

DOKUZ EYLÜL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE
AMERICAN CULTURE AND LITERATURE PROGRAM
DOCTORAL THESIS
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

**NOT-QUITE-HUMANS IN CONTEMPORARY WESTERN
CULTURE: OATES’S *ZOMBIE*, BURTON’S *EDWARD
SCISSORHANDS* AND LESSING’S *THE FIFTH CHILD***

Mustafa Fatih DALYAN

Supervisor

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nilsen GÖKÇEN ULUK

2023

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İZMİR-2023

APPROVAL PAGE



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this doctoral thesis titled as “Not-Quite-Humans in Contemporary Western Culture: Oates’s *Zombie*, Burton’s *Edward Scissorhands* and Lessing’s *The Fifth Child*” has been written by myself in accordance with the academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that all materials benefited in this thesis consist of the mentioned resources in the reference list. I verify all these with my honour.

19/12/2022

Mustafa Fatih DALYAN

ABSTRACT

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Dokuz Eylül University

Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of American Culture and Literature

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Historically, the most striking feature of Western perception is its binary construction. According to this perception, rankings and groupings, and the hierarchies between them are quite natural. Therefore, negative consequences such as racism, sexism, classism and ablism, and marginalizations based on them, have arisen. The human is also defined in opposition to its binaries although its meanings have always been subject to change. The term human does not designate a unitary category; there are hierarchies even within the categories biologically designated as human.

At the top of humanity in Western hierarchy is the white male subject. The remaining subjects, with the potential to be unqualified as humans, are deemed as not-quite-humans. These individuals are dehumanized and vilified as Others because they possess or are associated with characteristics attributed to classical monsters. Yet always haunting the human domain, they disrupt its order as soon as they intrude into it.

Vilified for displaying non-human characteristics, these beings can be placed in many categories such as subhuman, transhuman, cyborg, and so on. Addressing encounters between them and humans, Gothic fiction raises a masterful critique of the dividing, and hierarchical categorizations that inform the concept of human. Gothic literature centers on the issue of dehumanization through such discriminatory practices as othering and monstrosity.

The purpose of this study is to analyze three contemporary Gothic works in order to identify the methods of dehumanization, monsterization, abjection, and otherization as representing and contributing to the construction of the “not-quite-human.”

Keywords: Gothic, Monstrosity, Dehumanization, Otherization, Joyce Carol Oates, Tim Burton, Doris Lessing.



ÖZET

Doktora Tezi

Çağdaş Batı Kültüründe İnsan Olarak Nitelendirilemeyecek Varlıklar: Oates'ın *Zombie*, Burton'ın *Edward Scissorhands* ve Lessing'in *The Fifth Child* Adlı

Eserleri

Mustafa Fatih Dalyan

Dokuz Eylül Üniversitesi

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı

Amerikan Kültürü ve Edebiyatı Programı

Klasik Batı algısının tarihsel olarak en göze çarpan özelliği kavramları tanımlarken başvurduğu ikili karşıtlıklardır. Bu algıya göre sıralamalar ve gruplandırmalar ile bunların arasındaki hiyerarşi oldukça doğaldır. Irkçılık, cinsiyetçilik, sınıflara ve bedensel engellere bağlı ayrımcılıklar ve bunlara bağlı ötekileştirme gibi birtakım kötücül sonuçlar bunların eseridir. Tanımları sürekli değişime uğrasa da insan kavramı da bu ikili karşıtlıklar içinde şekillenmiştir. İnsan tanımı tek ve birleştirici bir kategoriye işaret etmez çünkü insan olarak tanımlanan biyolojik tür içinde dahi hiyerarşiler bulunmaktadır.

Batı hiyerarşisinde insanlığın en tepesinde beyaz erkek öznesi bulunmaktadır. İnsan dışına itilme potansiyeli bulunan geri kalan özneler, yeterince insan olamayan ya da insan olarak nitelendirilemeyen özneler olarak görülebilmektedir. Bu kişiler, ya klasik canavarlara atfedilen özellikleri taşıyan bireylerdir ya da o özelliklerle damgalanan/bağdaştırılan Ötekilerdir. Bunlar, egemen olan öznelerin dünyasına girdikleri anda oranın düzenini bozarlar.

İnsan dışı nitelikler gösterdikleri şekilde yaftalanan bu varlıklar alt insan, transhüman, siborg, ve bunun gibi çok fazla kategoriye yerleştirilebilir. Ancak bu ötekileştirici kategorizasyon, beraberinde eleştiriyi de getirir ve bunun eleştirisini de Gotik anlatı ziyadesiyle yapabilmektedir. Gotik edebiyat, merkezinde, Ötekilik ve canavarlık gibi ayrıştırıcı kategorilerin üzerinden insandışılaştırmayı konu alır.

Bu alıřmanın amacı, iki roman ve bir filmde oluşarı üç çağdař Gotik eseri, insandıřılařtırma, canavarlık, iğrenlik ve ötekileřtirme kavramları üzerinden incelemek ve bu eserlerin hangi bağlamda “insan olarak nitelendirilemeyen” fikrini tasvir ettiğini tanımlamaktır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Gotik, Canavarlık, İnsandıřılařtırma, Ötekileřtirme, Joyce Carol Oates, Tim Burton, Doris Lessing.



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INTRODUCTION

By nature, humans are complicated. Unlike other creatures of the ecosystem, they have built vast and glorious cultures, multifaceted ethics and norms. Naturally, they tend to think that they are unique, and thus, they think highly of themselves. However, despite all their glorious accomplishments, humans' self-proclaimed supreme position in the ecosystem seems unconvincing, if not completely fallacious.

Human supremacy can be defined as privileging humans, granting humans the supreme license to rule the earth, and holding humans above all other living beings. It has "a history that reaches back to classical antiquity and has its roots in the birth of civilization" (Crist, 2017: 62). It indeed has been around for quite a long time, and in the academic field, it is rather carved out as a worldview "propagated by the dominant culture" (61).

Humans tend to grant themselves superiority upon comparing themselves with their surroundings. It is true that they have gone a long way in their struggle for survival. Thanks to their various systematic and analytic abilities, such as linguistic communication, crafting, and making future projections and acting on them, they seem to *rule* the earth. They could also manage to employ critical thinking as a concomitant aspect of their survival. Their success as a result of such systematic survival strategies convinced humans of their own uniqueness and existence; therefore, distinguishing and separating themselves from their surroundings and the rest of creatures, they developed an anthropocentric view of the world. It is from this bias that they defined themselves and their environment and felt the need to leave a trace of their presence in their homes called the earth. Eventually, they identified things, and, based solely on their position, distinguished what is good and bad, virtuous and vile, friend and foe, human and non-human, humane and inhumane, we and they, etc. Such categorizations made them invent taxonomies, labels, groups, ranks, and hierarchies. Today, this approach and its consequences are experienced very commonly around the world.

Human reason and mental capacities in particular are responsible not only for the survival of the human species but also for raising them to the top of creation. They have given rise to categorizations and hierarchies between humans and non-

humans and even among humans. Maintaining these categories is intrinsically related with human supremacy. These categories underlie the formation of civilized or humanized spaces where humans live free from the dangers of wild nature. However, the separation between humanized and wild spaces has had traumatic consequences. For example, they have, as indicated above, caused an anthropocentric world view to dominate, by which everything is evaluated by whether it produces useful results for humans.

The following pages will specifically focus on anthropocentrism, which has given rise to other hierarchical categories between human groups such as racism, sexism, ableism, ageism, etc. As a worldview which places humans at the top of hierarchies, anthropocentrism is a thought, which “at its core... involves the planetary-scale subordination of nonhuman organisms [and]... denies they have value in their own right” (Kopnina et al., 2018: 115). Accordingly, as the self-proclaimed epitome of all creatures and the centerpiece organisms of the world, humans recognize and define themselves as the most unique and valuable. Yet, in order to call a living being as such, there must be other beings less unique and less valuable. In other words, hierarchies among creatures require a kind of superiority/inferiority relationship to be specified among its members. This relationship is oftentimes constituted through the qualities that are thought to be lacking in others. Creatures other than humans, in that regard, would be lacking human mental capacities and, eventually, every human aspect resulting from them, such as ethics and culture. Thus, from their superior position, humans scorn other creatures. That is why, some scholars such as Crist hold the term anthropocentrism as an equivalent of human supremacy (2017: 61).

Human hubris is historically most visible in their perception and treatment of non-human animals. The Darwinian perspective proves that, under the umbrella term of animal kingdom, humans share similar qualities with many creatures. However, since humans prefer to consider themselves superior, they are at pains to place themselves as separate entities despite such shared similarities with others. According to Birke and Parisi, they see themselves as opposites of other creatures because “the cultural assumption of our difference from other animals remains strong, [and] ... however scientists have classified nonhuman organisms, human

beings remain privileged” (1999: 57). If animals lack some uniquely human qualities, then they become a comparative reference for humans to define themselves. In other words, to precisely identify themselves, humans first identify what they are not, and thus consider animals, the most humanlike entities around, as their what-nots. Similarly, in this case, if humans are valuable, then animals would be worthless; if humans are superior, animals would be inferior; and the list goes on.

As human and non-human animal categorizations testify, human classifications are not simply markers of differences, but they are closely bound up with values. They are based on what we call binary oppositions that include one master or superior category and its inferior opposite. Binary oppositions overlook similarities and emphasize differences, no matter how insignificant and small they might be. Thus, they place each binary at the most distant end of the spectrum from the other. While they overemphasize minor differences between the superior and inferior groups, they lump many totally different groups among the same inferior group as in the case of human and non-human animal categories.

Animals, however, do not constitute the only binary opposite for humans because the more comprehensive term to match the human as its binary is the ‘non-human,’ and the non-humans are many. With fast developing technology, machines have been rapidly transforming human life. Eventually, the machine turns into a sort of binary for humans since it is, just as animals, often associated with both lacking and having some characteristics that humans have (Wilson and Haslam, 2012: 372-373). Machines are placed in binary position to humans despite their non-organicness, especially after the introduction of computers, artificial intelligence, and robots into humans’ lives¹. Yet, as in the case of animals, the anthropocentric approach would similarly view machines as what-nots of humans.

Anthropocentric pattern is clear: It leads to discrimination and categorizations, causing binary thinking to prevail. The same pattern would apply to any discriminating approach that is going to be mentioned in this dissertation, such as racism and sexism.

There is a variety of interpretations of anthropocentrism. Although it is responsible for many human ills, some scholars do not think so. Tim Hayward, for

¹ Apart from the machine, plants also occupy a position of binary opposition. However, this opposition is not presently a topic of hot debate.

example, is one of the pioneers re-defining and advocating anthropocentrism. He thinks it is “unavoidable that we should be interested in ourselves and our own kind” (1997: 51). For him, anthropocentrism is different from the evils which are speciesism and human chauvinism (52). He indicates that one should separate the “concern of humans with humans” from “a *lack* of concern for *non*-humans” (58). He claims the chauvinists and speciesists are few in number and far from representing the whole humanity, yet we do not know how he has measured that. Thus, he advocates that humans are varied; therefore, he argues, to “criticise humanity in general for practices of specific groups of humans” is indeed wrong (58). Although he is given credit for some of his ideas, overall, his Panglossian arguments are radically destroyed by Kopnina and her colleagues, who indicate that “Hayward gives fragmented definitions of anthropocentrism, some of which, ... overlap with human chauvinism and speciesism” (2018: 113). They claim that practices like chauvinism and speciesism are just “one aspect of anthropocentrism, not a new definition” (113). Moreover, they conclude, while discussing the natural human prerogative to focus on human concerns, “Hayward ignores the question of whether value lies *only in humans*” (113). Of course, humans are varied, and the actions they take may result in good or bad consequences for themselves and for the ecosystem, but whether held by a small minority or general humanity, speciesism and chauvinism exist with costs for the whole of humanity and nonhuman world:

While the label ‘sexist’ or ‘racist’ does not apply to all men or all whites, these labels ensure that discrimination is recognized—both sexism and racism are ethical failings that must be resolved. In a similar way, the ideology of anthropocentrism (including speciesism and human chauvinism) does not necessarily apply to all humanity, but to discriminating practices and society en masse—anthropocentrism is also an ethical failing that ought to be resolved. As there is no reason to a priori limit certain rights or legal protection to some parts of humanity, no part of humanity should be ‘exempt’ from responsibility to nonhumans. ... It is hypocritical to suggest that humanity should be seen as a whole when it comes to social equality (and corresponding responsibilities), but not when it comes to responsibilities for nonhuman organisms and environmental systems. (Kopnina et al., 2018: 122)

Similarly, one should not disregard that there are horrendously ugly facts such as racism or misogyny in this world. Although Hayward certainly does not deny such facts, he seems to keep them separately from the rest of humanity. Yet we cannot turn a deaf ear to the evil consequences of anthropocentric thinking, no matter how

small a group of humans might have caused them². What significantly matters is that humans—regardless of whether they are a majority or a minority—perform such discriminatory attitudes, and the dominant culture allows this pattern to continue cumulatively. As Crist indicates, a “negative” evaluation of humanness suggests that “humans are greedy, selfish and aggressive by nature” (2017: 61), an idea justified by countless proofs almost every day.

If chauvinism and speciesism are extensions of anthropocentrism or human supremacy, and if humans’ tendency to protect their own interests causes such discriminatory approaches to appear, one has to admit that humans’ natural tendencies are not wholly humane. Although anthropocentrism has become forgotten due to inter-human hierarchies and injustices, one should not underestimate its power in our modern world. Inevitably, anthropocentrism and the binaries that can be traced back to such thinking play a big role in the formation of inter-human otherizing practices. Among all, witnessed every day and everywhere, dehumanization, the denial of human status to certain human groups, stands out as a comprehensive practice encompassing racism, sexism, ableism. Such practices also contribute greatly to the concept of the not-quite-human.

Human chauvinism has created a large array of Others not only between humans and non-humans but among human populations. Since humans themselves are varied and different, they form their own sub-groups. Consequently, they see their own ingroups as unique and privileged, perceiving other human groups as less valuable. The motivations of these groups vary depending on the privileged value of the ingroup, such as the white race, male gender or heterosexuality. Consequently, hostility emerges because of the biased group’s zealously supported self-value, and practices such as racism, genderism, or sexism appear. Humans have often fought for these values, causing destruction, violence, tumult, and bloodshed. The irony is visible to everyone except (privileged) humans: Even though humans do not characterize themselves as tremendously instinctive, untamed, predatory, and violent creatures like animals, it is very ironic that these adjectives often express humans’

² Similarly, white people individually should not be held responsible for Western atrocities resulting from a discriminatory attitude. There are indeed many Westerners opposing the attitude of Western supremacy. However, such atrocities have happened and continue to happen. These ethical failures must as well be worked out and recognized, especially if they occur within a particular culture repeatedly and notoriously.

own dehumanizing and violent behavior against their own kind, as in the case of homicides, murders, wars, slavery, and massacres. What remains when all this veneer of glorified human rationality and cultural accomplishments is scraped off is that “Even with all of humanity’s ethics, religion, and conscience, humans are the most dangerous and destructive living creatures on our planet” (Bar-Cohen and Hanson, 2009: 148).

As human history demonstrates, most of the turmoil and evil in the world is not natural but man-made. As a result of seeing themselves through anthropocentric lenses, humans have created a world suitable only for their own interests. While doing this, they have not only fought against nature by shaping and taming it, but also against themselves. Not only have they established hierarchies among living things, but they have also created hierarchies within their own species. They have formed different groups with different values, each group placing their own at the top of human hierarchies. They tend to see the otherized humans, who supposedly violate their norms and values, as inferior entities. To put it more clearly, seeing the Others oftentimes as animal-like, less-than-human, or not-quite-human entities, they dehumanize other humans.

Western worldview has dominated the world for the last centuries; therefore, its norms have determined the status of humanness and who deserve that status. It is also through a Western focus that Others are produced. In Western society, the Other appears in many forms. The Other can be any dehumanized human who is vilified as a monster; or s/he can objectively be a vile being. As Crist indicates, “To look at the legacy of human supremacy is to zoom in at who and what have been displaced to the periphery: namely, indigenous people (‘uncivilized’ people), wild non-humans and wild nature overall” (2017: 62). This displacement can easily be extended to include women and all queers. Since Western society is patriarchal and is dictated by the white man, any female and non-Western person, for instance, could be automatically placed in peripheral position for failing to meet the humanness criteria. Likewise, any queer individual could take their share from this ranking practice. Thus, dehumanization is one of the ways by which non-white and non-heterosexual males and all females are othered and marginalized. When one is dehumanized, s/he becomes automatically degraded and turns into a not-quite-human before the

judgement of the dehumanizer. The patriarch white male often achieves this dehumanization and othering by labeling and/or perceiving the above-mentioned groups as animal-like or monstrous due to their behaviors, forms, or choices.

There are, however, critics of Western society's dehumanizing practices and anthropocentric ethics. These critics demonstrate that the dehumanized do not necessarily have to be vile and monstrous, which could turn the dehumanizer into a total hypocritical aggressor and oppressor. Even when the dehumanized are monstrous in some ways, their monstrosity is in no way a justification for their dehumanized status, for humans themselves are historically capable of the most monstrous acts. Furthermore, the claimed monstrosity of not-quite-humans meet even more monstrous treatments from humans themselves.

Of course, it might sound unfair to describe and label all humans as violent and aggressive because there are billions of people in the world with certainly much more humane and admirable aspirations and mindsets. However, because human gruesomeness and violence has higher visibility than cooperation and humane behavior in history records, one might come to the conclusion that it is the former side of humans that has won the battle between the two. Still, it is hope-inspiring that while such attitude surely lasts, humans continue to try to make sense of what they are by learning from their past mistakes.

Ultimately, the effort to understand the human is an effort from the distant past. It has been a never-ending process for humans to question and criticize themselves. While trying to understand this effort to perceive who and what humans are, a recurrent pattern becomes obvious: humans' problem is massively with themselves. Many stories emerge from this effort, and many of the stories are critical and ironic, proving time and again that man is a self-contradictory being, trying to mature rationally, while also enslaved by destructive instinctive passions.

Lately, the interest in defining human beings is expressed in a variety of ways including Posthumanist philosophy, which has brought a new interpretation to the conceptualizations of humans with discussions on whether the era of humans has come to an end. There are fictional stories, in which it is impossible to define humanness as an exclusive category. There is also a considerable increase in sci-fi works dealing with humans and the future of humans. However, across genres, the

Gothic is the most critical mode engendering new discussions and ways of understanding what humans are, as it always reveals humans' secret agendas and true faces. Thus, the strongest critique of society via the ill treatment of (vilified) not-quite-humans comes from the Gothic as it reveals the true but deliberately concealed human reactions like a slap on humans' faces.

Humans' self-questioning process is often very conflicting. As already indicated above, humans often deal with what they are not, not what they are, because it appears that they are afraid of confronting themselves in their self-search. Although humans idealize themselves as entities one should aspire to, they themselves often fail to live up to this idealized picture. When this happens, they tend to run away from themselves, try to suppress the undesired self-images, and eventually project their frustration onto others. Also, as they do not want to face themselves, they repress deep inside all kinds of undesired qualities they do not want to confront. However, in the end, the repressed surface often through some traumatic experience; hence, the truth is not to be escaped from. Literature and art are the sites where these repressed desires burst into visibility. In many art forms and literature, Gothic literature being the most salient one, this is the pattern that is reflected as the central tenet of humans' struggle with themselves.

The vile but common practice of dehumanization is frequently portrayed in Gothic works of art, especially via the treatment of countless not-quite-humans, monsters, and Others. Humans and humanity are questioned and criticized for their hypocritical and vicious ways in the Gothic.

Motivated through the Gothic social critique and through the analysis of three different Gothic works of art—two novels and a movie—this thesis will present a critique of humanity and show how hypocritical and vile humans become when they confront not-quite-human Others intruding into their domains. The analysis of these Gothic works will identify the methods of dehumanization, monsterization, abjection, and otherization as representing and contributing to the construction of the “not-quite-human.”

Not-quite-humans could be evaluated from different perspectives. They could be discussed in reference to three phases of human history: by looking at the predecessors of humans, modern humans, and successors of humans. First of all, as

humans are evolving beings, they had predecessors in the evolutionary process, which they (currently) call (more) primitive and less-than-human. Although there is continuity between modern and early humans and there are qualities that humans have inherited from these ancestors, it is difficult for humans to admit this scientific fact.

Secondly, although modern humans are a single species, the in-species diversity among them is quite high. These differences are not just related to unsubtle qualities such as physiognomy or gender. Differences in humans' cultures and behaviors also make it impossible to define the human from a fixed and unchanging aspect. Humans are varied. Thus, in theory, no single human being should have any existential superiority to another. However, human diversity is not commonly seen as a characteristic to celebrate and uphold. Just as they see their ancestors as primitive and unevolved, modern Western humans also tend to stigmatize non-Western humans as less human than themselves.

Lastly, in an imagined (post-)human future, too, differences seem inevitable. Judging from the changes and interventions of science into our bodies, it is very likely that future humans will have machine-human hybrid bodies, namely cyborgs. Questions such as whether humans will turn into something-other-than-human when they become cyborgs, or to what extent cyborgs are humans, or whether humanized robots displaying human behavior can be considered human are currently topics of debate. Thus, another perspective to discuss the future of humans is to consider their possible—yet unimaginable—successors. Will humans continue to exist into the future, or if they do, will they evolve into a species that can no longer be considered human, becoming something-other-than-human or not-quite-human? We do not know this yet. All things aside, as of now, we cannot even give a clear answer to the question of what is human, anyway.

All these things mentioned above, namely understanding the predecessors of humans, acknowledging the variety and differences among humans of today, and speculating about the future of the humans, are issues that can help us better conceptualize humans, humanness, not-quite-humans, and not-quite-humanness.

In order to discuss these issues, in the first chapter of the thesis, relevant theories and concepts will be introduced. First, the concept of not-quite-humanness

will briefly be elaborated on. To do this, an array of the definitions of humanness will first be introduced, which will lead us to analyze some salient human qualities and behaviors, including the vile ones. Accordingly, the concept of dehumanization will be discussed within the framework of prominent theories, which will help interpret the motivations behind the otherization process. Owing to its critical outlook on society, the Gothic, will appear as one of the most suitable modes to reflect the relationship between the dehumanizer and the dehumanized. Along with its origins and features, some brief information about the Gothic will be given, which will connect it to the issues of monstrosity and the Otherness. The notion of monstrosity and a discussion on the Gothic monsters will then follow to conceptualize the Gothic framework of not-quite-humanness. Next, various types of these not-quite-humans such as subhumans, cyborgs, etc., will be examined. Various aspects of not-quite-humanness, dehumanization and otherization: subhumanness/abhumanness, cyborgness, androidness, transhumanness, post-humanness will also be introduced in this chapter. Finally, various theoretical approaches regarding otherness and monstrosity will be delivered as the central theoretical framework of the thesis. Jerome Cohen's monster theory and Julia Kristeva's abjection theory will constitute the basis of the theoretical analysis, which will enable us to understand the underlying social dynamics and their affiliation with dehumanization and otherization. As a side note, one should remark that, unless otherwise noted, society in this thesis means Western society.

The following chapters will demonstrate the workings of otherization and vilification of the less-than-human characters in fictional works. In the second chapter, Joyce Carol Oates's Gothic book named *Zombie* (1995) will be examined. This chapter demonstrates the book's social critique by touching upon the notion of being perceived as a subhuman in two different and complicated perspectives. On the one hand, the book shows that monsters are not necessarily vilified. Because the main character is a true serial killer performing inhumane acts, there is no doubt that he is monstrous, and thus, in theory, he can be deemed as a not-quite-human. However, as a white person, the murderer is *only* seen as a villain when he murders a white person in the end, the act of which lays bare social hypocrisy. On the other hand, the protagonist's less-than-human status is revealed through his queerness.

Because it remains hidden to others except for a handful few, publicly he is protected under the umbrella of being a white male. However, in the eyes of those few, he is from the start incomplete, without dignity, in short, not-quite-human.

In the third chapter, Tim Burton's movie *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) will be evaluated to offer an analysis of not-quite-humanness from a cyborg/android perspective. The chapter will first focus on the not-quite-human status of the marginalized cyborgian main character Edward, who stands out with his hybrid features, making him both machine and human in appearance, while his behavioral qualities are completely humane and benevolent. Edward eventually begins to be taken as a threat by his society and is banished from their company. The chapter will continue with the background and the reasons for the main character's ultimate expulsion. As an intruder who tries to mingle with an almost homogenously white American society, Edward goes through many hardships and emotional abuse. Edward's society automatically perceives him as an Other because of his visible marginality and remains wary of him; but they do not immediately banish him, for they discover that he has a potential to be exploited forever like a slave. That is the only reason why society treats him nicely for a while. Indeed, it is his readiness to help his human friends and inability to reject anyone who needs his support that put him in trouble. As a result, he becomes scapegoated, and society automatically takes sides with his abusers, the ingroup, disregarding the fact that they are indeed the reasons for his transgression. Eventually, the ending of the movie reveals that even when he was seemingly accepted into society, his membership never went beyond being conditional. The social critique here reveals the social hypocrisy and bias, functioning through the vilification of the Other, who is labeled as a monster. Thus, as a Gothic monster, the main character becomes a medium to show the cruelty of social injustices.

The final analytical chapter takes issue with Doris Lessing's novella called *The Fifth Child* (1988). The story offers a Gothic insight of a not-quite-human's entry into an otherwise homogenous-seeming and self-complacent social fabric in two different ways. Firstly, via its disabled and female protagonists, the book shows the vile treatment of differently-abled people and the cruelty embedded in Western hierarchical tradition. An idyllic nuclear family of the Thatcherian era, during which

most of the story takes place, perceives their newborn baby as a subhuman due to his unusual corporeal and mental capacity. With the unexpected and Gothic intrusion of the baby, social cruelty against differently-abled people is revealed to the reader. In addition, the arrival of the baby also causes to surface other forms of ill-treatments and sufferings of their victims like women, whose dehumanization continues in more covert ways: The mother is denounced as responsible for giving birth to such a not-quite-human. The dehumanizing practices applied both to the baby and the mother receive support from individuals and institutions alike. To sum up, symbolically, the baby seems to be born as a harbinger of “monstrous” results, making the social bias, inequality, and Thatcherian institutional corruptness surface. Here, this Gothic criticism of dehumanization not only shows the position of those who are perceived as not-quite-humans in society, but also the norm-based institutional rottenness.

However, there is another side to the not-quite-human intervention and perception. *The Fifth Child* also offers a post-human vision to the future. By integrating a vilified subhuman into modern day humans, and by showing the vile treatment of this subhuman by humans, the story symbolically demonstrates how thus-far-evolved humans would react to their predecessors. From this perspective, today’s humans become post-humans for the subhuman character. Thus, his situation represents what it would be like to be exposed to so-called evolved—but in fact horrendous and aggressive—behaviors of the humans of the future. This perspective could shed light on the possible dehumanization practices of post-humans and show the failure of human moral evolution, for each new phase of humanity seems to be one step further away from peaceful and civilized.

The works included here demonstrate that, according to the dominant, conservative, and categorizing Western understanding, for now, *homo sapiens* individuals are perceived as truly humans if they possess certain, that is, ultimately Western, qualities. Therefore, humans who fail to meet these stereotypical criteria are in danger of being perceived as Others because of possessing different characteristics, cultures, bodies, and orientations, even though they are biologically members of the species called *homo sapiens*.

Apparently, humans attribute meanings to humanness by referring to non-humans. Therefore, in order to define the human, to understand the qualities that are

attributed to the Other as well as those that are attributed to humans is crucially important. It is thus worth re-emphasizing that there have been and are not-quite-human Others. As humans continue to be dehumanized, not-quite-humans will branch off into new varieties, continuing to appear in various bodies and planes of existence. Humanity as we know is still yet to evolve, but it seems that, as long as the tendency to think categorically continues, othering by dehumanization remains inevitable. Thus, not-quite-humans seem to continue to exist in the future, too.



CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTUALIZING THE NOT-QUITE-HUMAN

In dichotomies crucial for the practice and the vision of the social order, the differentiating power hides as a rule behind one of the members of the opposition. The second member is but the other of the firsts, the opposite (degraded, suppressed, exiled) side of the first and its creation. Thus abnormality is the other of the norm, deviation the other of law-abiding, illness the other of health, barbarity the other of civilisation, animal the other of the human, woman the other of man, stranger the other of the native, enemy the other of friend, 'them' the other of 'us...' (Bauman, 1991: 14)

Defining concepts is challenging in the subjective world of language and linguistics, because here, not just the intangible but also the concrete concepts rely on the judgment of the perceiver. This natural process of defining reminds us of the presence of the human factor, which is not static, coherent and/or predictable. Accordingly, as long as different selves, identities, communities, and cultures exist, multiple views on various issues or concepts will always be present in our world due to the human factor. Yet, from this the diversity of thoughts, people have managed to generate not only unifying, concrete, direct, and positive concepts, but also discriminatory, abstract, ironic and negative ones while identifying their own position regarding the concepts' interpretation.

People also try to identify "themselves" subjectively through language. In Western philosophy, this process involves binary logic; therefore, "the central problem" is "the tendency to binary identification in which all things must be one thing or another" (Buss, 2002: 72); that is, in the West, people require some sort of "other," through which they identify themselves. This involves a linguistic process. Such self-identification through words ironically includes the definition and interpretation of the word "human." If people define themselves as humans, then they must have generated this thought from the knowledge of what is not human, for "the meaning of something depends on its opposite" (Fourie, 2007: 249). Simply speaking, binary thinking suggests that one cannot make sense of any word without knowing its antonym.

The idea of thinking through categories and binaries in the West is also presently criticized, as according to Derrida, "within such structures based on binary

pairs, one part of the pair is always given a higher cultural value than the other; one term is marked as positive and the other as negative” (qtd. in Klages, 2006: 54), or one term is more privileged than and superior to the other. As indicated by Staszak, “Western thought ... has produced a number of binaries that oppose a positively-connoted term and a negatively-connoted term and thus lends itself well to the construction of the self and the other” (2009: 44). Consequently, such way of thinking independently promotes otherization through polarizing concepts and via creating hierarchies.

Evaluating the self-defining term “human” may become further problematic since, unavoidably, one may encounter numerous interpretations of the word human. Although it is possible to explain this word broadly with its lexical definition, it is not likely to state objectively what this word means by a universal consensus. Anyhow, if we evaluate the word human with its binary opposition and since “the frontier of human identity in Western culture has been [not only] between humans and animals [but also]... humans and machines” (Wilson and Haslam, 2012: 372-373), we get more than one double to consider, such as human/animal or human/robot.

By referring to these compared binaries above, Haslam proposes two categories that define humanness: “human uniqueness” and “human nature”. According to the former, our capability to feel certain emotions distinguish us from animals; likewise, the latter suggests that we have some essential qualities that are not found in machines or (primitive) robots, such as “emotional responsiveness, prosocial warmth, cognitive openness, and individuality” (373). Many examples could be found to demonstrate those comparisons between humans and machines or humans and animals. For instance, in the movie *Elephant Man* (1980) by David Lynch, when the bodily deformed main character is caught and encircled by people who chase him, in dismay, he shouts “I am not an animal! I am a human being! I am a man.” He is verbally and helplessly forced to explain to the people that he is a human like them since people had already otherized and categorized him as an animal due to his dissemblance to a human, namely to themselves. These people are notoriously reluctant to correlate the Elephant Man with the word human. In so doing, they evaluate “others” through what is (fully or partially) absent in the human.

Thus, they borrow qualities from the opposite term “animal” in order to conceptualize their own human qualities on the one hand, and others’ non-human features on the other.

Similarly, we come across such expressions in our daily lives. When, for example, we are expected to be energetic and carry out an accurate or coherent performance every day, we sometimes say “I am not a robot” to indicate our imperfectness and deficiencies, this time making “human” a negatively-connoted term. As such, the word human, like any other concept produced by language, is ridiculously interpretable. Some may attribute more negative qualities to this word while others glorify it.

Whether defined as the opposite of animals or robots, however, the following questions about the human and its binaries still remain unanswered: Do we have to depend on binaries in order to define the human? If not, is there something simultaneously beyond the categories of human and not-human? Kieran Egan claims that “human understanding comes from developing binary opposites and then creating terms that mediate the space between these two extremes” (Haven, 2007: 56). Thus, from this perspective, one can deduce that hybrid concepts emerge from the mediation of binary opposites. For example, the word mild emerges from the clash or hybridization of cold and hot. According to Kendall Haven, this process is true even in the totally “discrete” concepts such as “animal/human” since people are prone to create “fantasy” stories about “half-human, half-beasts” (2007: 56). Such hybrid beings, however, do not only exist in fantasy. For example, to a certain extent, the *subhuman* can be considered to be an animal-human hybrid. Likewise, *cyborg* can be seen as the hybrid of human and robot. These mediating hybrid categories are potentially so rich that we cannot know how many of them may arise out of the binaries of humanness and animality on the one hand and humanness and machinery on the other. Indeed, the mediations between the concepts of human and animal, or human and robot have so far produced many categories, such as i.e., cyborg, subhuman, abhuman, to name a few.

Furthermore, binaries do not necessarily have to work all the time. For example, the robot itself can be seen as a hybrid between human and machine. Therefore, behind every interpretation and conceptualization there is human

subjectivity intermingling and blurring boundaries. Whether mediating or not, the area that stands between human and non-human is often unclear. There are indefinite categories including neither-human-nor-animal (subhuman, abhuman), robot-but-still-human (cyborg, android), and entities distant from the current human but still connected to her (transhuman, posthuman) can be regarded as blurred categories included in the domain of the non-human. In other words, those who are both human *and* not, *partially* human and *partially* not, or *sometimes* human and *sometimes* not, can be deemed as “not-quite-humans.” Concordantly, to conceptualize the vague categories of the human and not-quite-human, it would be helpful to define and analyze the concept of humanness and eventually not-quite humanness.

1.1. HUMANNESS, DEHUMANIZATION AND NOT-QUITE-HUMANNESS

The Earth is a very small stage in a vast cosmic arena. Think of the rivers of blood spilled by all those generals and emperors so that, in glory and triumph, they could become momentary masters of a fraction of a dot. Think of the endless visited by the inhabitants of one corner of this pixel the scarcely distinguishable inhabitants of some other corner, how frequent their misunderstandings, how eager they are to kill one another, how fervent their hatreds. (Sagan, 1997: 6-7)

If not-quite humans are both human and non-human *at the same time*, one can, from the very beginning, conclude that the definition of humanness operates in complete vagueness. Then how can we, even roughly, answer the question: what does it mean to be human? Countless different explanations have been given to this question since the emergence of civilizations. The earliest answers can be at least traced back to the Greek philosopher Protagoras, whose famous quotation goes by “man is the measure of all things.” Over time, different cultures, different philosophers and thinkers have examined the concept of humanness in a variety of ways from which one can deduce complex conclusions. However, in no way has a consensus been reached on this issue as we speak. The lack of agreement on this problem has eventually led to the creation of many literary, cultural and philosophical works involving various interpretations of humanness. After all, “if humanness were a monolithic idea, then this would be a straightforward matter, and not something on which theorists might differ” (Haslam, 2014: 36).

Although it is quite apparent that “the question of humanness will always be subjective” (Dennis, 2009: 220), in broad strokes, “perceptions of humanness can be linked to biology, language, religion, intelligence, and so on” (Hodson, MacInnis, and Costello, 2014: 88). Within this context, the concept of humanness can be evaluated within the framework of physical, cognitive and behavioral determinants.

In terms of their physical appearance, humans obviously differ from other living creatures. The determinants of the physical appearance lie beneath the genetics. The physical features are macroscopic (that is, we can see and comment about them), but their determinants, the genes and genomes are not visible to the naked eye. According to the most current findings of medical science, in which we have more reasonably put our faith than in the more subjective interpretations of the human, these invisible determinants are responsible for the biological distinctnesses. If we are to comment on the ultra-microscopic dimension, however, we will find that there is not much difference between humans and other mammals as they all share a common heritage. For example, “humans share 98.5% of their DNA with chimpanzees but also ca. 50% with bananas” (Brooks, 2007: 23). Since the difference between the DNAs of chimps and humans does not seem to be much on a percentage basis, we might superficially think that it is this mere 1.5% that makes us human. Yet, regarded from another perspective, this 1.5% “amounts to thirty million DNA differences” (Harris, 2014: 87). From this point of view, one can infer that even a small percentage of difference in DNA is sufficient to categorize two mammals as different species.

However, physical differences are apparent not only among species, but also among different individuals belonging to the same species. Therefore, one cannot claim that there is a fixed cat form or a fixed human form. Thus, humanness cannot be determined by certain physical features. In our present world, we have almost eight billion humans living, and each of those humans is genetically unique although almost identical. They have visible physical differences among themselves such as eye color, height, or skin color.

Those physical differences have caused people to invent racial categories. Always prone to form categories and draw boundaries, humans create distinctions based on who remains outside humanness but also on who is the better human.

Instead of cherishing their diversity and differences, people generate opinions, whereby they marginalize others over their physical differences and evaluate themselves a superior category of humans.

This racial categorization is one of the reasons leading to questioning humanness as a concept because it creates room for hierarchy within this category. “For close to three hundred years,” categories such as Asian, White and Black have existed in the West, based on hierarchically organized physical characteristics. “Despite attempts by researchers over the centuries to divide humans into races based on skull shape, geographic location, and presumed cultural differences, [however,] there is absolutely no support for any of these classifications” in scientific terms (Fuentes, 2015: 74-75). In other words, for a great number of scientists, there is nothing called different biological races (Relethford and Harding, 2001: 2-3; Sussman, 2014: 1; Fuentes, 2015: 74); and the differences between groups of people can solely be considered as presumed cultural variations having nothing to do with so-called racial categories. The biological factors responsible for the physical differences among people are genetic variations resulting from adaptations to various environmental, cultural, and ecological circumstances (Fuentes, 2015: 59). Even though “all humans have the same genes,” these genes are coded differently in every individual (46), and as a result, people have different physical characteristics. These genetic variations do not assign an individual to some specific race, because “the majority of variation occurs *between* races, and much less within races” (Relethford and Harding, 2001: 2; emphasis added). In other words, these genetic variations “are [not] unique to specific populations, nor are their frequencies” (Fuentes, 2015: 78). Therefore, while it is possible to talk about “patterns of diversity” among humans, science suggests that “the biological race concept for the human species” has no real basis (Relethford and Harding, 2001: 3).

Rather, race is a socially-constructed phenomenon to identify cultural boundaries. Despite this scientific judgment, most individuals or groups attribute superiority to themselves by interpreting superficially-visible but biologically baseless racial differences to their advantages. For example, some may argue that they are more evolved individuals than others. As a result, they base racism on so-called biological and mental hierarchies. From this perspective, individuals who see

themselves as fully-evolved beings, eventually consider the others as less-evolved humans or not-quite-humans. Conceptualized from this perspective, the term not-quite-human denotes an existence lacking in the essence of humanness.

As suggested earlier, not-quite-humans are intimately connected to animals. According to Hodson, MacInnis, and Costello, “humans devote considerable energy to the abstraction that we are inherently different from, ‘superior to,’ and hence more ‘valuable’ than the animals” (2014: 86). Western binary thinking dictates that our behavioral and cognitive differences from animals underlie the very essence of our humanness (Bain, Vaes, and Leyens, 2014). Inarguably, according to this thought, humans’ distinctness from animals comes from their capacity for thought and rational behavior, rather than physical features, as “the present work suggests that we define humanness by the ascendancy of control behavior,” which is rational as opposed to instinctive (Dennis, 2009: 219). The discussions about these evolutionary developments consequently paved the way for humans to think that their physical characteristics do not necessarily make them *superior* to animals, but their behavioral and cognitive abilities do.

According to Alison Brooks, there are at least six different features of humans, the utilization degree of which makes them inherently unique among all living creatures. The first one is “abstract thinking,” which can be taught to primates only to a certain degree, but not in a way that is as complex as humans perform. The second one is “planning depth,” which is not a unique trait for humans by itself, but humans can plan for an extended future compared to other creatures. The third is “problem-solving through behavioral, economic and technological innovation.” Even though various creatures also have the ability of problem-solving, this feature involves a couple of ways that are non-existent in the world of other creatures, such as economy and technology. Moreover, humans can project difficulties that are yet to happen in the future. The fourth is “imagined communities,” which refers to other people in our communities with whom we have never made contact, despite knowing that they are a part of our in-group. The fifth is “symbolic thinking.” Unlike other creatures, humans can refer to “objects/beings and ideas with arbitrary symbols.” The final one is “theory of mind,” which means that humans are aware of their existence

as individuals and can show empathy towards other people including the ones they do not keep contact with (2007: 25).

The qualities of humanness, hereby, are realized through categorization and comparison with something other than, but close to, humans such as various animals. At first glance, these qualities fallaciously seem like they make humans superior to other creatures. But not one of them really answers how come this glorified human being can at the same time show criminal and malicious behaviors? Therefore, we may come to the conclusion that our differences do not necessarily make us superior to animals.

Accordingly, as a paleoanthropologist, Brooks does not make any comparison to glorify humans; what she underlines is merely the existence and functioning of those qualities. Yet, when talking about these features, one can never be sure as to the extent to which they are utilized by humans. Obviously, people often take advantage of their own (so-called) unique features and use them for their own interests and not-so-noble ambitions. If those with the vilest intentions too are included in the category of humanness, humanness does not denote ethical superiority to non-humans. Being human has nothing to do with being good or evil. Therefore, being ill-willed as well as acting in good faith can be considered as expected behaviors from humans. However, when people encounter some bad behaviors, they verbally refer to their “inhumanness.” Thus, here too, there is an uncertain range of humaneness, the extent of which is subjectively, abstractly, and vaguely conceptualized in the minds of every individual in a variety of ways.

The label inhuman is not just used to designate individuals or groups that practice bad behaviors. There is also an element of scorn in this designation. People tend to hierarchically express “cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual” differences (Cohen, 1996: 3-20). Yet, these hierarchies function differently in the case of the members of the same group (ingroup) from the case of those that belong to other groups (outgroup). The differences of the outgroup members are often designated as less-than-human. They are eventually perceived as something different from an actual human; or not-quite-human.

Language functions to deny human status to outgroup members. It is clear that through the use of language, people employ the term “animal” as a binary

opposition of “human,” which is the superior category here. This tendency has long existed, and people sometimes point out to those binaries when defining themselves and other people. Biologically speaking, both the otherized group and the one that defines them as animal-like are humans, but the former are linguistically defined as not-quite-human. Thus, language interferes with, disregards, and blurs even the naturally existing or biological categories³. This process of one human group’s labeling another as inferior, therefore, “represents the perception and/or belief that another person (or group) is relatively less human than the self (or ingroup)” (Hodson, MacInnis, and Costello, 2014: 87). Likewise, according to Wilson and Haslam, dehumanization occurs perpetually, as “perceived discontinuities between humans and nonhumans persevere in laypeople’s beliefs about humanness and are associated with judgments about who is fully human and who is less than fully human” (2012: 372). It seems that dehumanization through categorization has long been people’s habitual way of defining themselves as superior beings while degrading others to the status of something less than human.

In the second half of the 20th century, many psychologists revisited this concept of dehumanization to investigate why people would see others “as nonhuman” and “‘disengage’ from them;” and, furthermore, how they could justify this act of seeing others “as animals” (Bain, Vaes, and Leyens, 2014: 2). Some of these prominent researchers distinguish two trends of dehumanization: the relatively tacit dehumanization, which is subconsciously done or learned, and the rather explicit dehumanization as in animalizing and mechanizing. While the former, which they call *infracumanization* (2), is introduced by Leyens and colleagues, the latter approach is largely associated with the works of Haslam.

Leyens and his colleagues have worked on two forms of emotions—primary and secondary—in order to observe how *infracumanization* occurs. According to various psychologists, primary emotions, independently of being positive or negative, consist of those that are shared with animals such as “pleasure, anger, fear and attraction” (Castano and Giner-Sorolla, 2006: 805). On the other hand, secondary emotions are considered to be the ones reflecting the (so-called) “uniquely human” emotions, which “include love, guilt, humiliation, and hope” (805). Leyens

³ Due to the arbitrary nature of language, even the precision of these concepts such as biological categories is questionable.

et al. concluded that people “attribute” a lot more “secondary emotions to their ingroup than to outgroups,” but they usually avoid correlating secondary emotions with outgroups; and they are also less hesitant to work together with an outgroup “member who expresses himself through secondary emotions” (2003: 703). These results were later supported by further research in the field of psychology (Viki et al., 2006: 766-767); that is, people generally tend to inhumanize outgroups, associate uniquely human qualities with ingroups, and, again, naturally correlate not-uniquely human (animalistic) emotions with outgroups. That is to say, humanness as an ideological and political phenomenon is also implicitly learned and passed on within the ingroup, creating patterns of language and behavior regarding outgroups as less-than-humans, which individuals adopt unconsciously.

Similarly, yet with significant differences from Leyens, Haslam argued that some (groups of) people, such as some businessmen or politicians, are “denied human nature qualities” because they “are represented in mechanistic terms, seen to be cold, rigid, and interchangeable, more akin to automata (machines and robots)” (qtd. in Hodson, MacInnis, and Costello, 2014: 88). Thus, people accused of lacking those “human nature” traits eventually become dehumanized as well. This time, however, they are compared with the machine (rather than the animal), which is the less prevalently used binary opposite of the “human.” Being compared with a machine may sometimes make some people seem like they are more-than-humans or more capable than actual humans. But in fact, dehumanization does not actually grant them superiority. They are only scorned for being deprived of human nature qualities.

Haslam also introduced another and more common type of dehumanization: “animalistic dehumanization, in which individuals or groups are thought to possess fewer uniquely human attributes” (qtd. in Over, 2020: 5). In this type of dehumanization, it is emphasized that ingroup people tend to compare outgroups with animals and see them as entities that have less-than-human qualities under their belt. A recent popular example of this, for instance, happened in 2014, when famous guitarist Ted Nugent blatantly called Barack Obama a “subhuman mongrel,” animalistically dehumanizing him (qtd. in Hodson, Kteily, and Hoffarth, 2014: 267).

According to the most prominent theories of dehumanization discussed above, dehumanization may be realized in different but interrelated ways. From one perspective, it may appear through a process of metaphorical animalization, on the one hand, or through mechanization, on the other. From another perspective, it appears when people deny outgroups uniquely human features. Regardless of approach, however, the perception of dehumanizers ultimately and intrinsically defines the people of outgroup (or Others) as not-quite-humans.

In addition to behavioral and mental degradation, dehumanization involves physical degradation. The less-than-human, in that case, denotes physical deformity and imperfection. The physical differences of the outgroup members, as in the case of races, are often defined as imperfections or deviations from the human norm, exemplified by the physical qualities of the ingroup.

Moreover, as witnessed in history, even when such differences cannot be readily available, the appearances of the members of the outgroup are tampered with to such an extent that would make their physical similarities to the ingroup—their “human” attributes—less visible. For example, in Nazi Germany, the victims of the Holocaust that would be taken to the gas chambers were tortured beforehand, physically downgraded to something less-than-human, so that the officers who ran those chambers would mentally be persuaded, upon seeing the victims, that they were already dealing with a “subhuman” group (Castano and Giner-Sorolla, 2006: 805). Physical dehumanization, in that case, reveals that, before going through physical deformation, the victims were actually nothing less than regular humans just like their victimizers.

Since physical dehumanization does not cause the so-called dehumanized to become really less human, calling them subhuman, then, has no basis. This is an approval of the fact that the verbal dehumanization is actually a delusion, a preconceived opinion, and a self-justified mechanism of overcoming covert inferiority by overt superiority. An interesting process of dehumanization takes place between criminals and their victims. Already mentally and behaviorally considered subhumans, the former degrade their victims physically so that they could at least equalize themselves with them.

All in all, explicit or implicit dehumanization⁴ can be considered to be another way of otherization, monsterization, and exclusion, led by various political and ideological assumptions. Yet, because of the unpredictability of people's approach to other people, defining the concept of humanity has been ultimately impossible. From self-identification to defining other people, the interpretations of humanness vary greatly. In defining the term humanity, what remains unchanged is the surfacing of the concepts comparable to the human, often as the opposite of the term human, such as animal or machine, because without referring to them, such a definition becomes impossible.

Consequently, these various possible interpretations of humanness locate the not-quite-human subject or the Other as the animalized, the marginalized, the almost-human, the less-than-human, or the more-than-human, but never a fully human. However, categories of less- (or more-) than-human include a very large range of beings, such as animals, machines, partly-animals, partly-machines and partly-humans. Furthermore, there is the category of the not-quite-human as neither a complete animal, nor a machine (in form or in behavior), nor a human, but at the same time, as the name suggests, a human and/or a machine and/or an animal to an uncertain extent; an entity that destroys and/or includes boundaries and categorizations. Especially in fictional representations, depending on the author's subjectivity, what might otherwise be considered less-than-human can become a fully human subject of the outgroups (depending on the makeup of the ingroup, such as whites, non-whites, Christians, non-Christians, etc.). Hence, not-quite-humanness is predicated on the subjective ideas of people, discriminatory or glorifying politics, and the inconsistencies behind these choices. Thus, the term is used sometimes as an equivalent to the unwanted or the monster, and sometimes to the coveted or the cherished.

As such, not-quite-human does not just cover the domain of mere negative connotations even though it generally does so. Marked by corporeal, mental, or behavioral differences, this Other can also be hailed as more-than-human, almost-

⁴ At this point, one must note that dehumanization does not involve only racial or ethnic differences. Those who are perceived as Others may be dehumanized for different reasons (such as their queerness, class, religious orientation, criminal tendencies, etc.) for violating dominant norms or values.

human, or even less-than-human, such as various heroic fantasy or adorable anime characters. In this approach, the not-quite-human operates outside the realm of the Gothic. Sometimes, the not-quite-human is partially more and partially less-than-human as in the example of the shapeshifting android T-1000 in the famous *Terminator* movie series, which is corporeally undistinguishable yet certainly a lot more capable but morally quite worse than an ordinary human being. This android called Terminator, however, is pictured as an emblem of goodness in the movie. From these perspectives, not-quite-humans are not always threats for human beings while they can be so. However, one way or the other, they are always undeniably and perceivably distanced from the human subject.

What then determines the distinction among the negative, positive, and neutral interpretations of the term not-quite-human? The *peculiarity* of the not-quite-human has been depicted in art and literature, in which the Peculiar is sometimes glorified and sometimes disapproved. As far as art and literature is concerned, then, the simple answer to the above-question would be the literary form and framework in which the not-quite-human is situated. For instance, while in pure science-fiction, marvelous fantasy, or children's literature, not-quite-humans are not necessarily treated as a warning, in Gothic mode, they operate *almost* every single time as MONSTERS, intruders, Others, debunkers, and dangerous entities. Thus, the Gothic arises with not-quite-humans' dehumanization, monstrosity, and inhumanity.

As far as Gothic literature is concerned, the term not-quite-human contains not only the traits of actual human(like) beings, but also those of the fictional and made-up humanoids. In Gothic art or literature, not-quite-humans, take various forms, including the *abhuman* and *subhuman*, *cyborg*, *android*, *transhuman*, and *posthuman*. While the first two are directly linked to dehumanization and manifested in terms of degraded beings, the rest are *usually* perceived as neutral or upgraded beings. In either case, however, the Gothic not-quite-human can actually be *any* possible humanlike subject that is the Other, depending on the interpretation of the perceiver. Yet, through the Western gaze, which places the non-criminal white male individual at the top of the human hierarchy, Gothic not-quite-humans do not only encompass the imaginary *abhumans* and/or *subhumans*, such as zombies and lycanthropes, but also some people existing in the actual realm, such as racial and

ethnic minorities, females, children, murderers, people with physical/mental disabilities, our humanoid predecessors, and homosexuals. Not-quite-humans of Western Gothic are also *cyborgs*, *androids*, *transhumans*, or *posthumans* who are peculiar and unusual, avoided because of representing the fear of what we may possibly become. What makes these beings not-quite-humans is that their presence is based on their distinctness from normalcy, which may trigger our uncanny feelings, disturb us or bewilder us.

As a result, when we evaluate the human-animal-machine triangle, it is clear that the further one moves away from humanness, the more not-quite-human he/she would become. According to these degrees of divergence, various not-quite-humans appear under different names and categorizations. Therefore, no matter how the definition of human and humanity is plotted, the entities that cannot be defined as fully-human will always exist as products of subjectivities.

Thus, it is clear that not-quite-human terminology can be interpreted in numerous ways, and, therefore, it is necessary to separate its modes. The not-quite-humans that this study will focus on are contemporary monstrous Others rather than Others with heroic qualities. Because no other modes of literature or art have handled the Other any more pervasively than the Gothic, the Gothic as a mode is of capital importance for this study. The not-quite-human's otherness is, with almost no exception, equivalent to monstrosity in the Gothic. In that regard, it is crucial to identify why not-quite-humans are treated as peculiar intruders in the Gothic *compared to different literary modes*. Also, it would be useful to look at how humanoid not-quite-humans, who have been indispensable to the Gothic framework, have evolved over time and what we should expect from them in contemporary times.

1.2. MONSTROUS NOT-QUITE-HUMANS AND THE GOTHIC

In order to conceptualize not-quite-humans within the framework of monsterization, it is crucial to understand the origins, and the Gothic approach to such creatures. Therefore, the fundamentals of the Gothic must first be clarified. Two important steps would provide an insight into this clarification. Initially, a review of

the origins of the Gothic and its evolution period will lay bare how the essential aspects of the Gothic have remained almost intact despite the subjects it touches upon have changed and varied. Secondly, the following discussion on the Gothic, unlike other modes, will demonstrate that the Gothic contains a unique type of unheroic “otherness” (as exemplified in not-quite-humans) that functions as a warning. Thus, the origins of the Gothic and the origins of monstrosity will be shown to intersect, shedding light on how the Gothic almost certainly positions not-quite-humans as intruders, monsters, or indicators of monstrosity.

The Gothic can broadly be defined as “the language of terror,” which is, according to Foucault, “dedicated to an endless expense, even though it only seeks to achieve a single effect” (1977:65). This effect, traditionally, can appear in any emotional response related to terror, such as shock, horror, fear, disgust, etc. While achieving this effect, the Gothic delivers a variety of functions. It reveals our insights about our deepest fears, as it makes us intimately and implicitly confront the monster, the uncanny, and gloom, and eventually the naked truth. The Gothic is the terror from which we run away, yet find ourselves as a part of. It leaves us vulnerable to its language by getting us deeply immersed in it, revealing the most pitiful traits of mankind. One way or the other, it speaks the unspoken, exhibits the unwanted we uncannily hesitate to associate with ourselves, enables the repressed to be unearthed, and feeds our sense of wonder (Mülazımoğlu, 2019). Thus, it is “pervasive and haunting ... because it can contain and condense a seeming infinitude of threats and discourses” (Wester, 2016: 3).

1.2.1. The Fundamentals of the Gothic

According to Punter and Byron, scholars relate the word “Gothic” with the ancient barbaric Germanic tribe of the Goths, who were partly responsible for the decline of the Roman Empire. Historically, the Goths were regarded as the destroyers of civilization, who caused the classical European era to be interrupted and caused the European continent to suffer during what is called the Dark Ages until the reanimation of classical norms with the Renaissance period. Goths were, in other words, a representation of the “primitive” and “uncivilized” face of Europe, which is

later repressed with the re-establishment of the so-called glorified and civilized society in the post-renaissance era. Nonetheless, some Western scholars contentedly accepted the Goths as part of their history and saw their primitiveness as a steppingstone towards the current structure of the European culture. The Gothic is, after all, seen not only “as other to that civilized self,” but also [as] a reminder of the medieval Dark Ages (Punter and Byron, 2004: 3-6).

In the eighteenth-century Enlightenment, the Gothic, as a mode, started to be perceived as a reactionary conduct against what is called classical (7). Society, towards the end of the eighteenth-century, developed a counteractive attitude against the classical, extremely rational, and strictly systematic worldview, the occurrence of which could be considered as the labor pains of the romantic on the horizon. Probably, the most distinctive transformation in this period appeared in European people’s perception of their past. Some prominent scholars and artists in Europe (especially in England) refused to exclude the wild and primitive from their past, and, recognizing their continuity with it, they consequently accepted, celebrated, and embraced humanness with its imperfections. The Gothic, in that regard, came to be seen as the advocate of anything “archaic” that is “opposed to, or resisted the establishment of civilized values” (8). Many underlined the significance of the principles praised by the Gothic spirit and indicated that “the fruits of primitivism and barbarism possessed a vigour, a sense of grandeur that was sorely needed in English culture” (8).

Early predecessors of the Gothic appeared around the mid-eighteenth century; with its origins traceable to the 1740s, a blatantly new, radical and distinctive type of writing called “graveyard poetry” appeared. It was a type of poetry mostly about death and, therefore, clearly an attack on the dominant understanding in Europe, which claimed that “nature’s purpose is merely to serve human needs.” This poetry type intrinsically underlined the vulnerabilities and limitations of humans and their mortality, despite their ability for reasoning (10-11). Thus, in reaction to the purely rational, emotional and Dionysian values slowly started to surpass as a mode of human expression. With this rebellious tendency’s growth against the rational and orderly aspects of the Age of Reason, Europeans started to be more solicitous about their chaotic medieval past. Artists, scholars, architects, and writers fervently began

to show explicit romantic demeanor in their works. Edmund Burke's odd association of the sublime and beauty with terror heralded the paradigm shift in the discourse of literature. With the first widely accepted Gothic work *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Walpole, the Gothic came into existence as a separate early romantic genre. As time progressed, the Gothic eventually reanimated the repressed archaic and aberrant, rather than rational, European values, which favored the guidance of feelings (usually of fear, horror, and terror) rather than that of the mind. The Gothic, in that sense, was (and still is) the haunting of the past.

Every new period broadened the vision of the Gothic literature, while keeping its basic characteristic alive, which is delivering a romantic mixture of horror and fear. With the proliferation of the use of machine technology during the time of the Industrial Revolution, not only society but also literature became revolutionized. Especially "The very ideas of what it meant to be human were disturbed in the face of increasing regimentation and mechanistic roles" (Punter and Byron, 2004: 20). Eventually the term machine evolved into the binary opposition of human. As a result, challenged by this machine-human dichotomy, Gothic stories started to appear as products of imagination. For example, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), the most famous piece of the Gothic in that era, indirectly questions the condition of humans and humanity with its scientifically created monster. Thus, the Gothic started to introduce humanlike monsters.

However, these monster stories were not only interrogating the human condition as they were also delivering a social criticism of their time. In *Frankenstein's* case, for instance, there is an indirect yet disturbing inquiry about whether science would bring people comfort or trouble. Therefore, the Gothic here, by playing the devil's advocate, suggests an opposing stance against the dominant *weltanschauung* of the industrial era favoring mechanization, progress, and the spread of the use of technology. Ironically, science in *Frankenstein* causes an uncivilized and primitive-looking dysfunctional being to come to existence, making us confront our fears about regression and mortality. Certainly, the analysis of *Frankenstein* is not limited to this point of view since the novel can be interpreted in multi-dimensional ways. Still, Shelley's cornerstone work is one of the pioneers presenting "the concern that dominates Gothic's engagement with both science and

industry over the following centuries: the disruption of accepted notions of the human” (Punter and Byron, 2004: 21). From that point on, various not-quite-human bodies appeared on the Gothic scene, including shapeshifting and metamorphic vampires, zombies, and monsters.

Towards the end of the nineteenth-century the Gothic expanded across the Atlantic. A variety of Gothic works were produced not only during the Victorian Era in England but also during the American Renaissance in the United States concurrently, both contributing to the expansion of the Gothic mode in their own special ways.

For the Victorian Gothic, the use of setting was of primary importance. While its early examples usually had a setting of a medieval past, the Victorian Era eventually introduced the Gothic mode to the urban domain, as there was rapid urbanization going on in England. The traditional Gothic instruments such as castles and haunted houses were replaced by more familiar settings closer to people in their everyday lives. The terror of the cities and the domestic sphere now were the Gothic’s focal concern, which took place in new urban apartments, workplaces and houses. Ultimately, the Gothic welcomed the urban bourgeois life and put their fears (of mainly the aristocratic past) and weaknesses into words. This period presented very unique writers such as Bram Stoker and Robert Louis Stevenson, who revolutionized the mode of the Gothic via their novels. While Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) uncovered the fears regarding aristocracy and colonialism, Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) revisited the conflict between the primitive and the civilized. Furthermore, the odd and extreme use of imagination in those two works introduced unique modes of monstrosity to the Gothic scene. Especially with *Dracula*, the Gothic witnessed the intrusion of the vampires into the urban setting, which are often revisited in contemporary Gothic stories. The barbaric and unruly Gothic imagination and its monstrosity set off from the castles of the Dark Ages and expanded into the industrial and modern metropolises.

On the other side of the Atlantic, American Gothic appeared as an extension of the American Renaissance, which primarily aimed to break away from Puritanism in literature. American Gothic handled not only the haunting of the past, but also the haunting of the mind, or the mental entrapment of the self. Thus, the Gothic setting

began to contain abstract places like human minds. Consequently, the Gothic imagination began to deal with the cases of madness (or cases of people who are entrapped in the labyrinths their own minds), such as in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" (1892).

Most certainly, one of the masters of the madness-, consciousness-, and insanity-related Gothic stories in this era was Edgar Allan Poe, whose stories offer a unique ambiance via the portrayal of the gothicization of the mind. Especially two of his stories, "Tell-Tale Heart" (1843) and "The Black Cat" (1843) stand out as particular examples of such gothicization since they evince a dead-ended mental voyage resulting in devastation. However, in both stories, one comes across more than a prominent Gothic narration based on hesitation and tension. Depicting mankind's vulnerability to irrational forces with their (presumably) delusional, therefore, not-quite-human protagonists with mental instabilities, both stories implicitly offer a criticism of consistency and reason. These stories became the pioneers of Gothic depictions of the rational individual's decline, suggesting that progress was not something coherently achievable, since mankind, by nature, is susceptible to unreason.

Without a doubt, Edgar Allan Poe had a great impact on the development of the Gothic all around the world, and his contribution deserves volumes. However, in order to conceptualize his critical approach, which later will prove to be a valuable aspect of this study, there needs to be a further elaboration: As widely known, beside his masterful and poetic use of the language of terror and horror, Poe also delivered a deeply subtle criticism on the cultural conditions of his time (just like Shelley did) by giving the Gothic its due by his implicitly rebellious stance against the dominant drift of the Age of Industrialization and its progress ideology. According to Clayton Marsh, for instance, a symbolic reading of Poe's stories renders Poe's approach to progress and reason as "an oppressive and culturally pervasive confidence game that masked the horrors of frontier genocide and slavery beneath the speed and allure of industrial technology" (2005: 260). Knowing that this unmasking of the gilded corruptness actually constitutes one of the fundamental functions of the Gothic, Poe serves as the Gothic's most masterful virtuoso. With Poe, then, Western society's high hopes for the advancement of civilization began to fall under gothic criticism.

Because, as, Clery indicates, progress was a defining term for “civilization” for the Western mind, the Gothic critical stance, according to her, means a fundamental opposition to the Western thought. The price for the “civility” of modern Western mind, she maintains, is the loss of imagination. Thus, the Gothic suggests that “once a sense of loss had been acknowledged, it was only another small step to take the view that modernity must learn from the uncivilized past and aspire to imitate it” (2002: 27). For instance, as soon as the positive vision about progress is disrupted because of the disastrous wars—such as the Civil War—and their atrocious consequences, people get disillusioned with the ongoing state of humanity and take refuge in their “uncivilized past” by using the Gothic as an instrument (27). As in any other time period, the Gothic, once again, criticized the mainstream and the dominant values and thoughts through its metaphoric and implicit language and showed that scientific and/or cultural progress did not necessarily indicate being better. Progress, for the Gothic (and for Poe), was nothing other than a delusional idea in the minds of individuals. Thus, Poe set the essential genetic codes of the Gothic mode for centuries to come by his extraordinary approach towards the past/present and progress/regression. Poe’s approach and accomplishments inspired the next generation of Gothic writers foreshadowing future Gothic criticism.

The early twentieth century witnessed the rise of the Gothic especially in the American South, since the social changes of that time affected that region more than any other. Because the South socio-economy was agrarian economy depending on slavery, the social changes regarding human rights and freedom, as well as the economic orientation towards industrialization left the Southerners in uncharted waters. Consequently, Southern social and economic methods and its hidebound traditionalism started to fall out of date. In the literary imagination, “the decaying” of the “old plantation mansion” became a prevalent figure in Southern Gothic, which meant leaving the old, “once-grand” agrarian based community behind (Moss, 2014: 177). This excessive appearance of the haunting of the past also enabled the repressed to return in the Southern Gothic stories in forms of racism, gender discrimination, and patriarchal traditionalism (Wester, 2016: 25-26). Even though these issues were not unique to the United States, Americans were particularly urged to confront them in their lives in the early twentieth century, and in the fictional

creations of the Southern Gothic tradition. Especially the works of William Faulkner are considered as the cornerstones of the Southern Gothic in this era. This style eventually expanded into the mid twentieth century, the time of the Civil Rights Movements, particularly with the contribution of the writers such as Shirley Jackson and Flannery O'Connor.

The influence of the Gothic continues in the postmodern period in an evolved way by adapting to the characteristics of the period. According to Beville, Gothic works include any postmodern aspect such as "narrative self-consciousness," "metafictional" interaction, and "multiple levels of self-irony" but what makes them peculiar is that they have "a set of meta-discourses [of their own] which run subversively against mainstream society and the literature" (2009: 14-15). Nonetheless, due to the postmodernism's tendency to blur the borders among various different genres and modes, it is extremely difficult to offer a single definition of the postmodern Gothic. Moreover, not only did the genres and modes become intermingled but the ways of conveying the meanings of the Gothic also varied in this era. In addition to the traditional means of media, such as published books, postmodern period eventually witnessed Gothic movies thanks to the advancements in film making business. Among the prominent postmodern artists, we may list the award-winning authors, such as Stephen King and Joyce Carol Oates, and movie directors, such as Roger Corman and Tim Burton, all contributing to the expansion of the Gothic, which "has become a... widely variable, symbolic realm in... postmodern western culture, however archaic the Gothic label may make it seem" (Hogle, 2002: 2).

As a result of the intermingling of different genres and modes, the context what we should call Gothic or non-Gothic has undoubtedly become disputed in the postmodern era. Fleenor maintains that "narrative complexity" and "instability" are the most striking and distinct features of the postmodern Gothic so that the readers sometimes tend to question whether it has any "narration" (1993: 12). However, these features alone do not necessarily make any literary work Gothic. According to Kelly Hurley, "the Gothic is rightly, if partially, understood as a cyclical genre that reemerges in times of cultural stress in order to negotiate anxieties for its readership by working through them in displaced (sometimes supernaturalized) form" (2002:

194). The pattern Hurley brings to us is always relevant since social transgressions never cease. Likewise, Daly indicates that, although cultural anxieties tend to prevail in real life as a result of some imminent “crisis in the culture,” conventional and “dominant representations of a culture” can manage to veil and blur them. However, these anxieties eventually come back “as the ‘repressed’” of that very “culture” in the Gothic, making it a unique narrative (2000, 34).

In the light of this information, one can say that the Gothic operates today in our postmodern literature without a doubt, since the aspects explained by Daly and Fleenor are timeless, functional and prevalent. Moreover, to testify to the existence of the genre, the name of the Gothic is still required and used for labeling various postmodern movies and novels. Peter Bürger states, “whereas art forms owe their birth to a specific social context, they are not tied to the context of their origin or to a social situation that is analogous to it, for the truth is that they can take on different functions in varying social contexts” (qtd. in Bennett, 1990: 78). The outstanding features of the Gothic such as “the haunting of the past” and “the return of the repressed” have not always signified the same variable since the birth of the Gothic. In addition, because reading a literary text through different perspectives may result in different interpretations, today’s Gothic does not share the same motivation with that of the 1800s. Nonetheless, even though changes exist depending on the time and place, the Gothic continues to portray social problems on the background. For instance, while the social transgressions regarding the novel *Dracula* (1897) have to do with the aristocracy, Oates’s *Zombie* (1995) deals with racism and inequality. Both of those stories comprise of the language of horror/terror, but the latter delivers it in a postmodern setting.

Including elements of horror/terror, however, does not qualify a text as Gothic, for the aims of some such texts may be just to scare without offering a deeper insight into social transgressions. Similarly, not every literary text or movie that deals with social transgressions is also necessarily Gothic. The delineation of what constitutes the Gothic is partially decided by the social anxieties the reader finds in the text.

However, the most obvious characteristics of the Gothic include being an amalgamation of the terrorizing and the romantic; revealing of the cultural anxieties;

the use of suspense triggered by the unknown and/or uncanny; the intrusion or questioning of a not-quite-human (the Other or the suspensefully peculiar being), such as non-white, criminal, human subject; and finally, debunking the suppressed horrors and atrocities. It is such deep-seated psycho-social characteristics, as Hogle indicates, that have enabled Gothic fiction to survive throughout centuries:

The longevity and power of Gothic fiction unquestionably stem from the way it helps us address and disguise some of the most important desires, quandaries, and sources of anxiety, from the most internal and mental to the widely social and cultural, throughout the history of western culture since the eighteenth century. (2002: 4)

Today, for example, the stories of even the earliest examples of the Gothic such as *Frankenstein* or *Dracula* are in the limelight, recurrently revived, and repeatedly analyzed to shed light on and re-conceptualize the understanding of humanity as it is constantly confronted with the return of the repressed, haunted with the other, and the monster. Thus, today's Gothic literary works deal with the uncanny aspect of the fear/horror, the phenomenon of the repressed with reference to human psychology either at individual or social level, and the social critique of the notions of monstrosity and otherization. These aspects explain the relevance and significance of the Gothic today.

As already stated, the kind of monstrosity the Gothic involves has considerable connections with the notion of not-quite-human as demonstrated in many literary works. Then, where does not-quite-human stand in this framework and does it always have to be evaluated with regard to the Gothic? The Gothic enables a dimension of monstrosity to be created and discussed with all the characters it encompasses: the mentally doomed, vampires, criminals, zombies, etc. Moreover, by usually perceiving them as intruders, functioning as a medium that trigger the repressed, it interprets those beings very differently than other literary modes. Such point of view, therefore, makes these intruders outsiders or Others. Consequently, the Gothic demonstrates the existence of the "discourses of Otherness" (Wester, 2016: 2) through the portrayal of various monsters. Therefore, if a monster-based narrative is evaluated in an otherness-centered perspective, it should be most-likely referred to as the Gothic rather than any other genre.

A piece of fiction in Gothic mode should not be equated with another mode of fiction, because, as previously indicated, Gothic monsters, tone, and characters

would be different from those of the marvelous fiction, (non-Gothic) science fiction, children's literature or superhero-based narrations one way or the other. Moreover, even though it is highly possible to see some Gothic elements in any contemporary work, such as a dark/gloomy setting, without any perspectives on social transgressions and/or the aspect of otherness, they can only be not-quite-Gothic with horror or terror elements.

To sum up, it is clear that the Gothic revisits the concepts of the Other, the intruder, the haunted, the debunker, the marginalized, and the entrapped with its unique modes of horror and/or terror. What makes these unique is that they are usually treated as monsters in the mode of the Gothic. The monsters of the Gothic—unless they are supernatural entities such as ever-invisible and non-speaking demons—can also be considered as not-quite-humans. Those monsters can be partially human in form and/or behavior, such as vampires and zombies; they can be physically human but mentally inhumane, such as criminals and murderers; they can physically resemble a human but constitutionally, mentally, and artificially differ from a full human subject, such as androids and cyborgs do; or, most interestingly, they can be just human from an outgroup, whose humanness is put into question by the opposing ingroup. In all these scenarios, the monsters are examined under the umbrella term not-quite-human.

In postmodern narratives, it becomes even more difficult to differentiate between what is monster and what is human. In contemporary literature and movies, even some vampires or lycanthropes live among humans and look and act completely like humans regardless of the genre or mode they are associated with. Especially in non-Gothic genres or modes, monsters and the Others are sometimes ironically treated as beings with no evil qualities of monstrosity, such as the adorable and outgoing monsters in children's literature, or the hobbits of the Middle Earth, who are familiar species for their own fictional realm but would be most certainly treated as the unwanted Others in our world (considering the assumption that *homo sapiens* massacred the Neanderthals). Therefore, monstrosity here becomes a vague concept to be examined. All in all, in order to realize that the concept of otherness, not-quite-humanness and monstrosity in the Gothic are not always similar to those in other

genres or modes, one needs to examine what is understood from the concept of the monster.

1.2.2. Origins of the Gothic Monsters and Their Uniqueness

Defining monsters is a very challenging task, especially for the Gothic. Etymologically speaking, monster may be lexically related to the Latin words “*monstrare* (to show or reveal) and *monere* (to warn or portend)” (Weinstock, 2014: 41). The lexical roots of these words suggest that the monster functions both as an indicator (of something else) and a warning.

The origin of the monsters in the written documents in the West can be traced back to antiquity while we can predict that they have far longer history in oral tradition. However, since their known origins, monsters have not necessarily signified evil phenomena. The monster sometimes became “a display of God’s wrath, a portent of the future, [and sometimes] a symbol of moral virtue or vice, or an accident of nature” (Asma, 2009: 13).

First and foremost, monsters in ancient times represented power. There are many stories in Greek mythology, for instance, in which some heroes have to defeat monsters to legitimize their power. Thus, some monsters are perceived as imaginary power holders who are normally stronger than ordinary people. That is why monster images can be found on various symbols and even flags. For instance, the flag of Wales has a red dragon figure, which “may have been adopted as a symbol of power” (Marshall, 2017: 43). While the symbolization of a country by a beast is a source of pride and superiority for its own people, it serves as a threatening and deterrent force for outsiders.

Monsters push the limits of imagination and arouse our interest, because, as in the case of dragons, the Hydra, the Medusa, and the Minotaur, they are all products of the imagination. Those non-existent creatures evoke a sense of curiosity, for they are depicted as extremely strong and unique as no real creature on earth can be. Dragons, for instance, are powerful, noble, but at the same time threatening and frightening creatures. Thus, like most of the monsters, they violate categories by holding within themselves the characteristics of the improbable (Carroll, 1990: 188).

They exist in the imagination inspired simultaneously by real animal qualities of “the reptile and the bird” (Rowlandson, 2013: 215), which constitute their recognizable parts, but some of them can also speak and breathe fire, qualities which have no references to reality. All in all, as claimed by Carroll, monsters are “anomalous”; therefore, they arouse our attention. Yet, monsters are interesting and they “make us curious” because “one wants to gaze upon the unusual, even when it is simultaneously repelling” (1990: 188). Looming over “that ambiguous, primal space between fear and attraction” (Cohen, 1996: 19), monsters captivate and frighten us at the same time.

Doubtlessly, imaginary and mythic monsters of the ancient times are at the same time mysterious because they are non-existent and complicated while sometimes also referring to the unknown. Various mythological figures helped ancient people provide answers to “the mysteries of nature that weren't able to be explained” (Bolton, 2002: x). For instance, in ancient Crete, the Minotaur’s roar was held responsible for the sound of the earthquakes (Kaplan, 2013: 56-60), which turned the Minotaur into a threatening, but also a very powerful, monster even though it was invisible to everyone. Yet, the case of the Minotaur is merely an example among many other monster-related mystical explanations. Because of such connections with mysteries or mysteriousness, monsters can be examined with regard to the humans’ attraction to the unknown and its sublimation. Predictably, the descriptions of these imaginary creatures like the griffins or the dragons became so exaggerated at every telling that ultimately they became envisioned as grandiose mysterious creatures in legends. As a result of such exaggeration, these imaginary creatures reached the level of sublime and began to be associated with power or nobility. Naturally, these monsters, which have been depicted in various works of art over the years, even began to be used as some cultural symbols on emblems or flags. Thus, the image of the monster had been a sublime figure long before Edmund Burke provided the definition of the sublime. Being mostly imaginary creatures, these legendary beings did not give people difficulties in reality.

Monsters partially owe their mysteriousness to their uniqueness, for there are no entities in real world with their complete physical and behavioral characteristics. Even though many of those creatures had partial human features, they needed some

non-human qualities as well to be able to function as monsters. Thus, many of the mythical creatures actually can be considered as the very early prototypes of not-quite-humans. Again, the Minotaur of the Greek mythology, for instance, is partially human and partially bull, which is just one of the instances of such hybrid monstrosity. The Persian legendary creature Manticore is even more complicated. Its head is that of a human, but it has the body of a lion with scorpion-like strings on its tail. Thus, some monsters of the ancient world possess some human and some animal features, making them neither human, nor animal, but not-quite-human. Many of the mythic monsters even talk, think, and plan like human beings, so that they could appeal to human perception as liminal creatures standing at the threshold between humanness and animality as well as the real and the marvelous.

Although still relevant to today's world as the primary examples of monstrosity in contemporary literature, signifying fears and dilemmas as any succeeding monsters do, archaic monsters are somewhat different from modern or Gothic monsters. Unlike the modern or Gothic monsters, they are related to mythological beliefs and not necessarily debunkers or "active" intruders enabling us to see social transgressions. They are usually passive, living in their own domain until on occasion confronted by heroes. Though merely imaginary and symbolic, they inspire their successors as the earliest examples of monsters signifying dangers and threats. That is why their names or features still appear in modern pieces of literature.

Ancient monstrosity has led to the surfacing of another aspect in the modern formation of the monster such as otherization and marginalization. Monsters were kept alive in ancient times not only in the imagination but also in the real world, outside Western world's cultural borders, habitually projected the qualities of the Other. Wittkower indicates that the Greeks, in their written sources, depicted various monsters and "monstrous races and animals," similar to their mythological creatures, which they thought of as existing in India. By doing so, they "rationalized" their fears, which were already attributed to their own legendary imaginary monsters in mythology (1942: 159). Greeks might have reinterpreted the Eastern myths they adopted from the Indians; or they might have deliberately misinterpreted or exaggerated the exotic animals they saw for the first time, as in the case of

transforming rhinoceros into unicorns (164). Besides, most likely by speculating about the Indian myths they heard, Greeks depicted not only animals but also various races in India as strange and weird-looking (159). In any case, they located the mythic, the delusional, or the exaggerated somewhere remote in the real world so that they cannot harm them. This kind of monstrosity arose from an interest in the unknown as well as an effort to describe the Other. Even though the Greeks might have been inspired by the Indian myths in their depictions, there is also some reality behind their perception of India as a “marvelous land” (159) and their otherization of Indians. Monstrosity, in that regard, loosely includes the otherization of the unfamiliar humans. Consequently, regardless of them being completely imaginary or not, all the monsters were identified as feared and avoided beings distanced from a mundane setting.

The ancient concept of the monster provides the essentials for and sheds light on every other period’s conceptualization of monstrosity. As we approach from antiquity to the present day, it can be seen that although there are almost no fundamental changes in the concept of monstrosity, it has certainly evolved by strengthening and solidifying its ancient qualities double or triple-fold. In addition, different eras had slightly particular perceptions of the monsters, varying and diversifying them accordingly. For example, Stephen Asma classifies (Western) monsters under five different categories, starting from the ancient times to the present. First, he interprets them as symbols of power and sources of fear in myths (2009: 19-38). Second, the biblical monsters of the medieval monsters, shaped by religious legends, such as demons, evil-souls, and giants, appear (63-73). When, in medieval times, the clash between good and evil becomes a focal concern, monsters begin to embody the evil, such as in the case of Grendel, the monster in the Christianized pagan legend called *Beowulf* (94-102). Moreover, monstrosity once again expands into real life, and people who are accused of witchery become labeled as monsters (107-115). In the medieval era, any mundane value, person, or community that appears to Christian authorities to be violating religion was demonized.

The third phase of the evolution of monsters, according to Asma, starts with the scientific revolution. In this period, with the spread and dominance of the

scientific method, monsters become highly modified and chaotic. Especially with the emergence of Darwinism, more ideas are acknowledged about the diversity of living things, but this has also reinforced a diversity of Others. For example, science brought forth deformed individuals, mutants, and hybrid bodies, such as Frankenstein's, as monsters (123-182).

The most significant conceptualization in the era is found in the monstrosity of the human itself. Especially the Gothic perspective, which merged the monster with the Other, has led to the emergence of this specific monster discourse still relevant today. Inspired by the otherness of the ancient monsters, the Gothic monster has contributed deeper social meanings to the aspect of monstrosity. Yet in addition to revealing social contradictions, the monster figure became equipped with a stronger individuality of its own. Thus, the concept of monster, bounded up with the individual sphere more than ever before, was naturally brought closer to humans in appearance and behavior, and such familiarized monstrosity better demonstrated humans as monsters. As a result, monsters in literature were commonly portrayed as Gothic not-quite-humans. Seeing "how our own incongruities (personal and cultural) are reflected in them" (457), the distorted hybrid figures like Dracula and Frankenstein's monster simultaneously arouse in the readers disgust as well as sympathy. Eventually, the anthropomorphic monster as "a human character rather than an enlarged mixture of the human and non-human" repeatedly appeared in the Gothic literature (Hogle, 2013: 457).

As for the fourth category regarding monstrosity, Asma suggests that the rise of psychoanalysis provided a better understanding of concepts such as fear, uncanny, and repression (2009: 183-194). The monsters are now depicted as serial killers, criminals, aggressors, and psychopaths; that is, they are fully human in appearance (195-228). However, even though they are fully human in form, they are still not-quite-humans because their behavior has lowered them to the level of something less than human. Especially in Gothic stories, those not-quite-humans were many, and their monstrous desire to commit crimes was narrated in disturbing details, the act of which usually revealed the return of some social repression.

Finally, the last category Asma depicts is the postmodern monstrosity, which includes not only "the products of monstrous societies" such as "torturers, terrorists

and zombies” (231), but also androids, transhumans, posthumans, and cyborgs. The former usually indicates xenophobic otherization through the transformation of “other groups, whole races, into monsters” (239). The latter, on the other hand, depicts an unknown future that projects otherness through falling away from the current human condition with the use of science (255-274). Both of these subcategories present another layer of not-quite-humanness and are operative today in any fictional genre and/or mode including the Gothic.

As it is seen, monstrosity repeatedly brings binary oppositions into question at any given period. From the antiquity to the industrial revolution, the monstrosity of the otherized and/or demonized not-quite-humans has usually resulted from their being hybrids of humans and animals. This hybridity is all the more threatening because the animal is the quintessential Other of the human. Treating of animals even passed down to our language, which strengthens further the argument of animal otherization. For example, exotic and apparently unusual (and usually fierce) animals, which are different from human beings in appearance and which humans refuse to relate to themselves, are also called monsters in daily language. As is well-known, the word “beast,” which is used in English and is synonymous with “monster,” means “animal” at the same time. This lexical approach that integrates such hostile and distancing perspective into language alone summarizes how humans perceive the Others, which in turn shapes the perception of animals as monsters. Ultimately, the physical and/or behavioral traits of the Others (the monsters) of the antiquity were undeniably animal traits.

Since the industrial revolution, the tendency to see others as partial animals has mostly continued, but instead of explicit animal-human hybridization, degraded, deformed, humanlike, but still less-than-human creatures appeared in comparison to the full human subject. In other words, less than human as a category pointed to a place between the human and animal. Nonetheless, especially in the Gothic literature, those portrayed as less than human have mostly symbolized “others.” In that context, less-than-human subjects can be regarded as dehumanized outgroups of people or individuals to whom animalistic traits are verbally attributed by an ingroup. For instance, according to Halberstam, a symbolic reading of *Dracula* suggests that the vampire’s “physical aspect, his physiognomy, is a particularly clear cipher for the

specificity of his ethnic monstrosity,” which bears a resemblance to the stereotypical and dehumanizing description of a monsterized Jewish or Middle Eastern person by the West (1995: 92-93). Especially Dracula’s “sharp white teeth and pointed ears” indicate that he certainly has some “canine features, which are related to his ability to transmogrify into a dog, wolf, *orcynoccephalus* — all tied to Jewish and Muslim monsters” (Arjana, 2015: 123). Such animalistic depiction of Jewish monsters by Westerners can be considered as an example of binary-oppositional otherization, as they present a portrayal of human(like) beings with outstanding and exaggerated non-human features. Even when we read Dracula without correlating him with an ethnic group, we cannot deny his formal and behavioral monstrosity and animalistic features, making him not-quite-human.

Consequently, from Western perspective, any degraded, animalized, not-fully-evolved or less-than-human being in literature is regarded as a monster; this monster’s defectiveness may be in its form and/or behavior, and it may stand for some avoided notion or people, or person or thing. Therefore, it is small wonder that Dracula has not been the only example of such depiction in the history of literature, as there are many others recalling this symbolic monstrosity (123).

However, especially since the postmodern era, the term human is used as a binary opposition not only of the term animal, but also of the term machine (and even of the term plant despite being less common). In this context, postmodern otherness/monstrosity can be examined roughly within a three-dimensional discourse consisting of human, animal, and machine. Just as some not-quite-humans, who are partial animals and partial humans, are treated as monsters, robots and humanoid creatures are also called so in postmodern times since, from another perspective, they further represent the Other.

The postmodern era strongly underlines not-quite-human (thus eventually human) monstrosity from even a broader perspective since the term monster is applied not only to many different imaginary entities by such as golems, mythic creatures, zombies or vampires, but also to humans who “abdicated their humanity” (Asma, 2009: 8). In the postmodern view there is an alternative tendency to depict the Others who have not had their share of humanity in terms of behavior, such as murderers and criminals. In such a case, the monstrosity of the not-quite-human

seems self-generated, but society sometimes proves to be (partially) responsible for the growing monstrosity of those beings. Furthermore, these behaviorally corrupt monsters may look nothing less than human in appearance, and in this way, their presence symbolically underlines that monstrosity is not always physically distinguishable and the monsters are actually humans (or rooted in humans) per se.

On the other hand, in the Gothic literature, Others and not-quite-human monsters are not always self-generated; rather, humans are sometimes labeled as such when they have a physical deficiency (such as having a sort of physical deformation) or distinctness (such as belonging to a Hispanic racial category in a white-dominant society). If they are not behaviorally corrupt, then their labeling as monsters reveals not their monstrosity but humanity's very own monstrosity as "humans" tend to attribute what is considered disturbing in and among them to the Other. This act indirectly reveals the repressed notoriety of the Other (or his/her outgroup) in the human psyche even when the Other has no real evil characteristics. Thus, the monstrosity this time becomes emphasized as something explicitly present in humans rather than being symbolically implied.

In any case, Gothic monsters and monstrosity in Gothic stories have two interrelated but different aspects: While almost every not-quite-human in the Gothic is an Other, not every Other has to offer an evil monstrosity, as he can merely take the form of the Other in appearance, just like Edward in the movie *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), who is an extremely innocent cyborg that looks creepy and awkward on the façade. These not-quite-humans like Edward are labeled as monsters and they possibly uncloak society's or mankind's atrocities triggered by the "intrusion" of not-quite humans into the human sphere, so that the monster-story finds its true monster, the human being.

Especially some postmodern stories, regardless of the genre, blur the line between good and evil in terms of monstrosity. Formerly, for instance, the expected primary reaction to vampires would be to describe them directly as monsters, but today's vampires do not necessarily and completely have to be so. Likewise, one cannot even distinguish some of them from human beings in appearance because "the tendency in much contemporary media has been to dissociate appearance from monstrosity" (Weinstock, 2014: 44). Yet ironically, even if a vampire does not

portray any more evil qualities than regular human beings, s/he would still be “labeled” as a monster once his/her vampiric inheritance is discovered. Therefore, one can say that the postmodern literature problematizes the notion of monster by bringing traditional not-quite-humans as close to humans as possible, and “this decoupling of monstrosity from appearance” brings along “the pervasive anxiety that modern monsters are no longer visible to the naked eye” (45). Even if the traditional monster figure in such postmodern stories is stereotypically perceived as evil at first, he/she may function as a medium that fights to invalidate conditioned expectations. In fact, humans themselves can be modern monsters even when the story contains traditional monster figures.

Taking all this information into consideration, then what is it that makes some not-quite-humans Gothic monsters and some not? Why is *Shrek* (2001), for example, with a leading not-quite-human or monster figure, not considered Gothic? It is true that children’s literature, or science fiction, or any other non-Gothic fiction also may feature various monsters since monster characters are not limited to the Gothic fiction. In fact, it would be even absurd to call any fiction that has monsters in it as Gothic. Therefore, what role the monsters play also determines their functions. In the Gothic, as mentioned above, the monster, regardless of being vilified, is an outsider, the status of which is granted to him/her either by his/her appearance and/or behavior. Furthermore, he/she is an abject figure revealing social repressions and anxieties (Hogle, 2002: 4). On the other hand, in movies for children, monsters are not registered as threatening figures all the time. Shrek, for instance, is “a lovable and misunderstood ogre” who, as being an ogre suggests, looks monstrous but does “not behave monstrously” (Cooper, 2010: 89). To conceptualize this approach, Cooper indicates that turning a monster into an endearing character means “resignification of an abject figure,” which is realized through “removing that figure from abjection, from the status of vilified other to valorized self” (2010: 89). Consequently, “when monstrosity leaves abjection and ceases to horrify, it ceases to be Gothic” (89).

Indeed, many inferences can be made from the valorization of monsters in children’s literature. One can say that, as the monsters get closer to human beings in form or behavior, they become normalized and therefore used as regular figures in

children's movies/books. Since the monster is already one of us, we do not necessarily regard him/her as a stranger. On the one hand, the presence of imaginary characters that cannot be found in the real world may also be appealing to children (and even adults). Therefore, the endearing aspect of monsters may have arisen with the idea that, rather than ordinary, authentic and different things might be of interest to people. In that regard, it becomes almost uncanny in discourse when we say children adore the monsters and correlate themselves with them. On the other hand, those monsters in children's literature may feed children's imagination; as products of human imagination, they may help children understand the intertwined monster-human relationship; and they may contribute to fear management in children. Of course, countless more inferences can be made from this, but one does not necessarily expect those monsters to operate as intruders into the social sphere and/or indicators of cultural corruption even if they look, perchance, Gothicized in appearance.

A similar understanding also applies to various monsters in science fiction and marvelous fantasies unless they are engaged with the Gothic. In Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* (1954), in the realm of the Middle Earth, for instance, there are various not-quite-human species that can talk, plan ahead, and live in peace with the human race, such as the elves and the hobbits. Even though those not-quite-humans would be treated as the Others in our world, they are, in their own realm, not necessarily monsterized but merely considered as different humanlike and harmless species. Due to the order and contexture of their world, they are not perceived as threats. Therefore, their not-quite-humanness does not involve any specific Gothic aspect. Likewise, in the science-fiction-based movie *The Terminator 2: Judgment Day* (1991), the cyborg not-quite-human protagonist is not perceived as a monster (even though his identical projection is evil in the first *The Terminator* [1984] movie). On the contrary, the cyborg is a hero who fights for humanity against another cyborg. However, neither of those not-quite-humans triggers mankind's anxieties and atrocities.

However, there is Gothic-based science fiction literature as well, in which the Other, not-quite-human, or the monster functions as an entity that signifies and/or veils our most prominent aspirations, uncertainties, and "sources of anxiety" (Hogle,

2002: 4). For instance, in the movie *Ex Machina* (2015), the android not-quite-human named Ava leaves some Gothic traces (Miller, 2018: 139). Ava, who, with her behavior and later with her shape, makes it almost impossible to differentiate the human from the robot, operates as an interrogator of the human essence. The creation of this not-quite-human female robot (fembot) indirectly challenges “humanity’s innate fear of its own organic vulnerability and the brevity of human life by presenting violent confrontations between fleshy and fragile humans, invasive and mutable humanoids, and seemingly invulnerable techno-bodies” (Zigarovich, 2018: 13). Especially Ava’s body, which looks like a woman’s, but without the reproductive capacity of the female gender, problematizes the human as a concept and creates fears regarding the future of humanity: She is designed to be a fembot with romantic feelings but without the female reproductive functions. Confusing our perceptions of femaleness, she “exhibit[s] a fear of technology’s potential to erase gender binaries” (Miller, 2018: 140). Since machines cannot reproduce as humans do, it is assumed meaningless and awkward for robots to have genders. However, she is capable of developing romantic feelings despite having no *real* reproductive organ and gender. Ava’s body, in that case, becomes a source of uncertainty. For Miller, even though Ava is a so-called female, she is a total monster due to her trans-body which serves as a mixture of bodies, blurring “distinctions of race, class, gender, and sexuality” (2018: 158). Therefore, her body can be seen as a medium that questions “humanness” and reveals the awkwardness behind the marginalization of “non-normative bodies” (158). As seen in this example of Gothic science fiction, not-quite-humans may function as androids that reflect “anxieties resulting from their destabilizing of identities, their literal erasure of the human subject, and their exploration of the apocalyptic potential of technologies” (158). Various other science fiction stories, however, do not have to involve such Gothic monsters. Ultimately, unless the mode of any fictional story is Gothic(ish), their monsters do not trigger social anxieties or uncertainties.

To sum up, monstrosity can be applied to a vast range of beings and norms, and since ancient times, the monster has had different roles and meanings. However, Gothic monsters represent, more than anything, the “displaced and distorted versions not only of tendencies repressed across a culture, but also of the ‘bad’ subject (the

Other) with whom those tendencies have already been identified, and who has already been labeled monstrous” (Hurley, 2002: 198). However, Gothic monsters do not at all have to look like weird creatures that at first glance appear like non-humans, spirits, traditional vampires, zombies, demons, or animals. Since the romantic period, these Gothic monsters have gradually become more like human beings in almost every aspect. However, Gothic monsters are still considered as not-quite-human beings even if they have human shape because they are either vilified and marginalized Others or behaviorally corrupt ones. In fact, the number of individuals who are humans by formal definition but ideologically considered monstrous due to their foreignness/uniqueness/distinctness is quite high in postmodern literature.

This attitude arises from the Western thinking about the Other, which underlies the critical essence of the Gothic discourse. The Western thought explains the world through binary thinking, and thus needs the non-human (the monster/the Other) to define the human being. Since binary categorization and classification is primarily a Western approach, monsters in the West have functioned and probably will do so to solidify the definition of the human. Unless the Western culture experiences a paradigm shift in its binary-based philosophy, the monster figure *will always* portray the fears and anxieties of humans. It is evident that this shift has not yet taken place; therefore, it is expectable to see monsters symbolically referring continuously to other things. What is extraordinary is the expanding varieties of meanings attached to these monsters, ranging from different-looking creatures over time to symbolic depictions of (racial, sexual, political, etc.) differences among humans, and even to humanoids. All things considered, since the term monster already brings along criticism of the human and society, the most extreme symbolism, in this case, can be considered to lie beneath the humanization of the monsters. From this point of view, the proliferation of humanoid not-quite-humans in modern times does not come as shock.

Since modern Gothic monsters are generally rooted in human beings one way or the other, it is natural for today's monsters to be called not-quite-humans. In this context (and not surprisingly), the concepts that contain the word “human” such as *abhuman*, *subhuman*, *posthuman*, *transhuman*, etc. can be encountered as not-quite-

human categories. However, since the modern Gothic monsters are not limited to these concepts, it is necessary to consider the human-animal-machine relationship when evaluating this content. Therefore, the concept of not-quite-human expands to terms like *cyborg* and *android* as well. Precisely at this point, we can ask who are these monsters that dominate contemporary literature and have made a place for themselves in the Gothic mode, and how are we to evaluate them?

1.2.3. Contemporary Not-Quite-Human Gothic Monsters: Abhuman, Subhuman, Cyborg, Android, Transhuman, and Posthuman

“Not-quite-human” can simply be defined as some entity or creature that contains formal or behavioral *homo sapiens* characteristics within itself to an (un)certain extent. Since the term “not-quite-human” refers not only to the physical properties of humanness but also to its mental qualities, it eventually branches into various sub-definitions. Consequently, as mentioned above, concepts such as *abhuman*, *subhuman*, *cyborg*, *android*, *transhuman*, and even *posthuman* can be encountered while talking about the superordinate category of “not-quite-human.” All these categories eventually and partially verge on the notions of monstrosity and/or otherness.

The utterly negative aspects of the “not-quite-human” are best illustrated by the categories of subhuman and abhuman. While abhuman and subhuman are generally interchangeably used concepts, the former “commonly” and “primarily” indicates a human(like) subject’s adverse corporeal metamorphosis or distinctness from what is considered a fully evolved human. The word abhuman can be lexically defined by referring to the prefix ‘ab-,’ which signifies getting away from something (Hurley, 1996: 4), making the word mean “falling away from human condition.” Kelly Hurley, the author of *The Gothic Body*, defines “the abhuman subject” as “a not-quite-human subject, characterized by its morphic variability, continually in danger of becoming not-itself, becoming other” (1996: 3-4). She claims that especially the Western Gothic *fin-de-siècle* literature deals with various forms of abhumans to find an answer to “the epistemology of human identity” (6). Lycanthropes and vampires, for instance, are the most well-known examples of such

shapeshifting humanoids as they have both human and not-quite-human features in them.

Kelly Hurley uses the term abhuman as a defining aspect for the Gothic *fin-de-siècle* monsters. She indicates that the not-quite-humans of the Victorian era arise out of the conception of “re-making of the human subject,” reflecting “a general anxiety about the nature of human identity” (1996: 5). In that regard, one can say that those monsters deliver their Gothic duties flawlessly. Their closeness to humans in form and/or behavior emphasizes the ambiguity of the term humanness even more explicitly. Approached similarly, the abhuman today has almost an identical function as these early examples. Likewise, abhumans of the contemporary literature operate as Gothic monsters, revealing anxieties regarding the Others.

The term abhuman is extremely open to interpretation. Hurley primarily emphasizes the significance of the bodily monstrous, ruined, and degenerated not-quite-humans as abhumans in the Gothic such as Dracula. However, she indicates that abhumans in the West are not limited to corporeally degenerated or shapeshifting monsters visible to the eye, such as vampires, zombies, and werewolves. Her claim is that some humans are behaviorally and/or mentally *degenerated*—or vilified as degenerated—by the Western dominant understanding. In other words, they either become mentally less-than-human or are labeled as less-than-human as an outcome of the process of dehumanization. In both cases, however, there is a very clear reference to being different from what is considered human and a blatant emphasis on monstrosity and otherization. For the *fin-de-siècle* literature, this process of abhumanization is partially based on the theory of evolution since, for the Victorian scientific understanding, being less-than-human meant evolving less.

It is evident that the theory of evolution paved the way for some notorious racial ideologies. Some scientists of Darwin’s time interpreted his theory of evolving “from a common ancestor” as that eventually “some of us are more evolved than others” (Martin, 2018). As a result, today’s *homo sapiens* are framed into evolutionary hierarchies, the top of which defines the yet-fully-evolved modern *homo sapiens*. Ideologically speaking, for the Western mind, the top of this hierarchy has belonged to the white male body since the publication of the theory of evolution. This has eventually endorsed the idea of ranking “human groups hierarchically from

the ‘savage’ to the ‘civilized’” (Dorrien, 2015: 543-544), according to which “only the whites had, as yet, advanced to the civilized stage” (Bederman, 1992: 9). Therefore, “the non-white body” in the West is considered “as an abomination, indefinite in species-identity and otherwise abhuman,” and this approach was one of the focal concerns of the *fin-de-siècle* Gothic and Victorian era (Hurley, 1996: 80). Yet, as Weinstock indicates, this ideology, which “associate[s] monstrosity with those who deviate from the white, able-bodied norm continues in the twenty-first century” (2014: 44). Recent “debates [in the United States] over the controversial law enforcement practice known as ‘racial profiling’ that uses an individual’s physical characteristics as a primary factor in determining whether to engage in enforcement” can set an example to the operativeness of this racist tendency (44). It would not be surprising to see the reflections of this perspective in the modern Gothic literature as well.

According to Hurley, West’s tendency to see the Others as monsters manifests itself in modern times in white man’s perception of non-whites as some deviant creatures distant from full humanness or, in other words, as abhumans. This tendency naturally reinforced the mentality regarding racial superiority of Whites over the others. As Haney-López indicates, “whiteness exists not only as the opposite of non-Whiteness, but as the superior opposite” (1997: 20). His example regards the white Americans’ perception of African-Americans in the United States:

Witness the close connection between the negative characteristics imputed to Blacks and the reverse, positive traits attributed to Whites. Blacks have been constructed as lazy, ignorant, lascivious, and criminal; Whites as industrious, knowledgeable, virtuous, and law-abiding. For each negative characteristic ascribed to people of color, an equal but opposite and positive characteristic is attributed to Whites. (1997: 20)

Without a doubt, this viewpoint is not limited to African-Americans since any non-white person likewise can be marginalized. This perspective is rationalized by the idea of genetic superiority rooted in the misinterpretation of evolution and “granted” to the Whites only. For example, the myth that the Nordic race has a higher level of intelligence than others can be encountered every now and then as an implicit and so-called scientific justification of whites’ racial superiority (Sussman, 2014: 240). Most explicitly, for instance, the Eugenics Movement of the 1920s appeared as an attempt to justify the belief in the superiority of the white race. Suhay and Jayaratne discuss

in their article, “Does Biology Justify Ideology? The Politics of Genetic Attribution,” that even though this Eugenics understanding vanished after witnessing the atrocities of the Nazis in the late 20th century, “many prominent conservatives embraced sociobiology and arguments for the genetic basis of intelligence” to keep genetic superiority controversy alive by deliberately favoring the white race over the others (2013: 499). Even though “all measures of what we assume to be intelligence have some cultural bias” (Sussman, 2014: 240), in modern times too, the racist (pseudo-)scientific ideology insists that “genetically based IQ differences” exist (255). This discriminatory perspective remains merely as an attempt to rationalize scientifically unsustainable white racist myths and hierarchies. Without a doubt, presenting this mindset as science is present and persistent, which, as Hurley indicates, results in seeing non-Whites as abhuman or less-than-human.

However, being white alone is not enough to become a so-called fully human. Gender and sexual orientation are also considered as determining evolutionary hierarchies. From the perspective of the dominant, patriarchal, and normative mindset, the female body is considered to be “liable to... devolution” by nature (Hurley, 2002: 203). This idea automatically denounces females to the state of abhuman subjects. Similarly, “Deviant sexual behaviors ... [such as] homosexuality ... constituted a sort of behavioral recapitulation of some ancestral state, and a betrayal of the socioevolutionary process that distinguished the modern Caucasian from the present-day non-European ‘primitive’” (Hurley, 1996: 72). Therefore, deviation from heterosexual norms is designated as a depravity that would only characterize the degenerated, the not-quite-human (71). Thanks especially to the Eugenics movement, we come across this dominant atavistic European gaze, which defines “the Perfect Man, to which the human race should aspire” as the “white [heterosexual] male of Northern European stock” (Rothschild, 1989: 98). The ideology that upholds white androcentric superiority has always been one of the most focal determinants of Western identity. A recent example to this ideology of “white heterosexual male privilege (WHMP),” according to Dr. Janet Helms, was the victory of Trump’s white-male-biased discourse for 2016 elections (2016: 6). Continuously revisiting the human subject and the ideology behind it critically, contemporary Gothic literature clearly asserts that “creatures not white, not male, not

middle-class, and not heterosexual” are indeed the human subject’s monsters or abhumans (Wester, 2016: 5).

Ferrando summarily expresses the workings of the hierarchies in Western thought below:

In the West, the human has been historically posed in a hierarchical scale to the non-human realm. Such a symbolic structure,... has not only sustained the primacy of humans over non-human animals, but it has also (in)formed the human realm itself, with sexist, racist, classist, homophobic, and ethnocentric presumptions. (2013: 28)

These sets of thoughts, in essence, rely on the pathological evaluation of the physical and genetic differences among people, generating discriminatory and racist discourses based on an arbitrary and uninformed interpretation of the theory of evolution.

Kelly Hurley extends Cesare Lombroso’s criminal anthropology to indicate that being white and male does not grant everyone the privilege of being fully human because being a criminal would also lower a white male down to the state of being less than human. Lombroso’s ranking of humans took not only the evolution but also criminology into consideration. According to Lombroso, criminal behaviors indicate “a return to the early brutal egotism natural to the primitive races, which manifests itself in homicide, theft, and other crimes” (qtd. in Hurley, 1996: 95). Therefore, criminals possess the primitive or abhuman qualities. Furthermore, he advocates that some are “born criminal” genetically, claiming that this genetic failure is more common among females and non-White races (97-99). This idea is supposedly justified in the case of non-white people via so-called IQ tests, measuring mental qualities from the perspective of Western culture, maintaining that the “IQ differences are more accurate determinants of black-white differences in crime statistics” (Sussman, 2014: 255). In other words, white supremacists try to find a scientific-sounding explanation to the high crime rate among non-white people by referring to their so-called less-than-human qualities by disregarding the sociological causes behind their formation. Behind such perceptions of non-white people as abhumans and their “natural” criminal susceptibility lurk racist ideologies that attempt at rationalizing their dehumanization and marginalization. Thus, in the Western world, the superiority of the White and non-criminal male individual is

clearly declared in the biological hierarchy created around this phenomenon called abhuman. Meanwhile, however, despite the efforts to show criminality among whites as less than black criminality, it is still a fact that whites, too, commit crimes. Therefore, for Hurley, “one will not be surprised to discover that Lombroso's standard of this fully human subject was the (non-criminal) white European adult male” (1996: 94). This viewpoint *also* paved the way for all criminals—including the *White people*—to be considered as abhuman or not-quite-human. Accordingly, in Gothic literature, these criminals, murderers, and rapists eventually operate as not-quite-human monsters.

To sum up this notion of evolutionary abhumanness, Hurley concludes that “the white man's atavism could be measured against other subjects who were not quite subjects, not quite fully evolved, not quite human: nonwhites, women, and children” (94-95). Hence, in the West, the non-criminal white male body is certainly at the top of human evolutionary hierarchy and the rest are basically abhuman beings, Others, and monsters. Ultimately, the term abhuman borrows a lot, not only from race and gender discrimination, but also from moral dysfunctions such as criminality. The scope of abhumanness, therefore, is extremely vast, also appearing as contemporary Gothic monsters in literature. These monsters, regardless of being vilified as such or not, deliver their Gothic duties and eventually trigger a disorder, a chaos, a return of the socially repressed—as in the form of racism, homophobia, xenophobia, uprising, an unsettling of all beliefs and conducts—when they are injected into society. As a Gothic monster, “an abhuman then, is an abject human, a human body that is implicated in a decadent culture, and in the process, becomes sullied as well” (Ng, 2002: 226).

The status of the abhuman connotes a state of evolutionary incompleteness, a “not-quite” evolved humanness compared to Western idea of the fully evolved adult male human. However, since the evolution does not stop, Darwinian evolution proposes that “all human subjects, it would seem, are potentially liminal, potentially abhuman” (Hurley, 2002: 203). Thus, humans have possibly yet to evolve into something posthuman. Considering that the mankind evolved into *homo sapiens* from some “beasts, then they might still be abhuman entities, not yet ‘fully evolved,’ not yet ‘fully human’” (Hurley, 1996: 56). Moreover, since the evolution is not a

predictable mechanism, “the human race might ultimately retrogress into a sordid animalism rather than progress towards a telos of intellectual and moral perfection” (56). In his book *The Three Impostors* (1895), for instance, Arthur Machen, one of the most prominent Gothic science-fiction writers, created human figures that evolved “imperfectly,” became less-than-human, turning closer to “their beastly ancestors” and becoming some lesser types of abhuman (qtd. in Hurley, 1996: 63). Thus, they remind us that the idea of being fully-human is absurd and vague. Therefore, the abhumanness based on an evolutionary point of view proves to be a questionable and arbitrary concept. Generally speaking, however, the term abhuman continues to be used to indicate a clear attempt at vilification, dehumanization, monsterization, or otherization, in short, not-quite humanization, of some stigmatized individuals.

As a side note, one must consider another popular interpretation of being abhuman. When deemed outside its primary meaning (ruination and degeneration of the human body or being considered less-than-human), the concept of abhuman can refer to almost all not-quite-humans because it may “*alternatively*” be considered “some undefinable ‘thing’ that is mimicking the human, appropriating the human form” (Punter and Byron, 2004: 41). From this perspective, cyborgs, transhumans, and even androids can be considered abhuman. However, each of these categories also has its own distinct definition. Therefore, rather than labeling almost all not-quite-humans as abhuman and thus making the term extremely vague, flexible, and arbitrary, it would be more helpful to take only the primary definition of abhuman into consideration to conceptualize more comprehensively the notion of monstrosity with regard to animal-machinery-human-science interaction.

Another concept concerning not-quite-humans is the term “subhuman,” the synonym of the term abhuman, except for maybe a subtle and nonessential difference. Lexically speaking, various definitions of the subhuman can be found in various sources. According to *Random House Dictionary*, the primary definition of subhuman is “less than or not quite human.” *Merriam-Webster* suggests that subhuman means “failing to attain the level (as of morality or intelligence) associated with normal human beings.” Similarly, *Cambridge Dictionary* defines the subhuman as “having or showing behavior or characteristics that are much worse than those

expected of ordinary people.” All these definitions indicate an extremely corrupt being, while touching upon no physical characteristics as the abhuman does. Subhumans, therefore, can be considered as those people who are bodily human but morally much worse than an average human being, such as vicious aggressors, murderers, cannibals, rapists, and brutes. Hence, so far, the primary definition of the subhuman can be partially taken as an equivalent of the term abhuman, since both terms connote morally devious human features, while the abhuman may also indicate an adverse corporeal metamorphosis and the corporeally different Others.

However, when we take the secondary definition of the subhuman⁵—some predecessor of *homo sapiens*—into consideration, the terms subhuman and abhuman receive quite identical interpretations. When, for example, white heterosexual male privilege supporters mean to identify racial minorities, children, or women as not-quite-evolved beings, they may metaphorically evaluate them as subhuman (such as *homo heidelbergensis*) or simply label them as abhuman. Therefore, abhuman and subhuman terms can be used interchangeably. The only and subtle difference would be that if humans undergo an abrupt or observable and adverse bodily transformation during their lifespans, they basically go through a direct abhumanization process, such as those of lycanthropes, the result of which can only *metaphorically* be considered as becoming a subhuman.

Therefore, using the word subhuman or abhuman, in terms of vilification of the Other, will not make any difference in general. We can exemplify this assumption with a case from the Vietnam War: Some American soldiers during the war could “overcome a normal, innate human repugnance at killing other humans” since “the military has got the idea implanted in... [their] mind[s] that... [Vietnamese] are not humans, they are subhuman” (Castano and Giner-Sorolla, 2006: 805), and as a consequence, the soldiers could kill with less pressure and did not feel guilty for doing so. This brainwashing resulted in *perceiving* the Other as a less-evolved creature, like some primate that precedes *homo sapiens* in the evolutionary chain, something that does not deserve to live and that should have vanished long before, even though both the Other and the perceiver were in fact

⁵ According to *Merriam-Webster* dictionary, the subhuman also means “of or relating to a taxonomic group lower than that of humans” (Subhuman [Def.1c], n.d.).

members of the same species. Ultimately, this approach of calling the Other as subhuman is synonymous with labeling the Other as abhuman.

Other terms such as cyborg, android, transhuman, and posthuman also play a crucial role in defining Gothic not-quite-humans. Unlike the abhuman and the subhuman, which primarily represent animal-human not-quite-humans, these terms are *rather* various examples of not-quite-humans which have come to existence as a result of human-technology-nature interaction and/or further (un)guided evolution. However, even though they are generally considered as upgraded creatures compared to human beings at first sight, one must keep in mind that their incompleteness, exploitation, faulty progression, or even existence may have bad consequences, especially in the realm of the Gothic. By all means, they are not-quite-humans, regarded as the Other, some creature distant from the scientifically unmodified human, but still physically, behaviorally and/or cognitively (albeit artificially) something resembling the human.

The concerns arising from the existence of technologically-enhanced human hybrids show themselves in our fears of the chaos and obscurity of the future, the end of the human species, the destruction of patriarchy, the ending of categories such as genders, and unsustainability, etc. The Other, in this regard, operates in the postmodern domain as something away-from-human, but this time with a heavier interference of technology and an alternative interpretation of the evolution: enter postmodern monster.

To begin with, the term cyborg has a very simple definition. This term was first proposed in 1960 by Manfred Clynes and Nathan Kline to define the corpus of organisms that are modified with machinery and science to adapt to extraterrestrial realms (1960: 27). Donna Haraway's famous pamphlet *Cyborg Manifesto* defines cyborg as "a cybernetic organism, a hybrid of machine and organism, a creature of social reality as well as a creature of fiction" (1991: 150). In other words, Haraway says, "cyborg is a liminal creature, between the human and the machine, neither human nor machine, both human and machine" (Nayar, 2014: 36). Therefore, since cyborg operates somewhere between the human and the robot, s/he can be called ab-human as well as ab-robot. When compared to other not-quite-humans, the term cyborg, therefore, underlines *hybridity* among all other characteristics.

Gothic literature employs a great variety of cyborgs as not-quite-human monsters. Marge Piercy's sci-fi Gothic book *He, She and It* (1991), for example, "explores the erotics of a relationship between a woman and a cyborg" (Anolik, 2013: 617) by turning the cyborg into a medium that triggers various anxieties of mankind. To be more precise, cyborg protagonist Yod's intrusion into society starts a questioning of the human essence and qualities because Yod makes it disturbingly clear that "humans alone cannot claim monopoly over emotions, self-consciousness or selflessness" (Nayar, 2014: 153). This is a perfect example of the fear of the ending of categories. Similarly, Edward in Tim Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) functions as an intruder, a vilified Other, and a not-quite-human who unmasks the corrupted American suburban society. The eerie looking Gothic character Edward comes to existence as a posthuman project planned by a scientist, who dies before completing his design. Even though we do not know Edward's exact origins, he may be best defined as an incomplete cyborg. His humanlike features hinder him from being something more than human, but he is without a doubt a not-quite-human. As a peculiar Gothic cyborg, he serves as a monstrous Other, ironically revealing the monstrosity of mankind.

An incomplete cyborg, on the other hand, can already be described as a Gothic abhuman in a way since abhuman is a term that traditionally refers to corporeally degraded rather than an upgraded human. The incompleteness, which here refers to the deficiencies of cyborgs, can at the same time be interpreted as deformation of the human subject, making the incomplete being an abhuman. In other words, even though having mechanical parts on his/her body makes an individual a cyborg, his/her incompleteness grants him/her a regressive condition. For a cyborg having deficiencies is ironic since the cyborg is created for the express purpose of eliminating various deficiencies and limitations of human beings. Therefore, an incomplete cyborg can be perceived as a deviant entity that could neither completely belong to the domain of humanness nor achieve an upgrade from the human state. However, another interpretation dictates that an incomplete cyborg is nonetheless a cyborg and its mechanical deficiencies do not necessarily make her/him a regressed human, but a regressed robot, or simply a robot. Therefore, it would be more accurate to evaluate cyborgs within their own framework. Yet a

cyborg, incomplete or not, automatically possesses a not-quite-human condition as either s/he is essentially a human and at the same time artificially a machine, or s/he is neither at once.

Android, on the other hand, is a “purely mechanical” robot figure that imitates human features and is most certainly inspired from the human body in shape, but, unlike a cyborg, has no organic part (Short, 2011: 11). Even though androids have *artificial* intelligence, they mentally challenge their human creators. As such, they can be regarded as embodied simulations of the human mind or embodied extensions of human intelligence. Therefore, androids can be regarded as not-quite-humans emerging as a result of human-machine interaction. Although they certainly are not organic/natural human beings, oftentimes their appearances are indistinguishable from humans’. Thus, in postmodern literature and art, we come across many android figures that look a lot like human beings. Moreover, their abilities to process information are very similar to those of mankind. Ultimately, they are artificially crafted not-quite-humans: the consequence of the human desire to play God, who created human beings in his own image.

Gothic androids appear as Others who question human’s taboos, conventional thinking, traditions, culturally established patterns, etc. Most extraordinarily, they may become harbingers of a dystopian future that compels a paradigm shift, moving people out of their comfort zones. For example, as previously mentioned, the existence of the android Ava in the movie *Ex Machina* (2015) portrays this chaotic circumstance, by indirectly questioning humanness and the roles of human beings, as well as revealing mankind’s vulnerabilities. In the realm of the Gothic, the predictable and unpredictable results of technology may often produce monsters rather than upgraded humans. Gothic androids, therefore, can be considered as Frankenstein’s *postmodern* monsters, whose bodies and minds—unlike Frankenstein’s—are crafted with inorganic materials but—like Frankenstein’s—designed primarily by utterly organic human brains.

Despite being completely mechanical, androids may almost flawlessly behave and show emotions the way humans do. With their human forms and mental capacities, they become humanized by humans. According to Mori and his theory called “the Uncanny Valley,” the more humanized androids become, the more

distasteful sensations humans develop against them (2012: 100). As a result, androids become uncannily monstrous entities for humans because they challenge human norms.

Androids and cyborgs, therefore, are both hybrid entities. While cyborgs are bodily hybrids, androids are attributed that quality due to their mental and emotional abilities to mimic humanness. In other words, androids borrow features/qualities from humanness while cyborgs stem from humanness. Consequently, in both cases, for the Western mindset “the hybrid becomes the abject horror that must be expunged and distanced in order to stabilize the very categories that give credence to claims of superiority and inferiority” (Spenrath, 2016: 35). For this point of view, for instance, just as Frankenstein’s abominable monster’s incomplete, hybrid, and different body destabilizes the Western definition and boundaries of the human, the same applies to every other frankenstein-esque hybrid figure including Gothic androids. As a reaction to this, the hybrid disregards classifications and stands in the midst of contrasts, proving the binaries invalid.

Next, the transhuman is very hard to specify and yet is very similar to cyborg in definition. Nick Bostrom, one of the most prominent philosophers of human enhancement ethics, defines transhumanism as follows:

[transhumanism] holds that current human nature is improvable through the use of applied science and other rational methods, which may make it possible to increase human health-span, extend our intellectual and physical capacities, and give us increased control over our own mental states and moods. (2005: 202-3)

Bostrom underlines the possibility of the improvement of human condition with the use of science and technology. In this case, one may think that such improvements may include cyborgization, that is, inserting machinery into our bodies such as cardiac pacemakers, or the use of organic genetic engineering in order to mentally and physically expand the current limits of the human.⁶ Even though many scholars accept that cyborg is a kind of transhuman, according to Natasha Vita-More, “current discussion of transhumanism largely focuses on human enhancement. ... Rather than the cyborgization of the body,... transhumanization proposes an intervention of biology in modifying corporeality” (2013: 19). From this perspective, while the

⁶ In this case, cyborg and transhuman are synonyms.

cyborg refers to a corporeal improvement with the help of solely non-organic means, the transhuman favors organic and self-directed enhancement both mentally and bodily.

Cyborgization, then, is manifestly a deliberate and direct modification altering the human body and mind for its betterment whereas transhumanism is an attempt at transcending the human through a controlled evolution. Both cyborgization and transhumanism aim at improving the current human beings; therefore, both cyborgs and transhumans, *especially if they show rare peculiarities*, are uncharacteristic creatures, upgraded humans, something different from intact humans, and yet also not-quite-humans. Underlining transhumanism's promise of transforming mankind from their current state to an improved state, the evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley says that "the human species will be on the threshold of a new kind of existence, as different from ours as ours is from that of Pekin man" (1959: 17). Transhumanism eventually paves the way to the creation or existence of a "higher model" of *homo sapiens*, which, at some point, cannot be considered to be a *homo sapiens*. Therefore, transhumanists see the transhuman as a transitional stage towards the posthuman.

Interestingly, despite its roots in anthropocentrism, transhuman still faces being the Other: human and somehow not-human at the same time. In other words, s/he is somewhat a human whose genetics is (possibly) altered and who moves away from his/her natural biological condition to be upgraded and thus in a way s/he is a challenge to nature. However, some scholars oppose this idea and claim that technology is already a human trait, a natural sequence in our evolution to reflect our capability, and, therefore, taking advantage of it to make it contribute to our evolution does not make us artificial (Ferrando, 2013: 27-32).

Yet, as in the case of the cyborg, intervening in the natural flow of evolution can—again—be considered to assume the role of God, for it could cause a whole new future existence (or non-existence) for mankind, the consequences of which cannot be accurately predicted. Such unconventional intervention blurring the already fuzzy future existence with no granted order becomes a tempting concept for Gothic criticism. Even if the transhuman project achieves its promise, the *alteration* of the human alone may be considered a sufficiently destructive concern for Western

thought since such radical change threatens the much cherished and desired Western stability. Taking this case to an extreme, Fukuyama, for instance, claims that “human beings will modify themselves genetically so as to lose the possibility of supporting the claim that human beings have dignity, and therefore rights” (qtd. in Wennemann, 2013: 4). In other words, insisting on transhumanistic design could cause confusion in the future and the term human dignity could either change its meaning eternally or be without function. For Wennemann, the alteration of human nature could consequently disintegrate the human subject and damage “the hallmark[s] of Western culture,” which are “human dignity and human rights” (2013: 3) because the outcome of the possible change is unknown. However, the real concern behind the avoidance of a possibly dangerous diversification cannot merely be preserving human dignity. It should not be forgotten that the fear regarding this alteration may be related to the fear of dealing with the Other or the monster, which is the long-established enemy, the automatically-dehumanized, or the culturally-inferior, etc. Since the alteration caused by the enhancement of human condition would modify the definition of the traditional Other, it would drive the Western thought to a deeper ambiguity, since the Other, this time, would be anything but inferior. While some contemporary humans who are already *perceived* as inferior by the West are not actually so, witnessing the existence of people of the future who can be truly *superior* would create a traumatic experience for the West. Consequently, they would designate the future Others as lacking in human dignity instead of recognizing the dignity of all humans. This recurring tendency to exclusion and otherization is where Gothic criticism vocalizes the clash between the traditional and new, conventional and modern, mainstream and eccentric, or common and peculiar.

Transhuman traits manifest themselves the most with regard to changes in the human body and mind since these are the most observable differences in transhumans. To take the body beyond its innate capacities, to alter the order of the body, to change the body from how we know it, in other words, bodily metamorphoses, means the destruction of traditional patterns, which provokes Gothic criticism. In postmodern Gothic, “scientifically ‘enhanced’ bodies,” despite being attractive in appearance, can be considered equivalent to abominable monstrous bodies due to their abnormality, and they “can muddy long-standing binary

distinctions, and ultimately call into question what it means to be human” (Miller, 2018: 140). The transhuman peculiarities or differences cause them to be treated as monsters because these differences challenge our existing knowledge, order, and stability. Being one of the possible future minorities, transhumans can be perceived just like other genderwise or racially marginalized not-quite-humans (158). As indicated by Bernal, “the new man must appear to those who have not contemplated him before as a strange, monstrous and inhuman creature” (1929: 51).

It should be noted that transhumanism is a relatively new concept, but its earliest notions can be traced back to the epic of Gilgamesh, in which there is a “quest for immortality” that most likely inspired the search for “the Fountain of Youth” or “the Elixir of Life” (Bostrom, 2013: 52). All these myths and efforts are aimed at *transcending* human beings’ natural state to a better one by eliminating defects and vulnerabilities. Naturally, Gothic literature involves various transhumanist visions as well, presented through its very unique perspective. We come across one of the earliest Gothic novels with a transhumanist content at the beginning of the nineteenth century. *St. Leon* (1799), the little-known novel of William Godwin (not surprisingly Mary Shelley’s father), can be shown as an example of Gothic transhumanist criticism, which focuses on an ambitious pursuit of expanding human lifespan and of immortality. As Gothic as it gets, obtaining immortality in Godwin’s novel brings solitude and despair rather than happiness.

There are yet other examples of Gothic or non-Gothic transhumans as we get closer to modern-day since the will to enhance human condition continues even more assertively than before. Especially the non-traditional uses of the vampire figure in the twenty-first century can be more suited to the context of transhuman/posthuman⁷ Gothic. The vampire is no longer portrayed as a creature with a deformed body in postmodern depiction. Instead, its superhuman traits such as immortality and eternal youth are brought forward. Even so, the vampire still remains a monster or an intruder who disintegrates and questions the human subject. Thus, although the vampire can be viewed as a transhuman, posthuman, and/or monster, it has also much in common with the human.

⁷ Transhumanist view sees the posthuman as the successor of transhumans: a more evolved homo sapiens than transhuman who is no longer considered a homo sapiens.

According to Schmeink, movies like *Blade II* (2002), *I Am Legend* (2007) and *Daybreakers* (2009) portray the Gothic haunting of non-traditional vampires at their best. He indicates that “the vampire, in these films, has become a screen onto which to project posthuman Gothic negotiations of biotechnological transgressions and their disintegrating potential for human nature” (2017: 55). Especially the movie *Daybreakers* (2009) brings a multi-dimensional Gothic criticism by indirectly questioning mankind’s atrocities as well as efforts at transhumanism. In the movie, vampires do not possess any abominable bodily features because they used to be essentially human beings before a new epidemic turned them into vampires. They receive the *privilege* of immortality and eternal youth, which constitutes Transhumanism’s fundamental quest, by biological enhancement. As a result, they become something other than human and they outnumber humans. However, this turns out to be a terrible condition for humans because vampires need humans to satisfy their thirst for blood. In order to end this deadlock, a formerly-human biologist, who has qualms about consuming human blood despite turning into a vampire, works to find a cure and eventually succeeds in medically re-humanizing vampires. But since the story ends open-endedly, we do not get to see the outcome of these re-humanization efforts. Ultimately, through the expansion of vampirism, the story tells the unfavorable consequences of transhumanist projection, claiming that enhanced mankind’s unknowable future could bring humans unforeseen vulnerabilities. In addition to that, vampirism in this story can also be interpreted as a parody of modern humanity. Here, vampires or transhumans see humans as inferior beings and exploit them just as some people in our world see other people in the same way as a consequence of colonialism or any kind of superiority ideology. The Gothic criticism, therefore, appears as social critique by reminding us of mankind’s past (and current) atrocities.

Another term related to not-quite-human is certainly the recently popular one called posthuman. Posthumanism has two major lines of interpretations. “Primarily as understood by transhumanists,” posthuman is “a stage of human transformation, succeeding transhuman” (Vita-More, 2013: 25). Thus, these terms are used interchangeably from time to time though some philosophers of Transhumanism point towards some subtle differences between them. Therefore, in order to identify

the term posthuman, one should first designate its difference from transhuman. First and foremost, while transhumanist project is based on the improvement of the current position of mankind, the posthuman is a further projection towards an unknown future, something beyond current *homo sapiens*, the qualities of which we cannot yet identify but can only fictionally imagine. Julian Huxley implies, just as we, as *homo sapiens*, are basically a future form for *homo heidelbergensis*, our predecessors in human evolution, in the future, we will be predecessors of something beyond *homo sapiens* (1959: 17). In that sense, transhumanism can be considered as a transition period for the possible future that has to offer posthumans, “who may have indefinite health-spans, much greater intellectual faculties than any current human being” (Bostrom, 2005: 203). However, the *purpose* of the posthuman phenomenon is “not to achieve perfection in any biologically or socially given way, but rather to overcome species- based limitations” (Bardziński, 2014: 103). If posthuman is the heir of *homo sapiens*, then it is no longer human and, therefore, not possibly anthropocentric. Thus, despite its affinities with the transhumanist view, it tends towards a position away from human-centrism, but it is possible that it may find itself another centric approach, for, like transhumanist view, the future posthumanist one does not necessarily have to aim to dethrone centric thinking. All things considered, according to transhumanists, posthuman appears to be the antonym of subhuman, and definitely not-quite-human.

Critical posthumanism’s image of the posthuman, on the other hand, does not necessarily designate a far-future existence. It is about now:

a discourse of life itself in which interconnections, messy histories, blurred origins, borrowings and adaptations, cross-overs and impurities, dependency and mutuality across species are emphasized over boundedness, self-containment, distinctiveness and agency. (Nayar, 2014: 47)

Therefore, the posthuman is a definite threat for the Western mindset which tries to uphold its ideal of purity by avoiding hybridization and conceptualizes the world with categories and borders. While the critiques of anthropocentric project of humanism respond to “Othering within the human race, critical posthumanism extends this to include the machine, the plant and the animal” (47); in other words, posthuman becomes everything at once by challenging discrimination, racism, and

speciesism. Therefore, the “shift from the human to the posthuman” eventually “evokes terror and excites pleasure” simultaneously (Hayles, 1999: 4).

These two almost contradictory meanings of “posthuman” might be confusing. Therefore, it is important to underline this distinction for the coherency of this thesis. From today’s anti-anthropocentric perspective, critical posthumanism means deconstructing humanism. It suggests rejecting dualities and hierarchies of anthropocentrism since in posthumanism “human is not approached as an autonomous agent, but is located within an extensive system of relations” (Ferrando, 2013: 32). But from a transhumanist perspective, posthuman is ontological. It is a successor of *homo sapiens*, some different species that will live in far future. In other words, it is merely an unimaginable projection of the future. However, with the efforts of transhumanisation *and* cyborgisation of today, and also with the effect of the progressive critical posthumanist approach, it would be more *sensible* to think of the posthuman, our successor, as an entity that already surpassed categorizations that imprison modern *homo sapiens* in hierarchies and dualities. Still, from an alternative yet undesirable perspective, though, the posthuman might find itself another centric approach to depend upon. Or, since we are talking about an extremely faraway and unimaginable time, such aspects of (de)centrism would be baseless and irrelevant to mention. In order to make the distinction between the meanings of posthuman clearer, from this point on, “post-human” (rather than “posthuman”) will be used in reference to the successor of *homo sapiens*, unless quoted from other sources.

One must consider that our successor the post-human is just a speculation or rather an optimistic expectation for the future. Therefore, we can only make various projections for the post-human of the future. If, in fictional stories, a *homo heidelbergensis* is thrown into our contemporary world, modern people would in comparison be portrayed as its successor, but this successor would not be the unknown post-human of our future. They would only be unknown to the subhuman predecessor, in this case *homo heidelbergensis*, thrown into the world. For instance, the child intruder in Lessing’s novel *The Fifth Child* (1988) is treated as if he is some primate that had lived long before today’s humans. In that sense, people can be considered as successor species (a kind of post-human) for this child.

On the other hand, it is important to note that transhumanism's implications of technologically controlled evolution into post-human do not have to end up positively, either, since it involves human beings' assuming the role of God and an *attempt* to create yet higher versions of human beings, maybe no longer humans but superbeings, nonetheless. Just like Frankenstein's, any Gothic story involving such a creation scenario can turn out to be a "narrative of creation–advancement–punishment, in which God and man are affiliated" (Sheehan, 2015: 247). In addition to the success or failure of the post-human as a superbeing, there is yet another possibility: the created ones may, through their distinct ontological existence, represent a divergence from humanity and humanness. In other words, with their deviation from humanness, they could just as well be threats for the mankind as aliens, monsters, or not-quite-humans.

Just as transhumans are perceived as a threat for their peculiarities, post-humans can also signify the monstrous tomorrows for the mankind. Regarding this, Annas, Andrews and Isasi foresee two possible scenarios to point to the possible clash that might occur between the new and old forms of humans:

The new species, or 'posthuman,' will likely view the old 'normal' humans as inferior, even savages, and fit for slavery or slaughter. The normals, on the other hand, may see the posthumans as a threat and if they can, may engage in a preemptive strike by killing the posthumans before they themselves are killed or enslaved by them. (2002: 162)

Apart from such violence, post-human, with its own specifications, would definitely be altered from what is human, yet humans might still transmit their aggressive behaviors to the new form. New, then, does not necessarily mean better, but it most definitely means different. From what we have so far seen in known human history, there is a strong possibility that this difference will most likely be treated as monstrosity.

Gothic post-humans continuously and inevitably appear in the literary and artistic scene. This post-human discourse usually contains two different perspectives based on the position of mankind. The first one deals with the encounter with the subhuman. But it is not necessarily about unknown post-humans of the far future or subhumans of the ancient times, but often about a metaphoric representation of the post-human and/or subhuman. Post-human here is rather a successor of subhuman,

that is, some primitive species from the homo genus or someone *perceived* as so. In a time-distorted setting, modern humans or *homo sapiens*, for example, can be perceived in a “post” condition for a subhuman living among them. We can exemplify this “post” condition as follows: Based on the timeline of evolution, *homo heidelbergensis*, for instance, would be in a “post-” condition for *homo erectus*. Likewise, *homo sapiens* would be in a “post-” condition for any subhuman before him/her. That is why, *homo sapiens* could metaphorically be a post-human for their predecessors, but this post-human does not point out to the real post-human designated by transhumanist approach. S/he is merely a representation. As *The Fifth Child* (1988) indicates, modern human beings may be perceived to occupy a post condition for a thrown-in subhuman. Ben, the vilified subhuman thrown into the world in *The Fifth Child*, however, is *only* perceived as a predecessor of some kind. Such perception is enforced most likely to trigger the Gothic notion of the return of the repressed. Although neither is he really a subhuman, nor are the people around him post-humans, Ben represents humans’ eerie interaction with what they would see as their past, which, in the case of *The Fifth Child*, would take place as “species Gothic” (Nayar, 2014: 158). In such narratives, the human society occupying a post condition may actually be synonymous with today's society.

Secondly, post-human may refer to living (humanoid) creatures that have transcended human beings. In this case, they are unknown creatures of the future whose taxonomy in Latin has not yet been introduced, operating on the margins of some other kind of existence, and therefore cannot be considered human.

Although the latter case is handled more predominantly in the realm of non-Gothic science fiction, we may encounter some pertinent examples of postmodern Gothic literature and cinema. Although she is little known, Storm Constantine has produced some of the most authentic works of this genre. Especially her book series called *Wraeththu* (1993), “represents a time when humans are gradually supplanted by a new breed of beings, a properly posthuman race, the Wraeththu” (Du Plessis, 2007: 165). However, the Wraeththu appear to humans not only as monsters that try to replace humans, but also as signifiers for the deconstruction of Western categories and borders since the Wraeththu are properly androgynous. Obviously, here the transhumanist post-human has evolved/transformed not as anticipated by

transhumanist expectations, but exactly like the projection of the critical posthumanists. Yet, the most salient social critic from this story arises during the process of human species' disappearance: As the Wraeththu supplant their human predecessors, they also try their best to get rid of the possible deficiencies that have been transmitted to them from humans in order not to be doomed like them. Not only does Constantine here emphasize the need to reconsider humans' categorizing ways, but she also announces that the end of humanity is not far away. Hence, as Foucault indicates, "man is an invention of recent date," and through the course of an elusive but natural cycle "one can certainly wager that man [too] would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (2002: 422).

One of the most recent examples of this genre is the *Stranger Things* series, which started to be broadcast on Netflix in 2016. Although the series is still in progress and thus we cannot come to any conclusion for its ultimate analysis, it is clear from the first season that the character called Eleven, who is claimed to be a captive child used for a scientific experiment, can be assumed to be a Gothic post/trans-human prototype with superior traits intruding into a suburban microcosm and changing the flow of its stagnant and secure environment. In addition to that, Eleven's emergence can symbolically be considered as a phenomenon that helps surface some existing social problems, and such debunking of a seemingly perfect social order is traditionally a Gothic method. According to Shea, the story, on the background, focuses on "social structures such as the nuclear family and the government" by portraying them as "sources of danger" (2018: 53). Thus, Eleven's story can be read as a critique of child molestation and exploitation hidden in the modern nuclear family. There are many indicators that assign Gothic characteristics to Eleven, as she seems dark and mysterious, but the most obvious of these is that she is an intruder who is simultaneously feared and adored for her uncanniness, and therefore, she partially—or at least initially—becomes treated like an alien, an Other. She is nonetheless an (in)voluntary *harbinger* of monstrosity as she can keep direct contact with monsters. For all these reasons, despite the conclusion of the series is unknown, it is safe to say that the Gothic dominates this story.

As it can be seen, despite having various structural differences among them, in all postmodern Gothic categories, not-quite-humans perform similar roles.

Ultimately, these not-quite-humans are “the Others” we sometimes fear, and sometimes learn from (especially about ourselves). They sometimes function as entities or mediums that put to test and question our self-created and categorical boundaries since “the human species ... define[s] itself against its Other, the freak/monster, the animal and alternative body-forms” (Nayar, 2014: 46). Specifically, all of those not-quite-humans can be seen as some sort of MONSTERS or intruders, who, according to Jerome Cohen, present and/or symbolize distinct corporeal, “cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual” features (1996: 7). They may trigger our impulses about what we do when we encounter the “Other,” or, ironically, they may enable us to see the level of monstrosity within ourselves as “monsters ... reveal a lot about the cultures that produce them” (Murgatroyd, 2013:2). Contemporary Gothic literature takes up on such peculiar monstrosity in order to reveal the cultures in which we live.

1.3. THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO MONSTROSITY & OTHERNESS IN THE GOTHIC

Since the term monster has a very vast definition and can be “applied to any uncanny person, creature or thing” that are “extraordinary, alien and abnormal” or even to “any person of whom we disapprove” due to their distinctness; and since “monsters notoriously cross boundaries,” it is quite challenging to categorize the acts of monsters as monstrosity (Murgatroyd, 2013: 1). The monsters of the Gothic that are not-quite-humans, however, may or may not show monstrous characteristics; therefore, they can be handled in two different ways. They can be taken as outsiders that threaten us or our *dasein*, or they can be interpreted as the Others that unmask our own prejudices and monstrosity through their presence when we viciously try to oppress them. From this point of view, the monster can be thought-out not only as an idea associated directly with evil, but also as a concept that can mirror evil: a peculiar and an unusual corporeal entity that is different from normalcy, or an “Other” to whom we attribute our own *repressed* notion of corruptness. Hence, publicly acting out the repressed behaviors indicates that the Other already crossed the borders of our comfort zone and defied the system grounded upon the precepts of

culturally determined roles. In brief, the monster corresponds to any aspects that willingly or unwillingly challenge order and stability.

Regardless of whether the monster is considered a reflection of people or a vicious outsider entity (or both), we can address the act of monstrosity, or the connotations of the monster, with various theoretical approaches. According to Levina and Bui, there are three different but interrelated approaches to discuss and analyze monstrosity. They indicate that, the studies on monsters and otherness can be better conceptualized categorically through ontological, representational, and psychoanalytical approaches (2014: 5).

Discourses that deal with “a way of being, or a way of becoming” (6) may generally indicate an ontological assumption. When thinking about the concept of *becoming* a monster, one can consider its creation or transformation processes such as in the case of “Frankenstein’s monster –a life form beforehand [unknown and] thought to be impossible” (6). The framework of this context of monstrosity, therefore, usually has to do with, but not limited to, engineering, witnessing, or imagining the unknown and/or assuming the role of God, all corresponding to a process of *becoming* monstrous. This unknown, obviously, can be not only an abstract but also a concrete concept we are unfamiliar with. In postmodern literature, especially the not-quite-human monsters that signify a futuristic type of becoming such as transhuman, post-human, cyborg, and android appear as the unfamiliar consequences of creation. As Derrida implies, this creation (or becoming) of the unknown is called monstrous due to its obscurity. Thus, since the unknown product of the future beyond our knowledge and unrecognized by it becomes a source of fear and anxiety, “the future is... necessarily monstrous” (6). Monstrosity, therefore, “must exist in the future outside of the realm of the possible” as it “offers ways of becoming that are not known, not domesticated, and not appropriated by the existing discourses of power” (7). Inevitably, time has yet to offer possible monstrous creations, and in order to meet monstrosity halfway we need to relate to those imaginary entities through reflecting “our ontologies” in their figures (7). In other words, recognition of the monstrosity of the self is crucial in order to be able to interpret the discourses regarding the *unknown* monstrous creations awaiting us.

Representational approach, on the other hand, claims that the monsters are the representations of something beyond corporeally assembled entities (Cohen, 1996: 4), and this approach spotlights “a taxonomy of monsters in order to study the portrayal and representation of Otherness” (Levina and Bui, 2014: 5). Not only may monsters represent the ideas related to societies’ or individuals’ subconscious fears, but they also symbolize some concepts, time, or entities other than themselves.

From a Western perspective, Robin Wood, the author of the book named *American Nightmare: Essays on the Horror Film*, indicates that the monster chiefly represents the Other that “operates within our culture” (1979: 9), and “as Other, the monster serves to reveal, demonstrate, and warn us of our repressed fear, desire, anxiety and fantasy” (Yeo, 2018: 248). Wood claims that, in films and literature, this representation of otherness appears in eight categories, that are, first: “Quite simply, other people,” second: women “In a male-dominated culture,” third: “The proletariat,” fourth: “Other cultures,” fifth: “Ethnic groups within the culture,” sixth: “Alternative ideologies or political system,” seventh: “Deviations from ideological sexual norms” such as queerness, and eighth: “Children” (1979: 9-10). Obviously, all these otherness categories⁸ challenge the so-called stability of the middle/upper class, white, and male-dominated Western society as they represent its binary oppositions and challenge its predetermined, conspicuous, categorical, indispensable, and stereotyped assumptions and social expectations that ensure the continuity of its power and guarantee its security and peace. These social expectations, not surprisingly, force everybody to *act* according to their own prospects and try not to allow any external factor to overthrow their established system and destroy their hermetic realm. Inspired by Freud and referring to Marcuse, Wood calls the determinant of this “conditioned” behavior as “surplus repression” which is acting by the dictated norms and ideas of the dominant societal expectations that turn us, among other things, “into monogamous heterosexual bourgeois patriarchal capitalists” (1979: 8).

Although Wood’s aforementioned categories can be broadened, his approach can be summarized as follows: In general, all the elements that are marginalized by the dominant culture are nonetheless monsters in a Gothic setting. Therefore,

⁸ These categories can, of course, be expanded. Kelly Hurley, for instance, by referring to criminal anthropology, considers those who portray criminal behaviors as monsters, as well.

monsters can be considered as mere representations. Especially this pattern is a fundamental aspect of the Gothic since the representations of Gothic monsters are the enemies of the hallmarks of the dominant culture.

However, adversely, the monster implicitly represents not only the Others given in Wood's classification, but also the evil self. Thanks to surplus repression, even though the aforementioned artificially standardized man knows that not all individuals in society are homogenous, he does not speak it out. Thus, at every opportunity, he lives by disregarding, repressing, and even oppressing any reminders of his heterogeneous self (the Other). He then, achieves a homogeneous façade by behaving in accordance with what is expected of him through avoidance and self-control. He undoubtedly knows what atrocities he could face otherwise. Therefore, what is repressed within us is actually something very familiar to us because although we hypocritically oppress the violators ourselves, we would not want to get oppressed if we accidentally or otherwise violate the code. Thus, according to Wood, those who *remind* us of our repressed selves become taken as violators, the Others, or the monsters, so they have to be "dealt with by oppression" (1979: 7-11).

Interestingly, we are aware of what is repressed within us (because we recognize it), and when we try to oppress those people who portray these *repressed and unwanted* behaviors, we become the biased monsters ourselves. As Nietzsche indicates, "he who fights with monsters should look to it that he himself does not become a monster" (qtd. in Asma, 2009: 101). There are times, however, when our repressed feelings and behaviors find an outlet and we find ourselves occupying the position of the monsters that we had earlier fought vehemently. Gothic not-quite humans, in that sense, can be considered to be dead giveaways about our own monstrosity and/or the ones that intrude into our hermetic domain to threaten our order with or without causing terror. In other words, they may represent not only the monstrosity of the Other, but also the monstrosity of the self, as the embodiments of our deepest fears and anxieties. As Wester indicates, "the gothic is the moment in which the narrative fails to cohere and the (voice of the) Other threatens to break through and disrupt our seamless logocentric history to reveal its ever-present breaks and repressions" (2016: 4).

In addition to these representations, fictional monsters frequently give us clues about the state of the times they are produced. Monsters perform several roles, but regardless of their roles, they make us aware of the norms of their time and in general enable “an analysis of the history of norms” (Derrida, 1992: 386). Most strikingly, they represent the fears of their specific era. For instance, the aristocrat monster in *Dracula* (1897) can be interpreted as a representation of bourgeoisie’s fear of aristocracy. If we consider the time of *Dracula*’s publication, it is apparent that the industrial revolution and its capitalist economies enabled the bourgeoisie to emerge as the dominant class. Since the return of aristocracy would threaten bourgeois expansion, the aristocrat naturally became considered as a monstrous figure in the general cultural milieu of late nineteenth century. Likewise, the vampires in the movie *The Lost Boys* (1987) can be considered to represent the fear of queerness. From a Derridaesque perspective, one can assume that, through its queer Gothic monsters, the movie makes us aware that the dominant heteronormative ideology took queerness as one of its enemies during the mid-to-late twentieth century. These examples can be further reproduced, and, in light of these, it can be concluded that the monsters are representations of the challenges and threats to the values of their own time.

Finally, psychoanalytical approach can be employed to analyze Gothic monsters. In this context, we primarily encounter the ideas of scholars like Kristeva and Freud. To begin with, it is pretty much apparent that Freud’s concept of the “uncanny” greatly helps us interpret the monster. The term uncanny is described as something that is frightening and familiar at the same time (Levina and Bui, 2014: 2). We tend to repress this familiar aspect since it also frightens us. We fear, not because we do not know what we encounter, “but rather the repressed is made suddenly recognizable” to us (3). As a result, we become awed by what we come across. Considered in this light, we can say that the monsters can be regarded as uncanny entities for us, because we make a connection between the monsters and ourselves but vilify them due to the unwanted and avoided qualities that are repressed within us. For Levina and Bui, “The psychoanalytical approach thus perceives the monster as that which used to be a part of the self and needed to be cast away in order for the self to become unified or, at least, functional” (3).

Kristeva, on the other hand, employs the term “abject” to define a kind of otherization and “asserts with Freud that understanding a culture means understanding those acts and ideas that are most strongly forbidden by it” (qtd. in Sullivan and Greenberg, 2011: 116). Lexically, the word is composed of the prefix *ab*, which stands for *falling away*, and the suffix *ject*, which means *to throw*, meaning together “to throw off” and “being thrown under” (Hogle, 2002: 7). For Kristeva, abject is neither subject nor object, but rather somewhere between the two, thus making us feel uncomfortable by blurring the categories in our minds. She exemplifies this with the corpse (1982: 3) being a waste and something outside our physical existence, yet it “traumatically reminds us of our own materiality, thus making us feel like an object rather than a subject” (Felluga, 2015: 3). In other words, if we see a corpse, we feel disgusted because we witness that something that was once alive—like us—is no longer so. We then refuse to associate ourselves with it and thus determine and protect our borders. By rejecting the corpse, we want to express that we are different from it, and we want to make clear that, unlike the corpse, we are yet alive.

Kristeva further exemplifies the abject through various body fluids and claims that they are also wastes which we need to cast off to survive, and when thrown away they no longer become a part of us, thus complicating the border that distinguishes us from the Other. The waste, then, when cast off, becomes identified as something not associated with the self through disgust. Kristeva continues by indicating that “dung signifies the other side of the border, the place where I am not and which permits me to be” (1982: 3). Ultimately the wastes become traumatic reminders that we are, like them, cast off to the Symbolic world by leaving the wombs of our mothers, the Real, where “there is no separation of the self from its surroundings” (Levina and Bui, 2014: 3), and eventually we learn to distinguish ourselves from the others. Consequently, witnessing this trauma makes us feel abjection, which is “the human reaction (horror, vomit) to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the distinction between subject and object or between self and other” (Felluga, 2015: 3). Indeed, this is the result of internalizing the symbolic order or culture, in order to become a subject, upon being cast off to the symbolic world (of categories and language) and beginning to “recognize a boundary between ‘me’ and other” (3).

The abject strengthens Western thought's binaries and categories. It causes people to form their distinct selves and indirectly helps them to determine their social identities. Without the abject, one cannot be an independent entity because the abject makes us define the Other, and we define ourselves through what we are not. By pulling ourselves away from a realm of indefiniteness, we actually categorize ourselves, becoming a part of the herd, the society that contains (and accepts) us in the Symbolic realm. Then, according to Hogle, abjection, "a primordial state of betwixt-and betweenness" becomes "what we primarily 'throw off' and 'throw under' (the literal meaning of ab-ject), so that we can seem to have coherent adult identities that gain acceptance within the most standard ideologies of middle-class selfhood" (qtd. in Wester, 2016: 12). The individual, in that regard, ensures that there is a distance between the self and the Other.

According to Kristeva, in its most archaic form, the distinction between the individual and the Other, which leads to self-definition, is realized through abjection. Humans, for example, identify themselves through their binary opposite, the animal, the *not* human. In the depths of the history of mankind and in the most ancient parts of our personal memory, the traces of this otherization still exist. For the Symbolic order to function, "primitive societies have marked out a precise area of their culture in order to remove it from the threatening world of animals or animalism" (Kristeva, 1982: 12-13). Thus, in so many ways, the otherness of the outsider is connected to its being abject since "abjection is that which is utterly denied within the self and projected onto an Other" (Wester, 2016: 12). In this respect, with abjection, the Other can be identified as the embodiment of things we detest or avoid. For Kristeva, the source of this abjection is "what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite" (1982: 4). Therefore, the hybrid, the monstrous, the not-quite-human, or in other words "anything that disturbs or threatens the norm" gets cast off by us (Bro, 2018: 2).

Ultimately, abjection creates categorizations and borders. Due to these categories, we eventually distinguish between us—humans—and them—non-humans—through vilification or inferiorization of the latter, the Other, the alienated, or the abjected. Thanks to abjection, we learn about what aspects, entities, or people

are implicitly exiled from the dominant cultural norms. Gothic literature achieves its critique of the dominant culture by foregrounding the Gothic *wastes*, that is, entities shown as violating the norm, as abjects. Corporeally and concretely, various defective Gothic monsters, then, function as “the ‘proper’ somatic response to abhumanness” as they implicitly or explicitly cause “the sensation of disgust” (Hurley, 1996: 18), leaving us “in the throes of both desire and loathing” (46). However, for other not-quite-human beings or vilified Others without a monstrous appearance, the status of abjection does not express itself physically but behaviorally. And consequently, any not-quite-human, in this context, can be regarded as undesired *wastes* that rebel against the dominant culture’s norms (Wester, 2016: 16).

In addition to the above-mentioned methodologies and approaches examining the phenomenon of otherness and monstrosity of not-quite-humans, there is yet a theory that covers almost all of these different approaches called *monster theory*. According to Nayar, “monster studies demonstrates how particular forms of life, such as the disabled, the insane or the differently embodied, that do not fit the norms of the ‘human’ are deemed monstrous and consigned to the categories of ‘freaks’, non-humans or the inhuman” (2014: 111). Thus, the scope of monster studies can eventually be broadened to any not-quite-human. Nayar expresses the relation of monster studies to these entities and their reflections on the cultural level as follows:

Monsters... are expressions of cultural anxieties about –and demonization of– forms of life as diverse as the black races, particular animals, mutant babies/animals, the impaired and the insane. Strange animals, different physiognomies or skin colour and different bodies were categorized as monsters because they seemed to be outside any category. (2014: 114)

For Jerome Cohen, the father of the monster theory, monsters have seven distinct characteristics. These characteristics reveal the ideologies underlying people’s reception of the Other. First and foremost, he says, through the analysis of monsters, we reach a unique *cultural critique* because monsters tell a lot about the culture they intrude into. For not only do monsters represent the norms of their time, but they also reveal the anxieties of the culture they appear within. Secondly, monsters will always appear in different forms or aspects in time, triggering different modes of threat, signifying that every era has produced and will produce its own unique monsters. Thirdly, the monster appears in a hybrid form undermining

classifications and binaries, just as the term not-quite-human suggests. Fourth, the monster symbolizes being the Other, in other words, corporeal, “cultural, political, racial, economic, sexual” distinctness. Fifth, monsters also function as a warning that reminds us to avoid the violation of the dominant culture’s rules, order, and stability. In other words, the monster basically functions as a reminder of proper behavior. Sixth, monster is a kind of what Freud calls uncanny for us. The monster itself may attract our attention because it is familiar and strange at the same time; likewise, what the monster does, as well, may be found intriguing since it does things that we might desire to do but would not or could not do. The last point Cohen indicates is that, monsters are actually our products or our reflections. Even though they are abjected, they make us question our mindset regarding “race, gender, sexuality, our perception of difference [and] our tolerance toward its expression.” They show our true colors, or they show the monsters within us (1996: 3-20).

Thus, within the scope of the Gothic, it is most suitable to evaluate the monster as the Other. Monsters, that is, not-quite-human beings, have crucial cultural meanings, whether they have various modes, assume different tasks, exhibit deficiencies in appearances/behaviors, violate miscellaneous norms, or are perceived as entities that are marginalized. Gothic monsters survive in modern times with their endless functions, and these contemporary creatures can be versatile, bizarre, attractive, destructive, yet at the same time, fragile and considerate as any of us, and in this complexity, they may confront us with our fears, make us question ourselves and shout out our hypocrisy to the world.

CHAPTER TWO

ABHUMANS/SUBHUMANS, DEHUMANIZATION & SOCIETY: OATES'S *ZOMBIE*

American writer Joyce Carol Oates, one of the pioneers of contemporary Gothic literature, presents not only a dark and gloomy atmosphere in most of her writings, but also radical cultural criticism in their background through otherized and awkward fictional characters. In her 1995 work *Zombie*, she presents one of the most striking examples of Gothic literature based on a not-quite-human figure. In this fictional novel she sheds light on American society's hypocritical standards through a morally and mentally degenerated queer abhuman⁹ character.

2.1. THE FRAMEWORK: OBSESSION & SOCIAL MONSTROSITY

Zombie, Oates's Bram Stoker Award-winning work, is considered partially fictional and partially historical because Quentin (or Q__ P__), the main character in the story, is loosely inspired by an actual serial killer named Jeffrey Dahmer, who murdered countless people (mostly minorities) in the 1980s (Pitts, 2016: 1-2). Although many sociological interpretations can be made about the case of Dahmer,

⁹ It is important to keep in mind that the abhuman is traditionally understood as a transfigured subject that is not-quite-human such as a vampire or a werewolf. However, as some biased interpretations of evolution and criminal anthropology claim, this transfiguration or deviation from the white norm does not always have to be physical but also psychological, behavioral, or mental. According to Kelly Hurley, from the Western perspective, the ultimate human representation as the white, non-criminal, and heterosexual male is defined as the fully evolved. Such perspective denounces the rest as less-than-humans and degenerate subjects (something both human and not-human at the same time, discontinuous in identity). Therefore, the abhuman can potentially be anyone. However, such abhuman epithet surfaces only during periods of fear, anxiety, and threat. In other words, the dominant (norm-setting) ones who supposedly constitute the highest rank of humanness in society, profess some people's qualities—such as queerness or criminality, etc.—as less-than-human, monstrous, or undesired when such qualities menacingly threaten their norms or contradict their ideal human qualities. Eventually, the dominant sully such people as monsters or vestigially humans (abhumans) due to their undesired or less common features, making the abhuman synonymous with the monster. Consequently, the main character Quentin, as a queer and a criminal, can be considered as a not-quite-human subject whose degeneration is not immediately spotted by the naked eye. On the one hand, as a criminal, he is discontinuous in identity, for he is a human who performs behaviors deemed primitive and aggressive and correlated with animals. He is, nonetheless, a monstrous killer, and killers in the Gothic are generally portrayed as “abhuman[s]” (Valier, 2004: 121). On the other hand, by virtue of his sexual orientation, Quentin can be considered as a natural-born not-quite-human because homosexuality is considered as a degenerate behavior (Hurley, 1996: 72-75).

the most striking social aspect he exposes is America's "institutional bias against racial and sexual minorities" (2). It turns out that, in 1991, one of Dahmer's underage male victims, Konerak Sinthasomphone, could escape Dahmer's flat naked despite being drugged, but the police, who were called by some worried women that saw the naked and bleeding boy, handed Konerak, child of a Laotian family, over to Dahmer without suspecting the white man and by choosing to believe his false statements that the boy was at legal age and they were having an affair (Knight, 2018). It was reported that the police "were later heard making racist and homophobic jokes about the incident with the dispatcher" (Pitts, 2016: 2). This situation explicitly demonstrates how institutions of the state act in accordance with dominant cultural codes in matters where they should be impartial. Such acts also help condition community to perceive different individuals as monstrous in appearance and behavior despite performing no concrete acts of monstrosity. This perspective is a cultural critique that forms the backbone of Oates's story and is one of the bleeding wounds of American society that continues to this day.

Inspired by the Dahmer case, the novel, *Zombie*, tells the story of a monstrous murderer by briefly focusing on his process of becoming a serial killer. The book generally consists of short chapters that seem like the journal of this murderer, through which we learn his psychology, his experiences, his methods to hide his crimes, and ultimately the rising suspicions about his murders.

Although we observe superficially what Quentin experiences in the novel from the beginning to the end, the story consistently involves a Gothic critique in the background. In one way or another, Oates exposes everyday atrocities such as racism and sexism in a deliberately lethargic society, by putting a murderer into its center.

The plotline is quite simple to follow: Quentin, Oates' main character, who appears to be a parody of Dahmer, is a violence-prone person liable to become degenerate or an abhuman. Growing up in a typical peaceful small American town, he is initially aware of the social norms and order of his environment, but once he faces the more diverse university atmosphere, the hold of social norms on him becomes loosened. At the very beginning of the novel, we see Quentin as an ordinary individual under therapy and trying to adapt to his environment, but then we realize that his situation is much more serious. Eventually it is revealed that he is on

probation for a crime, and he is under private therapy in order to be cleansed of his criminal thoughts and become integrated back to society. Even during his rehabilitation, however, he continues committing crimes with subtle plans, kills and rapes, and somehow succeeds in remaining hidden until his last crime causes suspicion.

Quentin blends some uncommon characteristics. He makes a living as a custodian in an apartment building owned by his rich family. He is polite towards people around him, and he personally emphasizes the importance of kindness in his monologues. In return, he likes to receive kindness from people, a characteristic he finds only in minorities. Later, however, it is revealed that he sees kindness as a symptom of weakness to be taken advantage of.

Quentin is also obsessed with science, but this obsession is closely related to perfecting his killings and hiding their evidence. Even though he does not properly continue taking all his required classes at university, he voluntarily goes to science libraries and labs, and tries to learn some techniques for his prospective murders. That is why he does not seem to consider the murders he committed as crimes, since he rationalizes them as *modifying* (his victims) by employing science rather than approaching them for the purpose of killing. Ultimately, however, Quentin's every single modification attempt proves unsuccessful. He intends to lobotomize people to create mindless sex slaves for himself. But this procedure is not just performed for sexuality, as it is also intended to modify individuals to meet his basic human needs, such as care and compassion. Thus, Quentin, who cannot find anyone that truly loves and respects him, thinks that he can only achieve this goal by "domesticating" people by his own standards. In order to meet the most basic human needs, or the uniquely human, or secondary emotions, he tries to zombify people, but since everyone dies during that process, we witness the not-quite-human's unavoidable disillusionment of being doomed never to feel like (nor is allowed to be) a human again.

The story unfolds further when Quentin tries to reach his ultimate target: a white, middle-class boy whom he nicknames Squirrel. Quentin becomes obsessed with that boy and for a very long time makes plans to kidnap him. He eventually reaches his goal, rapes, and kills the boy, and keeps a trophy from him. The novel ends after Squirrel's death. Although we do not see Quentin getting caught by the

police, the disappearance of a white child now starts to create suspicion and fear in society.

Although the novel can be analyzed in multi-dimensional ways, it can be evaluated with at least two different perspectives that concern the roles of not-quite-humans. The first of these approaches is related to the not-quite-human character's obsession with dehumanization. The murderer, cannibal, and necrophiliac not-quite-human main character Quentin, tries to bring people down to his own level of (ab)humanness by applying a self-learned lobotomy or a process of zombification on his victims. He is restless and constantly testing new borders through his atrocious actions at the same time as his obsession turns him into a monster with no moral values. On the one hand, he tries to equalize himself with people around him, in order to make them understand and love him. On the other hand, since he is an individual disregarded by society, the process of bringing people down to his level proves to be a form of revenge for him. Quentin seems to believe that through lobotomy, a method of equalization, he brings justice on his own behalf. In this way, he criticizes the fact that society disdains him, and he tries to turn the tables.

One must note that Quentin primarily dehumanizes the minorities who are already (ironically) seen as not-quite-humans in society. This act reveals that Quentin, as a white not-quite-human murderer, feels *insultingly* placed even under the minorities in social hierarchy. Therefore, for Quentin, dehumanizing his victims "is his way of reminding himself that, though not on top, he is not and will never be at the very bottom of society" (Pitts, 2016: 18). However, he can only equalize himself with those who are only one level above him in social hierarchy. That is why, after he tries to literally dehumanize (or zombify) a white male person (higher in social hierarchy), he turns into a poacher, stops being extremely cautious, and as expected, his plan collapses.

The other analytical approach to the novel concerns the ingroup's hypocritical perception of abjects in society. Quentin, in that sense, indirectly reveals the society's deep-rooted deceitfulness: He kills many African American people performing failed lobotomy operations on them, but he does not get caught because he knows from his own invisibility as a social outsider that the disappearance of minorities will not be noticed in society. In other words, the cold-blooded and

deliberate murders that this monster planned take place upon his detailed calculation of the deficits in society. In order to realize his needs, he takes advantage of his society's discriminatory practices, which exist but are not often publicly voiced. In other words, he murders and rapes minorities by exploiting social norms that make some people vulnerable to abuse and crime, because being a member of the white race provides individuals, even criminals, with at least some legal advantages. Quentin's acquired racism (infrahumanization or dehumanization) proves that a seemingly democratic and peaceful society that pretends to do no harm can in fact turn out to be the real monster. Quentin knows that if he did any harm to a member of the white race, his risk of punishment would be way higher than if his acts were directed against minorities. But, as previously mentioned, towards the end of the story, Quentin cannot resist his instinctive impulses and victimizes a white boy. Not surprisingly, when the news spreads about the boy's disappearance eventually, the biased and hypocritical ways of society become all the clearer.

Before going into a detailed analysis of the novel, one final condition must be mentioned regarding Quentin's legacy and its reflections on society. Quentin's murders are actually reminiscent of another obscure, bloody, but pragmatic tactic that the West resorted to in order to relieve its own conscience: the proxy warfare. As mentioned before, in American society, the annihilation of not-quite-humans or minorities is not noticed at all. However, it is crucial to notice that in the novel, both the killer and the killed are abjects, society's unwanted not-quite-humans. In other words, allowing the not-quite-humans to slaughter each other, people turn a blind eye to their proxy-annihilation and get them to be cleansed from society without active involvement. Society neither takes any responsibility for the murders, nor does it feel any feelings of remorse about them. That is why Quentin can murder people (minorities) with almost no problem, until he decides to murder a white boy. But ultimately, Quentin gives society a taste of its own (poisonous) medicine.

2.2. THE PORTRAIT OF THE MURDERER AS A NOT-QUITE-HUMAN: THE STORY OF A WESTERN MURDERER & ITS REFLECTIONS IN SOCIAL SPHERE

Joyce Carol Oates presents Quentin to the reader as a criminal not-quite-human and a monster. Ranging from his obsession with dehumanizing Others, to his acquired-racism serving to manifest dominant but concealed social attitude, there are various examples from the story that solidify Quentin's status as a Gothic not-quite-human monster. Being a morally corrupt abhuman, Quentin undoubtedly is a monstrous and notorious killer. Thus, we can say that Quentin himself is responsible for the murders, but the community's partial responsibility for these actions cannot be disregarded since not only does society's attitude ensure that Quentin continue to murder, but it also makes Quentin feel worthless, alone, and otherized. Therefore, Quentin is a not-quite-human, an abject, a murderer, a misanthrope, a dehumanizer, a dehumanized, a monster, but at the same time, a science-obsessed and categorically minded Westerner. In other words, his formation as a monster takes place in a social milieu, which he responds to and reflects in his character development. His intrusion into society reveals much about not only his own monstrosity, but also that of society's. In order to understand the determining forces behind Quentin's inhumane decisions, one must first conceptualize how Quentin feels inside and outside his own domain.

2.2.1. The Making of a Not-Quite-Human: Quentin as an Obsessive Murderer

Being a vicious killer is the most obvious reason why Quentin is a degenerated being, or an abhuman/subhuman/not-quite-human character. The not-quite-humanness of this criminal mind, however, is not just one-dimensional. He has various more characteristics; that is, his tendencies, behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and decisions point to some awkward, undesired, and/or unwonted character, solidifying his status as a not-quite-human.

First and foremost, Quentin is a queer, a quality considered degenerate, scorned and feared by the dominant heteronormative Western mindset. Queerness, therefore, is what makes him a different being, an innate not-quite-human right off the bat. The indirect feedback he gets from his father regarding his queerness seems to be significantly negative, and he is aware of the fact that society's attitude about this gender identity is quite marginalizing. Therefore, he tries to hide this tendency as best as he can. He probably becomes filled with rage for being perceived as a natural-born outcast, and thus we see him develop some criminal attitudes in order to take revenge on his father, society, and anything that denounces him as abhorrent. His criminal attitudes may or may not be entirely considered as the outcome of being marginalized as a queer, but it is apparent that this condition has an important effect.

Apart from queerness, there are a few other characteristics that picture Quentin as a not-quite-human. Predominantly, his awkwardness is one of the first signs that points towards his degeneracy: He is an unusually asocial person, an obsessive sociopath, a misanthrope who challenges anthropocentrism in quite an unexpected way. He is a lone wolf who enjoys his times alone during which he acts like a nocturnal animal rather than a sane human. Furthermore, he is prone to violence and uses his intelligence for malevolent purposes, mostly to bring others down to his level of not-quite-humanness. In fact, his malevolence arises out of a strong feeling of inadequacy that so extremely overwhelms him that in the end he finds no outlet but to act like a psychopath. Last but not least, he is a relentless pedophile and a restless sex maniac with gross fantasies.

It is clear that some of Quentin's not-quite-human characteristics are acquired or manipulated, while some are innate. His queerness, for example, is an innate characteristic. Although this part of his not-quite-humanness cannot be translated into his perversion, its perception by society as a not-quite-human characteristic causes him to develop perversities. In other words, although some of his traits are natural-born, society and/or family can be held responsible for his criminal behavior. However, in order to be perceived as a not-quite-human, what one becomes holds more significance than his or her personality or traits. Therefore, as a final product, that is, as a not-quite-human or an abject, he indirectly gets cast out of his milieu.

Principally Quentin tries his best to conceal his awkward characteristics: namely, his restlessly criminal mental state, deliberate refusal to adapt to society, social incompetence, eye-contact avoidance, overthinking to an inhuman level. However, the people that know him closely, such as his family members, realize there is something “wrong” with him. That is why, even without murdering anyone, he already is a not-quite-human with all his awkward tendencies and behaviors. In fact, he contains almost every other undesired characteristic within, except for his race and class profile. He is a not-quite-human character with all the awkwardness he poses.

One of the first pieces of information offered in the novel about Quentin is that he has been taking psychological counseling and therapy (Oates, 1995: 4), and we learn that he is forced to do it because some unknown time ago, he committed a crime, which he denies being a crime (8). Unlike an ordinary person (or as a subhuman), he does not seem to show any effort to adapt to society. The therapies he receives do not seem to have any results in his behavior or thoughts since he does not take them seriously and names the therapists as “bullshit masters” (4).

We encounter his limited social skills in various forms throughout the story, but one of the most prominent indicators of his social incompetence manifests itself when he avoids making eye contact. For Quentin, people can “slide down into your soul” through eye contact (8), and eventually learn your secrets, decrypt your mysteries, and see your true colors. Portrayed by a white man, this perspective is an ultimate tribute to Western ocularcentrism, the tendency of “privileging the sense of sight” over the others, for it is associated with perceiving light, gaining knowledge, observing, maintaining rationality, and being exposed to truth, which eventually makes it hegemonic for the Western mindset (Levin, 1993:1-5). As an inheritor of such mentality, Quentin is aware of the crucialness of this telltale phenomenon that is capable of revealing what is considered his confidential, the hidden truth.

However, from another perspective, Quentin’s avoidance of eye-contact is also a rebellion against the surveillance fetish of our postmodern times, a fetish that keeps close tabs on individuals judging their compatibility with desired norms and behaviors. This latter case interferes with private life in a disturbingly Orwellian way. We can see Quentin’s uncomfortable feeling regarding the surveillance

obsession in various parts of the book through his journal-like notes. For example, Quentin feels very uneasy when his father watches him with skeptical eyes since childhood, doubting his abilities and attitudes. He does not want to be watched at all. When he is being watched, he avoids direct communication with people. In the detention center, for instance, where he was locked up for a while after his first crime, “It was observed how for that period of incarceration Q__ P__ was not talking & was not making EYE CONTACT with anybody” (Oates, 1995: 8). He fears that if he keeps eye contact with people, they would eventually seek in him answers to their questions, decrypt his inhumane goals. In fact, what Quentin is hiding from people is the knowledge of his status: that he is a not-quite-human despite having a white façade. Thus, he chooses to hide his monstrosity behind his white façade.

Not surprisingly, the fear of being constantly monitored eventually turns Quentin into an obsessive over-thinker. In a delusional way, he suspects he is being followed whenever he is out of the walls of his apartment. Even when he is at the dentist, he obsessively questions what the dentist might be doing in order to access his hidden motives. He says, “It might be that Q__P__ is being photographed and/or videotaped here, might be Q__ P__’s actual brain is being X-rayed & the negatives sent to the county offices & East Lansing, the capital of Michigan & the F.B.I. in D.C. & to Dad c/o Physics Dept., Mt. Vernon State University” (69). He is aware of being an outcast and violator of social norms and, therefore, fears and avoids the rule-makers and main actors of his society, persons who, according to him, expect blind conformism to social norms and expectations, such persons as the police and his father. Thus, he overthinks to the most absurd detail, and ends up suspecting getting his brain scanned. Since, however, he is aware of living in an age of constant surveillance, Quentin’s fears have a realistic basis. Yet when he takes his fears to unrealistic levels, it drives him into inhumanity.

Quentin is nonetheless an intelligent and hypercritical person, and these traits provide him with disguise quite a long time. In order to be perceived well-adapted to his society, Quentin passes himself off as a friendly and well-disposed person:

Sometimes like Mom says I’m too generous paying for somebody’s lunch or beers or whatever. Or actually lending money. & driving one or two of them home sometimes if they’ve missed their bus going a few miles out of my way into suburbs not-known to me & No trouble! I say & in such instances Q__ P__’s kindness will be remembered, my face & the Ford van with the AMERICAN

FLAG decal on the rear window. A big decal exactly fitting the rear window. If I needed a character witness (for instance at a trial) you would remember Q__ P__ from Dale Tech & the fact that I was kind. (79)

He does favors to random people around him not for the good of people, but for giving them the impression that he is actually a good and helpful person. He thinks that some of these random people would remember his acts of kindness and back him up against accusers or police in case he faces an accusation. Having such ulterior motives reveals that, morally, he has no interest in altruism. Acts of kindness are only his instruments in order to trick people to gain respect and appreciation.

Quentin benefits from people's weaknesses and vulnerabilities. Since he is a very careful observer, he analyzes the kinds of things people pay attention to and turns the resulting knowledge to his advantage. He concludes that people helplessly pay attention to imperfections, and thence, he draws a birthmark on his "left cheek" for people to look at. He claims that it is a "*baffle*" set up for people, and he supposedly shapeshifts into some other person than himself (114). As a shapeshifter, he disguises his not-quite-humanness from people around him.

Quentin knows that changing his daily routine, appearance and even handwriting would make him stay hidden longer since he believes he "REINVENT[S]" himself in this way, consequently making people treat him like a new person (120). For the sake of being camouflaged as an ordinary person, he buys new popular clothes despite disliking them. He even starts taking a shower "twice a day," as according to his close observations this is something very common among ordinary people (120). He manages to *appear* skillfully and minutely integrated into society despite being a complete threat for it.

Quentin also discovers that he can trick people into affection through deliberately dehumanizing himself physically. This knowledge comes to him after an experience he has: When he is out to meet somebody at night, a mob takes his wallet by force and beats him up (59). As a result, his face gets terribly messed up. He somehow enjoys experiencing this incident which gives him the idea that he can change his face to be unrecognizable. He turns being physically dehumanized into something he can take advantage of because he understands that he can exploit people's feelings by piling on the agony via his wretched and unrecognizable outlook. A messed-up face could disguise him "ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD"

and enable him to roam “LIKE ANOTHER PERSON”. Moreover, he would be able to “arouse PITY, TRUST, SYMPATHY, WONDERMENT & AWE with such a face” (60). Even though he does not necessarily prefer such physical dehumanization, it could help him hide his criminal side and ironically make him conceal his not-quite-humanness. As such, although Quentin cannot *escape* his status as a not-quite-human, he can manipulate his appearance to *hide* his not-quite-human state.

Quentin’s not-quite-human status lies more in his criminal mental state rather than his appearance. Just as he changes his “normal” white appearance in order to look physically dehumanized, he attempts to change the already-physically subhuman victims’ mental states in order to bring them down to his not-quite-human status, the lowest strata he occupies. His obsession with equalization urges him to modify the inside of these people’s minds through lobotomy so that they would at least be his match as perceived by the outside world or, preferably and equitably, some not-quite-human even inferior to him in his own perception. By this means, his victims become not-quite-humans not only socially or bodily—since most of them already are—but also mentally too. Thus, he convinces himself that he would then have a chance to be seen like the people around him, but in a *reverse* way. Despite the fact that he uses trickery as an equalizer, since he fails after all, as a ruthless criminal, he eventually confronts his fated isolation and self-designated place at the bottom of social hierarchy.

Quentin forces himself to find a way to escape from being seen as a criminal despite being so. Eventually, he bitterly realizes that he cannot escape from reality. His failure teaches him that neither bodily nor mental not-quite-humanness can be overcome. On the one hand, he knows that being white alone could grant him certain privileges in society, but ultimately, he deduces that it does not guarantee a *criminal* to be considered a human.

In order to feel human again, Quentin relies on his other mental qualities, such as intelligence, instead of his physical characteristics. His mental capacity could make him feel superior to other not-quite-humans in society, since he can be considered a smart person despite surrendering to his drives at certain times. Therefore, he could only achieve humanness by creating mindless beings, or

zombies, to whom he will be forever superior because it is apparent that, by zombie, Quentin means a mindless and submissive slave who has no function of “*passing judgment*” (49) like a semi-organic robot, somewhere between a human and an android, programmed to obey and show artificial affection. Thus, he hopes to gain a sense of human status next to their pronounced not-quite-humanness. Because of the failure of his *scientific* operations, however, he ends up learning that mental skills do not grant a criminal a state of humanness, either. The death of his so-called zombies signifies that no matter what he does as a criminal, he is doomed to be not-quite-human and is entrapped within that condition forevermore.

Science, for Quentin, is not only a tool for escapism, but also a medium to prove himself; thus, he is obsessed with it since the very beginning of the story. As somebody who “*has a natural love of numbers*,”—a rare complimentary judgment from his father since his childhood—Quentin is registered as a part-time student of computer programming at a university (7). His scientific curiousness does not stem from a desire to become a credited scientist; rather, he somewhat tries to compete with his respected scientist father in the field of science. Therefore, he wants to learn whatever he can to surpass his father via self-education, even though he lacks both social skills and mental capacity to compete with or surpass his father. Nonetheless, he uses science for purposes other than the sake of science. For instance, he looks for people who would best meet the criteria for becoming subjects for his lobotomy experiments. He observes like a scientist, deducts from imposed social norms, and decides that he should go for physically healthy people and avoid white university students in order to prevent social uproar. His avoidance of white persons stems further not only from an awareness that “they have families” who care about them (28), but also that there is a whole judicial system privileging them. Therefore, he concludes that preferably someone healthy “from the black projects downtown” should be his preference for a zombie specimen (28). Namely, he understands that those minorities are perceived by society as its most insignificant layer. Thus, Quentin refers to them as people who “should never have been born” (28).

In fact, Quentin’s obsession and futile struggle with science stems from his feeling of inadequacy next to his professor father. Compared to his father, Quentin is almost completely a failure because he “does not have the intellectual range or

educational training of his father” (Simpson, 200: 164), but he desperately tries to prove himself to him. On the one hand, Quentin feels under pressure because he is not respected by community—like his father, and as the son of an important professor, he is at least expected to be an honorable member of the family, a role he cannot inwardly live up to. In that regard, he tries to pay extra—but unwilling—attention to social norms and expectations in his community. On the other hand, he resorts to science in order to realize himself in his one-way battle against his father: He anticipates he will succeed in scientific experiments, most likely because he believes that he genetically has an innate capability for problem solving, which, he hopes, would help him even surpass his father. His competition with his father is only a domestic affair, though, because Quentin has no intention of proving himself to society. However, his relationship with his father becomes morally complicated because Quentin becomes well aware that his father is also an example of moral collapse like himself, even though he seems on the façade to be strictly following moral rules. For example, earlier in the story, he does not have any qualms about pulling some strings to get Quentin unpunished for his first offense, knowing that, if arranged correctly, the judiciary system could favor white people over the others, and he immorally takes advantage of its vulnerability to save the reputation of his family. But beyond that, his father most certainly witnessed and possibly had even a part in worse immoral actions, in order to make his mentor, Dr. K___, win a Nobel Prize for Biology. After the unexpected death of Dr. K___, it was revealed that he “led a team of scientists” who conducted “secret experiments” of radiation on innocent people including “mentally retarded children” (Oates, 1995: 171). Thereby, if Quentin inherited anything from his father, it would be criminality and immorality, not predisposition or commitment to science. While his father could cover his own crimes in a more subtle way and continue to live as a respected scientist, Quentin moves towards failure and turns into a misguided crime-machine because he feels paled by comparisons to his father whom he is expected to at least equal in success and reputation. Consequently, he envies him and forces himself to imitate and compete with his father. According to Simpson, he exemplifies how, “through envy and imitation, the intellectual sins of the fathers are generationally transferred”

(2000: 164). From that perspective, Quentin ironically becomes the victim of such inheritance.

Apparently, the major force that transforms Quentin from a victim to a victimizer is his father's disappointment in his abilities. Thus, Quentin ends up feeling extremely overwhelmed by the expectations of his family from him, especially those of his father's. His father suspects everything his son does and has no trust in him at all. Because he has a foreboding feeling that Quentin's existence has been violating the norms of humanity since the beginning, he keeps monitoring Quentin to take precaution against the possible disgraces that his predisposition to violence could cause. In other words, it is his father's self-fulfilling prophecy from his earliest childhood about his status as *not-quite-human* with a tendency to violence and queerness that he carries out later in life:

DAD'S EYES behind his shiny glasses. Looking at me like when I was two years old & squatting on the bathroom floor shitting & when I was five years old playing with my baby dick & when I was seven years old & my T-shirt splotted with another kid's nosebleed & when I was eleven home from the pool where my friend Barry drowned & most fierce DAD'S EYES when I was twelve years old that time Dad charged upstairs with the Body Builder magazines shaking in his hand. (Oates, 1995: 33-34)

Thus, the reason his father frequently follows Quentin is not to protect his son's well-being but to prevent his son from making a mistake which could ruin his life and, more importantly, tarnish his family's social status. For instance, "Once Quentin is arrested and convicted of child molestation, Professor P__ uses his status and connections to the legal community to minimize Quentin's punishment not so much to help Quentin but as to preserve whatever is left of the good family name" (Simpson, 2000: 160). Obviously, since Professor P__, as a reputed scientist, is racially and financially at the top of the social hierarchy, he would not want to lose this status because of his son. Hence, Professor P__ follows Quentin at every step, who, according to him, is a complete failure (Oates, 1995: 98). Consequently, Quentin becomes quite obsessed with the idea of being monitored all the time. Therefore, making no eye contact becomes a defense mechanism for Quentin to prevent people from discovering his possible shameful thoughts. He is most probably aware that he cannot gain anybody's trust, and thus, he feels insecure, insignificant, victimized, and abjected.

Already overwhelmed with expectations, Quentin leads a socially and individually restricted life. Being obsessed with the effort to prove himself, he feels obliged to surpass his capacity and thus becomes a psychopath disconnected from social life. Apparently, his constant failures in life stimulate his criminal inclination and urge him to try harder and harder. For this reason, Quentin shows rare and awkward characteristics, which, nonetheless, strengthen his not-quite-human position.

Not surprisingly, Quentin's social awkwardness or standoffishness eventually creates an invisible barrier around him. However useful this barrier becomes in covering his crimes, deep down, Quentin yearns for attention from others: Referring to not only other ordinary people having friends, but also the absence of a companion in his life, he says "*Why didn't Q__ P__ have friends like that, guys who liked me, guys like brothers? twins? & now when they see me their eyes flick carelessly over me*" (113). These secondary and uniquely human emotions and needs demonstrate that he still desires to rise above his status as a not-quite-human. Without them, he can prove neither to himself nor to his environment that he is genuinely a human.

Despite all efforts to become fully human, Quentin demonstrates yet another not-quite-human characteristic that is associated with being antisocial: Through monologues, we learn that Quentin is prone to showing various animalistic impulses when he is alone. For instance, he eerily enjoys the presence of the moon in the sky; he watches "the MOON move out of sight" (19) for a long time when he is in the attic, and like a lone wolf, or a *lycanthrope*, he shows some bizarre reactions under the moon, "[his] Heart beating fast & hard. & [he is] beginning to feel horny" (19).

Quentin's animalistic impulses result from a barely remembered childhood trauma of rape with twisted consequences for his psychic development only to find an outlet in solitariness. However, the attic's exposedness to others' sight especially in the moonlight threatens him with revealing his secret nocturnal private self. Thus, he is caught in the dilemma between enjoying the moonlight and fearing its power of exposure and feels awkward. For a moment, when the brightness of the moon hurts his *eyes* (17) despite its strange attractiveness, and interrupts his bestial joy, his fear of being exposed peaks. At this point, Quentin strangely experiences a quick flashback into his childhood upon feeling unsafe, exposed, but (at the same time)

horny. Then we learn that the queer in Quentin was triggered as a consequence of something terrible he experienced: He recalls two boys coming to the attic “scared & in a hurry,” and as a result of a possible rape, one ends up “bleeding & choking” (18). Quentin, however, does not know whether he is “confusing two [different] times” (18), but since he wants to repress this memory, one could possibly conclude that Quentin himself, was a victim of a rape as a child. His psychology, therefore, could be affected negatively and irreversibly since then, causing him to be socially awkward. Strangely enough, though, after remembering this incident, he now feels like a beast, sexually stimulated under the moonlight, at that very spot in the attic where the incident happened.

These animalistic urges from being exposed to moonlight serve as a milestone for the flow of the story. It makes Quentin recall disturbing images in his memories, symbolically indicating and directly foreshadowing that similarly disturbing and *lunatic* incidents are about to come. This exposure also makes Quentin realize that he should avoid the light and operate “UNDER GROUND” (19) like a nocturnal animal. Thus, he plans to set up the cellar for his upcoming evil plans, believing that no one can watch or observe him there. Like another abhuman character, a *vampire* this time, he moves to underground where no light reaches. He literally sets off to “*turn over a new leaf*” (19), which is something his father wished him to do, but in an exact opposite way.

Quentin’s isolation has further far-reaching consequences that verge on nihilistic existentialism. For instance, while other men walk past by him and look at him aimlessly, he suddenly begins questioning the concept of existence on a scale of microcosmic and macrocosmic worlds, starts to imagine huge galaxies and gradually reduces the scale to cities and human beings, and he concludes that, in the face of the incomprehensible size of the universe, human beings are in fact meaningless objects (29). Apparently, this approach assures him that the crimes he will commit will remain meaningless details in a meaningless world. Therefore, he sees people as just unimportant entities; therefore, he decides, there can be no harm in destroying them. In his *chaotically* self-directed world, they just function as extras (like himself) open to exploitation. For him, every human, regardless of their race, is nothing more than insignificant mortal objects.

Quentin's grand cosmic vision, however, is not the rule in his society where he needs to obey the laws made by the white man and enforced to protect particularly white people. Therefore, he makes use of the cracks in social laws and rules and targets the unprotected. Even though he *seems to* identify every human being as (un)equally worthless, to be on the safe side, he chooses his preys only from among non-white minorities (until the final incident that gives him away) because he is very much aware of social hierarchies and the insignificance of non-white people's lives. In other words, Quentin's seemingly racist choices are in fact based upon the racism of his society. According to Pitts, such racism is constituted through "Quentin P_'s [intended submission to, and] acceptance of dominant cultural beliefs in white male supremacy [which] leads him to actively resist the recognition of the legal and human rights of racial minorities" (2016: 19). He thus pictures minorities as even more worthless than the dominant racial group. Therefore, his quest for non-white victims can alternatively be considered as an example of an implicitly acquired racism (unintended for direct discriminatory purposes), and concordantly, he claims "I am not a RACIST. Don't know what... a RACIST is" (Oates, 1995: 8). One can choose to believe Quentin and can consider him as impartial to all races, and thus confirm that he initially murders the minorities only because they are made easy targets by social norms.

Quentin, thus, makes the impression that he is not a racially discriminating man in the conventional sense, but rather an implementer of biased social laws and rules. He seems to back up his claim via some of his actions. For instance, he is attracted to his victims without any exceptions, and he awkwardly seeks their compassion and care, a token not normally expected from a conventional racist. Moreover, at the end of the story, when his sexual drive gets the better of his cautious *modus operandi*, his obsession with a white boy shows that he could be equally attracted and destructive to people regardless of their races. In the end, however, despite any of his self-justified actions, Quentin still exhibits (implicit or explicit) racism, whether or not it is learned due to the social codes imposed on him.

Quentin's abhumanness involves a strong non-anthropocentric touch, for he does not place the human in the center of the universe nor the ecosystem. Although Quentin himself is a human, his view of humanity is rather negative and notoriously

misanthropic. Yet his criticism and dislike of humanity do not stem from a desire for recognition of other species as rightful living bodies. On the contrary, his non-anthropocentric view equals both humans and animals as consumable and exploitable products. The novel provides hints of Quentin's cannibalism since he keeps human flesh locked up for possible future use (35-36). He shows his monstrosity through cannibalism, "the ultimate and most disgusting proof of abhumanness," which turns not only him but his victims into animals, for "the cannibalized victim is animalized as well" (Hurley, 1996: 86). Therefore, unlike our anthropocentric world where animals are considered created for humans as property or food, in Quentin's non-anthropocentric world, humans are somewhat equivalent to animals: As neither holds significance, they both can be experimental and consumable objects. Quentin thus twists the anthropocentric value hierarchy on its head because in his nihilistic and meaningless cosmos, everything, human or non-human, is equally lacking in significance and value. Their presence or loss contributes or detracts nothing in the grand chaos that we all live in. His reduction of all humans to animals and his violence are his rebellion to his own status as an abhuman.

Quentin's misanthropy solidifies even further because he is in constant fear of recognition. He thinks people see through him and he is very uncomfortable with this feeling. He always feels threatened and uneasy, because people could suspect him of his actions. In a monologue, he addresses the masses who unsettle him: "Like you who observe me (you think I don't know you are observing Q__P__? making reports of Q__ P__? conferring with one another about Q__P__?) & think your secret thoughts—ALWAYS & FOREVER PASSING JUDGMENT" (Oates, 1995: 49). For Quentin, every single person is potentially suspicious about him, whose judgments threaten and destabilize him. Thus, his fear gives way to a misanthropy ultimately to the point of dehumanizing people, because only the dehumanized could judge or question him any longer.

Quentin acts like a queer sex maniac in a large portion of his daily life. He frequently becomes sexually aroused, even when he just looks at men walking outside (29). He has difficulty controlling his sexual drive and expels all his frustration as sexual violence. In this context, driven by instinct rather than reason, he fits the Western expectations of not-quite-human qualities. His urges undoubtedly

prevail against his rational thoughts, which define the human and the lawful world he built. Such violation of rational thinking is a symptom of weakness for the Western mindset. However, far from “fixing” himself in order to prevent this continuous violation, Quentin inversely rationalizes it by ironically resorting to science to create individuals for his sexual needs. For him, justice is served when robust bodies are deformed. For the outside world, however, he is a failure (or deficiency) of culture, nothing more than an untamable animal, that is, some beastly non-human, some kind of monster, and/or some violator.

Quentin’s sexual desires and fantasies are oftentimes concealed, but still out of control, quite sordid, and pathologically disturbing. Because his fantasies as a not-quite-human are neither acceptable nor ordinary, when he talks to the psychologist, he evasively denies having them: “*I guess I don’t have any—what you call ‘fantasies,’ Doctor. I don’t know*” (54). However, while working as a caretaker, he goes so far in his fantasies as leaving his own semen to dry “on the bedsheets, on the curtains, on the cardboard pizza box & napkins” and even on the residents’ “bed” (76). Moreover, we learn from his monologues that Quentin has some unusual, bizarre, and gory sexual fantasies demanding submission (112). He secretly masturbates in the restroom of a restaurant where his last victim Squirrel works and imagines Squirrel to be completely and voluntarily surrendering to him for sex involving all kinds of body fluids including blood. Then he leaves the napkin he used to wipe his semen on his table “for SQUIRREL to clear away unknowing” (112). By putting his gross sexual fantasies into practice, he wants to be in *touch* with the ones he finds attractive, in a remote, strangely unconventional, and repulsive way. In a way, he infects his victims before poisoning them completely. Such fantasies are signs of an unhealthy mental state and are not innocent social deviances still within normal range.

In Quentin’s distorted sexual fantasies and practices, much of what we would normally not think of in connection with one-another are inextricably bound together. Just as sexual attraction and physical violation are mixed in Quentin’s mind, sexual harassment and affection go hand in hand in his chaotic imagination. When, for instance, he talks to his psychologist about sexually harassing a child that caused him to be taken into custody, he says “*Yes doctor. I felt affection & that is*

why I lost control” (47). And while admitting this, he looks his doctor in the eye, leaving no room for doubt about the reality of what he said. Quentin is not only a terrible pedophile, but also a restless necrophile. Some of his victims are underage individuals, and he tries to have sexual intercourse with them even after they die. For example, after he kills his victim, whom he nicknames Big Guy, Quentin says:

BIG GUY lived maybe fifteen hours I think ... & I only comprehended he was dead when during the night waking. ... I felt how cold he was, arms & legs where I'd slung them over me & his head on my shoulder to cuddle but BIG GUY was stiffening in rigor mortis so I panicked thinking I would be locked in his embrace! (57)

Quentin looks for compassion in bodies that can be considered human only once upon a time. Yet, those bodies are cold and no longer functional, transformed into abject entities. They are, nonetheless, reflections of Quentin's own inhumanity.

Quentin's inhumanity is actually indirectly imputed to him by society's social hierarchies. Quentin, on one hand, seems to capitalize on the already existing social hierarchies. His choice of victims may testify to the fact that he takes advantage of his status as white male. Quentin's acquaintances believe that, if Quentin “had come up before a black judge, or a woman judge” he would have ended up receiving a terrible punishment after his first crime (87). Not only does his sexism and racism reveal a supercilious solidarity among white men but it also puts women (even white women) on the same scale as all other not-quite-humans. In fact, such a perspective is a direct product of social norms, and Quentin simply acquires this patriarchal perception inherited from one generation to the next. Quentin also responds to this social hierarchy with an alternative hierarchy. In it, he actually glorifies himself as a misanthrope; for instance, he sees animals more valuable—or at least less worthless—than humans. He knows he is perceived as equal to animals. He even has a “bumper sticker” on his car saying, “I BRAKE FOR ANIMALS” (5). However, he never voices such pro-human sentiments.

With his characteristics and violations of the dominant social and cultural norms, Quentin falls into the dominant culture's category of a complete not-quite-human. However, the real question concerns to what extent society, in which Quentin strives to exist, could be responsible for his monstrosity and share in this status?

2.2.2 The Not-Quite-Human's Exposure to Race and Racism

As Jerome Cohen indicates, monsters reflect the culture within which they appear. In other words, as intruders, monsters expose social hypocrisies that are always present but kept concealed deep inside. Oates's not-quite-human character, Quentin, functions as one of those monsters as a Gothic intruder: Not only does he commit atrocities himself, but he also indirectly reveals those committed by the community he intrudes upon. After all, no matter how much he is marginalized by his community, in reality, he is nonetheless, a product of that community.

One of the most prominent elements of evil encountered in society is definitely racism, and it surfaces repeatedly in Quentin's story. Yet, it is no wonder to see that racism—another dehumanization-related method Quentin has acquired—is already ingrained in the society he grew up in, though it is constantly denied and covered up. This can indirectly yet clearly be seen in Quentin's experiences throughout *Zombie*.

At the very beginning of the story, Quentin starts talking about his physical characteristics and ancestry, foreshadowing that one of the most fundamental issues his story touches upon will be about race. He says that his traceable ancestry, as far as he knows, consists solely of Caucasians (3). Quentin implies that belonging to the Caucasian race is an important criterion for his self-definition and survival, though, as previously mentioned, he repeatedly claims he is not a racist (8). Although he seems not to exhibit conscious and hostile racism, it is a fact that he undeniably has his inborn share of infrahumanization regarding race. As Pitts indicates, Quentin's "assimilation of the dominant culture's bigoted attitudes towards racial minority groups leads him to believe that his social inclusion depends on their subjugation, particularly through dehumanization and consumption" (2016: 2). Because Quentin's milieu has obviously indoctrinated him that it is acceptable to consider some groups of people non-human, he spends his own life accordingly, taking advantage of this situation when necessary.

However, from another point of view, one can also interpret Quentin's attitudes being solely misanthropic rather than racist, because, despite everything, eventually his murdered victims include a white person as well. In this context,

Quentin can be considered as a psychopath who has exploited the deeply-established racism of society until his last murder, in which he could not prevent his instincts to take complete control. Thus, for Quentin, the existing racist norms in society serve as facilitators to cover his tracks until he develops enough confidence and practice to expand his territory to include white people.

We can witness Quentin's implicit acquisition, reiteration, and exploitation of society's racist attitude many times and in multi-dimensional ways throughout the novel. For instance, squeezed into his information about the detention center is that the vast majority of its "inmates ... are black or Hispanic, [while few] white guys are put together in holding cells" (Oates, 1995: 8). This implies that some minorities in society are substantially perceived as innately crime-prone individuals or not-quite-humans who need to be fixed.

In *Zombie*, the discriminatory social codes surface inadvertently and repeatedly in daily conversations referring to race. When, for instance, Quentin is with Mr. T___, a white probation officer who comes to inspect him in his apartment building where he works as a caretaker, Mr. T___ finds it odd to see Quentin, a Caucasian person, serving minorities as a caretaker. Ensuing an interesting dialogue, he eventually says "*I don't mean anything by it, I've got lots of black friends. I'm speaking of history*" (131). Obviously, it is strange for some white people to see their fellow ethnic brothers *serving* those who supposedly *should* be doing such unskilled jobs in service industry. In a world of racial hierarchies where master-servant relationship reigns, skill is associated with the dominant side while incapacity is only attributed to the Others. However, despite receiving no criticism from Quentin, Mr. T___ feels urged to defend himself that he has black friends so that his conscience remains clean against any possible accusation of discrimination. After all, his is a blatant case of implicit racism because he voices a biased, established, and preconceived opinion of society which tends to perceive minorities as not-quite-humans. This behavior makes it clear that regardless of being consciously aversive or not to other races, racism persists, continuously reanimating predetermined and biased social codes. Mr. T___'s approach clearly exemplifies that any (Caucasian) person has the potential to act by these codes embedded in the genetics of society,

and in the light of these norms, s/he implicitly thinks himself/herself superior, eventually discriminating via inhumanizing against so-called not-quite-humans.

When Quentin talks about minorities, precisely the foreign university students living in his apartment, we see how he has internalized the negative stereotypical characteristics of Others. He says that they have “dusky skins & dark-bright eyes & dark hair that looks oiled. A smell of them like ripening plums” (12). He compares them with local students and highlights some of their supposedly-positive features such as being shy, tidy, polite, and faithful (164). However, these traits are not mentioned to praise foreign students but to show that they are utterly exploitable and manipulable. Thus, they are potentially vulnerable to ill-will. Through the course of the story, we witness that Quentin actually takes advantage of those traits, associating them with being obedient and submissive.

One can, however, understand that Quentin inherited this idea from his social environment, especially from his father, who, for instance, prefers to have foreign students rather than Americans as his tenants, because of their faithful and docile *nature* (12). To a certain extent, Quentin relates those traits with those of the obedient zombie he wants to create. But since he still wants to turn his minority-victims into real zombies, one can deduce that, *for him*, his victims, despite being labeled as not-quite-humans, apparently have some things zombies do not have: mind and compassion harmonized with freewill, in other words, uniquely human traits. This hybridity will complicate not only their status but also their relationship with Quentin.

The most threatening human trait his foreign tenants pose for Quentin is their free will. Even though they are already portrayed as faithful people when nothing disrupts their freewill, Quentin also recognizes that as actual humans, they would naturally protect themselves if they were attacked or their rights were violated. Therefore, by turning them into what he refers to as zombies, he intends to prevent these so-called not-quite-humans from lawfully and instinctually resisting so that they would do whatsoever Quentin wants them to do. In this context, zombies represent the lowest form of not-quite-humanness, lower than those who might be, in society, perceived as usual not-quite-humans such as minorities.

The reasons why Quentin picks minorities as his experimental subjects are obvious. Dominant social tendency determines Quentin's experimental subject pool to encompass primarily those vilified not-quite-humans because their hierarchically lower position makes his mission faster to be achieved, granting him certain advantages. Quentin, therefore, finds it easier to *enslave* those socially exploitable and unnoticeable people who can be lured with little effort and with limited social resistance. Thus, he guarantees a legally undetectable condition for his crimes. To sum up, social norms enable Quentin to dehumanize Others as conveniently as possible, without any suspicion or condemnation.

Mt. Vernon, the town where Quentin lives is another parameter in the novel, where continuing social hierarchical structures can be observed. The town is portrayed as an epitome of the United States where the laws and codes covertly favor the white male majority. It functions like a closed society, based apparently on the brotherhood of white men, which resists outside effects that could alter its main principles and fundamentals. For instance, when talking about Mt. Vernon, Quentin says that people at influential positions in Mt. Vernon know each other pretty closely, implying that these people—in this case Professor P__ and Judge L__—are ready to have each other's back when needed. They probably even “belong to the same club or clubs” (21), seeing each other very often. Somehow, with an irrational urge to preserve its prevalent social norms, society finds these power-holders reliable due to their respectable hierarchical positions. Thus, people believe that Judge L__ is a fair person and “not to be pushed around by special-interest groups” (21), that his decisions are never unfair while evidence to the contrary exist. For example, in order to protect Professor P__ from losing his reputation because of his son, Quentin receives a suspended sentence for his first known crime although it was punishable by a worse punishment. This decision, however, is taken not to save the not-quite-human character Quentin, but to maintain the judge's allegiance to white male brotherhood he shares with Professor P__. In other words, the violation of human rights proves to be less important than the loss of reputation of the privileged leading actors of society.

Since Quentin gets no punishment after all, the only one that suffers in this case is Quentin's victim, an African American teenager boy. Obviously, the boy

neither has any social status that could protect him nor knows anyone from the higher ranks of society. His case is treated unfairly because of Judge L___'s implicit vindication of Quentin. Eventually, simply for just being an African American and unwittingly entering the Caucasian manipulator's realm as his subject, this person becomes perceived as an intruder disrupting the order of the brotherhood. Consequently, this brotherhood tries to suppress the vilified 'violator' *sub rosa* for the sake of its stability. In essence, the intruder or the violator eventually uncovers the concealed atrocities of the suppressor. Apparently, this is the case not only for Quentin himself, but also for his not-quite-human victims. In this specific context above, for example, on behalf of every not-quite-human character, Quentin is only instrumental for the surfacing of social bias and discrimination, a condition we can see repeatedly in the story.

Racial stereotypes that prevail in society reflect complexes and social deficiencies. For instance, when Quentin depicts his desired prospective victims he wants to zombify, he especially underlines their expected physical features. Apart from being healthy, he wants his zombies to have remarkably big sexual organs (28). The majority of Quentin's victims are African Americans, who are stereotypically thought to possess superior male virility. There is reason to believe that their supposed phallic superiority probably expresses the sexual insecurity of those like Quentin who produce such stereotypes rather than a real biological difference between white and African men. Thus, Quentin is subjected to the white male's stereotypical sexual inadequacy against the virile African man. If this is the case, then his violence then can be taken as a radical protest against the inborn qualities granted to African Americans by nature because they *insultingly* violate the cultural hierarchical codes. Borrowing from the inherited Western mindset, Quentin camouflages this feeling of bodily inadequacy and inferiority by occasionally and impulsively foregrounding his mind, which is a white male prerogative. For example, in a monologue, when he thinks about the little African American child he molested, he belittles this boy by depicting him as "*black & retarded*" (46). In contrast, when he analyzes Squirrel, his last and only Caucasian victim, he describes him as "smart" (113), a glorifying adjective he never used for any of his other victims. While this somewhat isolated attitude does not necessarily mean *he* perceives *all* African

Americans this way, when he perceives them as such he relies upon the general social tendency to do so. Thus, behind his thought that minorities can be lured and manipulated with less mental effort lies their mentally inferior perception in society. Yet this is nothing other than the (white) ingroup's prejudices and delusions as to their superiority. Since enslaving privileged members takes a lot more time, courage, and effort, Squirrel dominates half Quentin's anecdotes. He may be less robust than Quentin's other victims, but Quentin perceives him as a serious mental challenge. In Quentin's society, the fittest that survive are not the physically stronger people but those that have mental superiorities. In other words, nature's physically privileged products are no longer perceived as the masters since people live in civilization, not wilderness. In this struggle for life, the victor becomes the ruler determining the codes of its particular culture while disguising and/or denying its own position as the beast (oppressor) by vilifying the subordinate ones as beastly.

The ultimate term Quentin uses to define the molested African American child is "*natural zombie*" (46), describing a condition of a child's not yet fully developed mental capacity coupled with Africans' beastlike racial profile. In this way, he makes it clear that in order to be *qualified* as a complete zombie, one needs to be lacking some socially adequate and/or desired qualities not only physically, but also mentally. In other words, if a person from a racial minority group is considered to lack *all* the socially coveted features, he becomes automatically identified as an inherent zombie. That is why, for Quentin, some people of minorities are *natural* zombies while still living. In other words, some minorities do not need to be lobotomized in order to be turned into zombies.

In short, from the very beginning, the racial minorities in American society, whether they are corporeally robust or not, are considered physically imperfect for not fitting into the dominant racial profile. Especially in *Zombie*, it is implied that it is common in society to dehumanize African Americans through denigrating their fragile social status and so-called intellectual capacity. Ultimately, this leads to their easy exploitation as abjects. In fact, this entire approach can be considered as a reference to the historical reality of American slavery, motivated by the same hierarchical thinking. Inheriting this historically defining but presently *unenacted tradition*, Quentin becomes utterly obsessed with enslaving his victims, that is,

limiting them mentally and corporeally. Thus, through Quentin's intrusion into society as a Gothic monster, the atrocities of the past haunt the present in another form. However, Quentin cannot revive even a personal interpretation of slavery of his own because his subjects die in the process without transforming into slaves. Therefore, thanks to Quentin, we are reminded that slavery is a dead practice that no one should attempt to resurrect forevermore and should only take its place in the dusty pages of history.

When Quentin names some people, he evokes yet another racist dehumanization in society, for he acts as if he has the rights of naming people whom he finds insignificant. Once again, what he does can be partially considered as another method that can be correlated to historical American slavery practices related to naming rights. His naming is based on simple observable qualities such as his victims' distinctive and stereotypical physical properties such as "BIG GUY" and "RAISINEYES" and sometimes on the insignificant objects they use such as "BUNNYGLOVES" (55). Ultimately, he makes the most remarkable nicknaming for his last African American victim and calls him "NO-NAME" (80). Quentin's naming of his prospective zombie-slaves is reminiscent of American slave owners' changing of the African names of their slaves with simple Western names that erased their identities, sometimes with derogatory ones such as domestic animal names, and sometimes with supposedly humorous ones, "names such as *Socrates or Plato*" to mock those "who were often considered lacking in intelligence" (Lopez, 2015: 164). Furthermore, the use of the name "NO-NAME" for an African American person is particularly striking because it seems to imply that such beings do not deserve to exist, are invisible, doomed to become zombies, and have actually NO-NAMES in society.

Such a naming ritual can as well be associated solely with Quentin's misanthropy and desire to remain anonymous, as with a tradition he inherited to be practiced upon *anyone* who must be enslaved, for he ultimately finds a nickname for his Caucasian victim, too. However, while choosing names for his victims, Quentin demonstrates his bias one more time. He calls his Caucasian victim SQUIRREL because he had "blond-brown-streaked hair" and he was "self-assured" and energetic (Oates, 1995: 100). Although this is an animal's name, he uses it to define something

positive, just like using the words bear, lion, or eagle to define power and/or royalty. When he compares other (non-victim) minorities around him with animals, however, he refers to animals with undesired qualities. For example, he describes a Hindu person called Akhil as “Monkey-like” (65). Upon meeting Squirrel, he says, compared to him, he forgot all about “dark-haired dark-skinned specimens” (101).

As a matter of fact, Quentin sufficiently summarizes the default exclusion of minorities from society with one sentence at the very beginning of the story: Like them, he is a person “nobody gives a shit for” (28). We can see that these Others in society are not just limited to racial minorities. Women and people with special needs are also considered as Others. As we learn through Quentin’s monologues and dialogues, all those people that can be described as Other, in other words, not-quite-humans, are somehow *instinctively* considered as intruders and excluded by society as if they are doomed. For instance, while Quentin drives back home, he says that the female members of his family sitting in the backseat keep talking nonstop. When they tell something to him, however, he completely disregards them, because, he says, “I wasn’t listening the way you don’t listen to females mostly” (90). He makes it obvious that in society there is a routine and conventional *way* to treat females that nobody finds unusual. He learned from his milieu that women are inherently less valuable and not at all to be taken seriously. Towards the end of the story, we also see that even possibly some physically, mentally, or morally “deficient” Caucasian males are considered as undesired individuals in society. When the news about the horrible experiments of Dr. K___ spread after his death, all the media shows how disgusting it is to make radiation experiments on people such as mentally retarded children and prisoners, among them white males. However, Quentin laughs at this twofaced approach in the media and questions “why people pretended to” care about this news since nobody would normally care about such not-quite-humans (171). Quentin apparently knows his society’s hypocritical standards pretty well because he has imbibed the social codes constantly imposed on him since his birth.

Due to his awkwardness, however, Quentin himself is also treated like an unwanted entity, even before his last crime. He shares with his non-white victims the predicament of being insignificant and invisible. For instance, as Quentin abusively stalks his Caucasian prey, he encounters such an attitude from him. He expects to

arouse his victim's attention for once, but his victim, apparently like any other *faultless* Caucasian person would, does not even notice Quentin at all (125-126). Although this incident may be attributed to a general indifference in society, in the context of fiction, it can be regarded as a symbolic indication of the not-quite-human's automatic exclusion from society because not only does Quentin complain about people around him being constantly cheerful and social at times, but he also emphasizes that he is lonely. Since Quentin is a socially awkward person prone to crime and constant abuse, the disinterested attitude he receives from outside implies his lower hierarchical position.

2.3. MONSTER: GIVING SOCIETY A TASTE OF ITS OWN MEDICINE

Oates's novel eventually confronts us with a critique of hypocritical value systems. Towards the end of the story, Quentin sets out to disturb the white majority by violating their most sacred code: that is, threatening their peace and security through committing a crime against them. He makes society feel insecure the way his minority victims feel among white people. Gradually his initial monstrosity grows to such a scale that he eventually becomes a bloodthirsty murderer and norm-violating entity rather than just a simple and adequately harmless and "degenerate" homosexual. Eventually, society feels terrorized unlike they had when minorities were being murdered. In other words, Quentin eventually makes society suffer from the very terror which it had allowed to be practiced on its outcasts. As a medium, he reveals that society's own value judgments are full of hypocrisy, prejudice, and bigotry.

Quentin manages to reveal social hypocrisy because he could take advantage of social norms, but some factors later caused him to lose this advantage. In order to understand how Quentin turned into what he is, one must first understand what caused Quentin roam freely as a murderer and what ended such position. Therefore, first, it is crucial to understand the social conjuncture that enabled him to commit murders. Secondly, one must analyze what caused him to succumb to his instincts of violence, a process that accelerated until his murder of a white person. It would seem

that the accumulation of such incidents and experiences result in Quentin's turning into a threat for the entire society.

2.3.1. Society's Blind Spot: The Unexpected Monster in Plain Sight

Before murdering a white person, Quentin was already a murderer, and as such, one expects that the judicial system should catch him and prevent him from committing more murders before a white man is killed. The question, then is how he can, though a not-quite-human himself, still roam freely and murder people by receiving no punishment.

Quentin is indeed—at least remotely—regarded as an abject and as a not-quite-human, because he is not only a sociopath prone to violence but also a queer to begin with. In Quentin's case, however, such “deviant” qualities are not easy to be spotted, for they are not visible like race or bodily disabilities. One must involve in a sort of interaction with Quentin, or at least become exposed to his presence for quite a while, in order to catch a glimpse of his queerness and sociopathic personality. On the façade, however, he is a white male with no imperfections. Therefore, he does not automatically become labeled as an outcast through his appearance. In fact, he *visually* represents white majority, and this enables him to hide behind such privilege as long as he succeeds in concealing his socially “deviant” qualities. The fact remains that Quentin does not violate the boundaries of white people's safe zone, nor does he reveal his *deviant* tendencies frequently in public. Quentin is basically avoided because of his antisocial behavior often taken to be harmless shyness; therefore, thanks to his racial profile, his earlier murders are covered up and tolerated until he violates the norm-setting white majority's order. Therefore, despite his crimes, society tolerates Quentin, remains silent on the massacre of minorities, and thus indirectly supports these atrocities by simply not preventing his actions. All in all, hiding behind society's only *seemingly* condemned racism, Quentin remains tolerated as long as he massacres people of minorities. Thus, annihilation of outcasts proves to be an utterly insignificant act, secretly encouraged by social norms.

Quentin's violence and queerness do not befit the *dignity* and role of a rational Caucasian person since in Western world, any sexual transgressions and

other violations of social norms and customs would be defined as irrational. Therefore, Quentin, as a sociopath queer, is from the beginning an irrational entity in his society. But, for reasons that will be delineated in the following section, he remains *tolerated* because such aberrant acts do not violate the *ultimate* social norm that designates white males as untouchable. However, once he violates this norm, he dramatically becomes an *ultimately* irrational not-quite-human. His irrationality surfaces on different levels. Unlike a rational citizen, he disobeys the unwritten laws that regulate the inviolableness of the dominant group. Therefore, he acts like a lunatic looking for trouble, or an animal with no reasoning capacity, or a mentally-weak or degenerate being carried away by his/her instincts, for he discomforts those privileged people. His emotional weakness to succumb to his instincts in the end results in the ultimate violation of social norms: murdering a Caucasian person. After this incident, he becomes automatically registered as a *completely* unqualified not-quite-human and falls forever into an irreversible doomed position. Otherwise, if he behaved *rationally*, he would be able to resist the temptation posed by the white boy and consequently could secretly continue to commit his crimes against non-white foreigners. In short, Quentin's society could absorb crimes against non-white people while it deems them irrational when they are directed at white males.

This biased and bigoted attitude of remaining silent when one is not on the receiving end of something unpleasant is indeed a common practice. There are many examples of threats being considered real only when they affect the people in dominant and privileged positions. For example, while people suffering from poverty, hunger, or endless *man-made* wars all over the world fall outside the radars of the opinion leaders and powerful rich people in *civilized and secure* countries, they donate record-breaking billions of dollars to literally *end* the COVID-19 outbreak as we speak because it does not distinguish between rich and poor, civilized and uncivilized, secure and insecure; meaning that *they* are also at risk of death. Likewise, although murders of minority people do not make the headlines while they are brutally killed by Quentin and maybe hundreds of others, Quentin becomes a threat only after his violence reaches beyond the pale of non-whites to whites.

The point of view that emerges from Quentin's massacre of minorities is that the troubles among the abjected are not seen as important matters in society. It is

obvious that in Quentin's case, except for his final murder, both the murderer and the murdered ones are outcasts. Yet the disappearance of minorities does not even receive any attention. Additionally, by taking no action against it, society might be secretly allowing Quentin to lessen the number of outcasts living among them, which is something they cannot, but might want to, do publicly. In that regard, society deliberately condones the vanishing of objects through massacre, and Quentin becomes their proxy operator.

2.3.2. Out of the Shadows: Monstrosity Revealed

What triggered Quentin to kill a white person constitutes another layer of Quentin's ultimate descent into monstrosity. Unlike one would expect from a rational white man, Quentin ceases to control his impulses and not-quite-human tendencies and eventually surrenders to his subhuman instincts. As a result, he sexually harasses and murders a white boy. Thus, from a *harmless* queer character with *harmless-but-violent* tendencies, he transforms into a bloodthirsty monster. But the process that brings Quentin to this end seems to be the haunting of his childhood experiences, which, from time to time, obsessively flash through his mind, foreshadowing his emotional weakness.

One must go all the way back to Quentin's childhood in order to understand what kind of an obsession he experiences. Quentin gives signals to the reader about his early childhood being quite traumatic, and we learn that he lost his friend Barry after a pool accident when he was just going to seventh grade (Oates, 1995: 100). Quentin obsessively mentions Barry in various chapters, making us suspect that it is he who caused Barry to die. Even if he was innocent in Barry's incident, there is no question about Quentin liking Barry in a sexual way. He literally keeps Barry's "grimy sock" to "fondle" it at nights, along with a few more items (100). Not only is this behavior unusual but it also connects the young Quentin's seemingly harmless obsession with the adult Quentin's trophy keeping after his murders. This obsession is apparently a fetishist, extreme, and unusual one, revealing to us Quentin's sexual orientation as well as his absurd fantasies. After his friend Barry's death, Quentin becomes traumatized, either for losing him as his *dear* friend, or, more likely, for not

being able to harass him as he pleases anymore. Either way, this trauma turns Barry into a real obsession for Quentin, whose sexual hunger for him might be what drives him to murdering a white boy in the end.

Obviously, Quentin was attracted by this Caucasian boy only when he was a child. Yet the timing of this attraction, childhood period, is of great importance since it is when the individual is mostly unaware of social norms and is not yet at the age to be held criminally responsible. However, Barry remains in Quentin's memory as an obsession, an archetypal and ideal image of a person to sexually abuse. When Quentin reaches maturity, clearly, he becomes aware of social expectations in his milieu and initially keeps himself away from harassing and murdering Caucasian people.

Later however, he comes across almost a Barry's carbon-copy whom he names Squirrel. After Squirrel stands in front of him for the first time, Quentin becomes stumped, relapses into his days of obsession with Barry. Eventually, Quentin cannot think clearly since his nostalgia takes the better of him and he helplessly follows his instincts. In other words, from then on, he starts to act as a *weak* creature, succumbing to his instincts, and a subhuman, who cannot use his brain properly despite knowing that his victim should not be "Anyone with a family to care about him, Caucasian & suburban & living in" his town (93).

Consequently, Quentin insists on his own *mindless* plan, which is like turkeys voting for Christmas. Even before he kills Squirrel, Quentin knows that the Squirrel's disappearance will be noticed because he is a Caucasian child, "not a black or a mixed breed," and for this reason, the police will be alarmed (109). However, he takes it as a challenge since he says "For never in the past not once to my knowledge had any cops anywhere known of my specimens' disappearance, let alone searched for them. & so this would be different" (109). By saying this, not only does he reveal the hypocrisy in society, but he also announces his readiness to take the ultimate challenge society poses to him. In a way, he stops following the safe way and falls away from reason in order to pursue his passionate and impossible desire: getting back to Barry via Squirrel. Thus, when he is carried away with his sexual drives, he automatically proclaims his status as a deviant not-quite-human.

The flow of the story changes after Quentin kills his Caucasian victim, Squirrel. From society's perspective, this act is carried out against it and it is society as a whole that is taken to be the victim of a monster to whom it had earlier hypocritically turned a blind eye. Unlike in the case of Quentin's earlier victims, the disappearance of Squirrel sets the agenda in the entire media (175). Everybody notices his disappearance, and people start campaigns to find him alive. Yet the last chapter of the story gives us some clues about what happens at the end. It consists of only one sentence of Quentin saying: "Mom called & left a message & the answering tape screwed up & erased most of it. Asking would I come for Christmas dinner probably" (181). The unusual thing is that as someone with a very limited social circle, Quentin gets a lot of messages from someone or some people on his phone, exceeding the limit of recordable memory. After this message, the story comes to an end. It is obviously some worried people trying to get to Quentin as soon as possible, and the only worrisome thing we think will cause Quentin any trouble is what he has done with Squirrel. Therefore, this ending most likely implies that the police already found the evidence for the case of Squirrel, and Quentin is apparently suspected. The author implies a future when, encircled by the police, Quentin awaits his detention, his complete removal from the social sphere, unless he finds an almost impossible way to escape.

In conclusion, Quentin's Gothic story tells us much about bigotry and monstrosity. Quentin makes us realize that if society nurtures bigoted monstrosity, all of that will consequently return to it. Clearly, the subjects who boomerang such bigotry comes from within society, but from among its outcasts and abjects. Therefore, the more abjects society produces and the more discriminatory policies it adopts, the more self-destructive it becomes. In a way, society's bigotry lies behind all monstrosities including Quentin's. It is possible to see him as an extremely absorbent figure who inadvertently becomes aware of, internalizes and takes advantage of society's prejudices. Although his monstrosity is undeniable, the monstrosity of the society in which he lives far supersedes his. In that regard, the story makes it clear that the monstrosity appears in this story in at least two-dimensional way. Firstly, it is a fact that Quentin alone is a deviant character, an subhuman, a murderer and a Gothic monster who exploits the unwritten

discriminatory social norms in society via his actions, even though he also suffers from them eventually. Secondly, and most importantly, Quentin becomes only a medium to reveal the concealed discrimination and bigotry in society which are at least theoretically condemned in any contemporary setting. He takes advantage of society's deeply rooted discrimination against what it has designated as monstrous bodies. By freely killing people of minorities, he shows us that some people in society are secretly perceived as abjects, and constitute the blind spots in society. With his final murder, however, he brings the invisible into sharp relief, making the white patriarchal society display its hypocrisy. Therefore, Quentin's position in the story plays an active Gothic role in indirectly manifesting radically and socially sensitive aspects and their critiques. In this context, Quentin shows us that he was not the *only* monster in his own story of monstrosity.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SCAPEGOAT NOT-QUITE-HUMAN: THE VILIFIED MONSTER & SOCIETY: BURTON'S *EDWARD SCISSORHANDS*

With the emergence and rise of goth subculture since the 1980s onwards, we come across so many written, visual, audio, and audiovisual postmodern Gothic art works. On the one hand, goth-rock bands like Bauhaus and The Cure pioneered a new type of dark sound in music industry. On the other hand, authors like Anne Rice, Joyce Carol Oates, Poppy Brite, and many more produced abundances of books in postmodern Gothic literature introducing new types of roaming vampires, anthropomorphic monsters, and recurring social transgressions, which confront their readers with their deepest fears. However, probably the most well-known and mainstream pieces of Gothic art appeared in the movies of postmodern period. Many directors, such as Roman Polanski and Francis Ford Coppola did film adaptations of notable literary works of the Gothic such as *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *Dracula* (1992) respectively. With their unique interpretations, they reminded us of the timelessness of being haunted. The silver screen also witnessed the making of original screenplays with Gothic and grotesque elements such as gloomy atmospheres, introducing alternative types of monsters and bringing criticism to modern social issues. Different directors and screenwriters contribute to this tradition as we speak. Among all the directors, however, regarding postmodern movie industry up to the hilt, Tim Burton stands out with his extremely authentic style referred to as Burtonesque “which captures the dark, unconventional, and eccentric aesthetics that characterize his films” (Stephanou, 2012: 99).

Burton is commonly known for his “gothic, whimsical, eerie, strange, haunting [imagery] ... bursting with detail” (Nathan, 2016: 6). Accordingly, the design, setting, and atmosphere in his movies are so Burtonesquely unique that a careful eye watching any scene from his films could tell that the director of that movie is Burton. Burton himself is aware of this phenomenon since he says, “I don’t think anybody can see any of my films and not know immediately that it’s mine” (qtd. in Tirard, 2002: 95).

Burton directed so many movie adaptations of famous literary pieces, such as *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street* (2007), *Alice in Wonderland* (2010), and *Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children* (2016), to name a few. In almost every attempt, he blended the original source and his imaginative interpretation together with a flavor of Gothic insight. In addition, he also wrote and directed many screenplays for short animations like *Stalk of the Celery Monster* (1979) and *Vincent* (1982). There are, however, only two full length movies he directed and co-wrote at once: *Edward Scissorhands* (1990) and *Frankenweenie* (2012). Especially his masterpiece *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), which he wrote together with Caroline Thompson, stands out as one of the most significant cult movies of the Gothic.

His movies, however, do not necessarily have *conventional* Gothic features in them. For instance, the lack of horror elements one would expect from a traditional Gothic movie can be noticed immediately, as Burton rather gravitates to dark humor and sarcasm. Nevertheless, in so many of his movies, the framework and plot reflect characteristics of Gothic novels as in the criticism they bring onto social issues. He usually does that via a whimsy character he injects into the ordinary.

Weinstock describes the Gothic impression in Burton's movies as "Gothic Lite" since the Burtonesque does not always trigger a conventionally apprehensive Gothic mode. According to him, in his lite version of the Gothic, Burton utilizes "two interconnected modes of storytelling: Gothic nostalgia, on the one hand, and Gothic irony, on the other" (2013: 26). Perhaps *Edward Scissorhands* sets the best example for this definition. The movie can be analyzed in its entirety as a complete irony due to the feature of a *benevolent monster* who tragically falls from being a hero to being vilified as a villain. On the other hand, the movie is nostalgic since "Burton's gothic films are nostalgic references to the uncanny through the mediating lens of the horror genre's earlier films" (Asma, 2009: 193), and *Edward Scissorhands* in particular can be considered as a Burtonesque take on Frankenstein classic. The movie puts a spotlight on Edward, showing him as a doomed and misunderstood monster like the monster in *Frankenstein*. This resemblance, however, indirectly indicates the ironic persistence of such misunderstandings that could not be resolved in the past. Edward is one of the most intriguing monsters

appearing in Burton's movies. He looks like a rebellious goth teenager from the late 1980s while he is indeed a warmhearted humanlike creature having no ill will. As unexpected from a monster, he uses his scary scissor hands for creating topiaries in his own mansion, instead of bringing deliberate destruction and agony with them. He is, nonetheless, a vilified monster with a ridiculously ironic story of monstrosity.

Edward Scissorhands begins in the present time on a snowy day with a little girl wanting her grandma to tell her about why it snows. To fulfill her granddaughter's request, the grandma starts telling a story and the viewers are taken back in time through a flashback framing the entire story of Edward. Grandma's story introduces Edward as a man with hands shaped like scissors given to him by a scientist who brought together a variety of materials to create a human. Upon the death of his inventor, Edward starts residing alone in his isolated mansion on a hill where he lives his entire life. After a while he gets discovered by a woman named Peg who takes him into suburbia for the first time. Edward's injection into the social domain, however, indirectly triggers many buried fears and anxieties in society. At first, due to his exploitable nature, society *seems to* like Edward despite his difference, but after a while his good will is so unconscionably exploited that he is tricked into an unintentional crime by a group of rebellious teenagers. Eventually, he becomes the ultimate scapegoat as he starts to be blamed for every bad incident taking place. Eventually, he becomes expelled from society upon being vilified a monster, while in fact it was the society itself that was monstrous with its bias and hypocrisy. He indirectly becomes accused of violating the harmony and homogeneity of society, and his difference proves to be the reason behind his vulnerability. Finally, he goes back to his mansion, and there he starts shaping ice cubes with his hands, making snow fall every year on the neighborhood, whereby not only does he metaphorically purify it, but he also reminds people of his presence. In short, while the movie superficially highlights teenage angst and alienation in the foreground, it in fact touches upon serious societal critiques in the background.

Edward's intrusion into the American neighborhood, in that sense, provides a mirror for society, as it reveals its arbitrarily vicious perception of Others, for the viewers to see. Yet, unable to see its reflection on this mirror, society acts as if it is above reproach. Although they fail to change society's own depravities, monsters

such as that of Frankenstein's and Edward do, however, ironically unite people for prospective and solidified social monstrosity.

In this chapter, the indirect social critique in the Gothic movie *Edward Scissorhands* will be the focal point of analysis. It is clear that in the movie, the social critique is rendered through the intrusion of the perplexing character Edward, who destroys the preset categories in people's minds via his hybrid existence. In other words, exposed to Edward's partly mechanic, partly human (yet extremely humane) presence, people have trouble understanding and reflecting on the limits of humanness. Thus, due to his hybridity, people eventually end up perceiving Edward as an abject, which makes him susceptible to vilification. First and foremost, therefore, it is important to understand what kind of an Other Edward is, what he signifies as a Gothic monster, what causes him to be perceived this way, and how the monster is remembered when everything is gone.

3.1. BORDERS OF HUMANITY: AN ANDROID OR A CYBORG?

Edward, as a vilified monster, is some sort of a humanlike figure. Being partly human grants him a *chance* to live among humans like one of them in their social space. However, since, as a being, he is at the same time located distantly from humans, he is treated differently and with caution. The biggest reason for such treatment is his appearance. He has some strange look, messy hair, cuts on his face, extremely pale skin, reddish eyelids, almost no social skills, and most obviously, scissors for hands, which causes him to be considered like someone with disability in the sphere of normal and healthy humans. Yet, just as his other unusual physical characteristics can be seen in normal humans, having scissors for hands could just be perceived as a quality absent in humans, granting Edward authenticity. Nevertheless, he is evidently best defined as a not-quite-human since not only does he have undeniably much humanlike features, but he also has some nonhuman ones that cause him to be categorized as an Other, a threat, an intruder, a violator, a reminder of deterioration and/or a monster.

According to Decker, Burton's movies usually tend to focus on "marginalized characters defined as subhuman or socially useless" (2014: 144). Edward seems to be

dragged into the subhuman position. Since the primary meaning of subhuman, as previously discussed, is being a morally corrupt character, then we can say that Edward, as a benevolent humanlike character, does not possess the qualities of a subhuman by default. However, through verbal dehumanization he is treated by people as if he is an actual subhuman. Therefore, he *eventually becomes* perceived as a dysfunctional and morally degenerate character. Being socially useless, Edward is in a strange condition: initially he seems to be useful in society since he becomes exploited for his free services such as doing topiary or giving a haircut with his scissor hands. However, he has no value in social communications since he neither has social awareness nor anything at stake in society. For this reason, he is definitely shunned for being socially awkward.

Moreover, since he is a not-quite-human figure who triggers “a general anxiety about the nature of human identity” (Hurley, 1996: 5) because of his hybrid corporeal otherness, Edward has much in common with what Kelly Hurley calls abhuman,¹⁰ without visible morphic variability. In the movie, for instance, people, at first, tend to approach Edward with caution due to his awkward nonhuman features and deviant appearance until seeing his *benevolent* humanlike nature. Besides, his body is *almost* identical to that of a human being. In that regard, perceiving Edward as both human and nonhuman, people falter about his identity as they both see and do not see their own reflections in Edward. He can, then, be considered as an abhuman, “some undefinable ‘thing’ that is mimicking the human, appropriating the human form” (Punter and Byron, 2004: 41), even though this definition includes the less specific aspect of abhumanness.

Another aspect of abhumanness involves behavioral degenerateness and less-than-humanness. In the case of Edward, we witness that he *behaviorally* transforms from non-violent benevolence to violent benevolence towards the end of the movie. Thus, his violence, his ultimate madness and resort to aggression may be a sign of his further moving away from being human towards being animal. Therefore, in this instance, he possesses characteristics of a kind of abhuman. However, this happens for an extremely limited time and does not reflect Edward’s temperament at all. The source of his aggression does not lie beneath his own motivation to destroy, either.

¹⁰ One must consider that the term abhuman has a broad meaning and is extremely interpretable.

On the contrary, he cannot comprehend the malicious intentions of mankind who label him as evil, but it is interacting with humans and being subjected to their labels for a long time that makes him go crazy.

In addition to that aggression, at the end of the movie, Edward kills a teenager named Jim, who is the ex-boyfriend of Kim, the girl Edward admires (Burton, 1990, 1:37:05). This action can be considered as self-defense because Jim is the one who walks into Edward's mansion without any permission in order to kill him with a gun in his hand. Moreover, it is when Jim tries to attack Kim, hurting her severely, that Edward heroically interferes in order to save Kim. Consequently, even though it is an observable and undesired behavioral shift, Edward's aggression transpires ephemerally. Therefore, calling him a behaviorally corrupt character, in this case, would be a far-fetched interpretation. Expectably, Edward goes back to his normal mental state eventually.

On the other hand, Edward can as well be interpreted as an entity who has some dominant beyond-human features. For example, one can say that he can technically be considered immortal. Besides, he does not get old and apparently does not (need to) cook and eat when he lives alone. Additionally, he has some mechanical parts making up his anthropomorphic corpus. Therefore, he is a mixture of a robot and a human, rather than an animal and a human, the condition of which would grant the hybrid figure visually and behaviorally less-than-human features, that is, a more traditional and common view of abhumanness. Because he is certainly not a traditional abhuman figure like a zombie or a shapeshifting lycanthrope, Edward's peculiarity (or, in other words, monstrosity/not-quite-humanness) can be more precisely conceptualized as some sort of futuristic humanlike figure such as cyborg or android.¹¹

What kind of not-quite-human is Edward, after all? The movie gives us some clues about his being composed of organic and non-organic parts. The most suggestive sequence about the creation of Edward is revealed through a flashback. While carefully watching a can opener in action, Edward goes back in time to his early prototype stage, and he remembers how his inventor comes up with the idea of

¹¹ One can choose to consider the term abhuman as a superordinate term for all not-quite-humans by referring to its broad and interpretable lexical meaning. In that regard, the word abhuman would still be valid to define Edward, and cyborg / android would be its subbranches.

giving him a heart (Burton, 1990, 0:33:28). The can opener here triggers nostalgia for Edward, implying that simple household gadgets evoke a feeling of belonging in him because the mechanical constitutes at least his partial nature or essence of his existence. During this flashback the viewers also see that Edward has some organic constituents within. He further visualizes his inventor standing by “the assembly line ... which opens cans of pink paint, breaks eggs, mixes batter, rolls dough, and eventually produces a heart-shaped cookie” (Markley, 2007: 277). The inventor smiles and holds that cookie on the tin torso that is probably designed to be used as a part of Edward. His action, then, possibly implies bringing his creature into life with a heart made up of organic elements. The movie renders this so Burtonesque that the artificial cookie heart is presented as if it is something very mundane, functional, and normal. During this entire process, the viewers eventually witness Edward’s partly organic and partly mechanic design. By all means, it is clear that “Edward is a being cooked up from spare parts, cumbersome or outmoded technologies, and strange recipes” (277).

Nonetheless, having a heart is apparently a crucial moment for the creation of Edward because it makes him not-quite-machine, moving him closer to humanness. It means that, unlike ordinary androids one would imagine, Edward is not controlled solely by his (presumably) mechanical mind. His semi-organic heart, obviously, enables him to *feel* the way humans do. Yet, Edward mimics humans so perfectly in every aspect that his heart can just be a human heart and the cookie could only signify its fragility, at the same time making it a source of inspiration for the inventor. In that regard, could he be perceived as a type of cyborg?

In order to be considered a cyborg in its broadest literal meaning, one needs to be essentially a human. Traditionally, inorganic and mechanical extensions or gadgets integrated to the corpus of a *human* make him/her a cyborg. Therefore, cyborgs must be able to show uniquely human emotions. If the essence of being a human is defined through exhibiting various feelings, then Edward, despite having a (mainly) mechanical anthropomorphized *body*, can be substantially and primarily perceived as a human because he portrays both primary and secondary emotions of humanness indicated by Castano and Giner-Sorolla (2006: 805). To be more precise, not only does Edward have common emotions like anger and fear, but he also shows

“uniquely human” (secondary) ones such as love and guilt. Unless he is an extremely advanced android flawlessly mimicking such human behaviors, he seems to fit into the category of (cyborgian) human rather than android. In that case, the semi-organic *cookie heart* becomes the root of Edward’s essence, and his mechanically constructed body just becomes a misleading façade of his heart, a medium for his corporeal existence. In other words, he is an entity built upon his heart, which signifies his human and humane essence.

There is not enough information about Edward’s creation process; therefore, the viewers can only predict whether he is a type of android or a cyborg-like creature upon watching and interpreting small and undetailed cutscenes in the movie since the amount of alchemy, magic, or science involved in the process cannot be determined; there could even be another background story one could never imagine. Since being android has more to do with the corporeal formation than behavioral attitude, Edward can be considered as an artificial human, a sort of humanoid or a unique and impossibly advanced android programmed to imitate organic reactions. Additionally, he could just be a product of alchemy, a type of human-size homunculus¹² who is later clothed with mechanical parts; or an upgraded and semi-organic golem or automaton. Likewise, he could be an outcome of a dark experiment, a cyborg with consciousness, cut and disassembled into organs and veins, then *magically* compressed into a body with partially inorganic substances. All things considered, possibilities to decide on his category of existence are countless, and a lot of imaginative ideas about his creation can be suggested. However, what is certain about his existence is that he is partly human and partly machine, and he is neither human nor machine; he is a not-quite-human.

Naturally, scholars offer various definitions to define Edward, and none of these definitions would be considered wrong as long as they are based upon possible scenarios. But many agree that, for having both organic and non-organic substances composing his body, ontologically Edward seems to be more on the side of cyborgness especially if we consult Haraway’s figurative take on the cyborg, which is briefly described as an entity that is “a mixture of machine and organism” (1991:

¹² An artificial man, usually depicted as smaller than actual human size, created through mysterious ways of alchemy. Organic substances such as blood, manure, sperm, or plant roots may be used in its creation process (Lachman, 2006: 7-10).

150). Bellin, for instance, refers to Haraway's *Cyborg Manifesto* to define Edward, and indicates that he is a cyborg because not only is he "in the narrow sense of being a coming together of human being and machine but in the larger sense of being composed of 'contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes'" (2005: 185-186). Similarly, Church indicates that "constructed from mechanisms somewhere between man and machine, Edward represents a cyborg figure" (2006). For example, Edward's body can start bleeding (Burton, 1990: 00:20:37), and he has visible scars on his face (which were missing when he lived with the inventor), signaling that he is vulnerably organic despite having substantially a mechanical body. Moreover, in one of the design sketches of Edward, we can see a heart with veins connected to it, covering his entire body (00:38:36), but we do not know whether they were made, created, existed within, or transferred to him. Besides, he is capable of eating and drinking. The fact that he is not seen cooking and eating alone signals that rather than physical needs to satisfy hunger, cooking and eating are, for him, a family ritual. Therefore, he most likely can survive with or without eating at all, but he can practice the eating ritual, nonetheless. On top of these, Edward needs sleep like humans do, probably to save his energy. To sum up, Edward's body reacts essentially like a human's; thus, to a great extent he has cyborgian, rather than android-like qualities. At least, even if he would be considered something else than a cyborg, he has undoubtedly a cyborgian body.

Even if Edward is considered as an android, he would be a unique example of a robot that is not distinguishable from humans except for his hands. His androidness, moreover, would not necessarily grant him a complete non-human position since he is also behaviorally very much like a human, which makes him then an android who is initially humanized by his inventor in both body and mind. Whether he is an android or not, however, he ironically transforms into a not-quite-human when he is accused of possessing only partial or incomplete humanness. After all, upon being vilified for violating the social order in the end, he becomes dehumanized and otherized, which seems to be the fate of any not-quite-human in society.

Johnny Depp, the famous actor who played Edward in the movie *Edward Scissorhands*, defines Edward in an interview as follows: "Edward is not a human

being, he's not an android, he's not an alien" (Easton, 1990). Depp, the *closest* person to Edward, sees him as a hybrid, a cyborgian entity, simultaneously showing both human and non-human qualities. Ultimately, taking all these approaches into consideration, and especially by referring to Haraway's discussion on machine-human hybridity, it would be reasonable to call Edward a cyborg, a not-quite-human. Yet, what one may call him is persistently open to discussion.

In the movie, Edward's hybrid characteristics appear in many scenes. At the early stages of the movie, the storyteller grandma refers to Edward as an invented man living up in the mansion above the hill all by himself, for a very long time. She says that the inventor "gave him insides, a heart, a brain, everything" (Burton, 1990: 00:04:28). The brain, here, can *possibly* be a mechanical processor, a creation of complex neuroscience. If Edward were composed only of such a brain, he would be categorized as android, and he would never need a heart. Often at the expense of heart and emotions, the brain as the source of rational thought has become the focus of Western science, which itself has been built upon a predictable and mechanical universe. Yet his inventor gave Edward a heart from organic elements. Therefore, the heart takes Edward out of the realm of pure rationality, moving him towards being a creature of emotion. As partly machine and partly not-quite-machine, even a human, Edward balances rationality and emotion in his cyborgian existence. Moreover, making up his cyborgian body, Edward also has "insides," which are his veins and neurons, and gizmo parts. The narration of the grandma, in that sense, signals to a hybrid entity, partly organic and partly inorganic.

These cyborgian features of Edward, however, constitute an impediment to a balanced existence in human community, because once exposed to it, his hybridity turns into a very heavy burden for him, sealing his fate forevermore and trapping him in ultimate loneliness. In society, he becomes emotionally exhausted and overwhelmed because he is a hybrid whose tired and fragile semi-organic heart rots much faster than his body. Having an almost endless lifespan turns into being his curse because he cannot vanish like completely organic entities and must put up with eternal sorrow. Therefore, his corporeal immortality is not a reward. Even though his body, his gizmo parts, would survive, his heart will always remain broken for being vilified as a monster. It is because of this that an important part of his human side has

been taken away from him. Therefore, Kim asks him to get away from human community to ease his agony. He eventually listens to her and saves himself from the persecution he had faced in the human environment and continues living on his own.

Moreover, his inorganic parts, especially his hands, hinder Edward from enjoying his human side, too, because although they are indeed functional tools, they turn out to be a disadvantage under certain conditions. For instance, when Kim asks Edward to embrace her, overwhelmed with emotion, Edward simply answers, “I *can’t*” (01:24:14; emphasis added), and thus, we witness why his hands are utterly dysfunctional for certain emotional human interaction. For Edward, his incompleteness signals to the lack of touch, one of the human senses. Therefore, he cannot possibly fully experience the warmth of physical affection. Nonetheless, as an emotional creature, he is doomed and cannot transmit his emotions through his finger nerves to experience certain affectionate feelings such as touching. In other words, he is unable to feel with all his senses to their fullest.

Despite his incompleteness, however, Edward (probably with a humane intuitional urge) attempts to adapt to society at all costs. Upon getting into the community from the early stages of the story on, he tries to learn how to be a *complete* human by gaining new cognitive skills. He compensates for his lacking skills through experiencing daily life in society. He gets exposed to many things humans do and thus learns new mundane concepts and fundamental terms he had never known before. Not only does he learn relatively positive things like having a family dinner, companionship, partying, or shopping, but he also *bitterly* understands the meaning of lying, exploitation of kindness and helpfulness, blaming, death, etc. Before being exposed to social influence, for instance, death was nothing more than just a deep long sleep for Edward, but he eventually learns what it truly is, because he captures its context this time from a human’s perspective. However, he also sees that defining concepts is just an arbitrary thing in humans’ world, and despite being true, what he had known until then did not make much sense in these man-made truths. Being helpful, for instance, is essentially a positive behavior for Edward, and he always helps everyone without any exceptions. But after Jim takes advantage of Edward’s courtesy for his evil plans, Edward painfully learns that helpfulness is a weakness that can be exploited in human society. His nature is so benevolent that

coming across something immoral makes him falter. After all, being a good *person* was what he had learned from his inventor, but apparently its application in real world proved to be so misguided.

Edward's benevolent nature is not just related to his inventor's cognitive contribution. Edward's own intuitions and emotions also play a role in the constitution of his nature. The most important factor guiding his intuitions and emotions is his very fragile (and supposedly) *cookie* heart, signifying that he is not only *sweet*, but also, unfortunately, too sentimental. In other words, he is a benevolent, well-disposed, and good-natured creature, as well as an exploitable and emotionally vulnerable one. Therefore, Edward appears in the story as a fragile and continuously abused individual who tries to make everyone happy but can never achieve happiness himself. In that regard, being fragile—just like being helpful—becomes defined as a weakness among humans, which could lead people into loneliness, doom, and despair, like Edward.

In connection with his intuitive faculties, Edward's emotional decisions and behaviors transpire in a significant way during his social adaptation (or becoming a complete human) process. He primarily goes through a ritual of being welcomed into humanness so that he becomes acknowledged and can act accordingly. As soon as he arrives in the house of the Boggs family, Peg offers him some common clothes to put on to make him look more like a member of society (00:18:55). Right after wearing a human outfit, he assumes the form of a complete human and supposedly becomes a part of the community. Since Edward, to a great measure, is corporeally fit for human interaction, just a simple action like wearing clothes gives him a license for socializing. Then, he finds himself room to socialize by displaying his already-human traits. Furthermore, he falls in love with Kim, Peg's daughter, upon seeing her picture. This uniquely human emotion makes it clear that Edward is behaviorally nothing less than human, as well. Moreover, just like some humans *would do*, Edward also becomes jealous and angry upon seeing the girl he loves with her scheming boyfriend, but he eventually tries to restrain his jealousy by turning his aggression to a relatively harmless act of scratching walls and objects.

When he scratches the walls of the house, however, he makes the household partially lose their trust in him (01:10:53). By showing anger—a primary human

emotion with negative connotations shared with animals—he debases his own position. He experiences that these behaviors are not much welcomed in the social sphere and he is expected to deduce that he must lose or at least hide them to be recognized as someone worthy.

Adaptation to human society is an endless challenge for Edward, for he is ultimately not (and will never be) considered a regular human by society. Even though the people of the household try to treat Edward as a human, they are, as a part of society, at least *aware* that Edward is a not-quite-human after all. This is the reason why he is generally perceived as a person (or rather an entity) that belongs to outgroups such as people of racial, ethnic, or sexual minorities, etc. Therefore, he is utterly condemned when he shows even a small scaled act of aggression. Nobody, however, tells him directly that these condemned acts such as showing aggression are indeed *common*, but they are usually (and hypocritically) associated with outgroups (or outcasts like Edward) to legitimize their dehumanization. Consequently, the ways of humanness Edward learns turn out to be misleading and ironic.

When Edward's entire effort to adapt to humanness is evaluated, the essence of his existence appears to be not very different from humans' after all. As a matter of fact, Edward is even extremely well-disposed and apparently more humane than many human beings. Probably this contributes to people's perception of Edward as an outsider because Edward's benevolence is too good to be true. Moreover, when Edward displays well-intentioned behavior, people tend to perceive it as weakness. Ironically Edward's human(e)ness works against his designation as a member of the human community. Thus, Edward makes us question the concept of humanness (or humaneness) and reveals that it is impossible to define that term due to conflicting perceptions where humaneness becomes the opposite of what it means to be human. Eventually human nature becomes the focal point of this discussion. Human nature, supposedly dignified and uniquely responsible for creating culture and civilization, becomes proven to be no less in fact rampageous than those we see less-than-human. In other words, the human pride in being the most developed life form turns out to be nothing but a myth humans have created out of their arrogance. The uncanniness of Edward's hybridity triggers people to show their inconsistencies and true faces behind the façade of civilization.

In the movie, Jim most obviously exemplifies this social dilemma. After Kim tells him that she does not love him anymore for getting Edward into trouble, Jim goes mad and belittles Edward by saying “He isn’t even human” (01:18:39). He finds the idea of not being preferred to a non-human insulting, portraying a complete anthropocentric hostility. Kim, however, decides that way because she sees truly human emotions in their purest in Edward compared to Jim, a real human, who acts in vile and inhumane ways.

In the end, ironically, the lesson Edward learns from being a human is literally how to be a monster. As a matter of fact, Burton, via injecting this monstrous creature Edward into society, reflects the monstrosity of humans back to us. In other words, it is important to realize who the real monster is: is it the dehumanizing humans themselves or the dehumanized (and vilified) Others? In that regard, Edward can even be considered as someone fortunate for being incomplete because he narrowly escapes from the dangers of becoming human. Humanness then, turns out to be just a concept with no specific meaning, used arbitrarily for political purposes.

Eventually and as expected, Edward fails to adapt to humanness after trying to become a part of society. Therefore, upon experiencing an irreversible mental breakdown, he leaves the American neighborhood. Ironically, the incident causing him to leave takes place between him and his beloved one Kim while she is dancing under the artificial snowfall scattered from Edward’s ice carving art. After finishing his job, getting down the ladder, Edward accidentally scotches Kim’s hand and unintentionally hurts her. Jim sees this action and blames Edward for deliberately injuring Kim. Edward cannot stand this excessive mental stress, apparently starts blaming himself for his dysfunctional existence causing Kim to bleed, and thus loses his mind. He starts running away, damaging everything that comes in his way. The small-scale destruction he causes, however, is not done with an evil intention, but because he cannot control his emotions going through a breakdown. He feels guilty for what he did to Kim, but the neighborhood does not understand his condition at all, and they call the police, perceiving the destruction as pure vandalism. Even though Kim indicates that it was a mistake and she was not seriously hurt, people choose to listen to Jim, the one who inhumanely engages humans into lynching the

outcast. Thus, society willingly becomes a part of this monstrosity because they indirectly seize a real chance to register Edward as unfit, justifying its vilification. Ultimately, while running, he cuts off the clothes on him, which he was told to wear to look human (01:19:10). With this action, he implies that he no longer belongs to the domain of mankind and perhaps never could adapt at all.

To summarize, Edward's cyborgian features bestow upon him a sort of hybridity. However, he can be essentially perceived as almost a human being since he is in every respect not very much away from the human condition. Yet, there *are* important features that distinguish Edward from humans. The most obvious one is his physical appearance with gizmo parts, which make him easier to be perceived and labeled as an outsider. As an almost-human, another distinctive feature of Edward is that he has no awareness about the dynamics of society and functioning of mankind since he had never been a member of any human community in his life. This situation eventually brings him a handicap in social life. Ultimately, Edward's hybridity does more harm than good for him. He faces resistance from the people around him to accept him into the human community because his visible cyborgian features reinforce his Otherness. Therefore, due to his hybridity, he cannot get away from being labeled as an outsider in society. Since society covertly and with an irrational intolerant urge perceives Edward as an outsider in the first place, any attempt from Edward to adapt to it proves futile. His outcast condition already proves that he could not even be allowed to completely integrate into the social dynamics even if he wanted to. This is due to the conservative societal norms ensuring homogeneity and perceiving Others like Edward as dangerous outgroup characters, who are sometimes ironically humane enough to teach society humanity.

3.2. HOW SOCIETY PERCEIVES THE GOTHIC MONSTER: VILIFICATION AND EXPLOITATION OF THE OTHER

In order to understand the circumstances under which Edward is exploited and at the same time vilified as monster, one must first define the overall societal interpretation of Edward's entrance into the American small town, a microcosmic space representing the whole of America. In this context, it is crucial to investigate

the story of the dehumanization (and monsterization) of Edward. Thus, it would be clearly seen that dehumanization becomes a factor that paves the way for Edward to be labeled a scapegoat.

It is also necessary to understand what makes Edward a Gothic monster after all, in order to see that he is not a monster that could be perceived as a superhero, a savior, or an ultimate friend. Therefore, understanding how Edward is perceived plays an essential role. Seeing Edward's portrayal as both a monster and a scapegoat turns Edward's intrusion into a social critique. As Cohen indicates in his monster theory, like all monsters, Edward also reveals clues about that very culture he functions within. This makes Edward not just a cyborgian uncanny creature, but also a Gothic not-quite-human entity.

Last but not least, it is important to look at the examples of how people at the individual level perceive Edward differently for their own selfish motivations. In this way, it would be acknowledged that not everyone dehumanizes Edward in the same form, despite contributing cumulatively to his exploitation and eventually expulsion from society.

3.2.1. Societal Perception and Dehumanization

First and foremost, it must be indicated that Edward is not *literally* a monster. He can be considered an entity mimicking humanness or, better, a being with a cyborgian body, something that has human and humane characteristics. However, people in the neighborhood verbally and ideally discriminate against him and eventually see him corporeally, socially, and cognitively as an outsider or a monster. Thus, the potential dangers that a cyborg (or a transhuman) would cause within a traditionalist society in the real world becomes foreshadowed with Edward's entry into the town. Ultimately, dehumanization, that is, the ingroup members' discriminatory perception towards Other people labeling them as inferior and dangerous, implicitly comes into play.

Edward gets verbally and remotely dehumanized (infrahumanized) by people for having physically different characteristics. For instance, since his arrival at the neighborhood, people call attention to his otherness by defining him primarily

through his non-human hands, foregrounding his physical difference for proper human categorization, which verbally (and hierarchically) distances him from the ingroup members. In this case, defining Edward through his supposed incompleteness is rather a covert yet blatant discrimination.

Through dehumanization, Edward becomes cognitively and socially non-human. According to Kelman, “to perceive another as human we must accord him identity and community”. As for the former, the one who is recognized as lacking the capability “of making choices, and [un]entitled to live his own life on the basis of his own goals and values” faces the danger of dehumanization (1973: 48). The latter, on the other hand, underlines that, to be recognized “as fully human,” one needs to be perceived “as part of an interconnected network of individuals who care for each other, who recognize each other’s individuality, and who respect each other’s rights” (48-49). In the case of Edward, people do seemingly accept him to their American neighborhood, but not as a person, rather as a servant, child, alien, or a pet. Not only does he get treated like a child who cannot decide on his own, but he also gets exploited for his unconditional services. Thus, he is denied an identity as a member of society. Moreover, nobody in the neighborhood, except for Kim, seems to care for Edward’s well-being and dignity since they simply see him as an alien, a sort of immigrant, stranger to the values and dynamics of the dominant.

Ultimately, Edward covertly becomes labeled as corporeally, socially, and cognitively incompetent. On the surface he might, *to a certain extent*, be recognized as human, but in reality, he is perceived not *as human as* the ingroup people.

Being perceived as unfit for full humanness makes Edward a socially vulnerable entity, whose vulnerability becomes exposed by means of social transgressions such as discrimination or otherization. In the movie, we can see the examples of such situations: Upon being tricked by Jim into breaking into a private property, Edward gets caught and, in the eyes of the people who catch him “red handed,” falls directly into the category of a villain. No one except Kim entertains the possibility that he is innocent. Edward naturally thinks that he was helping Jim to get into *his* house and was doing it for a good cause while Jim was actually making Edward unlock the door of a house for burglary. When the police get alarmed for this incident, Jim traps Edward in the house in order to make people think that he alone

was to blame. Since nobody would trust Edward anymore after this incident, he is of no further use for society. Thus, a single accusation becomes sufficient for his exclusion from society because he is an insignificant outsider, and it is easier to suppress him due to his vulnerable position. After that, the people in the neighborhood start making up tales about Edward and blame him for anything they see and can think of as wrong. Like any other being that cannot be utilized by humans, Edward gradually becomes ranked with what is abjected and held as uncanny. After this initial step, his otherization is put in motion. As Edward had previously unintentionally hurt Kim and her brother with his scissor hands, these incidents later provide much-needed proofs of his evilness and become the final nail in Edward's coffin. Jim claims to see Edward's ill-will and further blames him for intentionally hurting Kim and her brother. People naturally tend to believe a member of the ingroup, Jim, rather than the *untrustworthy* stranger who is given no license to defend himself. Strengthening Jim's allegations, some people adopt mob mentality so much so that they start correlating Edward with each and every bad experience they have recently gone through. In the end, with the accumulation of false charges, people xenophobically want to make sure that Edward goes out of their habitat. Eventually, Kim asks Edward to leave the neighborhood to end his agony and save himself from people's rage, and Edward goes back to his mansion. People lose so much of their ties of empathy with him that some of them even follow him in order to lynch him or to hear about his *death*. Obviously they could cleanse their consciences of empathy for Edward since they had already dehumanized him as non-human in advance. Ultimately, since dehumanization can become a "precondition" and, in later stages, "justification for violence" for the ingroup (Haslam, 2006: 255), such apathy can be considered a foregone conclusion.

When society looks for a scapegoat to cover up its own hypocrisy or impute its villainy to someone, it tends to find some so-called weakling Other. In that regard, the cyborg (being one of them) appears as a perfect and timely candidate because, as Haraway indicates, they are "monstrous and illegitimate" (1991:13). Because Edward is a hybrid not-quite-human, he implicitly challenges traditional categories, causing people to hesitate about mentally drawn boundaries, disturbing them, altering their realities, bringing them face to face with their fears that they had

formerly repressed as abject. He neither fits into any category nor bears any resemblance to any other human in the community mostly of conservative, likeminded, and conformist individuals. Sooner or later, people vilify this benevolent not-quite-human as the source of all the wrong in their society because his cyborg existence is susceptible to such vilification. As a cyborg, he is a stranger, an Other, a violator, a hybrid, trying to inject himself into a homogenous and *peaceful* society where categories, boundaries, and biased norms favoring the *status quo* prevail. Since one of the outcomes of perceiving the Others as the “parasites that infect the social body” is dehumanization (Haslam, 2006: 253), Edward becomes dehumanized eventually, and becomes simultaneously the perfect scapegoat and outcast.

3.2.2. Gothicism of the Not-Quite-Human Edward

There is no doubt that Edward is a vilified monster for society. Given the way people perceive Edward, it becomes clear that the existence of this monster has indisputably a Gothic function.

Monsters or monstrous entities do not necessarily dwell only within Gothic narratives since some of them are not eligible to qualify as the Other in the first place. However, in the Gothic, it is not very likely to see a monster who is not an outcast, regardless of being vilified. In order to create some Gothic impression, monsters highlight the social troubles taking place in the background. These monsters remind people of the (behavioral, physical, or verbal) atrocities they themselves commit, which are the outcomes of the registration of the deep rooted, conservatively inherited, repressed, and notorious dispositions.

When Edward’s case is taken into consideration, the Gothic function appears to exist, but whether he is a monster or not depends on how the perceiver has constructed his/her worldview. Since he is a vilified one, one can perceive Edward as a medium that intrudes into society to reveal their true, monstrous colors. Due to being an outsider, he triggers the discriminative, xenophobic, and hypocritical attitudes among conservative people even though he is essentially innocent.

Yet, Edward is so far from being a *monstrous* entity that, in the end, he does not take any revenge on people. The only act of vengeance he causes is represented

by the snow, an element of purification. With the fall of the snow, he, even without living among them, ironically reminds them of their atrocious behaviors every year. This explanation provides an answer to the initial question the young child had asked her grandmother as to why it snows. On the surface, it snows, because the monster is away from humans, but on the background, the snow represents his wish to purify the neighborhood reminding people that they could get cleansed of their sins thanks to Edward taking the blame.

Ultimately, in the end, the flow of the story points to two different monstrosities: on the one hand, there is an innocent yet vilified monster, and on the other hand, the witch-hunting monstrous society. Thus, Edward makes us question the meaning of humanness, humanity or humaneness, proving the arbitrariness of concepts and language, and revealing that humanity is not as glorified and/or dignified as it is portrayed.

Edward's intrusion into social sphere brings his Gothic functions to the foreground. He ends up violating the (supposed) order of the human hermetic space: He enters into a domain established by a homogenous community impervious to outer influence. This intrusion arranged by Burton is a recurring traditional pattern in Gothic stories. In many of them, a threatening uncanny intruder (entity or element) comes into a domain to (willingly or unwillingly) disrupt its domestic peace. Dracula, for example, stands out as one of the most well-known intruders of Gothic literature, menacing the people in some other realm than his own. Likewise, in some Gothic stories of Poe, we come across this act of intrusion which changes the flow of the story unfavorably. In *The Masque of the Red Death* (1842), for instance, death intrudes itself into the masquerade which takes place in a hermetic space supposedly isolated from external factors. Similarly, Burton's Edward, as an alien, enters into the conformist American neighborhood and starts re-forming relationships and the way people live there. Moreover, as a hard-to-define entity, he implicitly disrupts people's conformity by making them falter about their set mental categories and boundaries that help them distinguish one thing from another. Eventually, the existence of this outsider grows threatening for people because the more he adapts, the faster social dynamics shift and the less functional he becomes within that domain. Before uncertainties take the better of their lives as a result of his disruptive

entry, *luckily* for the people of American neighborhood, a collective resistance is achieved that will make their microcosmic hermetic space secure, unchanging, and great (!) again. Obviously, unlike most intruders, Edward gets vilified but remains a Gothic intruder, nonetheless, causing the monstrous outcomes of society's fear of the Other to be revealed. In other words, he performs a traditional Gothic function.

In the Gothic, these intruding monsters like Edward (will) always haunt periodically like a pattern, reminding us about what is notoriously repressed within our minds. All in all, they trigger our various anxieties and/or fears while hinting at the qualities of societies they intrude upon and proving their (possibly hermetic) spaces vulnerable.

3.2.3. Individual Perceptions of the Outsider

After going through Edward's perception by society as a whole and concluding that he is not only a dehumanized cyborgian body, but also a Gothic not-quite-human entity, we can now exemplify how he is perceived on the individual level and thus understand better the outcomes of the pragmatically exploitative culture encouraged by dehumanization.

In *Edward Scissorhands*'s hermetic neighborhood of the small American society, we come across various point of views concerning the treatment of the Other, all serving to Edward's implicit or explicit exploitation by different purposes. This process of exploitation is powered and legitimized by ingroup's perception of the (essentially very humane) Other as a strange non-human outcast. In this way of dehumanization, the members of the ingroup naturally consider themselves of higher caliber than the Other, and, as a result, they neither sympathize with him nor find it odd to enslave him.

In fact, several types of dehumanization lie beneath this motivation of seeing oneself superior, which may include various and often interchangeable intolerant practices such as racism and xenophobia, as well as mistreatments such as feeling pity for the disadvantaged or perceiving someone as fit for abuse. Correspondingly, since the cyborgness of Edward makes him eligible to fit into many categories on the

scale of human and/or not-quite-human hierarchies, there appears to be many ways to dehumanize him on the individual level through various discriminatory practices.

Some people feel pity for Edward, compare him mildly with animals and treat him like a humanlike pet due to his various cognitive vulnerabilities making him dysfunctional in the social sphere. Some others hostilely perceive him as a less-than-human entity for his uniquely different nature. This way of dehumanization includes seeing someone as “inhuman, either by using references to subhuman categories, for example, ‘inferior’ races and animals or by referring to negatively valued superhuman creatures such as demons, monsters, and satans” (Bar-Tal, 2000: 122). Edward falls into both categories since he is perceived not only as pure evil, but, on some occasions, also as utterly inferior. On the one hand, in religious terms, he is labeled as some kind of demonic entity poisoning the neighborhood upon his intrusion. On the other hand, he is seen like a less-than-human *immigrant* who is placed at the lower layers of American social hierarchy.

If one looks at his immigrant status, the racial contempt Edward experiences can be symbolically defined. In that regard, the strange Gothic castle upon a hill, the essentially un-American place he comes from, may be considered as a representation of his immigrant condition. The castle, as is known, is traditionally a European structure, and thus, someone coming from there can metaphorically be perceived as a non-American immigrant, an outcast from Europe, who is trying to integrate into the American society. In this context, Edward becomes an entity that undesirably evokes the past to the Americans, and therefore, he should be avoided accordingly. In fact, he seems quite like a Caucasian person, but despite his outlook, because of his origin he becomes treated like an alien—in this case, a European coming from the old continent—who does not have any idea about the values of America. Originally, the best way to evaluate him is to consider him a subhuman and use him as a slave, just like it was done to many poor European immigrants in American history. Thanks to Edward, this deeply-rooted practice once again implicitly surfaces with its remnants reflected through collective consciousness. Reflecting such acquired consciousness at the smallest scale, even the youngest individual in society, the little girl appearing at the beginning of the movie, describes the castle as “haunted” (Burton, 1990: 00:04:00).

Nonetheless, one may come up with countless approaches regarding the dehumanization process of Edward based on his inferiority. He can simply be considered as any type of outcast for the ingroup people such as a hybrid uncanny monster, an intruder outcast, a source of detestation, or pure abject. Regardless of their forms, these considerations result from mostly implicit xenophobic and/or discriminative perspectives rooted in society.

Edward is dehumanized not only as an animal but also as a machine, an instrument that can be put to use for others. According to Hetey and Eberhardt, when people are perceived as “mere instruments for the use of others,” they become dehumanized mechanistically (2014: 149), and this is what precisely happens to Edward. Edward’s cyborgian body inherently gives him some useful features lacking in humans that tempt them. Eventually, people start using him like an instrument and let him operate in their domain until he can no longer be exploited.

In the story, there are many incidents exposing Edward to all these dehumanization processes since different individuals at different times approach him with different motivations and for different reasons. By looking at these examples at individual level, one can conceptualize in more detail the fundamentals of this exploitative attitude towards Edward and understand the vulnerabilities his cyborgian existence causes.

As mentioned previously, there are various types of characters in the movie, but they all belong to a conservative, conformist, and patriarchal traditional society where only men have full time jobs and women are housewives. Adults seem like law-abiding citizens, and the social atmosphere in general seems peaceful and safe. Some children constitute the only rebellious group in the neighborhood, going through a natural phase of teenage angst. They tend to violate the rules, but at the same time, they try their best to avoid getting caught and punished. Despite all, these individuals make it seem like they are living in harmony, but when an uncanny outcast intrudes into their domain, s/he tends to lay bare their repressed emotions through demonstrating dehumanizing violations they would never do to one of their own.

One of the most remarkable characters in the movie is a middle-aged single woman named Joyce. This woman’s most prominent feature is her sexual hunger,

and her chances of attempting to overcome her problem in her present circumstances are limited. Even though she tries to conceal it, she seems quite desperate and lonely. She calls, for instance, some repairman despite having no broken appliances in her home, just to make a pass at him (Burton, 1990: 00:06:28). Likewise, Joyce sees the presence of Edward as an opportunity to appease her hunger. She becomes sexually charmed by him especially because of his uncanny nature, calls him “completely different,” “exciting,” and “mysterious” (00:36:19), and wants to get his attention constantly. Eventually, she attempts to have a sexual affair with Edward. To fulfill her desire, she takes Edward to an isolated room and starts teasing him, hoping that he would respond back (00:58:32). She could go so far with him as she most probably takes courage from Edward’s exploitable outsider status. In the end, however, as the chair they stand on collapses, Edward becomes scared and runs away. After Edward becomes the scapegoat of the neighborhood, jumping along on the bandwagon, Joyce lies and blames Edward for wanting to sexually assault her. (01:13:48). Since she is not the only one standing against Edward, everyone in the community believes her false claim, solidifying and further justifying Edward’s outsider status. Thus, she hypocritically and automatically manages to cleanse her conscience for exploiting his vulnerability.

Before turning against Edward, Joyce also takes advantage of him in another way. She starts a hair salon business relying on Edward as her master hairdresser employee. What Joyce does not realize at the time, however, is by starting a business by exploiting Edward, she finds a way to fight against the ultraconservative ways of the town which imprison women in the domestic sphere. In fact, Edward indirectly liberates the neighborhood, encourages people to exceed their normative limits, and inspires them to start something exciting in their boring lives. Put simply, for instance, if Edward did not help Joyce, the idea of starting a business for a housewife would not come true so instantly and easily. This demonstrates that in fact, the tendency to break out of patterns is a deeply ingrained yet strongly repressed human impulse, waiting to be triggered by some outer factor—in this case, a creature that becomes a scapegoat. However, Edward seems not only to promise a bright and free life to people, but he also takes the risk of being solely responsible if the freedom of this individual is punished by society or simply if her business fails. No matter which

way Edward turns, no matter what good intentions he has for others, he can never escape being the prospective scapegoat.

While Joyce hides her conservative attitude behind a more welcoming façade because she wants to take advantage of Edward, probably the only person in the neighborhood who blatantly shows Edward her conservativeness is a woman named Esmeralda. She is a deeply religious person and does not keep much contact with other people around her. She perceives Edward as the harbinger of the apocalypse due to his cyborgian body, which is, for her, a sign of evil because of simultaneously possessing both human and non-human features. She criticizes other people in the neighborhood for letting Edward in their community and says “It’s not heaven he’s from. It’s from the stinking flames of hell. The power of Satan is in him, I can feel it. Have you sheep strayed so far from the flock?” (00:31:00). She acts like a doomwatcher, refers to spirituality to justify her doctrine, and warns people about keeping unity and staying within the parameters of a homogenous and safe community in order to avoid evil by expelling the outcast.

Edward takes Esmeralda’s question, “Have you sheep strayed so far from the flock?” literally since he has no concept of religion in his mind, and answers “We are not sheep” (00:32:00). Edward’s answer has double meaning: while he reminds people like Esmeralda that they should refuse to be sheep, he also naively considers himself as one of the members of the community. However, Esmeralda insists and tries to organize people around their shared communal values by blatantly saying “You must push him from you, expel him”. Most strikingly, by calling attention to Edward’s uncanniness, she asks people to “Trample down the perversion of nature” (00:32:15). Here, she dehumanizes Edward through making an analogy between him and Satan and indirectly despises him for his cyborgian body, which blurs the preset borders in our minds. In other words, she slams this hybrid entity who is neither a robot nor a complete human and who disrupts the conservative cultural norms based upon categorical order. For Esmeralda, the danger that lies beneath Edward’s presence is that, if he is considered human, then in a community that has invested high stakes in homogeneity, humanness itself would be questioned and eventually redefined, destroying the traditional norms, privileges, and hierarchies. Therefore, she perceives him as a demonic monster whose intrusion is expected to foreshadow

and/or bring mischief and evil. In the end, other people's accusing Edward of burglary proves useful in justifying Esmeralda's religious doctrines (01:08:39). However, her prophecy becomes fulfilled not because Edward is truly a monster, but because, like her, people could easily label him as a scapegoat.

Interestingly enough, even Peg, the very first person from the American neighborhood to contact Edward, also perceives him in an unusual way. She instinctually feels bad for Edward, a person who has never been to civilization, and in a very Burtonesque way asks him to live in her house with her family, as if it is very common to invite people the way she does at first sight. Peg eventually may have taken pity on Edward and adopt him as a new member of the family. However, it is difficult to understand in what context she adopted him. Has she adopted him as a new (human) son or as a domesticated pet creature? Even though Peg shows Edward a lot of care and sympathy, she also considers him as someone lacking not only some physical capabilities, but also various cognitive and social qualities. In that regard, for Peg, Edward turns into a combination of a son who is physically partially handicapped and needs to be educated, and a domesticated creature with no social license, one who needs to be guided, fed, and taken care of eternally.

Many other people in the neighborhood also approach Edward as if he is a kind of exotic creature. For instance, as soon as he penetrates into the hermetic realm of the neighborhood community, all the housewives get together outside and gossip about this new "strange guy" (00:17:43). His arrival arouses curiosity and brings excessive excitement because he is an uncanny creature who is familiar enough yet at the same time mysteriously strange. Later, they decide to do something they would rarely do, and pay a visit to Peg's house to see Edward. However, they all stay outside the house with a lot of enthusiasm as if they have come to see a recently captured exotic animal in the zoo. Their attitude makes it clear that, merely a spectacle, Edward has never been accepted as a complete human, let alone a member of the ingroup.

The approach of Peg's young son, Kevin, to Edward further solidifies Edward's outsider status. On the one hand, Kevin feels disturbed by the arrival and existence of this uncanny creature. During their first family meal he makes fun of Edward and keeps staring at him disturbingly, without blinking, with an awkward

facial expression (00:24:44). His reaction implies that he does not want Edward's presence. On the other hand, as Kevin gets used to Edward, he becomes more and more fascinated by his non-human qualities, but behind his fascination he has a malevolent intent. He pays precise attention to Edward's scissor hands, something he does not have. He finds them valuable because, above all, they give Edward the so-called privilege to easily chop someone's neck. Since the combination of hands and scissors recall nothing but violence for even the youngest member of the community, Kevin's strange fascination with Edward's hands signals to us mankind's aggressiveness hidden behind a civilized veneer. Furthermore, to share his fascination with his friends, Kevin takes Edward to his school so that he can show those scissor hands during a lesson in which students present interesting *items* they *own*. Thus, he exploits Edward for his own interests and treats him more like a tool and possession that could be taken advantage of than a person.

The first instance of Edward's exploitation, however, occurs thanks to Peg's husband Bill. As he trims the plants in his garden, Edward starts imitating him and creates a very big and nice-looking dinosaur topiary work out of the bushes (00:29:00). Bill, then, becomes amazed by Edward's art and makes him do the garden work for free. Ironically, before this discovery, Edward used to be seen as a pathetic and incompetent creature that could not even eat his own meal by himself. But now, he turns into a useful and valuable helper, and he finally receives attention so that he could be further exploited in the future.

In time, people think of more ideas about how to take advantage of the free labor offered by Edward. As a result, more uses of Edward become discovered as every single family in the neighborhood relentlessly benefits from his free topiary, pet grooming, and coiffeur services. Therefore, people start thinking positively about him and at last perceive him as *someone* with some physical infirmity due to the condition of his hands (00:37:04). They even help Edward get his scissors oiled and sharpened up, not because they care about his personal well-being, but because they do not want his hands to get rusted so that he can continue offering services. In the end, however, after he can no longer be exploited, the language people use shifts into pejorative insults; this time they call him cripple rather than someone with infirmity.

With this blatant verbal dehumanization, people indirectly confess that their previous kindness was coldhearted and fake.

For a limited time when Edward becomes the center of attention, people approve of him as a temporary member of the community. During this transient legitimization, people also find the opportunity to see closely Edward's intriguing non-human features. The attention goes so far that he even goes on a television program for *being successful despite his condition*. In the program people ask him whether he wants to be a normal person with no handicap, and he answers to that question positively. However, one of the viewers says to Edward, if he were normal, "No one would think ... [he was] special" (00:55:21): Edward is special *because of* his particular handicap, a handicap that makes him open to exploitation.

Edward can be ceaselessly exploited also because with no social security number, he does not even exist at all as a registered citizen. That is why, Edward is denied when he and Peg go to a bank to take out a loan to start a business for him. The legal officer even states that he is not even sure about Edward's existence (01:01:50). Therefore, Edward is officially treated as a non-existent being who is naturally not eligible to make any legal claim; the only legal status by which Edward could function is that of an alien, an *illegal* one at that. Knowing that Edward existed physically but not constitutionally and that they would face no legal charges for unconditional exploitation, people could endlessly take advantage of him. However, when Edward (supposedly) is thought to pose a threat for the entire community, his use expires, and he begins to be institutionally disapproved by everyone in his community for arbitrary reasons. Ironically, his recognition as someone comes only when he becomes a criminal to be punished. Before, when he wanted to start a business, he was asked to prove his existence, but now, when he is falsely blamed for being a criminal, society grants him an immediate legal license and existence, treating him as someone with criminal capacity who needs to be punished. It means that, for society, if he had not been an outcast, he would have a legal position since the beginning, and he would be eligible neither for exploitation nor for blaming. In short, the outsider status of Edward grants him no legitimacy, but people consider this status arbitrarily depending on their own interests. This situation automatically enhances Edward's status as a vulnerable and exploitable entity.

Perhaps one of the most remarkable characters in the movie is Jim, whose relationship with Edward is based on complete abuse, dehumanization, and exploitation. In the movie, Jim makes Edward use his hands as lockpick to enter his father's secret vault so that he can steal some valuables from there in order to buy a van (01:02:30). However, Edward does not think it was a violation as he just believes that Jim wanted to enter his own house with Kim. After the burglary is accomplished, Jim locks Edward in the house, runs away with Kim (by force) in order to avoid prosecution, and eventually makes the police catch Edward "in the act" (01:04:00). Jim, however, seems very comfortable because he knows in his heart that Edward is neither capable of accusing anyone nor defending himself. As such, he takes advantage of Edward and dehumanizes him in two different ways. First, mechanistically, he perceives Edward as a useable tool and exploits his non-human quality. Second, he considers Edward as an outsider, a vulnerable subhuman suitable for vilification.

As the ultimate milestone in Edward's scapegoating, this act of burglary shows us that despite being perceived as a not-quite-human entity, Edward is human after all. It is, of course, Peg, who consistently sees Edward as a partial human being, becomes instrumental in revealing Edward's human aspect as capable of emotion. After she comes to take Edward from the hands of the police, she feels sorry for him and starts creating various scenarios in her head. She first thinks that Edward attempted to steal money from a rich person's house upon being refused by the bank for financial aid (01:06:58). However, as someone who is also aware of Edward's naiveté and benevolence, she feels suspicious for a while and, after an epiphanous moment, asks him whether someone put him up to this crime (01:07:23). Edward remains silent and takes the blame because he would rather listen to his human heart in order to save Kim from a possible accusation. Capacities for love and self-sacrifice, reactions and emotions thought of as fundamentally and definitively human, show that Edward is essentially nothing less than human. This concept will later be reinforced by Edward's answer to Kim even in a more uniquely and humanly emotional way. When Kim asks him why he lockpicked the house despite knowing that it was not theirs, Edward, showing his love, trust, and loyalty to her, replies "Because you asked me to" (01:10:37). This incident shows that the dominant drive

that motivates Edward's behavior is love and trust, which is associated with benevolent humanity, but which is ironically not very common among ordinary people who claim to be humane. This is the main issue that makes it difficult for us to decide who is monster and who is human. In this case, the one vilified as monster seems to be more humane than the society that vilifies him.

In addition to being denied existence, Edward undergoes another institutional diagnosis. The forensic physician at the court claims Edward *doli incapax*, someone incapable of crime, not because he is essentially good and more human than humans but because of his misperception of reality and incompetence to differentiate between good and evil. The doctor chooses his words meticulously while describing Edward and calls him a character rather than a person. Thus, Edward's not-quite-humanness becomes scientifically confirmed; in other words, he is announced to be exempt from written human laws. However, he is still judged by some other human-made laws, which are supposed to regulate human lives, and the unwritten laws of the community. Eventually, he is chased away by society despite his official status of *doli incapax*. In other words, although Edward's humanness is denied, the townspeople's desire to execute him remains as if he is a legally responsible criminal. This is the most prominent portrait of the limits of society's tolerance towards outcasts, a portrait that reminds us of the witch burning rituals of the past and shows us that not much has changed since then.

All the individual and communal perceptions of Edward that emerge upon his entry into society eventually converge, in one way or the other, as attempts at rejecting his humanness. As a result, people produce for themselves a justifiable basis for scapegoating Edward as a vilified absolute monster. However, the outcomes of the intrusion of this outcast scapegoat indirectly reveal society's hypocritical standards and provide us with novel perspectives for a rigorous social criticism.

3.3. SOCIAL CRITIQUE THROUGH THE MONSTER AND SCAPEGOATING

It is obvious that regardless of being a villain or not, Edward is an Other and a monster whose qualities fit perfectly with the features of monsters indicated by Jerome Cohen in his monster theory (1996: 3-20). Just as Cohen proposed for monsters in general, Edward destroys categories as a hybrid, indirectly revives ancient anxieties originating from the fear of the outcast (Other), anxieties that have historically given rise to activities such as witch hunting. As a hybrid Edward is evaluated as an uncanny entity that challenges unwritten social norms, and most importantly, bringing humans' notorious perception towards the outcasts to light with his presence, he reveals people's socially shared hypocrisy and inherent-but-concealed monstrosity. Therefore, behind the entire story of Edward lies a deep critique of society, and the most crucial step in critically laying bare of human society's moral shortcomings happens via the treatment shown to Edward after he was declared a scapegoat.

What essentially triggers the series of undesired incidents in the neighborhood is Edward's arrival upon Peg's invitation. At the very early stages of the story, she decides to go to Edward's castle, which had never been visited by anyone, and gets in contact with him for the first time. She goes there because, unable to sell anything in her neighborhood, she feels very desperate and she wants to turn the tide of the monotony of her life by paying a visit to a new and dangerous place avoided by everyone thus far, but things do not go as expected (Burton, 1990: 00:08:26). In other words, Peg desires to leave behind the sense of being trapped within the boring and monotonous small-town life, but her act unexpectedly affects and changes the flow of not only her life but also those in her neighborhood. At the beginning, inviting Edward seems like an innocent attempt, but this desire for new blood, in the end, turns into a violation as it introduces something new to a conservative society, fundamentally resistant to change. Eventually, this new blood, Edward, gets expelled from the hermetic human space so that its stability could be maintained. Therefore, one can say that Edward the monster indirectly represents a warning for people to avoid radical changes and violations of order because for

conservative societies, homogeneity, security, stillness, and safety within the charted waters are crucial, and Edward stands as a threat against them. Namely, the monster shows us that old school societies like Salem still exist, and they, just as in the past, still resist the possible modification of their social norms, categorical thinking, hierarchies, and understanding.

In the movie, another social criticism that is generated from scapegoating is mob mentality. In the neighborhood, the moral majority tend to protect conservative values and even venture upon supporting false claims if they feel those values are somehow endangered. For instance, when Edward is blamed for burglary, people, without even waiting for the law to take its course, jump in the bandwagon and start to push him away one by one. Some of them even claim that something was wrong with Edward since the beginning (01:08:29). What is worse, in order to solidify Edward's position as a criminal, some people make up lies to justify their change of mindset. For example, they say that Edward practically raped Joyce before, but people did not make it public back then (01:13:50). More precisely, by fabricating such false scenarios and speaking ill of Edward, they associate every recent bad incident that had happened in the neighborhood with him. Ironically, they do it altogether even though they know they are lying blatantly. It is thanks to Edward that the hypocrisy and decadence behind the moral veneer of the townspeople become exposed.

An interesting discussion of ethics between Edward and Bill the father makes us aware that being nice does not necessarily mean doing the right thing, which appears to be a playful and puzzling social dilemma. After Edward gets denounced as a burglar, Bill wants to lecture him and asks him what he would do if he found some money outside, wishing him to say that he would give it to the police (01:12:30). As an answer, Edward innocently says he would give it to his loved ones as he has an innate benevolent nature. Moreover, he cannot understand the social definitions of good or bad due to the inconsistencies he experienced. Answering the question, Kim backs Edward up saying she would do the same thing because it is *nice*. However, Bill gets upset and replies "We are not talking nice, we are talking right and wrong" (1:13:30). Even though Bill is right specifically about this incident, we sadly realize that not every good behavior is legally correct. Being nice to

someone is an act that can mean harm for others and may even result in punishment. Yet, at the same time, this leads to the awkward and ironic conclusion that doing favors to loved ones can sometimes be the wrong path to take.

Another important aspect of social criticism in the movie is the symbol of snow, with which the film starts. The viewer, in the end, understands that the entire movie flows to explain why it snows, and learns that snow, which falls after Edward's expulsion, has some deeper meaning: Indeed, in the story, upon being left heartbroken and outcasted, Edward makes it snow over the neighborhood for the first time in its history by carving ice cubes in his mansion, and since then it has snowed annually. The first time he scatters snowflakes in the garden of the Boggs family by carving ice cubes, Edward's motivation is, however, much different as he initially wants to express his romantic feelings for Kim. Most probably, he reflects these emotions by carving a gigantic ice cube to give it the shape of an angel. The particles of ice spreading around make it artificially snow in the garden, and Kim, mesmerized, starts dancing under it without Edward noticing her (01:16:10). However, this expression of pure emotions turns into a trauma arising from Edward's accidental injuring of Kim (01:17:28). Eventually, this becomes a chance for Jim to blame and scapegoat Edward. He starts hitting Edward in order to supposedly save Kim and punish him, which will ultimately lead to Edward's expulsion from the community. In the end, Edward walks away without knowing where he is going, not because he is banished, but because he feels helpless and desperate for hurting Kim. Upon being deported, Edward finds safety in his mansion and, to cherish Kim, continues his ice carving work up there and making it snow on the neighborhood ever since. Yet people have already monsterized and scapegoated him. In the community, only Kim remains true, believing in Edward's innocence. Eventually, the snow, as a symbol of purification and truth, comes to be a social critique, which, on the one hand, signals to the innocence of the vilified monster and, on the other hand, points to the community as something that needs to be cleansed and purified.

In an atmosphere where everyone labels Edward as a monster, a self-critique coming from Peg, the person who brought Edward to the community, is striking. On the one hand, she admits that bringing him to the neighborhood was a crucial mistake (01:22:00). In other words, Peg indirectly indicates that the natural environment

where Edward belongs is not human society since he is both human and non-human: a not-quite-human. On the other hand, however, Peg blames herself for not being able to predict people's aggressive behavior towards this authentic creature. Thus, she indirectly criticizes society for being resistant to novelty even today, for seeking a scapegoat for its own atrocities, for being ready to exploit the other, for always tending to blame the other, and for covering up its hypocrisy by hiding behind social norms that always defend the dominant. In an ironic way, these attitudes reveal that conservative societies remain unchanged in their mentality at least since the time of Frankenstein's monster. The only thing that changes is that the qualities of the Others now come in even more varied and complicated category-less ways because they may appear as cyborgs, androids, transhumans, etc.

The last incident causing Edward to be blamed clarifies his and society's status for the viewers. Ironically, Edward's destiny is sealed by Jim again, whose leadership in Edward's vilification helps social hypocrisy to prevail. After feeling abused by Kim, Jim, heavily intoxicated, wants to drive to her house with a friend of his (01:27:28). Meanwhile, Kim's little brother Kevin appears on the screen on his way to his friend's house. As one would expect, the drunk driver gets extremely close to crushing Kevin, but Edward sees this situation and saves him by jumping at him. However, within seconds of saving, Edward's scissor hands unwillingly cut Kevin's face. People around come running to the shouts of Kevin, and they claim to witness Edward hurting him because it seems like Edward is harassing Kevin with his hands. Eventually, for everyone, this becomes a proof that Edward is a villain indeed. This execution with extreme prejudice has at least two perspectives of social critique:

First, society discriminates against Edward because of his defects. Edward's hands, in this case, play a crucial role as corporeally depriving him of the feeling of touch, they prevent him from being a complete human and cause people to treat him differently. Thus, because of lacking hands, Edward can be considered as someone with disabilities. It cannot be denied that people with physical impairments such as Edward have also social disadvantages, one of the most important being their negative and hurtful general perception. In his comprehensive study, Livneh interprets this malicious social perception and comes to various conclusions. By

referring to some researchers he claims that “members of society” tend to see people with disabilities as “marginal,” and “therefore, ... as an ‘outsider,’ an ‘offender,’ or as ‘different’” (1982: 339). Even so, for some other scholars such as Yamamoto, “society needs the deviates as a symbol of evil and intangible dangers” (qtd. in Livneh, 1982: 339). Edward’s neighbors seek out in him the source of evil that permeates their lives and act on their fears of the dangers that such an evil source may cause them. In other words, he represents to them all those whom societies from their start have continued to outcast and stigmatize as dangerous and evil. Upon accidentally hurting Kevin, Edward becomes irretrievably registered as an evil monster because of his hands, the source of his defects, which make him *look like* he is committing monstrous acts even when he is trying to help people. And “despite all attempts to embrace his new community, Edward remains a threat; he is always and forever marked by his metal hands as, literally, armed and dangerous” (Halberstam, 1995: 168). Consequently, people, with extreme prejudice, blame Edward without even willing to hear the truth, and thus, symbolically, the doomed status of people with disabilities is reflected through the medium of Edward’s scissor hands. Sadly, nobody acknowledges that Edward saved Kevin’s life despite scratching his face. In other words, people ascribe a negative meaning to his scissor hands, and they refuse to understand that Edward cannot be perfectly functional with such hands in various social interactions. Therefore, it is illustrated that living among normative people would always tend to work against Others with unusual conditions such as Edward since most people prefer perceiving them as outsiders rather than trying to empathize with them. In addition to the critique of the hypocrisy behind the perception of such outsiders, there is a reference in the movie to the problem of the lack of empathy disabled people suffer from. All in all, Edward’s abnormal physical condition is one of the most crucial factors in his perception as the Other.

Second, there often lurks an element of hypocrisy behind people’s accusations of and prejudice against Others. Edward feels extremely awkward after saving Kevin since people start to blame him for intentionally hurting the boy. Meanwhile, Kim asks Edward to run away for good (Burton, 1990: 01:30:00) because she knows people would never listen to him and take advantage of every possible chance to blame him since he is, as an outsider, now useless for society.

Edward then, goes back to his mansion, but people never feel satisfied with him running away because they want him dead to ensure that the monster never comes back to destroy their order, revealing their hypocrisy. When people suspect that he is alive, they get into his castle to lynch him because rather than the facts, they tend to believe in their own fabricated truths to keep them safe. Thus, a crooked and arbitrary logic follows to rationalize the blame on the monster: If some mischief happens in society, recurring more frequently upon the arrival of the outsider (monster), and people can identify the mischief via “concrete” eye-witness testimony, then the first to blame for all this would inevitably be the outsider. In the movie, what society disregards is that eye-witness testimony has no truth or scientific base and, thus, cannot always be trusted and should be treated with caution because, as the saying goes, nothing is as it seems. However, Edward’s reality and the accusations directed at him do not fit. People know deep inside that some of them fictionalized their own crimes and shifted the blame onto the outsider, and some others cast fabricated aspersions upon the outsider in order to degrade him further when he can no longer be exploited. In fact, society as a whole is the culprit, but they conceal that because they do not want their order to be broken. They just hope hypocritically that when the creature that spoiled their homogeneity disappears, everything will go back to normal. However, if they wanted to be fair, all they had to do was to look in the mirror.

Ultimately, the strong abuse and oppression Edward faces leaves him no choice but commit his one and only conscious crime. He ends up fighting Jim who trespasses upon the mansion with a gun in his hand. But rather than acting in self-defense, Edward jumps in to save Kim since Jim brutally hits her. Consequently, Edward reacts against Jim’s violence when he stabs Jim (01:34:02). From one perspective, his only crime makes him a savior rather than a true monster. However, since he finally kills somebody deliberately, regardless of the purpose, he gives society a chance to justify its accusations. Thus, he will forevermore be remembered as a true monster by society.

People stop running after Edward only when they are finally convinced that he is dead. Since Kim is aware of this and wants to keep Edward safe, she grabs a spare part scissor hand from the mansion, goes out and shows it to the people as a

proof of Edward's death. Thus, for the prejudiced society, Edward gets what he deserves. Consequently, nobody feels upset for his painful departure since he has never been perceived as a human being worth anyone's empathy.

In conclusion, not only does Edward's story tell us much about otherness, dehumanization, Gothic monsters, and monstrosity, but it also directs a strong social critique at hypocrisy rooted in society. It shows that what is defined as a monster does not necessarily have to be a truly malevolent creature since monstrosity can be an imputation on unwanted entities (outsiders) that are perceived as dangers because they disrupt the order of society. As a dangerously hybrid vilified as monster, Edward becomes a perfect candidate for such otherization. Thus, society keeps a distance from him to protect itself from having to question and change its norms. Surprisingly, however, Edward also proves to be suitable for exploitation, and, therefore, he is tolerated until he can no longer be taken advantage of. When Edward's expiration date comes, he becomes expelled and declared as the root of all evil. To cover up its atrocities, society resorts to lies, deceits, and slanders at their best. This is how Edward functions as a Gothic monster since only through his abject presence and by indirectly revealing social hypocrisy, hostility, and discrimination towards Others does he bring up social criticism. At the end of the story, Edward gets away, but since then every year, by making it snow on the neighborhood ironically via his scissor hands, he reminds the community that they need to make themselves pure, clean, and true so that they can leave their fears and prejudices aside. However, it is unclear whether society will ever learn from this though it seems very unlikely, for the production of monster stories continue as testimony to societies' lack of learning. Ultimately, when society gets into trouble, a snow-maker Other will always come to its rescue whether his/her name is Edward or a monster or anything else...

CHAPTER FOUR

SUBHUMAN AND ITS POST-HUMAN PROJECTIONS IN LESSING'S *THE FIFTH CHILD*

Although it is implicit and unnoticed at times, every now and then discrimination takes the form of dehumanization. On the surface, this dehumanization occurs when one person or a group of people fail to associate other people with their self-considered human qualities, seeing them less-than-human (Wilson and Haslam, 2012: 372). That is to say, dehumanization is a practice of otherization and discrimination, as a result of which the dehumanized find themselves denounced as non-humans, not-quite-humans, or at least not as human as the dehumanizers.

Dehumanization practices eventually bring to light humanness to be a controversial and arbitrary concept because each ingroup renders its own standards for humanness essentially right. Since societies are generally based on categories and hierarchies, the dominant elements of each society generate the most ideal human definition belonging to that specific society. This ideal human being in Western societies has been repeatedly identified as the Caucasian male person occupying the apex of human hierarchies (Rothschild, 1989: 98), denouncing the others for being no match to his capacity and power. Hurley extends this definition by referring to the instances of deliberately misinterpreted scientific or simply pseudo-scientific arguments in anthropology about evolution during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She indicates that the superiority of the white race was often rationalized through pseudo-scientific discussions within the framework of evolution, which resulted in seeing people from non-Caucasian groups as less evolved human beings. She adds that race has never been the only determinant for defining this fully evolved human since other political categories such as gender, sexual orientation, and class also had hierarchical impacts. Along with the discussions on criminal anthropology, even heterosexual males ranking among Caucasians received further elaboration, resulting in the deduction that proneness to crime was another reason why one should be perceived as less than human. As such, new categories of less-than-humanness testify, as hierarchical categories expanded, so did the definition of

the non-human. But in the long run, from the Western perspective, “this fully human subject was [and still is] the (non-criminal) white European adult male” (1996: 94), and the rest were/are some entities away from full humanness to an (un)certain degree, or simply what Hurley referred to as abhuman beings.

As there are numerous ingroup and outgroup perspectives today, and as political intentions change frequently, dehumanization has become a daily and common phenomenon. Naturally, many articles have been produced, films have been shot, and books have been written on dehumanization. Postmodern literature too, of course, has had its share of this universal phenomenon. Among all the fictional narratives, however, Lessing's *The Fifth Child* stands out as one of the most interesting works dealing with categorizations in postmodern times with a narrative focused on dehumanization. Especially thanks to its monstrous Gothic subhuman character Ben, the book makes us see society's cruel attitude towards those they perceive as the Other, the abject, and the not-quite-human, including the minorities, females, and people with abnormal conditions.

In brief, *The Fifth Child* first takes us to the radical 1960s when relatively liberal worldviews prevailed. Within that kind of setting, two conservative youngsters named Harriet and David find and fall in love with each other and eventually get married and form the Lovatts family. They decide to have *countless* children in order to strengthen and value the family they formed together. They end up with four healthy children. About this time, some people around them ask them to be careful about having more kids since it is difficult to economically and spiritually afford childcare. Just at that time, during the late 1970s, unplanned, the fifth child Ben is born and like a Gothic monster brings about distress for both parents since his conceptions. Since we infer that he is born with an unspecified physical and/or mental condition, he is denounced as subhuman. After this unpleasant intrusion of this Gothic entity, social norms, biases, hierarchies, and social practices—such as discrimination, dehumanization, abjection, and otherization—become manifest, whereby individuals are accorded their places.

Lessing's book, however, does not solely touch upon the subhuman subject and the critique of abjection and/or dehumanization even though they constitute the main issues to be discussed within the novel. Alternatively, by bringing a throwback

to the present time, the novel makes it possible to make an extraordinary and indirect assessment of the post-human subject, who is the not-quite-human of the future from the current perspective and position of mankind. As a work that examines the not-quite-human's perception in multi-dimensional ways, *The Fifth Child* not only reveals the gravity of dehumanization, but also prompts us to reflect on the definition of what it means to be human.

Many scholars have discussed the novel's authentic approach towards humanness so far and offer various perspectives. Sullivan and Greenberg, for instance, engage with the issues of animality and immortality, the latter of which "symbolically" becomes possible for human species through reproduction, and indicate that a healthy human family to have a monstrous "animalistic" offspring in the novel makes the parents unable to "deny their own animality and therefore their mortality" (2011: 115). Thus, the connections between animality and humanness, which are supposed to occupy extreme ends of a binary opposition, become manifest and threaten the much-protected human exclusivity. Uematsu, likewise, maintains that the novel "questions what it means to be human and explores the lives of those who are excluded from this society" (2014: 8). As such critical approaches have also demonstrated, the novel shows modern societies' ongoing abjection and otherization practices which declare outgroup people as less than human or not-quite-human. At the end, being "human" as a concept proves to be arbitrary because, rather than objective and scientifically proven data, its definition depends on irrational psychological impulses or socially learnt ingroup behavior that itself arises from irrational biases and prejudices. In short, the novel puts to test Western concepts of humanness by portraying an ingroup's definition of outgroup humans as non-humans. As an utterly vague concept, this aspect makes us question the interpretation of possibly numerous types of humanness and of humanity, eventually rendering the idea of human singularity meaningless.

Alternatively, from the perspective of the abject subhuman Ben,¹³ the modern mankind would be his evolutionary successors. This takes us to another discussion

¹³ One must note that Ben is not literally a subhuman but he is perceived as such. Thus, here there is a metaphoric representation of subhuman through vilification. Modern mankind, likewise, is then metaphorically in a post condition for Ben. Therefore, Nayar calls this representation "species Gothic" (2014: 158), which will be discussed later.

about humanity: if humans treat their predecessors with cruelty, how would the behavior pattern of their successors evolve? As one way to look at it from today's perspective, modern conceptualization of humanness based on discrimination and segregation makes us unable to project the future-humanness—at least for now—isolated from such categorizing features. Therefore, one cannot guarantee the post-human or post-humanity to be inclusive and unifying terms unless humanity goes through a paradigm shift regarding self-understanding. Without such shift, similar lines of segregation and discrimination will be visited upon post-human futures, from the perspective of which every “other” will be seen as subhuman. Since within the framework of evolutionary progress, *homo sapiens* provides for Ben a post-species position, it is possible to think that from the next human taxonomy, the position of *homo sapiens* will be equal to Ben's present position as lagging behind in this framework. The novel is thus a warning as to what kind of cruelties our post-human futures may reiterate if we cannot now change our discriminatory ways of thinking.

Since the future we are talking about is eons away, it is currently futile to make a projection about that with today's knowledge. It is quite possible that the future existence of humanity will involve adventures whose framework and parameters we cannot even envisage. However, what needs to be underlined here is that it is quite ironic to call our predecessors primitive and wild when comparing ourselves to them, as we commit ruthless atrocities every now and then. Although we have experienced *marvelous* changes on the façade and we have achieved a *great* cultural accumulation, we have not yet managed to control our aggressive nature, that is, our primordial/primitive side. As such, evolution may not be a process that can only produce a utopian result as we like to imagine. This story alternatively may be giving us this kind of warning, although this is not the most prominent aspect of the novel.

All in all, the Gothic story of Ben enables us to offer various perspectives regarding dehumanization and the state of humanness. Upon his intrusion into a conservative setting, conventional hierarchical norms that denounce and dehumanize Others surface. Thus, the story becomes indirectly a social critique of the conservatism, aggression, and deficiencies of the Thatcher era in which it takes place. Therefore, in order to understand the novel's approach towards humanness, it

is crucial to mention primarily the dehumanization concerning the Others in the social sphere. However, it is also worth mentioning the post-human aspect of the novel as it renders its interpretation possible in a retrospective way.

4.1. CONSERVATISM: HARBINGER OF A MONSTROUS BECOMING

The Fifth Child takes place between the 1960s and 1980s when leftist tendencies in Britain approach to an end, and a movement of returning to conservative values slowly begins. The early indicators of this shift are demonstrated at the beginning of the story with two young people, Harriet and David, coming together and attempting to revive the *long-awaited* traditional family institution. The growth of this family symbolically represents the growing conservatism in society.

Their conservatism, however, does not go unchallenged: at the early stages of the story, the values that Harriet and David's families uphold stand in stark opposition to the values that the couple stands for. In fact, their warnings about the dangers of conservatism may be foreshadowing the ominous birth of a child with a defect. Yet, conservatively presumptuous and headstrong, Harriet and David pay no attention to those warnings.

In the end, upon having Ben, their youngest child, the idyllic family life David and Harriet dream of becomes disrupted. He arrives on the scene in 1975, precisely when Thatcher becomes the leader of the Conservatives. The older Ben grows, the more difficult it becomes to deal with him, and synchronously the Conservatives take charge of the government in Britain. In that regard, symbolically, Ben, as a defective child of a conservative family, can be considered as an indicator and/or debunker of the deficiencies of social norms and traditions valued and glorified by the Conservatives.

On a minor scale, Ben seems like a punishment for David and Harriet for being extremely presumptuous. However, on a larger scale, Ben's intrusion as a Gothic character reveals many a hypocrisy, deficiency, and corruption in society, which disturbingly culminate in the rejection and dehumanization of this character.

4.1.1. Punishment for Being Conservatively Presumptuous

In *The Fifth Child*, people around Harriet and David identify them as “conservative, old-fashioned, not to say obsolescent; timid, hard to please” (Lessing, 1988: 3). Although they live in the relatively liberal 1960s, they prefer rather strictly defined codes of behavior, and “their [traditionalist] attitude to sex” seems in stark contrast to the general spirit of the age (4). People of the 1960s perceive both Harriet and David as if they are two people coming from the past living among them because they “are alienated from the dominant cultural beliefs of their generation (that of the radical 1960s) and are not interested in ... self-expressionistic careers and a sexually liberated, hedonistic lifestyle” (Sullivan and Greenberg, 2011: 124). Harriet and David seem to be harbingers of the arrival of a new age of conservatism, an age where the worst fears of these liberal-minded people will be realized. That is to say, if the liberal people in the 1960s perceive some conservative values as ultimately old-fashioned, the haunting of those values in the 1980s for them means a journey to the further past rather than progression towards the future. This critique seems to be establishing the main framework of the story to be discussed.

The most outstanding early foreshadowing of this portentous future can be found in their relatives criticizing David and Harriet for having too many children (Lessing, 1988: 8). Especially the parents of David and Harriet become worried about the future of their own kids and feel insecure about whether they could economically and socially manage to deal with so many children. David’s mother Molly feels she needs to lecture Harriet and David about the responsibilities and troubles of having that many kids (13). Harriet’s mother Dorothy also warns the married couple about their decisions, but they get tired of these pieces of advice and say that they are civilized European adults who are responsible for their own decisions. Dorothy indicates that the case is about knowing one’s limits and accuses the couple of inconsistency because they want at once to have too many children like irresponsible third world citizens and to be prosperous like Europeans. In other words, she implies that a conservative anachronism has no place in late twentieth century Europe anymore. She also indicates that they are economically “in the middle,” so they should know their limits and act within those limits (16). But since,

as David's father Frederick says, the couple is ultimately "wrong-headed" (11), the efforts of their parents prove futile. They are, however, unaware that their headstrong attitude will coincidentally have bad consequences since these warnings will turn out to be the indications of Ben's arrival, as the punishing Gothic monster.

Harriet and David start having children continuously, four times in a row, even when they are economically insecure. After a while, they realize the worsening circumstances and intend to give a break to this. But at an unexpected moment, despite being "as careful as" they could get (58), Harriet becomes pregnant for the fifth time (31). This unplanned pregnancy causes "a monstrous becoming" to arrive. Afterwards, a growing anxiety dominates the scene, disturbing the Lovatts family and their surroundings as if it is their punishment, the consequence of their stubborn conservative rebellion and ignorance. Insecure with the pregnancy, Harriet feels like "this new foetus was poisoning her" (32). In the end, it seems as if, with their child Ben arriving as what they would call a horrific non-human, the Lovatts become punished for being extremely presumptuous.

4.1.2. Gothic Intrusion of the Monster, Subversion of the Idyllic Family & Surfacing of Roles and Hierarchies

The narration darkens as the Gothic monster suddenly intrudes into the world of the Lovatts. As an undesired entity, he serves as a representative of the socially otherized ones and functions to reveal society's tacit discrimination and hypocrisy. He thus proves to be a total Gothic monster: an intruder causing the repressed to surface with the horror he brings.

It is commonly known that just like Ben, Gothic monsters often appear as agents of terror "in order to present the underside of our cultural and social values" (Beville, 2009: 129). They "embody the contradictions and ambiguities of our beings" (39), and thus, their exposal forces the repressed within us come to light, causing disorder and anxiety. In other words, they reveal the defects of the dominant order of any time via their intrusion. Alternatively, as abject beings, they draw attention to the condition of the abjected and the process of abjection, by telling us the "stories of the oppression of ... all groups forced to the margins of power by a

patriarchal culture” (Crow, 2014: xviii) as they, like Ben, represent those who are unwanted in society.

It is small wonder that Ben makes both parents extremely disappointed with his intrusion, but most importantly, this intrusion reveals the true colors of people, by shifting the social mood from a somewhat mild-mannered, friendly, and vigorous one to that of a conservatively and utterly conformist, hierarchical, oppressive, hypocritical, and dull environment.

The most obvious change occurs with the treatment of Harriet. Before Ben, Harriet was treated as a valuable and respected member of the family, and David used to be a dedicated husband. After giving birth to a monstrous entity, however, Harriet is blamed by the family members while David draws himself away from responsibility, dedicating himself only to his “real children” (Lessing, 1988: 90). Moreover, he denies Ben and says “he certainly isn’t” his child (74); Ben is then only Harriet’s son since he “was [solely] Harriet’s responsibility” (90) from the start. Only Harriet is to blame because in traditional environments “when the child is not ‘healthy,’ it comes down to the responsibility of the mother” (Uematsu, 2014: 12). David, just like some other family members, directs “condemnation, and criticism, and dislike” at Harriet. It is Ben who “cause[s] these emotions, bring[ing] them forth out of people into the light” (Lessing, 1988: 59) as he changes the flow of the story via his arrival. Harriet does not remain silent in the face of such attitude and says to David, “I suppose in the old times, in primitive societies, this was how they treated a woman who’d given birth to a freak. As if it was her fault. But we are supposed to be civilised!” (60). David, however, seems to hold onto the traditional roles and social norms, valuing family affairs and expecting healthy children from his wife in order to become satisfied with his social condition and transmit his heritage into the future. Therefore, Harriet’s “body is supposed to be the mediator of society’s happiness” (Uematsu, 2014: 6). Demonstrating Harriet’s failure to function as such, “Lessing makes the mother into ‘the other’ in the eyes of her society” (14).

Overall, this sequence of events suggests to us that still in the late 20th century, we are primitive since only the mother is expected to hold the ultimate responsibility for childcare and anything related to her child’s existence until adulthood while the father shows limited contribution and holds almost no

accountability. In that regard, Ben helps expose cruel social hierarchies and traditional roles. Despite their presence before him, no one in the family expressed any disturbance by the existence of such roles because both parents were already traditionalists. With a problematic child appearing, however, the cruelty underneath the roles of parents surfaces as the father withdraws himself from the scene and leaves the mother alone with her—so to speak—sin. In other words, when everything is alright, people tend to see the world through rose-colored glasses, but in the face of difficulties, they evade responsibility by conveniently finding scapegoats who are embodiments of discriminative social norms.

Because of Ben, David, the white male, categorically dehumanizes Harriet for failing to deliver her duty to bring a healthy child to this world as *David's* offspring. Eventually via Ben, Harriet gets announced as unfit or dysfunctional to be a fully human, because from her female body, she gave birth to Ben, a not-quite-human. Ben, here, is just an instrument to reveal Harriet's position in the gender hierarchy as a female. Only one "failure" to perform her social role causes her to receive total rejection. Although Harriet had given birth to four other healthy children, none of them prevent her ultimate degradation. Most likely, if Ben did not exist, people would treat Harriet as if she was fully human, but Ben's arrival proves that Harriet's humane treatment in his absence had been provisional, always at risk to be nullified if she fails to deliver any of her traditional duties as a woman.

In order to stay away from distress and to experience life in Ben's absence again for a while, the Lovatts decide to go to France on holiday without him. Harriet realizes that when Ben is not around, she seems to be happy and she believes that his absence grants her the idyllic "family life" back again (Lessing, 1988: 65). When they come back, however, Harriet once again finds herself in misery and oppression. It becomes clear that ignoring the reality and acting as if things do not exist does not give anyone a long-term escape.

Ben causes other people's behavior to change as well as the dynamics of family life. The extended family no longer enjoys the time they spend around the Lovatts because Ben's presence disturbs everyone even though he causes no purposeful harm to them. When Ben was around, "the house was not the same; there was a constraint and a wariness in everybody" (60).

Ultimately, the family decides to send Ben to an institution (71), and for a while the other four children seem happy to Harriet (77). As such, Harriet hopes things would change if Ben was not among them. However, sooner or later, it turns out that the ambiance did not really change for Harriet and eventually for the Lovatts since she already had got herself stigmatized and dehumanized by the family. Even after Ben is sent away, she does not stop feeling guilty; she often thinks about him and wonders what he might be doing all by himself. It is as if Ben's presence changes the very essence of her world and shakes the foundations that she had thought unshakeable, so now nothing seems as it once had been even though things have some ring of normalcy. In Ben's absence, for example, David treats Harriet carefully and tenderly in order to gain her trust again, but Harriet already realizes his unnatural attitude and thinks that he approaches her "as if" she was "ill" (77). Underneath his tenderness, David also cannot restore his perception of Harriet back to the old ways, for he does not trust Harriet anymore and feels alerted, thinking that she would surrender to her feelings of guilt and pity as a woman, a vulnerable and exploitable entity (77). In that sense, David perceives Harriet as a not-quite-human, a female who fails to be reasonable by surrendering to her emotions.

As if confirming David, Harriet *succumbs* to her feelings and begins to feel even guiltier for sending Ben, just like many people regardless of their gender would normally do. In a way, she becomes degraded by her husband and environment into a being controlled, not by reason, but by her feelings and instincts, like less-than-humans or non-humans. Like them, she is exiled from the plane of the rational, the exclusive site of a fully evolved human. What is ironic here is that Harriet's feeling of guilt, a naturally humane characteristic, intensifies her position of being a not-quite-human. This implies that the concept of humanity is defined arbitrarily by the biases of the dominant mindset.

In an attempt to endorse David's doubts, Harriet brings Ben back. After saving Ben from the institution, Harriet deals "the family a mortal wound" (93) and destroys the dreams of a happy family life. Nobody seems to accept this terrible decision of hers for bringing the monster permanently back. Each tries to find a way to leave this mortally wounded family atmosphere. When they grow up, a couple of her other children decide to leave the house to "go to boarding-school" because of

Ben, and “this ... [goes] against everything Harriet and David believe in” (96). Once the monster becomes permanent, the family has no longer any pretense of happiness. It all gets destroyed and shattered completely, along with its conservative values.

The vanishing of the conservative family values is not the only consequence of Ben’s intrusion. Many other corruptions become exposed upon the haunting of this monster, such as the crooked political and social institutions in the United Kingdom, the social norms and hierarchies that create discrimination against the Others, and social hypocrisy, all contributing to a critique of the 1980s conservative values.

4.2. TOWARDS A SOCIAL CRITIQUE: DEHUMANIZATION, DISCRIMINATION & OTHERIZATION

Throughout the novel, the elements of dehumanization are especially exhibited via the treatment of Ben and Harriet. Both Ben and Harriet are perceived as not-quite-humans, but while Ben is rather a subhuman, Harriet is not-quite-humanized as a woman with an unqualified body, one who *needs* to know her place in society. In this context, the concept of humanness and the arbitrariness of its meaning become the focal concern in the novel.

An alternative reading of the novel focusing on Ben proposes that the sudden injection of a subhuman into the modern world indirectly brings along a kind of species-based criticism because if Ben is a subhuman for us, we would be his successors in evolution and thus constitute a future society for Ben. Nayar partially defines the novel as “species Gothic” as it focuses on the completely uncanny throwback monster Ben. According to him, Ben reminds us that we are the continuation of an evolution process in which he occupies a subhuman category. For this reason, he is perceived as something to be detested by the modern humans who are ashamed of their past from which they have long wished to disconnect themselves. When Ben shows up, he traumatizes the mankind as he “evokes dread as the uncanny ‘human’ (or humanoid), at once strange and familiar” (2014: 159). He represents the haunting of long-vanished, antique, and disgusting qualities of our primitive predecessors since he carries “the return of the repressed gene” (159).

Therefore, he is human, if at all, only to some uncertain degree. In that regard, “If the Gothic traditionally dwells on the arcane and the atavistic (ancient evil, spirits, the undead), as does the uncanny, then in Lessing’s novel what we see is a species Gothic in which another race has returned in the form of Ben” (159).

Thus, along with the speciesist, as it were, treatment of the subhuman, the novel might be giving us a glimpse of how humanity has in fact remained (and possibly will remain) primitive. We do not yet know how we will evolve into the future and will not know it for many millennia to come, but aggression—especially against the Other—seems to be a constant feature for us so far in the process. In a sense, the novel might be cautioning us about our biases to our real damnation that might remain into far future. Such indication, however, might help us spot our misperceptions of the self and the Other, thus enabling us to envisage a post-human (and posthuman) future freed from biased and discriminatory conceptions.

The novel, however, ends where no such light is visible yet. As the conservative values prevail towards the end of the story, the ill treatment of Ben and Harriet becomes even more noticeable, giving way to a social criticism of the time, because in the shallowest sense, this novel is ultimately “an allegory and criticism towards utilitarian family policies by Thatcherism” (Uematsu, 2014: 5). Nonetheless, if we are to outline a general critique of the Thatcher era England, we can see that it is somewhat like the American Gilded Age: on the façade, a fair and prosperous community that is devoted to family values is promoted, but under the skin lurks a corrupted, discriminatory, bigoted, and biased system. The most important factor underlying this discrepancy is the insistently hypocritical attitude of the creature we call *homo sapiens* towards its own as well as other species.

4.2.1. A Critique of the Postmodern Society in the United Kingdom

The critique of 1980s British society, namely the Thatcher era, and its conservative policies is needed in order to understand how otherization and dehumanization takes place in the novel.

The most striking criticism is to be directed at the old-fashioned values favoring the idyllic family institution. In the 1980s, “The Conservatives accused” the

policies of the liberal 1960s of “eroding” the “family values” and eventually advocated restoring these when they came to power (Uematsu, 2014: 11). The representation of this conservative mindset in the novel is realized through the Lovatts, the conservative family that holds onto the values of the past. They struggled through the liberal 1960s and insisted on starting a family relying on anachronistic conservative ideals which re-appeared in the 1980s. Thus, for the entirety of the story, the Lovatts, stand out as the idyllic family in favor of “The ‘return to family values’” endorsed by conservative Thatcher policies (Sullivan and Greenberg, 2011: 125). The novel criticizes the desire to bring back these obsolete ideals through the intrusion of Ben, a defected child growing into the 1980s. As a throwback, and with all his “dysfunctional” existence, Ben appears to be the incarnation of the retrograding conservative practices. As this dysfunctional kid grows, the old liberalism in Britain is challenged and reversed. Ben’s growth also parallels the unmanageable and disturbing growth of conservatism in English politics and social life in the 1980s. In a nutshell, he symbolically indicates that the return to conservative policies is not the best way around, and through his intrusion “the plot of the happy family, applauded by British society especially in the eighties, is debunked and challenged” (Uematsu, 2014: 8).

It is noteworthy that Ben’s status as a disabled individual is never medically recognized and reported. It is in the absence of such scientific support that the perfect-looking extended family of the Lovatts decides to send him to an institution, and they do it with ease since apparently “These things can be arranged” in the United Kingdom (Lessing, 1988: 71). In other words, the Lovatts take advantage of certain vulnerabilities in society to get rid of their unwanted child and thus show us that the bureaucratic system and social order are utterly exploitable. Moreover, even the most educated people, the doctors, get involved in this deceptiveness (74) without ever being accused of this misdeed. Such easy banishment of some individuals proves that some institutions turn a blind eye to deception in Britain.

There is a character in the book who expresses this hypocrisy without hesitation, even if she appears for a short time: Harriet's sister Angela. In the entire family, only Angela reacts to Ben’s unconscionable banishment by labeling it as “Typical upper-class ruthlessness” (72). Not only does she point out that families

with economic power can bribe whatever institution they want with their money, but she also despises the upper-class people for remorselessly and easily discarding infant family members from their families when they think the offspring is not qualified enough to represent their family. Angela eventually reveals the common hypocrisy rooted in society and concealed behind the grandiose-looking wealth and welfare when she says to her family: “‘Sometimes when I’m with you, I understand everything about this country’” (74). Whatever makes the extended family of the Lovatts strong is that they belong to the highest rank of human hierarchies as expressed in the “powerful, if nowhere registered, yardstick, the English class system” (18).

Another institutional critique appears in the discrimination against the people with special needs. Even when they are kids, those people, like Ben, are regarded as the unwanted entities, the Others, monsters, and non-humans, and they are excluded from the social sphere. Verbally, for instance, those with down syndrome are commonly referred to as “mongols” (22), which is not only a racist but also a discriminative reference. Another striking example shows up when Harriet goes to take back Ben from the institution to where he was sent. She witnesses that all the kids with special needs are placed in filthy cots, and they are treated as if they are beasts. Harriet herself even literally calls them “monsters” (81) to attest to their situation in society. Yet, Harriet would not even be aware of the situation of those kids if she did not visit the institution because society does not show or mention their terrible condition, for their not-quite-humanness is taken for granted. Nonetheless, society tends to support the “isolation and segregation of disabled persons from the remaining population” since they are perceived as inferior people just like the other “marginal” groups and minorities (Livneh, 1982: 342).

After Ben is brought back home by Harriet, David feels distressed and indicates that in order to continue as a healthy family, they should have ignored Ben’s condition (Lessing, 1988: 87). Obviously, for David, ignoring him would make the family ease their conscience since it would make Ben’s suffering invisible. This approach suggests that people from the higher ranks of society prefer to disregard the misery of the Others, and by doing so, they pretend there is no suffering taking place.

In addition to people with disabilities, Ben represents “vulgar” people from lower social ranks in society. As a not-quite-human Ben is shown to get along well only with John and his crew, the unemployed, rebellious, and lower-class people hired by the Lovatts to take care of him (91). John and his crew are described as aggressive and rough characters (91-94) who are expected to better understand the language of fierce animal-like monsters such as Ben’s. Being with Ben contributes to the self-worth of John and his crew because despite being regarded as “aggressors” from lower classes, with Ben, they feel they do not constitute *the lowest* part of the hierarchies. They accept Ben as a companion but treat him more like “a pet” (94), some sort of lowly beast, or “a puppy that needed training” (91). Their treatment towards Ben imitates how they are treated by the power holders, a revelation of the tragic position of the people with special needs in society. Compared to the Lovatts, however, John and his group could communicate with Ben a lot better for they are a lot more “associated with the hostile world” (Sullivan and Greenberg, 2011: 128) and its rage and aggression. That is why, from the perspective of the Lovatts and other ingroup people, vulgar crews like John’s and deviants like Ben are (almost) equally not-quite-humans.

Even though John leaves the neighborhood and Ben for a better life, an opportunity that Ben will never have, the quality of Ben’s social circle does not alter a lot. As he grows older and almost reaches adolescence, he roams around freely while some of his friends rise in the social ladder. Yet again and again, he finds himself a family-like companion group which consists of the abjects of society like himself. As a “cultural other” (Sullivan and Greenberg, 2011: 128), he seems to have “a sense of belonging his parents could never give him among the ‘outsiders’ (the immigrant and criminal groups)” (129). He ends up being somewhat equalized with the members of this outcast group, who are ultimately unwanted beings in society. The reader eventually is exposed to the fact that immigrants, (vilified) aggressors, and those with criminal tendencies are considered as dysfunctional not-quite-human entities contaminating the social order with their existence, just as Ben does. Their place is implied to be amongst the other fellow less-than-humans in society, isolated from the more evolved ones. Thus, in general terms, Ben proves to be “the monster who represents others in society” (Uematsu, 2014: 19).

All in all, through Ben's dysfunctional existence, the concerns of the period are subtly presented to the reader. On the one hand, his monstrous Gothic intrusion symbolically seems to set the end of a liberal era and start of the dysfunctional conservative ideals of the past. While this new era offers much hope for rekindling of the glorious past and reviving the “virility of the Empire” (Sullivan and Greenberg, 2011: 129), it turns out to be nothing more than the failure of the attempts at revitalizing the outdated conservative mindset. Moreover, rather than making it dissolve, this conformist and nationalistic effort helped surface what had been repressed in the entire country. It was seen that conservative politics did not help solve any fundamental social or economic problems, and problems such as “unemployment, immigration and crime” that could not be eliminated became the focal concerns of the era (129). Thatcherism and its conservatism failed simply because they mistakenly regarded consequences or symptoms of deeper problems as reasons themselves. In accordance with this decline, society continued to marginalize and discredit Others in a ruthless hypocrisy, this time heavily adorned with conformist conservative practices. In that regard, Ben’s connection “with foreign, deviant forces characterizes *The Fifth Child* as a product of Thatcher-era Britain” (129). As such, Ben reveals the abysmal condition of the Others (the abjects) in society through his association with them.

4.2.2. Dehumanization of the Abjected and Social Intolerance

In *The Fifth Child*, Ben is almost unanimously perceived as if he is a subhuman, an issue continuously mentioned since his birth until the end of the story. Having a child with special needs drives the Lovatts into such terrifying grief that they perceive this child as an abject entity, something they cannot correlate with themselves, or something they refuse to treat as their offspring due to its imperfections. Therefore, they identify Ben as a subhuman, some primitive anthropomorphic yet animalistic entity that is not-quite-human, but undesirably human in essence. Oftentimes they feel disturbed by Ben’s unprojected existence as they do not consider him as a subject like themselves. Their distress and disappointment lead to the dehumanization and abjection of this child because in

Kristevan terms, “The abject is the violence of mourning for an ‘object’ that has always already been lost” (Kristeva, 1982: 15).

Explicit dehumanization enters the domain of the Lovatts rapidly. We witness this case via Harriet’s depictions of Ben. Even when Harriet was pregnant with Ben, she starts describing him as her “enemy” and “savage thing inside her” without even seeing him (Lessing, 1988: 40-41). She literally wants to call him a “monster” (47) after his birth since “He did not look like a baby at all” (48). At the early stages, Harriet’s verbal dehumanization of Ben is mixed with a sense of pity as she calls this “creature” some “poor little beast” (49). However, as time passes, she grows wearier, and her labeling gradually becomes more dehumanizing with her more frequently used epithets such as “a troll,” “a goblin” (49), a “nasty little brute” (54), or something with “inhuman eyes” (96).

It is important to note that it is not just Harriet but all the people around and within the Lovatts who see Ben as something less than human. For instance, after Ben’s deportation, Ben’s brother Luke says his parents sent “Ben away because he isn’t really one of” them (76), virtually a non-human. The most hostile of the Lovatts, David leads the family in dehumanizing Ben, calling him a Martian (74). Other people around Ben such as John and his crew, the prospective caretakers of Ben, call him “Alien..., Hobbit, and Gremlin” (94). Therefore, dehumanization here is not a personal attitude, rather a social one, showing us how people can become blinded or turn a blind eye to discrimination when they are all surrounded with it. Although Ben is publicly dehumanized, the character who represents this attitude in most detail is Harriet because most of the book is composed of her monologues and dialogues.

Ben shows, according to the Lovatts, some aggressive, barbaric, and animalistic behaviors. For instance, when he is sucking milk from his mother, he roars “with rage” (51). He is extremely powerful and relentlessly fierce for his age. He even kills two pets during his early childhood, and he is described as if he is a carnivore hunting for prey (62). He bites one of his classmates, breaks her arm (101), and lashes at his brother Paul to hurt him (109). As a result, the Lovatts self-justify their claims about Ben being an animal-like entity.

Ironically, however, Ben makes us realize that we are indeed nothing different than how we perceive him. Scholars Sullivan and Greenberg perceive the intrusion of monstrous Ben as “a potent reminder of human creatureliness” (2011: 114). On the one hand, they indicate that our (healthy) children make us feel safe about transmitting our genes to the upcoming generations safely, making us symbolically immortal. On the other hand, they claim that humans tend to avoid correlating themselves with animals, perceive animals as mortal and inferior entities, and “seek refuge in symbolic constructions” such as immortality (114) in order to highlight their difference from the animals. Therefore, since Ben, the undeniably animalistic creature, comes into the world as an offspring of humans, he prevents his parents from carrying their genes healthily to the future, reminding them that they will not last forever. In fact, Ben’s animality shows us that we are not a superior species as we are mortal beings like the rest, even though we do not want to confront this truth. Therefore, Ben is an indicator “of our doomed nature as procreating animals” (122), and alternatively, he “is a perfect example of the abject as he blurs the line between existing natural categories” of animal and human (120).

Interestingly, Ben’s treatment and dehumanization reveals another hypocrisy: we are in fact as aggressive as we think non-humans are while we refuse to be called non-human. Oftentimes, humans deny or ignore their evolutionary past and connection with the primitive subhumans, correlate atrocities, aggression and/or evil with primitiveness but, at the same time, show ridiculous amount of atrocities, aggression, and/or evil. In the novel, we see such attitudes indicated through the dehumanization of Ben, who is essentially a human being but called literally a subhuman when compared with people. Sometimes he is called a “Neanderthal” (Lessing, 1988: 53), and sometimes a throwback to predecessors of *homo sapiens*, some other “kind” to be detested (70). Harriet, for instance, takes Ben to a doctor to get him diagnosed as something preferably other than human so that she can justify her dehumanization of Ben. She asks the doctor whether Ben is a human (105) and the doctor replies, “You think Ben is a throwback?” (106), feeling Harriet’s disgust yet not denying her completely. Harriet even dreams about getting Ben killed in some ways, while David literally perceives Ben as something that deserves to die. The treatment that Ben receives even from his parents testifies to the human

detestation towards their primitive predecessors, the subhuman which was once them. Ironically, as we see in the novel, humans do not seem to get rid of their so-called *archaic* side today as *homo sapiens* since they still show it in aggressive behavior. The only obvious difference probably is that, unlike subhumans, contemporary humans try to conceal the surfacing of their archaic attitudes behind the glorious culture they built, claiming themselves as civilized. Nonetheless, “Ben is a disturbing reminder that all humans are animals at base, evolved in a world of violence and death” (Sullivan and Greenberg, 2011: 121).

The novel gives a clear picture of this concept with well-fitting examples. For instance, seeing Ben as animalistic, people treat and describe him as terrible and primitive. As if he is a fierce animal, Ben is isolated from other members of the extended family when they are around (Lessing, 1988: 59). He gets locked into a room “like a prisoner” (59), and the room is unlocked only to give him his basic needs to survive. Ben stays out of the boundaries of the civilized even when he grows up, sometimes staying in the dark attic and “staring up at dim sunlight” (116). Harriet only invites him to *civilization* through language, by calling out his name, “putting into the word her human claim on him, and on this wild dangerous attic where he had gone back into a far-away past that did not know human beings” (116). While caring for Ben’s basic needs, Harriet just tries to ease her conscience because she inwardly wishes for his disappearance, or death (60-63). Yet no one in society sees any problem in the treatment of Ben as such, as if it is the human way of handling his condition.

All in all, Ben, as a Gothic intruder, proves to be an uncanny and abject entity. He triggers both familiar and unfamiliar feelings in people around him. Harriet, for instance, tries to empathize with Ben to a certain extent and feels pity for him because nobody seems to like him including herself (56). Moreover, despite knowing that Ben is a child of a human being, people look at him at first “puzzled” followed by a feeling of “fear” (57). Almost everyone feels uneasy next to Ben, and avoid seeing him as much as possible. Nonetheless, Ben, an abject entity as a whole, demonstrates different layers of society’s treatment towards the abjected.

4.2.3. Does Giving Birth to a Monster Make a Mother a Monster?

In *The Fifth Child*, conservative mindset's support for social categorizations and hierarchies and its grave consequences are exposed via Harriet's treatment by the people around her. Essentially, she is perceived almost as dysfunctional as Ben due to giving birth to him. This perception, however, reveals many of the social expectations from her, which she has mostly failed to deliver. Therefore, her position in society as a mother is eventually denounced.

Harriet ultimately becomes dehumanized exactly the same way she had previously dehumanized Ben. In the early stages of the novel, unaware that she will be subject to discrimination in the future, Harriet, as a conservative individual, explicitly ranks people in hierarchies. For instance, she, in a racist way, describes people with down syndromes as Mongols, considering them inferior to her own stock (22). Ironically, for Harriet, social norms and hierarchies have been ordinary as long as they have not negatively affected her. But it becomes a painful experience for her to undergo a similar kind of discrimination she had previously made. From the moment Harriet gives birth to the monstrous child, or from the moment the monster enters the domain of the Lovatts, the whole family's attitude changes, and she faces conservative social norms and hierarchies in such a strict way that they cause her to be treated as unfit. As a result, Harriet feels a lot less valuable as an abjected woman who cannot deliver her primary (maternal) duty, which is, giving birth to a healthy child to ensure the continuation of the father's lineage. While her case demonstrates the functioning of hierarchies and social expectations in society, it also alternatively, criticizes human hypocrisy about being exposed to difficulties: They realize the gravity of discrimination only when they taste its bitter fruits themselves as Harriet does.

As previously mentioned, Harriet becomes treated as a less valuable entity than traditionally assigned roles designate for women and mothers who contribute to patriarchal society by their reproductive capacities. Harriet first fails in this role. Thus, whatever had been kept repressed about her not-quite-human potential comes out with a vengeance. Therefore, her decision to take Ben back from the institution functions as another milestone in her social reception and perception, for this event

translates in the public hierarchical thinking into her *failure* to use her mind and submission to her emotions. It is at this point that she becomes perceived and labeled as a legitimate not-quite-human by her family. That is why, during the process of taking Ben back from the institution, Harriet realizes that discrimination and dehumanization against the Others has calamitous consequences. Not only does she realize that the institution is abysmal, but she can now empathize with the Others in some ways as a person degraded even by her family. This realization comes to her when she sees Ben not as a totally alien Other but as an extension of herself and takes him back home (83). Harriet's acceptance of Ben is first and foremost a behavior of a conscientious person. Her conscience, which had been silenced by social norms and hierarchies for years, finds an outlet with a sudden awareness of the biases behind hierarchies and her own lower status within them. Consequently, the not-quite-humanness of both Harriet and Ben—despite being of different degrees—is explicitly manifested. They are doomed to remain inferior to white Caucasian male person singlehandedly representing the fully evolved full human condition.

As soon as Harriet brings Ben back home, she is accused and questioned by her family. Harriet innocently implies that if David saw Ben's condition in the institution, he would also show some sympathy, but David gives an *unexpected* answer to Harriet and says, "I was careful not to see" (87). This was not the David she had known since the beginning. For David, keeping Ben away is the logical thing to do. Thus, by cold-blooded rationality, the superior trait of the white male person, David blames Harriet for not being as conforming and reasonable, eventually dehumanizing her further.

Harriet realizes that her dehumanization has not started recently; rather she had been facing this for a long time especially after Ben's birth: "I feel I've been blamed for Ben ever since he was born. I feel like a criminal. I've always been made to feel like a criminal" (104). She thus exposes the social expectations and oppression exercised over her for being a (dysfunctional) mother. For bringing Ben back, Harriet is labeled as being "irresponsible," "selfish," "crazy," "[a] scapegoat," and "the destroyer of her family" (117). Despite contributing to Ben's existence as much as Harriet, David, on the other hand, as a full human, receives sympathy from the people around him for having to deal with Ben again.

Ironically, David blames Harriet further for having the mindset of primitive dark ages that regard having a monstrous child like Ben as divine punishment “[f]or presuming” (117). As if he does not scapegoat Harriet like a witch, David thinks it was just a coincidence, and indicates that Harriet’s superstitious mindset would lead to “Pogroms and punishments, witch-burnings and angry Gods” (118). He never mentions that modern age has been producing its mass scale pogroms, witch hunts, and other such atrocities so much so that earlier ones are overshadowed by their grandeur. Just as the pre-moderns hid behind the discourse of religion to justify their atrocities, modern humans use reason in order to do the same things. Such cases reveal that the dominant can manipulate rationality (and language) at their own will. Thus, the dominant’s reliance on its full human qualities (such as being reasonable) turns out to be ridiculously groundless.

In the end, Harriet seems to give up because she cannot cope with the overwhelming oppression on her. She says that if she did not bring Ben back, “so many people, would have been happy” (131). She accepts her position and admits that she could not stop feeling sympathy for Ben. However, she does not necessarily feel regretful. Thus, Ben becomes just a medium to show how cruelly society functions in the face of violations of its norms and expectations.

4.2.4. A Glimpse into the Unknown: Our Post-Human Successors

As previously mentioned, Ben becomes labeled and perceived as a subhuman since his birth, and this perception towards Ben is verbalized continuously until the end of the story. Almost every five pages in the novel Ben is called something less than human with some fancy depictions such as an ancient type that “lived on the earth once” (114), or “a race that reached its apex thousands and thousands of years before humanity” (130); or with literal references such as a Neanderthal or a subhuman. Almost nobody doubts Ben’s subhumanness, and thus, he is treated as if he literally is a primitive subhuman. In that regard, Ben can symbolically be considered as a simulation of a subhuman species thrown into modern times. Therefore, modern humans function as successors for Ben in the evolutionary sequence.

Essentially, when subjected to categorizations, Ben represents any otherized and disapproved person in society who due to his/her marginal qualities. Thus, as an otherized entity (a subhuman or a dehumanized person), he functions to reveal people's attitude towards the Other. This attitude is commonly hostile, aggressive, and despising.

The otherness of Ben, however, is quite rare because he is essentially a child of humans at the top of social hierarchy, yet he is still an Other. Although people at first *try* to identify Ben as part of their human ingroup, their habits of categorization—in this case from the perspective of ableism—prevents them from doing so because Ben's appearance convinces them that he is characteristically an outcast (a subhuman). In fact, Ben's existence in their midst becomes a problem for the members of "full" humans. That is why ingroup people are quite disappointed with his intrusion, which becomes a traumatic experience for them.

Especially Harriet's relationship with Ben gives away not only some indications of humans' attitude towards the subhuman Other but also, from the perspective of humans, a subhuman's perception of them. As soon as Ben was born, for instance, Harriet wants to establish eye contact with him, "the creature who, ... had been trying to hurt her" during her pregnancy, in order to get a response from him, "but there was no recognition" (48), meaning that we are unrecognized by what is considered subhuman. Harriet thinks Ben neither recognizes her, nor understands her, but she expects him to adapt to the world of humans in a heartbeat. When humans deceive and finally convince themselves that this creature is not one of them, they put some distance between him and themselves because they become disturbed by his uncanniness, resulting in a hostile attitude towards him. For example, Harriet observes that even the doctor that saw Ben stares at him with a "feeling, which was horror at the alien, rejection by the normal for what was outside the human limit" (106). Lessing thus criticizes humankind for being anthropocentric and hostile towards what is considered non-human. Such a case also puts in question the whole idea of human progress according to which the more advanced humans are, the less aggressive and more civilized they become. Nonetheless, if *homo sapiens* are successors for Ben, then this successor type proves to be still primitive, not very much isolated from such traits like hostility and aggression. As indicated by Nayar,

“The horror therefore is not in Ben, but in how we, as humans, see our past as a radical Other, in our intolerance for this Other and, finally, in our refusal to recognize the Other-which-is-us” (2014: 160). In other words, not only do we carry the antiquity of this Other within us, but the human tendency to stay away from the Other is in a way our self-denial, a denial of our nature. The novel, therefore, alternatively implies that humans are alienated even from their own essence as they tend to disregard it.

Of course, this novel does not give us a transhumanist post-human vision in its literal and linear meaning. We cannot see a projection of the post-human form, meaning that the novel does not picture or portray our successors of the future. However, by playing with our understanding of linear time (that is, by integrating a subhuman into the present), the novel gives us the opportunity to make some inferences about our post-human perception. In the novel, from an alternative point of view, modern humans form a community that might represent the successor (post) species for subhuman Ben. This approach enables us to reinterpret and query how much change has actually occurred from our previous phase to *homo sapiens*. Not only does the story, then, question whether we interiorize, celebrate, or reject being an extension of our subhuman form, but it also makes us think whether our aggressive attitude towards the otherized is a heritage from our subhuman primitiveness. In other words, the novel signals to us that although *homo sapiens*, the present successors of the subhuman, are different from their predecessors in many ways, they still have hostile and aggressive attitudes and hence a primitive demeanor. In this context, this story questions the limits of humanity and points out that like their subhuman predecessors, humans, in their way of becoming post-human, are likely to transmit some of their bad qualities from their current state to the future.

Here, it might be useful to further discuss how the post-human phenomenon has been (re-)conceptualized so that Ben’s representation of the present and future can be better understood: In our modern world, with recent accumulation of technological interference into human bodies, it seems inevitable not to be touched by technology, especially thanks to transhumanization and cyborgization efforts. Therefore, the post-human of the future, if it ever will exist, might be some entity that benefited from mechanical and technological supplementation. However, the

advancement does not necessarily have to result in an improved condition that is cherished by transhumanists, and the post-human could just end up in a worse scenario than expected. There is, moreover, not just one post-human that could emerge in the future. Of these different modes of post-humanity “some modes of posthuman being are not worthwhile to pursue and some may in fact be dangerous” (Bardziński, 2014: 107).

Even Bostrom, the author of “In Defense of Posthuman Dignity,” acknowledges two possible and most prominent negative outcomes of the post-human issue by indicating that first, “the state of being posthuman might in itself be degrading, so that by becoming posthuman we might be harming ourselves. Another is that posthumans might pose a threat to ‘ordinary’ humans” (2005: 204). Though he advocates the transhumanist ideals of chasing a post-human future, he does not rule out these possible drawbacks. Such discussions make it clear that the post-human is merely a projection, and it does not necessarily mean it will function in the desired way. As Hauskeller succinctly indicates, “The problem with the transhumanist dream is that its realisation requires a *radical* transformation of the human condition, and radical transformations, and even all *attempts* at radical transformation, are typically fraught with dangers and uncertainties” (2016: 29).

One way to understand this species-based discussion is to take a look at our condition. Modern *homo sapiens*, for instance, is a successor of what we would call subhumans. Although there are many aspects that have changed in the process of evolving into *homo sapiens*, humans have not been able to flush their primitiveness completely, which they associate with subhumanness. We do have evidence of subhuman aggression thanks to many archeological excavations discovering sharp tools made by subhumans to kill and hunt. The early *homo sapiens* were not very much friendly, either. Indicated by Nicholas Longrich, “300,000 years ago,” the number of human species was more than one, but there is just *homo sapiens* now spread around the world:

By 10,000 years ago, they were all gone. The disappearance of these other species resembles a mass extinction. But there's no obvious environmental catastrophe – volcanic eruptions, climate change, asteroid impact – driving it. Instead, the extinctions' timing suggests they were caused by the spread of a new species, evolving 260,000-350,000 years ago in Southern Africa: Homo sapiens... There's little reason to think that early Homo sapiens were less territorial, less violent, less intolerant – less human. (2019)

Modern humans do not seem to be very much different from their early *homo-sapiens* in their atrocities since mass massacres and genocides they have recently committed on earth abound. This historical fact makes the correlation between aggression, violence and not being fully evolved totally ironic. On the one hand, humans tend to glorify humanity, but on the other hand, they commit brutal atrocities, but unlike subhumans, they, as masters of disguise, conceal their atrocities behind their glorified cultural accomplishments and superior social structures.

In the light of this information, the Panglossian belief in bright futures where humans evolve to eliminate their atrocious tendencies seems quite utopian. Primarily, we can contemplate about how *homo sapiens* will evolve into post-humans in the future: Since evolution—despite humans’ efforts to intervene in it—does not have a progressive direction, we do not know whether it will take humans to a desired state or not. Nonetheless, “We tend to think of the posthuman as something that is better than a mere human, more advanced, an improved human. But the posthuman may just as well turn out to be in some important respect less than human” (Hauskeller, 2016: 202). Therefore, human evolution does not have to lead to a progressive result, and it could even solidify the existing malevolent tendencies of humans. A future where such tendencies are eliminated, however, philosophically means a progressive paradigm shift for humanity, yet it is very uncertain whether humans will take this path. Post-humans, for example, may (still) have different groups in them pursuing different aspirations, labeling each other as less-evolved or the Other of one another. Even if humans have achieved a homogeneous unity, there is no guarantee that this unity will be reached at benevolence rather than malevolence. Moreover, we cannot even predict what society will be like or whether there will be something called society, either. Therefore, since we are dreaming about a very far and unpredictable future, this discussion currently seems to be just a stream of manipulations. But looking at the old data, the transformation into post-human does not seem so promising, and the story of Ben might individually imply this pessimism.

As the novel alternatively implies the non-decremental intolerance humans have for each other or against the Other, the reader can infer at least two further possible scenarios: either the impossibility of the post-human or the emergence of the

post-human as a more hostile species. For the former, one might deduce that as long as humans do not take the edge off their atrocious desires, they might go out of control and the future for them might remain unattainable. For the latter, if humans transmit their violence to the future—probably in a more consolidated or professional way as they did for the subhuman Ben in the story—they might evolve into an even more hostile, more monstrous species. This is not an unfamiliar projection for us because humans already expect such hostility from the future. Every now and then in our modern science fiction stories, authors imagine advanced yet ill-willed alien species visiting the earth, usually and ironically pictured as anthropomorphic creatures. Humans often fear being abducted or attacked by these “monstrous” creatures because it takes one to know one: They subconsciously know that if they switch roles and operate as the superior species, they would tend to dominate or enslave the inferior species as they have already literally done so in the past and in the present. Therefore, the novel might be read as a critique of post-human apprehension.

Ben, as a subhuman, makes us realize what humans have evolved into and what progress they are imagining for the future. In modern times, we might (think that we) have the tools to investigate human biology and evolution. We even might try to modify our genetic composition, and maybe in the future we will try to drive ourselves to a guided, small-scaled evolution or alteration. Such interference, however, was not possible in the past for the subhumans, and they evolved in a completely natural way. Therefore, it would be absurd to compare the technology we have today with the technology of the time of subhumans, the prehistoric era, and even further into the past. Maybe some science fiction stories will come true, and in the future, some privileged people will have the chance to get themselves modified through some transhuman project and have all their primitive human traits erased as transmittable genetic qualities, while forcing some non-privileged to feel as not-quite-evolved entities and indirectly continuing discriminative practices faced by Ben and the Others represented by him. Ultimately, projecting about the unpredictable, the eons-away-future, is (as of now) futile as there are endless possible scenarios one can come up with, and still none of them could possibly come true. However, it would not be very absurd to be concerned about humanity’s near future by looking at

the present humans' qualities and behaviors. Thanks to subhuman Ben and his species-Gothic story, we can question ourselves, our feelings for each other, our past, our future, and, technically, our approach towards other species.

4.3. BEN AS THE OTHER

Ben is not a simple child as those around him perceive him to be. He is perceived by people as a not-quite-human, some entity to be avoided, a subhuman bringing distress. In essence, however, he is a vilified monster, though as innocent as his nature allows him to be. He is otherized and dehumanized for being classified as someone with special needs, and his story tells us much about dehumanization and monsterization.

First and foremost, Ben functions as a Gothic debunker. He appears as a threat when he arrives, disturbs people with his existence, but meanwhile gets labeled as unfit, and thus, he reveals people's discriminatory treatment of Others. As such, Ben is not just a little child; he represents every single dehumanized person going through dehumanization and discrimination.

Historically, however, Ben's story reveals the social corruption in the 1980s and how conservative Western mindset classifies people hierarchically and labels some as outcasts and not-quite-humans. Moreover, Ben shows how questionably institutions function, usually siding with the dominant and the all-powerful.

Ben, however, does not struggle alone in society as an abject not-quite-human. Ben's mother Harriet also receives her share of dehumanization for giving birth to him and succumbing to her emotions. Despite being a white person, she ends up being treated as unfit, as well, since she fails to deliver her womanly duties. Ben, in that regard, makes it obvious that traditional gender roles deem women fit only as long as they contribute to the system as caregivers and mothers who give birth to healthy children. Such traditional gender roles eventually degrade everyone but healthy, white, non-criminal, heterosexual males. Through Ben's story, it becomes crystal clear that gender and racial equality, which seem to be continuously and fiercely advocated by the West, remain as mere delusions.

Finally, Ben's story might be telling us a lot about our vision of the future. Symbolically, as a primitive subhuman living among supposedly more evolved *homo sapiens*, he might be signifying that primitiveness is not something eliminated in the process of evolution. In that regard, Ben points out to the unpredictability of evolution and encourages us to rethink our understanding of our future and the post-human, alternatively.



CONCLUSION

Since ancient times humans have commonly defined themselves through binary thinking, by comparing themselves with animals—the primary non-human entities—and plants. In time, robots (machinery) became another means of comparison in defining humanness, especially after robots started to imitate some aspects of human cognition, responsiveness, reactions, and form. Eventually, what is present in humans but what is traditionally thought to be lacking in animals—such as *uniquely* human emotions like hope and guilt—and robots—such as “emotional responsiveness, prosocial warmth, cognitive openness, and individuality”—is considered to be the fundamental and unique factors definitive of humanness (Wilson and Haslam, 2012: 373).

Despite all such efforts to define it, however, humanness is an arbitrary concept. Therefore, there is an overwhelming variety and scope in designating the category of humanness. In fact, not every member of *homo sapiens* has been historically entitled to the category of humanness. Some of these individuals are left outside this category based on arbitrarily defined subcategories of race, sex, gender, criminality, etc. In other words, different and often arbitrary interpretations of humanness are employed to rank people and to decide who is full human and who is only so marginally or less-than-human.

Traditionally, social structures are often composed of people who share cultural, political, and physical similarities. As such, when people form ingroup identities and sense of belonging together, they also form barriers between us and them, ingroup and outgroup. As Cohen indicates, ingroup identity is defined as being superior to the outgroup in terms of culture, politics, race, sex, and gender (1996: 3-20). As a result, inspired by those most salient and dominant features of their own ingroup and pronouncing them as superior, people designate their own ideal human depiction as a group. For Western society, the one ideal human image that is supposed to be envied by all humanity is the preferably Northern European white man (Rothschild, 1989: 98), who is healthy, heterosexual, and non-criminal. The entities other than this ideal are dehumanized and considered “as an abomination,

indefinite in species-identity and otherwise abhuman” or not-quite-human (Hurley, 1996: 80).

Although those that fall outside this ideal are dehumanized, each subhuman category falls into differing degrees of dehumanization, so that among the dehumanized, too, hierarchies exist based on their closeness to the ideal. Determining the level of the others’ humanness is achieved by totally subjective criteria decided by the dominant members and imposed on the majority of the ingroup. For this mindset, those who are placed away from the point of self-proclaimed humanness become labeled as some sort of not-quite-human. The idealized model set by this definition brings further categories and hierarchies along, denouncing the others kept out of this as not-quite-humans while praising the model itself as the full human. In short, vilification resulting from dehumanization causes some more uncertain categorizations to appear. Eventually, a wide variety of (biologically human) not-quite-humans with different labels such as abhuman, subhuman, transhuman, cyborg, etc., appears. Therefore, the self-perception of the ingroup members as culturally, racially, intellectually, and physically superior will inevitably cause others—those that they define as not-quite-humans—to operate on the margins of humanness.

In Western culture, these biologically-human not-quite-humans constitute some further categories of dehumanization among themselves. Abhumans and/or subhumans, for instance, generally represent behaviorally, morally, and/or physically degenerate human subjects. These subjects are basically seen as abjects, perceived as beings that lack the West’s qualities that are considered quintessentially human(e). What is more, their qualities are usually associated with those of animals’, which places them in a lower position than the idealized human, placing them at the disadvantaged and negative end of an oppositional relationship. All racial and gender minorities including people of color, women, queers, as well as criminals, aggressors, and people with disabilities can be counted among those undesired entities or life forms. On the other hand, other biological-humans, such as cyborgs, and even transhumans appear as the technologically upgraded entities, often being considered as somewhat human, almost human or not-quite-human beings. However, the machine-embedded body of the former or the biologically hacked body of the

latter make them blur, if not expand, the definition of what is human. Although often equipped with qualities superior to biological humans, neither cyborgs and nor transhumans can escape otherization. For their presence as hybrids destroys the preset categories functioning through binaries: while the transhuman is between old and new, normal and abnormal, and organic and beyond-organic; the cyborg blatantly occupies the space between human and machine. What is worse for the conservative Western mindset is that a cyborg/transhuman can even be more confounding of the categories if s/he is a non-white person or a woman because s/he would then operate somewhere in the triad of animal, machine, and human. Consequently, despite being seemingly upgrades, these entities violate the norms of the conservative Western mind defining the categorical peripheries of humanness.

Yet, there are further violators which are not biological-humans or could no longer be described as humans. Especially in sci-fi movies and literature, we come across these types of entities such as androids and post-humans. These entities usually are presented as if they are closely related to humans or humanness despite being non-humans. Oftentimes their forms and attitudes (almost) perfectly echo those of humans', and thus, those anthropomorphic entities mimicking human behaviors can be considered both as quite-human or not-quite-human, but never completely human. While some androids blur the borders of humanness through their undetectable imitation of humans, such as it is seen in the movie *Ex Machina* (2015), the post-human, as the successor of humans, dictates an indefinite separation from as well as similarity to the human. Androids, as anthropomorphic robots, initially become humanized because of their mimicry of humanness, but then due to their uncanny existence, humans tend to dehumanize them for *originally* lacking substances of being human. Meanwhile post-humans, as no-more-human entities, dwell in the threshold of an unknown future as possible monsters-to-humans, where humans-as-we-know are most likely obsolete or archaic to them, as outdated as *homo neanderthalensis* to *homo sapiens*. When humans are exposed to the presence of either of these two entities, they regard both these entities as Others. Inwardly, humans realize that these entities are both different from and dismayingly similar to them. In other words, as familiar as they might appear, they are unknown: hence their uncanniness. Eventually, confused by the uncanny presence before them, humans

become uncomfortable by this exposure and thus, by dint of their dominantly self-righteous nature, they banish them from being correlated with themselves, the human. After all, even though those entities are perfect imitations, simulations, or successions of mankind, from the viewpoint of humans, they remain different one way or another: their form, behavior, composition, culture, values, mentality, and/or *raison d'être*. Thus, anthropocentrism and/or speciesism emerge as a kind of otherization and an alternative form of dehumanization if those entities are criticized with regard to their human characteristics.

In art and literature, it is very common to come across such not-quite-human entities. These anthropomorphic entities, who are not biologically human, may usually appear as sci-fi or cartoon characters that play a neutral role or role of a hero/villain whose struggle with their enemies is rather for pure entertainment purposes. However, when the mode turns Gothic, the function of those not-quite-humans, regardless of being biological-humans or not, ultimately becomes serious. As Gothic not-quite-humans, those entities function as real or vilified monsters injected in society. Consequently, their existence within society disturbs people, for, through their undesired qualities or merely their existence, those not-quite-humans utterly violate or are claimed to be violating social norms. In Kristevan terms, they are perceived as abjects who are doomed to be treated as the ultimate Others. Regardless of whether these not-quite-humans are vilified or not, they directly or indirectly reveal the true colors of human societies by showing their biased and atrocious face in the end and raising significant questions as to where monstrosity lies: with humans or not-quite-humans? They throw in the face of human societies their transgressive attitudes of otherization/dehumanization. They show and criticize such widespread and prevalent societal attitudes sustained blindly by many members of society. Oftentimes they reveal the trickery of society's self-justification to dehumanize either those who are biologically-human-Others or those that they had initially humanized through stigmatizing them as monsters. All things considered, they help surface a repressed social critique by desperately announcing that the monster is indeed society since sometimes its members may whimsically announce and vilify another member of their own society as a monster and sometimes they can

do that to a new comer, a total stranger who often is distinguishable by his/her appearance and/or behavior.

Naturally, since the examples of such not-quite-humans are prevalent in Gothic art and literature, so are the examples of such attitudes of otherization/dehumanization. One can see every type of not-quite-human functioning as the debunker of social bigotry.

Not-quite-humans can be anthropomorphic traditional monsters such as vampires and lycanthropes. They all are categorized as Others and have some kind of physical and/or behavioral convergence to humans and humanness. However, they can also be *biologically* humans that are perceived as Others, just as demonstrated in the stories *Zombie* (1995) by Oates and *The Fifth Child* (1988) by Lessing. In such cases, some of their undesired qualities are generally compared with those of animals to deprive them of humanness. They are exposed to dehumanization as subhumans/abhumans/less-than-humans because their biological and behavioral differences—such as belonging to outgroups like racial minorities, having sexual orientations other than heterosexuality, having criminal and/or aggressive tendencies, or, regardless of their races/tendencies/orientations, being disabled or differently-abled—locate them outside what is considered fully human.

The term not-quite-human also encompasses upgraded humans, humanized androids, and human-machine and human-animal hybrids. They can partially be humans such as cyborgs like Edward in Burton's *Edward Scissorhands* (1990), technologically enhanced transhumans, and/or humanized androids. Their compositional differences, in this case, differentiate them as Others among humans, while they also blur and destabilize the boundaries of humanness. Thus, humans of the ingroup, by default, find them repulsive and thus keep them at a safe distance, trying to guard themselves against their norm-violating existence. Unless they are truly monstrous, humans may only turn a blind eye to their existence as long as they can be exploited as slaves at different levels of enslavement. Even when these unnerving not-quite-humans are allowed to exist and even if they contribute to the comforts of humans, they cannot escape dehumanization and dehumanizing strategies and discourses. Consequently, not-quite-humans remain as Others due to

humans' penchant for keeping their preset hierarchies, values, and norms quasi uncontaminated, which are in fact self-preserving tendencies.

Especially the dehumanizing treatment of not-quite-humans vilified as monsters shows the biases of society. The injection of not-quite-humans' into society reveals the existence of these covert human categories and hierarchies, which deny full membership to large groups such as women and children, who are indeed categorized as not-quite-humans. In the West, every human other than white, healthy, heterosexual male seems to be belonging to lower fractions of human hierarchies.

However, not-quite-humans can also be really monstrous, aggressive, and criminal humans just as in *Zombie* (1995). Thus, such humans become deemed as not-quite-humans who, behaviorally, could not reach the ultimate phase of human moral evolution. Moreover, this human can even be a white male who corporeally looks like a "full human." As an example, Quentin's case is intriguing since he brings together biological and moral forms of otherness in his homosexuality and criminality. Yet even as a biological category of otherness, homosexuality could remain in the closet for years and even for a lifetime as long as it is not openly performed in public. Unlike racial Others, such not-quite-humans are only otherized when their norm-violating potentials, reveal themselves in their behaviors. Even then, unless a criminal's victims are white, he is not marked as Other. In such a case, the monster reveals the fine nuances of society's bigotry because it becomes vocal only when ingroup is threatened. Consequently, the intrusion of such monstrous not-quite-humans into society, then, *also* provides a social critique in the background; hence their mode is utterly Gothic.

Finally, not-quite-humans can also give us a glimpse into humans' treatment of other species ranging from subhumans to transhumanist post-humans. The ill-treatment of those who are perceived as subhumans—as seen in *The Fifth Child*, demonstrates the discrepancy between human self-perception as complaisant beings and the reality that they are as aggressive and wild as the predecessors with whom they refuse to associate. Thus, speciesism proves to be a self-delusory mechanism for maintaining the self-attributed human grandeur.

The Fifth Child also offers a representation of the post-human. It allows us to see the humans' savage attitudes towards what they consider as their subhuman

predecessors. Ironically, in the course of human evolution, humans could not yet—if they ever will—lose their violent tendencies, attributed to their predecessors. In this way, the book gives its readers a glimpse of a future reflection where the post-human might also fail to eliminate their aggressive attitudes, just as current humans failed to do in their evolutionary journey. Indeed, such a projection not only raises questions as to current human perceptions and behavior but also suggests an uncertainty for the future. At present, almost every human group violently marginalizes other human groups, let alone other species. In this day and age, societies function, as they have always functioned, on hierarchies and ranking. As Bostrom fittingly put, “Human society is always at risk of some group deciding to view another group of humans as being fit for slavery or slaughter” (2005: 207). Humans yet do not know whether this attitude will remain an evolutionary heritability or be eventually grinded down. Indeed, human tendency for violence even puts into question whether there will ever be a post-human future.

However, there are fictional Gothic stories that directly touch upon what kind of future may be awaiting humanity when some beings eventually become something beyond human, such as in *Wraeththu* (1993) series of Storm Constantine. In the series, this upgraded species suppresses the human binary thinking while posing a threat to the existence of humans as a distinct species. In the trilogy, what awaits modern humanity is annihilation and replacement with a more evolved species.

All in all, Gothic stories that contain not-quite-humans bring a wide range of social criticism. Regardless of how far those not-quite-humans are placed from humans, they all have some critique to offer. Once the not-quite-humans intrude into the lives of those who are considered fully humans, they alter and disturb the order. Their stories are the stories of monsters, indeed, but one must keep in mind that most of those monsters are vilified as such. In their depths, their stories lay bare the so-far-hidden findings about humanity and humanness. They either implicitly or directly show the awfully insulting conditions that the dehumanized beings must go through. They expose the hierarchical relationship between the dehumanized and dehumanizer. They reveal patriarchy’s cruelly biased dynamics. They disturb social norms of purity through their peculiar characteristics, uncanniness, and hybridity. Thus, whether they are subhumans, abhumans, transhumans, cyborgs, androids, or

post-humans, not-quite-humans are always kept at a distance from what is called human. Whether true or vilified, their monstrosity also reflects the monstrosity of humanity. They help reveal that humans, as masters of hypocrisy, oftentimes hide behind their cultural establishments, their so-called superior moral standards, their self-proclaimed remarkable mental, sexual, physical, and economic qualities to conceal their atrocities. With the not-quite-humans haunting their norms and order, humans' true colors reveal themselves. In the end, not-quite-humans disclose that the humanity is not as glorified as it is reflected.

As long as humans exist, it seems inevitable to come across various new and unimaginable not-quite-humans. Humans nowadays rarely tell stories of traditional Others/monsters such as vampires or lycanthropes. They rather explicitly stigmatize certain human groups as Others and dehumanize them by seeing them more animal-like or robot-like, in other words, as not-quite-humans. Humans have not given up such attitude for ages and will not seem to do so in the long run. Though much of what might be said about the future remains mostly as speculation, with our current knowledge of humans and their behaviors, it is safe to say that at least near future does not seem to witness any alteration in the outcomes and causes of the atrocious human behaviors.

Apparently, because the Gothic frequently questions humans and their motivations, Gothic art and literature will continue to reflect human fears and anxieties in the future, too. In the Gothic, the aspects of fear and anxiety are oftentimes reflected through the intrusion of a non-human or dehuman(ized) entity into the realm of humans as "The Gothic explores (and sometimes celebrates) the dehuman, and the abjected and rejected 'entities and beings'" (Hehold and Edmundson, 2020: 8). These not-quite-humans, however, frequently unveil human hypocrisy, aggressiveness, and atrocities. Thus, in the Gothic, thanks to these not-quite-humans, society is criticized with all its members from the most peripheral to the most valuable, and the message is set clear: Western patriarchal, categorical and hierarchical binary order is vile, dysfunctional, and broken, and it must be fixed and re-evaluated.

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