their human and civilised appearance. Moreover, this story identifies these animal, pagan forces with the Christian devil. For instance, when Clarke learns about the possibility that Helen might have introduced her neighbour and childhood friend Rachel to Pan, he concludes: "Et Diabolus incarnates est. Et homo factus est" (Machen 47).⁴⁶ By identifying Pan with the Devil, Clarke establishes a clear connection between the body, the animal, and the Beast. Therefore, 'The Great God Pan' adheres to an ecophobic representation of identity inasmuch as it represents the body as evil on the grounds of its animality.

The interpretation of Pan as a symbol of the demonised remains of characters' atavistic and animal-like desires is further confirmed by the consequences that Raymond's failed experiment has on Mary's identity. Once she sees Pan, and her dormant sexuality is awakened by Raymond's intervention, Mary's rationality is completely rescinded. As a result, she is reduced to a "hopeless idiot", or in other words, a body without a soul or conscience (Machen 27). Bearing in mind that reason had been held as the distinguishing feature between animals and humans since the Renaissance, Mary's madness places her dangerously close to the animal other (De Cicco, "More than Human" 15). In fact, after seeing Pan, Mary's "soul [struggles and shudders] within the house of flesh" apparently eager to break free from the burden of her animality (Machen 27). "The house of flesh", or the body, is presented as a degenerative prison from which Mary's soul, that is, her remaining reason and humanity, fights to disassociate itself from.

Against some critics' interpretation of Raymond's experiment as a demonstration of the inconsistency of divided concepts of identity (Lovatt 21),⁴⁷ I argue that the text shows that Raymond's undermining of scientific materialism's reliability stems not from a will to refute the Cartesian concept of identity, but from a desire to confirm it. Raymond's failed procedure does in fact prove the existence of a division between the

⁴⁶ Translated as "And the devil was incarnate. And was made man" in Dennis Denisoff's edited version of 'The Great God Pan' in *Decadent and Occult Works by Arthur Machen* (21).

⁴⁷ This argument is based on the operation's apparent dismantling of the mind-body separation, since it proves that by altering the brain, which is part of the body, the subject's mind and identity also undergo alteration (Lovatt 21-22).

rational soul and the animal body, since by disintegrating the wall that separates Mary's soul from her body, he is actually verifying its existence (Milbank 277).

Moreover, the experiment also shows that the moment this wall is destroyed, 'irrational' and hallucinatory visions invade Mary's mind and completely remove her reasoning and soul:

[Mary's eyes] shone with an awful light, looking far away, and a great wonder fell upon her face [...]; but in an instant the wonder faded, and gave place to the most awful terror. The muscles of her face were hideously convulsed, she shook from head to foot; the soul seemed struggling and shuddering within the house of flesh. (Machen 27)

Once Mary's identity has been tampered with and her animal side awakens, the animal in her proves to be so powerful as to take over her whole identity, imprisoning and nullifying her soul "within the house of flesh". Mary, Pan's first victim, already illustrates the impossibility of the coexistence of animal and rational forces within the individual, thus rejecting the potential existence of an embodied, hybrid human identity. Thus, 'The Great God Pan' also denies the plausibility of a safe coexistence of both animal and human tendencies within the individual. Hybridity is presented as destructive, as the complete annihilation of Mary's rationality by her internal animal proves. Raymond's experiment both confirms the existence of a wall between reason and animality and argues for its necessary maintenance.

Raymond's experiment is also key to the development of the story's plot since, apart from cancelling Mary's rationality, it also results in her pregnancy and the birth of Helen Vaughan. This ultimately confirms the interpretation of the surgery as sexual intercourse, an interpretation also implicitly recognised by Raymond's confessions at the end of the novel:

It was an ill work I did that night, when you were present; I broke open the door of the house of life, without knowing or caring what might pass forth or enter it. [...] ...there may enter in that for which we have no name, and human flesh may become the veil of a horror one dare not express. (Machen 154)

Mary's pregnancy is the consequence of the opening of "the house of life", a woman's womb, which allegedly enabled Pan's evil and unspeakable forces to invade and impregnate her. In the period of nine months, these forces became "human flesh" and

Mary gave birth to a child.⁴⁸ The threat posed by Pan and his supposed offspring is, therefore, first and foremost a sexual one. Although the perpetrator of the phallic operation, and the god that allows for the incarnation of the animal within are both male, its threat is deflected onto a female, Helen Vaughan. This was a common tactic in Victorian Gothic fiction where the dangers of male animal sexuality tend to be displaced onto a female temptress.

Against 'The Great God Pan's third persona narrator, 'Dionea' is written as a one-sided, epistolary story in which the reader only has access to the letters sent by Dr Alessandro De Rosis. A first person narrator suggest that the story might be more prone to adopting a spectacular approach, as the account of the events ultimately relies on the potentially biased and incomplete perspective of a single person. At the same time, however, the inclusion of letters in tales responds to a surveillance strategy used to imbue fiction with veracity. Moreover, the protagonist, De Rosis, is the "communal physician" (90). According to a surveillance approach, this scientific background makes him a reliable and objective source. Moreover, De Rosis identifies himself as a Republican, and a "priest-hater", further highlighting his alliance with rationalism and materialism (79). In fact, since the story takes place in Italy, De Rosis' self-proclaimed agnosticism represents his dissociation with Catholicism, a religion which was typically associated in British literature with superstition and excess. All this renders him as a perfectly enlightened narrator.

Despite this supposed rationality, De Rosis is interested in the study of the Greek gods from a nostalgic and sympathetic perspective, even though he considers Greek culture "a trifle free, a trifle nude". When reporting the evolution of his study to Lady Evelyn, De Rosis cannot help but express his admiration for those Greek times in which "garlands of roses were still hung on the olive trees" and "folk" lived in connection with their natural environment (Lee 83). Yet, De Rosis's scientific and materialist background does not allow him to actually consider the possibility that Greek gods have survived Christianity and found refuge among the common people, as Heine suggests. On the contrary, he comes to the conclusion that Greek gods only exist in the present as metaphors for the natural phenomena and bodily sensations that they once embodied.

⁴⁸ Scholars such as Mantrant and Boyiopolous have seen in Raymond's ritual a parallelism with the birth of Christ. Mary would stand for the Virgin Mary, Pan would represent the Devil, and Helen would consequently be the antichrist (Mantrant 3; Boyiopoulos 364).

Consequently, De Rosis sees Pan in the “awfulness of the deep woods”, and the “creak of the swaying, solitary reeds”, and thinks that “great goddess Venus” survives in the “blue, starry May night [...], the sough of the waves, the warm wind” and in young people’s feelings of love and desire (Lee 91-92). Therefore, De Rosis’s surveillance perspective does not lead him to believe in the tangible existence of gods or demons, as it does with Raymond. Instead, his agnosticism causes him to arrive to the opposite conclusion: the categorical denial of the gods’ actual existence. His lack of superstition and his secularism blind him towards that very mystic reality that ‘The Great God Pan’ attempts to unveil. For De Rosis, pagan gods are just symbols, and their exile and disguise among common people is a metaphor for the persistence of certain atavistic behaviours in modern society (Lee 83).

Although De Rosis drives attention to Dionea’s similarities with the goddess from the moment she arrives ashore, he never actually establishes the connection between the orphan and the goddess. The clues to Dionea’s true nature are, however, plentiful. She arrives on a Greek boat and speaks “some half-intelligible Eastern jabber” mixed with “a few Greek words”, her name is written in Greek alphabet, and she longs to “*get back to the sea*” (Lee 78; 81),⁴⁹ a reference to Venus’s birth from the foam formed when the genitalia of Uranus fell to the sea (Ruiz de Elvira 50). Apart from that, Dionea loves myrtle and roses, plants traditionally associated with the goddess, and whose growth she can accelerate by means of her mere presence. Similarly, she seems to have control over the behaviour of pigeons, Venus’s favourite animal and the one responsible for pulling her carriage (Grimal 12). Her communion and connection with nature not only supports Dionea’s likeness to Venus, but also her potential atavism and degeneracy. For instance, Dionea is caught imitating with great precision the “cooing sounds” and typical movements of pigeons (Lee 81). Despite such animal-like behaviour, De Rosis remains oblivious to the extent of her potential degeneracy.

Despite possessing the necessary theoretical knowledge to lift the veil of her appearance, De Rosis’ purely surveillance approach blinds him towards recognising “baleful” Venus in Dionea (Lee 77). For instance, although De Rosis is aware of exile gods’ tendency to use “the stolen garb of the Madonna or the saints”, he cannot recognise Venus in Dionea even when she even adorns “her wicked little person with [the

⁴⁹ Original italics.

Madonna's] sacred garments" (Lee 91; 84). Due to his faith in appearances as accurate reflections of the subject's personality, De Rosis is blinded by Dionea's beauty. Given that symmetry, beauty and femininity were understood as proof of female normativity according to a surveillance approach, De Rosis sees Dionea's "wonderfully well proportioned" appearance as enough guarantee of her humanity and sanity (Lee 81). Similar to Dorian Gray's case, Dionea's immaculate appearance disguises her inner hybridity, and dismantles surveillance, since it proves that that the symbol is not necessarily an accurate representation for what lies beneath.

Despite its narrator's adherence to surveillance and Cartesian conceptions of identity, Lee's narrative manages to question them by portraying De Rosis as an unreliable narrator, since he is unable to comprehend or uncover what lies beyond the veil of appearances. By doing this, the narrative proves the inefficacy of reading people based on how they look and behave, drawing attention towards an invisible side to the modern subject's identity.

2.2 The Hybrid Goddess

In both stories, the figure of the supernatural hybrid other is embodied by a female figure of Italian or Greek appearance whose influence on men and other women is suspiciously related to the awakening of bodily desires and the disabling of reason. Apart from this, however, their approach to the animal woman is not similar, given the narratives' opposing visual and ecocritical standpoints. Helen is presented as the demonic offspring of the terrible Pan, whereas Dionea's personality remains dual and her supernatural identity is never explicitly revealed.

The first time the reader comes across Helen in 'The Great God Pan', is from Clarke's recounting of the story's events as told by his friend, Dr Phillips. This common strategy of having the story told by a close friend was aimed at providing the narrative with veracity, even more when the source is a doctor. This implies that reason and empirical evidence are privileged in the construction and comprehension of the events at stake. Clarke affirms that "he [Dr. Phillips] assures [him] that all the Facts related therein are strictly and wholly True" (Machen 32).⁵⁰ Hence, this choice of narrators and their alliance to facts suggest that the story adopts a surveillance approach to fiction.

⁵⁰ Original capitalization.

Helen's portrayal also follows a surveillance perspective, since her physical appearance is presented as an objective reflection of her inner otherness: "her skin was [...] clear olive, and her features were strongly marked, and of a somewhat foreign character" (Machen 35). Helen is subjected to a Lombrosian scrutiny, since her degeneracy is signalled both by a physiognomic analysis of her marked features and by her Greek or Italian foreign appearance (Ambrogiani 42). Her monstrosity is, however, more subtle than that of Dracula and the Beetle, as she is said to possess "the most wonderful and most strange beauty" (Machen 53). Still, she is both "the most beautiful [...] and the most repulsive" woman at once, a description which draws from the sensation of physical rejection that the figure of monster provokes (67). Hence, despite of her beauty, her appearance is unsettling enough for male characters to be experience an ecophobic reaction in her presence, thus suspecting her as a degenerate.

Helen's hybridity is not only signalled by her physical appearance, but also by her "fondness for the forest", which highlights both her connection to Pan and her potential animality (Machen 44). In fact, it is during her "rambles" in the forest that she is reported to have engaged in acts of unspeakable nature, which constitutes the ultimate confirmation of her degeneracy (35). Helen is first accused by her young neighbour, Trevor, of having been "playing in the grass with a strange naked man" (38). The identification of the naked man with Pan is supported by the "sort of singing" that Trevor hears and by the utter terror he feels by witnessing the scene (38). Moreover, Trevor's mental health is hindered in a way similar to Mary's, since after seeing a "man in the wood", he "suffers from a weakness of intellect" (41-42). The similar pattern of Mary's and Trevor's mental decline suggests a common cause: having met Pan. Helen is also accused of dragging Rachel, another neighbour, into her "wild" unspeakable acts (45). The nature of these acts is never explained in the narrative, since Machen has Clark stop reading his notes just in time for it not to be revealed. However, given the nudity of Helen's playmate, supposedly Pan, the scene is suggestive of sex.

Rachel's story further supports the initial reading of the act of 'seeing Pan' as a sexual initiation or awakening. For instance, after being with Helen in the forest, Rachel's behaviour turns "rather peculiar"; being now more "languid and dreamy". Her change is confirmed when her mother enters her room after hearing some "supressed weeping", to find her "half-undressed, upon the bed". Rachel's lethargic behaviour, together with her nudity, is a clear sign of eroticism. Moreover, her moaning could be motivated by sexual

self-discovery rather than by “great distress” for having followed Helen to the forest (Machen 44). Rachel undergoes a transformation similar to that of Lucy Westenra after being introduced to Pan, which suggest that it shares the same effects as the vampire bite: the revival of the victim’s animal desires by means of sexual initiation. Consequently, Lucy and Rachel are transformed into degenerate “monsters” in the eyes of those guided by an ecophobic perspective, since it was believed that “aggressive sexuality” and “narcissistic autoerotic self-sufficiency” were characteristic of the animal-like “primal woman” (Lombroso and Ferrero 152; Dijkstra 289; 308). Sexuality, especially in women, was seen as monstrous, as it was considered to go against a woman’s natural tendencies, namely, “maternity, piety, [and] weakness” (Lombroso and Ferrero 151-152). Clarke is portrayed in agreement with this surveillance and Lombrosian perspective of identity, as he catalogues Rachel and Helen’s ventures into the woods as something “too incredible, too monstrous” to be true (Machen 45).

Helen is progressively de-humanised, especially upon her arrival to the urban space. Once in the city, she is silenced in a way similar to Dracula, only worse, since her voice is never directly heard in the story. Given that language was seen as one of the key elements that distinguished humans from animals, denying the monster a voice responds to an ‘otherisation’ strategy (Orning 3; Ambrogiani 42). Moreover, since “only human beings have names”, Helen is portrayed as having no true name (Machen 57). Instead, she is known by four different names: Helen Vaughan, Mrs Herbert, Miss Raymond and Mrs Beaumont. The artificiality and multiplicity of these names enable her to move freely and unnoticed between the West End and the disreputable East End. Thus, while maintaining an appearance of respectability as Mrs Beaumont on Ashley Street, she is able to tend to her dubious business in her room in Soho as Miss Raymond. Helen’s ability to have several dwellings and names at the same time is an undeniable sign of hybridity in the story, since in Machen’s London the characters’ identities are deeply reliant on their residences and names.⁵¹ Indeed, it is Helen’s capacity to pass as a West-ender that

⁵¹ The relevance of geographical location to define the character’s identity can further be perceived in ‘The Great God Pan’ in the way light and darkness are used. Thus, when Villiers encounters Herbert for the first time around Piccadilly, he decides to drive him towards “an obscure street in Soho” where nobody would judge him for being in the company of a beggar. This way, the East is portrayed in Machen as a place of sordid ugliness that nevertheless offers West Enders a relief from the constant monitoring they are subjected to in the West (Murga 369). Machen’s fictional London bears a great deal with the representations of the city in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In the article “The Great Modern Monster: Portraying London in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Great God Pan*”, I offer a more detailed study of London’s hybridity and its role in conforming its inhabitant’s identity within these three key urban Gothic fictions.

terrifies Austin most: “You must remember, Villiers, that I have seen this woman, in the ordinary adventure of London society, talking and laughing, and sipping her chocolate in a commonplace drawing-room, with commonplace people” (Machen 126). In this respect, Helen strongly resembles Stevenson’s Dr Jekyll, as both exercise their multifaceted personalities by making use of different names and personae. Under the guise of Miss Raymond, in Helen’s case, and Mr Hyde, in Dr Jekyll’s, the two characters manage to move freely around the sordid ends of the city. There is, however, a difference between them, one that makes Helen all the more monstrous: the contrasting freedom of movement exercised by men and women in the urban space. Thus, whereas excursions to the sinful East End are considered improper but inevitable for men, for a woman to ramble alone, and especially in the east of the city or at night, would cause her to be labelled as a street-walker (Ledger and Luckhurst 53-54). The fact that Helen not only goes to the east, but has rooms in Soho where she receives visits “two or three times a week” (Machen 129) hints once again to her connection to illicit sexuality, which in turn brings her closer to the animal, and so, the monster.

Helen’s fluid, hybrid personality is, thus, what ultimately transforms her into a monster in the eyes of Clarke, Villiers and Austin, demonstrating their endorsement of a Cartesian concept of identity. Similarly, all three male characters present surveillance tendencies. Clark is described by Villiers as a “man of business”, and a “dry fellow” (Machen 86). Even his interest in the occult is shaped by his desire to “*prove* the Existence of the Devil” by gathering documents and manuscripts (31, my italics), thus adopting an ocularcentric perspective. Austin seems to be an amateur antiquarian or collector of ancient objects, which also supports the gathering of physical proofs in the persecution of the historical other. Villiers’s overall character and perspective on the events are, admittedly, more difficult to determine. He is presented as a decadent figure, a dandy or *flâneur* who takes pleasure in rambling around the “obscure mazes” of London (50). He also makes more use of his bodily senses than the rest of characters, as seen in the way he conveys his impressions in visiting the Herberts’ in Paul Street:

“How very curious that you should experience such an unpleasant sensation in that room. [...] it was a mere matter of the imagination, a feeling of repulsion in short.”

“No, it was more physical than mental. It was as if I were inhaling at every breath some deadly fume, which seemed to penetrate to every nerve and bone and sinew of my body.” (88)

Villiers gives his body legitimacy in the process of recognising Helen as non-human. Nevertheless, he follows the established surveillance visual codes to the point of applying a Lombrosian scrutiny to an inanimate object: “the [Herbert’s] house had the most unpleasant physiognomy he had ever observed” (60). Finally, despite his apparently dandy personality, it is Villiers who, in discovering Helen’s myriad of names, decides that her monstrosity is such that he needs to free London from the “burden” of her existence (136).

Hence, the portrayal of Helen Vaughan is entirely reliant on a male group’s surveillance and Cartesian perspectives on life and identity. As a consequence, she is ultimately reduced to the status of a “thing” and forced to hang herself in order to contain her *pandemic* (Machen 140). The gruesome details of her death – that is, the Darwinian devolution of her body to the point of becoming “jelly” (144) – constitute the final evidence of her supernatural nature (Ambrogiani 42).

On the other hand, there is no visual confirmation of Dionea’s degeneration, since her beautiful appearance successfully masks her supernatural nature. ‘Dionea’ tells the story of a mysterious orphan who arrives at the shore of Montemirto Ligure after the ship in which she travelled sunk during a storm. She is taken under the protection of Doctor Alessandro De Rosis who, with the help of Lady Evelyn, princess of Sabina, manages to provide Dionea with an education at the Sisters of the Stigmata’s convent. As Dionea grows up, both her beauty, but also her strangeness of character, are made more evident. Once an adult, Dionea makes a living by selling love potions, as she is thought to have some influential powers. Finally, when the sculptor Waldemar and his wife, Gertrude, arrive to Italy, Dionea becomes Waldemar’s model for a Venus; event that prompts the tragic ending.

Despite her beauty, there are certain physical and behavioural traits that should have alerted De Rosis about his *protégée*’s potential degeneration. For instance, Dionea’s physical strength and lack of “natural piety” would classify her as a potential female offender (Lee 81). These characteristics were considered to be aberrant for a woman, due to the fact that they were regarded as masculine (Lombroso and Ferrero 151). De Rosis also notices Dionea’s “serpentine” and odd smile, and compares her to cats, using felines and snakes to describe her. This imagery is used to highlight a woman’s inherent animality (Lee 84; 87). And yet, despite his traditional views on women, De Rosis

remains sympathetic towards Dionea, never seriously considering her a degenerate, let alone the reincarnation of the great goddess, Venus.

De Rosis's inability to see Dionea's true personality is ultimately rooted in his surveillance and materialist perspective, since, as already mentioned, he did not believe that pagan gods existed outside "that rogue's", Henrich Heine, imagination (102). "Reality [...] is always prosaic", he explains to Lady Evelyn, Dionea's patroness, "at least when investigated into by bald old gentlemen like me" (102). Despite Dionea's rarities and apparent supernatural influence, De Rosis regards her as a "village girl, an obscure, useless life", only extraordinary in terms of her outstanding beauty (98). De Rosis's "certain admiration and awe" towards Dionea is solely tied to her beauty (95), on which he constantly comments: "it is magnificent to see Dionea, in her short white skirt and tight white bodice, mixing the smoking lime with her beautiful strong arms; or, [...] walking majestically up the cliff..." (89). In fact, De Rosis declares that his appreciation for Dionea becomes "religious awe" the moment the goddess's beauty begins to supernaturally increase (Lee 100). De Rosis is, in this respect, hardly different from Villiers, Austin or Clarke, since he is also judging Dionea's identity solely based on her appearance.

Contrarily, De Rosis is sympathetic towards Dionea and appears to be genuinely worried about her wellbeing. This preoccupation seems, however, to be patronising in origin, since he never ceases to regard Dionea as a "poor little child" (Lee 85). He justifies her strange behaviour on the grounds of the potential mental turmoil that her traumatic upbringing might have caused: "I fear that early voyage tied to the spar did no good to her wits, poor little waif!" (Lee 83). De Rosis even calls Dionea a "mad creature", thus delving into the cult of female invalidism to explain Dionea's non-normative behaviour (De Cicco, "More than Human" 15; Nead 29).⁵² In sum, he relies on his Cartesian and dualist views on gender roles to explain Dionea's strong personality and strange behaviours, as he regards her as harmless because she is a woman.

Not only is De Rosis blinded toward Dionea's identity, but by classifying women as saints of *femme fatales*, he also misconstrues Gertrude, Waldemar's wife. While he regards Dionea as some wild, mad, and yet innocent creature, he portrays Waldemar's

⁵² This cult catalogued women as weak creatures with a greater tendency to sicken in an attempt to secure female dependency (Nead 29). Thus, by painting women as more prone to sickness, male mentoring or control over women was defended as natural and necessary.

wife as a “snow-white saint”, the epitome of the Angel in the House, and ignores Gertrude’s potential bodily needs and desires (Lee 96). Furthermore, De Rosis is also incapable of correctly judging men, starting with Father Domenico, and Sor Agostino, and finishing with Waldemar. He completely overlooks the “latent ferocity” in Waldemar’s “odd eyes”. Yet, this ferocity is what prompts the tragic ending, as the painter ends up sacrificing Gertrude to Venus (Lee 96). Hence, Lee’s story follows a spectacle-oriented perspective, as it ultimately highlights De Rosis’s contradictions and failed judgements. De Rosis’s surveillance and Cartesian approach is portrayed as unable to perceive the invisible reality that lies beneath appearances. Dionea, the supernatural creature, remains uncategorised, a common occurrence in Lee’s ghost stories. Therefore, in ‘Dionea’ the visible symbol is not successfully decoded, but it remains an unresolved enigma.

Dionea is, indeed, an enigma, perceived differently by all characters. She is regarded as a strange, but innocent creature by De Rosis, a good model by Waldemar, and a witch by the majority of her neighbours. In fact, the way Dionea is described by most of them resembles Helen Vaughan’s portrayal in ‘The Great God Pan’. She is also an orphan of mysterious origins, and shares Helen’s “dark” and Italianate beauty (Lee 84). Moreover, in the same way that Helen is presented as possessing an equally beautiful and repulsive appearance, Dionea’s beauty is made threatening on the account of an “odd, ferocious gleam in her eyes and a still odder smile, tortuous, serpentine” (84). As previously mentioned, both the presence of ferocity in a woman and the possession of certain “odd” and “serpentine” traits would classify her as a potential degenerate or *femme fatale* according to a surveillance and Lombrosian perspective (Dijkstra 289-294). Moreover, Dionea hates doing all duties considered as feminine, such as “sewing” or “washing up the dishes” (Lee 81), preferring to lie in the garden under the roses and myrtle and contemplate the vast sea. This is similar to Helen again, as she, too, had a passion for nature and walks in the woods, and a disregard for feminine education and duties. And yet, despite the many similarities to Helen Vaughan, Dionea is not demonised in this narrative, nor is she persecuted.

However, the connection between the Greek goddess and the Devil is also established in Lee’s narrative when De Rosis jokingly wonders if “the Evil One” could have entered the convent in Dionea’s guise after she attempts to wear the Virgin’s garments (Lee 84). However, De Rosis’s suggestion is not intended as a serious statement,

since he is neither a religious person, nor does he believe in the existence of Greek gods. Despite people in San Massimo and Montermirto being truly fearful of Dionea, and believing that she carries the “evil eye”, Dionea is never fully demonised (85). She seems to share this “evil eye” or fatal influence with Helen Vaughan too given that both their contagious spells are connected to the sudden awakening of bodily needs and desires of others. However, Dionea is still trusted by some of her neighbours who go to her for love potions and spells demonstrating that she is never fully catalogued as a monster in the narrative. This shows that what ultimately defines how the hybrid is presented is the visual perspective adopted, since, despite Helen and Dionea possessing very similar, if not identical hybrid qualities, Dionea is never labelled, and remains an enigma.

2.3 The Normative Male: Tempted and Tempresses

Even after Helen’s degeneracy is visually confirmed, some important questions remain unanswered: what about her company drove well-to-do English men to commit suicide? Why is the threat of the hybrid woman fatal? And who is to be held responsible for these men’s deaths, Helen or Pan? In order to explore the phenomenon of influence and determine the source of Helen’s fatal powers, one must focus on the identity of her victims and persecutors as well. Her first male victim is her husband, Herbert. According to him, Helen seduced him by singing, which not only resembles the tactics of *The Beetle*’s priestess, but also connects her to Pan.⁵³ Moreover, it is through the sense of hearing that Helen introduces Herbert to her pagan ways on their wedding night. The use of a bodily sense other than sight, especially the more evocative sense of hearing, shows how reason is left aside during the sensory exchange. This suggests a disruptive and potentially erotic subject matter for Helen’s words. Helen adopts an active role and does all of the *talking* on their wedding night, reducing her husband to a passive listener and introducing him to “things which [he] would not dare whisper in the blackest night” (Machen 54). This inversion of gender roles is abnormal and corruptive for Herbert. Active or phallic sexuality, represented by the god Pan, is, in itself, already animal and becomes monstrous when exercised by his wife. After being exposed to Helen’s monstrosity, he “was a ruined man, in body and soul” (55). Herbert’s statement shows his belief in the weakness of the flesh, and the corrupting effects that yielding to one’s bodily

⁵³ Pan was also associated with music. He was said to be able to hypnotise or “charm” those who heard him play his pipes (De Cicco, “The Queer God Pan” 6).

desires could have. He confesses to Villiers that from his wedding day he became “a haunted man, a man who has seen hell” (56), thus drawing the connection between the body, the animal and the Devil once more, and so brandishing a Cartesian and ecophobic approach to his and his wife’s identities.

The narrative supports a surveillance perspective again when the consequences of Herbert’s corrupted soul are visually reflected in his “altered and disfigured” face and degraded social status (Machen 50-51). However, the same narrative also suggests that Herbert’s identity could have inclined toward hybridity before he met Helen. For instance, he admits to having gone “a good deal into society” and enjoyed himself in a “harmless sort of way” in his youth (52), but among his “harmless” pastimes was gambling. This questions whether Herbert’s moral, physical and literal ruin was prompted by Helen or by a possible addiction to gambling. Therefore, despite endorsing a Cartesian and surveillance portrayal of Helen, Machen’s narrative also hints at Herbert’s latent degeneration.

Duality or hybridity is a distinct feature of both Machen’s London and its inhabitants, as Herbert is not the only character to show addictive tendencies. The novella also presents Clarke’s obsession with compiling “documents on the most morbid subjects” as a vice:

...Clarke would find himself casting glances of warm desire in the direction of an old Japanese bureau [...] Like a boy before a jam-closet, for a few minutes he would hover indecisive, but lust always prevailed [...]. Its pigeon-holes and drawers teemed with documents on the most morbid subjects... (Machen 30-31)

The use of the word “lust” to refer to his compulsion to consult his occult papers, and the “glances of warm desire” he casts towards the bureau suggest that this might be pornographic content (Murga 370). Villiers, on the other hand, “prided himself as a practised explorer of obscure mazes and by-ways of London life”, despite his reprobation of Helen’s Eastward wanderings (Machen 49-50). He is the one who sees Crashaw leaving Mrs Beaumont’s house at two in the morning, which necessarily places him in the streets at that hour. Just as Helen loved to ramble in the forest and enjoy the company of Pan, Villiers has the habit to wander about in the dark, London alleys at night, hardly an innocent pastime.

Not only Helen’s persecutors, but also her victims, tend to show signs of a double and hybrid personality, demonstrating that animal inclinations were not exclusive to

Helen. Her first victim, Lord Argentine, is introduced as a man who regarded dining “as a fine art” and was dedicated to entertaining London’s “fallen humanity” (102). In other words, Lord Argentine’s understanding of “enjoying life” was reliant on his bodily pleasures, and, thus, one can argue that it was his search for pleasurable experiences that led him to Helen (102). Yet, the narrative chooses to deflect responsibility onto an external agent, blaming Helen Vaughan for the city and its inhabitants’ hybrid tendencies.

Therefore, when the suicides start to take place, the victim’s identities are not taken as potential clues. Rather, their deaths are explained as a product of an outbreak of suicidal mania. London is then regarded as a city of disease where “horror” floated “in the air” (Machen 107). Helen Vaughan is, however, at the epicentre of this apparently contagious mental malady. Her degenerative influence is presented as one-directional, as the “entertainment [she] provided for her choicer guests” invariably results in a “shock to [their] nerves” (133), and after spending some time with her at night, these men are reduced to “an infernal medley of passions” (120). Crashaw, another one of Helen’s victims, attests to this since he is possessed by a “medley of passions” as a consequence of his interaction with her:

...furious lust, and hate that was like fire, and the loss of all hope, and horror that seemed to shriek aloud to the night, though his teeth were shut; and the utter blackness of despair. (Machen 120)

All of these emotions have something in common: the absence of reason. They all seem to spur from the body and its instincts. Furthermore, Villiers interprets these emotions as animalistic or devilish, and so an indication of the loss of Crashaw’s soul or humanity: “I knew I had looked into the eyes of a lost soul, Austin: The man’s outward form remained, but all hell was within it” (120). Villiers’ claims support a surveillance perception of identity, since he presents Crashaw’s inner emotions as objectively reflected in his appearance. Moreover, Villiers also applies a Cartesian concept of identity since, once Crashaw’s reason is removed, in Villier’s eyes he becomes merely a body, an animal. Finally, animality is, once more, linked with the Devil and the loss of the human soul. The moment they are exposed to Pan, Villiers regards the victims as devilish, thus dehumanising them. This corroborates this narrative’s use of ecophobia to perpetuate negative connotations about the body and its needs.

Among the visceral emotions Villiers sees in Crashaw’s eyes is the “loss of all hope”. Being introduced to Pan, as previously suggested, is being introduced to the

presence of the animal within oneself and others. Pan and Helen confront male characters with the knowledge that “each of us has heaven and hell in him”, as Dorian Gray states in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Wilde 109). After all, given his physical and historical hybridity, Pan is “the definitive symbol of the admixture of human and animal”. As such, he attests to the undeniable historical continuum that connects modern British subjects with their “bestial forebears” (Worth 224-225). This knowledge necessarily dismantles the established anthropocentric and Cartesian perspective that supports humanity’s enlightened superiority. By revealing this horrifying knowledge, Pan removes his victim’s reason, demolishing their enlightened façade and awaking “the worm which never dies”, the animal within (Machen, *The Three Impostors*). It can be inferred, therefore, that the certainty that the Beast is real and that it lurks beneath their own “human flesh” could be among the reasons that lead Helen’s victims to commit suicide (Machen 154).

Contrary to Merivale’s understanding of Helen as having nothing in common with Pan, I argue that she is definitely Pan-like. After all, she is a human-goddess hybrid, since, in theory, she is Pan’s daughter. Moreover, Helen acts as Pan’s ally and priestess, initiating Victorian characters into the pagan ways. In fact, the end of the narrative reveals that Helen *is* actually Pan. At the end of the story, the veil of her human and female appearance melts and reveals the horror lying beneath her appearance: “the skin, and the flesh, and the muscles, and the bones, and the firm structure of the human body that I had thought to be unchangeable; and permanent as adamant began to melt and dissolve”. Helen’s body changes “from sex to sex”, descends “to the beasts” and ascends again, and transforms itself into the fluid “principle of life” before ultimately showing its true nature: the “foul” and “unspeakable shape” of the “neither man nor beast” god Pan (Machen 143-145). In other words, the symbol is made flesh. ‘The Great God Pan’ gives the “surface”, the symbol, an epistemological value. In doing so, it confirms that sight is capable of objectively decoding identity based on appearances. The last scene of ‘The Great God Pan’ confirms the epistemological value of sight, since Helen’s supernatural hybridity is finally corroborated by having her body literally dissolve and reveal her suspected degeneracy.

The privilege of sight as an epistemological medium is also reinforced by the way Dr Robert Matheson describes the measures he takes when approaching Helen’s corpse. First of all, he makes sure that he is “under no delusion”, that his “pulse [is] steady and

regular” and that he is “in [his] real and true senses” (Machen 143). In other words, he is guaranteeing that his sense of sight is not being compromised by any malfunction of his body or mind. By doing so, he is certifying that whatever ghostly – or godly – vision he faces originates from an exterior, and so objective source. He then stares closely at Helen’s body and forces himself not to break eye contact despite the “horror and revolting nausea” arising from its metamorphosis (143). The doctor places sight and reason above the rest of his senses, as he represses his bodily reactions in order to ensure objectivity.

Therefore, despite the apparent initial emphasis on invisible realities, in the end ‘The Great God Pan’ substitutes a sight-based, tangible reality with yet another visible, only more terrifying one (Ambrogiani 38). In other words, the ghostly Pan or Pan as a symbol is, at the end of the novel, substituted by the corporealised and tangible Pan (Machen 135). Therefore, contrary to Ambrogiani’s interpretation of this story, I argue that this narrative not only does not challenge ocular epistemology, but it reinforces it.

Pan’s regressive revelations do not affect all god-seers in the same way, however. Seeing Pan seems to have stronger effects on Mary and Trevor, since their will and reason are completely removed and their madness makes them “queer societal outcasts” (De Cicco, “More than Human” 15). Pan’s facile invasion of Trevor’s and Mary’s identities seems to confirm Lombroso’s view of women and children as closer to the animal and, thus, more reliant on their bodies and instincts (Lombroso, *Atavism and Evolution* 48). On the other hand, when introduced to West-end gentlemen, Pan encounters more resistance, as they would rather put an end to their lives than succumb to madness.

The different outcomes of Helen’s influence suggest that there may be a subjective dimension to influence in the narrative. In fact, several examples support reading the phenomenon of influence as spectacle-oriented in ‘The Great God Pan’. For instance, Villiers refers to the victims of suicide as Helen’s “choicer guests”, implying that their selection is not, after all, random, but there is a certain element of planning involved (Machen 133). In fact, Lord Argentine’s hybrid inclinations, that is, his love for food and his overall hedonist tendencies, suggest that a certain degree of duplicity was required for Helen’s influence to succeed. Not only Lord Argentine shows signs of hybrid inclinations, but also Villiers and his night-time ramblings, Clarke and his love for the occult, and Herbert and his addiction to gambling. Therefore, in the treatment of influence, Machen’s

narrative comes closer to a spectacular approach to identity, since the same narrative that displaces the threat onto the *femme fatale* also hints at the male character's contradictions.

Moreover, Helen's, or Pan's, influence does not affect every woman and every man in the same way. Despite being exposed to Pan, Rachel is not reduced to idiocy, like Mary and Trevor, and Clarke does not commit suicide, like Lord Argentine, Crashaw and the rest of Helen's male victims. Moreover, Clarke's case not only reveals influence as subjective, but also questions the assumption that the sexual threat at stake is of female origin. In fact, the first character to come "face to face" with the Greek god is not Mary, but Clarke, as he sees Pan fifteen years prior to Raymond's experiment, and without the need of brain surgery (Machen 22).

Instead, Pan comes to Clarke in a moment of sensory immersion and pleasurable communion with nature. In fact, to see Pan, Clarke requires the use of all of his senses, not just sight:

Above all there came to his nostrils the scent of summer, the smell of flowers mingled, and the door of the woods, of cool shaded places, deep in the green depths, drawn forth by the sun's heat; and the scent of the good earth, lying as it were with arms stretched forth, and smiling lips, overpowered all. His fancies made him wander, as he had wandered long ago, from the fields into the wood, [...] and the trickle of water dropping from the limestone rock sounded as a clear melody in the dream. (Machen 21)

Clarke's description of the forest is offered predominantly from a visual perspective, but is also a multi-sensory one, as his nostrils are filled with the scent of plants, soil and flowers, and he exposes his arms to the heat of the sun and the coolness of the shade, and, most importantly, he lets Pan's song, the "melody" of the forest, bring him into an alternative, Mediterranean-inspired reality. This episode grants the body the epistemological legitimacy denied by the rest of the narrative, a legitimacy that has no detrimental consequences for the subject. Thus, Clarke's encounter with Pan not only indicates the different ways and responses to Pan, but it also demonstrates that seeing Pan can be a non-traumatic experience, and an experience that does not require a female enabler.

In this displaced Italian or Greek landscape, Clarke meets with "a presence that was neither man nor beast, neither the living nor the dead, but all things mingled", that is, the promise of the dissolution of "the sacrament of body and soul" (Machen 23). However, Clarke does not seem terrified in Pan's presence, as "he stood face to face" with Pan, not

crying or showing any fearful reactions (23). He is not reduced to idiocy or suicide after contemplating the god, either. Apart from a guilty conscience and an obsession with the occult, the side effects of having seen Pan are almost unnoticeable in Clarke.

Understanding Pan as the god of sexuality, and seeing him as the awakening of his victim's sexual impulses, Clarke's encounter with Pan in the forest stands for his sexual awakening. This awakening, however, is not forced, nor does it result in the nullifying of his reason. Clarke might therefore be a hybrid character, as reason and animality are capable of coexisting within his identity. In fact, he is presented by the omniscient narrator as an odd mix of "caution and curiosity"; a conflicted character, divided between austerity and reason, and a desire to prove the existence of the Devil (Machen 28). Clarke's hybridity explains the absence of terror when he was presented with the dissolution of the wall that divides soul from body, which contrasts with the horrified reactions of the rest of the male characters. However, once he reaches adulthood, Clarke endorses the same Cartesian conceptions of identity as the rest of the male characters. For instance, he is horrified by the story of Rachel's sexual initiation, cataloguing it as "monstrous" (45). Clarke's comment attests to the double bind by which sexuality is the most aberrant when exercised by a woman, because despite his own encounter with Pan, he still regards Helen's and Rachel's acquaintance with the god as degenerate and abnormal.

The fact that the first to come across Pan in the story is Clarke suggests that the origin of the threat is actually male. After all, Pan is a male deity of fertility, whose connection to male sexuality is made evident by some of his representations in Greek art as possessing an enormous erect phallus (De Cicco, "The Queer God Pan" 19). He is therefore more suitable to stand for male rather than female sexuality. In fact, "masculinity is [...] the force that drives Dr Raymond" to practice the experiment on Mary in the first place, making masculine will and desire responsible for the invocation of Pan and Helen's conception (Ambrogiani 38). There is room for hesitation with regard to Helen Vaughan's biological paternity, since, in his confession, Raymond takes responsibility for the acts and the outcomes of that night: "It was an ill work *I* did that night [...] *I* broke open the door of the house of life" (Machen 154).⁵⁴ Helen's birth would

⁵⁴ There are several hints regarding the strange relationship between patient and doctor. For instance, Clarke comments about Mary's beauty, stating that he "did not wonder at what the doctor had written to him" about her (24). As with much other potentially sexual information, what Raymond wrote about with regard to Mary's beauty is never revealed in the narrative. However, there are many other insinuations to a close

be, thus, the consequence, not of Pan's monstrous sexuality, but rather of Raymond's. In any case, the phallic connotations of Raymond's operation, and the clear symbolism of Pan as an embodiment of male sexuality highlight the fact that male animal sexuality is what actually prompts the outburst of degeneration.

In fact, if we understand Helen *as* Pan, rather than his offspring, the monstrous sexuality at stake is, again, male, since when the *femme fatale*'s appearance melts down, it hovers from sex to sex, to finally transform into the god Pan:

Then the ladder was ascended again ... [...] for one instance I saw a Form, shaped in dimness before me, which I will not further describe. But the symbol of this form may be seen in ancient sculptures, and in paintings which survived beneath the lava, too foul to be spoken of... as a horrible and unspeakable shape, neither man nor beast, was changed into human form, there came finally death. (Machen 145)

The reincarnation of Pan in Helen is indeed hinted by Clarke very early in the narrative. When reflecting about Helen's effects on Rachel and Trevor, he writes as a conclusion: "Et Diabolus incarnatus est. Et homo factus est" (Machen 47). That is, Clarke believes that the Devil Pan had been made man, or in this case, woman, in the flesh of Helen Vaughan. Hidden under female guise, Pan rambles the streets of London, summoning the not so forgotten sexual and animal pulses of respectable west-enders. However, once the female symbol is stripped out of its veil, the ever-changing and metamorphous male Pan is revealed.

The narrative exteriorises the threat of an inner animal sexuality into a foreign, female agent. This makes it easier for characters to manage the threat of the hybrid. If the pagan god becomes an identifiable, tangible and eradicable entity, it leaves no room for doubt or self-reflection. Once Helen is dead, the threat is defused and the male inhabitants

relationship between the two: Mary blushes in his presence, calls him "dear" and demands that he kisses her on the lips before the operation (24). Furthermore, Raymond's operation has been interpreted as potential "rape" (Boyiopoulos 364) on the grounds of the disregard with which Raymond treats Mary, and his disposal of her as his property: "I rescued Mary from the gutter [...]; I think her life is mine to use as I see fit" (16). This statement suggests that Mary's agreement to undergo surgery could have not been as voluntary as Raymond alleges. Lovatt also sees a reference to the controversy over vivisection in Raymond's dehumanised treatment of Mary. Raymond treats Mary with the indifference a scientist would treat an animal or an object of study. As a consequence, Lovatt claims that both Mary and Raymond lose their humanity in the process of the experiment. On the one hand, Raymond's lack of remorse proves his lack of moral or soul, and on the other, Mary's soul is ultimately removed, transforming her into "an animal form absent of any human character" (Lovatt 23).

Another potential interpretation is to read the experiment as a pagan wedding. Arguments that support this interpretation are Clarke's presence as witness of the union, Mary's white dress, and the way she is asked to give herself to Raymond "entirely", which recalls the vows asked by a Priest in a Christian wedding (Machen 24). In fact, Dr Raymond's "phials" and "stone slab" seem more appropriate tools for an alchemist than a Victorian scientist, which suggest an approach to the experiment that is more ritualistic than scientific (Machen 19).

of London's West End can resume their dual lives as if nothing had ever happened. Therefore, although the story hints that the forces of Pan come from inside the modern subject, the narrative finally finds a scapegoat that prevents characters from coming to terms with their hybrid identities, allowing them to continue with their Cartesian, dual lifestyles. This ending contrasts with the indefinability that characterise the fate and identity of spectacle-inspired revenants. Thus, despite the evident decadent and even spectacle-inclined elements of this narrative, the final portrayal of the hybrid and the ending of the story are approached from an ocularcentric and Cartesian angle.

However, the portrayal of the phenomenon of influence follows a spectacle perspective, since the narrative highlights the different side effects of seeing Pan and hints at the duplicity of all male characters, suggesting an inherent inclination to see Pan in Helen's victims. Thus, 'The Great God Pan' is, as Jackson states, difficult to categorise within a single genre and visual perspective (125). Machen's narrative combines surveillance and spectacle standpoints in order to portray the modern subject as inherently hybrid, at the same time that this hybridity is specifically located in the subject's animal body. By connecting the body to the animal and the Devil, the narrative warns readers about the spiritual consequences of allowing agency to their bodies. This reveals the narrative's ultimate Cartesian inclination. It privileges reason and soul when forging the modern subject's identity, and argues in favour of repressing the body.

Similar to Helen, it is when Dionea reaches adulthood that her powers of influence increase. Instead of only affecting animals and plants, however, they also affect people. By means of her mere presence, Dionea awakens feelings of passionate and irrational love in those around her, thus removing her victims' reason and unleashing their bodily and sexual impulses. In Dionea's case, however, the sexual desire awakened is not directed towards herself. On the contrary, Dionea's presence works as a mere catalyst that ignites the hidden desires in the hearts of her neighbours. The first to fall victim to her spell is Sora Luisa's daughter, a young girl who, after being exposed to Dionea's presence, decides to break her former engagement, stating that she would only have "that ragamuffin Wooden Pipe from Solaro, or go into a convent" (86). Similarly, the wife of the town's coffee housekeeper is said to have started an affair with a coastguard after Dionea helped her with some chores. Like Helen's, Dionea's influence also affects men, and Sor Temistocle's son cuts off his own finger to avoid going to war and being separated from his cousin, with whom he is madly in love (Lee 86).

De Rosis catalogues these events, and the sudden craze that seizes the elder students at the Stigmata as a “love epidemic” (Lee 86): Dionea’s influence is presented as dangerous by using the same metaphors of disease and contagion in ‘The Great God Pan’. Like Helen, Dionea is also placed at the epicentre of this phenomenon and made responsible for the “unknown things [that] have sprung up in these good Sister’s hearts”. These sexual desires are presented as “unknown” because De Rosis cannot conceive the possibility that they could be already present, although repressed, in the hearts of the Sisters of Stigmata. Consequently, he sees them as alien, planted there by Dionea. When describing Sister Giuliana, for instance, he claims that she is “a prosaic little saint as ever kissed a crucifix or scoured a saucepan”, once again drawing from the female ideal of the Angel in the House (Lee 86). Contrary to expectation, this “prosaic saint” renounces her sacred vows and elopes with a sailor. Since his limited, and Cartesian conceptions of female identity do not allow him to consider women, let alone nuns, as sexual beings, De Rosis’s judgement is proved wrong once again.

Dionea’s influence does not affect everyone in the same way, however. De Rosis, for instance, always remains immune. If the results of being exposed to Dionea vary, this means that, in order for her spell to be successful, a certain complicity from the subject’s part is required. Hence, despite De Rosis’ incredulity, the feelings awakened in the heart of the nuns were not new or unknown, only dormant or repressed. Moreover, unlike Helen, Dionea never engages in any sexual act herself, remaining “as cold as ice, as pure as snow” (94). Since she is chaste, it cannot be asserted that Dionea is actively spreading her sexual degeneracy. In fact, Dionea’s love spell seems involuntary, as her attitude of “indifferent contempt” toward those affected shows. She works as a mere catalyst of people’s latent animal desires (Lee 89).

The awakening of feelings of love and infatuation does not lead the majority of victims toward madness or suicide, as in ‘The Great God Pan’; but it simply leads to endorsing a more impulsive, bodily-driven behaviour. In fact, Dionea’s influence seems to be liberating for some characters, since it gives Sora Luisa’s daughter the courage to escape from an unwanted and possibly arranged marriage, helps Temistocle’s son to avoid going to war, and allows women to exercise their sexuality freely and actively. By ‘lifting the veil’ and confronting characters with their bodily desires, Dionea is liberating them from the need to comply to social impositions of restraint and obedience. In other words, she embodies the Greek essence of a freer sexuality (Evangelista, *British Aestheticism*

84). Moreover, this freer sexuality only results detrimental for those characters who are unable to come to terms with their hybrid identity. Contrary to 'The Great God Pan', Lee's narrative illustrates the possibility that passion and reason might co-exist, as the awakening of the body and its impulses does not necessarily reduce characters to idiocy. Most are actually capable of leading a hybrid life in which both body and reason are considered equally legitimate, epistemological sources.

Whilst Dionea's influence can be freeing for some of her neighbours, for others it results in tragedy. Venus is a goddess characterised by possessing "both benign and malign aspects", to the point of being referred to not only as the goddess of love, but also of death, given her "demands [of] ritual sacrifices" (Maxwell, "From Dionysus" 264), and there are several deaths connected to Dionea's influence. The first is that of Father Domenico, whose death strongly resembles those of Helen Vaughan's victims, since he also commits suicide after being exposed to Dionea's influence. His motives for doing so seem similar to those of Machen's characters, as De Rosis describes the priest as someone who had struggled a good deal "with the tempter", but "had conquered" (Lee 87). Father Domenico is used to punishing his body by means of "fasts and vigils", which reveals his endorsement of Cartesian concepts of identity by which the body, the animal, needs to be suppressed in favour of the mind (87). De Rosis considers that these penances help Father Domenico become a "victorious soul", an example of "angelic serenity" (87). However, this serenity is not as steady as De Rosis believes and starts to crumble as soon as the priest is exposed to Dionea. De Rosis notices that he seems less collected, that "his eyes had grown strangely bright" and that red marks had appeared on his face (88). Upon seeing his admired Father sick with fever, De Rosis advises him to stop putting himself under new privations since, as he says, "the flesh is weak". Father Domenico's hysterical reaction to De Rosis's advice is significant, as he cries: "Do not say that! [...] the flesh is strong" (Lee 88). These words reveal the Father's struggle to dominate his body and his preoccupation with not being able to keep its desires at bay by means of punishing the flesh for much longer.

The sensual nature of these tormenting desires is confirmed by Dionea when she gives De Rosis myrtle for the Father's grave, murmuring "amor, amor, amor" (Lee 89). Her words imply that what killed Father Domenico was related to love or erotic interest. Given his religious faith, the Father is unable to accept and live with the knowledge of his animal identity revealed by Dionea. He persists punishing the flesh, and when this

does not work anymore, he gets rid of his body by killing himself with charcoal fumes (88). Given his faith in Cartesian dualism, the only possibility left for Father Domenico in the battle against his body is committing suicide. Father Domenico's suicide seems to be prompted by the same reasons that led upright west-enders to kill themselves in 'The Great God Pan': avoiding their hybridization and stopping their identities' degeneration. However, in ending the animal body, the subject's reason also dies, proving that body and soul, animal and human are mutually dependent.

The second death connected to Dionea is that of Sor Agostino. He does not take his own life; instead, he is struck by lightning. Such a singular death is interpreted as a divine punishment, presumably sent by the Greek god Zeus or Jupiter in response to Dionea's cry for help. "I told him", explains Dionea to De Rosis, "that if he did not leave me alone Heaven would send him an accident" (Lee 90). The fact that Sor Agostino attempts to sexually abuse Dionea is made evident in the narrative, as De Rosis laments having exposed Dionea "to the passion of a once patriarchally respectable old man", and adds, "I feel even more abashed at the incredible audacity, I should almost say sacrilegious madness, of the vile old creature" (90). Sor Agostino is, thus, the only character whose bodily desires are directed towards Dionea. Dionea is not, however, a defenceless creature, but a resourceful goddess who has the means and the power to decide her destiny. Therefore, when Sor Agostino's advances do not stop, Dionea asks for Greek divine intervention, and he dies by a lightning strike, which for De Rosis was just a "strange and uncomfortable [...] coincidence" (Lee 90).

Dionea is presented as a free spirit, a rebellious figure who does not let any external impositions shape her personality. As Waldemar states, Venus is not a woman, but a goddess (Lee 96). Lee fuses the feminine with the supernatural in order to offer a portrayal of womanhood that challenges established gender roles (Maxwell and Pulham, "Introduction to *Hauntings*" 11). Rejecting social impositions, Dionea chooses to live in communion with nature. Moreover, she is not represented as evil, since the only moments she becomes Baleful Venus is when she feels that her will and identity are being trampled upon. Waldemar is the last male character who unleashes Baleful Venus's fury by applying his partial and restrictive concepts of womanhood to her.

Waldemar is presented as a sculptor "of the old spirit", since he is able to find and capture the spirituality of the model's "mere body" or "physical life" (Lee 92). However,

he is only able to perceive the beauty and depth of the human body of men and boys since, according to him, “the point of a woman is not her body, but [...] her soul” (96). In other words, Waldemar applies a Cartesian perspective on women’s identity, only in reverse. Instead of situating them closer to the animal on the grounds of their bodily nature, he considers them as solely spirit. All women, including his adored wife, are Angels in the House for Waldemar. Consequently, the way he interacts with his wife seems more fitting for a worshipper than a lover, as De Rosis remarks:

It is in her company that I like Waldemar best; I prefer to the genius that infinitely tender and respectful, I would not say *lover* – yet I have no other word – of his pale wife. He seems to me, when with her, [...] like the lion of Una, tame and submissive to this Saint... (Lee 96)⁵⁵

The comparison of Gertrude with Una highlights the fact that Waldemar regards her as a saint, the embodiment of “Truth and the One True Faith”: a sacred soul (Maxwell and Pulham, “Introduction to *Hauntings*” 96). In fact, Waldemar does not seem to consider the other traditional female archetype, the *femme fatale*, since he is unable to consider women as ambitious and sexual beings. Consequently, De Rosis cannot see Waldemar as a lover to his wife, as he does not seem to consider her as in possession of a body.

According to Waldemar, women are in fact more “expression” than “form”, than body, lacking the required aesthetic or sexual attraction to be sculpted. Curiously, Waldemar’s Cartesian perspective to women’s identities also results in the dehumanisation, in this case, of Gertrude: although he perceives the soul as divine, and superior to the body, by stripping his wife of a body or animal side, she also becomes a non-human other: an angel. Hence, despite Waldemar’s Cartesian view, the narrative reveals that for a subject to be considered human, both body *and* soul need to be equally recognised, thus subtly arguing for a hybrid, embodied identity.⁵⁶

On the other hand, Waldemar considers men as worthy models for statues on the grounds of their physicality, which he sees as proof of their superior “strength and beauty” (Lee 96). Waldemar’s interest in sculpting male figures is directly connected to the body and its eroticism. In fact, representational, but especially nude sculptures functioned in the nineteenth century as mediators between platonic or aesthetic contemplation of the human form, and actual erotic desire (Thomas 248-253). Waldemar’s rejection of women as “the unaesthetic sex” equals his perception of them as sexless, both unattractive

⁵⁵ Original italics.

⁵⁶ My italics.

and lacking sexual instincts (Lee 97). The fact that Waldemar seems to only be able to perceive men as corporeal, erotic and sexual beings, has also been read as a reference to same-sex desire, or in Thomas's words, a "homophile" tendency (268).

His wife, however, is not happy with Waldemar's sculpting preferences and is determined to find a female model that awakens the desire to reproduce a female figure in him. Gertrude's search rejects Waldemar and De Rosis' conceptions of her as a saint, devoid of all carnal instincts. In fact, she avidly looks for an aesthetically pleasing, and so sexual woman for her husband to sculpt: "It is odd to see this pale, demure, diaphanous creature, not the more earthly for approaching motherhood, scanning the girls of our village with the eyes of a slave-dealer" (Lee 97). Regardless of her role as mother, and her clear interest in awakening Waldemar's desires for women, both male characters insist on labelling Gertrude as a saint.

Gertrude manages to find a female model in Dionea; a model capable of igniting Waldemar's interest: "Waldemar stood silent; his eyes were fixed on her, where she stood under the olives, her white shift loose about her splendid throat, her shining feet bare in the grass" (Lee 97-98). Waldemar sees Dionea for the first time in her habitat, surrounded and connected to nature by means of her body, as she walks barefoot, feeling the grass under her feet. Consequently, Waldemar is unable to deny Dionea as possessing a body. In fact, as Waldemar himself puts it, Dionea is not a woman, at least not a woman according to his restrictive notion of womanhood, but a goddess: a strong, partly masculine, and partly animal hybrid woman. Hence, the sight of Dionea successfully challenges and changes Waldemar's view of women as bodiless, and he embraces her as a Venus.

However, Waldemar's Cartesian conception of identity strikes again. Although he is now able to perceive a woman's body, this blinds him, in turn, away from her soul. He drastically shifts, then, from worshipping a woman's soul, to adoring a "woman's mere shape":

I could never have believed that an artist could regard a woman so utterly as a mere inanimate thing, a form to copy, like a tree or a flower. Truly he carries out this theory that sculpture knows only the body, and the body scarcely considered as human. The way in which he speaks to Dionea after hours of the most rapt contemplation of her is almost brutal in its coldness. And yet to hear him exclaim, "How beautiful she is! Good God, how beautiful!" (98)

De Rosis criticises Waldemar's sudden objectification of Dionea, because he treats her as an inanimate object: a non-human, non-sentient body. Whereas Waldemar is able to perceive and portray the spirituality of a male's model shape, his restrictive and Cartesian approaches to women do not allow him to do the same with Dionea or Gertrude, who are forced into opposed categories. 'Dionea' reflects on how women can be dehumanised, both on account of their lack of a body, or their absence of soul. Like many of Lee's narrators and male protagonists, Waldemar is incapable of appreciating the soul *in or of* the body of a woman. In other words, he is unable to see women as embodied beings: simultaneously soul and body, driven by the needs of their souls as much as of their bodies.

But Dionea is no ordinary woman, and she refuses to have her image reduced to a biased and one-sided version. At first, her statue is considered superior to the model, as an "immortally beautiful" work of art that resulted from a "village girl", an otherwise "obscure, useless life", as De Rosis affirms (Lee 98). However, Dionea rebels against these men's attempts to limit and fix her identity into a sculpture, and her fluid, organic beauty starts to increase, surpassing the statue's. By showing the superiority of her organic, living beauty to that of an object, Dionea draws attention to the existence of her soul or subjectivity.

This is the moment when De Rosis is closer than ever to appreciating Dionea's true identity, as he exclaims: "How strange is the power of art! Has Waldemar's statue shown me the real Dionea, or has Dionea really grown more strangely beautiful than before?" (Lee 100). As Dionea states, for De Rosis and "for the rest" she was a simple foundling (98). It is thanks to Waldemar's statue that De Rosis finally regards Dionea with the "religious awe" that the goddess of love deserves (100). For Waldemar, however, Dionea's increasing beauty is a source, not of admiration, but of anger, as he is not used to women challenging his restrictive perspective of them. "That odd spark of ferocity" that was already in him increases when his views are contradicted, and, out of frustration, he destroys the face of his statue: "seizing the largest of his modelling tools, he obliterated at one swoop the whole exquisite face" (100). Dionea, thus, manages to successfully awaken Waldemar's impulsive and animal instincts as well, although, in his case, they are more oriented towards violence than eroticism, but after all Venus is also known as the "Goddess of Death in Life" (Maxwell, "From Dionysus" 264).

De Rosis finds Waldemar “strangely agitated”, frustrated that his sculpture is not capable of matching the model’s beauty (101). However, the narrator does not give great importance to Waldemar’s strange behaviour, even after he expresses interest in the sacrificial rituals traditionally offered to Venus (Lee 101). In fact, it seems that from this moment onward, Waldemar starts going pagan, as he leaves behind the worship of souls – Christianity –, for the worship of the body – Paganism –: “They were wiser in that day, to wring the neck of a pigeon or burn a pinch of incense than to eat their own hearts out, as we do, all along of Dame Venus” (101). This resembles Wilde’s maxim in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that “the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it” (Wilde 16). Rather than resist the desires of the flesh commanded by “Dame Venus”, and wallow in remorse, Waldemar seems to argue that it is healthier to submit to the goddess’s calling, and sacrifice the purity of the soul to the body. These words and his “ferocious” expression (101) suggest that the story’s tragic ending is a consequence of Waldemar acting upon his words: the literal sacrifice of the soul, embodied in Gertrude, in the altar of the body, represented by Dionea.

Given the mysterious ending, however, it is impossible to determine who the actual one responsible for the fire is. Does Waldemar finally recognise Venus in Dionea, and choose to offer himself and his wife as sacrifice? Does Gertrude decide to burn down her husband’s study out of jealousy? Does Waldemar attempt to assault Dionea like Agostino, and like him, receives a divine punishment? It is impossible to choose a single explanation for the strange events as there is evidence for all of them. For instance, De Rosis reports that Gertrude is jealous, as he notices that she seems vexed by her husband’s admiration of Dionea’s body:

I wish I could make Gertrude understand... [...] Surely she knows best that her husband will never love any woman but herself. Yet, ill, nervous as she is, I quite understand that she must loathe this unceasing talk of Dionea, of the superiority of the model over the statue. (100)

In fact, on the night of the fire, Gertrude is seen leaving the house towards Waldemar’s study, presumably to see what he was doing alone with his model at such an hour (103). However, it is difficult for Gertrude to have started the fire because she is found having bled to death at the altar as if she had been sacrificed: “the pale hair among the ashes of the incense, her blood – she had but little to give, poor white ghost! Trickling among the carved garlands and rams’ heads, blackening the heaped-up roses” (104).

The presence of roses and incense suggests that Waldemar could have recognised Venus in Dionea and prepared this sacrificial ritual in honour of the goddess. In fact, he “he had placed Dionea on the big marble block behind the altar, [...] like a Madonna of Van Eycks” before (103). Another motive for wanting to eliminate Dionea could be his artistic pride, and the frustration arising from his inability to finish the statue. In fact, De Rosis seems inclined to think that it was Waldemar who killed his wife, and maybe “wished to complete [...] the sacrifice” by making “the whole temple an immense votive pyre” (104). However, given that his body is also found “at the foot of the castle cliff”, and Dionea’s body, on the other hand, is never found, there is still a third explanation for the events: that Baleful Venus is responsible for this tragedy after all. However, Dionea is not a villainess like Helen in ‘The Great God Pan’, and would only attack Waldemar if she felt her will was being tampered with, as previously discussed. Hence, either Waldemar’s worshipping of her body goes too far, or Dionea resents his inability to recognise her as a sentient, intelligent being in possession of a soul.

Despite the unclear ending, Lee’s ‘Dionea’ demonstrates that a surveillance and Cartesian approach to women’s identities is not only inaccurate and obsolete, but also damaging for society as a whole. In fact, the story presents endorsing a divided notion of identity as detrimental for men too, as the example Father Domenico shows: his inability to embrace his animal side is what leads to his downfall. Contrary to ‘The Great God Pan’, Lee’s narrative portrays hybridity as inherent, inescapable and in need of acknowledgement in order to avoid degeneration or death, thus adopting a proto-ecocritical approach. Similarly, instead of promoting the symbol as capable of representing the truth behind it, ‘Dionea’ presents appearances as incomplete and deceiving, as illustrated in Waldemar’s failed attempt to transform women into icons.

‘Dionea’ is one of Lee’s stories that criticises male aestheticism. For instance, ‘it condemns the use of Hellenism as yet another medium through which to perpetuate the binary division of women into Angels or Demons. ‘Dionea’ emphasises the need to recognise women as spiritual, but also embodied beings. Against male Hellenists’ “misogynistic practice” of focusing only on the Greek sculpture of male models as a way to promote the masculine figure as the aesthetic – and thus erotic – ideal (Evangelista, *British Aestheticism* 85), Dionea’s beauty and allure insinuates women’s bodies as sexual and sensual. Like with many of Lee’s short stories, ‘Dionea’ also subtly argues for the allowance of female voices within art criticism, as it demonstrates that the artistic

representation of the haunting female can never be successfully finished unless the artist is able to recognise both the visible and invisible elements that conform the sitter's identity (Zorn xxii-xxiii). An embodied, hybrid identity is, thus, promoted as precisely what prevents both men and women from succumbing to degeneration. Father Dominico, Sor Agostino and Waldemar's examples prove that rejection and self-repression is what ultimately drives characters to animalisation and death.

2.4 Conclusion: Revengers or Liberators

The differences between 'The Great God Pan' and 'Dionea' are marked by their contrasting visual perspectives and portrayals of the supernatural hybrid. Although pagan gods, Venus and Pan, are made to stand for the animistic and animal impulses within the individual, the way these are represented in the two narratives varies enormously. 'The Great God Pan', portrays them as invariably detrimental to the subject's identity, since the awakening of the animal within always results in the removal of the subject's reason or humanity. Therefore, the possibility of coexistence of both tendencies within the individual is presented as impossible. Moreover, the story establishes a connection between Pan, sex, the body, and ultimately, the Devil, suggesting that through the inferior, more animal, human body, Pan or the Devil can corrupt the subject's soul.

Dionea, on the other hand, is not demonised. Despite the narrator's warnings and reports of her strange, love-awakening influence, he still regards her with affection. De Rosis does not consider these rumours as real since, according to his rational, surveillance perspective, Greek gods are only metaphors. Moreover, Dionea's spell does not result in actual madness, but only in more irrational, bodily driven behaviour. In fact, it can be argued that Dionea's influence liberates people from the burden of social impositions, encouraging them to follow their formerly repressed instincts and desires. Dionea does not remove her victim's reason, nor does she traumatise them – with the exception of Father Domenico and Waldemar. As their example demonstrates, Lee's narrative points to rejection and repression of the animal as the actual cause of madness and death. The story approaches hybridity from an embodied perspective, which questions and challenges traditional negative connotations around animality and the body.

Despite their common focus on the existence of an invisible reality, the narratives takes opposing visual standpoints with regards to the portrayal of the hybrid. Even if it starts by drawing attention to the existence of an alternative, hidden reality, 'The Great

God Pan' ultimately privileges sight as the only sense connected to reason and, thus, capable of making sense of environment. In fact, the story ends up re-enacting its own premise, that "all symbols are symbols of something", as it has Helen literally melt and reveal the Truth hidden behind the symbol of her appearance. In other words, once the veil is lifted, the presence of Pan or the Devil appears underneath the *femme fatale*: "for one instant I saw a Form [...] the symbol of this form may be seen in ancient sculptures" (Machen 10). In other words, despite 'The Great God Pan' does use some spectacle strategies, the ending supports surveillance's claims about the visibility of vice. It reveals that the symbol always stands for something, that the veil warns about what lies beneath, in sum, that animality *can* be seen.

Moreover, in this story sexuality and the body are identified as regressive and evil inasmuch as animal, Pan-like, and externalised in the figure of a woman. This way, the initial inner threat of a male and monstrous sexuality in the shape of the phallic god, Pan, is ultimately transferred into a female form, which guarantees a weaker threat and easier eradication. The invisible horror that lies beyond the veil of appearances (presumably, male animality) is made visible in Machen's narrative, only deflected into an awe-inducing, monstrous female figure. Hence, 'The Great God Pan' does overall approach life and identity from a surveillance, ecophobic and so Cartesian perspective.

On the other hand, neither the narrator, nor the characters in 'Dionea' manage to recognise the goddess of Love and Death in the eccentric and beautiful Greek orphan. She successfully escapes classification and representation, arguing against ocular epistemology's claims of objectivity and accuracy. In fact, Lee's spectacle-oriented narrative constantly draws attention to the imprecisions and dangers of privileging sight as an objective medium. 'Dionea' shows how sight is as subjective as any other bodily sense and, thus, equally as prone to alteration and misperception. De Rosis's sight-based judgement is portrayed as incapable, not only of recognising Venus in Dionea, but also of correctly understanding the characters of Father Domenico, Sor Agostino and Waldemar. In fact, Gertrude's doom is motivated by De Rosis's incompetence, as he is unable to recognise the signs of madness in Waldemar. Waldemar and De Rosis's blindness is rooted in their inability to embrace and recognise the influence of both soul and body on the subject's identity.

Finally, the different portrayals of influence are key to understanding the approach these stories have to hybridity and identity. In ‘The Great God Pan’, influence is paradoxically portrayed from a spectacle perspective, which contrasts with the general surveillance structure of the story. London modern society is presented as being already “fallen” (Machen 102), inherently inclined towards hybrid, pleasure-driven lifestyles. Even the protagonists responsible for the extermination of the threat present hybrid identities, as Villiers frequently rambles at night in the east of the city, Clarke is obsessed with occult subjects, and Herbert has an addiction to gambling. Thus, Helen’s influence is not as one-directional as it may seem, but requires the collaboration of the victim. Helen only introduces Pan to those who already secretly desire acquaintance with the deity. However, these men are horrified upon realising the presence of the animal within; their up-right and Cartesian mentalities cannot process such a terrible revelation. Their terror, or *panic*, is such that they would rather put an end to their lives than continue living with the knowledge that the terrible animal other lies not so much in Helen the temptress, but in their own monstrous, Pan-like sexuality.

Despite drawing attention to the male character’s hybridity, ‘The Great God Pan’ ultimately argues in favour of the maintenance of the Cartesian wall that divides the body from the soul. By revealing the terrible consequences of the destruction of this wall, the narrative confirms its existence and argues for its maintenance. The ultimate moral of the story is that the animal within needs to be repressed to guarantee the survival of civilisation. In other words, it needs to be alienated from the self, externalised in the shape and body of an ‘other’, a woman, the *femme fatale* Helen Vaughan.

Influence in ‘Dionea’ is also presented from a spectacle perspective, since the way her spell affects people actually relies on their own prejudices and preconceived ideas about identity and the body. This time, however, the possibility of leading a hybrid lifestyle is proven to be, not only possible and harmless for the subject, but also the way to avoid stagnation and death. In fact, the only occasions in which Dionea’s influence is presented as dangerous or fatal are when the ‘victim’ attempts to impose their restrictive views of identity on her. As a result, Sor Agostino is punished by the Father of Greek gods, Zeus, for trying to assault her, and Waldemar faces his death as a result of his attempts to impose his restrictive and artificial standards of womanhood on his wife and Dionea.

Contrary to Helen Vaughan, Dionea's identity always remains in the mist of the undefined, as her true identity is never explicitly revealed. Similarly, there is an open ending in which the nature of the events are not stated, the culprit is not identified, and more importantly, the mysterious hybrid deity is not captured and killed. The story ends with several contradicting reports of her presence in different locations: "among the cliffs", or sailing in "Greek boat" back to her real home, the sea (Lee 104). Dionea escapes being identified as hybrid and exterminated.

These narratives' adherence to, or rejection of, ocular epistemology contributes to the shaping of the supernatural hybrid from an ecophobic or embodied angle. Although the 'The Great God Pan' presents the phenomenon of influence as spectacle-based, the story ultimately positions sight as the only objective sense by lifting the veil of Helen Vaughan's appearance and confirming her hybridity. Despite hinting at the possibility of the threat as an internal one, Machen's story finally contains it in the figure of the female other. Machen's narrative combines both visual perspectives in order to portray the modern subject as inherently hybrid, but also to externalise hybridity, blaming it on the body's connection to the Devil. The modern subject is therefore warned against the spiritual consequences of granting agency to their body, ultimately arguing in favour of a Cartesian privilege of reason, soul and sight in the formation of human identity.

Lee's 'Dionea', on the other hand, demonstrates that a surveillance and Cartesian approach is detrimental to individuals and society as a whole, as repressing one side of your identity – either the body or the soul – is what actually leads to alienation and degeneration. Father Domenico's inability to embrace his bodily desires, his animality, is what prompts him to commit suicide. His death also proves the mutual dependence of soul and body and, thus, human beings' inevitable hybridity. Waldemar's doom also stems by his imposition of a Cartesian perspective onto women. 'Dionea' reveals that Waldemar's perspective of the female identity is distorted since he remains oblivious of Dionea's true powers, and Gertrude's desires. It is only with those who tried to impose themselves onto her that Dionea unleashes her wrath. Animality is, thus, not necessarily evil; it only becomes degenerative or fatal when it is neglected or repressed. In fact, as previously mentioned, acknowledging one's inner desires and granting the body equal agency proves to be liberating for some of Dionea's 'victims'. Contrary to 'The Great God Pan', Lee's narrative portrays hybridity as inherent, inescapable and in need of acknowledgement in order to avoid degeneration or death.

3. Ghosts: the Invisible Animal Other

Victorian imagery is filled with ghosts as not only do they haunt the literature of the period, but they also managed to infiltrate the sciences. There was a bloom of pseudo-sciences, *séances* and occult associations attempting to prove the existence of ghosts. This contrasts with the materialist and scientific character of an era which was supposed to be concerned only with “Facts [...] nothing but Facts” (Dickens 7).⁵⁷ After Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* refuted the idea of a miraculous creation of the world and its inhabitants, “life’s greatest miracles” were replaced by the “uncontrollable and random” law of natural selection. Spirits and supernatural phenomena were, consequently, supposed to be out of the question, and yet, pseudo-sciences such as phrenology and mesmerism appeared (Dickerson 15; 17). These pseudo-sciences combined scientific and unorthodox methods to approach troublesome issues such as the existence of the supernatural, or the visibility of atavism and degeneration. However, the majority of scientific approaches to ghosts endeavoured to deny their existence. Ghosts, inasmuch as could not be seen, measured, or perceived in an objective and scientific way, were deemed unreal, thought to only exist in the ghost-seer’s altered mind or eyesight (Smajic 1114-16; Lalvani 176). Having no body to be analysed and dissected, unlike monsters and gods, ghosts redirect the focus of scrutiny towards the human subject, the ghost-seer.

Both in real life, and in fiction, ghost-seers find themselves in a more intricate and confusing situation than those who came in contact with the physically abject monster. The invisibility of the ghostly other is interpreted as proof that the monster resided within the subject’s mind or body, which draws attention toward the individual’s potential for misperception, irrationality and imperfect sight (Lalvani 195-196). The ghost, thus, increases anxiety regarding identity construction, as it suggests that sight, empirical evidence and human reasoning are not trustworthy generators of knowledge after all (Collins and Jervis 3). Science and sight are insufficient to enlighten the ghost-seer, who doubts between trusting his senses and mental capacities and confirming the existence of the supernatural, or using logic and explaining the ghost as a hallucination (Smajic 1109).⁵⁸ Consequently, whereas Harker is able to dispel his uncertainties about the

⁵⁷ “Now, what I want is Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts; nothing else will ever be of any service to them” (7).

⁵⁸ Srdjan Smajic studies the contribution of ghost stories to nineteenth century’s debates regarding vision and knowledge. According to him, the difference with realist fiction is that “the fictional ghost-seer is typically caught in a disconcerting double-bind between instinctive faith in the evidence of one’s sight and

existence of vampires by means of his faith in sight and in the enlightened power of science,⁵⁹ the seer of invisible and elusive ghosts remains in the dark, attempting to find visible, and so objective, proof that confirms the existence of the ghost.

Not only does the ghost question epistemological vision, but it also challenges the enlightened project by questioning time linearity, and with it the idea of progress. Ghosts disrupt the western concept of time by portraying a reality in which present – the ghost-seer – and past – the ghost – necessarily coexist. For Buse and Stott, ghosts of modernity are proof of enlightenment’s failed attempt to remove spiritualism from society’s imaginary (Buse and Stott 3). Hay argues that the prolificacy of ghost stories at the turn of the century is proof that modernity had not “wrench[ed] free of the past and so has not become fully modern” (15). Dickerson touches on the relationship between the figure of the ghost and the general in-betweenness of the period, arguing that:

This spectrally announced betweenness, a condition with which Victorians could identify, since they found themselves between mediaeval god and modern machine, monarchy and democracy, religion and science, spirituality and materiality, faith and doubt, authority and liberalism [...]. (Dickerson 14)

The modern subject was trapped between two worlds, neither of which was completely dead nor truly alive (Dickerson 14). In fact, the ghost became “one of the ‘signs of the times’, a marker of [the author’s] social, historical, and philosophical positionality” (Dickerson 13).

And yet, despite being an emblem of the times, the figure of the ghost has not received as much scholarly attention as other supernatural creatures. As Smajic highlights, the ghost has been unjustly neglected and separated from the rest of Gothic hybrid beings, such as vampires:

[...] ghost stories are probably the last place one would think to look for evidence of how industrialization, Darwinism, or colonial expansion affected Victorian society and culture. It is as if the figure of the ghost demarcates the borders of an inhospitable, alien territory where social and political consciousness [and] the sense of literature’s historical and cultural embeddedness [...] are somehow mysteriously effaced [...]. The case is precisely the opposite with Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, which has often been read as an overt commentary on late nineteenth-century anxieties

the troubling knowledge that vision is often deceptive and unreliable: a subject precariously positioned at the crossroads of ocularcentric faith and anti-ocularcentric scepticism” (Smajic 1109).

⁵⁹ When Harker is informed of the existence of vampires by reliable sources, doctors and scientists, he claims: “I felt impotent, and in the dark, and distrustful. But, now that I *know*, I am not afraid, even of the Count” (Stoker 168). Note my emphasis on the word ‘know’.

about crime, cultural atavism, and degeneration, as well as the dubious ethics of British colonialism. (1108)

With a few exceptions, the majority of literary work on ghosts preceding Smajic's article tends to address the ghost story from a general angle, or as a subgenre within Gothic literature, lacking the specificity and interconnection with other supernatural hybrids he argues for.⁶⁰ In his article, Smajic states that ghost stories are "directly informed by contemporary philosophical and scientific discourses about vision and knowledge, thus participating in the same debates around identity, visibility and, I argue, ecophobia than the rest of the *fin de siècle* hybrid creatures analysed here (Smajic 1108).

Smajic understands the figure of the ghost as necessarily delving into a "play of surfaces", thus illustrating "the observer's capacity for misperception" (Lalvani 196). In other words, due to their invisibility and the absence of animal-like, traceable marks left on the ghost-seer, Smajic concludes that the figure of the ghost is necessarily immersed in a spectacle regime. In fact, according to him, *fin de siècle* ghosts generally question sight and reason, and humans' ability to objectively interpret reality (Smajic 1109). However, the analysis of Vernon Lee and M.R. James's contrasting approaches to the ghost reveals that, as with monsters and Greek gods, ghosts are also bendable archetypes able to convey disparate commentaries on identity and hybridity. Drawing from Smajic and Nina Auerbach's plea for a narrower focus when approaching ghosts stories,⁶¹ this chapter is delimited to the analysis of the similarities and differences between M. R. James's and Vernon Lee's visual approach to ghosts and how they connect to the varying degrees of ecophobia present in their portrayal of hybrid ghosts.

⁶⁰ There are, however, a couple of monothematic studies on the ghost prior to Smajic's plea. Of interest to this thesis are: Vanessa Dickerson's *Victorian Ghosts in the Noontide* (1996) and some of the articles in Peter Buse's and Andrew Stott's *Ghosts: Deconstruction, Psychoanalysis, History* (1999). These works agree with Smajic's claim and contribute to portraying ghosts stories as inscribed within their epoch, and therefore, necessarily in conversation with the same preoccupations explored by the rest of the hybrid creatures.

⁶¹ Nina Auerbach agrees with Smajic in the need for critics to narrow down their focus when analysing ghost stories in "Ghosts of Ghosts" (2004). She claims that the existing anthologies on Victorian ghost stories tend to use ghosts as a backing tool for the authors' main critical concern, which, in her words, leads to unproductive generalizations. She illustrates her point with Dickerson's work, which, in her opinion, disregards the analysis of the role of ghosts within their specific narratives in exchange for the portrayal of a more unified use of the figure of the ghost among female writers, "Dickerson, too, seems not to know what to say about women's ghost stories. She falls into predictable oppositions, claiming not that men did not write ghost stories, but that their ghosts are authoritative and hegemonic, while women's embody the pain of exclusion: [...] Instead of trying to generalize about an overwhelming amount of material, at once formulaic and eccentric, Basham and Dickerson might better have traced the ghosts of a particular woman writer. (281).

James's and Lee's ghosts inhabit "the more or less remote Past", as they tend to come from the Middle Ages or the Renaissance, and seem to have returned to modern society to invade and thwart the minds of enlightened artists and scholars (Lee 39). Like pagan gods, Lee's and James's ghosts are reminders of the ignored and repressed primal forces within individuals. However, their threat is more pressing than that of the classical gods, since not only are these ghosts European, but they originate from an era closer to the nineteenth century. Moreover, their lack of a body also supposes a greater challenge for ghost-seers, since it forces them to turn surveillance onto themselves to determine whether the ghost is real or a product of their degenerating mental capabilities or bodies. In other words, the ghost forces the subject to switch the focus of physical and mental scrutiny from the other to the self, thus, exacerbating peoples' fear of the animal within. As shown throughout this thesis, however, the ghost and what it represents, to wit the presence of animal forces within the human subject, can be approached with either fear and anxiety or desire and acceptance. To determine the angle from which hybridity is approached in ghost narratives, the degree of trust placed on sight in contrast to the rest of the senses ought to receive special attention. Rejection of the animal body and its senses as producers of untrustworthy information usually equates to an ecophobic and Cartesian representation of identity. On the other hand, the narratives where senses are legitimised as equal generators of knowledge present a more complex view on animality as an inherent, and not necessarily evil characteristic of the human subject.

This chapter engages with the roles that sight, hearing and touch play in the portrayal of the hybrid ghost in a series of contrasting narratives by Lee and James. The role of sight is first addressed in James's 'The Mezzotint' and 'Canon Alberic's Scrap-Book', versus Lee's 'Oke of Okehurst', each of which feature haunted portraits that challenge the fixity and accuracy of visual representation. Next, hearing and its evocative supernatural qualities will be analysed in 'Oh, Whistle, and I'll come to you my Lad', and 'A Wicked Voice'. In both stories hearing and sound are presented as prompters or propagators of corruption: the sound of the whistle, on the one hand, and the corrupting voice of the ghost, on the other. Finally, intimacy and touch are studied in 'The Treasure of Abbot Thomas' and 'Casting the Runes' in comparison to Lee's 'Amour Dure'. Physical invasion, or touch, is presented as the ultimate threat in all of James's stories. This fact, together with the recurrent imagery of haunted objects found in wells or damp holes, seems to suggest a connection between the horror of being touched, and the

protagonists' fear of their own bodily needs and sexual desires (Fielding 766-767).⁶² For Vernon Lee's narrator, Spiridion Trepka, however, touch is not disgusting or feared, but desirable, as he longs for Medea Da Carpi's embrace.

3.1 Haunted Objects or Haunted Minds? The Ghosts of M.R. James and Vernon Lee

Montague Rhodes James is considered an indispensable ghost story writer, if not the quintessential English one, still popularly consumed and equated to Edgar Allan Poe or Bram Stoker as a "master of the macabre" (Cox xi). It is therefore unexpected to find very scant thorough scholarly work on such a key figure. In fact, the majority of articles written on M.R. James tend towards a biographical and descriptive approach rather than dwelling into a literary analysis of his works *per se*.⁶³ A potential explanation for this can be found in the apparent critical consensus regarding the superficiality of James's stories. For instance, Julia Briggs and David Punter agree on the general absence of psychological depth in M.R. James's stories and characters. Punter considers James's tone "shockingly bland" (68), his characters completely "cardboard" (86), and his constant reliance on conventions as a sign of unoriginality (67). In the same line, Briggs argues that M.R. James's "technical mastery" brought about a characteristic "dry tone" to his supernatural tales (181).

There are, however, several essays that refute Punter and Briggs' statements by attempting to give a more critically ambitious outlook on James's stories. O'Sullivan, for instance, argues that M.R. James's stories have gained "more substantial achievement than his detractors allow for" (45), and reads his texts against the conception of them as void of psychological depth. Other scholars such as Michalsky, Thurston and Brewster, and Murphy and Porcheddu have also written articles aimed at demonstrating that there is more to James's ghosts than what meets the eye.⁶⁴

⁶² The connection between the multitude of wells and holes in James's stories and the threatening image of female genitalia has already been established by Fielding in his article "Reading Rooms: M. R. James and the Library of Modernity" (2000). In this thesis, I draw from and deepen this association and arrive to slightly different conclusions, since I redirect the origin of fear towards the character's own sexuality.

⁶³ Some of the articles where text analysis and close reading of the texts are secondary are those by Terry Thompson "James's 'Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come To You, My Lad'" (2001), and Maria Purves's "'A Warning to the Curious': The 'Nicely Managed' Mind of M. R. James" (2009). Purves's article, for instance, focuses on M.R. James rather than the texts, attempting to diagnose the writer with autism on the grounds of the supposed autistic tendencies reflected in his stories.

⁶⁴ Michalsky applies a Marxist reading, Thurston and Brewster a visual approach to M.R. James's haunted objects, Murphy and Porcheddu focus more on the question of sex, and Hay does a formal analysis of his texts.

Following these last critics' approach, I argue that the formalities considered as signs of unoriginality by some are more of an aid than a hindrance when interpreting James's texts. The repetitive use of certain conventions and elements responds to these texts' narrow target and concrete aim (Cox xvii). In fact, James's stories were initially designed to be read on Christmas to his circle of scholar friends with the intention of, both, horrifying and entertaining them (Murphy and Porcheddu 397).⁶⁵ This explains the homogeneity of antiquarians and scholars as narrators, the presence of frequent Latin inscriptions and the characters' reliance on sight and reason to prove the existence of the ghost. This can be seen in their use of notebooks, reports and the photographs as objective evidence.

In fact, M.R. James's hybrid ghosts are not invisible, but have more in common with the monsters analysed in the first chapter than with ethereal spirits. The ghosts that haunt James's scholar *milieu* are hardly even human. Instead, they are evil remnants and demons from barbarous times. This clarifies that the ghost and the ghost-seer have nothing in common, at the same time that it removes the focus of scrutiny from the human to the monster. Moreover, in James's stories the tangibility of the monster is confirmed when the protagonist manages to see the ghost. Thus, what ultimately legitimises the ghost's existence are sight and reason, since sight is connected to the mind as producer of objective knowledge.

On the other hand, the rest of bodily senses such as hearing, smell or touch are presented as subjective and unreliable and, thus, producers of illusions or hallucinations. In M.R. James's stories, the removal of sight by darkness equals an annulment of reason, and a consequent awakening of imagination. In other words, whereas sight is associated with reason and humanity, the rest of the senses are connected to imagination and irrationality on the grounds of their animality. Therefore, the impressions registered by these senses are portrayed as partial and untrustworthy since they distort reality rather than decode it.

The stories' specific aim and target audience not only help analyse the constant presences, but also the stories' striking absences, which ultimately reveal a set of shared

⁶⁵ M.R. James states in 'Some Remarks on Ghost Stories', originally published in *The Bookman* (1929), that the ghost's only purpose should be to frighten, "still, here you have a story written with the sole object of inspiring a pleasing terror in the reader; and as I think, that is the true aim of the ghost story" (James "Some Remarks" 343).

cultural fears and anxieties surrounding identity invasion or hybridization. One of the most evident absences is the scarcity of women, as they only appear, if at all, as secondary characters. This goes to show the thoroughly homosocial circle in which nineteenth-century academics and scholars used to move around (O'Sullivan 54; Murphy and Porcheddu 394).⁶⁶ Among all the stories, the lack of female presence is more evident in 'The Mezzotint' since, despite dealing with the revengeful killing of a family's only heir, the mother of said family is never mentioned, nor does she appear in the story.

Similarly, sex or any direct reference to intimate relationships between men and women is also absent from James's stories. M.R. James himself declared that "sex [was] tiresome enough in the novels" to be dealt with in ghost stories too ("Some Remarks" 347).⁶⁷ Through a close reading of the stories, however, it is possible to observe that the protagonists' deepest fear is the exposure to unwanted physical contact. Touch is regarded as the most animal of all senses, and thus, is the ultimate source of fear in James's stories. Moreover, in most of the stories analysed in this chapter, the climatic encounter with the supernatural takes place in the solitude of the protagonist's bedrooms. In other words, these stories associate touch with animality, and animality with sexuality, so that the monster's irruption in these scholars' bedrooms stands for the ultimate invasion.⁶⁸ It can, thus, be argued that, rather than being absent, sex and the dangers of succumbing to the flesh's animal needs are present in these stories, precisely by means of their constant omission (Fielding 766).⁶⁹

Written by a female aesthete, on the other hand, Lee's ghost stories are certain to show a different perspective on the senses and women. Her ghosts are not monstrous

⁶⁶ Furthermore, not only were female characters secondary, but they were sometimes represented as potentially untrustworthy, as Dennistoun's prejudices about the sacristan's daughter disinterested present demonstrate. The girl gives Dennistoun a silver crucifix chain as protection present that Dennistoun takes as an attempt to obtain more money from him (James 9). In fact, he compares her to Gehazi, character found in the Hebrew Bible that tries to scam the Syrian General Naaman by charging for the services that his lord, the prophet Elisha, had bestowed for free (Cox 303).

⁶⁷ James states in 'Some Remarks on Ghost Stories' that there are some ghost stories that "drag in sex too, which is a fatal mistake; sex is tiresome enough in the novels; in a ghost story [...] I have no patience with it" ("Some Remarks" 347).

⁶⁸ The bedroom is the place where people are their most intimate, most vulnerable moments. Some of the critics that have dealt with the topic of sex in M.R. James are O'Sullivan, Fielding, Murphy and Porcheddu, and even Punter, who suggests that a Freudian approach to M.R. James's would read his character's curiosity as a sublimation of their sexual urge (Punter 86).

⁶⁹ This has also been noted by Fielding, adds: "try as they might to keep women out of the picture, James's largely bachelor heroes are continually confronted with sexual imagery which, though disguised, is familiar to the reader by virtue of its adoption of visual forms which render it both hidden and customary" (Fielding 766). As it will be analysed later in this chapter, despite the lack of women in M.R. James's stories, there are numerous images that recall and evoke femininity and female influence.

creatures, but the spirits of different women and a castrato singer. Although femininity is generally associated with animality, in Lee's case the hybrid and womanly identity of the ghosts is not there to signify the less evolved and more primal nature of these revenants. As the previously analysed stories by Lee demonstrate, her tales tend, instead, to position themselves on the side of women by showing how they are usually labelled as animal and evil creatures forcefully and unjustly. In fact, Lee's ghost stories have been consistently read by critics as her way of drawing attention to the lack of feminine voices in history and art (Zorn xxii-xxiii).

Apart from the difference in the nature of the ghost, Lee's stories also introduce a change in the protagonists. Although her narrators are all men too, these are artists, not scholars, with the exception of Spiridion Trepka in 'Amour Dure'. Moreover, rather than being haunted by the ghost, it seems that in Lee's stories it is them who search for and persecute the spectral. Yet, these artists share the need to capture or represent the ghost visually or verbally in order to determine its objective and external existence like James's scholars. However, Lee's ghosts are "unseen spurs", and thus, both the stories' protagonists and readers find it more difficult to determine whether they are real or imaginary (Lee 37).

Lee always keeps the identity of her revenants immersed in a literary mist that prevents quick assumptions. In fact, in the preface to her haunting tales, Lee argues against "men of semi-science" and their attempts to verify the existence of real ghosts by visual and factual means (38). Instead, she argues that "the supernatural, in order to call forth those sensations, terrible to our ancestors and terrible but delicious to ourselves [...] must necessarily [...] remain enwrapped in mystery" (Lee 37). In direct opposition to James's narratives, Lee solely regarded ghosts of the imagination as "genuine" (Lee 39). Consequently, none of the reasonable protagonists are able to finish their creative projects and capture the ghost, whose identity is never fully revealed. Lee's Ghosts are displaced to the mind of the haunted subject, and with them, the animality otherwise attributed to the female or hybrid other.

Therefore, Lee's ghost stories follow Smajic theory as they side with a spectacle visual approach to life and identity. By preventing the visual representation of the ghost, these stories represent sight as another unreliable bodily sense. The rest of the senses are, in turn, given more relevance, as it is only when perceived through all bodily senses –

hearing, smell, sight, and ultimately touch – that the character feels convinced of the external existence of the ghost. Moreover, touch is not usually feared in Lee’s tales, but desired. This suggests that the portrayal of hybridity present in Lee’s tales might align more with an embodied and proto-ecocritical concept of identity rather than with a Cartesian and ecophobic one.

Despite their apparently opposing approaches to the senses, hybridity and women, a closer study of these authors’ different ghost stories is necessary to determine the angle from which the hybrid other is portrayed. Hence, several of their ghost stories will be analysed in regards to their treatment of sight, hearing and finally touch.

3.1.1 Vision and Representation: Lee’s and M.R. James’s Haunted Portraits in ‘Canon Alberic’s Scrap-Book’, ‘The Mezzotint’ and ‘Oke of Okehurst’

Haunted paintings and portraits became a recurrent source of uneasiness within *fin de siècle* Gothic fiction given the era’s tendency to use visual representations as a tool to catalogue, standardise and dispel the unknown. Ocular epistemology is questioned by having paintings move and change, challenging their creators and viewers’ trust in the objectivity of sight, and thereby of reason. Portraits were particularly disturbing since they blur the limit between reality and representation, raising questions about the visibility of identity, and the extent to which the body can accurately reflect the subject’s personality (Jervis 14). In fact, the nature of images as inherently ghostly has been discussed by Mitchell, who draws from Lacan’s definition of vision as a cradle in which the ‘image’ stands in the middle of an exchange between subject – observer – and object – observed. According to Lacan, the image resulting from this visual exchange is a hybrid by-product, as the ultimate rendition of the observed object depends on the subject’s interpretation of it, and thus, visual representation is never fully unbiased and objective (Mitchell 175). To put it differently, the subject or observer sees the object through his or her particular lens, transferring part of their own identity into the final visual product.

Both Lee and M.R. James’s stories analysed in this section deal with visual representation’s degree of reliability. All of these stories feature haunted paintings or haunting sitters where either the art object or the sitter take a life of their own, challenging the character’s and reader’s ideas on visual representation. Beginning with ‘Canon Alberic’, it tells the story of Dennistoun, a Cambridge man interested in archaeology who buys a mysterious ancient book from the sacristan at St Bertrand’s Church, in France.

Among the pages of the manuscript, there is a singular drawing representing what appears to be a biblical scene. At the centre of the painting, there is “a crouching figure”, a demonic creature, which ends up liberating itself from the binds of the paper, and appears in the real world (James 7). Not only does the creature refuse to be reduced to an image, but it seems to be able to evade verbal representation up to a certain degree too:

I entirely despair of conveying by any words the impression which this figure makes upon anyone who looks at it. I recollect once showing the photograph of the drawing to a lecturer on morphology — a person of, I was going to say, abnormally sane and unimaginative habits of mind. He absolutely refused to be alone for the rest of that evening, and he told me afterwards that for many nights he had not dared to put out his light before going to sleep. However, the main traits of the figure I can at least indicate. (James 7-8)

By means of the terror it inspires, the creature tampers with the viewer’s reason and capacity to rationalise and verbally describe the sensations it inspires. When it comes to describing its appearance, the narrator is only able to describe the creature’s “main traits”, giving a fragmentary and incomplete description of the demon. The narrator is not able to grasp the full essence of the ghost by means of sight and reason, proving that neither words nor sight succeed in accurately representing irrational, or inexplicable phenomena. The fear that the monster inspires obstructs the viewer’s reason, to the point that not even a “lecturer on morphology” seems capable of putting the exact appearance of the demon and the sensations it awakens into words.

In ‘The Mezzotint’, instead of trespassing from the painting into real life, it is the painting that takes a life of its own. Mr Williams, who works for an unnamed British library, acquires one day a seemingly over-priced mezzotint of an uninteresting manor-house. However, the drawing’s abandoned manor-house becomes suddenly inhabited by a humanoid figure. This mysterious figure literally refuses to be frozen in time, choosing to re-enact the traumatic infanticide that took place in the house. Like Dorian Gray’s portrait, the mezzotint reveals the sinister truth lying beneath the tranquil appearance of the house. In fact, the manor-house deceives both the painter – as it refuses to be fixed – and the observer’s first impressions. Before the painting begins to change, Mr Williams describes it as a “rather indifferent”, “plain” and the “work of an amateur” (James 16). However, the painting starts to morph in front of his incredulous eyes, thus questioning sight’s reliability when determining the nature of the object of study

There are also references to the difficulty of putting images into words, as the narrator admits: “I cannot hope to put before you the look of the picture as clearly as it is

present to my own eye” (James 16). The impossibility of accurately describing images highlights the fact that an image ultimately relies on the subject’s interpretation of it, which denies the possibility of a single, universal and objective interpretation of an image.⁷⁰ Hence, it seems that James’s stories question ocular epistemology to a certain degree by demonstrating the subjective nature of visual representation.

‘Oke of Okehurst’, on the other hand, tells the story of an unnamed painter who stays at the Okes’ manor house while he paints their family portrait. The Okes have a gruesome family past, as their ancestor Nicholas Oke and his wife, Alice Oke, killed Alice’s former lover, Christopher Lovelock. William Oke seems ashamed and scared of his family history, while his wife, whose name is also Alice, is not only unapologetic, but also extremely invested in the figure of her ancestress, whom she resembles greatly. The narrator is not as interested in the Oke’s ghosts as he is in the living Alice Oke, who he regards as a magnetic enigma. There are two simultaneous hauntings in this story; the ghosts of the infamous Okes’ ancestors and Alice’s elusive personality (Fluhr 288).

Instead of a haunted painting, this story features a haunting sitter, since despite the narrator’s attempts at portraying Alice, she eludes being grasped and fixed both in canvas and in words. The narrator is able to describe certain physical features and to establish Alice’s beauty, but he remains unable to finish her portrait. He approaches Alice as a “singular being”, a “marvellous creature” (106), understanding her as a perfect object of study rather than as a fellow human being. Sometimes she is not even described as in possession an organic, living body. The narrator explains that he “never thought of her as a body – bones, flesh, that sort of thing; but merely as a wonderful series of lines” (Lee 114). For the unnamed narrator, Alice is not composed of flesh and bones, but she is an abstraction, an ethereal image or a ghost. The narrator is de-humanising Alice on the grounds of her lack of a body, which contrast with the most common strategy of animalising women to indicate their non-humanity. However, this strategy is also dictated by a Cartesian and ecophobic concept of female identity by which women could only be either Angels in the House, that is, ghosts; or animalistic *femme fatales*. In both cases, the humanity and subjectivity of any woman viewed through that lens is denied. Given that

⁷⁰ This discrepancy has been noted first by Luke Thurston, who states that “there is thus something unrepresentable about ‘the look of the picture’, a phrase deliberately chosen to waver semantically between the gazing subject and object being gazed at, as if the mezzotint refuses to conform to the ordinary grammar of identity. But if the picture is marked out as beyond the scope of the narrative, it is nevertheless ‘present to my own eye’: it has a haunting psychological temporality at odds with the time of interpretation” (109).

he is ignoring part of Alice's identity, the narrator is unable to capture her image both on canvas and in words, "I wish I could describe her. I wish, alas! – I wish [...] I could paint her, as I see her now, if I shut my eyes" (Lee 114). Vision and words are presented as unable to pin down the hybrid ghost in 'Oke of Okehurst', thus questioning sight and literacy's status as reliable producers and vehicles of objective knowledge.

The Hybrid

Analysing the way in which the ghost is visually represented helps determine whether it is approached from an ecophobic or an embodied perspective. M.R. James's demonic ghosts, for instance, are closer to monsters than to invisible spectres. As such, they are visible, and so bound to be submitted to physiognomic scrutiny. Moreover, the ghosts' abundance of hair, their size, head shape and resemblance to animals are used as proof of their lack of humanity. In 'The Mezzotint', the text's ecophobia is demonstrated by the use of language, particularly of pronouns. The first time the mysterious figure appears, it is described as a "black blot" and identified as "the head of a man or a woman" (17). When the silhouette can be better appreciated, Mr Williams refers to the creature as male, "My goodness! *He* must have got in" (20).⁷¹ However, the moment the figure becomes sharper and they realise that it is kidnapping a baby, the protagonists stops assigning it a human pronoun, and refer to the creature as 'it' (21).

There is, in fact, an earlier clue of the figure's lack of humanity, as the second time the painting changes, it is described as "crawling on all fours" (James 18). From a surveillance perspective, this statement reveals the creature's potential animality. Curiously, the narrator's words recall Harker's description of Dracula "crawl[ing] down the castle wall [...] face down", and his ecophobic reaction of disgust (Stoker 39). The creature challenges readers and characters' preconceptions, as despite being progressively regarded as non-human, it also seems to be evolving into a more human-like appearance. In fact, the next time it appears, it is standing on both feet, and walking graciously, "the figure was once more on the lawn: but not this time crawling cautiously on hands and knees. Now it was erect and stepping swiftly, with long strides, towards the front of the picture" (James 23).

⁷¹ My italics.

The apparent evolution of this creature towards human-like behaviour contrasts with its progressive animalization in the story, which culminates throughout its physical description:

The moon was behind it, and the black drapery hung down over its face so that only hints of that could be seen, and what was visible made the spectators profoundly thankful that they could see no more than a white dome-like forehead and a few straggling hairs. The head was bent down, and the arms were tightly clasped over an object which could be dimly seen and identified as a child, whether dead or living it was not possible to say. The legs of the appearance alone could be plainly discerned, and they were horribly thin. (James 23)

Despite the fact that the creature's features are not completely discernible, the narrator still manages to slip in some Lombrosian remarks about its "white dome-like forehead", and the extreme thinness of its legs.

Its lack of humanity is not only demonstrated by its physical appearance, but also by the terrible act it is committing: the kidnapping and murder of a baby. As previously seen in *Dracula*, killing a child was considered to be the most inhuman of acts. Since children were considered as the "central symbol of the future potential of mankind" (Dijkstra 345), killing a baby posed a major threat against civilization's progress and continuity. As Fielding points out, the figure in the Mezzotint seems to stand for the "Coming Man", the result of reverse evolution, and the act of killing a baby would stand for the stale future that awaits those who go against progress (Fielding 762).

A similar description can be found in 'Canon Alberic Scrap-Book', where the "crouching figure" is described as follows (7):

At first you saw only a mass of coarse, matted black hair; presently it was seen that this covered a body of fearful thinness, almost a skeleton, but with the muscles standing out like wires. The hands were of a dusky pallor, covered, like the body, with long, coarse hairs, and hideously taloned. The eyes, touched in with a burning yellow, had intensely black pupils, and were fixed upon the throned King with a look of beast-like hate. Imagine one of the awful bird-catching spiders of South America translated into human form, and endowed with intelligence just less than human, and you will have some faint conception of the terror inspired by the appalling effigy. (James 8)

In this case, the creature is heavily animalised, as the remarks on its resemblance to the monstrous South American spider, or the reflection on the "beast-like hate" in its eyes show. Its human characteristics are also highlighted, however, as the narrator clarifies that, although resembling a spider, the creature had a human form. Thus, like in 'The Mezzotint', the ghostly demon is a humanoid animal, a hybrid. Not just an animal, yet

not quite human, the creature's intelligence is consequently described to be "*just less than human*".⁷²

The hybridity of the demon in 'Canon Alberic' echoes the animalizing strategies used in *Dracula* and *The Beetle* to categorise the hybrid as a human-animal monster. For instance, Dennistoun notices that the monster has hairs on its hands, "longer than ever grew on a human hand" (James 10). The presence of hair, and specifically of hairy hands is also used by Stoker as Dracula also possesses "hairs in the centre of the palm" (Stoker 24). Like Dracula, James's creature also has long, sharp nails, "pale dusky skin" (James 10). Moreover, Dennistoun applies a phrenological analysis to the creature's jaw, which he describes as "thin [and] shallow, like a beast's", which both directly connects the creature with animality, and echoes the Beetle's deformed mandible (James 11). Finally, like in *The Beetle*, the demon's most terrifying features are his eyes, which shone with "hate and thirst to destroy life" (James 11). M.R. James's draws, thus, from the same surveillance strategies and ecophobic references employed by Stoker and Marsh; strategies extensively used during the *fin de siècle* in order to indicate a character's deviant tendencies and potential degenerate identity.

Curiously, both the narrator of the story and the protagonist, Dennistoun, agree in conferring an "intelligence of a kind" to the creature, particularly an "intelligence beyond that of a beast, below that of a man" (James 11). These statements are rooted in the same ecophobic and Cartesian perspective than the hybrid's animalisation previously discussed, since it antagonises intelligence and animality, thus identifying humans as the most enlightened of species. At the same time, however, this statement confers a certain degree of intelligence to both animals, and non-human hybrid creatures. Even when this intelligence is not supposed to be as elevated as that of humans, it still presents human-animal hybrids as intelligent, thus dismantling the claim that only humans are capable of reason. In the end, these two narratives still position humans at the top of the scale since the hybrid is described as being more intelligent than animals, yet not as much as humans. M.R. James's hybrid ghosts are terrifying, not so much because of their animality, but because of their threatening resemblance to human beings.

A characteristic shared by M.R. James and Lee's narratives in this section is the thin build of their ghosts. The connection between slenderness and animality has been

⁷² My italics.

studied by Silver, who argues that the connection between the body and irrationality dates back to Aristotle, Socrates and Plato, and was exacerbated by the Victorian's faith in the epistemological value of sight and the visual (Silver 8).⁷³ This fundamentally affected women, since they were already considered as closer to the animal, and therefore, the ability to restrict and dominate their animality or body through hunger was expected of them (Silver 9-20). The slender build of these demons, therefore, suggests a feminine or feminised identity and, consequently, a bodily and animal tendency. Moreover, their thinness does not make them less physical as it actually highlights their bones and muscles, and emphasises the fact that these organs are shared by animals, humans, and hybrids alike (Silver 173,175).⁷⁴

The way in which the narrator in 'Oke of Okehurst' describes Alice Oke also draws from this connection between thinness, femininity and animality:

She was as straight [...] as a bamboo. [...] But this bamboo figure of her had a suppleness and a stateliness [...] that I can't compare to anything else; there was in it something of the peacock and something also of the stag; but, above all, it was her own. (Lee 114)

Alice's slender figure fits within what was considered to be the appropriate feminine body, since the less flesh on a woman's body, the closer she was to becoming the spiritual ideal of the Angel in the House (Silver 3). This is also how her husband, Mr Oke, regards women, as for him "every woman, every wife" is "something holy" (Lee 120). She was not even considered to be composed by "bones, flesh, that sort of thing" by the narrator (114), who, going further than Silver's argument, directly transforms Alice into an ethereal being devoid of an organic, living body.

It is curious that, despite regarding Alice as a 'soul', devoid of a body, the narrator still compares her with animals such as the peacock and the stag,⁷⁵ pointing out her animal

⁷³ Anna K. Silver in *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body* (2002).

⁷⁴ Anna K. Silver explains that, in contemporary fashion and publicity standards, the ideal body is the one composed solely by "bones and muscles"; "assuming that muscle and bone are more a part of the body than fat" (173). This makes muscles and bones the core elements of physicality and animality, as they represented the "stripped" version of what a human or animal body is (173).

⁷⁵ Peacocks are associated with the goddess of marriage, Juno, and are generally used as symbols of beauty and pride. They are also associated with immortality, since it was thought that they never decayed (Helicon 178; Ferber 152). On the other hand, stags, mature male deer, stand in literature as the object of the hunt, and so are used in "love chase" poems (Ferber 57). Stags have also been used to symbolise the proud and "self-satisfied" character of upper or aristocratic classes, as these animals were usually represented in many noble coats of arms (Helicon 209). Thus, the combination of stag and peacock imagery to define Alice Oke portrays her as a proud, beautiful, self-absorbed and potentially supernatural creature, given the connection of the peacock to immortality. Yet, this potential ghostly femme fatale is, at the same time, reduced to being a stag, that is, the object of the unnamed narrator's chase.

nature. Her animality is confirmed when he claims that she possesses a “Narcissus attitude –curiously complicated with a fantastic imagination, a sort of morbid day-dreaming, all turned inwards” (116). Alice is therefore presented as a hybrid creature, ethereal and yet animal, but definitely not human. In fact, her possession of a soul or subjectivity is negated by the narrator, as he describes her inner world and moments of reflection as “morbid day-dreaming” (116). Her self-absorbed, self-sufficient attitude deeply disturbs the narrator and Mr Oke since it is not considered appropriate behaviour for women, who were regarded as naturally selfless and family oriented.

However, the narrative constantly contradicts these men’s attempts at de-humanising Alice by denying her either a body or a mind. For instance, despite her husband’s claims that she was sickly or weak, Alice surprises them by riding a horse at an incredible speed; “I could scarcely believe my senses. This woman, in her mannish little coat and hat, driving a powerful young horse with the utmost skill [...] could not be the delicate, morbid, exotic, hot-house creature, unable to walk or to do anything” (Lee 132-33). The moment she shows that not only does she have a body, but also a powerful, able one, the narrator makes use of adjectives such as “mannish” to represent her as an anomaly, a hybrid, and, consequently, deny her humanity.

The existence of Alice’s subjectivity and inner world is made clear by her connection to her ancestress, with whom she shares a name and physical appearance. This relationship with her ancestress has been read as a reference to same sex desire.⁷⁶ However, I argue that Alice’s “eccentric passion in the past” and “flirtation” with her ancestress can also be read as a reference to Alice’s autonomy and self-sufficiency, both in sexual and social terms (122-23). In fact, the narrator himself remarks that “Mrs. Oke, who seemed the most self-absorbed of creatures [...] entered completely and passionately into the feelings of this woman, who [...] seemed to be not another woman, but herself”. In fact, the narrator even goes as far as to say that when Alice talked to him about her ancestress, he felt she was “speaking of herself in the third person, of her own feelings” (Lee 131). This supports the interpretation of Alice’s interest in her ancestress as a symbol of her sexual and emotional self-sufficiency. Alice, who is the true Ghost in the House in this story, “destined to be seen but unseen” (Dickerson 11), in other words, destined to

⁷⁶ Athena Vrettos, for instance, points towards this possibility in her article ““In the clothes of dead people”: Vernon Lee and Ancestral Memory” (209).

never be fully recognised as another human being, turns for connection to the only female presence in the house: herself – or her ancestress.

Self-sufficiency in a woman was indeed regarded as another sign of degeneracy, since this was a characteristic of the “primal”, animal woman (Dijkstra 308). This would place her even closer to the animal according to the narrator and Mr Oke’s surveillance and Cartesian perspective. In fact, Alice starts to be increasingly represented as a *femme fatale* or animal woman: “She seemed to me, suddenly, perverse and dangerous” (128), the narrator declares, to finally refer to her as supernatural creature, a reincarnation of her seventeenth century ancestress, “siren and murderess”. The portrayal of Alice is thus constructed from a place of ecophobia and surveillance since they never attempt to understand her as another human being, but as an ethereal image to be grasped at the beginning, and an animalised *femme fatale* at the end.

Haunted Subjects

Turning to the haunted subjects, an analysis of how the narrative presents them as either reliable or unreliable narrators contributes to a more comprehensive outlook on these stories’ understanding of identity and visibility. Mr Williams, from ‘The Mezzotint’, seems to have a surveillance approach as, in seeing the painting for the first time, he judges it based on its appearance and is consequently disappointed by its plainness and amateur composition. Williams is presented by the narrator as a thorough, orderly and scientific scholar, who occupies his days by expanding his museum’s collection and playing golf with his fellow antiquaries.⁷⁷ As someone with a scientific background, Williams is inclined toward a surveillance and anthropocentric perspective. In fact, in coming back from playing golf, the narrator makes a remark that highlights Williams and his circle’s entitled approach to life, as they complain about their golf session, arguing that “neither player had experienced that amount of luck which a human being *has a right* to expect” (16).⁷⁸ The claim that they deserve to have good luck on the grounds of humanity suggests that William’s circle consider humans, and so themselves, above the rest of the creatures on earth. This attitude is repeated in the story since Williams is

⁷⁷ In fact, it is common for M.R. James’s protagonists to play golf, as noted by Thompson who argues that this pastime is held as an indicator of the character’s orderliness and individualism (“Golf As Metaphor” 342). Thompson analyses the significance that the game of golf has in relation to the character’s identities and the development of the narratives in his essay “I Shall Most Likely Be Out on the Links”: Golf As Metaphor in the Ghost Stories of M.R. James”.

⁷⁸ My italics.

confident that keeping an eye on the mezzotint is not necessary, given that he believes that they are “meant to see the whole thing” (James 21). Williams considers his friends and himself as an enlightened audience, thinking the sole reason as to why the painting is changing is for them to see it, study it and unravel the mystery.

This attitude also places reason and vision over the body, as it considers that humans, and more specifically, scholars are the enlightened ones destined to make sense of the world. Williams follows a surveillance approach in dealing with the morphing painting, calling different witnesses first in order to confirm the appearance of a mysterious figure in the previously figure-free mezzotint. Otherwise, he says, “he might have been tempted to think that something gravely wrong was happening either to his eyes or his mind” (James 19). However, once the presence of the supernatural has been confirmed by several eyewitnesses – all of whom are also scholars – Williams assumes that this is automatically objective information, and so, his fears about his eyes or mind potentially malfunctioning are dispelled. He then proceeds to take photos of the painting, and to produce meticulous reports on the changes. Therefore, sight and reason are held in this story as objective and trustworthy generators of knowledge, which leads to the confirmation of the existence of the ghost as an external, measurable phenomenon, not a by-product of a malfunction in the character’s eyes or mind.

From the moment the changing qualities of the painting are confirmed, the scholars believe they are in control of the situation. They think that the only reason the mezzotint is changing is so they can witness it. They, thus, believe that the painting would not change while they were not paying attention. However, the mezzotint does change for somebody else, Mr Filcher, Williams’s servant. Contrary to their expectations, the painting does not make class distinctions, as it shows its supernatural changes to either enlightened or unenlightened audiences, contradicting Williams privileged assumptions. Despite adopting a general surveillance and Cartesian perspective, ‘The Mezzotint’ also challenges the character’s ego and enlightened mind-sets. Moreover, this narrative portrays sight and reason as not completely efficient when trying to grasp and capture the supernatural creature, as the demonic ghost’s sex and species remains a mystery despite all the reports, witnesses and photographs.

In ‘Canon Alberic’s Scrap-Book’, Dennistoun, being an archaeologist and Cambridge scholar, regards sight as connected to reason too. In fact, he also relies on

notebooks, drawings and photographs to document his studies. Moreover, he agrees with Williams's initial explanations for the supernatural, as he explains the sacristan sings of extreme disquietude as a result of an altered state of mind, a "fixed delusion" or "a guilty conscience" (1). Similarly, when the sacristan displays strong emotional responses of fear, Dennistoun concludes that "the man must be a monomaniac" (James 3). He thus connects ghost-seeing with madness or, in other words, with the annulment of reason (Smajic 1114).

Fear, and not persuasion, is the means through which the supernatural manages to influence the normative subject in M. R. James's stories. Dennistoun, for instance, starts feeling uneasy when he goes to the hotel after having taken the sacristan's book with him. Once in the solitude of his room, he hears the same eerie laughs he heard in the church when he was with the "monomaniac" of the sacristan. At first, he manages to rationally dispel his uneasiness arguing that these laughs should certainly belong to the landlady. Given that hearing is not considered trustworthy, Dennistoun does not struggle to find a possible logical explanation for the mysterious laughs. However, the moment he *sees* the hand of the demonic creature portrayed in the book, Dennistoun's reasoning is unable to find any explanation other than assuming the reality of his vision, revealing sight as the most objective of senses. He then collapses and screams "with the voice of an animal in hideous pain" (James 11). It is by means of utter terror that the monster influences M.R. James's protagonist, removing their reason completely, and driving them *backwards* to the animal. In seeing the ghost, he loses all his "Englishman" ways, reacts impulsively, and screams like a beast (1). Dennistoun's example demonstrates that even the most level-headed English scientist can be reduced to animal behaviour by means of fear. Similarly, when Williams notices a change in the picture for the first time, he is also terrified to the point of "nearly [dropping] the candle to the floor", despite his scepticism and scientific outlook (James18). Therefore, hybrid ghosts awaken the protagonists' un-surmounted animal instincts through fear. Fear is, thus, the vehicle through which these monstrous ghosts impose their degenerative influence on modern British subjects.

Conversely, in 'Oke of Okehurst', desire fuels and grants the success of the hybrid's influence. The narrator's obsession with painting and understanding Alice stems from his attraction to her, as he himself confesses: "I had her on the brain. I pursued her, her physical image, her psychological explanation, with a kind of passion which filled my days" (117). Despite Alice's strange and hybrid qualities, the narrator does not fear her,

but he is even more drawn to her. This suggests a certain degree of degeneration of the narrator himself. In fact, in the introduction of the story, he is said to wear a “velvet coat” and to love to pursue “extraordinary imaginative impression[s]” (Lee 107; 112). These aesthetic and imaginative preferences, together with his attraction to hybrid Alice, would classify him as a potential aesthete artist. As such, it could be argued that his approach to art and identity would be a spectacle one. Yet, he exhibits his works at the Royal Academy, the most prestigious and predominantly classical gallery in Great Britain, instead than at Grosvenor gallery – an alternative, and *avant garde* venue (Rosenfeld). Similarly, the way he approaches his sitters, the Okes, reveals his employment of a surveillance approach to identity, since he judges them solely based on their appearance.

However, the narrative gradually reveals the narrator and his ocular-based method as unreliable. Despite his claims of knowing “the absolute reality of [Alice]” (113), at the end, readers discover that he is not only oblivious to Alice’s true nature, but also to her husband’s. He constantly describes Mr Oke as the epitome of “the perfectly conscientious young Englishman [...]; devout, pure-minded, brave, incapable of any baseness” (117). The narrator assumes that because he is a man, he must be guided solely by reason and facts, and describes William Oke as having a “curious unimaginative earnestness” (120). Yet, it is Mr Oke, and not Alice, who ultimately re-enacts their ancestors’ sin by murdering his wife. Moreover, it is precisely Mr Oke’s dislike of imagination what ultimately prompts the tragic ending. Led by his surveillance perspective, William assumes that the ghost of Lovelock is real and tangible when he sees him. Additionally, due to his lack of imagination, he is not capable of thinking of an alternative explanation, and screams, “Who’s that fellow looking in at the window, and making signs at you, Alice? Damn his impudence!” (Lee 141).

Judging characters based on their appearance is portrayed in this short story as not only detrimental, but as the trigger that causes the tragic ending. It is the narrator and Mr Oke’s continued attempts at imposing their own prejudiced version of Alice onto her that prevents them from actually understanding her. ‘Oke of Okehurst’ proves the inefficacy of a surveillance perspective on identity by showing how inadequate Mr Oke and the narrator’s polarised conceptions of womanhood are when applied to a real woman. Alice Oke is neither an angel nor an animal, neither a soul nor a body, but she is a complex human being.

In this story, influence's success depends on interest and desire rather than fear. For instance, despite the narrator's constant attempts to attract Alice's attention, he is only able to spark a reaction from her when he happens to mention a topic of her interest:

The first time Mrs. Oke seemed to become at all aware of my presence [...] was one day – I might have been there for a week – when I chanced to remark to her upon the very singular resemblance that existed between herself and the portrait of a lady that hung in the hall. (Lee 118)

This portrayal of influence contradicts its depiction as a devastating and one-way phenomenon that M.R James's stories present. In turn, 'Oke of Okehurst' suggests that the narrator is only able to obtain an active response from Alice when he touches "some secret chord" within her (Wilde, DG 17). Lee's story presents influence as a reciprocal exchange, as it shows that for influence to take place, certain compliance from the influenced subject is required.

From the moment the narrator discovers Alice's trigger, he purposefully tampers with her behaviour. He confesses to taking pleasure in "teasing" and "delighting" her by asking questions about her ancestors, even if it was an uncomfortable subject for William, her husband (143). More importantly, the narrator admits to interfering with the unfolding of the events. According to him, to properly study Alice's personality and do his "subject justice", he could not remain "at a distance" (122):

So I let myself go to the habit of allowing Mrs. Oke daily to talk over her strange craze, or rather of drawing her out about it. I confess that I derived a morbid and exquisite pleasure in doing so: it was so characteristic in her, so appropriate to the house! It completed her personality so perfectly, and made it so much easier to conceive a way of painting her. (128-129)

The narrator is therefore not trying to understand the real character of Mrs Oke, but is projecting his biased views of identity onto her. By constantly mentioning the topic of their gruesome family past, he is trying to mould Alice's personality to match the picturesque nature of the house, thus ultimately producing an artificially rearranged visual version of reality. Despite the narrator's insistence on exposing Alice's supposed morbid personality, it is his own "love of morbid excitement" and William's jealousy that ultimately hastens the story's tragic ending (Lee 140).

Unlike Alice and the narrator, William Oke is moved by fear, as are M.R. James's scholars. His fear and rejection of his family's past is what ultimately drives him to kill his wife. While Alice regards their family history as a "picturesque" story (120), William is ashamed and scared of it. He regards the murder of Lovelock as if it were current, and

defined their identity.⁷⁹ Instead of acknowledging and accepting his family's past, he chooses to completely avoid the subject, repressing it in a similar way to how M.R. James's characters imprison the past in its relics. This repression can be seen in William's constant policing of his feelings and emotions. He always tries not let out any "outspoken expression of disapprobation", especially against his wife; and as a consequence, he either blushes or his "maniac frown" shows up on his face (Lee 140). Progressively, William's control over his "glum fists" starts to wear off (144), and he slowly descends into madness: "I feel sometimes as if I were mad, and [...] fit to be locked up" (150). The constant repression of the "restless, self-seeking" side of his family and of himself leads to its sudden and uncontrollable resurgence (Lee 121).

On the other hand, Alice is neither scared, nor ashamed of the story of Lovelock's murder, presumably by the hands of the very Alice Oke. She seems to accept the consequences that this event might have had in her and her family's identity. For instance, she seems to be at peace with Nicholas Oke's prophecy or curse that establishes that "when [...] the master of Okehurst should marry another Alice Oke [...] there should be an end of the Okes of Okehurst". She calmly acknowledges the fact that the prophecy seems to be coming true and adds, "we have no children [...]. I, at least, have never wished for them" (Lee 134). She is thus accepting of both her role as a descendant of the terrible Okes, and her childless destiny. The narrative actually shows that it is William, and not Alice, who puts an end to the Oke's lineage. In other words, rather than hybridity, it is William's self-repression and alienation towards his family's animal past what ultimately thwarts progress and condemns the Okes to extinction.

This story offers a portrayal of animality as not inherently evil, since it only turns evil after having been repressed for a long period of time. 'Oke of Okehurst' also contradicts the faith in ocular epistemology in M.R James's stories by presenting an unreliable narrator whose judgements are all proven wrong by the narrative itself. His inability to foresee and prevent the tragic events shows that sight is not enough to fully grasp the sitter's identity, since it cannot capture their invisible side. In fact, in 'Oke of Okehurst' the actual existence of the ghost is never confirmed, so that the reader is left to decide whether William saw or imagined the ghost of Lovelock. Regarding influence,

⁷⁹ William says, "but I feel as it were all one whether it was long ago or not, when it's a question of one's own people..." (120). This shows that he considers the murder as an important event that still defines who they are, as if he and Alice were extensions of their ancestors.

this story reflects two different triggers for the character's evolution, fear and desire. Despite their differences, both vehicles of influence require certain compliance from the victim of the influential exchange, since their vulnerability stems from the presence – either accepted, or rejected – of animal tendencies within their own personality. Finally, 'Oke of Okehurst' introduces an alternative, spectacle-like and proto-ecocritical approach to hybridity in the character of Alice Oke. Against William and the narrator's surveillance and ecophobic approach to identity, she privileges the use of imagination and empathy as tools to comprehend others and the self.⁸⁰

3.1.2 Hearing as Imagining: Voice, Body and Beast in 'Oh, Whistle and I'll Come to You, My Lad' and 'A Wicked Voice'

In 'Oh, Whistle' and 'A Wicked Voice', the threat of the hybrid ghost is not made evident by the hybrid's appearance, but by the hallucinatory qualities of the sound of either their voice or a musical instrument. These two stories focus on the less reliable sense of hearing and its connection to the animal body, imagination and madness. The sense of hearing as untrustworthy and a generator of monsters has already been introduced when discussing 'Canon Alberic', since Dennistoun disregards the strange sounds he hears at the Church and tries to explain them in a logical way. Hence, hearing is presented in James as a subjective sense in need of policing, and as such, one with a greater inclination toward misinterpretation and inaccuracy. The identification of hearing as opposed to sight and reason is made clearer by Dennistoun's gradual inability to find rational explanations to the odd noises he hears once darkness starts to fall, and his eyesight decreases:

... the short day was drawing in, and the church began to fill with shadows, while the curious noises, [...] seemed – no doubt because of the fading light and the consequently quickened sense of hearing – to become more frequent and insistent". (James 3)

At night, when human sight cannot perform properly, the rest of the senses "quicken", and the subject has no alternative but to rely on their animal body to make sense of the

⁸⁰Alice Oke has been interpreted as the embodiment of Lee's feminine version of aestheticism (Maxwell and Pulham, "Introduction and Notes" 11). In spite of being a disciple of Walter Pater, Lee does not borrow uncritically from aestheticism, instead she writes simultaneously "with and against Pater's model" (Zorn 166). As a female aesthete, she became aware of the weakness that a predominately male and male oriented movement could have, that is, the lack of female voices, and so the absence of an empathetic approach to female figures in art, history and art criticism. As Denisoff states, in 'Oke of Okehurst', Lee portrays two different approaches to identity and art: a masculine and surveillance approach embodied in the narrator, and a feminine one characterised by "historical sensitivity and empathy" ("The Productivist Ethos" 75).

world. From a Cartesian perspective, however, with the annulment of sight there comes the abolition of reason. Hence, the rest of bodily senses are regarded as imagination stimulants and untrustworthy, and judgement is suspended until sunrise.

‘Oh, Whistle’ and ‘A Wicked Voice’ focus on the connection between sounds, hearing and hallucinations in greater depth, as they feature an instrument, a listener or victim, and a traumatic encounter with the hybrid other. In ‘Oh, Whistle’, the instrument is an old whistle found near a Templar site, whereas in ‘A Wicked Voice’, the body of the castrato singer Zaffirino is described and conceptualised as an instrument: a “violin of flesh and blood” (Lee 154). Moreover, both male protagonists, Parkins and Magnus, have similar reactions of fear and attraction to the sound produced by these mysterious instruments. Yet, the narratives manage to portray the hybrid other and the haunted subject from disparate visual, and ecocritical perspectives.

‘Oh, Whistle’ tells the story of professor Parkins, who finds a mysterious whistle near the ruins of an old Templar church. From the moment he touches the whistle, his rationality seems to dwindle, decreasing even more rapidly when he decides to blow it, and completely disappearing when a mysterious linen creature answers the whistle’s call, and manifests in his room. Prior to the creature’s appearance, Parkins and another guest at the inn, referred to as the Colonel, conclude that, given the place where the whistle was found and its Latin inscription, it must belong to a “set of Papists”: the Templars (James 70).⁸¹ However, neither of them are able to decipher the Latin inscriptions or determine the instrument’s actual date of origin. Therefore, the inscriptions could even date back to Roman times, and so would the ghost inhabiting the object. In fact, what lies beneath the veil remains a mystery, since the linen that surrounds it is never lifted in the narrative.

If Parkins had known Latin, he would have realised that the mysterious inscription on the whistle is warning those who dare to blow it of the unpleasant future that awaits them, since it suggests that they will be so scared that they might go mad.⁸² Parkins is

⁸¹ References to the Templars are recurrent in M.R. James’s stories, as in ‘Canon Alberic’s Scrap-Book’ and ‘The Mezzotint’, since the book and the portrait’s figure are both covered by a cloth with a cross on it (James 5; 21). These references are a clear example of the extent to which M.R. James’s religious upbringing influenced and inspired his ghost stories (Cox xi-xiii). The Templars did, indeed, embody the worst side of Catholicism from the Anglican Church’s ascetic perspective, and so, they were traditionally represented as a secretive group of “undisciplined imagination [and] sexual excess” (Murphy and Porcheddu 404).

⁸² Thurston, Murphy and Porcheddu have come to the conclusion that there are two main approaches to the whistle’s inscriptions. The first option is to read the suffix *-bis* at the end of each Latin word – *furbis*, *flabis*, *flebis*– so that the translation would be: ‘you will go mad, you will blow, you will weep’ (Thurston 105).

nevertheless oblivious, a fact that highlights that vision does not always equate understanding, and it is not necessarily connected to reason. In fact, in his story, the sound of the mysterious pipe calls a series of hallucinatory images upon Parkin's closed eyes which are as incomprehensible for him as they are for the reader. Therefore, not only is hearing presented as unreliable, but also sight to some degree, as both can be producers of a distorted reality at times.

A 'Wicked Voice', on the other hand, is the story of a Norwegian musician named Magnus, a lover of Wagner's music, who is attempting to compose an opera entitled *Ogier the Dane* in a Wagnerian style. However, while staying in Venice, he falls victim to Venice's decadent spell and becomes haunted by the voice of the castrato Zaffirino. After a traumatic encounter with the ghost of the singer, Magnus is unable to continue working on his opera. He is, from that moment, only capable of composing and playing the "corrupt and corrupting music from the Past", a style that he despises (Lee 155). His downfall starts the night he is given the portrait of the eighteenth century castrato singer Zaffirino, as from that moment, Magnus is haunted by the sound of his voice, that "violin of flesh and blood, fashioned with the subtle tools, the cunning hands, of Satan" (Lee 154). Therefore, contrary to Parkins's whistle, in this story, the haunting instrument is no other than the hybrid's body. Voice and body are, indeed, one in Magnus's mind, given that the human voice depends on the body and its organs to perform its music.

Similar to James's 'Oh, Whistle', listening to the sounds of Zaffirino's voice is presented as dangerous and potentially hallucinatory. This time, however, the danger of his voice is connected to its origin in the body, the animal. Magnus presents the body as inferior to intellect and as connected to the devil:

Singer, thing of evil, stupid and wicked slave of the voice, of that instrument which was not invented by the human intellect, but begotten to the body, and which, instead of moving the soul, merely stirs up the dregs of our nature! For what is the voice but the Beast calling, awakening that other Beast sleeping in the depths of mankind... (Lee 156)

This would work as a forewarning to the results of the blowing, as Parkins is indeed close to madness by the end of the story. However, there is an alternative reading by which *fur* is read as a noun, only adding – *bis* to *fla* and *fle*, so that the following translation results: 'Thief, you will blow, you will weep' (Murphy and Porcheddu 399). Murphy and Porcheddu support their interpretation by looking at the original 1904 version of the story and comparing it to the manuscript. They say that in the original version, the swastika has a distinct form as the right arm is shorter and finishes in a 'U' or bracketed shape (400). They interpret this as clue suggesting that the word *bis*, also situated on the right, should be read differently. This seems confirmed when looking at the manuscript where James originally joined *fla* and *fle* to *bis* with a v-shaped bracket (>). Therefore, *bis* should not be read in isolation, nor should it be added to all, but only to the last two words as clarified by James's original (>) bracket symbol (100-102).

Voice, body and the devil are, for Magnus, intimately connected, if not different representations of the same evil: animality. Magnus establishes reason as the key element that defines humanity, and thus rejects the body in terms of its animal nature.

By identifying the body and everything related to it as evil, such as the voice, Magnus is revealing his ecophobic and dualistic perspective on identity. His approach to the hybrid other, Zaffirino, is also defined by this view. Inasmuch as a castrato, Zaffirino is a hybrid character and androgynous figure. He is described as an “effeminate beau”, whose voice granted him success and also great love conquests (Lee 157). As one of the guests in Magnus’s boarding house explains, there is a legend that affirms that Zaffirino could make any woman fall in love with him just by singing. Zaffirino also claimed to be able to kill them with the sound of his voice. This seems to have been the case of the Procuratessa Vendramin, who died while listening to Zaffirino’s singing *L’Aria dei Mariti*. In fact, this ability in Zaffirino’s voice to drive his victims to their death has been interpreted as the climax of sexual intercourse or “la petite mort”, by Vicinus (610). Once more, the threat of the hybrid is of a sexual, thus animal nature.

Zaffirino is one of the few hybrid others that manages to literally have a voice, and exercise it, reclaiming his status as agent. Moreover, despite being a castrato, he finds a way to actively penetrate the minds and hearts of women with his voice. As Caballero notices, his voice is compared to a “violin of flesh and blood” (Lee 154), or in other words, a bodily organ which is “no less sexual than musical” (Caballero 389). Moreover, Zaffirino’s voice not only affects women, since Magnus displays clear symptoms of infatuation towards the singer. He wonders, “why, the sight of this idiotic engraving, the mere name of that coxcomb of a singer, have made my heart beat and my limbs turn to water like a love-sick hobbledehoy” (Lee 158). Hence, despite the constant defamations against him, Magnus is indeed attracted towards the castrato:

That effeminate, fat face of his is almost beautiful, with an odd smile, brazen and cruel. I have seen faces like this, if not in real life, at least in my boyish romantic dreams, when I read Swinburne and Baudelaire, the faces of wicked, vindictive women. Oh yes! He is decidedly a beautiful creature, this Zaffirino, and his voice must have had the same sort of beauty and the same expression of wickedness... (162)

In this fragment, he narrator is recognising that he considers Zaffirino to be beautiful and desirable, since he has dreamt of similar countenances in his “boyish romantic dreams”. At the same time, he deflects the threat that dreaming romantically about other men entails

by clarifying that the faces in his dreams were of “wicked, vindictive women”. However, *femme fatales* were also considered to be androgynous and animal, inasmuch as masculine. Although he tries to camouflage his desires, he still confesses to possessing an animal attraction towards hybrid individuals. His alienation from his own animal desires, however, prevents Magnus from identifying these desires as his own, coming from within. Consequently, he projects them onto the figure of Zaffirino, who becomes increasingly tangible, until it creates a body by means of his voice.

Haunted subjects

The way in which Magnus and Parkins approach the encounter with the supernatural is rooted in the perspective through which they view the world. Starting with Parkins, he is a “young, neat, and precise in speech” professor of Ontography, whose orderly and individualist nature is constantly highlighted in the narrative, for instance, by his fondness of golf (James 57). As Thompson has noticed, the allusion to golf, with its strict rules and lack of team work, is used by M.R. James to construct his character’s individualistic personalities (“James’s Oh, Whistle” 194).⁸³ In fact, it is near the golf field that Parkins finds the whistle, as the golf course had been built near the ruins of an old Templar church. Locating the modern and orderly golf course over medieval ruins parallels the way modern civilization stands over feudalism, paganism, and beyond. However, when “nature, history and tradition” are unacknowledged, people remain unaware of the ancient forces lying beneath their feet. Therefore, when the neat and logical present, represented by the game of golf, becomes unexpectedly haunted by the spirits of the past on which it stands, characters become terrified since they are unable to recognise the traits of their own past in these ghosts.

Parkins, who is said to be “scrupulously polite and strictly truthful” (58), shows a strong dislike towards the supernatural. As a logical, ordered, scientific man, he thinks that “any appearance of concession to the view that such things might exist is equivalent to a renunciation” of everything he believes in (59). However, from the moment he touches the whistle, his mind begins to be invaded by inexplicable images and sensations. For instance, on his way back home from the golf course, he notices an “indistinct personage” who appears to be running after him, and starts recollecting the stories about

⁸³ According to him, golf was “supremely patrician and strictly ruled game” that provided readers and characters alike with a false sense of security and control over the course of the story (Thompson, “Golf As Metaphor” 340).

“foul fiends” with “horns and wings” that he read during his “unenlightened days” (James 63). This statement confirms Parkin’s placement of reason as the key element that defines the modern subject’s identity, as his “unenlightened days” refer to his childhood. This comparison is similar to Lombroso’s ideas as he also depicts children as not completely human. Given their imaginative and irrational behaviour, Lombroso considered they were closer to animals (“Atavism and Evolution” 48). As an adult, however, Parkins fights against his imagination with the help of his reason, and tries to convince himself that “the gentleman behind [was] not of [the demonic] kind”, but just a man (James 63).

It is when Parkins blows the whistle, however, that his mind becomes successfully invaded by hallucinatory images. Hence, sound and hearing are presented in ‘Oh, Whistle’ as having “the power [...] of forming pictures in the brain” (65). The images Parkins sees with his eyes closed are immediately considered to be illusions since neither sight nor reason are involved in their production; rather, they are shaped by his imagination. This is presented as opposed to reason, as it is when the objective sense of sight is no longer able to work, that imagination invades the subject’s mind calling forth the monsters. Hence, both the narrative and its protagonist adopt a surveillance and Cartesian perspective by which reason is connected to objectivity and sanity, and imagination to animality and madness. Consequently, Parkins tries to find logical explanations for his strange visions, resisting imagination’s force:

With many misgivings as to incipient failure of eyesight, overworked brain, excessive smoking, and so on, he finally resigned himself to light his candle, get out a book, and pass the night waking, rather than be tormented by this persistent panorama, which he saw clearly enough could only be a morbid reflection of his walk and his thoughts on that very day. (James 67)

He blames the vision on his eyesight, his exhausted brain, or on the trauma linked to the impression that he was being followed earlier. Any physiological explanation is better than assuming that he might be going mad, or worse, that those visions might be real, and a direct consequence of blowing the whistle. Moreover, he tries to avoid the recurrence of those visions by lighting a candle and reading a book. In sum, Parkins chooses light and reason over darkness and imagination.

Magnus experiences the haunting of Zaffirino’s ghost in a similar way as Parkins, since the first time that he sees the singer is in his dreams. Similarly, Magnus explains the dream away arguing that it is a consequence of having been told the story of the Procuratessa Vendramin’s death the previous day. Moreover, he also decides to get up,

and spends the rest of the night trying to finish his opera of *Ogier the Dane*. He, too, finds logical explanations for constantly hearing Zaffirino's "ghost-voice". He repeats to himself that "it had been some silly prank of a romantic amateur, [...]"; and that the sorcery of the moonlight and sea-mist had transfigured for [his] excited brain those sounds into Zaffirino's voice" (168). He uses the same arguments Parkins does to rationalise his obsession with the voice of the castrato, blaming his auditory hallucinations on a malfunction in his body. Finally, he externalises the threat by blaming his strange haunting on Venice's "mysterious influences" which "make the brain swim and the heart faint". He thus portrays the phenomenon of influence as corruption and disease, arguing that his "vanished genius" was the result of a prolonged exposure to Italy's decadent atmosphere of "moral malaria" (Lee 156).⁸⁴

Magnus approaches ghost-sighting – or ghost-hearing – from a surveillance perspective by which the invisible ghost is explained as a symptom of disease and degeneration that originates in the body. In fact, Nordau would consider Magnus as the perfect illustration of the damaging effects that the exposure to a decadent lifestyle has on the modern subject's weakened nervous system (Mosse xxii). Magnus describes his identity as having been invaded by the degenerative forces of Zaffirino's music, presenting influence as an overwhelming and unstoppable force. According to him, it is due to the castrato's voice that he is transformed into a werewolf, a "half-bewitched", and so human-animal creature (Lee 155). The narrator is both aware and disgusted by his hybridization, and insists that "although [his] artistic inspiration [is] enslaved", his "reason [...] is free" (155). Once again, Magnus supports a Cartesian concept of identity as he defends his preservation of his humanity on the basis of his unmarred reason. This statement supports the division between reason and animality, soul and body, and yet it also recognises the presence of irrational forces within Magnus's mind or soul because, even if his reason remains untouched, he cannot deny that his mind is haunted by the ghost of Zaffirino.

This Cartesian approach to identity also shapes his understanding of art and its influence, since he distinguishes between nourishing and detrimental music on the grounds of their origin. When it comes from "human intellect", such as instrumental

⁸⁴ In Angela Leighton's words: "...malaria gives Vernon Lee an imagery, not only of a sickness long associated with Venice, but also of that decadence which spawned so many infectiously risky "yellow books." Airs, vapors and moonlight transmute, readily, from sense to sense, as the text plays out the ghosts in what should be safe and sane meanings." (9).

music, it is beneficial. On the other hand, he considers that music that is sung corrupts the listener given that the human voice originates in the body (Lee 156). Yet, according to Lee herself, music, as an art, is pure aesthetics, and as such, it is “beyond [...] Good and Evil”, that is, it lacks morality (Leighton 4). The author’s approach to music and influence clashes with her protagonist’s, since, following Lee, music’s capacity to stir up “the dregs of [the listener’s] nature” does not depend on its meaning, but on the subject’s interpretation of it (Lee 156). In a similar way to how Oscar Wilde claimed that “to look at a thing is very different from seeing a thing” (DL 937), Lee also argues that there are two different approaches to sound: hearing and listening (Caballero 395). Like looking, hearing, is the passive perception of music, whereas listening, like seeing, requires the subject’s active engagement with the input, and an actual attempt to understand and absorb it (Caballero 395). Given Magnus’s rejection of the human voice as a medium, he is unable to *listen*, that is, to actively engage with the castrato’s song. Hence, following Lee’s interpretation, Magnus would be merely *hearing* Zaffirino since his unwillingness to admit his attraction to the castrato’s voice prevents him from actively paying attention to it (Caballero 395).

Parkins and Magnus value reason, the human, over imagination and the body, the animal, and explain their hauntings in terms of a malfunction in their senses. Moreover, hearing is presented as a more evocative, less reliable sense than sight in both narratives. Both protagonists assume a surveillance perspective to identity, too. Influence is portrayed as one-directional and inevitable as, despite the protagonists’ rationality, they are both deeply affected by the spell of the hybrid other. However, in both stories, influence is not only fuelled by fear, but also by desire, albeit unacknowledged. Magnus longs to hear Zaffirino’s voice, but he is horrified by the depth of his desire for the androgynous creature at the same time. On the other hand, Parkins is also initially attracted to the sound of the mysterious whistle, as the narrator establishes “the sound of the whistle had so fascinated him that he could not help trying it once more” (James 65). Then, both characters’ initial haunting is triggered by an unrecognised attraction towards the sound of the whistle or the castrato’s voice respectively, later camouflaged by terror and rejection.

The Encounter

Parkins’ disbelief in the supernatural is ultimately challenged when he comes face to face with the hybrid ghost. Parkins lies in bed in the darkness of his bedroom “with all

his eyes open [...] breathlessly listening” to the noises that confirm the presence of an unwanted roommate. Thanks to the light of the moon, Parkins is able to perceive a figure raising up and sitting on the extra bed. He has the sensation that the creature is blind, and given that sight is associated with reason, so the creature is not only blind but also potentially animal. Its blindness forces him to necessarily employ its more bodily senses to make sense of the room. The over-rational Parkins is disgusted by this body-reliant creature that, instead of looking, touches everything around. The way the ghost “felt the pillows” makes him “shudder”, and he declares that he “could not have borne [...] to touch [the ghost]; and for its touching him, he would sooner dash himself through the window than have that happen”. Parkins cannot conceive of this blind, bodily-reliant creature as being human, and thus wonders “what manner of thing” in the semblance of “*crumpled linen*” this hybrid creature is (James 75-76).⁸⁵

However, the appearance of this linen ghost also reduces Parkins to animal-like behaviour. Firstly, given that it visits the scholar at night, the ghost forces Parkins to rely on his more bodily senses to escape, confronting him with the horror of his own animality. Hence, it is the protagonist’s ecophobia or fear of his and other’s potential animality that ultimately reduces him to irrational behaviour. Among all the senses, it is touch, the most connected to the body, that provokes the strongest reaction in Parkins. When the creature’s blind groping movements happen to slightly touch his face, Parkins cannot “keep back a cry of disgust [...], and the next moment he was half-way through the window backwards, uttering cry upon cry at the utmost pitch of his voice” (James 76). Fear manages to transform the rational and analytic Parkins into a scared creature that reacts out of pure instinct.

Luckily for Parkins, the encounter with the hybrid ghost is cut short by the abrupt entrance of the Colonel, who prevents him from losing his life, but more importantly, “his wits”, that is, his reason or humanity (76). In the presence of the Colonel, the animated bed sheets return to a motionless state and fall to the floor. Suddenly, the creature is described as having “absolutely nothing material about it”, which contrasts with the fact that it was its corporeality and capacity to touch that stood at the centre of the fear that

⁸⁵ Original emphasis. The sentence “what manner of thing it was” (James 75) resembles the line in *Dracula* when Harker, in seeing the Count crawl down the walls of the castle, exclaims, “what manner of a man is this, or what manner of creature is it in the semblance of a man?” (Stoker 39).

stirred in Parkins. Despite being incorporeal, the ghost “had made itself a body” with Parkins’ bedclothes apparently granted by the whistle’s call (James 77).

Curiously, something similar happens with Zaffirino’ ghost, who manages to forge himself a body by means of his voice:⁸⁶

...the murmur of a voice arose from the midst of the waters [...] which expanded slowly [...], taking volume and body, taking flesh almost and fire, an ineffable quality, full, passionate... [...]. The note grew stronger and stronger, and warmer [...], until it burst through that strange and charming veil, and emerged beaming [...] long, superb, triumphant. (Lee 167)

Zaffirino’s voice is able to create a body that is warm and alive and burns with enough passion to break the invisible veil that separates soul and body, past and present, and become a corporeal entity. Similarly, Zaffirino’s ghost also functions as a reminder of Magnus’s own bodily, animal nature. The more senses that are activated in Magnus, the closer he is to fully perceive Zaffirino’s ghost. For instance, right before encountering the singer, Magnus perceives a “vague scent of cut grass [and] of that white flower” (177). The smell also evokes a taste of peaches, which was present on the table when he heard about Zaffirino for the first time.⁸⁷ The awakening of these senses, together with hearing, finally allows Magnus to see “the handsome, effeminate face [...] of the singer” (Lee 179-180). In Lee’s story, bodily senses are given prevalence in the perception of the ghost’s presence, since sight, or vision, is presented as dependant on the other, more evocative senses.

It is when all of his senses are awakened that Magnus recognises what had remained unconscious in him until that moment, “that [Zaffirino’s] voice was what [he] cared most for in all the wide world” (179).⁸⁸ This statement is a confession of his vulnerability to the love spell of the castrato’s voice, which also implies his attraction to the singer’s body since voice and body were one for Magnus. Hence, Zaffirino’s voice awakens the “Beast sleeping in the depths of mankind”, that is, Magnus’s animal, bodily side (156). Magnus recognises that he wishes to become one with the sound of Zaffirino’s voice: “and I felt

⁸⁶ This has already been addressed by Leighton, who says that in many of Lee’s stories and references to music, the ghost “take ‘volume and body’, the two ideas of sound and flesh coming together [...] to evoke an art built up by desire” (6).

⁸⁷ “The table on which they lean after supper is strewn with butts of bread, [...] and heaps of those huge hard peaches which nature imitates from the marble-shops of Pisa” (Lee 156).

⁸⁸ Angela Leighton says in her essay ‘Ghosts, Aestheticism and Vernon Lee’: “The moment that Magnus is able to acknowledge his “craving” for the ghost-singer is also the moment which sets in motion another “take” of the story. The fever is for “pleasure,” at once a sickness and a purpose, a natural and an unnatural goal, a supernatural nonsense and a supreme inspiration” (8).

my body melt even as wax in the sunshine, and it seemed to me that I too was turning fluid and vaporous, in order to mingle with these sounds as the moonbeams mingle with the dew” (179). Given that voice stands for body in this narrative, his desire to fuse with the castrato’s voice stands for a desire to fuse with the singer’s body. Magnus’s infatuation with or fatal attraction to Zaffirino is confirmed when he claims: “I understood that I was before an assassin, that he was killing this woman, and *killing me also*, with his wicked voice” (180).⁸⁹ If Zaffirino’s voice has the power to kill the narrator, it is because its love spell is as efficient for women as it is for Magnus. Consequently, he hears “the voice swelling, swelling,[...] leaping forth clear, resplendent, like a sharp and glittering knife that seemed to enter deep into [his] breast” (Lee 180). Zaffirino’s voice makes itself tangible for Magnus, takes the shape of a “knife” and penetrates into his heart. This scene can be read both as a metaphor of infatuation and of sexual intercourse since, as previously illustrated in *Dracula* and *The Great God Pan*, knives and sharp objects were commonly employed as phallic objects in *fin de siècle* Gothic narratives.

Magnus struggles to recognise that his attraction to Zaffirino and the music style he now produces comes from within himself, as he says, “my head is filled with music which is certainly by me [...] but which still is not my own, which I despise and abhor” (Lee 181). His alienation from his own desires and tastes makes him loathe the music he now compulsively creates, yet he recognises that it comes from within himself. However, instead of searching for an inner explanation, he blames it on Zaffirino, presenting himself as victim of a supernatural possession. In his last words, however, Magnus openly recognises that he desires to hear the castrato’s voice once more:

O wicked, wicked voice, violin of flesh and blood made by the Evil One’s hand, [...] the longing to hear thee again should parch my soul like hell-thirst? And since I have satiated thy lust for revenge, since thou hast withered my life and withered my genius, is it not time for pity? May I not hear one note, only one note of thine, O singer, O wicked and contemptible wretch? (Lee 181)

Magnus’s closing statement resembles that of a spiteful ex-lover who, after being abandoned, begs for one last romantic encounter. Although he has maintained that he finds Zaffirino’s voice abhorrent during the whole narrative, this is contradicted by his last statement. ‘A Wicked Voice’ manages to depict influence as a two-way phenomenon, rather than an all-invading force by presenting Magnus as a potential unreliable narrator. The open ending to ‘A Wicked Voice’ shows an obsessed Magnus, who confesses his

⁸⁹ My italics.

addiction to Zaffirino's voice in a way that forces readers to consider whether the castrato's ghost is a real, tangible one, like in James's stories, or a product of Magnus's imagination.

As characters, Magnus and Parkins are very similar. For instance, they approach the hybrid ghost from the same Cartesian and surveillance angle, thus valuing sight and reason, and disregarding the rest of the senses. As a result, they first explain their hauntings as a consequence of mental alteration, disease, eyesight failure, or the unreliability of the sense of hearing. Moreover, they only admit the possibility of an actual haunting when presented with visual proof. Their ecophobic approach to others and their own identity results in a feeling of alienation towards their bodily needs and desires. They are, therefore, unable to recognise themselves in the hybrid ghosts' image. Unable to assume the possibility that these might be ghosts of the imagination, embodiments of their animal fears and desires, Magnus and Parkins choose to believe in the existence of actual, tangible spirits. This way the threat they pose is handled once the ghost returns to the past, where it belongs.

However, the encounter with the hybrid ghost has long lasting consequences on Magnus and Parkins, whose mental health deteriorates. Yet, I argue that it is not the ghost itself that propels the degeneration of these characters, but their irrational fear towards their own and others' animality. Magnus's inner struggle and inability to accept that his attraction towards Zaffirino stems from his own bodily desires is what turns him into a scared and paranoid creature. Similarly, Parkins is also reduced to animalistic behaviour by means of fear. Cornered by the linen creature, he becomes increasingly frantic and unpoised, reaching his peak of irrationality when the hybrid creature slightly touches his face. This unwanted contact is what deeply traumatises the scholar since it confirms the ghost's physicality, but also his. After the touch of the hybrid, Parkins's mental state is forever altered, to the point that "he cannot even now see a surplice hanging on a door quite unmoved, and the spectacle of a scarecrow in a field late on a winter afternoon has cost him more than one sleepless night" (James 77). Paradoxically then, it is his ecophobia and fear of his and others' animal body that successfully draws Parkins closer to becoming an irrational, instinct-based human-animal. Despite apparently promoting a surveillance and Cartesian take on reality and identity, these stories also manage to point towards fear of the animal as the ultimate responsible for the modern subject's degeneration.

3.1.3 Feeling the Ghost in ‘The Treasure of Abbot Thomas’, ‘Casting the Runes’ and ‘Amour Dure’

The most bodily of all the senses, touch, is the main focus of James’s ‘The Treasure of Abbot Thomas’ and ‘Casting the Runes’, and Lee’s ‘Amour Dure’. All three have male scholars as protagonists: Mr Somerton is an antiquarian, Mr Dunning is a researcher in the field of alchemy, and Lee’s Spiridion Trepka is a historian. Another aspect they have in common is that the haunted objects they feature all have a connection to the written word, hinting at reading as a potentially dangerous activity. For instance, in ‘Casting the Runes’ and ‘The Treasure of Abbot Thomas’, the evil spirit is summoned by reading or simply possessing a piece of cursed writing, and in ‘Amour Dure’, Trepka becomes obsessed with Medea Da Carpi after consulting numerous historical texts on her life and deeds.

‘The Treasure of Abbot Thomas’ tells the story of Mr Somerton, an antiquary who, after reading about Abbot Thomas’s treasure, decides to search for it in Steinfeld’s Abbey, Germany, where it is supposed to be hidden. Once there, he finds some enigmatic Latin inscriptions in the church’s stained windows that finally guide him to the well where the Abbot’s treasure lies. The gold is however cursed, and from the moment he removes it from the well, a mysterious and terrifying creature starts to follow him. Rather than the gold, what seems to be cursed is the very act of reading and interpreting the inscriptions. This resembles Nordau’s classification of art and literature as beneficial or ‘poisonous’ works, depending on the topics and styles employed. Nordau considered aesthetic and decadent authors and works as dangerous influences for impressionable people because they went against the established philistine and Cartesian morality and, in his opinion, promoted atavism and degeneration (Nordau 300-301). ‘The Treasure of Abbot Thomas’ seems to agree with Nordau’s premises to a certain degree since it presents reading as a risky activity. These Latin riddles turn out to be a dangerous influence on Mr Somerton, which would classify them as a ‘poisonous’ reading according to Nordau. Curiously, the inscriptions are written in yellow, which is a colour traditionally associated with the decadent movement due to *The Yellow Book* (Kooistra and Denisoff).⁹⁰ Although the

⁹⁰ *The Yellow Book* was a literary journal where aesthetes and decadents published texts. The colour yellow became associated with the modern, innovative art that flourished in the last decade of the century; years which were also referred to as the “yellow nineties” (Kooistra and Denisoff).

intentionality of this choice cannot be proven, the colour is at least suggestive of the dangers they may unveil.

Reading is key for the discovery of the gold, which is what emphasises the privileged role that sight and reason play in decoding reality in this story. Moreover, not only are they presented as the tool for the discovery of others' treasures, but also as entitlement to appropriate them (Michalsky 54-55). As an enlightened scholar, Somerton feels he deserves the ownership of the medieval Abbot's gold based on his ability to interpret visual signs. This can be seen in the story's numerous references to eyes and sight, such as the ones engraved in the stained glass, which read "upon a stone are seven eyes" and "they have eyes and shall not see" (James 87, 90; Michalski 54). For the gold to be discovered, Mr Somerton must come. He, who, with his superior and rational British mind, will be capable of seeing what others cannot see and unravel the mystery. Hence, 'The Treasure of Abbot Thomas' adopts a surveillance approach due to the trustworthiness it assigns to sight and reason. Moreover, it also supports a Cartesian hierarchy of human versus animal, since reason and sight are privileged over the rest of the more bodily senses.

'Casting the Runes' also deals with a written curse. The tale narrates the story of Mr Dunning, a researcher at the British Museum, who discovers that he has been cursed by Mr Karswell for rejecting his inaccurate paper on alchemy. It could be argued, however, that the true haunted 'object' in the story is Mr Karswell himself, rather than the runes. He is, in fact, the one that produces the runes with which to haunt Mr Dunning for his offence. Mr Karswell is described as having a "dreadful face", which would make him a potential degenerate, according to a surveillance perspective. As such, "whatever influence" he might exercise would also be "mischievous" (137). His influence is indeed mischievous, as his victims are induced to commit suicide in the course of three months after reception of the runes.

'Casting the Runes' focuses particularly on the way influence can be exercised by means of the written word, as both Karswell's "evil" book and his runic notes are defined as poisonous (140). There is a chapter in Karwell's *History of Witchcraft* on how to tamper with a person's will by casting the runes on them, "either for the purpose of gaining their affection, or of getting them out of the way" (151). This is a chapter dealing with how to influence a subject's actions in general. Not only can runes be aimed at

causing pain, but also they could be used to attract the victim. Unfortunately for Mr Somerton, the runes he receives are intended to make him disappear by means of fear. In the same way he terrifies some children at the beginning of the story, Karswell's runes are intended to progressively frighten Mr Somerton "out of [his] wit" (James 137-38). 'Casting the Runes' also presents influence as an overwhelming force that cannot be resisted by the victim, since the runes can influence the subject by mere possession, even without having been read. This removes all responsibility from the reader, placing the entire blame on the poisonous text and its author.

These two narratives by M.R James support a surveillance approach, since seeing, reading and writing are portrayed as tools for appropriating past relics. Moreover, a Cartesian depiction of identity is also adopted, since these texts are presented as evil inasmuch as medieval, connected to an unenlightened past. Both hybrids, the creature from the well and Karswell, are emissaries of the past and threaten to spread pre-modern beliefs and superstitions among nineteenth-century British scholars (James 140). The irrational past and its terrifying powers are presented as foreign, dangerous and in need to be left behind. However, Abbot Thomas and Karswell, the atavistic characters, manage to outwit the modern and more advanced ones. This questions and blurs the clear-cut binary division between the past as a site of irrationality, and the present as enlightened.

Vernon Lee's 'Amour Dure' also deals with the supposed superiority of the present over the past. The protagonist is a Polish scholar, Spiridion Trepka, who goes to Urbania, Italy, in order to research and write about the history of the region. During his investigation, he comes across the historical figure of Medea Da Carpi and becomes more and more invested in her life to the point that he begins to question the reliability of the present and the irrationality of the past. The documents Trepka finds on Medea are nevertheless written from a surveillance and male perspective. All of the male historians he consults portray Medea as a *femme fatale* or animal woman based on her beautiful appearance and assertive behaviour. For instance, she is described as having a "somewhat over-round" forehead, an "over-aquiline" nose, and low cheek bones (Lee 51), all of which are within the stigmata Lombroso considered to be indicative of degeneracy (Hurley, *The Gothic Body* 93).⁹¹ Furthermore, she is reported to have a great "love of

⁹¹ In her analysis of abhumanity in *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*, Hurley summarises Lombroso's stigmata stating that "The most common of the visible stigmata included an irregular or disproportionate cranium, facial asymmetry, prognathism (a jutting jaw), large or

dress and ornaments”, which was also regarded as a sign of atavism (Lombroso and Ferrero, *The Female Offender* 165).⁹² She is compared to a tigress as well, an animal typically used in art and literature to symbolise women’s animal nature (Dijkstra 294). Finally, it is her “sinister seductiveness” and her vampire mouth that “looks as if it could bite or suck like a leech” that ultimately labels Medea as a monstrous woman (Lee 52).

The image of Medea that Spiridion reconstructs out of the historical documents and pictures he finds, is that of a female vampire: a threatening active, penetrative, human-animal woman. Having been written by scholars and first-hand witnesses, Trepka initially trusts these surveillance-based reports to be objective and truthful, and sides with the ex-Cardinal and Duke Robert II. At this stage, Trepka works as a researcher, merely quoting and summarising others’ accounts. However, he finds himself gradually haunted by the enigma of Medea, and progressively abandons his former detached and surveillance approach, and starts to regard Medea from a place of sympathy. Consequently, he wonders, “am I turning novelist instead of historian?”, and yet he feels that he understand Medea better now, “so much better than [his] facts warrant” (Lee 55-56). Trepka’s progressive disengagement from a “distanced, objective” approach to a sympathetic one has also been noted by Fluhr. She also argues that ‘Amour Dure’ suggests that “one must be *both* a novelist and a historian to touch the past”, that is, that imagination and empathy are as important for decoding the past as facts themselves (288).

Spiridion Trepka differentiates himself from all of M.R. James’s scholars in that he is the only one capable of questioning surveillance’s faith in facts and sight. He then approaches the ghost from a place of empathy and imagination, trying to view the events from Medea’s point of view. He concludes, “we must put aside all pedantic modern ideas of right and wrong. Right and wrong in a century of violence and treachery does not exist, least of all for creatures like Medea” (Lee 56). His portrait of her consequently changes and incorporates more positive aspects. He describes her as “a woman of superlative beauty”, but also “of the highest courage and calmness, a woman of many resources, a genius [...] whose one passion is conquest and empire” (Lee 56). Although he praises her beauty too, he also recognises her potential for intelligence and ambition.

misplaced ears, receding forehead, and apelike disproportion of the limbs” (93). In sum, any physical characteristic that would resemble an animal was understood as indicative of the subject’s atavism.

⁹² Medea is often represented as wearing jewellery often, particularly a “gold chain with little gold lozenges at intervals, which has the following posy or pun engraved [...] “Amour Dure – Dure Amour” (Lee 52).

Yet, some critics, such as Peter Christensen, still regard Trepka as “the class of men whose views of women seem to be little more than fantasies about female narcissism” (35). I agree that, even when Trepka praises Medea’s intelligence and bravery, he employs terms such as “creature”, or compares her to animals. Nevertheless, these animal comparisons are not aimed at defining Medea as inferior or non-human. Instead, I argue that, in his portrayal, the association with the animal and the *femme fatale* has a positive connotation (Lee 56). Having already rejected the Cartesian division of animal as evil and human as good, Trepka approaches the hybrid woman from a place of admiration and acceptance. I agree, therefore, with Maxwell’s reading of Trepka’s reconstruction of Medea as a “submerged feminist analysis” given that he contextualises Medea’s behaviour within the restrictive historical period in which she lived (“From Dionysus to ‘Dionea’” 267). For instance, he explains Medea’s marriage fiascos, arguing that her constant escapes are the consequence of being treated “like a chattel”, expected to give children but never advice (Lee 56). Medea’s insurgence reveals that she is not a “chattel”, but a tigress: an independent, determined woman who is not afraid of assuming the consequences of her hybrid identity. In ‘Amour Dure’, animality is stripped of negative connotations, since it is used as an excuse to tame the hybrid subject by some, but also as symbol of her courage and perseverance by Trepka.

By deconstructing the negative connotations around animality, Trepka frees Medea of any responsibility over the supposed effect that she provokes in men, arguing that their attraction does not originate in Medea’s temptation powers, but in these men’s own animal desires. Contrary to M.R James’s stories, influence is portrayed in ‘Amour Dure’ as an active exchange for whose success the influenced subject’s inclinations are essential. Therefore, Trepka concludes that “to suppose Medea a cruel woman [would be] as grotesque as to call her an immoral woman” (Lee 57). This position resembles Oscar Wilde’s preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray* which affirms that no book is immoral and shifts the corruption to the observer who sees “ugly meanings in beautiful things” (Wilde DG 3). Trepka also diverts the blame to the men around Medea, also suggesting that sin lies in the eyes of the spectator rather than in the object of contemplation. Following Trepka’s conclusions, Medea’s hybridity or animality is not an objective indication of her non-humanity, only acquiring that meaning when she is contemplated from a surveillance and ecophobic perspective.

In ‘Amour Dure’ both the narrative and the narrator adopt a spectacle approach by which animality is stripped of its negative connotation, making it a potential proto-ecocritical Gothic story. In fact, Medea seems to be in tune with her hybridity, accepting and embracing her animality. Medea’s confidence with her animal within parallels Nietzsche’s definitions of the *Übermensch*. According to the philosopher, an *Übermensch* is a subject who accepts their identity as irremediably bodily, and thus, animal and chooses not to repress their impulses and instincts, including those of cruelty and the will to power.⁹³ In doing so, this subject also assumes all of the consequences that living in tune with his animal side may have. This acceptance and love of one’s destiny receives the name of ‘amor fati’ (Valls 25). The *femme fatale* does conform to Nietzsche’s concept of the Dionysian or hybrid identity, as has been noted by Valls. Therefore, a *femme fatale* or animal woman who is also aware and satisfied with the consequences that exercising her hybrid identity might entail, should also be considered as an embodiment of a female *Übermensch*, an *overwoman* (183).⁹⁴ This is, no doubt, the case of Medea, who does not let any of her husbands and suitors divert her from her objective: acquiring land and power in the region of Urbania. Moreover, she does not hold back her instincts of cruelty in the search for her objective. In Trepka’s words, “her fate is [...] to triumph over her enemies, at all events to make their victory almost a defeat; [...] and it is the destiny of all her slaves to perish” (Lee 57).

Following her instincts and desires does not make her a degenerate or evil character in Trepka nor Nietzsche’s eyes, on the contrary. According to the philosopher, it is only

⁹³ This term is originally only applied to male subjects because Nietzsche does not contemplate the possibility of an *Überfrau* or *overwoman*. Eduardo Valls, however, argues that the fact that Nietzsche did not consider the possibility of an *overwoman* does not mean that he rejected the idea (183). Nietzsche did not conceive the coming of an *overwoman* because he understood life as a multitude of contrasting and unbalanced forces in continuous tension. This made women and men necessarily antagonistic in his view (184). However, Valls finds a contradiction which would allow assigning *Übermensch* characteristics to women. Even if in *The Gay Science* (1882), Nietzsche affirms that women’s ultimate purpose is to be possessed by a man, in *Human, All Too Human* (1878) he claims that women also possess the soul of their male partner in return (185-186). Being both equally possessors and possessees, this statement establishes that both parties, in a heterosexual relationship, are able to preserve their individuality, and so, their will to power. This would make the application of *Übermensch* characteristics to a woman possible. Hence, she who takes absolute control and responsibility over her actions can also be called an *overwoman* (Valls 186).

⁹⁴ Valls illustrates this conclusion by applying Nietzsche’s concepts to the character of Ayesha, in *She* (1877) by Henry Rider Haggard. Moreover, Valls argues that she is the first *overwoman* archetype to appear in English literature (Valls 187). Ayesha is an immortal, knowledgeable and beautiful matriarch considered as a deity by her subjects. She is characterised by her love of life as it is, including suffering or death (Valls 189). Most of Ayesha’s characteristics are shared by Medea. For instance, she is also considered to be a deity by Trepka, who refers to her as “mia dea” (Lee 64). Medea should thus also be approached as another potential early archetype of the female *Übermensch*, since Lee’s ‘Amour Dure’ was first published in 1877 in *Murray’s Magazine 1*, like Haggard’s *She* (Maxwell and Pulham, “Introduction and Notes” 41).

when the subject recognises and accepts both their rational and animal side that they become true ‘moral agents’. This way, the subject is liberated from the burden of guiltiness that living true to their identity entails, becoming a “free spirit” (Daigle 242-243). Medea’s acceptance of her actions and her hybridity frees her from any remorse and regret. Unfortunately for her lovers, Medea’s only everlasting love or ‘Amour dure’ is the one she feels towards her embodied identity and her destiny, her ‘*Amour fati*’.

Haunted subjects

In contrast to Medea’s embodied identity, Trepka situates the figure of the ex-Cardinal and Duke Robert. Despite previous depictions of the Duke as a clement prince, Trepka states that said clemency was only the “result of mere fear of laying violent hands upon” the terrible Medea (Lee 58). Duke Robert’s fear is such that he considers her “something almost supernatural” (Lee 58). He is so scared of Medea that he avoids viewing her image or being in her presence, obsessed with avoiding any kind of corruption or temptation emanating from the woman. His fear is demonstrated by Medea’s execution, as he has her killed only by women. In his second interpretation of Duke Robert’s character, Trepka portrays him as a “cunning, cold, but craven priest” whose fear for Medea stemmed from his alienation and rejection of his own animal desires (Lee 58).

The Duke’s alienation from his animal side is such that he arranges a ritual to separate his soul from his animal body. After that, he locked his soul inside his effigy (Lee 58). Duke Robert regards his soul as his core identity, and so he tries to save it from any corruption by attaching it to an idealised, ghostly image of himself rather than an organic, animal body.⁹⁵ In other words, the Duke is taking his Cartesian concept of identity to an extreme by literally dissociating his humanity or soul from his animality or body. The confinement of his soul within an effigy after his death also responds to his fear of meeting with Medea, even in the afterlife. This way, his soul would be protected from any potential post-mortem moral contamination emanating from the woman. The Duke is an extreme advocate of the Cartesian and ecophobic concept of identity, as he is

⁹⁵ The Duke’s extreme Cartesian concept of identity is similar to that in Anna K. Silver’s book *Victorian Literature and the Anorexic Body*, inasmuch as he sees the body as a thwarting element of the real self, which is the soul (Silver 3). Hence, by leaving his body behind, the Duke is liberating his soul and transcending that animalised state into a superior one.

incapable of accepting the animal in him and others. As such, he is the complete opposite of the *overwoman* Medea.

Similarly to Duke Robert, Somerton and Dunning also privilege sight and reason over the body and its senses, and fear the supernatural. As commonly found in M.R. James pieces, the encounter with the hybrid in these two stories takes place at night, when the absence of light rescinds reason. For instance, Somerton, goes at night to the well where the treasure of Abbot Thomas is supposed to be hidden. Although the full moon provides some light, once he steps inside the well, darkness forces him to rely entirely on his other senses. He has to feel “every step” while he scan the walls with the help of a lantern (92). Despite the help of the lantern, he is unable to find any alteration or mark in the stone to guide him towards the gold, just as the prophetic inscription predicted, “they have eyes and shall not see” (90). In fact, he finally discovers the treasure’s location thanks to the wall’s texture being “just a little smoother than the rest” on one spot, an appreciation that relies more on touch than sight (James 92).

In fact, to get hold of the treasure, Somerton needs to introduce his arm in a mysterious cavity, only guided by his sense of touch, “Well, I felt to the right, and my fingers touched something curved, that felt –yes – more or less like leather; dampish it was, and evidently part of a heavy, full, thing” (94). With these clues, uncertain because granted by his sense of touch, Somerton decides to pull the heavy “thing” out of the hole, which, seconds after, takes a life of its own and surrounds Somerton’s neck with “*its arms*” (94).⁹⁶ The “terror and revulsion” that Somerton experiences by being touched is heightened by his inability to see the creature that grabs him:

I was conscious of a most horrible smell of mould and of a cold kind of face pressed against my own and moving slowly over it; and of several [...] legs or arms or tentacles or something clinging to my body. I screamed out, Brown says, like a beast, and the creature slipped downwards... (James 94)

When sight is unavailable, the senses of smell and touch are the only ones left for Somerton to try in order to discern what kind of creature he is dealing with. In comparison to sight, however, these senses are inferior and fragmentary. Therefore, Somerton wonders what kind of face, if a face at all, is being pressed against his, or whether the limbs he is feeling around his body are “legs” or “tentacles”. His bodily senses are presented as unable to help him determine the nature, whether animal or supernatural, of

⁹⁶ Original italics.

the creature in the well. The absence of light equals the annulment of sight, and with it, of reason, and prompts Somerton's loss of control and final transformation into a screaming beast. 'The Treasure of Abbot Thomas' presents reason and the body as opposites, as it portrays sight and the mind as the only medium through which objective knowledge can be attained.

Dunning's encounter with the corporeal ghost happens in a similar atmosphere of darkness, but in a more intimate location: his bed. At night, he hears some strange noises and wants to investigate. Unfortunately, the electric lights do not work, and he decides to consult his watch to see how many hours of darkness lie ahead. He introduces his arm under his pillow, where he keeps his watch, and collapses when, instead of the watch, he touches "a mouth, with teeth and with hair about it" (James 146). He immediately flees to a different room, locks himself in, and remains on alert and fearful for the rest of the night. Similarly, darkness revokes reason, and the senses are activated, leading the character to behave irrationally, histrionically.

The way all of the characters come in contact with the supernatural is quite similar, as almost all of them are forced to experience it through senses other than sight. Moreover, Somerton, Dunning, and also Parkins are exposed to the hybrid other in a similar manner, as they all insert their arms into dark holes, relying entirely on their animal sense of touch to make sense of the objects found.⁹⁷ In Dunning's case, the damp object at the end of the hole is a hairy non-human mouth, which calls upon the figure of the *vagina dentanta*.⁹⁸ This, together with the repetition of images of arms being wearily introduced in damp holes, seem to support Murphy and Porcheddu's, O' Sullivan and Fielding's arguments about the presence of sex references in M.R James's stories. For instance, Fielding notices the connection between the supernatural, wells, and the "sometimes lethal female genitalia" (766-767). According to him, female sexuality was scary for these scholars because it is supposed to be characterised by absence and stands in direct opposition to masculine sexuality, translated in these characters' compulsion to accumulate (Fielding

⁹⁷ In 'Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, My Lad', Parkins finds the mysterious whistle in a dark, "small cavity" excavated in the middle of some Templar ruins. To grab the whistle, Parkins also has to rely entirely on touch, blindly introducing his arm in the hole and grabbing "a metal tube" that ends up being a whistle (James 62).

⁹⁸The *vagina dentanta* is a literary motif that appears in several folk tales and myths from different cultures across the world "in which the mouth and the vagina are identified with one another [...] and pose a threat of castration to all men". (Roth 420; Jackson 341). Sigmund Freud also used and popularised this term to signify male anxiety towards the castration powers of women (Gulzow and Mitchell 315).

765-769). O' Sullivan, Murphy and Porcheddu agree with Fielding in that James's ghosts suggest a fear of sex or intimacy. They indicate that there is a certain "sexual suggestiveness" in "the ghost's embrace", as they usually manifest in the characters' bedroom (Sullivan 45; Murphy and Porcheddu 409). Therefore, despite M.R James's own claims, neither sex nor women are completely absent from his ghost stories, as the body, sex and touch are an integral part of his hybrids ghosts' monstrosity ("Some Remarks" 347).

Moreover, the encounter with the supernatural takes place in a moonlit night.⁹⁹ The moon is traditionally used to symbolise irrationality and imagination and it is identified with femininity and contrasted to the rationalising powers of the sun, associated, in turn, with masculinity and enlightenment (Dijkstra 340). Even though there are no women in M.R. James's stories, all his ghosts are under the influence of the moon, and hence, feminised. The female is thus present in M.R. James's stories, albeit invisible, like a ghost. Moreover, the main source of panic for the majority of the male scholars is their disgust and rejection of physical contact. Therefore, sex or intimate touch is at the core of the protagonists' animalisation. Given that the body is feared and rejected on the grounds of its animality, these stories view the human subject from an ecophobic perspective. Nevertheless, it is precisely through fear of the animal that the hybrid ghost manages to reduce characters to their most animalistic and instinctual behaviour.

Regarding the phenomenon of influence, among all of M.R. James's stories, it is in 'Casting the Runes' where it is more directly addressed. Influence is represented as a one-way phenomenon in which the subject's personality is unilaterally invaded. Although not directly through fear, at least at the beginning, Dunning experiences the sensation of having been "robbed of all initiative" to the point of wondering whether he is under "hypnotic suggestion" (James 153; 148). This eliminates any responsibility on the part of the scholars, since the success of the ghost's influence does not require any invitation from the subject's part, who is defenceless against the influential spell. This one-way portrayal of influence facilitates the protagonists' return to normalcy once the threat is handled. When the object from the past has been returned to the place it belongs, the

⁹⁹ The moon is very present in many of M.R. James's stories. In 'The Mezzotint' not only does a creature appear in the painting, but also a full moon. In 'Oh, Whistle', the moon is present both in Parkins' visions as well as on the night he is confronted by the linen creature. Moreover, in 'Casting the Runes', John Harrington is sent a picture that resembles Parkin's illusions, as they also include "a moonlit road and a man walking along it, followed by an awful demon creature" (James 153).

protagonists resume their surveillance and enlightened perspectives on life as if nothing happened. Yet, they can never be freed from a certain residual nervousness.

Contrary to all of M.R. James's protagonists and also Duke Robert, Spiridion Trepka does not experience fear of touch or intimacy, instead, he longs for Medea's touch. At the beginning, when he starts seeing the ghost of Medea, he reacts in a way similar to M.R. James's scholars, and fears for his mental sanity, feeling "as if some danger pursued [him]" (63). He initially associates imagination with madness, and explains the ghost as a hallucination. "What a fool I am!" he exclaims, and looks for logical explanations for his visions, concluding that he must be "the victim of a hoax" (64-65). However, when he receives a letter presumably by Medea Da Carpi herself, he decides to follow its instructions and visit San Giovanni Decollato's church. It is at the church that Trepka starts to perceive the presence of ghosts, not only by means of sight, but through all of his senses progressively. The more reliability he concedes on his body and imagination, the more senses become available for him with which to perceive the ghost. He is then able, not only to see the ghosts, but also to hear their voices and the music they play on the church's organ.

Confused, he wonders whether he should trust his senses or his reason, "is it a delusion?", "Am I mad? Or are there really ghosts?" (Lee 68; 65). The ghost forces Trepka to question the validity of sight and reason. Explaining the ghost as a hallucination reduces sight to being another unreliable bodily sense, like hearing. Moreover, acknowledging one's hallucinations reveals that the human mind is also irrational and capable of producing deceiving information. Hence, 'Amour Dure' dismantles the fallacy of the human subject as a superior being capable of delivering completely rational and objective judgements. In fact, by offering two different portrayals of the same woman, Medea, the story reveals the impossibility of reaching consensus on anybody's identity. In other words, no construction or conclusion made by a human subject is ever without a certain degree of bias. Finally, this story also reveals that repressing the body, or animal within, does not increase the subject's rationality or humanity, since all characters in this story are equally liable to experience irrationality, fear and desire.

Despite his initial worry about his sanity, Trepka admits to contemplating the idea of Medea's ghosts "not with horror", but with an unspeakable but "delicious" feeling (69). This lack of fear towards his animal desires is what leads Trepka to choose to trust his

senses over his reason. “I can no longer doubt my senses. Why should I?”, he claims (69). From that moment on, Spiridion becomes able, not only to see and hear the ghostly presences, but also to smell and touch them:

A Hallucination? Why, I saw her, as I see this paper that I write upon [...]. Why, I heard the rustle of her skirts, I smelt the scent of her hair, I raised the curtain which was shaking from her touch. Again I missed her. But this time [...] I found upon the church steps a rose [...] – I felt it, smelt it; a rose, a real, living rose, dark red and only just plucked. (69-70)

Medea cannot be a hallucination since he has not only seen her, but also heard, smelt, and almost touched her. Moreover, she leaves a “real, living rose” behind that Trepka kisses, further confirming the corporeal reality of Medea (Lee 70).

Guided by his newly acquired trust in his senses, Trepka argues for the existence of ghosts:

Those pedants say that the dead are dead, the past is past. For them, yes; but why for me? – Why for a man who loves, who is consumed with the love of a woman? [...] why should she not return to the earth, if she knows that it contains a man who thinks of, desires, only her? (69)

He distinguishes himself from the ecophobic pedants who neglect and disregard their past and bodily senses, and for whom ghosts, love and desire are unworthy pursuits. Yet, Trepka also distinguishes himself from hedonists, stating that he is neither satisfied with “the life of the intellect” nor “the life of the senses” (71). He seems to argue for an embodied perspective in which both reason and the senses are just as recognised and integrated as other equally worthy aspects of the modern subject’s identity. In fact, for Trepka, the past and the senses are not a site of horror: “why should the present [reason and enlightenment] be right and the past [animality and imagination] wrong?” he asks (71). He regards the people who lived three hundred years ago to be of “as delicate fibre, of as keen reason” as modern men (Lee 71). Spiridion Trepka represents, hence, a major break from M.R. James’s scholars and their troubled relationship with animality, the past and their bodies. His statements undermine the concept of progress and the idea of degeneration, consequently dismantling the supposed superiority of the present over the past, and the human over the animal.

During the process of investigating about Medea, Trepka turns into another Nietzschean or embodied subject like her. He, first, gives his body the legitimacy to interpret the world, allowing it a place in the composition of the subject’s conscience or identity (Valls 21). This helps him recognise that the fate for which his soul “has been

striving” is to love a dead woman, Medea. Not only does he acknowledge his animal desires, but also reclaims his right to follow them in spite of the consequences and of people’s opinions, exclaiming “but if madness means the happiness of one’s life, what of it?” (Lee 71-72). Assuming the potential consequences of his love for Medea also involves accepting that being another server and lover of Medea might cost him his life.¹⁰⁰ Trepka is therefore also exercising Nietzsche’s ‘amor fati’, and confirming his transformation into an *overman* since he accepts that loving a woman such as Medea entails submerging into an abyss of both pleasurable and painful experiences (Valls 183).

But what does death stand for in this story? “Is not [Medea] also dead”, as Trepka points out? (Lee 73). According to Vicinus, death in ‘Amour Dure’ represents the union of two people, that is, the act of sexual intercourse or “la petite mort” (610). Trepka both fears and desires the act of merging with Medea because it would also lead to the dissolution of his individuality (Vicinus 611). I further support this equivalency of death with sex in ‘Amour Dure’ based on the fact that Trepka is found stabbed in the heart. I have analysed similar metaphors in several of the *fin de siècle* narratives in this thesis, all of which consistently read as symbols of penetrative intercourse.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Trepka’s death by stabbing identifies him as a victim of masculine, penetrative sex. Another clue in the narrative that supports this reading are the warnings uttered by Medea’s past lovers. When Trepka is on his way to destroy Duke Robert’s effigy and win Medea’s heart, he is interrupted by the ghosts of her past lovers whose words seem to be spiteful comments fuelled by jealousy rather than warnings. For instance, Prinzivalle degli Ordelauffi cries: “You shall not pass! [...] you shall not have her! She is mine, and mine alone” (Lee 75). Medea’s past lovers seem, therefore, worried that she might grant her favour to Trepka, which further corroborates the hypothesis of death as sex in ‘Amour Dure’.

The words of Medea’s ex-lovers do not stop Trepka, who, after liberating Duke Robert’s soul from its hiding place, goes back to his room and awaits Medea’s arrival with a beating heart. His attitude recalls Jonathan Harker’s pleasurable anticipation to the bite of the female vampires in *Dracula*. The difference between the two is that Trepka assumes the consequences that following his animal desires may have, instead of blaming

¹⁰⁰ “All had to die, I shall die also” (Lee 73)

¹⁰¹ In *Dracula*, there is a scene in which Arthur drives “deeper and deeper [a] merciful bearing stake” into Lucy’s bleeding heart (Stoker 192). Christopher Craft reads Lucy’s death by stake as a representation of the necessary therapeutic penetrations that would put an end to her unnatural behaviour (Craft 454). Moreover, Zaffirino’s beautiful voice is also felt by Magnus as a knife through the heart, and in ‘The Great God Pan’ Raymond introduces Mary to Pan by penetrating her skull with a surgical blade.

his desires on an external other, a temptress. In fact, Trepka declares, “should anything happen this night to me, Spiridion Trepka, no one but myself is to be held...” responsible (Lee 76). This is also the key difference that allows Magnus to live after having been penetrated by Zaffirino’s voice. Unlike Trepka, Magnus is unable to succumb and accept his animal side, and thus he resists merging with the ghost. His inability to accept his desires for Zaffirino as legitimate and human prevents Magnus from embracing his and other’s hybrid identity. As a consequence, instead of dying and becoming a ghost, Magnus is “wasted by a strange and deadly disease” that fills his head “with music which is certainly by [him]”, but which he despises and abhors (Lee 181). In other words, this disease is ecophobia and self-hatred. Therefore, against Vicinus’s interpretation of Trepka’s death as a warning of the destructive dangers of physical and animal passion, I read it as a metaphor of his identity transformation as a result of the union with Medea (613). Choosing to live life as a human-animal subject, Trepka becomes a ghost, a hybrid, constantly hovering between past and present. However, he is neither afraid nor regretful since, according to him, adopting this new identity meant “the happiness of [his] life” (Lee 72).

‘Amour Dure’ presents a very different portrayal of influence and degeneration than do James’s stories. Medea influences Trepka by means of desire rather than fear, a desire that admittedly stems from Trepka himself. Secondly, contact with the ghost does not lead to degeneration, only a change of identity. Instead, it is fear and ecophobia that lead characters to madness and degeneration. This is Duke Robert’s case, as his creeping anxiety and obsession with Medea is what drives him to the mutilation of his own identity by separating his soul from his body. Spiridion Trepka is the only protagonist among all the ghost stories analysed who does not react in fear and rejection when being confronted with his animal, sexual self. Instead, he accepts his animality and assumes the hybridising consequences that embracing it may bring.

3.2 Conclusion: Hybrid Ghosts for a Hybrid Present

M.R. James and Lee’s approaches to identity could not be more disparate. On the one hand, M.R. James’s protagonists are scholars and antiquarians, and as such, supporters of sight and reason as the epistemological tools to produce objective knowledge. These characters attempt to prove the existence of the ghost through visual and intellectual proof. In ‘The Mezzotint’, for instance, exhaustive reports and pictures are used to demonstrate that the painting is changing. Moreover, the supernatural hybrid’s

features are read through a Lombrosian lens by which their animal aspect is regarded as synonymous to their non-humanity.

This accreditation of sight also leads to a Cartesian conception of identity. These scholars considered that their soul or mind is what constitutes their humanity or identity, whereas their bodies are a dangerous source of animal desires in constant need of policing. Bodily senses are indeed portrayed as unreliable in these stories. Yet, the irruption of the ghost at night entails an annulment of reason that leaves characters dependent on their bodily senses. In order to overcome the fear emanating from self-ecophobia, the tangibility of the ghost needs to be determined. This way, scholars are capable of preserving their surveillance and Cartesian beliefs. Once the supernatural is revealed as real, sight's privilege is restored. This allows for the imprisonment of the hybrid ghost in the relics of the past where it belongs. Similarly, the animal within is also repressed, although characters are never able to overcome the eerie ecophobic feeling that the knowledge of their own animality provokes.

Vernon Lee's ghost stories portray this alienation towards one's animal desires as the true cause of degeneration. Repression of one's body and senses is what leads to a lack of self-recognition and empathy in Lee's characters. Their unsympathetic approach to their sitters incapacitates them to finish their works of art. This is the reason why the unnamed narrator in 'Oke of Okehurst' cannot finish his portrait of Alice Oke, since he never truly understands her. Critics have interpreted Lee's criticism of her narrators' surveillance and biased approaches to their sitters as a veiled critique toward Walter Pater's Aestheticism. Lee was conscious of the movement's detached, passive, and so "flawed version of contemplation"; flawed because it did not acknowledge the, usually female, model's subjectivity (Smith and Helfand 97).

Against this masculine Aestheticism, Lee proposes a female version, based on empathy (Denisoff, "The Productivist Ethos" 75). This empathic version of Aestheticism is represented in her ghost stories in the relationship between Alice Oke and her ancestress, and Trepka and Medea. Alice and Trepka are the only characters able to adopt a hybrid, embodied perspective when approaching the hybrid other. They attempt to understand the hybrid ghosts' feelings and motives by means of sympathy and imagination rather than by dissecting stigmata and visual signifiers. Hence, their

perspective allows them to perceive the invisible side to personality that neither textual nor pictorial portraiture could capture.

In M.R. James's stories, imagination is instead portrayed as the creator of monsters. It is connected to the night, the annulment of reason, and the rise of the rest of the body's senses. In other words, imagination and the body are presented as opposed to rationality and humanity, and thus labelled as animal. For instance, hearing is portrayed in several of these ghost stories as connected to imagination, and so, evocative of hallucinatory images. Curiously, this is also the case of Lee's Magnus in 'A Wicked Voice'. The musician blames his hybridisation on the hallucinatory voice of the castrato Zaffirino. Nevertheless, Lee's spectacle-like story manages to reveal the narrator's contradictions. Despite Magnus's claims of disgust toward the singer, he finally admits that his voice is what he "cared most for in all the wide world" (Lee 179).

Touch, physical intimacy or sex is present in some of the stories too. M.R. James's protagonists, especially Parkins, Dunning and Somerton, are extremely repulsed by any unwanted physical contact. Touch is presented in James's stories as the most terrifying and disgusting of the bodily senses. The repetition of certain imagery, such as the blind introduction of these scholar's arms into unknown and damp holes suggests that sexual contact, and female sexuality specifically, is at the core of these ghosts' animality. Whereas for James's characters being touched by the ghost is a source of fear, Lee's Spiridion Trepka longs for Medea's embrace. Trepka is in fact the only character in this chapter able to evolve and abandon his initial surveillance and Cartesian perspective for a spectacle, proto-ecocritical one. Not only is he aware and accepting of his animal desires, but he is also open to the consequences that giving free rein to his animality may have towards his identity. In other words, he is willing to die as Spiridion Trepka and assume a new ghostly and hybrid identity.¹⁰²

Inducing fear is the original intention of M.R. James's stories, and it is through fear that the hybrid ghost manages to spread its regressive influence among modern scholars. All of James's erudites become screaming beasts when blinded by the irrational forces of fear. Although it suggests that animality lurks even within the most rational of scholars, fear is also a powerful tool for the preservation of established surveillance and Cartesian

¹⁰² Death has been used as symbol of transformation and change in the representational arts, as Eduardo Valls explains in *Dueños del tiempo y del espanto* (189).

morality. Ecophobia and self-ecophobia is ultimately what triggers people to self-police their own body and senses in order to keep the animal within at bay. Moreover, fear presents a portrayal of influence as all-powerful and imposed, liberating the subject from any responsibility. On the other hand, in Lee's narratives, the success of influence relies on a certain degree of invitation on the subject's part. For instance, despite his many attempts at influencing Alice, the unnamed narrator in 'Oke of Okehurst' is only able to get to Alice when he mentions a topic which is already of interest to her. Similarly, although Magnus constantly blames the ghost of Zaffirino for his degeneration, the narrative shows that it is his self-ecophobia that propels his mental degeneration. Hence, Lee's spectacle narratives manage to show the unreliability of their narrators, revealing their active role in their or others' downfall.

These narratives' styles and portrayals of identity are determined by their visual approach. The way identity is presented is connected to the stories' perspective on sight, reason and rest of the senses as either reliable or unreliable epistemological means. The endings to the ghost stories further confirm their alliance with either a surveillance or spectacle approach. In James's tales, the external and corporeal existence of the supernatural is confirmed. This allows the characters to easily repel the degenerating threat since all they have to do is return and repress the animal creature in the past where it belongs. Lee's endings, on the other hand, are plagued with uncertainties. The ghost's existence is never confirmed, leaving the reader hesitant whether to believe in the ghost's tangibility or explain it as a product of the characters' overworked brain. In Lee's works, the modern subject is portrayed as necessarily hybrid and dependant on both their mind and their body. In sum, while in James's texts, the message is that the past should be repressed and left behind in order for progress to triumph, Lee's stories show that repression is precisely the cause of degeneration (Hay 99). Her ghost stories present a reality in which animality cannot be left behind because it does not belong in the 'past', since past and present coexist. Hence, instead of arguing for repression, her stories show that only by accepting and acknowledging the contemporaneity of the past and the hybridity of the human identity will the future stagnation of society be avoided.

4. Doubles: The Animal Within

After analysing the overtly external and foreign monster, the uncomfortable hybrid ancestor, the Greek god, and the eerie invisible ghost, the focus is now on the doppelgänger or double, which constitutes the complete internalisation of the animal by the modern subject. The two double figures analysed here illustrate the gradual change from the external and foreign monsters of the first chapters, to this chapter's internal and insider hybrids. To begin with, both Jekyll/Hyde and Dorian Gray are doubtlessly human, even if they are, at some point, described as partly or completely atavistic. Not only are they human, but they belong to the upper class, since Dorian is an aristocrat and Jekyll a doctor. They suggest the possibility that the reminders of western civilisation's atavistic past did not need to haunt civilised British subjects in the form of monsters, ghosts or Greek gods, but they could also arise from within their own minds and bodies. In fact, both stories take place in London, which was the capital of the so-called most advanced of nations. Hence, the threat in these novels is not displaced onto a foreign or fictional land, but it is situated within the Victorian social body. The hybrid other is portrayed as crawling from within the body of the individual subject and the body of society as a whole. These doubles take hold of the host's body and mind, rather than only ridding them of their reason like ghosts and gods did. In sum, the animal inner double constitutes the complete hybridisation of the subject, the integration of the animal within the human. As such, their presence is far more threatening than any hybrid creature analysed thus far.

Doubles have always been a recurrent literary archetype, "from antiquity [...] through the biblical tradition [...], the Middle Ages [...], the Renaissance" and Romanticism (Ferrer-Medina 67). They have therefore received considerable critical attention, which has been particularly tied to psychology. Early psychoanalytic approaches, such as Tucker's, read the double as a figure that problematizes the relationship of "the self to the self", seeing a projection of the subject's soul or "shadow" in the doppelgänger (Introduction). In fact, as Vardoulakis states, the very origin of the word "doppelgänger" refers to the relationship and mirroring between individuals and their subjectivity (3). Throughout literary criticism, doubles have generally been interpreted as a materialisation of a character's subjectivity: a distorted reflection of an unknown or unacknowledged side to their identity (4). Thus, doubles show the impossibility of completely knowing oneself, let alone others, since they defy the limits of identity and reveal identity as multiple, or at least, dual (Vardoulakis 10).

In the context of *fin de siècle*, the double tends to be the embodiment of the other, that which is different to the norm; the civilised British subject (Ballesteros 256).¹⁰³ In other words, it stands for the “primitive type” that might potentially lay dormant within Victorian society (Dryden 9). At a social level, this monstrous double was usually identified with the urban poor, who were held as living proof of the degenerative effects of modernity and mass industrialisation (Dryden 9). The urban lower class was frequently used as illustrations of Nordau’s weaker subjects whose brain centres had not been able to process all of the changes brought about by the industrial and demographic revolutions and had consequently degenerated into lesser humans, or human-animal creatures (Mosse xxi). However, this chapter’s doppelgängers reveal that “the beast within” had the potential to be lurking inside every member of society, regardless of their social class. In sum, these two *fin de siècle* doubles present animality as taking over civilisation from within.

This concept of identity as divided into animal and purely human sides was even supported by contemporary scientific theories. This is the case of the Dual-Brain Theory, which argued that the right and left hemisphere of the brain worked independently so that, in case of brain damage, they could substitute one another. Not surprisingly, the functions and characteristics of each hemisphere were assigned following the principle of binary opposition, so that “the left brain was seen as the logical seat of reason and linguistic ability, contrasting with the emotional right brain”. This led to the association of the left-brain with culture, reason, “masculinity, whiteness, and civilization”, and the right brain with nature, femininity, and the person’s animal “emotions” and “instincts” (Stiles 884-85). As is the case with all binary oppositions, the relationship between the hemispheres was hierarchical, so that the left/cultured brain was considered superior to the right/savage brain.

The Dual-Brain Theory gave Victorian scientists more “objective” evidence to defend the biological inferiority of “women, savages, children, criminals, and the insane”, arguing that they all presented a dominating right brain that overpowered “the rational activities of the left brain” (Stiles 885-86). There were indeed Lombrosian-inspired

¹⁰³ “El doble surge como miedo a la alteridad. a lo otro, a lo distinto y diferente. Las formas de dicha alteridad se convierten en la gran pesadilla del imperio y de la gran ciudad industrial. Con el fin de siglo, el hecho de que “el sueño de la razón produce monstruos” se convierte en un axioma implícitamente asumido por los escritores de ámbito británico” (Ballesteros 256).

neurological theorists who claimed that the subject's degeneracy could be determined by observing their brain's size and shape. Hence, the presence of a larger right hemisphere was regarded as another decisive innate characteristic of the born criminal (886).¹⁰⁴ Despite presenting the right brain as alien and animal, The Dual-Brain Theory reveals the unavoidable presence of animal-like traits within every single human subject, including the very scientists and doctors who developed the theory.

At the end of the nineteenth century, this right-brain atavistic double is made to stand for the modern subject's sexual, primal or, in other words, bodily desires and appetite. The threat that the inner double poses is thus much more acute than that of the monster, the god or the ghost, since, this time, it is from within that the animal other has the potential to nullify or overpower the civilised subject (Dryden 9-10). Similar to the rest of the hybrids analysed, the animal within needs to be controlled, subjugated or even extirpated from the subject's identity in order to thwart its threat. The eventual death of one of the two identities is, in fact, a common trope within doppelgänger literature, and one that reveals the narrative's positioning with respect to the dichotomy of culture/nature. The death of one of the doubles implies a certain degree of "moral judgement", since it reveals which half the narrative portrays as the superior one: the human or the animal, the male or the female, the left or the right part of the brain (Ferrer-Medina 74-5).

Doubles would appear to support a Cartesian concept of human identity as they are split it into a rational self and an animal one. However, by doing so, they also question the validity of the enlightened concept of the human subject as a rational being. It is thus a difficult task to confine the archetype of the doppelgänger within a surveillance or a spectacle regime. Moreover, as this thesis has proven with the analysis of the monster, the ghost and the pagan god, hybrid creatures are flexible and bendable archetypes whose ultimate interpretation actually relies on each narrative's take on the visibility of vice and the connotations assigned to animality. Is the animal within approached from a place of fear and rejection, or acceptance and acknowledgement? Which side to the character's

¹⁰⁴ Stiles shares the illustrations of an article published in 1882, in *Brain: A Journal of Neurology*, where the author, David Ferrier, explains the behaviour of a female infanticide based on the shape of her brain. In fact, in the article, entitled "The Brain of a Criminal Lunatic", readers could find the image of the woman's brain that showed an undeveloped left hemisphere, which was missing the frontal lobe, paired with an "over-enlarged right brain" (Stiles 886-87).

identity dies at the end? Does the narrative condone the rational, human side or the animal, instinctual one?

In fact, in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* neither double survives, which further complicates the reading of these narratives' approach to the division of nature and culture. In order to accurately answer these and other questions, this chapter studies the stories' visual approach and stylistic choices in order to determine the extent to which they are relevant when portraying the double. Furthermore, this chapter also analyses the way the animal double is portrayed in order to determine whether these narratives adopt an ecophobic and surveillance approach, or a spectacle and embodied one. Finally, the human half and the rest of the normative characters will be analysed and contrasted with the animal doppelgänger to see what characteristics each narrative establishes as key factors to distinguish the animal from the human subject. This last chapter aims to demonstrate that it is possible to find a proto-ecocritical representation of the animal double within *fin de siècle* Gothic fiction. After all, as Ferrer-Medina states, the Culture/Nature and Animal/Human distinctions are false binaries and constructed concepts, since as Darwin's treatises already suggested, and new ecological sciences later confirmed, "the human element coincides with the animal" (67).

4.1 Visual approach: Objective Science versus Subjective Art in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

Although dealt with in the last chapter, Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are two of the earliest stories to be published among those analysed in this thesis: 1886, and 1890 respectively. It is curious, thus, how these two early *fin de siècle* Gothic monsters are more explicitly internal than later ones. This shift from insider, national monsters to alien and foreign ones was motivated by a general increase in fears regarding a potential degeneration of Western civilisation towards the end of the nineteenth century (Botting 11-13). Due to this imminent devolution, the identification of the degenerate individual became more pressing, eventually leading to the creation of overtly animal hybrids in fiction (Hurley, *The Gothic Body* 4).

One of the key events that contributed to fuelling fears of degeneration, especially with regard to the invisibility of vice and the role of external influence, were the infamous Queensberry Trials. In 1895 Oscar Wilde was judged and condemned for acts of "gross

indecenty” with other males. The trials were initially instigated by Wilde himself in an attempt to stop the Marquess of Queensberry, father of Lord Alfred Douglas, from accusing him of “posing as a sodomite” (Salamensky 134-136). However, during the trials, his literary and personal writings, including fragments from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, were used as proof of his deviant, threatening behaviour (Foldy 2). This event, together with the publication of Nordau’s *Degeneration* that same year, greatly affected the way literature, and specifically Decadent and Aesthetic works, were received afterward (Foldy 70).¹⁰⁵ Fears about an invisible kind of moral corruption that undermined societal conventions from within fed controversies about the reliability of sight, and the extent to which criminality could be physically detected (Karschay 176; 213). Most novels and short stories analysed in this text were published after 1895,¹⁰⁶ except for Vernon Lee’s ghost stories, which were published in 1890 in the collection *Hauntings: Fantastic Stories*,¹⁰⁷ and *The Great God Pan*, which was published in 1894. Wilde’s public downfall could have therefore influenced some of the later portrayals of Gothic hybridity analysed in this thesis. In fact, there is an actual critical consensus on the connections between Wilde’s fate, Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) and Lee’s *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* (1896) (Schaffer 472; Stetz 113).¹⁰⁸

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* are dealt with last, despite their earlier publications because this thesis is organised thematically rather than

¹⁰⁵ “Wilde’s trial for homosexuality in 1895 [...] created a moral panic that inaugurated a period of censorship affecting both advanced women and homosexuals” (Showalter 171).

¹⁰⁶ *The Beetle* was published the same year as *Dracula*, 1897 (Ortiz-Robles 17). M.R. James’s “Canon Alberic”, “The Mezzotint”, “Oh, Whistle” and “The Treasure of Abbot Thomas” were all published within *Ghosts Stories of an Antiquary* in 1904, although “Canon Alberic’s Scrap-Book” had already been published in 1895. “Casting the Runes” was published even later, in 1911, in the collection *More Ghost Stories of an Antiquary* (Cox i-xxxii).

¹⁰⁷ Most of them had already been individually published before: “Amour Dure” (1887), “Oke of Okehurst” (1886), “A Wicked Voice” (1887) (Maxwell and Pulham).

¹⁰⁸ Both Schaffer and Auerbach maintain that there exists a link between *Dracula*’s and Wilde’s fate (Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* 83). For instance, Schaffer argues that despite Stoker’s ongoing work on the novel, it was not until August 1895, after the trials, that he started writing in a sudden “flow of vivid inspiration” the first Transylvanian passages of the novel (Schaffer 472). In fact, Wilde and Stoker knew each other personally through their connection to theatre, and because they both courted the same woman, Florence Balcome, who finally married Stoker (Auerbach and Skal ix-xiii).

As for *Prince Alberic*, Stetz claims that the story seems constructed as an allegory addressing Oscar Wilde’s conviction and imprisonment (113). Furthermore, Lee published her story in the *Yellow Book*, which was the avant-garde quarterly in which Wilde often published himself, and the journal in which several other authors covertly demonstrated their sympathy with Wilde’s plight. Finally, Lee’s story is full of Wildean tropes, and references to his texts, such as the allusion to *Salomé* codified in Lee’s usage of moon imagery (Stetz 116-17).

chronologically. As established in the introduction, hybrid creatures have been arranged from less to more threatening and from more to less visible, since the more internal the animal other is, the scarier it becomes. Ultimately, however, it is the narratives' take on hybridity that determines their visual rendition of the featured hybrid creature. *A priori*, it would seem that the double should ally with a spectacle approach to hybridity. Yet, Stevenson and Wilde's visual and stylistic choices need to be considered first in order to accurately determine whether they portray animality from an ecophobic or a sympathetic and embodied perspective.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde resembles other stories analysed such as *Dracula*, *The Beetle* or M.R. James's ghost stories, given that Mr Hyde's identity is also dissected by several prestigious members of society. The main 'detective-like' character is Mr Utterson, a lawyer who, thanks to Mr Enfield, a *flâneur*, and Dr Lanyon, finally discovers the disturbing truth about Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde's relationship. The inclusion of upper-class characters, especially lawyers and doctors responds to a strategy to imbue the narrative with veracity, given the reliability associated with these professional men. In fact, the trustworthiness of medico-juridical discourses relied on "the authoritative gaze" of these professional men, given that doctors' and lawyers' sight was considered objective on the grounds of their scientific and enlightened endeavours. In fact, it is through their privileged "gaze" that people's identities were dissected and classified into criminal and normative subjects (Rago 277).

In Stevenson's novella, all characters, especially Utterson, express their reliance on sight to "lighten" up the mystery:

If he could but once set eyes on him, he thought the mystery would lighten and perhaps roll altogether away, as was the habit of mysterious things when well examined. He might see a reason for his friend's strange preference or bondage (call it which you please), and even for the startling clauses of the will. (Stevenson 10)

Utterson believes that by "setting eyes" on Mr Hyde, the mystery of Jekyll bequeathing everything to Hyde would be solved. Utterson's trust in his own sight is such that he sets himself out to gathering all the clues necessary to unveil Hyde's identity: "If he be Mr Hyde [...] I shall be Mr Seek", he declares (10). Dr Lanyon similarly trusts his own medical judgement enough to confidently claim that Jekyll's strange behaviour was most certainly due to some kind of "cerebral disease" (38). That is, not only do they use their sight, but also their reason to look for "natural, reasonable explanations" for Jekyll's case (Reid 80). Moreover, the narrative also includes "wills, letters, chemical formulae, bank

drafts”, and some of these professional men’s first personal accounts of the witnessed events as final proof of the authenticity of the story (Arata 50). Hence, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* also reflects the power that doctors and lawyers had to transform their supposedly unbiased observations into a written and binding form, such as legal and medical treatises.

Not only do these characters privilege reason and visibility, they also regard imagination as inferior and associate it with “the gross darkness of the night” (Stevenson 9). In fact, there are recurrent metaphors of light and darkness displayed throughout the narrative: whereas light and day are associated with reason, propriety and the West side of London, darkness and night are connected to the East End and the illicit and sensory-driven activities that were usually carried out there (Ascari 134). This going east, going dark is also captured in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* when Dorian notices how “the gas-lamps grew fewer and the streets more narrow and gloomy” as he advances towards the east (Wilde 146). However, the fragment that best illustrates the intentional darkness placed upon the east is when “the dismal quarter of Soho” where Hyde lives, is purposefully covered by a “chocolate-coloured” fog in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, submerging the controversial neighbourhood in darkness despite it being nine in the morning (Stevenson 17). Given the post-Darwinian context of these metaphors, light and darkness not only marked a difference between morality and immorality, but they “also became the emblem of a different and no less powerful struggle – that between civilisation and the primitive” (Ascari 133-34). At first sight, therefore, it would seem that *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Picture*, support the association of civilisation and reason with sight and light, and imagination and the senses with darkness and animality. However, this strategic darkness over the east of the city can also respond to a spectacular approach to identity, since it draws attention towards an unspeakable side to civilised society. After all, this battle between civilisation and animality was taking place at the heart of the largest of civilised empires (Ascari 134).

Moreover, despite its use of authentic documents as narrative resources, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* also draws attention towards their possible inauthenticity. Arata draws attention toward the text’s concern with forgery and counterfeited writings, which start with Hyde’s suspicious check, following with Jekyll’s will, and ending with the letter Hyde leaves Jekyll after Carew’s murder announcing his disappearance (50). Utterson is indeed outraged when Mr Guest, a clerk and “a great student and critic of handwriting” (21), helps him discover that Hyde’s note has been potentially written by Jekyll himself.

This situation questions the reliability and objectivity of legal and medical documents, since it reveals that authoritative figures, such as doctors, are also capable of lying and counterfeiting for their own benefit. Hence, even though this novel makes use of surveillance-like strategies by including respectable characters and their first-hand written documents, it also questions their reliability by revealing the characters' biases and subjectivity.

In brief, although the narrative seems to ally with a surveillance approach, given its use of typically realist devices, the more the story advances, the more the reader becomes aware of its characters' contradictions, of the double meaning of its metaphors of darkness and light and of the unreliability of 'objective' documents. After all, this story is about Mr Utterson's continuous attempts at denying Hyde the economic and social rights that inheriting Jekyll's fortune would grant him. Rights that, as the ending of the story reveals, already belonged to him given that Jekyll and Hyde were the same person. Hence, what lawyers and doctors are doing in this story is to attempt to police and contain Jekyll's "internal animal": Hyde (Ortiz-Robles 20). Stevenson's narrative neither adopts a true realist and surveillance approach nor a spectacle one, which complicates the determination of whether this story sides with doctors and lawyers or with the double.¹⁰⁹

On the other hand, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s alliance with an aesthetic and anti-surveillance approach is clearly established from the beginning. To start with, none of the characters are male professionals, but artists, like Basil Hallward, or idle aristocrats such as Dorian and Henry Wotton. Their perspectives are certain to be different from *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*'s lawyers and doctors. In fact, the novel's preface already goes against ocular epistemology by claiming that "all art is at once surface and symbol", and that those "who go beneath the surface [and] those who read the symbol [need] do so at their peril" since "it is the Spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors" (Wilde 3). In other words, from the beginning, this aesthetic and decadent short novel establishes that 'sin' rests not in the object of contemplation, but in the eye and prejudiced mind of the observer who "see[s] the object as in itself it really is not" (Wilde, CA 986).

Not only does *The Picture of Dorian Gray*'s question the reliability of ocular epistemology, but it also portrays the general "mist", the darkness that surrounds all

¹⁰⁹ This ambivalence has been indeed identified as a recurrent aspect of Stevenson's fictional and non-fictional production, especially with regards to the multifaceted nature of identity (Reid 5; 55-56).

bourgeoning characters as positive and necessary (142). “Secrecy”, in Basil’s words, is the only thing that makes “modern life mysterious or marvellous” (Wilde 7). This resembles Vernon Lee’s own approach to ghostly identities, since she also claims that in order to haunt and delight, ghosts should “remain enwrapped in mystery” (Lee 37). In other words, given the tendency to judge and catalogue people according to their appearance, it seems that surrounding themselves with a fog of deception and secrecy is the only way that characters have to explore their individuality without risking their respectability.

Wilde’s rejection of “objective truths” has been noted by several critics, including Regenia Gagnier and Lawrence Danson (Danson 81; Regenia, “Wilde and the Victorians” 19). The latter says that Wilde’s use of aestheticism and decadence ultimately responds to an attempt to dismantle “the supposedly objective truths of science, economics [and] sociology”. In fact, in his critical essays, Wilde draws attention towards the artificiality of the constructs of the “natural” or “normal” subject, arguing that behaving according to these concepts is as much a pose as any other (Danson 86). Similarly, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Henry Wotton questions the objectivity of men in the “learned professions” by describing “the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man” as “a dreadful thing [...], all monsters and dust” (6). This statement implies that the minds of privileged men, such as Mr Utterson or Dr Lanyon were also inhabited by monsters, or in other words, fears, irrationality, and ultimately, animality (Wilde 12).

In fact, against the professional atmosphere in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Wilde’s novel focuses on the role of art, and its connection to subjectivity and the senses. The introductory paragraphs of the first chapter already emphasise the text’s aesthetic and decadent sympathies. The “odour of roses”, the “light summer wind”, and especially the “flame-like” laburnum described reminds of Walter Pater and his encouragement for artists to “burn always with this hard, gemlike flame” (Pater 189). Aestheticism went against the dominant utilitarian ideology of restraint and productivity, as it placed impressions and sensory experiences as worthy pursuits for self-development and progress (Denisoff, “Decadence and Aestheticism” 32). Similar to Pater, Henry Wotton encourages Dorian to “live” and “be always searching for new sensations” (Wilde 19). Contrary to Mr Utterson, Dr Lanyon, and even Jekyll’s constant attempts at containing Hyde, Henry Wotton seems to embrace the animal side to identity, not only in himself, but in others. It therefore seems that Wilde’s narrative follows a spectacle and

sympathetic approach to the animal hybrid. However, in order to confirm these initial hypotheses, it is necessary to analyse how Dorian Gray is portrayed by Basil and Henry, and compare it to how Hyde is described by Jekyll's friends. Ultimately, however, it is the narrative itself which, in adopting a spectacle or realist approach, dictates whether identity and hybridity are represented from a proto-ecocritical perspective or an ecophobic one.

4.2 The Animal Within: Mr Hyde and the Portrait

The way Hyde and Dorian Gray are perceived by the rest of the characters in these novels varies enormously. This is mainly due to the different nature of each *doppelgänger*: whereas Jekyll's animal side appears to have a body and mind of its own, Dorian's darker side is never granted a body. Yet, both doubles' animality is shown by means of atavistic stigmata, such as Hyde's ape-like stature or the portrait's vampire-reminiscent cruel and sensual mouth. Hence, both narratives seem to agree in establishing a connection between animality and degeneration. However, while Dorian is able to keep his decrepit soul a secret and walk around without raising any alarms, Jekyll's overtly animal side, Hyde, is received with a unanimous reaction of rejection and ecophobia by all of the characters he encounters.

The first one to deny Edward Hyde's humanity is Mr Enfield, who describes him as a Juggernaut, thus comparing Hyde to a pagan god. Particularly, the name Juggernaut references a celebration in which the image of the god Krishna is carried around in huge chariots under which believers throw themselves to be crushed (Middleton 225). This references Hyde trampling over a child at the beginning of the novel. By comparing the English gentleman to an Indian deity, Enfield is presenting him not only as non-human, but also as a foreign, external threat both in terms of race and of class. In fact, Hyde is also compared to women, animals and the devil himself in an attempt to mark him as "other", and ultimately, non-human. In fact, all characters coincide in pointing out his short stature, that some even call "dwarfish" or "troglydytic", which also marks him as an inferior, hominid-like creature (Stevenson 11-12; Ferrer-Medina 76). The connection between Hyde's physical appearance and animality is further reinforced by the detailed description of Hyde's hands. According to Jekyll himself, they are "lean, corded, knuckly", "of a dusky pallor" and covered by thick hair, and curiously bear a resemblance to Dracula's, which are also "coarse", pale and have "hairs" on the centre of the palm

(Stevenson 47; Stoker 24). Hairiness was among the characteristics which gave born criminals and degenerates away, inasmuch as it resembled animals, particularly apes or wolves. This, together with his short stature, pointed towards Hyde as a potential degenerate (Hurley, *The Gothic Body* 93).

Jekyll's description of Hyde's hands is, however, the only nuanced image of Hyde's physiognomy or appearance there is in the novel. Despite the many assertive claims that "the man [seemed] hardly human" (12), not a single character is capable of giving a detailed depiction of any of Hyde's features. For instance, Lanyon describes Hyde's face as being governed at the same time by a "remarkable combination of great muscular activity and great apparent debility of constitution" (39). Something similar happens with Mr Utterson, who regards Hyde's behaviour towards him as a "murderous mixture of timidity and boldness" (11-12). Such contradictory concepts juxtaposed against each other prevent the reader from clearly visualising Hyde's appearance and his behaviour. Therefore, in spite of the initial agreement with a surveillance approach, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* draws attention to the lack of actual visual proof that would allow Hyde to be labelled as hybrid.

In fact, all characters struggle to find the appropriate words to describe Hyde's appearance (Sanna 27). In Mr Enfield's words:

He is not easy to describe. There is something wrong with his appearance; something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinarily-looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can make no hand of it; I can't describe him. And it's not want of memory; for I declare that I can see him this moment. (7)

Despite claiming that "there was something wrong with his appearance", and that Hyde "must be deformed somewhere", Enfield is unable to point towards any specific stigmata. Hyde does not possess a bird-like nose, or protruding jaws or ears, nor is his forehead domed. Therefore, there is no visual, objective proof to classify him as degenerate or animal. Mr Enfield's inability to put Hyde's image into words is similar to the unnamed narrator in Lee's "Oke of Okehurst" and his failed attempt at finishing Alice's portrait. Both men struggle to find words to portray the hybrid even when they say that their image is fresh in their minds. Like Alice Oke, Hyde challenges the lawyers' and doctor's attempts at labelling him as animal, disrupting "the authoritative gaze" (Rago 277). *Dr*

Jekyll and Mr Hyde questions, thus, the reliability of a surveillance approach by challenging its faith in the power of sight to produce objective, accurate knowledge.

Physical appearance was not the only aspect taken into account when cataloguing a subject as atavistic or criminal, since people's behaviour was also under vigilance (Karschay 177). The way Hyde carries himself, and especially the way he speaks and interacts with the rest of the characters, is also used to prove his animality. For instance, Mr Utterson portrays Hyde as shrinking "back with a hissing intake of the breath" when he confronts him for the first time (11). This automatic reaction paints Hyde as possessing the instinctive reflexes of a threatened animal. Utterson also chooses to use the term "hiss" to describe the sound uttered by Hyde, a word more commonly used to define the sound emitted by certain animals. Humans' capacity to use articulated sounds, that is, language, was one of the key characteristics used to establish a clear hierarchical division between them, irrational animals, and us, rational ones (Buchanan 265). Hyde's grunting and snarling during this conversation, which he finishes with a "savage laugh", portrays him as some kind of atavistic human-animal creature incapable of proper human communication (11).

What ultimately marks Hyde as a degenerate is, however, the "vile life" he leads. There are rumours about his "callous and violent [...] cruelty", and yet, there are no specifications so as to what the majority of his misdeeds consist of (22). Only two of his supposed multiple felonies are known: trampling over a young girl and the murder of Carew. The nature of the rest of his terrible actions remains as mysterious as his appearance. Throughout the years, literary critics have consistently assigned sexual connotations to these unnamed misdeeds (Reid 99). In fact, Hyde stepping all over a female child in the middle of the night suggests the possibility that this assault is of a misogynistic and sexual nature (Gibson 176-179). This becomes even more plausible when contextualising the novel with the publication one year earlier of Stead's "The Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon" (1885), an article revealing that child prostitution was ultimately sustained by the demand of "members of the upper classes" (Dryden 52). Among the critics who read sexual deviance in Hyde's obscure actions, some, such as Showalter and Sanna, interpret the absence of women, and the silent and queer atmosphere around the character as codifying a reference to homosexuality (Sanna 36; Showalter 107).

On the other hand, Reid affirms that Stevenson had a “heterosexual rather than homosexual ‘deviance’” in mind when writing about Jekyll’s and Hyde’s relationship. She supports her claim by drawing attention to the novel’s manuscripts where Utterson suggests that Hyde was Jekyll’s illegitimate child, thus revealing Jekyll as having had a heterosexual, extramarital affair (99). With regard to the lack of female characters that some critics hold as evidence of a potential homosexual subtext, Stiles suggests that it could also respond to a strategy to draw attention to the patriarchal relationship between male doctors and female patients. As reflected in *The Great God Pan*, women were usually the subjects of medical experimentation. Stevenson’s story is, however, about a male doctor that experiments with himself, which makes Jekyll’s case *stranger* (Stiles 895). Moreover, women are not as absent from the narrative as it may seem. For instance, Sandison argues that there is a reference to prostitutes in the way the traders in Jekyll’s street are portrayed, since they are said to be displaying “their gains in coquetry; [...] with an air of invitation; like rows of smiling saleswomen” (Stevenson 4; Sandison 223-224). Soon after, there is another reference to female characters when Enfield describes the angered women that witnessed Hyde’s abuse of the little girl as “wild as harpies” (Stevenson 5).¹¹⁰ Although hardly present, women are catalogued early in this narrative as either sexual workers or beast-like creatures, controlled by their animal emotions. In other words, Hyde is not the only character who is victim of an ecophobic depiction, since all female subjects are also portrayed as animal-like.

In fact, despite the lack of actual female characters in the narrative, Hyde’s animality is constructed using the same strategies employed for the depiction of the *femme fatale*. Comparing male characters to women had a similar effect to comparing women to hybrid creatures, since female-like behaviour was indicative of the subject’s predominant right brain, that is, the emotional and animal half of the brain (Stiles 885). Hyde is represented as impulsive and lacking restraint when he is scared, angry or anxious. For instance, when he is about to be caught by Jekyll’s servant, Poole, he emits a “dismal screech [...] of mere animal terror” (33). Similarly, when he is waiting for the transformative drug, he “grates” his teeth convulsively, unable to hide his impatience (29; 40). He is also described as crying “like a woman or a lost soul”, which both connects crying or emotion with women, and points towards women – and Hyde – as being lost

¹¹⁰ Comparing women to mythological creatures was a common resource used to shape the image of the *femme fatale* of animal woman (Dijkstra 288).

souls (32). Finally, the way Hyde interacts with, and ultimately kills, Carew strongly loops back to the behaviour of the enraged harpies in the first chapter, who would have attacked Hyde if Mr Enfield did not prevent it.

...he broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the cane [...] like a madman. [...] Mr Hyde broke out all bounds [...]. And the next moment, with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot, and hailing down a storm of blows. (16)

Hysteria was usually medically linked to women, thus classifying women as inherently animal based on their biology. However, Hyde's disproportionate and irrational reaction shows that men were also capable of behaving like "madmen". In fact, Nordau did not distinguish between the sexes when diagnosing modern subjects with hysteria, since most of the people he 'diagnosed' were, in fact, men (Rago 281). Hyde is proof that male bourgeois society can also become infected with hysteria and degeneration.

What ultimately marks Hyde as non-human is the automatic response of disgust that he causes to those who come in contact with him. In Poole's words, Hyde's presence evokes a "cold and thin" feeling of disgust that originates from within "your marrow" (31). Its power increases if there is physical contact, such as when Dr Lanyon experiences an "icy pang along [his] blood" at Hyde's touch (39). Almost all gentlemen in the narrative experience this ecophobic reaction to Hyde. Despite being unable to pin down Hyde's exact deformity, Utterson suggest that what ultimately sets these men's ecophobic alarms off is the general "radiance of a foul soul" that transpires through Hyde's "clay continent" (12). The possession of a foul soul is met with an instinctive ecophobic reaction, as was the case in *Dracula* and *The Beetle*. Therefore, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* also establishes a connection between animality and the possession of an evil soul, and ecophobia and the possession of a human soul.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde presents ecophobia as an innate mechanism shared by all normative characters. Mr Enfield, for instance, justifies his irrational disgust for Hyde based on a doctor's reaction to him. Enfield observes that the "cut-and-dry apothecary" who tends to the trampled child also turns "sick and white with the desire to kill" Hyde (5). The fact that a serious, objective and restrained doctor shares his same reaction is enough proof for Mr Enfield that his ecophobia against Hyde is not irrational and subjective. Ecophobia's natural origin is later confirmed by Dr Lanyon who states that, although he first considered his disgust against Hyde to originate from "personal distaste", he later found "reason to believe the cause to lie much deeper in the nature of

man, and to turn on some nobler hinge that the principle of hatred” (39). In other words, he confirms that ecophobia, or the rejection of the animal other, responds to the possession of an inherent “noble hinge” located deep within “the nature of man”. Therefore, *Dracula* and *The Beetle*’s understanding of ecophobia as a human innate moral compass is backed by doctors in Stevenson’s narrative, and thus is established as an objective and verifiable fact. Once more, the privileged sight and reason of doctors is used to confer authority and veracity to the existence of a “nobler hinge” that warns against the dangers of a hybrid identity. Ecophobia is again established as the key element that allows the distinction between normative and healthy subjects and degenerate, animal ones.

At the same time, however, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* recognises that animality or degeneracy is an inside threat that might even raise from within one of the most respectable members of society, another doctor: Jekyll. The novel presents doctors as also capable of being moved by selfish and irrational purposes, which questions the reliability of medicine. Moreover, it also challenges the objectivity of sight since none of the characters are capable of producing an accurate and detailed description of Edward Hyde’s supposed animal stigmata. Despite the initial apparent subscription to an ecophobic and surveillance approach to the hybrid other, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* ends up revealing this perspective’s contradictions and deficiencies.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, there is not a single, unified approach to the double. Instead, Basil, Henry and the narrative itself portray Dorian from different visual angles. Contrary to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*’s premise that the hybrid subject’s foul soul always transpires through the body, Wilde’s novel portrays a hybrid of perfect physiognomy and beautiful appearance. Consequently, the general consensus among characters is that he must be a good-natured, simple lad. Dorian’s beautiful outer appearance initially blinds people to the existence of a darker, inner double, which is only visually reflected in the secretly changing portrait. This supposes a greater challenge to sight’s objectivity and the viability of a surveillance view since it reveals that the animal can move through society unnoticed. However, with time, some characters start to get suspicious about Dorian’s potential deviancy, including Basil. Yet, only the omniscient narrator and the reader are truly aware of Dorian’s gradual involvement in a lifestyle of sensory experimentation and crime, the nature of which is however never revealed.

Dorian's initial descriptions are all based on his appearance. The first to give an impression of Dorian is Basil, who sees him as a "new manner in art, an entirely new mode of style" thanks to which he can "now recreate life in a way that was hidden from [him] before" (11). Basil describes Dorian as a new "school" of art, the confirmation of "the harmony of soul and body" (11). Rather than a person, Dorian is, for Basil, assurance that adopting a surveillance approach would indeed unveil the mysteries of life and identity. In other words, he is confirmation that appearances do reveal the secrets of the observed subject. For instance, Basil claims that, by having Dorian nearby, he can better see the essence of what he is painting: "I saw in the plain woodland the wonder I had always looked for, and always missed" (11). Finally, he also applies a surveillance lens to Dorian because he assumes that the lad "has a simple and beautiful nature" given his youth and handsomeness (13). Interestingly, and despite defending the role of the body as the mirror of the soul, Basil also recognises the potential subjective nature of sight and perception. When Henry insists on meeting Dorian, Basil warns him that even though Dorian means everything to him, Henry "might see nothing in him" (11). This statement admits that the final interpretation of visual cues relies on the spectator rather than on the object of observation. This, therefore, suggests a certain criticism on Basil's part of a purely ocularcentric approach to identity.

However, the way Basil applies his theories about the union of soul and body onto Dorian reveals his adherence to a purely surveillance approach. Even after hearing disconcerting rumours about his young friend, Basil insists on preserving his concept of him as an immaculate individual because, according to the painter:

Sin is a thing that writes itself across a man's face. It cannot be concealed. [...] If a wretched man has a vice, it shows itself in the lines of his mouth, the droop of his eyelids, the moulding of his hands even. [...] But you, Dorian, with your pure, bright, innocent face, and your marvellous untroubled youth – I can't believe anything against you. (104)

Not only does Basil believe in the correlation between stigmata and degeneracy or vice, but he also believes in Dorian's innocence on the grounds of his "untroubled" beauty, which corroborates Basil's alliance with a "Lombrosian positivism" (Karschay 176). Moreover, even after Dorian has forced Basil to look at the portrait of his decrepit soul, Basil still refuses to recognise the presence of his original portrait in it: "it was some foul parody, some infamous, ignoble satire. He had never done that" (108). He is thus incapable of accepting the existence of a connection between the portrait and Dorian's

identity, or in other words, of admitting Dorian's potential for evil. Even when Basil observes his own signature and confirms that it is his own painting, he still rejects Dorian's desperate claim that everybody has "heaven and hell" within themselves (109). Basil is incapable of accepting that the corruption emanating from the canvas might have already been present in his sitter when he painted Dorian's original portrait.

Instead, he continues applying a surveillance perspective, this time onto the portrait itself. He makes use of pagan and satanic imagery to stigmatise Dorian's soul-portrait as evil and animal by claiming it had the "face of a satyr" and "the eyes of a devil" (109). His alliance with a Lombrosian perspective is further emphasised by his ecophobic reaction to the portrait: "there was something in its expression that filled him with disgust and loathing" (Wilde 108). Just as Mr Utterson, Dr Lanyon and Mr Enfield do not experience a feeling of rejection around Jekyll, Basil's ecophobia does not activate when he is around Dorian. It is when confronted with the visual confirmation of Dorian's animality, the portrait, that his sight-based moral compass is triggered. Basil's reaction of disgust to Dorian's portrait is what ultimately confirms his alliance with a surveillance perspective, since it is only when *seeing* Dorian's degeneracy that he experiences ecophobia (Nordau, *Degeneration* 260).

However, Dorian's case refutes Basil's claims that sin "writes itself across a man's face" (Wilde 104). Unlike Hyde, the ugliness of Dorian's "foul soul" does not transpire "through [...] its clay continent" (Stevenson 12), disproving the infallibility of ocular epistemology. Dorian's animality remains secret, hidden within Dorian's identity and projected onto the portrait concealed in his house. Therefore, Wilde's narrative poses an even more serious threat to ocular epistemology than Stevenson's. This time, the hybrid, Dorian, does not need to create an atavistic and physically external alter ego to avoid facing the consequences of following his animal instincts. Instead, Dorian's double is an invisible part of his identity. In fact, it could be argued that there is no such double, but that the animal in Dorian is fully integrated within his overall personality. In a way, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* presents a reality in which "the true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible", as Henry Wotton says, given that attaining a single and objective interpretation of someone's identity based purely on appearances turns out to be impossible (19).

The other main character of this narrative, Henry Wotton, openly adopts an anti-surveillance and anti-utilitarian perspective, as he rejects the idea that following your animal desires and needs leads to the corruption of the subject's body and soul. Instead, he argues that succumbing to temptation is what actually prevents degeneration: "we degenerate into hideous puppets, haunted by the memory of the passions of which we were too much afraid, and the exquisite temptations that we had not the courage to yield to" (19). Inaction, hesitation and regret is what transform people into "degenerate puppets", according to Henry. Moreover, he turns the logic of degeneration discourse upside-down and directs it against its usual proponents, that is, professional men, such as doctors and lawyers:

Intellect is in itself a mode of exaggeration, and destroys the harmony of any face. The moment one sits down to think, one becomes all nose, or all forehead, or something horrid. Look at the successful men in any of the learned professions. How perfectly hideous they are!" (6)

Prominent noses and protruding foreheads are not signs of the subject's irrationality and animality for Henry, but the direct consequence of people's intellectual, reason-based endeavours: the more someone thinks, the more "horrid" they become. Henry's perspective plays with the reader's prejudices and subverts them, suggesting that physical and mental degeneration derives from thinking rather than acting.

Against this damaging overthinking, Henry preaches to embrace a "new Hedonism" that allows the subject to take advantage of their youth and explore all aspects of their identity, including bodily desires (19). Henry is thus promoting an embodied identity, as he includes both artistic and bodily stimuli as valuable for the development of the subject. Yet, his perspective still supports a hierarchical division between body and soul; only that this time the body, the animal has privilege over the mind or reason:

Life is not governed by will or intention. Life is a question of nerves, and fibres, and slowly built-up cells in which thought hides itself and passion has its dreams. You may fancy yourself safe, and think yourself strong. But a chance tone of colour in a room or a morning sky, a particular perfume that you had once loved and that brings subtle memories with it, a line from a forgotten poem that you had come across again, a cadence from a piece of music that you had ceased to play – I tell you Dorian, that it is on things like these that our lives depend. (150)

Rather than by reason or "will", Henry presents life and identity as being governed by the subject's "nerves" and "fibres" which are stimulated by all of the senses, not only sight, and also by literature and art. According to Henry, even the intellectual side to the modern subject's identity is ultimately dependant on the animal senses, that is, the body. Henry's

position agrees with the philosophy normally adopted by aesthetes and decadent authors, and which bears great resemblance to Nietzsche's proto-phenomenological defence of the body as the "grand reason", and the soul or mind as the "little reason".¹¹¹ Like Nietzsche, Henry rejects the idea of the mind as entirely rational and presents it as just another element within the body. Henry Wotton's Hedonistic approach gives priority to the body as it is considered the main "tool" through which human beings make sense of the world (Daigle 228-236).

Henry presents an *embodied* version of identity to Dorian, one that he adopts. Inspired by Henry's speeches, Dorian develops "a passion for sensations" and "a wild desire to know everything about life" (36). On his search, he decides to make use of his intellect, but always prioritises the senses over any "theory or system that would involve the sacrifice of any mode of passionate experience" (91). In other words, although he does not reject the use of the mind, he decides to focus on experiences first, trying to salvage his life "from that harsh, uncomely puritanism" that characterised the period (91). He then begins his quest for any doctrines—philosophical, religious or scientific, that dealt with life and identity, always arriving at the same conclusion: in the end, the spirit necessarily depends "on certain physical conditions, morbid or healthy, normal or diseased" (93). He therefore concludes that no theory surpasses the experience of life itself, and begins to seek purely sensory stimulated experiences instead of theories. Dorian consequently focuses on the study of perfumes, music, jewels and embroidery, and collects instruments, gems and ecclesiastical garments from all over the world. However, given that he does not make distinctions between "morbid or healthy" bodily desires, the narrative suggests that Dorian has other methods of procuring his sensory experiences besides through art solely.

The Picture of Dorian Gray is far more explicit about the nature of its protagonist's potential misdeeds than *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. For instance, the narrator draws attention to the existing rumours about Dorian "brawling with foreign sailors in a low den in the distant parts of Whitechapel" and associating "with thieves and coiners and knew the

¹¹¹ The similarities between the Decadent movement and Nietzsche's philosophy have already been noted by several literary critics, such as Regenia Gagnier (*Individualism, Decadence and Globalization*), Eduardo Valls Oyarzun (*Dueños del tiempo y del espanto*) or James S. Allen ("Nietzsche and Wilde"). The possibility that there existed a direct influence between the philosopher and specific authors, such as Wilde, is, however, highly improbable. It cannot be denied that aesthetes, decadents and Nietzsche shared similar tenets and aims, and their writings challenged ocular epistemology and battled against the established Cartesian and rational construction of human identity.

mysteries of their trade” (Wilde 99). This paragraph situates Dorian at the East End and in the company of “foreign sailors”. In fact, London’s East Docks were a natural way through which ships coming from India or China brought their goods into the city and the country. Among the goods imported from the east of the Empire there was opium, the period’s drug of choice. In fact, a connection was established between the consumption of drugs and the east, both of the city, but ultimately of the Empire. Hence, by talking about the foreign company that Dorian frequented, the novel points towards his potential involvement with their “trade”, that is, drugs or even prostitution (Marez 279). In fact, when Dorian crosses to the East End in search of one of those “opium dens where one could buy oblivion”, he comes across several “monstrous marionettes” that move behind “lamp-lit” blinds (128). The fact that these silhouettes are a reference to prostitutes is established when comparing these lines and those in Wilde’s poem “The Harlot House”, which openly deals with a brothel.¹¹²

Although less evident, there is also a reference to prostitution in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, where the narrator calls attention to the presence of “women of different nationalities” in Soho, coming and going for their “morning glass” (Stevenson 17). In fact, in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* it seems that there is also a more subtle reference to another addiction: alcoholism. Alcohol abuse was an actual major issue in 19th century London, and “gin palaces abounded in the East End” (Dryden 93-94). This is subtly reflected in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, since, apart from that reference to women having an early drink, the very effects of Jekyll’s drug are very similar to the effects of alcohol, as well as the effects of opium. All these beverages suppress “the bonds of obligation”, and provide the subject with “freedom of the soul” (Stevenson 44). Moreover, although Jekyll affirms that he can “be rid of Mr. Hyde” when he pleases, he is “tortured with throes and longings” the moment he stops taking the potion, which shows great similarity to the symptoms of alcohol withdrawal syndrome (Stevenson 15; 49). Furthermore, Jekyll himself compares his situation with that of a “drunkard” trying to “reason with himself upon his vice”, which seems to suggest that this is, in fact, his addiction (Stevenson 49).

¹¹² This fragment of the novel references Wilde’s poem “The Harlot’s House”, which describes the contrast between love and lust while a couple observe a brothel from outside. In the poem, we find these lines: “Sometimes a “horrible marionette/ Came out, and smoked its cigarette/ Upon the steps like a live thing” (Wilde, *The Harlot’s House* ll. 22-24) which are echoed in the novel, thus suggesting that the “monstrous marionettes” that made “gestures like live things” were a reference to prostitution as well (Wilde, DG 128).

Yet, although Dorian's addictions are more openly stated in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, unlike Hyde, he can count on his appearance, which works as the perfect physiognomic veil. In fact, despite scrutinising him with "with cold searching eyes", nobody discovers "his secret" (Wilde 99). This is because every single character in the novel approaches Dorian from a surveillance perspective. Even Lord Henry, who acknowledges the presence of secrecy and duplicity among all civilised members of society, describes Dorian as "some brainless, beautiful creature" when he first meets him given that "there was something in his face that made one trust him at once" (6; 14). Moreover, like Basil, Henry also refuses to revise this first impression of Dorian even after his subtle murder confession. "It is not in you, Dorian, to commit a murder", Henry sentences, and insists that he is still as "flawless" as he has always been based on his unchanged appearance (147; 150). Hence, despite preaching sensory exploration and constant evolution, Lord Henry falls into the same surveillance trap as everybody else, and he too fails to acknowledge the presence of an invisible, darker side to his beautiful friend.

However, the narrative reveals both Henry and Basil's contradictions and errors in judgement by making the reader aware of this other, sinister side to Dorian that neither of his friends are willing to recognise. Rather than a fleshed out double figure as Jekyll has, Dorian's double is projected onto the mysterious portrait. Although "strange rumours about his mode of life" start to flourish among London's society, all suspicion quickly vanishes on the grounds of Dorian's perfectly beautiful face (Wilde 89). By making the fixed image on canvas change and bear the marks of age and vice while the organic, living Dorian stays young and beautiful, this novel challenges the Lombrosian assumption that degeneration shows in a person's face.

These novels seem to present two different versions or approaches to the animal double. Whereas in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the double is given an external and autonomous body, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* there is an internally diluted version of the animal other as it is indistinguishable from the whole. Although they portray two different versions of inner hybridity, a similar conclusion can be reached in both novels. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*'s version of hybridity seems to agree with a Cartesian perspective since the liberation of Hyde apparently proves that it is possible to divide the modern subject into a rational, human side and an irrational and animal one. Yet, the novel also highlights the fact that Jekyll and Hyde are but two sides of the same person; indivisible,

dependent on each other, and reliant on the same body. Moreover, this thesis' analysis of the hybrid other has shown that the narrative also draws attention toward the many inaccuracies of a purely ocularcentric perspective. In fact, none of the characters are capable of producing a detailed physiognomic description that justifies their intense ecophobic response to Hyde. Moreover, although Hyde is part of Jekyll, none of his friends' ecophobic alarms react when they are in his presence, which suggests that animality can actually be invisible and go undetected within the modern subject. In fact, the novel also suggests that even doctors, seen as the pinnacle of objectivity and reason, can pursue misguided, selfish, and degenerate endeavours. On the other hand, Dorian's double is completely invisible, except for the changing, but hidden, portrait. Dorian's case is thus a more direct attack against ocular epistemology since nobody can perceive the supposed corruption brewing within him. He consequently walks among society completely unnoticed, only fearing that his secret soul portrait might be discovered.

Despite the abovementioned differences, both stories present a portrait of London's society as duplicitous and secretive, where people of the highest classes, such as Dorian and Jekyll, are also eligible to possess an animal, hybrid identity. In order to fully comprehend these stories' approach to animality, it is therefore necessary to compare the animal double against the 'human' or normative half. This way, the origins of Dorian and Jekyll's animality can be traced, completing these novel's portrayal of human and hybrid identities. Why do Dorian and Jekyll develop doubles? How are they different from the rest of the characters? Which double survives and why? These are all key questions for the understanding of animality and hybridity in these two doppelgänger novels.

4.3 The Human Without: Haunted Subjects

4.3.1 Dorian and Jekyll: Normative or Hybrid?

Dr Henry Jekyll is presented as a respected and appreciated member of Mr Utterson's professional and male social circle. His physical appearance is designed to contrast with that of Mr Hyde, since Jekyll is "a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty", rather than a dwarfish, young and somewhat deformed human-like creature. Yet, on the same line where his attractive physical appearance is described, the unnamed narrator also highlights the presence of "something of a slyish cast" in him, thus recognising the potential for cunning, secrecy and deviant behaviour in Jekyll. This remark is however diminished by the following clarification that he also bore in his

expression “every mark of capacity and kindness”. This, together with the “sincere and warm affection” Jekyll demonstrates towards Utterson, makes the first statement slide fairly unnoticed (Stevenson 14). However, it cannot be denied that the narrative does give early hints so as to Jekyll’s selfish tendencies which, paired with his generosity, already point towards the doctor as potently hybrid or double. Actually, Jekyll’s potential deviancy or difference from “the practices and beliefs of his male circle” is later confirmed by his strangely close relationship with the horrid Hyde (Middleton ix).

Yet, instead of reporting or rejecting Jekyll, his male social circle is quick to excuse the doctor and protect his reputation. Before ever considering any threatening explanation for Jekyll and Hyde’s bond, Mr Utterson readily assumes that Hyde must be blackmailing Jekyll over “some of the capers of his youth” (6). However, at the same time, this justification of Jekyll’s relationship with the atavistic Hyde reveals that the doctor’s past was far from being an example of propriety:

He was wild when he was young; a long while ago, to be sure; but in the law of God there is no statute of limitations. Ah, it must be that; the ghost of some old sin, the cancer of some concealed disgrace; punishment coming, *pede claudo*, years after memory has forgotten and self-love condoned the fault. (Stevenson 13)

Early in the narrative, Jekyll’s “wild” youth is revealed, as one that was not absent of sins and disgraces. Not only does the narrative portray Jekyll as possessing a double identity from the beginning, but it also suggests that duplicity is an extended social phenomenon. Mr Utterson’s knowledge of his friend’s “concealed” disgraces in the past, and his determination to keep them that way, reveals that secrecy is in fact a shared practice among their bourgeois social circle.

Utterson justifies his attempts at protecting the doctor’s reputation by hunting Hyde down on the grounds that these “old sins” over which Jekyll was being blackmailed, belonged to the long gone past and had been buried with years of exemplary behaviour. However, Dr Lanyon’s words about Jekyll suggest that the doctor continued to show questionable behaviour throughout his adult life, and into the present. He explains that their relationship started to go sour “more than ten years ago” when Jekyll began to adopt theories and behaviours that were “too fanciful” for Lanyon, who finally became preoccupied about his friend’s mental health (9).¹¹³ Once again, however, the threat of

¹¹³ “He began to go wrong, wrong in mind” (Stevenson 9).

Jekyll's hybridity and potential madness is lessened by having Lanyon clarify that their disagreement is rooted in their different approaches to medicine.¹¹⁴

Despite the continuous subtle hints at Jekyll's duplicity, his mysterious relationship with Hyde is a clear indication of his potential degeneracy, which is finally confirmed when Hyde is revealed to be the materialisation of Jekyll's animal half. Jekyll's first account of the events further highlights that he has been inclined towards a duplicitous existence from an early age. He explains that although he has always been "inclined to industry", he also had "a certain impatient gaiety of disposition". It was therefore, difficult for Jekyll to navigate the more impulsive side of his nature given his simultaneous and "imperious desire to carry [his] head high" in public (41-2). Consequently, he turns to secrecy and duplicity in order to keep his shameful pleasures hidden until he manages to physically divide his rational and social self, from his irrational and animal one. Nevertheless, Jekyll recognises both tendencies as part of his identity: "I was no more myself when I laid aside restraint and plunged in shame, than when I laboured, in the eye of day" (42). Jekyll's confession reveals that he already possessed a hybrid identity and exercised a double life before consuming the transforming drug, thus portraying hybridity as inherent to human identity.

The case of Dorian Gray is also strange and similar to Jekyll's. Although Dorian blames both Henry's book and Basil's portrait for his soul's degeneracy, there are hints in the narrative that reveal Dorian as an inherently hybrid character as well. Like Jekyll, Dorian belongs to the upper class, although he is the son of a mixed-class couple. Whereas his mother, Lady Margaret Devereux, is an aristocrat, his father is "a penniless young fellow; a mere nobody, [...], a subaltern in a foot regiment or something of that kind" (26). Dorian's potential hybridity is already suggested by his exceptional conception. According to Dorian himself, people not only inherit physical characteristics, but also "strange legacies of thought and passions" (99-100). There is a high chance that his mother not only had passed her beauty on to him, but also the impulsive temperament that prompted her to marry outside of her class (100). In fact, Dorian's suspect biological hybridity is even reflected in his surname, "gray", which indicates Dorian's mixed or *grey* identity (Wainwright 509).

¹¹⁴ Lanyon refers to Jekyll's ideas as "unscientific balderdash", thus pointing to a professional rather than personal disagreement as the source of their estrangement (Stevenson 9).

Apart from this biological warning, the text also points to Dorian's lifestyle as another potential source for his animalistic impulses, since he has no occupation, and leads a typical aristocratic lifestyle of hedonism and contemplation. Not only is his inclination towards idleness innate, but the narrative also portrays Dorian as already exhibiting a vain and cruel behaviour towards Basil prior to ever meeting Henry. For instance, when he first mentions the lad, Basil admits to Henry that, "now and then [Dorian] is horribly thoughtless, and seems to take a real delight in giving [him] pain". He adds that he sometimes feels that Dorian treats their friendship "as if it were [...] a bit of decoration to charm his vanity" (12). In fact, like Jekyll, Dorian finally confesses that the most "poisonous influences [...] came from his own temperament" rather than any external input (Wilde 84). *The Picture of Dorian Gray* reveals, thus, that those traits that finally lead its protagonist to his destruction, namely, vanity, selfishness and indolence, are not acquired, but innate.

These two *fin de siècle* representations of the doppelgänger concur in portraying their protagonist as double even before their personalities are visually divided into human and animal halves. Consequently, neither the painting nor the drug introduce any new "passions" into Dorian or Jekyll's personalities. None of these objects have any "discriminating action" and are "neither diabolical nor divine", and so, they do not provoke actual change. Instead, they free Dorian and Jekyll from the fear of social exposure, shaking "the doors of the prison-house of [their] disposition", and allowing the animal within to "run forth" (Stevenson 45). These triggers do not introduce new passions or desires into Dorian and Jekyll's minds, they only increase their freedom by guaranteeing the absence of any degeneration stigmata in their appearance.

Given the hybrid nature of their identity, it is complicated to establish a clear distinction between the normative half of Jekyll and Dorian as human, and their doppelgängers as animal. Both protagonists are aware of theirs and others' duplicity and they attempt to educate the rest of the characters on the multifaceted nature of the modern subject. For instance, in his confession, Jekyll claims that "man is not truly one, but truly two" (42), and Dorian assures Basil that "each of us has heaven and hell in him" (Wilde 109). Jekyll even ventures to imply the possibility that, after him, someone else may prove that instead of two, humans are "a mere polity of multifarious, incongruous, and independent denizens" (42). This is the case of Dorian Gray, who claims that man is "a

complex multiform creature”, “a being with myriads lives and myriad sensations” (Wilde 99-100). Jekyll and Dorian are both aware of the hybrid or multiple nature of human identity.

They also share an initial non-ecophobic approach to their animality that evolves from curiosity towards rejection throughout the narrative. The first time the transforming drug is successful, Jekyll views his feelings of being Hyde in an overall positive light. He perceives this new version of himself as freer, “younger, lighter, happier in body”, yet “tenfold more wicked” (43-44). Jekyll associates Hyde with the body, and the body with wickedness, establishing an ecophobic connection between animality and evil. However, he also admits feeling liberated and joyful in Hyde’s body, recognises him as part of his overall identity, and most importantly, regards Hyde as the superior twin since Jekyll is divided, and so, imperfect:

This, too, was myself. It seemed natural and human. In my eyes, it bore a livelier image of the spirit, it seemed more express and single, than the imperfect and divided countenance I had hitherto accustomed to call mine. (44)

By classifying Hyde *as* human, Jekyll recognises the intrinsic presence of animality within human identity. In fact, in looking at “that ugly idol” for the first time, Jekyll receives it with “a leap of welcome”, instead of showing any signs of ecophobic rejection against the “less robust and less developed” body in the mirror (44). In fact, he does not conclude that Hyde’s body is inferior because it is animal, but because it has been “much less exercised and much less exhausted” than his rational side (44). Similarly, when Dorian is first confronted with the “evil and ageing face on the canvas”, he does not experience ecophobia either. Instead, he experiences a feeling of “monstrous and terrible delight” in contemplating the “sharpness of the contrast” between his beautiful appearance and the decrepit image of his soul (90). Like Jekyll, Dorian does not think poorly of his other, sensuous half, but he is merely curious about the mysterious connection between his actions and the ageing portrait. Jekyll and Dorian’s cases disprove the conception of ecophobia as an exclusively human, innate warning mechanism, since neither of them show signs of instinctual rejection towards their own animality.

They are, however, the only characters that do not experience strong bodily reactions in the presence of Hyde or the portrait. Jekyll’s alternative explanation for this ecophobic reaction is that it was caused by the shock of seeing the only countenance of “pure evil” “in the ranks of mankind”. Whereas the rest of “human beings [...] are commingled out of good and evil”, like Jekyll himself, Hyde is the only one whose

animality is not hidden, but clearly visible (44-45). In other words, it is not so much a reaction against animality, but a reaction against its visible representation. Dorian's picture plays a similar role, since it works as a magical and revealing mirror that reflects Dorian's inner animality otherwise hidden behind his immaculate appearance. Hyde and Dorian's portrait, thus, are mirrors into which none of the characters dare to look in, in case it confronts them with their own animality.

Yet, despite Dorian and Jekyll's initial acceptance of their hybridity, both of their approaches to animality experience a gradual evolution towards ecophobia. In *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* this change is triggered by Carew's murder at the hands of Hyde. From that moment on, Jekyll stops consuming the transforming drug and attempts to suppress his animal within. However, Hyde does not stay quiet, and starts materialising without the need of consuming the mysterious beverage. One day, when unexpectedly seeing Hyde instead of Jekyll's reflection in the mirror, Jekyll's blood changes "into something exquisitely thin and icy", hence experiencing self-ecophobia for the first time (47). The way he refers to Hyde also changes and he starts calling him "the animal within", "that Child of Hell", or "the brute that slept within", thus no longer regarding Hyde as human or part of his identity (51-52).

Dorian experiences a similar evolution and, curiously enough, this is also prompted by a murder: Basil's assassination at the hand of Dorian himself. Up until that moment, Basil's constant attempts at imposing his surveillance and ecophobic perspective onto Dorian had been in vain. Despite his multiple attempts at influencing Dorian, the young man remains "dimly conscious" of Basil's words (21):

Basil's Hallward's compliments had seemed to him to be merely the charming exaggerations of friendship. He had listened to them, laughed at them, forgotten them. They had not influenced his nature. (21)

Despite all of his previously failed attempts, Basil's strong ecophobic reaction against Dorian's ageing portrait does manage to cause an impression on him in the end. Basil's words of disapproval ignite a terrible fear in Dorian: the fear that his corrupted soul might be publicly exposed, and his animality discovered. Hence, fear is what ultimately drives Dorian towards an increasing feeling of rejection and disgust towards his image on the portrait.

Both Jekyll and Dorian's conversion to ecophobia is ultimately rooted in fear. Jekyll hates and fears the knowledge that Hyde is within him, and Dorian is terrified about the

possibility that the painting might be discovered. Both characters' feelings of self-rejection are fuelled by their need to preserve a *façade* of respectability. As discussed in previous chapters, fear is at the root of degeneration, since it is through fear that most apparently rational characters are reduced to exhibiting animal behaviour.¹¹⁵ This is also reflected in these two novels since both Dorian and Hyde act most brutally when they feel threatened. In Jekyll's words, his duplicity and degeneration do not originate in the "degradation of [his] faults", but in the "exacting nature of [his] aspirations" (41-42). Rather than in the actual evil nature of his animal instincts, his transformation into a criminal is actually rooted in society's implacable moral and physical scrutiny. This surveillance scrutiny is what actually forces its members to either develop a double identity, or repress the animal within. In turn, this repression and fear of the animal within provokes the subject's loss of control over their own animality. Lord Henry Wotton also supports this theory, as he states that "the passions about whose origin we [deceive] ourselves [are the ones] that [tyrannise] most strongly over us" (Wilde 43). In other words, self-ecophobia leads to the subject's neglect and detachment from their inner animality, so that when it suddenly "runs forth", it is perceived as an external agent, a *doppelgänger*, over which the subject has little or no control (Stevenson 45).

These two novels also agree on challenging the Cartesian and surveillance principles of philistine morality. Both point towards the societal pressure to conform to the established ocularcentric concept of identity as the actual culprit that forces characters into a paranoid, self-ecophobic and duplicitous life style. In Wotton's words, people are governed by "the terror of society, which is the basis of morals, [and] the terror of God, which is the secret of religion" (16). Hence, it is through fear of the visible confirmation of animality that the modern subject becomes duplicitous and self-ecophobic. In fact, self-denial and self-hatred is what prompts both Dorian and Jekyll to try to destroy their monstrous souls, killing themselves in the process (Wilde 154). Rather than the animal origin of their desires, it is the pressure to conform to a productive and respectable concept of the civilised man that actually prompts Dorian and Jekyll's degeneration and death. Both characters become, in Jekyll's words, creatures "eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind, and solely occupied by one thought: the horror of

¹¹⁵ See the first and second chapters for a more extensive analysis of the role that fear plays in the animalisation of degeneration of the modern subject.

[their] other self" (53). Societal ecophobia is presented as the actual responsible of the modern man's degeneration.

Although they agree in presenting ecophobia as the trigger of the modern subject's degeneration, there is a key difference between these two novels' understanding of the animal within. Whereas in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* there is a sympathetic approach to the body, the senses, and, therefore, the human-animal embodied in Henry Wotton, there is no such alternative perspective in Stevenson's novel. Even when animality is presented as irremediable, and its neglect is discouraged, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* still presents animality from a negative perspective. In other words, it argues for its acknowledgement, but not for its integration into the identity of the subject. Despite initially enjoying his transformation, Jekyll leans on the association of animality with evil from the beginning. He claims that he feels "more wicked, tenfold more wicked" when he is Hyde and refers to his doppelgänger as "the evil side of [his] nature" (44). On the other hand, Dorian, who is also scared of the corruption showing in his portrait, does not classify the portrait as 'animal'. Therefore, despite its critical questioning of identity and surveillance, the portrayal of the human-animal in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* cannot be classified as proto-ecocritical. Although depicted as irremediable, the animal within is still a sinister and disquieting force in Stevenson's novel.

4.3.2 Normative Characters

Given that all of the characters belong to the same bourgeois and upper class, they are all subjected to the same scrutiny and social restrictions. Therefore, there exists the possibility, that Jekyll and Dorian are not the only hybrid or double characters in the novels. Jekyll insinuates this when he states that the difference between his situation and that of the rest of the men in his social circle, is that he is the only one who can "plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment [...] strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty". In other words, his capacity to put on the disguise of Hyde, in an effort to keep his reputation "under shelter", is what makes him different, not his hybridity itself (46). The unnamed narrator also hints at this possibility, since Utterson is described as "the last reputable acquaintance" of many of his friends, whose "misdeeds" he tolerates (3). This reflects that succumbing to questionable activities is not an exception, but a rule in Jekyll and Mr Utterson's social circle.

In fact, Mr Utterson's best friend, Mr Enfield, is presented as a *flâneur*, that is, a passive observer of the city (Ledger and Luckhurst 53-54). The figure of the *flâneur* is already a controversial one, since their philosophy is grounded in contemplation rather than production, and it is connected to dandyism and Hedonism (Dryden 58;87). Mr Enfield's potential degeneration is further highlighted by his own words, since he confesses that the first time he met Hyde he "was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o'clock of a black winter morning" (4). What was Mr Enfield doing at three o'clock in the morning? Where exactly was he coming from? Chances are that this mysterious "end of the world" location is situated at the east of the city: the realm of vice and corruption. This possibility, together with the ungodly hour at which his encounter with Hyde takes place, suggests that Mr Enfield might not be so different from Mr Hyde after all. Mr Utterson does not reject his friends for their duplicity. Just the opposite, he has "an approved tolerance for others", and he is even jealous of the passion involved in his acquaintances' adventures (3). Moreover, not only does he accept his friends' lapses as natural, but he contributes to keeping them a secret. For instance, when he suspects that Hyde might be blackmailing Jekyll for "the capers of his youth", he makes it his mission to help Jekyll get rid of Hyde, and maintain his social face (6). In sum, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* not only includes a duplicitous character, but a whole hybrid society that has developed mechanisms that guarantee the undetected perpetuation of those morally inappropriate behaviours that it condemns.

Mr Utterson seems, in fact, to be the only true example of propriety in the novel. The narrator defines him as "a man of a rugged countenance", cold and "backward in sentiment" (3). Mr Utterson is extremely austere and emotionally undemonstrative. Curiously, this absence of an emotional, thus animal, side is what makes Utterson look *less* human. For instance, the narrator points out that it was only when "the wine was to his taste", that "something eminently *human* beacons from his eye" (3).¹¹⁶ In other words, only when stimulated with alcohol does Utterson appear to be human. Yet, this "humanity" stops at the eyes, and does not find "its way to his talk", or actions (3). This reference to alcohol consumption is foreshadowing Jekyll's transforming drug, and comparing Utterson's handling of alcohol and his control over his animality, with Jekyll's unstoppable transformation into Hyde. At the same time, however, the novel portrays Utterson as less human, precisely because of his lack of animality, thus offering an

¹¹⁶ My emphasis.

alternative concept of identity in which animal passions are regarded as an integral part of humanity.

Hyde, on the other hand, is the complete opposite to Utterson: the embodiment of unrestrained passion, instinct and animality, to the point that it can be argued that Hyde is more of Utterson's doppelgänger than Jekyll's. Hyde is indeed Utterson's biggest challenge since, although his name is "utters on", he is impotent in trying to find the appropriate words to describe Hyde's appearance (Gibson 181). This inability to equate images and words when it comes to Hyde is a shared experience among all characters. Thus, Gibson understands this silence as a burgeoning mechanism that allows, not only Jekyll's, but the hybridity of all members of this society to remain secret (182). I root these men's inability to find words to describe Hyde in their unwillingness to acknowledge him as an equal, as another gentleman and rightful member of their bourgeois society. Doing so would imply recognising themselves in Hyde, or in other words, admitting their own hybrid nature. Identifying Jekyll's features in Hyde's face stands for recognising the human within the animal, and the animal within civilised society. Therefore, these men's inability to acknowledge that Jekyll and Hyde are the same person comes from their unwillingness to recognise themselves in the mirror of hybridity.

In fact, all bourgeois characters in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* are revealed as hybrid to some or other extent, including Mr Utterson.

His past was fairly blameless; few men could read the rolls of their life with less apprehension; yet he was humbled to the dust by the many ill things he had done, and raised up again into a sober and fearful gratitude by the many that he had come so near to doing, yet avoided. (13)

Despite having a "fairly blameless" past in comparison to that of his peers, Mr Utterson confesses to having done his fair share of misdeeds. More importantly, although he successfully managed to resist, he admits to having had many moments of temptation. This reveals Utterson as having an animal half, like every other character, with the only difference being that he does a better job at keeping it at bay. It can be argued, thus, that the only real differences between Hyde and the rest of the characters are his – temporary – anonymity, and his lack of self-restraint.

Moreover, there is also proof of Hyde's gentlemanly behaviour since, despite these men's continuous attempts at labelling Hyde as "monstrous", the narrative also portrays

Hyde as having artistic taste and good manners. For instance, Hyde's rooms in Soho are decorated with "luxury and good taste", which contrasts with his animalised personality (Stevenson 18; Ferrer-Medina 77). Moreover, although brusque, Hyde is always polite in his interactions with Utterson and Lanyon, who decide to ignore this, and focus solely on his reticence and impatience. In Lanyon and Hyde's conversation close to the novel's ending, Lanyon reprimands Hyde and tells him to "compose" himself when he shows signs of anxiety, but does not acknowledge those instances in which he is not only civil, but grateful, like when "he thanked [him] with a smiling nod" (40). As Rago remarks, the reason why these men do not accept Hyde as another member of society is that "to recognize deviance in Hyde as a gentleman requires knowledge that one should pretend not to have". That is, acknowledging Hyde as a member of their social circle would imply recognising the fact that animality is an intrinsic and unavoidable part of the civilised modern man's identity. At the same time, however, ignoring the presence of the animal in Hyde would be like "accepting the degenerate" into society, which is regarded as a risk for the maintenance of the established *status quo* (Rago 281). Given that acknowledging Hyde as a gentleman would imply having to accept the possibility of their potential hybridity, these men refuse to see their reflection in Hyde's facelessness. Moreover, they animalise him and use him as a scapegoat whose sacrifice grants the extermination of visible animality, while theirs remains hidden and invisible.

Despite supporting a surveillance approach, none of these characters have enough visual confirmation to categorise Hyde as animal, given they are unable to describe his features. Instead, Hyde is animalised on the grounds of the ecophobic reaction he provokes. Even if ecophobia seems to be subjective, and so invalid as evidence, it becomes objective in Mr Enfield's eyes since it is backed by lawyers and doctors. Therefore, despite its apparent alliance with surveillance, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* drives attention to the fact that identity is a construct that ultimately relies on the dictations of law and medicine, institutions on which the maintenance of the *status quo* relies. As Stiles highlights, Stevenson's novel "manages to disclose a chink in the armour of late-Victorian scientific objectivity", while revealing the system's contradictions and flaws (888). Similarly, Jekyll's ability to extract his animal self from the rest of him seems to support a Cartesian, and so split, version of identity; yet, his death reveals that Jekyll cannot survive without Hyde. In other words, the human does not survive the elimination of the animal within, proving that both sides are indivisible and symbiotic. In spite of the

novel's ambivalence, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*'s ending ultimately points to the unavoidable hybrid nature of the modern subject's identity. Yet, the fact that it is unavoidable does not mean it is positive. Instead, the multifaceted nature of human identity is a source of fear in Stevenson's novel. It cannot therefore be said that his is a proto-ecocritical narrative, although it does question Cartesianism and ocular epistemology.

Contrary to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*'s doctors and lawyers, Henry and Basil are artists. Basil excels at painting, while Henry's artistic ability consists in improvising the most entertaining and controversial theories and puns. Henry, Basil and their art can be seen as doubles of each other, since they have completely opposite views on life and identity. In seeing Henry for the first time, Dorian notices the "delightful contrast" his two friends make (15). Henry and Basil stand, moreover, as Dorian's two main sources of influence. Prior to making any early assumptions about the nature of each of these characters' influence on Dorian, a closer analysis of Basil and Henry is required.

Lord Henry Wotton is presented as the example of a Dandy: he smokes "opium-tainted" cigarettes (6), he has "dreamy, languorous eyes" (17), and an "olive-coloured face" that Dorian classifies as "romantic" (18). As seen in previous chapters, the possession of a dreamy and languid expression was seen as a sign of eroticism, and hence, of animality and degeneration. Furthermore, Henry's skin, which resembles the description of Helen Vaughan's, establishes him as potentially foreign, and thus, other. However, Henry is a Lord, and thus a well-known and respected member of the upper classes, contrary to Hyde. Yet, instead of preaching secrecy, Henry openly remarks that although "drunkenness, stupidity, and immorality" are assumed to be acts of the "masses", it is also common conduct among the upper classes (10). In fact, Henry Wotton seems to be the novel's spokesperson for Wilde's essays, since his teachings point towards an embodied conception of identity by which following one's bodily desires is neither shameful nor sinful. According to Henry, there is a symbiotic connection between the senses and the soul, since "nothing can cure the soul but the senses, just as nothing can cure the senses but the soul" (18). He goes on to affirm that "pleasure is nature's test, her sign of approval",¹¹⁷ which turns the discourse of sin upside down since the animal body and its desires are not linked to evil, but understood as natural and positive. As

¹¹⁷ This statement can also be found, word for word, in Oscar Wilde's essay "The Soul of Man under Socialism" (1066).

opposed to the repression of the animal within, Henry regards the harmony of body and soul as the key to being a ‘good’, healthy individual (56; SM 1066). He also disagrees with a fixed concept of identity, and argues for the subject’s freedom to evolve, change and explore. Henry does not regard any experience, bodily or otherwise, as corrupting. Instead, he affirms that “no life is spoiled but one whose growth is arrested”, pointing to repression and stagnation as the ones truly responsible for society’s backwardness (54).

In sum, Lord Henry Wotton is the embodiment of an aesthete or decadent artist. As such, he rejects the established understanding of morality, arguing that rather than natural and fixed, that which is ‘morally accepted’ is ultimately dictated by the “standard” of each age, and, thus, it changes throughout time. He actually considers that following the standard itself is an act of “the grossest immorality” (56). Instead, he promotes disobedience and adopts an individualistic and Hedonistic perspective that contrasts with the established utilitarian morality. Moreover, Henry rejects the classification of people into degenerates and healthy subjects, and remains empathetic to all since, in his words, he likes “persons better than principles”, and “persons with no principles better than anything else in the world” (10). Like Mr Utterson, Henry claims to be non-judgemental towards people, as he states that approving or disapproving of somebody’s behaviour is “an absurd attitude” that stems from a desire to impose “our moral prejudices” onto others (53). Yet, despite promoting a decadent viewpoint, Henry is a flawed character since he judges Dorian’s personality based on his appearance when he refuses to even consider that his beautiful friend could be a murderer. Hence, despite his preaching, Henry also projects his “moral” – or amoral – “prejudices” onto Dorian, thus “arresting his growth” to a certain extent.

Is Dorian in the right when he blames his degeneration on Henry’s influence? *The Picture of Dorian Gray* presents influence as a two-way conversation whose success depends on the subject’s active acceptance of the input received. This can be observed in the completely different effect that Basil and Henry have on Dorian, since while the lad remains unmoved by Basil’s surveillance idealism, he immediately takes a “fancy” for Henry Wotton’s Hedonism. The difference stems from the Lord’s ability to touch upon the “secret chord” that already exists within Dorian, that is, his innate inclination towards idleness and contemplation (15; 17). On the other hand, Dorian remains unmoved and “dimly conscious” of Basil’s uninteresting words (21). Therefore, for influence to be successful there needs to be a previous interest or inclination on the subject’s part. This

reveals that the influenced subject plays an active role in the influential exchange. Blaming the totality of his downfall on Henry denies Dorian's own responsibility in the matter.

I argue that Dorian's decline is not rooted in Henry's words, *per se*, but in Dorian's misunderstanding of them. Particularly, it comes from Dorian's incapacity to distinguish art from reality. I argue that Henry's incendiary speeches are another form of art, beautiful lies which aim to delight an audience (Wilde, DL 932). In the same way that Basil plays with colours, Henry does so with words and ideas, transforming them in the air, making them "iridescent with fancy, and [winging them] with paradox" (Wilde 32). Henry is thus the embodiment of the "brilliant, fantastic [and] irresponsible" liar that Wilde understood to be the perfect artist: the teller of "beautiful untrue things" (DG 32; DL 943). In fact, the narrator compares Henry's speeches to music, his voice is described as musical and beautiful, and his words are said to "have a music of their own as sweet as that of viol or of lute". Henry's artistry is compared to that of a musician. Given that, according to the preface, "the type of all the arts is the art of the musician", Henry's role as the perfect artist is confirmed (Wilde 17).

Henry's speeches are works of art, and as such, they are not intrinsically evil or immoral, but amoral since "vice and virtue are to the artist materials of an art" (3). Dorian Gray is, however, the only character that remains unaware of the fictional aspect of Henry's words. For instance, Basil reprimands Henry for never saying "a moral thing", yet never doing a "wrong thing" (7). Basil and Lady Agatha also claim that Henry does not believe in his own statements (10).¹¹⁸ When asked whether he *means* what he says, Henry avoids giving a direct answer, stating instead that "the value of an idea [has] nothing whatsoever to do with the sincerity of the man who expresses it" (Wilde 33). In fact, he tends to forget what he says during his speeches, and needs to ask his audience if his words were "very bad" (33). This suggests that he improvises and makes up most of his theories and stories, which questions their sincerity. I therefore argue, that Henry is fully aware of the artificial nature of his artistic productions. In fact, Henry claims that he is not concerned with "actions", but his "only quarrel is with words" (134). After all, Henry is a *flanêur*, a passive observer of the city and its people, a Hedonist that is "ashamed of his own virtues" (7). Therefore, he never translates his aesthetic and

¹¹⁸ Lady Agatha affirms that "he never means anything he says" (30), and Basil responds to Henry's words by stating: "I don't agree with a single word that you have said, and, what is more, Harry, I feel sure you don't either" (10).

rebellious theories to the real world, since he is aware that once he finishes his controversial monologues, “reality enter[s] the room” (32). Dorian, however, remains incapable of differentiating reality from fiction throughout the entire novel. Following this train of thought, Dorian’s transformation is not rooted in Henry’s words *per se* but in “Dorian’s reading of them” (Salamensky 132).

Although Dorian mainly blames Henry and the yellow book of his disgrace, the beginning of his gradual downfall is actually connected to Basil’s portrait. It is in seeing his beautiful reflection on canvas while listening to Henry’s praise of youth that prompts Dorian to sacrificing his invisible soul for the preservation of his physical appearance. Hence, it is the image in the portrait that ultimately triggers Dorian’s innate vanity and drives him to pronounce the cursed words that will propel his and the portrait’s mutation. Dorian is thus transformed into a superficial being by means of his own renunciation to having a soul or a conscience. From that moment on, Dorian is only capable of sympathising with external beauty, particularly his own. He favours visual and sensory experiences alone, since he regards life as a pure spectacle, a perspective which, in turn, disables him to distinguish between art, performance, and real life (Dickson 8).

The clearest example of Dorian’s superficial and flawed approach to life and identity is his treatment of Sybil Vane. Sybil seems to be the perfect match for Dorian, for they both regard life as if it were a play, an artificial spectacle. However, once she realises the difference between life and art and consequently steps off the stage, Dorian regards her as “shallow and stupid” (62). His behaviour is symptomatic of his lack of awareness of the distinction between real life and artistic performance. In fact, he never regards Sybil as a fellow human being, but as a beautiful work of art. He admires her because he does not see as her a single, real woman, but a collision of all women throughout the history of theatre and literature. Hence, once stripped of her artistic veil, she becomes ordinary and so insignificant for him. Dorian is not the only character who seems unaware that “a human being, no matter how beautiful, is not art” (Marcovitch 128). In fact, Basil treats Dorian in a way similar to how Dorian treats Sybil. Basil approaches Dorian as an object of art, and sees in him the embodiment of a new ideal in art and philosophy: the perfect union of a beautiful soul in a beautiful body (Marcovitch 20). Therefore, he also neglects Dorian’s subjectivity since he insists on projecting his own artistic vision onto a living, breathing human being, unable to recognise Dorian’s true personality. I argue that both Basil’s surveillance approach and his portrait have more to do in Dorian’s fate than Henry and the yellow book.

Basil Hallward and Henry Wotton function as opposites, since while one promotes the embrace of the animal body, the other preaches the principles of a surveillance and Cartesian approach to identity. Henry and Dorian describe him as a “bore”, and “a bit of a philistine”, since he constantly judges and gives people, specifically Dorian, “good advice” (148; 41). Despite stating that he cares and worries about Dorian, the narrative portrays him as an inflexible, possessive, and jealous friend at times. For instance, he is reticent about introducing Henry to Dorian, and when Dorian expresses his desire to marry Sybil, Basil becomes “silent and preoccupied” because he can “not bear this marriage” (57). Moreover, Basil turns from idolising Dorian, to severely judging him when his behaviour starts to challenge his own preconceived idea of the young man. A clear example is Basil’s visit to Dorian after Sybil’s death. When he arrives to Dorian’s house and finds his friend calm and collected, and in no need of consolation, he exclaims:

Dorian, this is horrible! Something has changed you completely. You look exactly the same wonderful boy [...]. But you were simple, natural and quite affectionate then. [...] Now, I don’t know what has come over you. You talk as if you had no heart, no pity in you. It is all Harry’s influence. (77)

There are, however, several fallacies in Basil’s words. Firstly, he assumes that Dorian’s change comes from an external influence, thus ignoring the possibility that it might have actually come from within Dorian himself. Most importantly, Basil claims that Dorian was “simple, natural and quite affectionate” before, words that directly contradict his own previous confessions to Henry about Dorian’s innate vanity and cruel behaviour towards him. In sum, Basil treats Dorian as a fixed, beautiful creature, and does not allow him to contradict his impressions of him, or develop and change in any way. Basil Hallward dehumanises Dorian since he attempts to turn him into a static work of art, thus he arrests his growth in the same way Dorian will later do with Sybil.

Basil is a painter, after all, and as Wilde says in the “Critic as Artist”, painters’ powers of representation are limited to the visual, since their job is to try to show “the mystery of the soul [...] through the mask of the body” (CA 986). What *The Picture of Dorian Gray* reveals, however, is that appearances and sight are actually not objective but depend on the viewer’s biases. In fact, Basil himself recognises that “...every portrait that is painted with feeling is a portrait of the artist”. Basil has strong feelings for Dorian, indeed, to the point he felt Dorian “would absorb [his] whole nature, [his] whole soul” (Wilde 8).

Moreover, Basil's intense feelings are suspect of being romantic, since the way Basil describes Dorian and their interactions seem to be driven more by infatuation rather than by friendship:

We were quite close, almost touching. Our eyes met again. [...] We would have spoken to each other without any introduction. I am sure of that, Dorian told me so afterwards. He, too, felt that we were destined to know each other. (9)

From this first encounter, Basil's obsession with Dorian only increases, and he becomes "jealous of everyone" and wants to have him all to himself (80). Hence, as Henry suggests, Basil's so-called "idolatry" for Dorian is more romantic than "artistic" (11-12). This reveals that Basil, the supposed example of propriety and decency, is but another duplicitous and potentially degenerate subject. There are, in fact, further hints so as to Basil's double nature, such as his past, sudden and mysterious disappearance which led to "many strange conjectures" (5). The clearest hint, however, is Basil's own confession that he has "grown to love secrecy", which suggests that he also leads a duplicitous lifestyle, as everybody else in the novel (7).

Whose soul inhabits Dorian's portrait, then? Given Basil's confession to having transmitted the "secret of his soul" – his love for Dorian – to the painting, the "hideous puppet" in the portrait can be actually interpreted as a self-reflection of the painter's, rather than of Dorian's soul (Wilde 19). According to this interpretation, the corruption present in Dorian's portrait would actually come from Basil's self-ecophobia and self-repression. "Being too much afraid of life", Basil follows the established morality of restraint and self-control in order to attain the perfection of inner and outer beauty he desires (Wilde 78). Consequently, he sacrifices the bodily, animal side of him, the one he fears has been revealed in Dorian's portrait. Following Lord Henry's words, this rejection and repression of part of his soul would be responsible for the corruption present in the portrait (Karschay 207). In sum, the soul presented in the portrait would be Basil's "naked" and "starved" soul, victim to his owner's Cartesian and Lombrosian conception of identity (Wilde 16).

Another possible interpretation for the identity of the soul in the portrait is that it does represent Dorian's soul, but as seen through Basil's ecophobic perspective. After all, Basil admits that the corrupted painting is his "own handiwork", which suggests that the visible corruption emanating from the portrait does not originate in the sitter's animal soul *per se*, but in Basil's perception of it (Wilde 106). The painting would act, thus, as

Dorian's surveillance, reiterating Basil's disapproval of his actions. Since Basil believed in the correlation between action and physical stigmata, the portrait's degenerating features can be interpreted as the visual materialisation of how Basil would conceive Dorian through his surveillance and ecophobic lens (Wilde 104).

The hypothesis that the decomposing image of Dorian's face is a visual expression of Basil's disapproval of his friend's choices, is further supported by Basil's behaviour towards Dorian. In fact, Basil condemns all of Dorian's attitudes and actions from the moment he introduces Dorian to Henry. He constantly harasses him with annoying remarks and "good advice" (Wilde 41). From his Cartesian conception of identity, Basil considers that Dorian's search for experiences and his desire to change and evolve is an abomination, among other things, because this would ultimately destroy his immaculate concept of the lad, that is, his portrait. Hence, the corruption that emerges in Dorian's painted face comes not from the sitter's animality, but from the painter's biased eyes, once more confirming the preface's statement that sin rests not in the object, but in the subject.

Therefore, Basil plays a more important role in Dorian's degeneration and death than Henry does. In fact, it is Basil who finally changes Dorian's self-perception, so that he too becomes increasingly scared and disgusted about his corrupted soul. Despite Dorian trying to avoid Basil's judgement, the painter finally manages to corner him and demand an explanation as to why his "friendship [is] so fatal to young men" (Wilde 104). Dorian responds with increasing contempt, denying his responsibility for the vices and behaviours of others, and drifting the attention to the upper class: "What sort of life do these people, who pose as being moral, lead themselves? My dear fellow, you forget that we are in the native land of the hypocrite" (Wilde 105). Dorian's accusations reveal that hiding a double life of illicit and immoral behaviour is an extended phenomenon among the middle and aristocratic classes (Karschay 204-5). In fact, as this thesis has proven, not a single character in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, including Basil, is exempt of a certain degree of duplicity.

Hence, in Dorian's words: "what right had Basil to have spoken to him as he had done? Who had made him a judge over others?" (Wilde 106,128). This rhetorical question is of extreme importance for the understanding of the novel, since it questions Basil's authority to categorise Dorian and his portrait as evil and corrupted. Being ashamed of

his own hybridity, Basil reacts in fear and disgust when forced to contemplate a visual representation of the “secret” animality “of his soul” that he had projected onto Dorian’s portrait. His detachment from the animal side of his identity, also blinds him to recognising and accepting it in other people, specifically, Dorian. Thus, he insists on calling the portrait a “satyr” despite the clear signs of pain and discomfort that his friend shows in hearing those words (109). Finally, he ignores Dorian’s last call for empathy, which ultimately propels his death. Basil dies at the hands of his own prejudices and false ideals, unable to recognise the image of his own soul in the picture of Dorian Gray.

Basil’s continuous attempts at imposing his surveillance morality onto everybody, including himself, is what ultimately leads to both his and Dorian’s destruction. Hence, as Dorian himself recognises, Basil “had more to do with [...] the marring of [his life] than poor Harry” (Wilde 117). In fact, Basil’s portrait is the first input that instigates Dorian’s vanity, since it teaches him that looks, not actions, are what matters the most.¹¹⁹ The seed of Basil’s surveillance approach is thus in Dorian from the very beginning, and his murder finally triggers its full bloom. Ever since the murder, the ghost of Basil’s ecophobia finally manages to influence Dorian, who becomes obsessed with his corrupted soul, and desperately attempts to redeem it from the ugliness that has crawled upon it. Yet, as Henry Wotton helps him realise, he is not doing it from a genuine place of regret. Instead, he is repressing the animal within based on purely aesthetic reasons, that is, with the single idea of removing the disgusting stigmata from his painted face. Therefore, what truly motivates Dorian’s “denial of the self” are the same feelings that led to his duplicity in the first place: “vanity, curiosity, and hypocrisy”. Consequently, not only does the corruption not disappear from the portrait, but it also increases (153). Ultimately, it is Dorian’s self-denial and self-rejection that drives him to stabbing his doppelgänger, the portrait, killing himself in the process (Wilde 154).

Dorian’s death shows the impossibility of Basil’s Cartesian approach to identity and confirms Henry’s warnings about the damaging effects that social impositions have upon citizens. In other words, Dorian’s death confirms that the animal and the human cannot be successfully isolated from each other, and that “there is no such thing as a good influence”:

¹¹⁹ In Dorian’s words, the painting is responsible for his surveillance and unsympathetic approach to life and other people: “I know, now, that when one loses one’s looks, whatever they may be, one loses everything. Your picture has taught me that” (22).

All influence is immoral – immoral from the scientific point of view. [...] Because to influence a person is to give him one's own soul. He does not think his natural thoughts, or burn with his natural passions. His virtues are not real to him. His sins, if there are such things as sins, are borrowed. He becomes an echo of someone else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him. (15-16)

All imposed influence, no matter the intention behind it, is necessarily detrimental, according to Henry, since it thwarts the individual's subjectivity or soul. Moreover, Wotton considers that society's decline is precisely rooted in the moral and ecophobic scrutiny his citizens are subjected to. This scrutiny is what forces people to either lead a double life, or completely repress their intrinsic animal part of their identity in order to preserve their social respectability. In Henry's words, it is "the mutilation of the savage", that is, the negation of the animal within, that has resulted in "the self-denial that mars our lives" (16). Rather than seeing the body and its impulses as sinful, Henry regards their refusal and rejection as the true originators of nineteenth century social degeneration (16).

The Picture of Dorian Gray, especially its ending, drives attention towards the artificiality of morality and of a Cartesian construction of identity. Its spectacle-like approach to identity reveals that the perception of animality as evil is not objective, but it depends on the perspective through which it is viewed. Early in the novel, Lord Henry Wotton warns readers about the artificiality of 'nature' and 'natural morality'. He calls being 'natural' not only a pose, but "the most irritating pose", since the label 'natural' is used to establish a standard identity and behaviour as the only 'healthy' and 'human' option (7). For Henry, and for Wilde, "truth" and "nature" are malleable concepts, since nature "is our creation", that is, what is determined as natural ultimately relies on human interpretation (Wilde, DL 937). Therefore, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* questions Nordau's and Lombroso's defence that there is a single human morality, and that those who do conform to it are non-human. This novel portrays a society in which every single member shows signs of not adhering to the established morality since they either lead a double life, or actively choose to repress part of their identity. This narrative reveals that what Nordau and Lombroso call natural is in fact an "ideological mystification of the social" (Dollimore 42). Identity is revealed as irremediably hybrid, as well, as Dorian's death proves that the animal and the human are indivisible and mutually dependent components of the modern subject's identity. Moreover, the novel also rejects the surveillance premise that there are visible natural and non-natural features and behaviours

that allow the identification of the degenerate subject as it portrays a society in which all members manage to lead a double life of private sin and public reputation.

4.4 Conclusion: Repression or Animality; The Ultimate Evil

The *fin de siècle* double as portrayed in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* represents the complete internalisation of the animal within the modern subject. The ghost already suggested the possibility that the supernatural hybrid might be a product of the ghost-seer's mind or eyes, thus situating the animal within the human. The doppelgänger in these two novels, however, presents animality as having completely taken over the modern subject: their mind and body. More specifically, they portray the modern subject as torn between a human and rational self, and an animal and irrational one. Hence, Wilde and Stevenson's doubles do fulfil Tucker's interpretation of the doppelgänger as a performance of the relationship of "the self to the self" (Tucker).

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde seems to approach Hyde's identity from a purely surveillance approach at first, since it leans on his physical animality to illustrate his potential evil and dangerous nature. Yet, the narrative also drives attention to the normative characters' inability to pinpoint exactly what the features are that prompt them to categorically label Hyde as not human, but animal. In fact, except for one description of his hairy hands, there are no detailed physiognomic descriptions of the human-animal's face, as there is in *Dracula* or *The Beetle*, for instance. Instead, Hyde's animality is confirmed by his so-called animal or impulsive behaviour, and more importantly, by the feeling of ecophobia or repulsion he ignites in lawyers and doctors. In other words, this novel shows that rather than actual visible, tangible proof, it is the observer's intellectual, privileged position that transforms a feeling, ecophobia, into a fact. Despite its apparent alliance with surveillance, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* questions the objectivity and reliability of ocular epistemology, particularly, of these professional men's privileged 'gaze'. Instead, it reveals that even doctors can be moved by biased and selfish motives, and, like Jekyll/Hyde, they can even be human-animal.

The alliance of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* with a spectacle perspective, on the other hand, is clearly stated from the beginning. From the very first paragraphs, that evoke Walter Pater's conclusion to *The Renaissance*, to the choice of artists as main characters, the novel gives clues so as to its embodied and visually critical approach to identity. Dorian Gray's invisible animality goes against a Lombrosian reading of degeneration,

since it shows that the animal within is not reflected in the body. Unlike Hyde, Dorian Gray's beauty blinds characters towards his inner animality, as neither his appearance nor his presence triggers any kind of ecophobic warnings in the people surrounding him.

Wilde's novel does question the negative connotations surrounding animality, mainly through the character of Henry Wotton. Henry preaches a new Hedonism that recognises the body, the animal within, as an equal, or even more influential element for the shaping of the subject's identity. In his words, "life is not governed by will or intention. Life is a question of nerves, and fibres", that is, of the living, animal body (150). Rather than linking the body or animal with sin and degeneration, Lord Henry argues that it is repression of our passions that later haunts us and transforms us "into hideous puppets" (19). Inasmuch as it questions the connection between animality and degeneration, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a proto-ecocritical narrative. On the other hand, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* cannot be said to be the same since, although it agrees in pointing to repression of the animal within as a main trigger of degeneration, it never approaches animality from a place of sympathy. Although irremediable, the animal within is associated with evil, potentially dangerous tendencies. Hence, even when the novel argues for the need to acknowledge and recognise the multifaceted nature of human identity, it does not approach the animal from an ecocritical angle.

These novels take the doppelgänger figure from an individual level to a social level, as they also reflect London's ecophobic demographic and class divisions. The urban lower class is portrayed as the social doppelgänger since both novels situate vice, deviancy and crime at the east of London, the most deprived area of the city where slums multiplied (Dryden 9; Ballesteros 257). This association of the east and its inhabitants with sin and degeneration reinforces the city's geographical and class divide, and transforms EastEnders into insider monstrous doppelgängers (Reynolds 134). At the end of the nineteenth century, London was regarded as a two-faced city, and a "hotbed of physical and mental degeneration" (Ascari 141). This demonstrates how, in these narratives, the dangers of animalisation do not solely affect certain individuals such as Jekyll and Dorian, but that hybridity is an extended phenomenon that affects British society as a whole. Moreover, animality comes from within, both at a social and individual level, since Hyde is part of Jekyll, vanity and cruelty are part of Dorian's personality, and EastEnders are also citizens of London. Hence, although these novels

establish Cartesian and social divisions, they also blur all borders, physical, psychological and geographical, in order to present a society that is inherently hybrid.

Not only do they extrapolate the issue of hybridity to the social fabric, but these novels also seem to suggest that society, not biology, is responsible for the modern subject's degeneration. Starting with *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Jekyll himself explains that the only difference between himself and the rest of the characters is his capacity to transform into Hyde, thus protecting his respectable façade, Jekyll, from social scrutiny. In other words, he directly states that his entire social circle is involved in the same duplicitous lifestyle as he is. Animality is revealed as a common aspect among the bourgeois social circles, and hence, a quality inherent to the modern subject. These irrational or bodily desires are categorised as animal and equated with disease due to the stigmatisation carried out by privileged institutions such as law and medicine. These two fields were, and are still to some degree, regarded as the epitome of objective knowledge, the emblems of progress and civilisation. Therefore, any verdict coming from doctors and lawyers was to be taken as irrefutable truth. In fact, as Sanna remarks, nineteenth-century medicine is responsible for stigmatising certain sexual desires or orientations as types of deviancies. Homosexuality was approached as a disease and homosexuals as a "new species to be studied, analysed, catalogued, and 'explained'". In general, Victorian medicine was at the service of the *status quo*, as it supported the bourgeois, imperialistic and patriarchal set of beliefs and morals that determined what was 'natural' or 'human'. Consequently, it demonised that which was outside of the norm by assigning labels of "atavism, inborn criminality and degeneration" whenever people did not conform to the artificial definition of normativity (Sanna 22). Difference was connected to animality, that is, non-humanity, and was criminalised and persecuted with the help of the legal system.

This institutional persecution of the hybrid subject is portrayed in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. Despite not being able to specify any visual, and so, objective proof to classify Hyde as non-human animal, he is still labelled as such, thanks to the unarguable judgement of doctors and lawyers. Given that all doctors experience the same reaction of ecophobia in the presence of Hyde, Mr Enfield assumes that this makes the reaction universal, objective, and so, enough of an argument to loath and reject the man. The novel gives, however, a different approach to ecophobia, since Jekyll himself does not experience rejection against his animal self, but sympathy and recognition, at least at the

beginning. Moreover, Jekyll provides a different reason for the feelings of ecophobia that Hyde ignites in people. He suggests that the characters' ecophobic reaction comes from being forced to contemplate the animal within the human in an absolute, visible and undeniable way. In other words, whereas the animal within is camouflaged in other people, it is completely evident in Hyde. This prevents the other characters from ignoring the fact that they can perceive the animality and violence emanating from this otherwise polite gentleman. Their continuous attempts to catalogue Hyde as non-human or foreign might actually originate from their unwillingness to recognise the presence of animality in their society and themselves. Through medicine and law, they strip Hyde of his class, of his right to inherit Jekyll's wealth, of his humanity, and ultimately, of his life.

This human-animal, east-west dichotomy is propelled by society itself, as its institutions deny citizens the enjoyment of the same pleasures that the city offers. In Dryden's words, London "breeds its own deviant types", and, at the same time, it hides them from sight by blaming corruption and degeneration on others, such as the poor, the colonised, women, or the atavistic Hyde (88). Henry Jekyll confirms that it is the repression of animality, and not its existence within the modern subject itself, that turns people into monsters. He explains that what "made [him] who [he] was" was "the exacting nature of [his] aspirations", not the presence of "any particular degradation in [his] faults" (42). In other words, his desire to preserve his status as a respectable, upper-class member of society is what propels his fear against his animal side, which is not socially acceptable. Although *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* still portrays animality as something undesirable, it also highlights that it is still an integral part of every member of society. Degeneration happens when the animal within has been so repressed and alienated from the rational self, Jekyll, that it is incapable of controlling the thirst of the animal within, Hyde. Self-hatred and fear is what truly transforms hybrids into monsters.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* agree on the fact that social determinism, that is, institutional and imposed influence, plays a more significant role in the formation of the subject's identity than biology, or inherited animality. Henry Wotton explains that when people are forced to neglect and repress part of their identity, they become "an echo of someone else's music, an actor of a part that has not been written for him". As a consequence, "their own souls starve and are naked", which leads to the creation of a neglected and hungry doppelgänger within the very subject. When suddenly awakened, the subject lacks any sort of control over this doppelgänger. This is firstly, due

to the repression endured, and secondly because they do not feel as if it is a part of themselves, and thus they lack communication between the rational and the irrational sides of their identity. The modern subject is ashamed and regretful of the actions stirred by these animal doppelgängers because, in Henry Wotton's words, people learn to be "afraid of themselves" (Wilde 16). In brief, ecophobia originates in the rejection of that side of oneself that does not conform to established morality and definition of humanity. Therefore, ecophobia is not a natural or biological human reaction against evil, just the other way around: ecophobia, particularly institutionalised ecophobia, is the true culprit for the creation of monsters. As Wilde states in "The Soul of Man Under Socialism", the souls of the poor, and by extension, of the dissident, the different and the rebel are "made hideous by [society's] laws", rather than by their intrinsic evilness (1044).

Dorian Gray is also an example of how the subject's personality is both determined by his biological inheritance and his sociocultural environment. In fact, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* explicitly deals with the idea that the subject not only inherits biological traits from previous generations, but also behavioural ones (Smith II 205). At the same time, Henry Wotton reveals that these inherited behavioural patterns are not natural, but artificial, given that the concept of what a human is and how they behave has changed throughout history. For this reason, Henry considers that "being natural is simply a pose, and the most irritating pose" since trying to behave in what is considered a 'natural' way is another way of regulating your identity, albeit the established one (7). Therefore, classifying people into healthy subjects and degenerates on the grounds of their degree of fulfilment of social rules cannot be justified as being objective. Justification cannot occur even when these rules are backed by science, medicine, and law, institutions that these novels reveal can be subjective, biased, and at the service of ecophobic morality.

Moreover, like Jekyll, Dorian is not an isolated case, a solitary hybrid, but as Henry suggests, he is the perfect product of his society: "the type that the age is searching for, and [...] is afraid it has found" (Wilde 150). His vanity and egotistical tendencies are encouraged by a society that promotes a surveillance approach to life and identity, that is, one that favours looks over matter. Dorian's remorse and self-ecophobia are also a product of the same societal scrutiny, which is represented by the haunting of Basil's moralist ghost. Society is what forces Dorian to live a life of duplicity, and by doing so, he becomes the example of the modern subject: a hypocrite who is afraid and ashamed of his "monstrous soul-life" (Wilde 154). Fear, specifically, fear of moral corruption is what ultimately prompts not only Dorian and Jekyll's degeneration, but also Basil's. This

fear—ecophobia—is what leads to “mad wilful rejections [and] monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial”, which, in turn, result in a “degradation infinitely more terrible” than animality (Wilde 91). In fact, in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Henry is the only main character that survives, and the only one that is not afraid of himself and others. He is also the sole main character that is never persuaded to adopt a Cartesian and ecophobic view that would oppress and repress the body and its animal needs. Instead, he suggests that “action is a mode of purification”, and that “the only way to get rid of a temptation is to yield to it”. Rather than being scared of animality or the body, Henry suggests that categorising certain acts as sins or vices originates in the person’s internalised self-rejection and ecophobia, not in the act itself (Wilde 16).

Against this established so-called ‘natural’ set of morals, Henry argues for the need to let the individual “realise [their] nature perfectly”, without any kind of social judgement and imposition (16). Henry Wotton, echoing “The Soul of Man” and “The Critic as Artist”, proposes a utopian individualist society in which each individual would be freed “from the self-imposed and trammelling burden of moral responsibility”, and thus be capable to pursue self-realisation (Wilde, CA 997). Only when difference of type and freedom of choice are established will people cease to be corrupted by a ‘bad conscience’,¹²⁰ and ‘sin’ will cease to exist. This conclusion is connected to and supports the statement in the preface for the amorality of art which claims that “it is the spectator [...] that art really mirrors” (Wilde 3). In other words, art, like animality, has no meaning in itself, but the viewer is who “sees in it whatever he chooses to see” (Wilde, CA 886). Therefore, neither *The Picture of Dorian Gray* nor Henry’s yellow book are ‘immoral’. It is their readers who, from their socially determined, ocularcentric point of view, regard them as such. In Henry’s words, “the books that the world calls immoral are the books that show the world its own shame” (Wilde 151). Basil and Dorian’s reaction against the ageing image in the magical portrait reveal their inner corruption, since, as the preface indicates, it is “those who find ugly meanings in beautiful things who are corrupt” (3).

Through the example of Dorian, Wilde illustrates that “evolution is the law of life”, and that it is when individual experimentation and development is not allowed that we are dealing with “a case of artificially arrested growth, [...] disease [and] death” (SM 1063). Hence, thwarting individuality is responsible for a potential stagnation and

¹²⁰ The portrayal of ‘bad conscience’ as a diseased manifestation of the individual’s joy in self-punishment is also significantly analysed by Nietzsche in the “Genealogy of Morals” (Magnus and Higgins 49-50).

retrogression of modern society, and embracing difference and animality is the solution. Against the criminalisation of those who are not within the norm, Wilde expresses in “The Soul of Man” that “agitators [...] are [...] absolutely necessary”, and that “without them, [...] there would be no advance towards civilisation (SM 1044). Despite the death of the hybrid other at the end of the novels, it hints at another, non-ecophobic approach to the animal within as the remedy against degeneration. As Dorian reflects, the senses have been condemned as sinful for many years given their connection with “less highly organised forms of existence”, in other words, animals. The body has been classified as inferior and corrupted on those same grounds, denying its key role in determining the subject’s identity. However, as Dorian clarifies, degeneration is the consequence of the “wilful rejections” and the “monstrous forms of self-torture and self-denial” that the established ecophobic and hierarchical mentality promotes (Wilde 91). This anthropocentric binary concept of the human as different and superior to the animal is the original culprit for the creation of the monstrous modern hybrid.

CONCLUSION

This comparative study of *fin de siècle* supernatural hybrids shows how the traditional constructs of humanity and animality determine the way we see others and ourselves. The close analysis of these Gothic narratives reveals that ecophobia, or fear of the animal, was and still is a successful method to regulate people's behaviour in society. This became especially evident during the nineteenth century given the necessary coexistence of different classes and nationalities within the same space. Urbanisation, an incipient globalisation, and the ideological turmoil arising from Darwin's treatises led to the criminalisation of animality (Plunkett 1-19). As reflected by most of the narratives considered here, a physical resemblance with the animal was used to 'otherise' the dissident and transform them into non-human, animal monsters.

The progression from external hybrids to internal ones established in this thesis helps illustrate that ecophobia cannot only be directed towards the animal other, but also to the animal self. Yet, the approach to hybridity or animality is not the same in all Gothic narratives. Despite traditional readings of the Gothic as never siding with the "abomination" (Hurley, "British Gothic Fiction" 206), this thesis has proven that there are Gothic stories that question the negative connotations around animality. Moreover, they present ecophobia and repression of the animal as the actual cause of people's degeneration. I consider that these fictions apply a proto-ecocritical view onto identity since, rather than condemning the body, the senses and imagination as evil, they argue for the need to recognise and integrate these factors as equally legitimate and human elements. In these stories, hybridity is not presented as negative and dangerous, but as inherent and potentially beneficial for the subject when allowed epistemological legitimacy.

This thesis not only demonstrates the existence of proto-ecocritical Gothic narratives, but it also confirms the initial hypothesis that each work's approach to the hybrid is dictated by their visual take on identity and reality. This has been proven by focusing on the way each narrative approaches the body-soul dichotomy. The way these are perceived is very telling of each story's take on the binary human-animal. The narratives that adopt a sight-based perspective support a Cartesian division of the human into an animal body and a human mind, and identify the body as evil inasmuch as animal. In these stories, hybridity is made visibly evident by assigning animal characteristics to

the supernatural creature, and thus facilitating its identification as a degenerate. On the other hand, the soul or moral reasoning, the cogito, is presented as the core of the modern subject's identity and the key element that distinguishes normative subjects from human-animal ones. Consequently, these narratives argue for the need to subordinate the animal within, the body and its needs, to reason or the soul in order to avoid degeneration of the subject. In other words, the narratives that follow a surveillance approach portray identity from an ecophobic perspective. They divide the characters into a human, reasonable side and an animal and dangerous one that needs to be controlled and repressed to guarantee the subject's sanity.

This is not solely the case of *Dracula* and *The Beetle*, novels that feature an external, highly 'otherised' creature. In fact, this thesis proves that it is possible to portray any supernatural creature from a surveillance and ecophobic perspective, regardless of its corporeality. For instance, M.R James's interpretation of ghosts follows a surveillance approach. Rather than invisible beings, James's ghosts resemble Stoker and Marsh's creatures, and are even further de-humanised. Something similar happens to Arthur Machen's interpretation of the hybrid god. Even though Machen's Pan is more of a ghostly entity than James's ghosts, the appearance of his host, Helen Vaughan, is no doubt constructed following a surveillance and Lombrosian approach. Furthermore, the appearance of Jekyll's doppelgänger, Hyde, is also constructed on the grounds of the visibility of degeneracy.

In these surveillance-oriented narratives, ecophobia works as a self-regulatory mechanism that encourages characters to subordinate their bodies and their senses to their reason or soul. In *The Beetle*, and especially in *Dracula*, possessing ecophobic instincts is what ultimately differentiates humans from weaker, hybrid subjects. The possession of an ecophobic soul is what distinguishes Mina from Lucy, as it is the key element that prevents Ms Harker from transforming into a soulless, "foul Thing" (Stoker 190). Ecophobia is also what forces M.R. James's scholars to return their antiques to the place where they found them; the past. Ecophobia is presented as a gut feeling, an instinctual reaction that warns the characters of the dangers of digging into the animal past. This fear of the animal also instigates their need to repress, ignore and forget the knowledge of their irremediable animality.

The role of fear in M.R. James's ghost stories is more complex than it seems. Although it warns the characters against the presence of the abominable ghost, it is also through fear that the ghost manages to reduce protagonists to their utmost animalistic behaviour. When their sense of sight is rescinded by the darkness of night, James's scholars are left to interpret the world around them through their more bodily, senses of hearing, smell and touch. This forces them to realise their reliance on their animal body. Finally, in most of these stories, it is the supernatural hybrid's unwanted touch that actually drives the scholars closer to madness and animality. This suggests that in spite of the author's claims, sex, or fear of intimate contact is very present in his tales.

The fact that the threat of the animal other is of a sexual nature is insinuated in most of the analysed narratives. For instance, the figure of the vampire in *Dracula* has a highly sexual undertone, and the same goes for the Woman of the Songs in *The Beetle*. *The Great God Pan* is, nevertheless, the narrative where the sexual nature of the hybrid other is most obviously stated. In Machen's novella, being introduced to Pan, the god of male sexuality, stands for the characters' sexual awakening. Together with their sexual awakening, seeing Pan also implies a traumatic confrontation with the sudden confirmation of their irremediable animal and bodily identity. Although the initial monstrous sexuality is male, Pan, the threat is lessened by attributing it to his daughter and priestess, Helen Vaughan. Once more, women are associated with the animal and portrayed as temptresses. This diminishes the threat of an inner male animal sexuality and facilitates the destruction of the animal threat, since it is always easier to eliminate an alien enemy than a familiar one. Yet, in *Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde* the male and insider origin of Jekyll's animality cannot be questioned. Even when there are hints so as to a certain animality latent within all protagonists in all of the ecophobic works mentioned above, it is in Stevenson's novella where it becomes most evident. Jekyll recognises Hyde as an integral part of him – "this, too, was myself" (44), he says –, and as already present within himself from before he takes the transforming drug.

Doctor Jekyll and Mr Hyde also questions the assumption of ecophobia as an objective mechanism that warns against the presence of the animal. At the beginning, Mr Enfield validates his instinctive hatred for Hyde when he observes the same reaction in a doctor, a man of science. According to his surveillance perspective, this proves that ecophobia was a shared and objective reaction that lied "much deeper in the nature of man" and, thus, depended on "some nobler hinge that the principle of hatred" stood upon

(Stevenson 39). However, the fact that Jekyll himself, also a doctor, does not experience fear or rejection against Hyde, but a welcoming feeling questions this association. Stevenson's story shows that doctors reach different and often opposing conclusions with regards to science and identity. This novel ultimately reveals that doctors and lawyers can also be driven by selfish or biased motives that, in turn, question the validity of the established ecophobic medical and legal concepts of human identity.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde presents a portrait of ecophobia similar to those of proto-ecocritical narratives. Jekyll begins to lose control of his animal side the moment he starts fearing it and attempting to repress it again. After the murder of Carew, Jekyll decides to never drink the transforming drug again, scared that Hyde would be recognised and captured. However, the animal within is not willing to be cloistered within Jekyll's body again, and starts to break free at will. Repression is what feeds the animal's impatience and anxiety and makes it uncontrollable. Therefore, it can be argued that ecophobia or fear of the animal within is ultimately responsible for Jekyll's decline. Yet, despite presenting repression as the main problem, and human hybridity as irremediable, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* does not approach animality from a sympathetic perspective. Negative connotations around animality are not questioned or dismantled, and the animal continues to be associated with evil, detrimental tendencies. Therefore, although the novel advocates for acknowledgement and management of the animal rather than its systematic oppression, Stevenson's novel cannot be classified as a proto-ecocritical narrative.

Contrarily, the narratives that follow a spectacle-like perspective do defy traditional definitions of animality, identity and objectivity. Vernon Lee and Oscar Wilde's Gothic stories draw attention to the unreliability of reason and sight. This critique of an ocularcentric epistemological approach also implies the questioning of a Cartesian concept of identity. Inasmuch as it questions the objectivity of sight and reason, it also questions their privilege as 'more' human, 'less' animal senses. Consequently, it provides the body and the mind with the same level of humanity. These narratives give more prominence than usual to the rest of the senses, hearing, smell, and especially touch, and present them as equally reliable, epistemological sources. In fact, they argue for an embodied identity that embraces and acknowledges both the body and reason as equally worthy and human.

This spectacle and proto-ecocritical perspective is not reduced to a specific type of supernatural hybrid either. There are proto-ecocritical representations of monsters, gods, ghosts and doubles. For instance, *Prince Alberic and the Snake Lady* is probably the clearest example of a friendly and sympathetic approach to the supernatural hybrid even though the Snake Lady is an external hybrid monster. Although her monstrosity is physically constructed, her personality does not fulfil the stereotypes assigned to animal women. Not only is Oriana presented as a harmless creature, but she is also a positive influence for Alberic, who becomes an intelligent, skilled and strong young man under her tutelage. Instead, the emblems of reason, the Duke and his entourage, are portrayed as selfish, cruel and barbaric. This story challenges traditional representations of monstrosity and normalcy, revealing both concepts as equally subjective constructs. This is highlighted by the fact that the story presents readers with two different interpretations of Oriana's animality, one told by a priest and the other by a story-teller. Whereas the priest classifies the Snake Lady as an evil creature, punished to assume animal form for her sins, the story-teller argues that she was "condemned for no fault, [...] by envious powers" (207). Given that the protagonist decides to believe the second version of the story, the narrative induces readers to wonder whether the animalisation of women is a consequence of their evil nature and behaviour, or an imposed, and so artificial, construct forced on them by "envious powers" (Lee 207).

The hybrid pagan goddess is portrayed in a way similar to the monstrous woman in 'Dionea'. The clues the story provides with regards to her potential animality also follow a surveillance approach. For instance, she is described as having a strange connection with myrtle and doves, that is, nature and animals, and as having uncommon behaviour for a young woman. Despite her apparently perfect and beautiful appearance that defies the visibility of vice, Dionea inspires an intense feeling of fear in the people around her. Even though this shared ecophobic reaction seems to confirm her animality, the narrative also reveals that the invasive love spell she casts on people is, first, involuntary, and second, not evil *per se*. Although her indirect influence leads people to disregard societal norms and follow their instincts, it only becomes fatal for those characters that reject and fight against their awakened animal desires. In fact, Dionea only becomes 'Baleful Venus' when she feels threatened or violated, confirming that she has no ill intent. It can, therefore, be concluded that hybridity in 'Dionea' is not inherently detrimental, but only becomes so when animality is repressed, in oneself or in others.

Vernon Lee's ghost stories represent a further step in the internalisation of the monster. They redirect scrutiny towards the ghost-seer, given the evasive and invisible nature of Lee's hybrid ghosts. Contrary to James's ghosts, Lee's are actual, ethereal spirits that, in order to be seen, need to be firstly perceived through the rest of the bodily senses. This favours the body over sight, and questions its reliability as the all-powerful, all-seeing sense. Moreover, Lee's ghosts manage to escape the protagonists' attempts to depict them, challenging their ocularcentric concepts of identity. Lee's ghosts constantly challenge the protagonists' stereotypes. This suggests that sin, or animality's negative connotations, rests not in the ghost itself but in the eye of the ghost-seer. In fact, among her male protagonists, only Spiridion Trepka in 'Amour Dure' is capable of actually understanding the hybrid ghost. This is because he is the only one willing to abandon his previous surveillance and ecophobic perspective and approach the animal Medea with sympathy and imagination. Furthermore, Trepka is also the only character able to merge with the ghost and become a hybrid character himself.

The Picture of Dorian Gray presents the complete internalisation of the animal and the strongest refutation of the visibility of vice. Dorian Gray not only has an immaculate appearance, like Dionea, but also nobody experiences ecophobia around him. This shows that animality is not necessarily visible, and also that hybrid subjects can pass unnoticed in society. Like Stevenson's novella, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* also questions the idea of ecophobia as a natural warning system within the soul or mind of the normative subject. Moreover, it expands on the idea that hybridity is not the exception, but the norm, as suggested in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. London is indeed presented as presumably filled with hybrid subjects whose animality is as invisible as Dorian's.

The Picture of Dorian Gray shows an alternative and proto-ecocritical approach to the animal within embodied in the character of Henry, characterised by acceptance and exploration rather than fear. Dorian is, however, unable to adopt Lord Henry Wotton's embodied approach. Although he tries, he is constantly haunted by the horrible image of his degrading soul looking back at him from Basil's painting. His ultimate decline is triggered by Basil's confrontation. The moment Basil forces Dorian to regard his portrait from a place of fear and disgust, the young man loses all control over his animal impulses and kills the painter. After this event, Dorian's life is filled with fear and rejection of the monster reflected in his portrait that lives within himself. Therefore, as in Jekyll's case,

fear and self-rejection is what ultimately leads Dorian to the destruction of the painting, killing himself in the process.

Contrary to Stevenson, Wilde's novel questions the negative connotations assigned to the animal and the body and its needs. *The Picture of Dorian Gray* holds a mirror to Caliban's face,¹²¹ encouraging contemporary readers to consider that, rather than animality, it is the intransigently established morality that turns people into monsters. In fact, prior to Basil's murder, Dorian's sins are never fully revealed, and thus the actual degree of their supposed evil nature cannot be confirmed. It is through Basil's surveillance and utilitarian approach that they acquire a negative connotation. As the preface warns, "it is the spectator, and not life, that art really mirrors" (3). It is in Basil's eyes that Dorian's behaviour acquires an evil connotation, in the same way that it is in the reader's eyes that *The Picture of Dorian Gray* might become an immoral novel. Neither Dorian nor Wilde's novels are evil or corrupt in themselves, instead, those "who find ugly meanings in beautiful things [are the ones who] are corrupt" (3). This spectacle approach to vision and identity completely dismantles the connection between an animal appearance or behaviour and sin or evil. On the contrary, it argues that the image, the symbol, is originally void of any cultural or ideological meaning. The social meaning is artificially assigned by the biased subject who, independently or through their status or profession, necessarily projects his or her own preconceived notions of identity onto others and themselves.

Finally, the representation of ecophobia is connected to the way each narrative approaches the phenomenon of influence. For surveillance narratives, ecophobia is an inherent moral compass designed to warn against the supernatural hybrid's influence in order to avoid it. In these narratives, the hybrid's influence is portrayed as an invasive and unavoidable force that reduces characters to animalistic, hybrid behaviour against their will. This allows protagonists to pass the blame of their own animality onto an external hybrid. This way, once the supernatural other is eliminated, so is the threat of their potential animalisation. To counteract this contagious animal influence, these stories usually argue for the need to spread a different, more beneficial type of influence throughout society; one that promotes the established Cartesian morality.

¹²¹ Reference taken from the preface to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: "The nineteenth-century dislike of Realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in a glass. The nineteenth-century dislike of Romanticism is the rage of Caliban not seeing his own face in a glass" (Wilde 3).

On the other hand, in spectacle oriented narratives, all enforced influence is equally evil, regardless of its basis. In fact, it is when normative characters try to impose their ecophobic morality onto others or themselves that they meet degeneration or death. Moreover, instead of presenting the animal's influence as external and all-powerful, these spectacle narratives suggest that for influence to actually stir organic change in the subject, it needs to be invited in. In other words, it is only through the presence of a certain inclination or interest in the subject that any external input can truthfully affect the characters. Of course, this complicates the elimination of the animal threat, since this interpretation situates it *within* the subject. However, inasmuch as proto-ecocritical, these fictions do not necessarily regard animality as a threat. Instead, they argue for the acceptance of the modern subject's irremediable hybridity as essential and beneficial for the progress of civilisation. "The rebel, the wizard" does not only work against progress, but contributes to inspiring the necessary change to incite progress (Lee 226-227). All of these spectacle narratives, and even some of the surveillance ones, like *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, reveal that it is not the hybrid itself, but the isolation and repression of the animal within that actually leads society towards "sterility" and standstill (Dellamora 539).

As Wilde suggests in 'The Critic as Artist', the key to progress may precisely lay in freeing the individual "from the self-imposed and trammelling burden of moral responsibility" (Wilde, CA 997). Only when people are freed from an enforced and unnatural ecophobia, are they capable of embracing their animality as just another aspect of their humanity and identity. In the eyes of decadents and aesthetes, the characters who are able to embrace their hybridity, like Medea and Spiridion Trepka in 'Amour Dure', Alberic in *The Snake Lady* and Lord Henry Wotton in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, become the perfect embodied type, Nietzsche's *overmen* and *overwomen*. Having understood the malleability of morality and of the so-called objective constructs of 'reality' and identity, they have consequently freed themselves from the burden of social and moral responsibility.

Individuality and self-exploration are not synonymous to selfishness in these proto-ecocritical stories. Instead, in Wilde's words, "asking others to live as one wishes to live", that is, imposing any kind of ideology onto people, is the actual selfish act (Wilde, SM 1063). Animality's negative connotations are deconstructed, drawing attention towards the detrimental effects that repression and self-repression have on the development of the subject. Therefore, these narratives offer an alternative, non-Cartesian understanding of

identity, an approach that, inasmuch as it opens the door for the integration of the animal within the human, I consider to be a proto-ecocritical one.

Applying a combination of ecocritical and visual concerns to the study of the *fin de siècle* Gothic questions the very definition of degeneration. It reveals that fear of the animal, and of the animal body is the backbone to nineteenth century constructions of monstrosity. Yet, this study also reveals that ecophobia is not the only reaction to the human-animal, since certain narratives manage to actually dismantle negative connotations around animality. The narratives that I have deemed ‘proto-ecocritical’ argue for the need, not only for the acknowledgment of our own animality, but also accepting it as an integral part of our identity. Portraying repression as the true culprit for the decline of characters, these stories reveal that the animal within is not necessarily a detrimental aspect to identity when it is allowed representation and epistemological legitimacy. If applied, the acceptance of an embodied identity could also affect the way the human relates to animal and natural realms. An ideal society that accepts and celebrates difference and does not stigmatise people based on the animal-human binary, would also be a society that reconsiders the validity of the established hierarchy between human civilisation and the animal and natural worlds. Yet, we are still very far from reaching this embodied utopia any time soon.

Although there have been overtly ecocritical approaches to the hybrid since the nineteenth century,¹²² the animal continues to be used as a key element for twenty-first century constructions of monstrosity in literature and film. In fact, certain *fin de siècle* hybrid creatures, especially vampires, have experienced a popular resurgence in the last century. It would, therefore, be interesting to apply this thesis’ ecocritical approach to recent film or TV representations or adaptations of some of these key *fin de siècle* hybrids. The figure of the vampire, for instance, has suffered great transformations from the abominable human-animal Dracula of Stoker to the attractive vampires in *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), or the infamous Edward Cullen in *Twilight* (2008). Critics have

¹²² Ferrer-Medina gives an example of a contemporary narrative that turns *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*’s logic upside-down: Marie Darrieussecq’s *Pig Tales* (1998). In this novel, the female protagonist sides with wildness and embraces the animal within instead of the civilised part of her identity. Darrieussecq’s representation of the human-animal is an ecocritical one, since in Ferrer-Medina’s words, for the protagonist, “life is not as straightforward. Duality is an ineluctable part of who we are as humans and cannot be resolved into unity. What is more, perhaps the moral order resides not in the civilized, but in the wild world” (Ferrer-Medina 85).

indeed noticed a shift from fear against the alien animal other to identification, sympathy and a romanticisation or domestication of the hybrid's animal impulses (Abbott 110). An ecocritical and comparative analysis of these new cinematic supernatural hybrids against their nineteenth-century forbearers would be a possible future research interest. This way, one could discern whether contemporary depictions of hybridity are still defined by the animal/human binary. Is the animal still a source of fear? How is monstrosity constructed in the twenty-first century?

Another question worthy of further research is whether twenty-first century's depictions and definitions of womanhood still rely on the animal/human dualism. A theoretical framework that approaches this issue already exists; ecofeminism. Ecofeminism emerged in the 1970s, but it was not until the 1990s that it began to be used as a theory in literary criticism (Castellano 77). Although there are different branches, there is a consensus that, as a movement, ecofeminism aims at driving attention towards the connection that exists between all systemic oppressions (Nhanenge n.p). It intends to demonstrate that "social domination" and the "exploitation of nature" are connected. Ecofeminism argues that the oppression that certain groups of people suffer and the exploitation of the animal and natural realms respond to the same patriarchal and anthropocentric ideology that divides living beings into 'selves' and 'others', subjects and objects (Nhanenge n.p). As this thesis also discusses and illustrates, the argument that cements and sustains the hierarchical division between the human and the non-human is the latter's supposed lack of rational intelligence; that is, of the capacity to interpret the world, to be a 'subject'. Ecofeminism goes against this narrow definition of 'selfhood', and in the same way that the proto-ecocritical narratives featured in this thesis do, it argues for the need to create a post-anthropocentric concept of subjectivity that includes the body, the animal, as an integral part of identity (Booth 333). Above all, as Carr says, the aim of ecofeminism is to question and ultimately debunk the "supremacy of the 'sentient'", the hierarchical and restrictive binary that decides who is human and excludes a great percentage of the population (161).

Many of the objectives of ecofeminism, as defined by Carr, are indeed reflected in Vernon Lee's tales. For instance, her hybrid female protagonists reject the stereotypes associated with animality and monstrosity. Rather than regarding animality as negative, Lee's tales show that emotions, and bodily senses are equally valid epistemological

sources (Carr 161-62). Therefore, in the same way that Lee's stories can be defined as proto-ecocritical, they are also proto-ecofeminist. Deepening an ecofeminist approach to the *fin de siècle* Gothic female would therefore be another future line of research I would be interested in pursuing. Particularly, I would like to focus on an analysis of nineteenth century Gothic women as represented by women writers, such as Vernon Lee, Elizabeth Gaskell or Charlotte Perkins Gilman.¹²³ Moreover, I believe it would be even more enriching to establish a comparative study between the portrayal of the Gothic woman in the nineteenth century and current Gothic approaches to female characters by authors such as Margaret Atwood and Marge Piercy.¹²⁴ By comparing presumably proto-ecofeminist approaches to female identity against overtly feminist portrayals of womanhood, one could arrive at a better understanding of the strategies used by writers, and literary critics, to deconstruct and redefine the connotations associated with the animal, and subvert the anthropocentric binary human/animal.

"The Animal Within: An Ecocritical Approach to the *fin de siècle* Gothic Supernatural Hybrid" helps highlight the biased and artificial concepts over which the definitions of animal and human are constructed. Moreover, it illustrates how the nature-culture, animal-human divide influences and defines the meaning assigned to other identity related binary concepts, like male versus female, civilised versus savage or sane versus insane. In all of these cases, the inferiority of one of the elements is established on the grounds of its closeness to the animal, or in other words, its *lesser* humanity. Not only is ecophobia "as present and subtle in our daily lives and literature as homophobia and racism and sexism", but this thesis also suggests that fear or rejection of the animal might actually be the backbone that supports all of these oppressive hierarchical binaries (Estok 208). Ultimately, these anthropocentric divisions affect society's current relationship with the environment. Despite the pressing ecological situation, more attention and urgency is being destined to political, economic or cultural issues. Once more, the human is favoured

¹²³ Gaskell published some Gothic tales, among which it might be interesting to look at *Lois the Witch* and *The Grey Woman*, both published in 1861. Similarly, some Gothic short stories by Charlotte Perkins Gilman like "When I Was a Witch", "The Rocking Chair", "The Giant Wisteria", the famous "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1890), and even the longer *Herland* (1915) would be worth the ecofeminist reading. In fact, some of them, particularly *Herland* and "An Extinct Angel", deal with women identity in connection with nature and an unequal and binary hierarchy.

¹²⁴ Apart from her famous *The Handmaid's Tale* in which women are literally subjugated and reduced to their reproductive capacity, Margaret Atwood has some novels in which she more clearly delves into the animal/human dichotomy, such as *Oryx and Crake*. *He, She and It* and *Woman on the Edge of Time* by Marge Piercy also lean on the 'speculative' science-fiction genre in order to question definitions of humanity and sanity from a feminist perspective.

over the rest of living beings. Yet, as this thesis helps to highlight, humans are ultimately dependant and reliant on their animal bodies and their environment to survive.

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