

# **LITERARY MONSTERS**

**FORM, BODY, AND SPECTACLE IN VICTORIAN FICTION**

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## SAMMENDRAG

Denne oppgaven tar for seg framstillingen av monstrositet i Sheridan Le Fanus "Green Tea," Oscar Wildes *The Picture of Dorian Gray* og Bram Stokers *Dracula*. Jeg har spesielt lagt vekt på hvordan det monstrøse uttrykkes gjennom monsterets kropp, fortellingenes form og i fremstillinger av episoder som har potensial til å skape overveldende visuelle inntrykk (for leserens indre øye).

Det første kapitlet handler i stor grad om hvordan den fysiske manifestasjonen av den onde ånden i "Green Tea" kan tolkes i forhold til en sosial og historisk kontekst, og i tillegg om hvilke litterære virkemidler som er tatt i bruk for å skape en atmosfære av spenning i teksten.

Andre kapittel handler om *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Denne romanen har mange eksplisitte referanser til monstrositet, og i noen av disse tilfellene brukes begrepet på en uvanlig måte. Derfor har jeg forsøkt å tolke disse passasjene.

I det tredje kapitlet undersøker jeg hvordan Draculas kropp er sammensatt av forskjellige elementer som kan betegnes som menneskelige, dyriske og overmenneskelige. Jeg ser også på hvordan romanens fremstilling av spesielt voldelige episoder.

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## CONTENTS

Introduction.....	5
Chapter I: Religion and Suspense in “Green Tea” .....	19
Chapter II: Monstrous Language in <i>The Picture of Dorian Gray</i> .....	41
Chapter III: Hybridity and Violent Spectacle in <i>Dracula</i> .....	59
Conclusion.....	79
Works Cited.....	82

## INTRODUCTION

And from Cain there sprang  
misbegotten spirits, among them Grendel,  
the banished and accursed, due to come to grips  
with that watcher in Heorot waiting to do battle.  
The monster wrenched and wrestled with him,  
But Beowulf was mindful of his mighty strength,  
The wondrous gifts God had showered on him:  
he relied for help on the Lord of all,  
on His care and favor. So he overcame the foe,  
brought down the hell-brute. Broken and bowed,  
outcast from all sweetness, the enemy of mankind  
made for his death-den. (*Beowulf* 61)

In the English epic, *Beowulf*, the hero fights for honour and glory, and to make certain that his name is remembered after his death. The epic celebrates the hero's victory over a powerful enemy that has haunted the Danish king Hrothgar's hall, Heorot, and turned the people away. From the citation above we can see that the epic, which takes its story from a heathen society, has been adjusted for a Christian audience: *Beowulf* combines the heathen ideal of the fearless warrior with the Christian ideal to fight evil on earth. This epic shows that the fascination with monstrosity goes back to the very beginning of English literature.

In spite of the long period of time that has elapsed since Grendel first appeared to terrify an audience, monsters are as fashionable as ever. Vampires are particularly popular these days and appear in films, books and TV series like *True Blood*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *Being Human* and *The Twilight Saga* along with other fantasy creatures. In my thesis I will however go back in time, focussing on Gothic literature and exploring the representation of monstrosity in three works of fiction from the late Victorian period.

The works that will be inspected are Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's "Green Tea" (1869), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). These narratives are all about monsters, but in many ways they differ in how they deal with this

matter: I will focus on how each one of them approaches monstrosity and how they diverge in their perspectives. In doing so, I will to a large degree focus on the following three issues: (a) the appearance and significance of the monstrous body, (b) how text or narrative form interrelates with monstrosity, and (c) the presence and effect of violent spectacles in the fiction.

The short story “Green Tea” by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu was first published in four issues of *All the Year Round* in 1869. Then, in 1872 it was published in book form as part of a collection of stories titled *In a Glass Darkly*. The protagonist of the story is the reverend Mr Jennings who is being persecuted by a small, black monkey that only he can see. This mystery leads the distressed man to consult the renowned physician Dr Hesselius. The doctor spends his time on medical cases that are a little out of the ordinary and have as much to do with the spirit as with the body of his patients. “Green Tea” is built up around the uncertainty of what will happen to Mr Jennings, what the true nature of the monkey is and why it is harassing the increasingly disheartened reverend.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde first appeared in 1890 in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, and an edited and extended version of the novel was published the following year, and this later edition is the one that I will be investigating. At the outset of the book, Dorian Gray is an extraordinarily beautiful and quite innocent young man. After looking at a portrait of himself, he becomes aware of his good looks and he despairs because he knows that he will have to grow old while the picture will remain young and beautiful. Then, a strange transformation occurs: Dorian and the picture change places, so that Dorian's appearance remains constant while the picture grows old in his place. From this point on, Dorian's life is filled with superficial passions and his ability to empathize with others gradually declines.

Abraham “Bram” Stoker’s *Dracula* was first published in 1897. The novel begins with Jonathan Harker’s journey in Transylvania and his meeting with the vampire. Harker’s alarming discoveries at Castle Dracula foreshadow the challenges that the group of friends centred around Van Helsing will have to encounter when the vampire appears in England. Count Dracula is a powerful enemy, so the members of the group must combine their skills and apply every bit of courage they have in their attempt to defeat him. Their hunt for the vampire eventually leads them back to Transylvania where the final showdown takes place near Castle Dracula.

In *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* the authors explain that literature is “above all, about the human, about what it means to be human, and therefore about the non-human, about what it might mean not to be human” (Bennett and Royle 225). It seems that monsters do not just appear in narratives to frighten and entertain us, they are there as constructs against which we can measure our own humanity, and this is apparently why they emerge so frequently in literatures of different times and cultures. The duality of humanity and monstrosity is essential to many narratives, and this is an important reason for my interest in the subject, and for my decision to explore the notion of monstrosity in this thesis.

Before I begin to search for monstrosity in my primary texts, I will have to map out the monstrous territory I am going into. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*<sup>1</sup>, *monstrosity* can among other things describe “an animal or plant ... an organ or part, that is abnormally developed or grossly malformed.” It can also denote something which is “repulsively unnatural” or “aesthetically displeasing.” The word *monster* can be used in a number of connections. In its original meaning the term refers to “a mythical creature which is part animal and part human, or combines elements of two or more animal forms, and is

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<sup>1</sup> All the following dictionary entries are taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*.

frequently of great size and ferocious appearance.” From this we see that the early monsters were results of hybridization. The centaur, sphinx and minotaur are given as examples of such monsters. The term has however come to apply to a wide range of creatures and even some inanimate things; for instance, “any imaginary creature that is large, ugly and frightening,” an extremely cruel individual or “an ugly or deformed person, animal or thing.” The term can also be used to imply that something is extreme or unnatural in a sense or simply very large, sometimes in extended and figurative use. In other cases the word *monster* can even be used to describe “an extraordinarily good or remarkably successful person or thing.” Even though this last application of the term is unusual, it shows that the word can be used in ways that are clearly very different from the ones I want to investigate. I intend to focus on the more familiar attributes of monstrosity, like hybridity, danger, malice and incredibility or strangeness. Monstrosity can be visible in the appearance of life forms or things, but also in actions or forms of mediation.

The etymological origins of *monster* are further related to *demonstration*, “the action of showing forth or exhibiting; making known, pointing out.” The word *monstrance* is also etymologically related to *monster*. It has been used in the meanings “action of showing, demonstration, proof,” and can also refer to an object “in which the consecrated host is exposed for veneration.” From all these related words it becomes clear that the monsters have something to show us. In this thesis I therefore hope to consider of what the monsters represented in “Green Tea,” *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and *Dracula* might be a demonstration.

The works that I have chosen to explore have a number of things in common, apart from their involvement with monsters. All of them partake in the Gothic genre and were written in the latter part of the Victorian period. Another common trait is that they were all written by authors who had an Anglo-Irish background and who to a large extent wrote their

fiction for an English audience. The action in the works mainly takes place in England and in all the works many of the characters are English. Because of these similarities I think it makes sense to choose these works for a comparative analysis. My aim is not only to look for the similarities, though; I am interested in the range of perspectives on monstrosity that manifest themselves in these works.

In this thesis I have chosen the concept of monstrosity as a key to my analysis. A more traditional approach to the theme that I want to explore might have been to view the works in light of their aforementioned participation in the Gothic genre. I could also for instance have explored the works in relation to Irish society and history. Since I find the concept of monstrosity to be particularly interesting, I have however chosen this to be the main focus of my thesis. The late Victorian period bred an abundance of literary monsters, so it was a natural decision to study fiction from this epoch. I think the approach I have chosen will give me the necessary amount of freedom to follow up on trails that seem promising with regard to the stated goal of exploring the significance of monsters in literature. It will lead me into contact with a number of issues. The Gothic genre and the Irish context will be among them, but there will be many others as well.

I have already mentioned that I will mainly focus on the monstrous body, text and narrative form and spectacles, and I would now like to explain my approach in a little more detail. The body of the monster reveals those qualities in the monster that we resent but that perhaps also fascinate us. By analysing the monstrous body it is possible to discover the traits that make each monster unique. The vampiric body of Dracula is an example of a monstrous body and my analysis of it focuses on how it combines human, superhuman and animal characteristics, and how the Count reveals his monstrosity through the transformations between these different forms.

With regard to text and narrative form I am interested in how these interrelate with monstrosity in the fiction. A text for instance has the potential to draw attention to or conceal the monstrous. In *Dracula*, the monstrous nature of the vampire is revealed through the combined accounts of the different members of the Van Helsing group. A result from this method of representing the monster is that the monster is always seen through the interpretive framework or perspective of his enemies.

At certain places in the narratives, episodes are described in a manner which makes them stand out from the text as a whole. These episodes confront the reader with an impression of a striking visual image or sensory effect. I will refer to these occurrences as spectacles. While spectacles can be overwhelming visual displays of different kinds, I will focus on spectacles that are specifically connected with monstrosity. Here the monstrous is described in a manner that makes the violence and horror appear (uncomfortably) close to the reader. The effect one gets from this is similar to what one might experience from visual images, for instance in horror films. Such scenes may produce revulsion in the viewer, but at the same time there may be a desire to keep watching the monstrous; a kind of voyeurism. Since the word spectacle implies something that can be viewed by an audience, it might seem a little odd to use this expression in connection with fiction, but when one is writing about horror fiction it can certainly be a very useful term. In *Skin Shows* Judith Halberstam comments on monstrous spectacles in fiction and film: “In *Frankenstein* the reader can only imagine the dreadful spectacle of the monster and so its monstrosity is limited only by the reader’s imagination; in the horror film, the monster must always fail to be monstrous enough” (3). Although there is no doubt that spectacles in horror films can be extremely unpleasant, Halberstam has a point when she calls attention to how the reader’s mind can produce even scarier images. Although these pictures may be less explicit and are created in the reader’s own imagination, they are still spectacles.

There are many other themes that will be relevant to all the works I am exploring. I have already mentioned the Gothic genre and the Irish context. Victorian society, ideas and ideals, religion and ethics, science and knowledge; all of these certainly play a role in relation to the works I am studying. I will mainly bring them into my discussion in relation to the main focus areas I have chosen, though. These themes are often very closely connected. One can for instance say that belief in science and belief in religion were both Victorian ideals, even if they also clashed with one another in important ways. The rapid scientific developments in the period leading up to the time when the stories I discuss here were written would in themselves have had elements of monstrosity to them, for large parts of the contemporary public, as they questioned old truths and forced people to live their lives differently from previous generations. The challenge to religious beliefs must have been difficult to bear for many people. In this context the new theories of evolution, and in particular the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, are of course very important.

Different theories have been useful for my study of the monstrous. The theoretical approaches to monstrosity that have been most important for my work with this thesis are perhaps the ones authored by Jacques Derrida and Jeffrey Jerome Cohen. Their works introduce a number of different understandings of monstrosity, and they have thereby provided me with rich sources for inspiration in the study of my primary texts. In an interview titled "Passages – from Traumatism to Promise," Jacques Derrida makes some general observations about the topic of monstrosity. He states that: "One of the meanings of the monstrous is that it leaves us without power, that it is precisely too powerful or in any case too threatening for the powers-that-be" (385). This description of the monstrous is relevant to the fate of the Danes, during the twelve long years when their hall Heorot is deserted. Monsters do however need opponents, so finally the hero, Beowulf, appears and he is indeed

powerful enough to kill Grendel. Monsters can never be destroyed once and for all however, so Beowulf must continue to prove his courage in battle with Grendel's mother and finally he must defeat a dragon. In the battle with the dragon most of Beowulf's men let him down, only his loyal thane, Wiglaf, is brave enough to remain by the king's side and take up the fight. While they succeed in slaying the dragon, Beowulf dies after the battle. This reflects the way in which, even though monsters are too threatening for most people, and even though they never stop renewing themselves, they are not invincible for those who are willing to make the required sacrifices – as indeed reflected in *Dracula*, for instance, where the vampire is defeated, but at the cost of Quincey Morris' life.

After speaking about the power of monsters, Derrida goes on to mention a form of monstrosity that we have already touched upon, hybridization; “this composition that puts heterogeneous bodies together may be called a monster” (385). He points out how “monstrosity may reveal or make one aware of what normality is” (385), and how the monster can be simply “a species for which we do not yet have a name ... it shows itself in something that is not yet shown and that therefore looks like a hallucination” (386). Monstrosity can consequently appear in the unfamiliar and the original. In “Green Tea” one of the protagonist's first reactions when faced with monstrosity is indeed to question his own mental health and consider the possibility that he might be hallucinating (24).

Another source that has been valuable to me is Jeffrey Jerome Cohen's essay “Monster Culture (Seven Theses),” where he offers “a method of reading cultures from the monsters they engender” (3). This method is put forward as the following seven theses: I: The monster's body is a cultural body, II: The monster always escapes, III: The monster is the harbinger of category crisis, IV: The monster dwells at the gates of difference, V: The monster polices the borders of the possible, VI: Fear of the monster is really a kind of desire and VII: The monster stands at the threshold ... of becoming (4-20). The significance of these

theses is of course explained in more detail in Cohen's essay, and the points may be more or less valid for different monsters. Since the listing above renders a rather abstract impression of their usage, a material example of how to apply the theses seems to be appropriate. We must remember that the monster manifests itself physically; it shows itself – it is not an abstract notion. As we have already had a chance to look at the plot in *Beowulf* and as this epic provides us with a basic narrative of monstrosity I would like to see if it makes sense to apply Cohen's theses to *Beowulf*. Before I do that I will however have a quick look at how Andreas Haarder has interpreted this epic in *Det Episke Liv*.

Haarder's discussion of *Beowulf* first makes it clear that one has to interpret the hall as a symbol of community; of the peaceful and right order of what human society should be like. Inside the hall people are gathered, but outside in the night the monster approaches from those territories with which people are unfamiliar. The monster reacts against the peace and happiness in the human society (51). The hero, Beowulf, is described as the one who is more determined to uphold his honour and renown than anyone else, and this also means that he is the one who more than anyone else desires to embody the opposite of the monstrous. Beowulf presents an example for others for the reason that people may in fact become like monsters, and that is the most frightening thing about them (56). The hero's valour is thus that he acts according to the norms of human society, however frightening the dangers he has to face may be. If he did not defend these norms, human society would lose its value and existence would have no meaning.

Let us now consider *Beowulf* in combination with Cohen's theses. In relation to the first thesis, "the monster's body is a cultural body," we can see that the bodies of the monsters of the epic are different from each other; the first two are ogres, son and mother respectively, and the last is a dragon. For each monster Beowulf has to fight, the opponent becomes stronger. In spite of their different shapes, it is possible to say that they represent the same

kind of threat, albeit with different force. The monsters all challenge the same norms and try to destroy a balanced and peaceful human society. Both the dragon and ogre are creatures that many people in earlier times imagined might actually exist in the inhospitable corners of the world, and they feared that they might be a threat to their own way of life. Thus, these creatures reflect the beliefs and superstitions of the culture they originate from, and the danger they represent to this culture is clearly visualised by their ability to destroy the hall, since the hall played such a distinct and important role in the society *Beowulf* describes – consequently they gain their significance in relation to a specific cultural phenomenon belonging to the society in whose literature they appear.

The second thesis declares that “the monster always escapes.” At first glance it might seem that this thesis does not apply to the monsters in *Beowulf*, since they are all killed. From Cohen’s essay it is however apparent that the author does not intend this thesis should be subject to such a restricted interpretation. He writes:

No monster tastes of death but once. The anxiety that condenses like green vapour into the form of the vampire can be dispersed temporarily, but the revenant by definition returns. And so the monster’s body is both corporeal and incorporeal; its threat is its propensity to shift. (5)

*Beowulf* reveals with all possible clarity that the fight against monsters is a continuous battle which cannot be settled once and for all. When the hero has defeated one monster, a new one appears, even more powerful and terrifying than the previous one.

The third thesis proclaims that “the monster is the harbinger of category crisis.” Cohen explains that monsters “are disturbing hybrids whose externally incoherent bodies resist attempts to include them in any systematic structuration. And so the monster is dangerous, a form suspended between forms that threatens to smash distinctions” (6). The monsters in *Beowulf* have affinities with humans and reptiles, but they are markedly different from their

natural counterparts. The ogres are stronger than humans, with the exception of Beowulf himself, and they live in the swamp, a habitat highly unappealing to humans. The dragon above all resembles a dinosaur, but unlike any living creature it breathes fire.

In relation to the fourth thesis, “the monster dwells at the gates of difference,” it is important to observe that the monsters who live outside the human domain do not acknowledge the law that this society is based on. They do not respect the social bonds that are created when a ring-giver presents his warriors with gifts and in return expects them to fight for him. The monsters are therefore a threat to the social hierarchy.

In connection with the fifth thesis, “the monster polices the borders of the possible,” Cohen states that “the monster of prohibition exists to demarcate the bonds that hold together that system of relations we call culture, to call horrid attention to the borders that cannot-*must* not-be crossed”(13). We remember from the excerpt cited at the very beginning of this chapter that Grendel is explained to be a descendant of Cain, who as we know murdered his own brother. This is the reason why his descendants have been driven to the outskirts of the human world. Grendel’s domain is therefore a place where righteous people will fear to go; it is the land of those who have committed terrible crimes. In this way the monster becomes an embodiment of the taboos of a culture.

The sixth thesis states that “fear of the monster is really a kind of desire,” and in relation to this thesis Cohen writes that “the same creatures who terrify and interdict can evoke potent escapist fantasies” (17). Even though the monsters we meet in *Beowulf* are manifestations of threats to human community, it is possible to admire or envy their extraordinary power, autonomy and freedom from the restraints imposed by society.

Finally, the seventh thesis proclaims that “the monster stands at the threshold of ... becoming,” and in relation to this point Cohen writes that “monsters are our children” (20). This observation seems to be in accordance with Haarder’s claim that monstrosity in *Beowulf*

is not only concerned with what attacks from the outside, but that monstrosity can also arise from within. When people fail to meet the challenges of monstrosity, this is monstrous in itself, and when humans stop defending the community in the hall, they risk becoming like the lonely creatures that lurk in the periphery of the world. I will leave Cohen for now, but in the following chapters I will occasionally return to his theses and apply them where this seems productive.

In addition to the theoretical approaches mentioned above I have benefited from literary analyses written on my primary texts by a number of authors. Judith Halberstam's *Skin Shows* has been particularly important for my own writing, mainly because of her approach to the subject matter. *Skin Shows* is centred on monsters in Gothic fiction.

In the first chapter, which deals with Le Fanu's "Green Tea," I will focus on the manifestation of the monster and the narrative techniques used by the author. The monster in "Green Tea" might at first sight appear as rather insignificant. It looks like a little monkey, and does not strike one as repulsive in the way that Count Dracula or Dorian Gray's picture do. In the end, however, it turns out that the monkey may in fact be an unusually fatalistic representative of monstrosity. The monkey attacks the psyche of its victim. It seems to be playing on guilt in the mind of the unfortunate man it persecutes, but whether this guilt is justified or just imagined is more difficult to decide. The monkey can be put in connection with religion and religious doubt. It can even be seen as a showing of evil divinity. Implicitly, the monkey can also be interpreted as having some historical implications in relation to evolution and anti-Irish prejudice. In addition to telling the story of a quite unusual monster, "Green Tea" is interesting due to the form of the narrative. An important trait of Le Fanu's writing is the suspense it creates in his readers. In relation to this point I will look closer at how Le Fanu manages to create the semblance of reality in "Green Tea" and at how he is able

to maintain the mystery and constantly confuse and unsettle readers of his fiction until the very end of the story.

In the second chapter I will write about how monstrosity is represented in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In this novel the relationship between Dorian and the picture is of particular interest in relation to the question of monstrosity. Their connection can be seen as forming a hybrid between a man and (what used to be) an inanimate object. There are also several explicit references to monstrosity throughout the novel. To some degree I will explore monstrosity in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* against a wider social and historical background. I will however place a great focus on close readings of the text in this chapter. The novel gives voice to a number of ideas, and this is why I am particularly interested in its own discourse of the monstrous. A wide range of notions regarding monstrosity are expressed in the novel, and these are often contradictory. In this sense *The Picture of Dorian Gray* can be seen as a monstrous hybrid. The conflict between art and ethics is central in the novel and will also be important to my discussion.

In the third chapter about *Dracula* I will again turn much of my attention to the body of the monster. Of the monsters discussed in this thesis, the Count is the most famous. I think it is also safe to say that he is the one that answers best to a common idea of what monsters are supposed to be like: Dracula poses a severe physical threat to his victims and his appearance is one of cruelty and repulsion. He can transform himself into other life forms, and control certain animals. He can also attain power over peoples' minds. This vampire's manner of killing or turning his victims is unnatural and perverted. He is able to spread monstrosity to others, and he has power over those he turns into monsters; death would be a better fate for his victims. In *Dracula* a number of particularly violent scenes are described to the readers, and I will inspect the form and significance of these spectacles. In addition to the monstrous body and spectacles, there is a third aspect of this narrative which I find

particularly interesting: In *Dracula* the vampire is revealed for what he is, hunted down and destroyed through the aid of text: His enemies give their accounts of him, share these accounts with each other and are thereby able to discover his weaknesses. Thus the narrative itself gives the impression that it is closing in on the monster. The different accounts provided by the members of the Van Helsing group, gradually unite to make up the full picture of Count Dracula, like the pieces of a puzzle.

## CHAPTER I

### RELIGION AND SUSPENSE IN “GREEN TEA”

The short story “Green Tea” by Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu is concerned with the ill-fated Reverend Mr Jennings and his companion, an evil spirit in the shape of a monkey. The reverend approaches Dr Martin Hesselius, hoping that this man, who has a reputation for being a highly accomplished physician, might be able to dispel the troubling vision from which he suffers. “Green Tea” was first published in the autumn of 1869 when it was serialized in *All the Year Round*, then edited by Charles Dickens. In 1872 it appeared in a collection of Le Fanu’s stories named *In a Glass Darkly*. This title is derived from St Paul: “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known” (1 Corinthians 13:12).

As we can see, Le Fanu has altered the quotation slightly in his title for the collection of stories. On the one hand, this change actually serves to underline the original meaning of the biblical citation where “the ‘glass’ referred to was a mirror or looking-glass, reflecting not transparent” (McCormack 141). On the other hand, by changing a well-known passage like this one, the author is able to highlight the new connotations that are created by the exchange of *in* for *through*. Whereas the word *through* makes one think of a progression onwards, *in* creates the impression of resistance or even confinement. The gloss therefore suggests that the stories in the collection are not wholly uncomplicated: Their nature is such that they might invite, and even challenge, considerable interpretive energy. In the introduction to the Oxford World’s Classics edition of *In a Glass Darkly*, Robert Tracy claims that the ‘glass’ in Le Fanu’s title “is a mirror in which we glimpse our own darker nature” (xv). This observation also has a more general relevance with regard to stories about monsters, since monsters may,

in a way, be said to function as mirrors that tell us something about what it means to be human.

In my search for monstrosity in “Green Tea,” it seems apt to start with the monster itself, which in this case comes in the innocuous form of a little black monkey. In his essay “Monster Culture (Seven Theses),” Jeffrey Jerome Cohen claims that a monster’s body typically “incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy (ataractic or incendiary), giving them life and an uncanny independence” (4), and also that as “a construct and a projection, the monster exists only to be read ... Like a letter on a page, the monster signifies something other than itself” (4). From this perspective, it would seem that a sensible place to begin the task of a critical interpretation of monstrosity in “Green Tea” would be to figure out what qualities actually are incorporated into the body of the monkey. I also believe it is important to give the medium by which the monster is conveyed its fair share of attention, as it is vital to the manner in which the monster appears to the reader: I will therefore look at how the author uses narrative techniques to bring about the effect of monstrosity in this short story. It is characteristic of Le Fanu’s works to have a strong building up of suspense, and by exploring *how monstrosity reads* in “Green Tea,” I hope to learn more about how he is able to produce this typical effect. Before I go on to consider the monster’s implications in a wider context, I will begin by focusing on how the characteristics of the monkey’s body – or perhaps it would be more accurate to say its physical manifestation – are rendered in the text.

The evil spirit that is portrayed in “Green Tea” may in fact not appear to be so frightening at first sight. Its presence is certainly experienced as highly disturbing by Mr Jennings, but it cannot attack him directly since its body is not solid – something the reverend is able to verify when he pierces his umbrella through the monkey and finds that there is no resistance (cf. 24). According to Dr Hesselius “the spirit is an organized substance, but as different in point of material from what we ordinarily understand by matter, as light or

electricity is” (8). The monkey therefore appears to be more of a psychological than a physical threat to the reverend. In this way the monster in “Green Tea” differs from many other literary monsters whose physique testifies to the bodily threat they pose to their victims. A good example of this type of monster is Dracula, whom I will look at later in this thesis. In the end, however, the demonic monkey in “Green Tea” also proves to be a physical threat (albeit an indirect one) as it finally drives Mr Jennings to commit suicide (cf. 35).

As mentioned in the introduction, the incorporeal nature of the monkey at first causes Mr Jennings to wonder whether he is hallucinating. This will also strike many readers as the most likely explanation of the mystery, even though the reverend soon goes on to assure us sincerely that the monkey really does exist (cf. 24). The suspicion that the protagonist may be suffering from a mental disease is thus one of the possible answers Le Fanu hints at, but as the story progresses a number of other potential explanations are exposed as well. The possibility that the protagonist is mentally ill is relevant for his credibility as a narrator: The readers cannot know if his observations are sound or delusional.

The shape of the evil spirit is first revealed to its unsuspecting victim one evening while the reverend is travelling home from town by omnibus. He first becomes aware of “two small circular reflections ... of a reddish light” (23). Mr Jennings is soon able to recognize the outline of a monkey, and the circular reflections turn out to be its eyes. In time these eyes become a great nuisance to the reverend, because, as he tells Dr Hesselius: “In all situations, at all hours it [i.e., the monkey] is awake and looking at me” (26). Mr Jennings describes the appearance of the monkey in daylight in this manner: “It is a small monkey, perfectly black. It had only one peculiarity – a character of malignity – unfathomable malignity” (26). He then depicts the monkey’s appearance in the dark: “In total dark it is visible as in daylight. I do not mean merely its eyes. It is *all* visible distinctly in a halo that resembles a glow of red embers, and which accompanies it in all its movements” (27).

Mr Jennings' companion follows him around at all times, and he describes the monkey's manner of moving about as quite unpleasant: "I saw the monkey, with that stooping gait, on all fours, walking or creeping, close beside me on top of the wall ... As I stopped so did it. It sat up on the wall with its long hands on its knees looking at me" (24). Even more disturbing is the monkey's ability to mesmerize the vicar by means of its movements:

It used to spring on a table, on the back of a chair, on the chimney-piece, and slowly to swing itself from side to side, looking at me all the time. There is in its motion an indefinable power to dissipate thought, and to contract one's attention to that monotony, till the ideas shrink, as it were, to a point, and at last to nothing – and unless I had started up, and shook off the catalepsy I have felt as if my mind were on the point of losing itself. (30)

One important reason for the sinister impression left by the monkey is evidently that it acts in a manner which plainly reveals its form to be nothing but a disguise. Ordinary monkeys do not mesmerize people, and they do not come up with evil schemes to break a man's psyche. The monkey in "Green Tea", however, can clearly think for itself.

While the shape of the spirit remains the same over time, the intensity of its presence gradually increases. In the beginning, it seems content with watching its victim and looks "sullen and sick" (26-27). Later it finds more active ways of channelling its malice. In the end, the reverend can even see the monkey through his closed eyelids, and it speaks to him, disturbing his prayers with blasphemies and urging him to commit terrible deeds (cf. 30-32). The monkey also interrupts Mr Jennings' services in church. To Dr Hesselius the troubled man explains that "while I was reading to the congregation, it would spring upon the open book and squat there, so that I was unable to see the page" (29).

The physical characteristics of the monkey make it clear that its form is after all relatively ordinary compared to that of other monsters. This is also apparent in how Mr Jennings at first believes the monkey to be someone's "ugly pet" (23). Its glowing red eyes

and halo in combination with unfathomable malignity, however, work to remind us that the spirit comes from hell, to which it also occasionally returns. This is at least the explanation offered for the phenomenon in Swedenborg's religious teachings, of which both Mr Jennings and Dr Hesselius seem to have a high opinion. I will soon come back to the religious theories of Swedenborg as they are presented in "Green Tea." The reverend explains that when the monkey disappears for some time, this happens in the following manner:

It is always at night, in the dark, and in the same way ... there comes the appearance of fire in the grate ... it [i.e., the monkey] draws nearer and nearer to the chimney, quivering, it seems, with rage, and when its fury rises to the highest pitch, it springs into the grate, and up the chimney, and I see it no more. (27)

The monkey's movement through the fire in the grate and up the chimney (like an inverted, diabolical version of Santa Claus) seems like an appropriate way to travel when one takes its destination into account. By the manner in which the monkey leaves, one gets the impression that it is not happy to go, and that it is perhaps forcibly called back to hell. The monkey is of course perfectly clear about its intense dislike of any attempt by the vicar to partake in religious rituals, and it is equally clear that religion is an important component in the make-up of this monster.

One important religious reference in "Green Tea" is presented via citations from Swedenborg's *Arcana Caelestia*. Dr Hesselius comes across these volumes in Mr Jennings' library, discovering that the reverend has placed paper markers inside them. When he opens them at the indicated pages, he finds that some revealing passages have been marked with pencilled lines in the margin. Here is a selection:

When man's interior sight is opened, which is that of his spirit, then there appear the things of another life, which cannot possibly be made visible to the bodily sight ... There are with every man at least two evil spirits ... The evil spirits associated with man are, indeed, from the hells, but when with man they are not then in hell, but are

taken out thence ... If evil spirits could perceive that they were associated with man, and yet that they were spirits separate from him, and if they could flow in into the things of his body, they would attempt by a thousand ways to destroy him; for they hate man with a deadly hatred ... Nothing is more carefully guarded from the knowledge of associate spirits than their being thus conjoint with a man, for if they knew it they would speak to him, with the intention to destroy him ... The delight of hell is to do evil to man, and to hasten his eternal ruin. (14)

Interpreted through the lens of this passage, it appears that – to Mr Jennings’ great misfortune – one of his associated spirits from hell has indeed discovered the reverend’s ability to see him, and is trying to bring about his eternal ruin.

The Swedenborgian passages do not specify exactly how an associate spirit might gain the disastrous knowledge that it is conjoint with a man who can see it. It is however clear that the reverend’s behaviour on the evening when the monkey first appears is extremely unsuitable with regard to concealing the fact that he can see it. His actions serve to prove just the opposite as he first keeps staring at the monkey’s eyes, and once he can make out its shape he pokes his umbrella through it. Swedenborg writes something quite disturbing about this particular issue. He describes his own situation as similar to Mr Jennings, in the sense that he can see into the world of spirits, but with an important difference: “I have been continually protected by the Lord. Hence it appears how dangerous it is for man to be in a living consort with spirits, unless he be in the good of faith” (15). So what does this mean for the poor Mr Jennings? Being a reverend one should think that he would be in the good of faith, but perhaps this is not the case, after all? At one point Mr Jennings in fact says that he is “seized and riveted in ... satanic captivity” (26). Dr Hesselius tries to reassure the reverend by referring to his Shropshire excursion, when he wanted to kill himself, but was prevented from this because his niece would not leave him alone (cf 32). The doctor claims that: “It was the act of God. You are in his hands and in the power of no other being” (33). It is evident that the reverend has a difficult time maintaining his faith, and taking Swedenborg’s words into

account it is not strange that his behaviour seems to indicate doubts about whether God will protect him from the persecution of the evil spirit.

Dr Hesselius makes it clear that Swedenborg's religious writings also include an explanation for the shapes taken by associate spirits: "evil spirits, when seen by other eyes than those of their infernal associates, present themselves, by 'correspondence', in the shape of the beast (fera) which represents their particular lust and life, in aspect direful and atrocious" (15). In his notes to this section of the text Tracy remarks that the monkey is not among Swedenborg's 'bestial forms' (cf. 322). To present the evil spirit as a monkey is consequently an invention of the author. Although one can still expect the shape to reveal something about the spirit, one cannot entirely explicate its significance or motivation on the basis of Swedenborg's *Arcana Caelestia*. Accordingly, it is necessary to go on to consider other sources which can illuminate the question of why the evil spirit has taken the particular form of a monkey.

Now that the monster's physical nature and appearance has been explored in relation to relatively immediate textual evidence, it is time to reflect on its significance in a wider context. Remembering Cohen's claim that the monster's body incorporates fear, desire, anxiety, and fantasy, it will be interesting to see if the reverend's feelings and beliefs can throw new light on what it is that haunts him. This immediately leads us back to religion, since it is central to Mr Jennings' own understanding of his fate. He believes the monkey appeared because of the fact that he, in the period leading up to his sufferings, had been working on a text concerning "the religious metaphysics of the ancients ... the actual religion of educated and thinking paganism, quite apart from symbolic worship" (21). He comes to the conclusion that this was "not good for the ... Christian mind ... Paganism is all bound together in essential unity, and, with evil sympathy, their religion involves their art, and both their manners, and the subject is a degrading fascination and the nemesis sure" (21). When

describing his involvement with the subject, the vicar goes so far as to state that “it thoroughly infected me” (21). Apparently some subjects are so contagious that they threaten to overpower even the most scholarly and moral of minds. The metaphor of ‘infection’ underlines the possibility of a direct connection between the reverend’s involvement with pagan religion and his illness.

The relationship between our unfortunate protagonist’s involvement with pagan religion and the appearance of the monkey is stated so explicitly that there can be no question of its relevance, but then again it seems like the reverend is punished too severely for his offence, for which he has certainly repented. His prayers are interrupted by the monkey and, despite his efforts to resist the creature’s influence, Mr Jennings is aware that he “is drawn in and in, by the enormous machinery of hell” (31). The events that befall Mr Jennings have a lot in common with those that are experienced by the protagonists in “The Familiar” and “Mr Justice Harbottle”, two stories from *In a Glass Darkly* that follow directly after “Green Tea” in the collection. In “The Familiar” we meet with a Captain Barton who, immediately following his engagement to a young lady, notices that he is being pursued by someone. When he ascertains the identity of his pursuer, the captain is astounded because he thought that this person was dead. The man who follows him around looks exactly like someone who was once a member of the captain’s crew, with the exception that he seems to have shrunk. Mr Barton had formed a guilty alliance with this man’s daughter, and he might also have caused the man’s death.

The captain clearly has a troubled conscience, but it is nothing compared to the protagonist in “Mr Justice Harbottle”. This judge does not show any mercy for the people whose fate he is to decide. In a vision the judge is however brought before the even crueller and more grotesque Chief-Justice Twofold and sentenced to death. Both Mr Barton and Mr Justice Harbottle are found dead in suspicious circumstances. Thus Le Fanu, in *In a Glass*

*Darkly*, makes repeated use of a narrative scheme which consists of people being faced with their sins through terrible visions and then suffering a violent death. Still, when we compare these stories, Mr Jennings is definitely the victim who commands the greatest compassion from the reader; the other men have acted mercilessly against fellow human beings, while Mr Jennings is portrayed as a particularly benevolent man. Finally, one might assume that a reverend, due to his occupation, would have some form of extra credit with the higher powers, but maybe it is the other way around: Because of Mr Jennings' profession he should perhaps know better than to meddle with pagan religion, even if it does not take the form of a practical involvement, but is only a subject that he studies from an academic point of view.

In his analysis of "Green Tea," Tracy suggests that Mr Jennings' "studies have led him into pagan mythology, to half-realize that the gods and goddesses of Greece and Rome are metaphors for a sensuality he can neither accommodate nor confront ... Jennings' haunting monkey is an aspect of himself, from whom there is no escape" (xiv). This diagnosis of the reverend's condition immediately makes one think of psychoanalysis, even if this theory was not developed at the time when "Green Tea" was published. In her essay "The Precautions of Nervous People Are Infectious": Sheridan Le Fanu's Symptomatic Gothic, Helen Stoddart reads "Green Tea" and "Carmilla," another of Le Fanu's stories from *In a Glass Darkly*, in relation to Freud's case studies. She focuses on the late nineteenth century association of paranoia as male and hysteria as female illnesses, and both as infectious diseases that pose a threat to society. Stoddart claims that: "Paranoiac sufferers such as Jennings, in their acts of self-destruction, become martyrs, not just to their own nerves but to the contagious fears of the rest of society" (26). Seen against the background of Stoddart's analysis I think it makes sense to ask whether Mr Jennings' illness is in itself the very offence of which he is guilty.

In addition to the issue of unconscious guilt, Tracy also mentions that the "monkey may reflect Victorian anxieties after Darwin's unwelcome suggestion that man was of simian

ancestry” (xiv). He adds that “supernatural stories often reflect their authors’ own anxieties,” and points to the fact that this story was “written shortly after the abortive Fenian rising, and in the year when Gladstone abandoned the Church of Ireland, and by implication the Anglo-Irish, to their fate” (xiv). It seems sensible to assume that “Green Tea” might reflect some of Le Fanu’s own anxieties with regard to the development in the political situation in Ireland at the time and possible negative consequences for the Anglo-Irish. My focus in this thesis will not generally be of a biographical nature, however – I will therefore not speculate about Le Fanu’s personal views – but it is possible to relate this analysis of monstrosity in “Green Tea” to common beliefs held by the Anglo-Irish ascendancy as a group. In that respect certain distortions of Darwin’s theories, and how they relate to Victorian faith, are particularly relevant.

How do the religious anxieties of the author’s own times come to the surface in “Green Tea”? Although the events portrayed in the short story are supposedly to have taken place at the beginning of the nineteenth century, sixty-four years prior to its publication, its representation of religious doubt tapped into what was very much a contemporary concern. I have previously pointed out that Mr Jennings clearly struggles to hold onto his faith. The fact that his daemon takes the shape of a monkey may well indicate that the reverend’s faith is crumbling as a result of the implications that Darwin’s research would seem to have for a Christian believer: If humans share their ancestry with the animals, then the narrative of Genesis is undermined, and if this is the case, then what about the rest of the Bible? Are there still a God and an afterlife to set one’s hopes on? One must remember that while Charles Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* was published in 1859, his *The Descent of Man* in 1871 – so the latter could not have had a direct influence on “Green Tea,” which, as we remember, was first published in 1869. Helen Stoddart’s suggestion to read both *The Descent of Man* and *In a*

*Glass Darkly* “as symptomatic texts, very much of their time” seems perfectly reasonable, though (“The Precautions of Nervous People Are Infectious” 33).

In *Anglo-Saxons and Celts: A Study of Anti-Irish Prejudice in Victorian England* L. P. Curtis, Jr. explains how the Irish and English were believed to possess a number of different characteristics in Victorian England. Ethnographers, ethnologists and anthropologists were busy dividing peoples at home and abroad into categories based on the supposed worth of their so-called race. Darwinian theories were distorted and used as evidence by the enthusiastic researchers of this newly esteemed study of human nature, and “in the rapidly burgeoning field of anthropology some of them stumbled about like the amateurs they were” (29). Predictably these researchers were able to discover that the ruling English possessed much more positive characteristics than the ruled Irish, and the argumentation of the Unionists often owed much “to this ethnocentrism, and throughout the debates on the question of Home Rule the underlying assumption of almost all those who opposed Gladstone’s two bills was that Irish Celts were in no way suited for such luxuries as Anglo-Saxon liberties and institutions” (16).

In another study, *Apes and Angels: The Irishman in Victorian Caricature*, Curtis looks at how the image of Irish people was conveyed to Victorian readers, for instance in magazines like *Punch*. Caricatures of the Irish had hardly been sympathetic in the period leading up to the 1840s, but from this point in time they rapidly changed to the worse:

By the 1860s no respectable reader of comic weeklies – and most of their readers were respectable – could possibly mistake the simous nose, long upper lip, huge, projecting mouth, and jutting lower jaw as well as sloping forehead for any other category of undesirable or dangerous human being than that known as Irish. (29)

The stereotype of the Irish man, Paddy, had come to look more like a monkey than a human being and, according to Curtis, “the changes in Paddy’s features during the middle decades of

the century do seem to reflect a change in attitude among many Victorians about Irishmen and Irish agitation” (29). There was however one exception from the rule about grotesque caricatures of the Irish, and that was the representation of the beautiful Hibernia, the female personification of Ireland.

The existence of such prejudices against Irish Celts can perhaps help to explain why “paranoia is particularly prevalent in Irish Gothic” (26) – a claim made by Darryl Jones in *Horror: A Thematic History in Fiction and Film*. In a section where he comments on the image of *old dark houses*, he states that:

For the Anglo-Irish protestant ascendancy caste, seeing all around them an indigenous population whom they tended to caricature as backward, superstitious, and with a propensity for violence, but who also outnumbered them greatly, the image of the ‘Big House’ simultaneously as fortress against outside oppression and as a prison from which escape was difficult, was a natural one. (26)

This description is interesting in relation to the gloomy portrayal of Mr Jennings’ living environment in “Green Tea.” At one point Dr Hesselius gives an account of the mood in the reverend’s house at Richmond: “The silence, too, was utter; not a distant wheel, or bark, or whistle from without; and within the depressing stillness of an invalid bachelor’s house” (21). Indeed, even as he first approaches the house the doctor is of the opinion that the reverend “would have been much better in a lodging-house, or hotel ... It was a perverse choice, for nothing could be imagined more triste and silent” (20). The doctor also remarks on the atmosphere of the reverend’s house at Blank Street: “I stepped into this perfectly silent room, of a very silent house, with a peculiar foreboding; and its darkness ... helped this sombre feeling” (13).

The impression one acquires from the description of Mr Jennings’ houses is more similar to what one would expect to obtain from that of a prison than that of a home. The atmosphere is heavy, claustrophobic and suffocating. Nevertheless, as a result of the

monkey's appearance, Mr Jennings practically barricades himself inside these houses, away from the prying eyes of society. He is however not able to shut out his enemy; quite to the contrary, the monkey seems to feel perfectly at home. This becomes clear already on the first evening of its appearance: "The brute moved close beside me, and I fancied there was the sort of anxious drawing toward the house, which one sees in tired horses or dogs, sometimes as they come toward home" (26). The monkey's apparent attachment to the reverend's home certainly has a disturbing effect. After all, no one would want anything so 'unheimlich' to feel so 'heimlich' in one's own home.

Mr Jennings' situation of being locked up in his home with the enemy can be interpreted as a metaphor for the general situation of the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland. The monkey would then, according to such a reading, stand as a symbol of the Catholics, whom the Protestants associated with violence due to particular historic events of the time. The monkey's familiarity in the reverend's house would be no more mysterious than Irish Catholics' familiarity with the land belonging to Protestants. As a result of the Ascendancy's awareness that they were living on land which had previously belonged to the Catholics, it is not strange that they should fear the revenge of the former owners, but neither is it strange if some of the more empathetic among them should also feel some level of guilt.

For someone who accepted the derogatory image of the Irish Celts which has been explained above, the prospect of Home Rule would seem like a hazard, and for a devout Protestant the threat of a Catholic takeover in combination with the discomfiting implications of Darwinian theories would present great cause for religious uneasiness. Consequently, these concerns may well have had a bearing on Mr Jennings' troubled psyche – even if they can only be extrapolated from between the lines. In addition to these reasons for religious concern, the more overt presence of the pagan religion of the ancients and the doctrines of Swedenborg is significant in "Green Tea." Whereas the pagan religion is clearly

identified as a danger to the Christian mind, the doctrines of Swedenborg are presented in a more favourable light, as these are approved by both Mr Jennings and Dr Hesselius. According to Sage, however, Le Fanu has applied Swedenborgian theory with a specific intention in mind:

The back-dating also, which may look casual and evasive at first sight, is also important here because it recalls the apparently dead theological pressures of Swedenborgianism at the end of the eighteenth century, with which the story is to be concerned: I say *apparently*, because this is a common pattern of sleight-of-hand in Le Fanu – to reactivate a threat of a theological nature, as Dissent still was in the latter half of the nineteenth century, by back-reference. (204)

In this manner Swedenborgianism leads one to the topic of dissent. It is also worth noticing that even though this particular direction is sympathetically portrayed in the story, the focus is predominantly limited to this theology's explanations for visions of evil, while the equivalent visions of good are not mentioned.

The monkey is apparently 'a religious monster' and, according to Swedenborgian theology, it is the manifestation of an evil spirit which is sometimes in hell and sometimes in the world of spirits, and when in the latter it would like nothing better than to destroy human beings. Because the monkey belongs in hell, its appearance to the reverend can be regarded as a showing of the divine, but not in a benevolent sense: It is a showing of evil divinity.

When divinity is revealed it is typically a terrible and even monstrous kind of event, and this is true both for its good and its evil forms. We may for instance consider the interaction between gods and humans in Greek and Roman mythology. In these stories the gods often visit the human world, but they usually disguise themselves before their encounters with humans. The story of Semele is a good example of how disastrous the revelation of divinity can be to humans. Semele is one of Jove's many human lovers, and when she becomes pregnant with his child, Juno wants revenge (Ovid 93). She tricks Semele into

asking a particular favour from Jove. Semele consequently makes the following request of her divine lover so as to prove his love for her: “Take me the way you take Saturnia in your arms” (94). Sadly for poor Semele she has not realized what an unveiled encounter with divinity will actually be like; so when Jove fulfils her request, her body flames into ashes (94).

As I mentioned in the introduction, Derrida discusses the powerfulness of monsters in “Passages – from Traumatism to Promise,” Jacques Derrida states that the monstrous “leaves us without power ... is precisely too powerful or in any case too threatening for the powers-that-be” (385). This powerlessness is suddenly revealed to Semele in the ancient myth. Likewise, the monstrous influence that Mr Jennings is submitted to in “Green Tea” also proves to be overpowering in the end.

While literary monsters mirror concerns of human life, they are not bound by the limits of nature like us, and we are all glad to see them safely contained between the covers of a book, which we can close any time a monster appears too real. Within the text they are free to roam about in the manner of their inclination, and it is within this context that the author has the power to control their appearance. The narrative techniques used by authors are of course essential in determining what kind of atmosphere we, as the readers of their works, encounter. I have previously mentioned that Le Fanu’s works are characterized by a building up of suspense, and I will now present some of the techniques deployed for achieving this effect – relating this effect to how monstrosity works in “Green Tea.”

Towards the end of “The ‘Uncanny,’” Sigmund Freud mentions some narrative techniques suitable for creating an uncanny feeling in works of fiction. He claims that the choice of a setting which pretends to conform to common reality is vital in this respect: “In this case he [i.e. the writer] accepts as well all the conditions operating to produce uncanny feelings in real life; and everything that would have an uncanny effect in reality has it in his story” (951). When the author then introduces uncanny elements into the story in spite of his

pretence to move in common reality, the readers may feel as if they have been tricked. There is however a way in which the writer can counteract this experience in the readers: “He can keep us in the dark for a long time about the precise nature of the presuppositions on which the world he writes about is based, or he can cunningly and ingeniously avoid any definite information on the point to the last” (951). Finally Freud points out that the author has the power to lead the readers’ emotions in the direction he wants by choosing to focus on the feelings of one character rather than another (see 951-952).

These methods will be familiar to the Le Fanu reader, since this author seems to know every trick in the book as far as literary deception is concerned. “Green Tea” is certainly set in an environment which initially comes across like common reality, so when the monkey is introduced to the story, this clearly produces an uncanny effect. The short story consists of a prologue, ten main chapters and a conclusion, and the author does not reveal the existence of the daemonic monkey until the sixth chapter. This is not to say that the reader is unaware of something being terribly wrong in Mr Jennings’ life – several hints have already been made of this fact – but any information about the actual cause of the protagonist’s troubles is carefully guarded from the reader for a large part of the story. When the information finally begins to appear, the nature of it is still very secretive and uncertain. The fate of the reverend is not revealed to the reader until the last chapter, and the doctor’s diagnosis is not given until the conclusion. For this reason it is not possible for the reader to understand what is really going on in the story until it is over, and the atmosphere of the narrative thus remains mysterious throughout. The author also makes use of the last technique mentioned in Freud’s account. Since Mr Jennings’ experiences are conveyed to the readers in the reverend’s own words, the narrative also conveys his feelings toward the monkey. This strong focus on the protagonist’s point of view is upheld through four entire chapters, from number six to number nine, and provides the suitably gloomy mood for the final revealing section of the story.

In addition to the strong suspense in Le Fanu's stories, the use of framing narratives in *In a Glass Darkly* is a device that draws attention to itself. All the stories in the collection are presented as if they were cases collected by Dr Martin Hesselius in the course of his career, and later edited by his profoundly devoted English medical secretary. The stories are presented as if they have a number of different narrators; the testimony of Dr Hesselius, the anonymous medical secretary and witnesses to the remarkable episodes in question all contribute to the final narratives that are conveyed to the reader. Since there is more than one narrator of the stories, the reader will also expect that there may be more than one reason for the telling of the stories and that there may be different opinions about the events that are narrated. It is also unclear why there should be such a strong focus on who the narrators are in the first place.

Darryl Jones has described some interesting characteristics of nineteenth-century British-Irish Gothic texts that are relevant at this juncture. He claims that: "There is considerable formal pressure to suggest or guarantee the veracity of one's subject matter, in direct proportion to the degree to which that subject was removed from a quotidian 'reality'" (125). Since "Green Tea" deals with events of a supernatural nature the quote above is illuminating as to why Le Fanu should find it necessary to make widespread use of narrative techniques that pretend to document the reality of his story. This practice is however apparently related to Freud's point, concerning how a realistic setting is important if one wants to create uncanny feelings in works of fiction. Le Fanu's abundant supply of evidence in "Green Tea" simply demonstrates a very meticulous application of this principle. The same can be said for the 'Strange Case' format, which was a conventional narrative framework for stories of horror fiction in the nineteenth century. Sage analyses "Green Tea" as an example of this format. He claims that the 'case' in fiction raises strong expectations in the reader's mind with regard to the power of the facts to prove something. These expectations are similar

to those one might feel in an actual legal situation. Sage explains that “the form of presentation instantly calls up a strong and apparently unified set of expectations, of an ‘objective’ set of ‘facts’ which are there to be ascertained, regardless of whether the ‘case’ is a medical, a legal or a theological one” (188).

The narrative techniques that we have looked at so far are all representative for many works of nineteenth century gothic fiction. I would now like to explore a subject which I believe is particularly relevant to Le Fanu’s writing in some detail; this subject is the building up of suspense. The monster in “Green Tea” does not act hastily – for a long time we, as readers, maintain hopes that the reverend can be saved – but then slowly, surely the daemon tightens its grip on the victim and reveals how terrible its power really is. It turns out that it represents a truly fatalistic kind of power; the monkey has only one goal and it has all the time in the world to achieve it. The spirit’s abundance of time and the narrative’s leisurely progress seem to bring about an alliance between content and form in “Green Tea.” The strong feeling of suspense that builds up in this story can be a little frustrating to the reader, because one feels that one is stuck although the narrative is progressing. In this way the reader’s feelings are to some degree coordinated with those of Mr Jennings; they both have to wait patiently for the disclosure of his fate.

The use of suspense in “Green Tea” can be explicated with the help of Roland Barthes. One of his chapters in *S/Z* is titled “Delay,” and here he explains some methods of how the progress of a text can be slowed down. Barthes describes the dynamics of the text as paradoxical; as the text progresses it must strive to “*maintain* the enigma in the initial void of its answer” (75). To achieve this, the ‘hermeneutic code’ “must set up *delays* (obstacles, stoppages, deviations) in the flow of the discourse” (ibid). Between the formulation of a ‘question’ and the emergence of its ‘answer’ we often find a number of ‘dilatory morphemes’. These are:

The *snare* (a kind of deliberate evasion of the truth), the *equivocation* (a mixture of truth and snare which frequently, while focusing on the enigma, helps to thicken it), the *partial answer* (which only exacerbates the expectation of the truth), the *suspended answer* (an aphasic stoppage of the disclosure), and jamming (acknowledgement of insolubility). (75-76)<sup>2</sup>

Applying Barthes' theory to Le Fanu's story will help unveil some of the author's techniques and provide a clear sense of "how monstrosity reads" in "Green Tea."<sup>3</sup>

Arguably, the two most important enigmas in "Green Tea" are the questions: (1) "What is Mr Jennings suffering from," and (2) "What will happen to him?" These two enigmas are intertwined since the reverend's condition is of crucial importance to his fate. Although the reader wonders about what the outcome will be for the reverend throughout most of the narrative, this is a fairly uncomplicated issue which one finally learns the answer to in the tenth chapter, where one is told: "His master had made away with himself" (35). I believe more mystery and literary deception is generated in relation to the question of what Mr Jennings is suffering from, and I will therefore examine this enigma more closely.

Already in the title of "Green Tea" we find a clue to the mystery. Although we don't know what the enigma is yet, we have acquired a piece of its solution. Green tea is one of the factors that have led the reverend into his unfortunate condition, so the title is actually a partial answer. Soon after, we are told that when Mr Jennings is "to engage in the actual duties of his sacred calling, his health soon fails him, and in a very strange way" (7). Here we have a focus on the protagonist's health, which is to be the object of the enigma, and this passage is therefore an example of thematization. In addition, the passage signals the existence of an enigma by the use of the word *strange*. The reader is bound to wonder what

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<sup>2</sup> Other important "hermeneutemes" (morphemes belonging to the hermeneutic code) in Barthes' terminology are 'thematization', 'proposal', 'formulation', 'promise of an answer' or 'request for an answer', and 'disclosure' and 'decipherment' (210).

<sup>3</sup> My description will have to be very selective though, since there are far too many "hermeneutemes" in this story for me to give a complete account of them here. Only a few items that are prominent and significant in this narrative are included.

exactly it is about the reverend's failing health that is strange. In Barthes' terminology, when an utterance makes the reader aware of the existence of an enigma such an occurrence is referred to as a proposal. On the same page we get another description of Mr Jennings: "People, however, remark something odd. There is an impression a little ambiguous" (7). The words *odd* and *ambiguous* make the reader aware that there is an enigma to be solved, and these utterances are therefore more proposals.

In the second chapter Dr Hesselius has a conversation with Lady Mary where he is able to confirm some of his speculations about her vicar. He states that: "to begin with, he's unmarried" (11). Later he says: "Well, either his mother or his father – I should rather think his father, saw a ghost" (12). The first of these statements can be interpreted as a partial answer. The fact that he is unmarried is one of the reasons why he has been able to let his living conditions become so gloomy without anyone intervening. The second statement is also revealing with regard to the reverend's condition, but this one is a little trickier. The reverend is indeed able to see a creature that no one else can see, but it is an evil spirit, not exactly a ghost. It does at least not conform to the beliefs one usually have of ghosts, and the monkey is not described as a ghost in the story. This does not mean that the beings seen by the father and the son would necessarily have had to be of the same kind, or that anyone has been consciously lying about the fact that the reverend's father saw a ghost. The statement does however make an implicit suggestion that the reverend's condition runs in the family. The father's ability to see otherworldly beings is not mentioned again, but in the conclusion when the doctor states that Mr Jennings died as a result of hereditary suicidal mania it is easy to assume that this was derived from his father's side of the family. I should perhaps also add that there is no information, in the story, about how his father died. It is as though the two separate conditions that the reverend suffers from blend into each other, and the limits

between them become blurred. Since this utterance is a mixture of truth and snare it is an equivocation.

As mentioned before, in the sixth chapter Mr Jennings meets his companion: “I soon saw with tolerable distinctness the outline of a small black monkey” (23). This utterance gives us another piece of the puzzle, it is a partial answer. A while later in the story the doctor gives the reverend a promise: “I would give neither time nor thought to any other subject until I had thoroughly investigated his case, and that tomorrow he should hear the result” (33). This is an example of a promise of an answer. At the very end of the conclusion we finally get the disclosure of the enigma; “the complaint under which he really succumbed, was hereditary suicidal mania” (39-40). This is of course only a part of the answer to the enigma but it is the last one to be revealed. From the analysis above it becomes clear that a number of ‘dilatatory morphemes’ of different kinds are at work in “Green Tea,” diverting the reader’s attention from the truth about Mr Jennings’ illness. Since the answer is made up of several parts the truth still seems fragmented, even when all the parts have been revealed to the reader.

There is in fact a lingering uncertainty about Mr Jennings’ condition in “Green Tea.” Perhaps the reader is simply left with too many answers. The clues that are given in the course of the narrative point in so many different directions, that one does not feel at all assured that one has been told the truth by the time the story ends. Even though it is possible to make all the answers add up to a more or less consistent account, one may still get the feeling that a truthful explanation would be simpler, it would not need so many answers; and that perhaps they are not answers at all, but excuses.

Throughout “Green Tea” Le Fanu hints at possible reasons for the reverend’s misery. It is being implied that Mr Jennings is guilty of something: When an evil spirit appears to torment someone, it is expected that there is a reason for it. The story never really satisfies the readers’ curiosity with regard to this issue, but one thing seems certain: The monkey is a

religious monster. Thematically, “Green Tea” is concerned with issues that alludes to pagan rituals, Catholic and dissident religious pressures and the implications of theories of evolution to traditional religious views. The episode where the monkey keeps the reverend from seeing the page of the Bible in church seems to be symptomatic for monstrosity in general in “Green Tea.” As a story about religion and religious monstrosity, “Green Tea” is concerned with the dark side of religion through its focus on hell, evil spirits and an intruding memory of pagan customs. In spite of the ethereal nature of the monkey’s body, it still leaves the reader with a forceful impression. Now we will however leave the spiritual, incorporeal domain of this monster and go on to explore the superficial, material world of Dorian Gray.

## CHAPTER II

### MONSTROUS LANGUAGE IN *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY*

Monstrosity is a hazard to the established order. It threatens to destroy the things we care for in our lives. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* the painter Basil Hallward is faced with his own masterpiece and feels “as if his blood had changed in a moment from fire to sluggish ice” when he sees that the picture has altered (131):

He held the light up again to the canvas, and examined it. The surface seemed to be quite undisturbed, and as he had left it. It was from within, apparently, that the foulness and horror had come. Through some strange quickening of inner life the leprosy of sin were slowly eating the thing away. The rotting of a corpse in a watery grave was not so fearful. (133)

The passage above describes the horrible process of decay in a portrait that was once a singularly beautiful work of art, and worse, it illustrates the effect of corruption on a human soul. The mystery, horror and repulsiveness of the event which is described here make the narrative clearly recognisable as a member of the gothic genre.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* decay is evident in the transformation of the picture and in the amoral life which the protagonist leads. Dorian Gray and his portrait also form the focal point of monstrosity in the novel. When Dorian Gray projects a part of himself into his portrait, the process of creating two closely connected monsters is set in motion: Dorian himself will begin a life centred on his desire to experience as many pleasant sensations as possible, while the picture will transform into a physical manifestation of his gradual moral decline. The return of beauty to the portrait and a natural appearance to Dorian Gray is finally accomplished as a result of his death. In my discussion of the novel I will show how the narrative plays around with the concept of monstrosity in a self-conscious and thought-provoking manner.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* is an important work in the canons of the Decadent and Aesthetic movements, which are closely related to each other. Both of these movements put their stamp on English art in the second part of the nineteenth century and make up part of the production referred to as *fin de siècle*. An important promoter of Aestheticism in England was Walter Pater, an Oxford professor whose work was a great inspiration to Wilde. In the “Conclusion” to Pater’s *The Renaissance* he presents some of his views on art and life.

Pater writes that our experience is made up of “a swarm of impressions” (60). Each impression only lasts for a moment. The author claims that: “Not the fruit of experience, but experience in itself, is the end” (60). From this we gather that Pater sees it as a goal to acquire as many impressions in life as possible and thereby achieve vast experience. He thinks that we should “be forever testing new opinions and courting new impressions” (61). Pater concludes by stating that the best place to look for experience is in art, “for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments’ sake” (62). In his “Conclusion” he also refers to a famous slogan originally derived from French Aestheticism: “Art for art’s sake” (62).

In “Decadence and Aestheticism,” Dennis Denisoff explains that: “From the Latin ‘decadere’, meaning ‘to fall away’, ‘decadence’ was first commonly used to describe a society as it decayed, falling from a state of health and prosperity to one of physical and ethical ruin” (33). The Decadent movement challenged the idea that society “can know one objective reality or that progress to any sustainable ideal is even manageable” (33). Advocates of decadence did not believe that there could be “a common moral basis to beauty and the meaning of life” (32). According to the Decadent movement, art and nature were opposites. This view is reflected in the artistic production of this movement through a focus on its own artificiality. Later in this chapter I will discuss the importance of Decadence and Aestheticism for *The Picture of Dorian Gray* at more length.

*The Picture of Dorian Gray* was first published (serialized) in July 1890 in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*. The reception of the story was however rather harsh and Wilde made numerous changes to the narrative before it appeared in book form in 1891. The novel was now extended from thirteen to twenty chapters, and a preface, which has the appearance of a defence speech – made in advance, since the author apparently anticipated unfavourable criticism – was added. Wilde also made a number of smaller changes, for instance to passages that might be particularly objectionable to his opponents. In this thesis I will use the text as it appeared in the 1891 edition for my textual analyses.

Viewed against the other narratives discussed in this thesis, *Dorian Gray* stands out in the sense that it is not only a story about monstrosity, but was actually suspected of being some kind of monster in itself. This suspicion did not even stop with the novel, but also spread to its author. In his introduction to the Oxford edition of *Dorian Gray*, Joseph Bristow looks at some of the views that were held by reviewers following the publication of the novel in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*. Bristow here gives attention to what he believes is the main reason why *Dorian Gray* by many was considered as an immoral book; its allusions to homosexuality. He also describes how the content of the novel was later used against the author as evidence “to show that Wilde was ‘sodomitical’” in the libel suit against the Marquess of Queensberry in April 1895 (xxxix). Wilde was judged on the basis of more solid evidence than his writing, but as Bristow points out, people’s suspicions of his forbidden relations to other men, were most likely an important reason for the harsh critique that *Dorian Gray* received several years previous to the trial and conviction of its author (xxii).

In this connection the fifth thesis of Jeffrey Jerome Cohen’s “Monster Culture (Seven Theses)” may be enlightening. Here the author declares that “the monster polices the borders of the possible” (12). He goes on to explicate this point by stating that “to step outside this official geography is to risk attack by some monstrous border patrol or (worse) to become

monstrous oneself” (12). From this we gather that one always ought to stay at a safe distance from monstrosity; it is contaminating. In *Dorian Gray*, Wilde failed to shy away from discussing homosexuality, and this apparently caused many reviewers to wonder why he would risk this encounter with a topic that was considered highly immoral and perverse, on his own behalf as well as that of the readers. Could it be that the author himself had been infected with the same kind of ominous disease that he described in the novel? To many conventionally-minded Victorians, the text took on the appearance of a contagious monster and in the end, so did its author.

For contemporary readers the novel has, however, lost its ability to shock. The references to homosexuality that were once regarded as immoral have now lost their edge and can only serve to remind us how fluctuating the borders that separate normality from the abnormal often are. It is an example of how the monstrous may simply be something that has yet to be domesticated; an aspect of monstrosity that Derrida mentions in “Passages – from Traumatism to Promise.” He writes: However monstrous events or texts may be, from the moment they enter into culture, the movement of acculturation, precisely, of domestication, of normalization has already begun” (386). The *Picture of Dorian Gray* has gone through such a process of normalization, but even if the novel is no longer regarded as a monster, its representation of the monstrous is still relevant, and is closely tied up with the connection between art and ethics.

In *Dorian Gray* the reader meets with familiar topics that are treated in an unfamiliar way. The situation that Dorian Gray finds himself in suggests that he has really made a Faust-like bargain with the devil regarding his own soul. Like most literary monsters, the protagonist is finally defeated (by himself, ironically), but because the text is constantly undermining its own discussion of ethics, this ending – which would normally be morally significant – does not come across as entirely satisfactory. Throughout *Dorian Gray* the text’s

own artificiality is highlighted and it seems that no topic is too sacred to escape ridicule. Because of this, it is very difficult to establish whether the novel makes any final or emphatic judgements whatsoever concerning moral issues; and *Dorian Gray* therefore represents a breach with or a parody of the Gothic genre as it deals with cold-blooded murder, manipulation of nature and probably a satanic bargain, in a very playful manner.

It is however clear that whether or not the novel makes any moral judgements in connection with monstrosity, it engages with this subject to a very large extent. *Dorian Gray* seems to convey that the world is full of monsters. There are monsters of nature and monsters of art, monsters of myth and of science, and what emerges as monstrous depends on the observer. I will try to acquire an understanding of the many different perspectives on monstrosity that are represented in the novel, and how these different perspectives affect each other. I will begin by looking at the more obvious cases of monstrosity in the novel, like the protagonist himself and the picture, and other explicit references to monstrosity in the text. I will then go on to explore other factors that I believe can contribute to the understanding of monstrosity in *Dorian Gray*. Finally I will see the different aspects in combination and reflect on how they affect each other.

In *Dorian Gray* the protagonist becomes a monster following the occurrence of a strange symbiosis between him and his portrait, and the picture is likewise turned into a monster. It is perhaps unusual that a dead thing, like a painting, should become a monster, since, as Derrida points out in "Passages – from Traumatism to Promise," "Monsters are living beings" (386). But after the union of Dorian Gray and his portrait has been established, the painting is no longer an immobile, dead object; it changes in rebellion against its nature. It is perfectly possible to see the man and the picture as one being; neither of them can stay alive without the other. When Dorian dies, there are no monsters left; only a dead villain and a beautiful picture.

Dorian and the picture are the most important monsters in this novel, but they are not the only ones. There are in fact a number of references to different kinds of monsters in *Dorian Gray*. In Chapter XI the many sources searched by Dorian for new impulses and sensations are described. Some of the objects that Dorian admires are connected with myths of monstrous creatures. His fascination with jewels leads him to the stories of “a serpent ... with eyes of real jacinth”, “snakes ‘with collars of real emeralds growing on their backs.’”, and a dragon who had a gem in its brain and that “‘by the exhibition of golden letters and a scarlet robe’ the monster could be thrown into a magical sleep, and slain” (115). Dorian is also interested in pearls, and about this beautiful object it is told that: “A sea-monster had been enamoured of the pearl that the diver brought to King Perozes, and had slain the thief, and mourned for seven moons over its loss” (116).

Dorian often looks to literature for inspiration. This is particularly the case when it comes to his absorption in the yellow book that Lord Henry Wotton sends him. This book has been identified by many literary critics as *À rebours* by J.-K. Huysmans, but as Joseph Bristow makes clear in the notes to *Dorian Gray*, Wilde’s references to the yellow book often diverge from the original. The protagonist finds this book highly exciting and in it he discovers stories about people he considers as his “ancestors in literature” (122). Some of these belong to “those whom Vice and Blood and Weariness had made monstrous or mad” (123). Among them are the following:

Filippo, Duke of Milan, who slew his wife, and painted her lips with a scarlet poison that her lover might suck death from the dead thing he fondled ... Gian Maria Visconti, who used hounds to chase living men ... Ezzelin, whose melancholy could be cured only by the spectacle of death, and who had a passion for red blood, as other men have for red wine – the son of the Fiend, as was reported, and one who had cheated his father at dice when gambling with him for his own soul. (123)

The connection that Dorian feels with these people does not present him in a very flattering light. The men described above have, like Dorian, been able to experience sensations that most people do not, and Dorian does not discriminate against them on moral grounds.

When reading *Dorian Gray*, one may sometimes get the feeling that the nature of the protagonist's crimes is shrouded in secrecy. From the novel it is however apparent that he kills his friend Basil Hallward and blackmails his former friend Alan Campbell into helping him conceal the murder, that he uses opium and exploits women and many of his friends. Still, there is an uncertainty with regard to the extent of Dorian's crimes, and in this sense the novel resembles "Green Tea" which also conveys the impression that information is being withheld. The uncertainty concerning the extent of Dorian's actions combined with the allusions to the exceptionally cruel men in the paragraph above makes the reader wonder if Dorian's crimes could be anything like theirs. They are men who the protagonist believes have "made sin so marvellous and evil so full of subtlety" (122). After all we are told that to Dorian "it seemed ... that in some mysterious way their lives had been his own" (122). We know of course that Dorian desires to learn about the subtlety of sensations, and his fascination with monstrous men from the past suggests that evil sensations are no exception.

The rich thematic focus on monsters does not stop with these descriptions, though. In *Dorian Gray*, Wilde also uses words like *monster* and *monstrous* when he is referring to things that do not immediately appear to be monstrous. Some of these references are easily understandable, while others seem rather odd at first sight. Take for instance this peculiar statement made by Lord Henry Wotton: "It is like a bric-à-brac shop, all monsters and dust, with everything priced above its proper value" (14). The description refers to "the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man" which Lord Henry classifies as "the modern ideal" – an ideal which he resents (14). The use of the word *monsters* in this connection is however somewhat mysterious. How exactly can the facts accumulated in a mind be understood as monsters? In

this instance the meaning of the word *monsters* does not seem to cohere with the way this term is usually applied.

Apparently the character who has this opinion, Lord Henry Wotton, likes neither “the mind of the thoroughly well-informed man” nor bric-à-brac shops (14), and his description of their content as something monstrous is a result of this. As odd as his statement might seem, the eccentric character’s views are apparently shared by others. In his *Notes on England* the French philosopher Hippolyte Taine gives the following description of the English mind:

The inside of an Englishman’s head can be very fairly compared to a Murray’s Guide: a great many facts, but few ideas; a great deal of exact and useful information, statistics, figures, reliable and detailed maps, short and dry historical notes, useful and moral tips by way of preface, no all-inclusive vision.

(Cited in *The Spirit of the Age: Victorian Essays* 16)

Coming from a Frenchman one should perhaps regard this information with a healthy amount of scepticism. Taine’s description of how English people tended to learn huge amounts of random information by heart is however very similar to Lord Henry’s description of the English ideal. His opinion that this information is monstrous, might originate in beliefs similar to Taine’s; that the English mind contains an abundance of facts, but few ideas. This would be a flawed approach to knowledge; and we are perhaps dealing with some kind of a method monster here.

The vocabulary that Lord Henry uses to describe this ideal is surprisingly negative. This can be explained by Lord Henry’s manner of speech, as he is always trying to shock and amuse his audience. In addition to Lord Henry’s exaggerated vocabulary, which is caused by his desire to poke fun at thoroughly well-informed men, the facts they fill their minds with are random, unnecessary and out of place. In this sense the facts can be seen as an extension or an outgrowth to their minds that should not really be there, and for this reason they are monstrous; just as sprouting an extra head would be. The goods for sale in a bric-à-brac shop

are also extra, unnecessary items that one should resist the inclination to acquire, some would claim. The facts, as well as the goods, are also of a mixed nature, and they therefore make up a hybrid when they are combined.

Later in the novel, Dorian gives the following description of Mr Isaacs, the Jew at the theatre: “He was such a monster” (44). This is a surprisingly negative judgement on a person who does not display any signs of cruelty in the narrative. The description of the Jew is stereotypical as it describes how Mr Isaacs somehow influences Dorian to enter the theatre and pay a whole guinea for the stage-box. In the introduction I mentioned Derrida’s comment about how monsters are overpowering, and this is also the case here; the Jew has some mysterious way of swaying Dorian’s mind. The labelling of Mr Isaacs as a monster can partly be explained as an expression of anti-Semitic beliefs. Another related reason for the use of the term monster may be the nature of those specific characteristics that are attributed to Mr Isaacs in the narrative. He is described in a manner that makes him appear vulgar and exaggerated. His behaviour is too theatrical for real-life and his outfit comes across as somewhat grotesque, seeing that Dorian claims he was wearing “the most amazing waistcoat I ever beheld in my life ... and an enormous diamond blazed in the centre of a soiled shirt” (43). The striking contrast between an enormous diamond and a soiled shirt highlights the bad taste attributed to the Jew, and combines filthiness and delight in riches, two traits that are central to the prejudiced views held against Jews.

In Chapter IV Lord Henry is thinking about his great interest, the study of human life: “It was true that as one watched life in its curious crucible of pain and pleasure, one could not wear over one’s face a mask of glass, nor keep the sulphurous fumes from troubling the brain and making the imagination turbid with monstrous fancies and misshapen dreams” (50-51). In this passage we see that human life, which most people think of as a good thing, has more sinister associations to Lord Henry. He chooses to observe it from a distance, as an interesting

study; but objectivity is his method, and he will not become emotional about it. In fact, he seems to think of human life in general (not his own of course) as a rather sordid affair seeing that he somehow finds it to be the source of monstrous fancies and misshapen dreams.

As part of the narration of Sybil and Jim's trip to the park in Chapter V we find this peculiar comparison: "The brightly-coloured parasols danced and dipped like monstrous butterflies" (60). Butterflies usually have positive associations connected with them, so the expression *monstrous butterflies* give a contradictory impression; it is like a clash of opposites. Still, it is a representative image; we can easily picture the colourful parasols as butterflies of monstrous size that are being carried around by people who move at their leisure, and how these motions would make the parasols' progress resemble the unsystematic, pleasant movements of a butterfly. In addition to their great size, there is however another reason why the parasols are like monstrous butterflies. The parasols are inanimate objects that have taken on the likeness of living things, and that move as they would do if they were alive. In contrast with the organic make-up of the butterfly, we have the steel and fabric of the parasol.

Immediately following the scene where Dorian kills Basil Hallward in Chapter XIII, there is a description of how the night sky appears to someone who fears being caught red-handed: "the sky was like a monstrous peacock's tail, starred with myriads of golden eyes" (134). This observation expresses Dorian's concern that he might be discovered, that the night is not dark enough to conceal his crime. The peacock's tail can be regarded as monstrous because it is covered with imitations of eyes. These eyes are not in their natural place and there are too many of them. The peacock's tail is also known for its beauty and it is associated with aristocracy and luxury. The sky that is described here is perhaps beautiful, and it draws attention to itself. If the stars are like the eyes of a peacock's tail they threaten to discover you, but they are really blind.

In a section of Chapter XX, Dorian is considering his options, and wonders if he ought to confess his crimes: “Did it mean that he was to confess? To give himself up, and be put to death? He laughed. He felt that the idea was monstrous” (186). At this point in the narrative, what is regarded as right and just by the society Dorian is a part of, appears as monstrous to him. If other people knew his crimes and his unnatural condition, they would think of him as a monster. As it is, however, Dorian finds it monstrous to give himself up, and in one sense this is true; for it is surely unnatural for any living being to assist in its own destruction.

From these examples we can see that Wilde uses the term *monster* in ways that challenge the reader, as many of the usages makes it impossible to narrow its significance down to a single, uncomplicated meaning. This also suggests that language itself inherently possesses a certain monstrousness. It cannot be completely controlled and it has the ability to develop into new and unexpected forms. Monstrous language seems to be a central quality to *Dorian Gray*, but this is not only a result of Wilde’s creative use of language, as in the examples above. By contrasting diverging ways of thinking and through the use of irony and humour the author has accomplished this effect. (The novel is a result of paradox and parody.)

Now that I have had a look at monstrosity as it appears on the surface in *Dorian Gray*, I will have a look at the less obvious implications of monstrosity in the novel. Among other things, I would like to explore how the text communicates with the ideas and ideals of its own time. One thing that complicates monstrosity in *Dorian Gray* is that the protagonist is a rather unusual kind of monster – as he is, in fact, strikingly handsome. This is also his great advantage, because it enables him to follow his selfish desires without anyone interfering. No matter how grave the nature of his deeds are, his appearance always stays the same, even after he has murdered his friend, Basil Hallward. Dorian’s stunning and unchanging looks function as a disguise. In *Skin Shows*, Judith Halberstam stresses the importance of secrecy in *Dorian Gray*: “While Basil’s secret is ... his desire for Dorian, Dorian’s secret is his own portrait.

Desire, in this narrative ... is the secret that art tells and that the subject conceals” (67). Halberstam connects homosexual desire with secrecy in her analysis. While the protagonist commits a number of crimes, sexual acts between men are singled out as the deeds that can only be hinted at, but not mentioned directly.

Since the characters in *Dorian Gray* are so concerned with keeping their secrets and maintaining their respectability in the public eye, one might wonder if the narrative is supposed to be a comment on late Victorian society. Perhaps the novel suggests that the privileged citizens in London at this time were far more concerned with keeping up their appearances than they were with actually living moral lives.

If *Dorian Gray* was meant to be an attack on moral hypocrisy in Victorian England, it was met by a fierce counterattack. Art is the central topic in this novel, but when the novel was first published many people felt that the focus on art came into conflict with ethics. Wilde tried to divert peoples’ attention from the questionable morals of his book and rather focus on its aesthetic qualities through the aforementioned preface. Here he practically gives a recipe for how he feels people should read the novel. Wilde for instance writes that “All art is quite useless” (4), a view which is central to Aestheticism, and goes against the typical middleclass opinion that art should have a function or teach moral values. In “The Preface” Wilde also writes that: “Those who find beautiful meanings in beautiful things are the cultivated ... There is no such thing as a moral or an immoral book” (3). The notion that one should not look for morals in art is in agreement with decadent thinking.

Unfortunately for the author, many people of his own time still felt that there decidedly was such a thing as an immoral book. Furthermore, his attempt to make people see beautiful meanings in beautiful things might not seem like a very good idea when viewed in connection with his fiction, where beauty tends to deceive. After the transformation of Dorian and the picture, Dorian in a sense becomes a work of art; his existence is certainly not natural.

If he is concealing any beautiful meanings, they are, however, hard to find; his beauty is firmly confined to the surface. As we have already seen, the beautiful picture of Dorian also hides a secret that many of Wilde's contemporaries would have deemed immoral, namely Basil's idolatry of Dorian.

Somehow it seems unavoidable that Wilde would fail in his attempt to make people look at his novel strictly from an aesthetic viewpoint. *Dorian Gray* is after all concerned with the human soul; the soul is closely associated with religion, and religion is intimately related to ethics. On the occasion that Dorian's transformation takes place, he is mourning the inevitable ageing of his body and envying the perpetual youth of the picture. He exclaims: "If it were only the other way! ... I would give my soul for that!" (25). When Dorian shows Basil the picture many years later he says: "So you think that it is only God who sees the soul, Basil? Draw that curtain back, and you will see mine" (131). Even though Dorian's character is concealed by his good looks, there are those who seem to know his secret. A woman in an opium den calls him "the devil's bargain" (157).

Dorian's Faust-like bargain with the devil makes him a religious monster. The use of this narrative device signals to the reader that the story will relate to the fate of the protagonist's soul. In the same way as with Rev. Jennings in "Green Tea" a lot of concern is tied up with the question of what will become of the protagonist. Until the very end, the reader is wondering if Dorian will repent and change his ways or if he will remain a monster and be claimed as "the devil's bargain". This uncertainty of the protagonist's destiny functions as an important force that propels the story forwards in both *Dorian Gray* and "Green Tea". Le Fanu's application of religious references strongly contributes to create the appropriate, gloomy atmosphere in his story. Citations from religious writing combined with the creepy nature of the monkey merge features from texts that some people consider to represent the real world in an accurate manner with writing of the entertaining and unrealistic

gothic genre. The religious text thereby lends some of its credibility to the fiction and adds to its sinister atmosphere.

In *Dorian Gray*, Wilde makes use of a familiar plot with religious implications as a framing device. He then goes on to tell his story without the reverence that is typically required for this subject matter – possibly even preaching “a new Hedonism” (111). Blasphemous, Godless villains are certainly not rare in gothic writing, but *Dorian Gray* is as much a parody of this genre as it is a member of it. Religion contributes to setting the stage in *Dorian Gray*; as it does in “Green Tea”, but the effect is not the same. In “Green Tea” the religious references were not particularly controversial, but in *Dorian Gray* they can be interpreted as problematic because it is hard to establish the novel’s stance towards religion. This uncertainty was sure to raise a few eyebrows in Victorian England.

In the end Dorian is bound to lose the battle for his own soul, for as Halberstam comments: In this novel “the body is obviously enthralled to the soul ... Dorian ... represent a failure of self-discipline and that failure is linked to the fact that his soul is separate from his body” (73). It therefore becomes impossible for Dorian to redeem himself after he has traded away his soul. The battle of Dorian’s soul can also be interpreted in a wider context. By the end of the Victorian era there was in fact a battle of a great many souls due to the influence of Darwinism (as well as other scientific discoveries and moral challenges to religion). Darwin’s theory challenged the foundations of Christianity, and the great extent of (circumstantial) evidence testifying to the truth of Darwinism made it difficult to ignore. Two vital Victorian values were thereby set against each other: the belief in God and the belief in science.

In *Dorian Gray* remarks about Darwinism indicates the Victorian reliance on science. There are also other instances where science is discussed. Although the novel soon makes it clear that the symbiosis of Dorian and the picture is a result of supernatural influence, the reason for the picture’s transformation at first puzzles the protagonist: “Was there some subtle

affinity between the chemical atoms, that shaped themselves into form and colour on the canvas, and the soul that was within him?" (82). At this early point Dorian is considering whether the change in the picture could be caused by a scientific process. Similarly, the painter, Basil Hallward, tries to find a logical explanation when he sees the transformation. He tries to convince himself that mildew has got into the canvas or that the change is caused by mineral poison in the paint.

These attempts to find a logical explanation when something seemingly impossible is happening come across as perfectly credible human behaviour. However, both Dorian and Basil focus rather specifically on natural science in their search for answers, and this approach to a problem has a distinctly Victorian tinge to it. In *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature, 1830-1890* Robin Gilmour describes the stabilising effect of Victorian science: "While they lasted ... these stabilities gave the idea of science a confidence and a cultural authority which it had not had before and was not to enjoy in quite the same way again" (111).

I would now like to follow the implications of Darwinism in *Dorian Gray* a little further. This is of course a theory that not only deals with animals, but also with humans. When we regard human beings as animals, this will have consequences for the religious belief that there is a human soul. Earlier in this chapter I mentioned that Lord Henry takes a great deal of interest in the study of human life. His approach to this topic seems to be strangely detached, considering the nature of his studies. My impression is that he is, to some extent at least, trying to study human nature in a scientific manner.

Lord Henry's interest in human nature can be put in connection with his interest in evolution, which he discloses on a few occasions. As an explanation for why "the modern ideal" is to "over-educate" oneself he says that: "In the wild struggle for existence, we want to have something that endures, and so we fill our minds with rubbish and facts, in the silly hope

of keeping our place” (14).<sup>4</sup> A conversation he has with the Duchess of Monmouth about the English similarly reveals his interest:

‘Still, we have done great things.’  
‘Great things have been thrust on us, Gladys.’  
‘We have carried their burden.’  
‘Only as far as the Stock Exchange.’  
She shook her head. ‘I believe in the race,’ she cried.  
‘It represents the survival of the pushing.’ (164)

The last line of the passage above refers to the phrase “survival of the fittest” which was coined by Herbert Spencer and became a kind of slogan for his “Social Darwinism” (*The Victorian Period, 1830-1890* 175).

Evolution can be regarded as monstrous in its very essence. It indicates the possibility that we might slowly be changing into new, unfamiliar life forms, without even being aware of it. And these life forms may not be good; they could just as well be monstrous. Darwin’s theory of evolution is, as previously mentioned closely connected with religious doubt. From a Christian standpoint there is a clear distinction between humans and animals: Significantly, humans have souls and animals do not. Faced with Darwinism it would therefore be likely that religious Victorians would feel a sense of loss. Dorian Gray’s soulless condition could in fact be seen as a representation of this loss. The soul stands as a symbol of all those good qualities that Dorian lack. He is unable to love, so he exploits women and is disloyal to his friends, with the exception of Lord Henry, whom he admires. From an evolutionary viewpoint he can be regarded as quite successful however, since his appearance has an appealing effect on everyone that he meets. Dorian can therefore be seen as a conceivable, but frightening product of evolution.

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<sup>4</sup> In *The Origin of Species* Charles Darwin writes: “Hence, as more individuals are produced than can possibly survive, there must in every case be a struggle for existence, either one individual with another of the same species, or with the individuals of distinct species, or with the physical conditions of life” (67).

Another way to understand Dorian's immoral life is to view it as the natural prolongation of a monstrous past. The dramatic rumours about his parents, who married for love but soon died in tragic circumstances, establish the connection between youth, beauty and love on one hand and dark deeds on the other. Dorian's lonely childhood as an orphan under the care of his mean grandfather completes the fairytale-like cliché, but unlike other beautiful creatures that start their lives in hard conditions, Dorian never becomes good. In him, the beauty of his mother and the cynicism of his grandfather are merged.

It is in the old schoolroom, which Dorian associates with his unhappy childhood, that he chooses to hide the picture. It is also here that he kills Basil and finally himself. Dorian's tragic background provides the story with a suitable frame for a gothic novel, but does not create feelings of sadness or horror in the reader. The tragic events that are described in *Dorian Gray* all come across as artificial and theatrical and this is of course also the point. Wilde's novel studies the world from a distance and pokes fun at human behaviour. In many ways it can be said to take the same approach to the world as Lord Henry does.

An example of the grotesqueness with which characters and situations in *Dorian Gray* are presented can be found in the scene where Jim Vane leaves for Australia and asks his mother to take care of Sybil: "Don't forget that you will have only one child now to look after, and believe me that if this man wrongs my sister, I will find out who he is, track him down, and kill him like a dog. I swear it" (62). One might think that these grave words would disturb his mother, but that is not at all the case. On the contrary, she highly appreciates the melodramatic atmosphere of the situation and comes to feel that "for the first time for many months she really admired her son" (62).

In the scene described above, Jim and his mother come across as ridiculous, and the episode demonstrates why it does not feel very natural to sympathize with the characters in this novel, as well as why it is difficult to know when to take the novel's content seriously.

There are also other aspects than the use of humour that make the interpretation of this novel challenging. The clash of art and morals is particularly important in this respect. The use of a Faustian bargain as a narrative device gives a signal to the reader that the novel will explore a theme which is closely related to ethics, but at the same time there is a number of references to the aesthetic and decadent movements in the novel. As we have seen, the members of these movements believed that art should be criticised only by its aesthetic qualities, and not from a moral standpoint.

## CHAPTER III

### HYBRIDITY AND VIOLENT SPECTACLE IN *DRACULA*

Abraham “Bram” Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) tells a now-renowned tale of the fight of humankind against the monster. Following Jonathan Harker’s imprisonment at Castle Dracula and the strange circumstances of Lucy Westenra’s death, a small group of friends realise that they and the rest of “righteous” humankind are under attack from a devilish fiend, and they put their minds together to rid the earth of his fearsome presence. They must closely consider the strengths and weaknesses of the vampire, so that their quest may be successful. The pursuit of Count Dracula is a dangerous one, where the roles of hunter and prey are often rapidly turned around. In their terrible ordeal the humans must look to their own strengths, and they find that the solution lies in putting to work some human traits which have often proved essential in moments of danger: interpretive power and social feeling.<sup>5</sup>

Dr Van Helsing emerges as the natural leader of the group. He is a brilliant scholar who is updated on the latest discoveries in medicine, but this does not prevent him from keeping an open mind with regard to the possibility of supernatural phenomena when he is faced with unusual or improbable occurrences. Another member of the group, Mina Harker, is represented as a model woman, by late Victorian standards that is. She is intelligent, kind and helpful, and she does all she can to be a valuable aid to her beloved husband, Jonathan Harker. The other men in the group are also very fond of Mina, and when she falls victim to the vampire they all risk death and damnation to save her, in a crucial battle which is not only a matter of life and death, but more importantly about the afterlife. Faced with the humans Dracula, notwithstanding his many advantages, takes a too defensive stand. He believes that

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<sup>5</sup> By “social feeling” I am here thinking of the choice to sacrifice one’s own safety for a greater good, for one’s friends or for the values in which one believes. It is clear that Dracula also has interpretive power, but unlike the humans he has purely egotistic motives for his actions.

time is on his side, and puts security first. This however makes him vulnerable to the humans, who are willing to even sacrifice their own lives in accordance with their ideals.

In this chapter I will imitate the hunt of these brave friends; I am not, however, searching for a monster, but for what might be termed *the nature of monstrosity* in Stoker's novel. At first glance the monsters in *Dracula* can be mistaken for human beings, but on more thorough inspection it becomes clear that they belong at once to a lower and a higher level of existence than human beings. One could perhaps say that they resemble humans in their looks, gods in their powers and animals in their desires. Stoker's conception of the vampire comes about through a combination of these three categories. The features distinctive to these categories merge and create a new and monstrous body. These categories are not always easily distinguishable from each other in the first place, and as they blend into each other in the body of the vampire, they form a unified entity. In its different shapes the vampire takes on appearances that allow it to pass almost unnoticed; even in its humanoid form. However, regardless of its seemingly coherent surface, the vampiric body is clearly a result of hybridization. I will begin my discussion of *Dracula* by having a closer look at how the animal motif functions in the novel.

Dracula possesses several qualities usually attributed to animals. His sharp, canine teeth are particularly white and protrude over his lips. In the novel they leave the marks of "two little red points like pinpricks" (89) on the necks of his unfortunate victims. Jonathan is struck by the Count's hairiness, and particularly the fact that he has got hairs in the centre of his palms. In their footnotes to the Norton edition of *Dracula*, Auerbach and Skal have pointed out that this is "one of Dracula's few affinities with the werewolf" (24) and that "werewolves and vampires are often allied in Romanian folklore ... both are hybrids, prone to nocturnal transformation into animals" (14). The Count's nails are "long and fine, and cut to a sharp point" (24). This gives them a resemblance to claws and in combination with the

fanglike teeth and the unusual hairiness of the Count they give him the appearance of a predator.

When Jonathan observes Dracula's descent down the castle walls he is reminded of the movements of a lizard. In this way the vampire is aligned "with those monstrous proofs of Darwinian evolution, dinosaurs – which Victorian scientists classified as reptiles – rather than with the mammalian bat" (Auerbach and Skal, 39). Dracula's manner of spreading his cloak out like wings and moving downwards with his head first, however, is reminiscent of the bat, an animal that the vampire changes into on several occasions later in the novel. This is for instance the case when Dr Seward follows Renfield to the chapel in Dracula's old Carfax estate: "Then I caught the patient's eye and followed it, but could trace nothing as it looked into the moonlit sky except a big bat, which was flapping its silent and ghostly way to the west" (103).

On the second instance that Jonathan is able to observe Dracula in his coffin, the vampire resembles a leech, and Jonathan is horror-struck by the appalling view that meets him:

There lay the Count, but looking as if his youth had been half renewed, for the white hair and moustache were changed to dark iron-grey; the cheeks were fuller, and the white skin seemed ruby-red underneath; the mouth was redder than ever, for on the lips were gouts of fresh blood, which trickled from the corners of the mouth and ran over the chin and neck. Even the deep, burning eyes seemed set amongst swollen flesh, for the lids and pouches underneath were bloated. It seemed as if the whole awful creature were simply gorged with blood; he lay like a filthy leech, exhausted with his repletion. (53)

This passage goes to the core of what vampirism is about. Dracula's appearance is visibly altered; he now looks younger, but someone has paid a horrible price for his transformation. In addition to the vampire's extraordinary rejuvenation, however, the revitalizing effect of his blood drinking has also left him with a look that is clearly repulsive; his body has swollen like

that of a full leech. Although the image of a leech that drinks blood from a human being creates an effect of repulsion similar to that which is conveyed in the passage above, the leech is not at all such a formidable threat as Count Dracula. Leeches are well known for their extensive use in medicine in earlier times. In some instances their application was useful (and still is), but at other times; when employed to suck the blood out of already drained patients, they did more harm than good. In the relatively harmless little leech one can however perceive the ominous potential of a magnified version of this creature. Unlike the leech, the vampire does not settle for mere drops, but takes parasitism to the extreme, and sucks all life out of its victim.

Dracula's full potential as a bloodsucking parasite is exhibited when he attacks Lucy. At first her weakening is reckoned to be caused by some kind of disease. The physicians are able to detect Lucy's anaemic condition, but they are bewildered as to what has caused her immense loss of blood, and for as long as they are unable to make the proper diagnosis, the vampire can go on quite undisturbed with his dark business. Since Lucy's physicians are highly skilled in modern medicine, they have a hard time believing the real cause of her suffering. For a while they hope to cure her by the application of the most recent inventions that medicine can offer, and ironically this leads them to give her transfusions of their own blood, on which the vampire can further strengthen himself. Thus, in spite of her friends' considerable efforts to save her, Lucy's existence as a human being comes to an end, and Dracula succeeds not only in transforming her into a vampire, but also in weakening his enemies in the process.

On Dracula's arrival in Whitby, he appears in the shape of a large, fierce dog. The vampire's coming to England takes place at night and is accompanied by a great storm. As soon as his ship, the *Demeter*, reaches the shore, Dracula, in his disguise as a dog, leaps onto the sand and runs away in the dark night. In addition to changing his own appearance, Dracula

“can command all the meaner things: the rat, and the owl, and the bat-the moth, and the fox, and the wolf” (209). The animals mentioned above are all associated with danger, darkness, pestilence, parasitism or revulsion, with exception of the dog of course who is usually reckoned to be man’s best friend. The particular dog that Dracula changes into, however, is not an appealing representative of his own species. It may perhaps seem out of character for Dracula to show himself as a dog, but the situation in question requires a suitable disguise, as he is observed by a crowd of people when leaving the *Demeter* and has to blend in among the regular inhabitants of Whitby for a short period after his arrival. (If Dracula had visited Whitby today, however, he would probably not have needed to disguise himself, but would on the contrary have blended in perfectly well among the local and visiting Goths.)

Before I go on with my account of the vampire’s animalistic characteristics, I will have a look at the implications carried by the name of the ship on which Dracula arrives in England. Demeter or Ceres, the Greek-Roman goddess of fertility, is most famous from the myth about her daughter, Proserpina. The latter is abducted to Hades, where she became Death’s wife. In this myth, as it is told by Ovid, Ceres punishes the land of Sicily where her daughter was raped by reclaiming “the gift of grain” (153). During Proserpina’s stay in the underworld she “plucked a dark pomegranate, unwrapped its yellow skin and, and swallowed seven of its blood-purpled seeds” (155). This act binds her unavoidably to the underworld and she is only allowed to return to her mother for six months of the year. Thus, when Proserpina is with her mother it is summer on earth and when she goes back to her husband it becomes winter.

The name of Dracula’s ship consequently carries a wide combination of associations; from fertility, abundance and sunlight to loss, grief, blood, brutality and the bleakness of grey shadow lands. Upon Dracula’s arrival in Whitby, the name of the *Demeter* hints that someone has returned from the underworld, just like Proserpina did. When one compares Demeter and

Dracula it becomes clear that they represent opposing types of fertility: Demeter stands for a healthy, natural fertility, while Dracula gives life in a perverted and unnatural sense to the un-dead. Demeter can make the fields yield in abundance; Dracula is interested in another kind of harvest.

It is also possible to draw a comparison between the fates of Proserpina and Lucy. They are both represented as beloved, childlike virgins who lose their innocence in a violent manner. Proserpina is bound to Death after eating seven blood-purple seeds of a pomegranate, and there is a great possibility that Lucy becomes irrevocably bound to Dracula as a result of having drunk his blood. Although there are no scenes in the novel that show this explicitly – we only see Dracula feeding from Lucy – it seems sensible to make this assumption. In his attempt to win influence over Mina, Dracula indeed forces her to drink from him, and it is likely that he follows the same procedure in Lucy's case. The name of Dracula's ship can therefore be seen as an omen of what will happen when he arrives.

Leaving the world of the ancient gods and returning to the animal kingdom, we may already remark that this pursuit for the nature of monstrosity in *Dracula* entails our covering a great distance. The animal motif is not only evident in that Dracula transforms himself into, resembles and commands certain animals, it is also significant with regard to the union of the vampire and his servant, Renfield, and in connection with the sexually aggressive and predatory behaviour of some of the characters. Renfield's condition is in some ways similar to that of the vampire. Dr Seward classifies him as a zoophagous (i.e., life-eating) maniac. The patient attracts flies by feeding them sugar. Then he feeds the flies to spiders, the spiders to birds, and when Dr Seward refuses to give him a kitten, Renfield ends up eating the raw birds himself, feathers and all. Finally he keeps an account of how many lives he devours. On one occasion he goes as far as to attack Dr Seward and lick up his blood from the floor, after which incident he repeats these words: "The blood is the life! The blood is the life!" (130).

Renfield refers to Dracula as his master and by becoming his servant he hopes to gain access to more lives.

Another aspect of the nature of monstrosity in *Dracula* is the strong focus on the explicit sexuality of the vampires. The portrayal of the females, who are represented as sexually aggressive, would presumably have been regarded as particularly shocking by an audience imbued with the traditional Victorian values regarding sex and gender roles. A famous scene from the novel concerning this issue is Jonathan Harker's meeting with the "weird sisters" in Dracula's castle, which turns out to be a thoroughly unsettling experience for him: "There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips" (42). The two dark vampires urge the fair one on to do just that: "He is young and strong, there are kisses for us all" (42). As she bends over him, Jonathan finds that "There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth" (42). In this passage the fair vampire is explicitly compared with an animal, and the connection between sex and the animalistic is thereby underlined.

The female vampires are also highly in conflict with Victorian values when it comes to their total lack of motherly care for children. As a matter of fact, their conduct on this particular point would be (and should be) in conflict with human societies on a universal basis, but the emphasis on fulfilling the roles of mother and wife in middle-class Victorian society was particularly strong. After her transformation into a vampire, Lucy falls into the habit of luring little children away and feeding from them. The children call her the "bloofer lady" (160), because they are too small to be able to pronounce "beautiful lady". In context of the novel it is clear that Lucy's nickname also alludes to her newfound liking for blood. At a

point the men observe her with one of the children: “With a careless motion, she flung to the ground, callous as a devil, the child that up to now she had clutched strenuously to her breast, growling over it as a dog growls over a bone” (188). This episode of course alludes to and inverts the manner in which women might breastfeed their children or hold them tight to protect them. Instead of acting the role of a caring maternal figure, Lucy is like a beast of prey.

From the episodes described above, regarding the “weird sisters” and Lucy, we can see that there is a connection between *Dracula* and Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*. The fact that the three female vampires have been named after the witches in *Macbeth* is obvious, but the representation of Lucy’s behaviour towards a child also resonates with a passage in Shakespeare’s play where the following words are spoken by Lady Macbeth:

I have given suck, and know  
How tender ’tis to love the babe that milks me.  
I would, while it was smiling in my face,  
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums  
And dashed the brains out, had I so sworn  
As you have done to this. (2590)

The comparison of Lucy with Lady Macbeth, one of the most notorious female characters ever to have been portrayed in imaginative writing, is certainly no compliment to the vampire. The Victorians knew their Shakespeare well, and it is possible that the allusion to his play might have caused some of the audience’s feelings towards Lady Macbeth to spill over to Lucy.

Although it is evident that the female vampires in *Dracula* are callous, they often use their skills to charm and tempt their victims. The children want to play with the “bloofer lady” and even though Jonathan Harker is deadly afraid of the “weird sisters” he still wants them to kiss him. There is apparently a gendered distinction between the vampires on this point which

implies that Dracula is stronger both physically and mentally than his female companions. While the female vampires need to lure and seduce their prey, the Count is able to manipulate his victims' minds to a very large degree; he is cunning and he possesses immense physical strength.

Although Stoker's vampires have succeeded in overcoming death alongside several others of nature's laws, and although they have laid aside every moral principle that they might have cherished in their former lives as humans, it is interesting to observe that their interrelations are represented in a way that conforms to traditional gender roles. Dracula is described as the head of the family, and he is stronger and more intelligent than his female companions. He is further portrayed as the one who puts food on the table (or keeps the wolf from the door, although in a literal sense this is not necessarily so in Dracula's case), and he cannot trust the females to stay away from mischief if he leaves them alone. This is shown in the scene where Dracula gives "the weird sisters" a child to feed from and the scene where the females attack Harker without the Count's permission.

In connection with how vampires are represented in terms of sexuality, gender and hybridity, it is interesting to compare *Dracula* with an earlier vampire story by Le Fanu, "Carmilla," which is one of the narratives included in *In a Glass Darkly*. Many of the characteristics of the vampire that we find in *Dracula* are also present in "Carmilla." The latter narrative is however original for its representation of a lesbian vampire. Carmilla is skilful at concealing her sinister nature and usually comes across as a very pretty young woman to people she wants to deceive. She is also observed in the appearance of "a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat" (278). Carmilla generally preys on young women, but the protagonist, Laura, is first attacked by the vampire when she is a child. In this narrative there is a distinction between ordinary attacks, where the vampire uses force and kills the victim quickly, and attacks where the vampire has a particular interest in the victim.

In attacks of the latter type, the victim becomes the objective of “an artful courtship,” and the vampire “seems to long for something like sympathy and consent” (317).<sup>6</sup>

It is clear that Carmilla has many traits which also are characteristic of the Count featured in *Dracula*, as well as the traits which are typical of his female counterparts. Also characteristics which are defined as distinctly male in *Dracula* were previously exhibited in a pretty, young girl in “Carmilla.” The vampire in the latter of the narratives displays physical strength when she defends herself from the general and when she attacks people in her ordinary manner. She shows mental capacity and cunning when she befriends her victims and drains them of blood, slowly and unexpected, and she exhibits magical power when she appears in the form of a cat. The ability to transform into animals is restricted to the Count in *Dracula*, although the female vampires have some magical power as well; they are for instance able to physically slip through narrow openings.

The most obvious of Carmilla’s masculine characteristics is, however, defined by the role she engages in as a romantic suitor of young women. Both Dracula and his female companions engage in activities that are either overtly sexual – like the “weird sisters” attack on Jonathan Harker – or of an implied sexual nature, like the Count’s attack on Mina (which resembles a rape). These sexualised attacks are however restricted to members of the opposite sex. It is also clear that while the “weird sisters” and Lucy tempt their victims, Dracula applies a more brutal and direct method, and the vampires’ actions conform well to traditional views on gender. In contrast with Stoker’s vampires, Carmilla changes her approach to her victims, so that she sometimes makes an alluring impression on them and at other times engages in a brutal attack.

In my search for monstrosity in *Dracula*, it appears I have taken a little detour from my path; seeing that I started by exploring hybridization and at present find myself looking at

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<sup>6</sup> The relationship that evolves between Laura and Carmilla has similarities to the events that take place in Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s “Christabel” (1816). Here the young heroine, Christabel, is charmed into letting a witch named Geraldine into her home, and into her bed.

Victorian gender roles. Now I intend to get back on track and can start by affirming, on the basis of the above, that the vampires in *Dracula* evidently have a number of animalistic characteristics. They are however marked by their superhuman qualities as well. The most impressive one of these is also the most obvious: namely their ability to defeat death. Like all vampires, Stoker's literary monsters are immortal and can only die from a violent death. Their killing must be carried out in accordance with certain rituals in order to be effective. The pursuit and killing of these bloodthirsty monsters is a rather unnerving task for any hunter to embark on, and the quest to destroy Count Dracula is no exception, as he is a particularly powerful vampire.

In his human shape Dracula appears much like other men, and no one would predict the enormity of his physical power from his looks, although he in fact possesses the strength of twenty men. As mentioned earlier in the text, the Count has the ability to command certain animals; he for instance summons the rats from his basement in the Carfax estate. Since this is apparently not a result of having trained the animals to do his will, one may consider this ability as belonging not only among his animal qualities but also among his superhuman powers. Dracula is also able to "direct the elements: the storm, the fog, the thunder" (209), and this is vividly portrayed on the occasion of his arrival in England. The scene is decidedly an ominous one as the *Demeter* finds her way into the harbour "unsteered save by the hand of a dead man" (78).

One of Dracula's attributes that is particularly dreadful and causes a lot of vexation among his enemies is his ability to control his victims' minds. It seems that both Lucy and Renfield come under Dracula's influence before they have met him. In Lucy's case it seems that Dracula has not even set foot in England when she is affected by his presence. Dracula causes Lucy to leave her home while still asleep and meet him on several occasions, without her having the slightest idea of her terrible danger. She only complains of bad dreams. The

vampire's power over her mind is in fact so great that he is able to keep her in the dark as to the reason of her sufferings. Dracula's power to conceal the truth from his victims is partly explained by his dexterity in the practice of hypnosis, but his power in this field transcends the effect that a human could achieve and takes on a quality of the supernatural.

Like Lucy, Mina eventually also comes under the vampire's influence, and Dracula's power over her is a severe setback to the Van Helsing group. Mina, however, realises a way in which she can still be of use to her friends. Her condition has provided a connection between Mina and Dracula's minds, and when Van Helsing hypnotises Mina at sunrise and sunset, she is able to reveal some facts relating to Dracula's condition and surroundings. Dracula's power over Mina is nevertheless a great disadvantage since it leads to her isolation from the group, and apparently keeps her from plotting against him: She is unable to speak her mind freely and as she draws close to Dracula's castle, Mina can hardly do anything but sleep.

Despite the vampires' many animalistic and superhuman qualities one must not forget that they are after all a lot like humans. At one time (according to the legend presented in the novel) they indeed were humans, and in their immortal form they still look a lot like us, with the exception of a few significant details, prominently the pointed teeth. It is this humanoid appearance with a difference that makes vampires monstrous in the first place. It should be specified that there are no absolute boundaries between the categories of the human, animal and superhuman. For instance, it is not easy to pinpoint exactly which qualities separate humans from the animals.

Hybridization is however not the only thing that marks *Dracula* as a narrative of monstrosity. Another important aspect is the presence of what I have described as spectacles. When one compares this novel with "Green Tea" and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, it becomes obvious that the representation of the monstrous in *Dracula* involves more dwelling upon horrifying episodes. The novel goes into greater detail in describing horrific scenes and, on

the whole, comes across as a more brutal representation than the other narratives. All of these narratives do of course deal with monstrosity, but the moods of the stories are quite different, and in *Dracula*, the thorough exhibiting of things that are brutal, deviant and horrible is particularly important; that is to say the novel takes a rather explicit approach to the task of representing monstrosity.

In *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* Noël Carroll has written about how horror affects its audience. As the title of his book suggests, he attempts to arrive at a philosophy of the horror genre. Carroll argues that this genre is marked by the presence of what he calls “art-horror” (12). This is a term he applies in order to separate his usage of the word “horror” from other usages, such as what one might call “*natural horror*” which takes place in real life (12) or horror which is generated through art but which does not fit in with the genre that is commonly understood as horror (see 13). Carroll defines art-horror in this manner:

Assuming that “I-as-audience-member” am in an analogous emotional state to that which fictional characters beset by monsters are described to be in, then: I am occurrently art-horrified by some monster X, say Dracula, if and only if 1) I am in some state of abnormal, physically felt agitation (shuddering, tingling, screaming, etc.) which 2) has been caused by a) the thought: that Dracula is a possible being; and by the evaluative thoughts: that b) said Dracula has the property of being physically (and perhaps morally and socially) threatening in the ways portrayed in the fiction and that c) said Dracula has the property of being impure, where 3) such thoughts are usually accompanied by the desire to avoid the touch of things like Dracula. (27)

In the definition above ‘monster’ refers to “any being not believed to exist now according to contemporary science” (27).

The fact that Dracula tends to generate fear and repulsion in the human characters of the novel, both in his vampire and animal shapes, is significant in relation to Carroll’s theory of horror. Already on the first night of their acquaintance, Harker notices these qualities in Dracula: “As the Count leaned over me and his hands touched me, I could not repress a

shudder. It may have been that his breath was rank, but a horrible feeling of nausea came over me, which, do what I would, I could not conceal” (24). In relation to this very passage from *Dracula*, Carroll comments: ”For horror appears to be one of those genres in which the emotive responses of the audience, ideally, run parallel to the emotions of characters” (Carroll 17). Harker’s reaction to the vampire’s touch is therefore signifying to the reader that there is some impure quality lingering about the Count, even though Dracula has not been exposed as a monster at this point in the novel. Carroll claims that this impure quality – along with the invocation of fear in other, positive characters – is necessary in an art-horrific monster.

There are many episodes in *Dracula* where these conditions are thoroughly fulfilled. One obvious example is the instance mentioned above where Harker sees the Count in his coffin and is reminded of a leech. The scene fills Harker with repulsion, but it is clear that the monster also poses a physical threat to his wellbeing, as the creature’s thirst for human blood is revealed in this passage. Another horrifying episode that Harker witnesses during his stay at Castle Dracula takes place when the Count gives the three “weird sisters” a bag. Harker recognises a “gasp and a low wail, as of a half-smothered child,” and he is “aghast with horror” (43-44). Finally, Dracula’s attack on Mina should be mentioned as being in the same vein. When the men break into her bedchamber in search of the Count, they are met by an appalling view:

With his left hand he held both Mrs Harker’s hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. ... The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten’s nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink. (247)

When Mina is released of the Count’s grip she gives a despairing scream followed by “a low desolate wail which made the terrible scream seem only the quick expression of an endless grief” (247).

The examples above seem to be in accordance with the aim that emotive responses of the audience should run parallel to the emotions of characters. Carroll's theory may therefore be said to apply to some of the scenes in *Dracula* that are likely to have an emotional impact on the audience, but it does not apply as easily to all of them. There are for instance some complications to the theory with regard to the episode when the heartbroken mother comes to the castle in search of her child. The mother's feelings are overtly expressed through the description of her behaviour, and her cry has an emotional effect on Harker; as he states that it was "in tones which wrung my heart" (48). After the woman has been eaten by a pack of wolves however, Harker states: "I could not pity her, for I knew now what had become of her child, and she was better dead" (49). This (facade of) double communication does not seem to lessen the emotional effect of the scene at all. (To be better off dead is hardly an enviable condition.)

Another spectacle, which is complex with regard to the emotions it invokes, is the scene where the men desecrate Lucy's body. After her transformation to a vampire, the Van Helsing group comes to the decision that it must destroy Lucy, and to achieve this it is necessary to pierce her heart and cut off her head. This action is carried out in an extremely violent scene, where Lucy's former fiancé drives a stake through her heart: "He looked like a figure of Thor as his un-trembling 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" (192). Here the "good guys" perform an operation which undeniably gives a monstrous impression.

Although the target of the violence is in fact a monster, Lucy have previously been portrayed as a positive character in the book, and the other characters are represented as having positive feelings towards her. The act of inflicting extreme violence on her body is therefore a difficult task for them, and it is probable that the audience also share these mixed feelings with regard to the destruction of Lucy. The killing of Lucy the vampire consequently

comes across as a terrible scene for other reasons than those which usually make the killing of monsters shocking. This killing invokes feelings of regret and sympathy with the monster, whereas the killing of a “typical monster” might involve feelings of fear and disgust directed towards the monster and a wish for the monster’s death. The emotional impact of the scene where Lucy is killed is not reduced however, since the memories of her former condition as a positive character in the narrative makes one feel almost as if a positive character is being murdered.

The violent scenes mentioned above all come across as spectacles. Some of them conform well to Carroll’s views, while others show that monstrous spectacles in horror stories come in different versions. When episodes of brutality are described in great detail one can assume that they are intended to create some kind of unpleasant emotion in the reader, even if these emotions may differ to some degree from the emotions of positive characters. In the scene where Lucy is destroyed, it is for instance very likely that some readers might feel disgust or resentment which is directed against the Van Helsing group instead of the monster. Even though the feelings of modern readers are likely to be different from the feelings of positive characters with regard to the episode where Lucy is killed, we must remember that the general attitude of a Victorian audience might nevertheless have been in agreement with the feelings of the members of the Van Helsing group. Lucy’s transgression of gender roles is likely to have made a greater and more negative impression on Stoker’s contemporaries than on present day readers because of the official, Victorian distaste for “licentious” women.

Now that we have seen the skills that Dracula can avail himself of and the brutality he demonstrates in his actions, it seems strange that anyone would dare to challenge him at all. Where there is a monster there is usually also a hero, however, and *Dracula* is no exception to this rule. In the course of the action played out in the novel, something happens with regard to the vampire’s power. When Jonathan Harker is imprisoned in Castle Dracula, his situation

seems desperate, but yet, he escapes. Still, the Count clearly has the upper hand. He travels to England and challenges Harker and his friends at home. For a while the vampire appears to be invincible, but with Van Helsing's arrival on the scene, things start to look up for the humans.

The group is eventually able to chase the vampire from the country. This is in itself quite remarkable; the superior and powerful vampire we meet in the beginning of the novel seems very different from the fleeing, unconfident creature we see towards the end. When Dracula again arrives at the Castle his enemies are waiting for him, and at this point in the narrative the vampire is not even strong enough to defeat them at his own home ground. In the conclusion of this chapter I will focus on this remarkable hunt and look at how the Van Helsing group manages to *bring the monster down to size*.

Earlier I mentioned that the Van Helsing group displays interpretive power and social feeling and that they are willing to make large sacrifices in the process of defeating the monster. The serious commitment to moral standards that the members of this group shares is obviously an important reason for the eventual success of their mission. There are however a few other elements that prove to be crucial for the happy outcome of their quest, and these can be summed up as the use of religious rituals, scientific inventions and textuality.

Even though there is a strong focus on the advantages offered by modern scientific developments in *Dracula*, the novel is also concerned with old knowledge. When one is going to fight supernatural beings it is generally very useful to be familiar with the traditional ways of dispelling such creatures. In *Dracula* it is Van Helsing who sees the necessity of applying traditional rituals to destroy the vampires, and he is able to provide the group with the necessary information. He for instance knows that crucifixes, garlic and communion wafers can be very useful to ward off vampires and that one may place the branch of a wild rose on the vampire's coffin to prevent it from escaping. The vampire can be killed when shot by a sacred bullet, beheaded or pierced through the heart with a stake.

In the hunt for Count Dracula, the old world meets modernity and traditional superstition meets up-to-date science. As a gothic work *Dracula* stands out due to its focus on modernity. Sure, the initial setting in Transylvania conforms well to gothic standards, but the vampire's arrival in London is a little out of the ordinary. At the end of the nineteenth century this city was the heart of the British Empire and held the status as a beacon of civilization; no place for an ancient creature usually confined to myths. In this modern setting, the humans have a number of clever inventions at hand, and the Van Helsing group shows great motivation to avail itself of new discoveries that may give its members an advantage in their confrontation with Count Dracula.

This is for instance apparent when Van Helsing carries out several blood transfusions between the men and Lucy in an attempt to counteract her strange loss of blood. Some of the group's members are acquainted with phrenology, a method of telling people's character by interpreting their cranial features. This was previously reckoned to be a scientific approach to this subject. Mina and Jonathan practice shorthand, an efficient way of writing in code. Mina is also competent at using the typewriter, and Dr Seward applies a phonograph to record his diary. The ready application of inventions and methods that can improve the efficiency of their work is an asset to the group, and the approach that they have to the mission altogether is generally marked by professionalism and good organization. Mina can be seen as an incarnation of this attitude, as she works continuously to improve herself; for instance by memorising the train tables<sup>7</sup> and practicing her typewriting.

When it becomes clear that they are in fact dealing with a vampire, all the members of the Van Helsing group share the evidence they have obtained about vampirism with each other. As the group's secretary, Mina compiles the different accounts into one large document, which she writes out on her typewriter. Thus the group's members are able to

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<sup>7</sup> The fact that Mina has made an effort to learn the train tables by heart seems to support Hippolyte Taine's claim, which we looked at in chapter II, that English people tend to fill their heads with "a great deal of exact and useful information" (16).

acquire an overview of information from a variety of sources. This makes them acknowledge the severity of the events they are involved in and the importance to continue documenting these astonishing experiences. The narrative as a whole therefore consists of bits and pieces collected or authored by different members of the group. This includes diaries and journals, a number of letters, telegrams, newspaper clippings and Van Helsing's memorandum. Through these documents the group manages to gain an understanding of the vampire's behaviour and also of his weaknesses.

Gradually, the group succeeds in illuminating the dark secrets of the vampire's existence, and parallel with this process, the previously looming threat of the Count appears to grow smaller. When he is challenged, Dracula actually flees back to his native country, but the members of the Van Helsing group follow close behind him. The destruction of the Count is surprisingly enough described in much less detail than the killing of Lucy. The latter of these episodes is also described in a manner which exposes the appalling nature of the event to a much greater degree than what is the case with the killing of Dracula. With regard to the destruction of the Count, the narrative is centred on the Van Helsing group's anxiousness as to whether they will be able to accomplish their mission in time, i.e. before sunset. The task of killing the vampire does indeed claim Quincey Morris' life, but this happens as a result of his fight with the gypsies. Dracula himself lies immobile in his coffin and poses no threat to the humans when Jonathan and Quincey attack him with their knives.

In a footnote to this episode Auerback and Skal have commented that: "This is not the communal killing the vampire hunters had planned. Dracula's supposed death is riddled with ambiguity" (325). Since this final attack on the vampire takes place exactly as the sun sets, and since he is able to transform himself into a number of different shapes, (he can for example change into mist,) the fact that his "body crumbled into dust and passed from ... sight" is not as reassuring as one might at first think. The fact that the mark on Mina's

forehead disappears along with the vampire might perhaps be taken as a more convincing piece of evidence of the vampire's death. The expression on Dracula's face immediately before his destruction still leaves us with a certain amount of doubt though: "The eyes saw the sinking sun, and the look of hate in them turned to triumph" (325).

At the final destination of my hunt for the nature of monstrosity in *Dracula*, I am a little worried that the monster might have evaded me. According to Cohen's second thesis the monster always escapes, so this is indeed a possibility. However, as I cannot track the vampire any further, it is now time for me to go over my findings.

The nature of the vampires clearly marks them as hybrids. In *Dracula*, the male vampire is represented as superior to his female companions, and this representation is in agreement with Victorian, stereotypical views of gender. The Count's ability to transform into a large number of shapes is a great advantage to him in his parasitical existence. He is also very cunning and in addition possessed many skills that mark him as a supernatural creature. In this chapter I have looked at how the vampires' characteristics can be understood as humanoid, animalistic and superhuman. It is however clear that these categories often overlap.

*Dracula* tells the story of an encounter between east and west and at the same time between an old and a new world. In spite of his many skills, Dracula's attack on the modern world fails. The members of the Van Helsing group possess their own advantages; they for instance make use of the latest discoveries and inventions in their fight with the ancient creature. Thus, the Van Helsing group's victory over the monster is a triumph of the modern over the pre-modern.

## CONCLUSION

Then the bane of that people, the fire-breathing dragon,  
was mad to attack for a third time.  
When a chance came, he caught the hero  
in a rush of flame and clamped sharp fangs  
into his neck. Beowulf's body  
ran wet with his life-blood: it came welling out.  
(*Beowulf* 90)

This passage describes a scene from Beowulf's last battle, where he and Wiglaf manage to kill the dragon, but at the cost of the hero's own life. It reveals the courage which is typically required to face a monster. The power of the dragon is vividly portrayed; the death match of the monster and the man takes the form of a violent spectacle.

The hero, Beowulf, gives us a lesson in the honourable way to face a monster. Even though the battle kills him, he can rest assured that he has acted admirably. Not everyone is able to meet the challenge of monstrosity in such an upright manner. Mr Jennings in "Green Tea," for instance, approaches his problem in an anxious manner. He makes himself endure the monstrous invader of his life for as long as he can, but unfortunately the monkey is even more patient than he is, and the reverend finally dies by his own hand. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* the protagonist himself becomes monstrous. He is not intimidated by this change in himself and he does not see the need to fight it. Dorian's showdown with monstrosity comes about by an ironic twist of fate: He is trying to get rid of the evidence of his monstrosity in order to continue his wicked life, but he has not fully understood the strange bond between himself and the picture. When he tries to destroy it, Dorian dies instead. The members of the Van Helsing group in *Dracula* at least seem to have taken their clue from *Beowulf*: They go about destroying monsters in the old-fashioned and heroic manner. In spite of these variations in how to face monstrosity, one thing seems clear: monstrosity claims

sacrifices. At best, a show of courage in the encounter with monstrosity is rewarded with a limitation of the losses incurred by the heroic figures or protagonists.

All the three texts I have discussed is, of course, centred around a literary monster and any Fiction that deals with monstrous imagery is likely to have an emotionally unsettling effect on its audience. The monstrous imagery will often leave a relatively clear, visual imprint in the reader's mind, like the passage from *Beowulf*, quoted above. With regard to the use of monstrous spectacles, the primary texts discussed in this thesis differ a great deal. The visual impact of monstrosity is however important in all the works, although in their own, different ways. As we have previously observed, scenes of explicit brutality play an important role in *Dracula*.

"Green Tea" takes a less direct approach to monstrosity, and speaks of things too terrible to be told. When Dr Hesselius arrives at the scene after Mr Jennings has committed suicide he states: "what I saw there I won't tell you" (35). Then he immediately goes on to describe the crime scene. Victor Sage has described the narrative technique that Le Fanu applies here as a "fiction of censorship" (206). The passage is in fact not censored, but the reader is "off-balance, looking all the time for something that isn't there" (ibid). In this way Le Fanu can benefit both from the effect of unpleasant spectacles and the assumption that monstrous secrets are still being kept from the reader, inviting the reader to expand the monstrosity of the image in his or her own head.. Visibility is also important in "Green Tea," for the reason that the monster can only be seen by the protagonist, and it is his very ability to see the monster that seals his fate. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray* surface is all that matters. While the monstrosity of the protagonist remains hidden, the surface of his portrait reveals his monstrous secret.

We have previously looked at *Dracula* in light of Carroll's theories about the effects of the horror genre on its audience, but "Green Tea" and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* can also

be explored against this background. Since the monkey in “Green Tea” can only be seen by Mr Jennings, we merely need to investigate which effect the monkey has on him. Before the monkey finally drives the reverend to commit suicide, the patient has described his situation thoroughly to Dr Hesselius. Because the story is related in the patient’s own words, some of the anxiousness that he is represented to feel, might be transferred to the audience. In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, there are also some horrible spectacles, for instance the passage quoted in the beginning of the second chapter, where the transformation of the picture is described. The emphasis on horrible images and characters’ feelings towards them is however not maintained over longer periods in this narrative.

A lot of literature from the Victorian period mirrors a strong belief in science, and this age’s interest in science comes to the surface in all the three primary works of this thesis. It is however interesting that of these stories it is only in *Dracula* that science triumphs over the supernatural forces. Of course, science cannot explain away the presence of evil and unnatural forces in *Dracula* either, but at least there is a seemingly unproblematic alliance between the truths of science and the truths of religion in this work. In the other two works the presence of supernatural forces soon overshadows any hopes there might have been of finding an illuminating, scientific explanation to the mysterious events that take place.

Thus, the three texts have three very different approaches to monstrosity, and also the possibility to overcome or defeat it. However, what the three have in common are monsters that are both physical threats and subversive challenges to the predominant values of the contemporary Victorian society.

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