

**“I saw him looking at me”: Male Bodies and the Corrective Medical Gaze in Sheridan Le Fanu’s “Green Tea”**

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<1> In *The Birth of the Clinic*, Foucault identifies a movement in the medical profession, at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, from a classificatory system of knowledge that understood disease and illness only in terms of categories and origins to a theory and practice based on what is “seen” and “spoken” and what is therefore “perceptible” and “stable” (95). Foucault found that this shift was “nothing more than a syntactical reorganization of disease in which the limits of the visible and the invisible follow a new pattern” (195). A transition from understanding illnesses that can be categorized to those that can be observed brought along with it a strengthening of power relations that positioned the gaze of the physician to be thought of as holding near-Godlike powers of healing. The expert status claimed by physicians placed the patient in roles of “types” or “cases,” while the physician played the role of powerful observer who could diagnose a body merely with his eyes. Theories concerning a powerful medical gaze that constructs and defines the subject as “ill” or “insane” have been used in reading nineteenth-century literature, namely in gendered terms that help us understand how male and female bodies were subjected to this corrective and oppressive medical gaze.

<2>By basing my argument on these insights concerning a concept of medical empiricism, I will present a reading of Sheridan Le Fanu’s “Green Tea” that understands the physician and his gaze operating in the story for normative and disciplinary purposes. Le Fanu’s story centers around the character of Mr. Jennings, a clergyman who begins to suffer from persistent visions of a demon-monkey that begins to follow him at all times. These visions cause Jennings to seek out the treatment and observation of Dr. Hesselius in order to cure his illness. This supposed mental illness forces Jennings to retreat from the public sphere, and makes it increasingly difficult for him to perform his clerical duties. “Green Tea” depicts a world obsessed with viewing and observing, with knowledge being gained primarily through visual means, and the making of value judgments based only on empirical evidence. Le Fanu’s story represents the practice of medical observation as a disciplinary mechanism seeking to norm Jennings’s behavior so that he can once again fit acceptable Victorian male roles. I will argue for a reading of “Green Tea” that focuses on Dr. Hesselius’s medical gaze as it seeks to regulate a male body perceived to be abnormal, and even disabled, due to its inability to work and its reluctance to enter into the social sphere. Hesselius identifies Jennings’s unhealthy body as being too exposed and open, in direct contrast with the common Victorian belief in the healthiness of the closed-off male body. In true gothic fashion, the story’s conclusion, namely Jennings’s suicide, suggests the dangers for men

of exposure to foreign influences, and to refusing to practice bodily self-control. "Green Tea" functions as both a warning to nineteenth-century male readers to avoid foreign influences, and as a promotion of the healthy, corrective medical gaze.

<3> The reader learns early in "Green Tea" that the primary focus of the narrative is on empiricism and corporeality. Dr. Hesselius's initial evaluation of Jennings is purely empirical, and he finds the man to be performing his gender roles adequately (at least those roles that are work-related). Jennings first appears to Hesselius as a healthy body, mostly due to his observable ability to work, and his conventional masculine presence in the social realm. We are told by Hesselius that Jennings is a bachelor, with "sixty thousand pounds in the funds," an attribute that is balanced with the information that he is indeed "a charitable man" (5). In his first appearance in the story Jennings is an employed man who is a charity-giver and not a charity case. This is important because constructions of Victorian middle-class masculine identity were often founded upon men who are self-sufficient and economically independent. When Hesselius first gazes upon Jennings he perceives a man who is physically "normal," and even though his features are not considered "handsome" by the doctor and others, they are "well formed" (5). Furthermore, according to Lady Mary Heyduke he is "the most happy and blessed person on earth" (5). Jennings is perceived to be physically acceptable, and his presence in the social sphere ranges from passable to exceptionally "happy and blessed." However, Jennings's later inability to physically and mentally perform his clerical duty risks placing him in the un-masculine category of economically dependent and unemployed man.

<4> In "Under Victorian Skins: The Bodies Beneath" Helena Michie posits that when speaking of the Victorian male body we must "speak of plural and often contradictory 'masculinities' and of changing masculine ideas" (413). Noting that ideas of masculinity and femininity are both always changing and always contested, Michie singles out the Victorian period as being one that was "pivotal in transforming ideas of masculinity" (413). With the emergence of the middle-class during the Victorian period, ideas of masculinity were compared to and contrasted against the "male-ness" represented by the aristocracy of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As Michie found, the aristocratic male was often viewed as isolated, inactive, immoral, and effeminate by Victorian authors.(1) A number of factors, including a changing social make-up during the Victorian era, the emergence of the working middle-class, and their growing numbers in comparison to the slow decline of the aristocracy's influence, all worked together to force a change in how British society defined its men and women. While middle-class women became the angels of the house, middle-class men's identity, specifically their purpose in Victorian society, became closely tied to what physical, intellectual, and religious work they produced. For middle-class Victorian men (and even more so for the working classes) masculine gender identity was largely dependent upon being a good worker.(2) Masculine norms in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were largely illustrated by the figure of the aristocratic man who spent his days lounging about. However, by the mid-nineteenth century this conception of normal masculine characteristics was quickly being replaced by the rising Victorian middle-class man who was being defined as physically and morally strong, and who, if he was to be thought of as a man at all, must be outside the confines of the home during most of the day while he performs his job, thereby largely leaving the domestic sphere to women and children.(3)

<5> These notions of masculine norms being defined in terms of healthy, active bodies figure early in “Green Tea.” Dr. Hesselius and others quickly begin forming an opinion of Jennings’s health that shifts from him being perceived as an able-bodied man to a perception of him as being disabled, and therefore somewhat un-masculine. Martha Stoddard Holmes found that the “distinction between abled and disabled bodies in Victorian culture (and our own) was produced partly in terms of the distinction between men and women and beliefs about what ‘naturally’ characterized each gender” (94). For the Victorians, Holmes argued that what “naturally” differentiated each gender was their relation to the domestic sphere, with the women occupying that space while the man leaves the home to work. Being seen outside the home, where she must work, or worse yet, beg for money, was a characteristic of the disabled woman. Similarly, the disabled man is marked by his tie to the domestic sphere, either due to his invalid status or as he “roams the streets without a regular workplace” (94). In order to avoid being perceived as disabled, Jennings must be employed, be able to perform the duties of his job, and be able to enter the social realm with a healthy-looking body.

<6> Initially, both his profession and “normal” physical appearance allow Jennings to function as a man in terms of his ability to work, while his sufficient income prevents him from being seen as sick or somehow disabled. In terms of being defined as sick or disabled, and therefore less than masculine, Jennings’s professed desire to work is even more important than his independent economic status. Jennings is “most anxious to be actively employed in his sacred profession” yet “when he goes down to his vicarage in Warwickshire to engage in the active duties of his sacred calling, his health soon fails him” (5). Here the split between one’s persona and the physical body becomes clear, as Jennings claims a healthy work-ethic but finds that his body fails to live up to his masculine ideals. This disagreement between a man’s desires and his body pairs him with the story’s unnamed narrator who, we are told, is “carefully educated in medicine and surgery” yet has “never practiced either” due to his “loss of two fingers, amputated promptly” (3). This amputation restricts the narrator’s ability to perform his medical duties, and he becomes, as Holmes’ theory suggests, a wanderer without a regular workplace who has “seldom been twelve months together in the same place” (3). While losing his ability to perform his masculine duties, the narrator becomes a wandering, dependent creature until he is saved by Dr. Hesselius. The doctor rescues the narrator from living as a disabled, dependent non-masculine man by giving him the ability to work, as the narrator tells us that “for nearly twenty years I acted as his medical secretary” (3). It is unclear if the doctor performed some kind of psychological and/or traditional medical treatment on the narrator, or whether his function as employer to the narrator was sufficient in restoring his deficient middle-class masculine identity.

<7> This focus on the working male was normalized in nineteenth-century literature in many ways. In terms of normalizing this notion of the working/physically active masculinity Carlyle’s *Past and Present* operated as one of the most influential Victorian texts. Carlyle stressed the importance of work and its relation to masculinity. Long held beliefs degraded the concept of work for the upper-class gentleman so much that even as late as the mid-century Carlyle felt the need to idealize labor by providing it both practical and spiritual elements. Carlyle writes that “there is perennial nobleness, and even sacredness in Work” and that “a man perfects himself by working” (53-54). Labor of any kind became a spiritual endeavor for Carlyle, as “the evil passions of so many men (with the Devil in them, as in all of us) he has to vanquish” (54) through his work. The equation Carlyle has laid out for his male readers is simple: Do your work

and you will lead a healthy, happy life; Do not do your work and you will (1) be thought of as less of a man, and (2) fall prey to the Devil inside each of us. This idealization of work and its relation to moral and physical health can be seen in the uneasiness felt by both Jennings and the narrator. Both men experience anxiety over not being able to work because that ability is integral to the construction of their physically healthy, male Christian identity.

<8> We can see how the construction of Victorian middle-class masculinity, especially in the early to mid-section of the period, was largely based on the corporeal and the visible.<sup>(4)</sup> While a growing focus on the physicality of the male body did not necessarily mean that spiritual or intellectual characteristics were downplayed in the evaluation of masculine identity, it did mean that such intangible matters as one's religious faith and moral strength began to be described in terms of the visible and the corporeal. An individual's will was thought of as a muscle that one could exercise and make strong, while the movement towards muscular Christianity completely equated spiritual faith with physicality. With increasing importance placed upon the corporeal and the visible, the physician's role, as explained by Foucault, began to shift towards a practice of observing the body for the purposes of both diagnosing and treating the patient. Furthermore, if a growing faith in the value of empiricism privileges what is seen over what can be intuited, then the social visibility of illness becomes a factor in establishing one's identity. In other words, if an individual can visibly appear ill, or is defined as sick solely through visual evidence, then appearances of unhealthiness become cause for panic for the person who shows physical signs of being unwell.

<9> As the narrative of "Green Tea" progresses, Jennings's body is perceived as being "sick" because it cannot perform one of the most basic male functions: work. This becomes a cause for panic, as the switch from economically independent, hard-working man to dependent and non-working invalid is unavoidable as soon as the male body becomes unable to engage in any sort of labor. If the reverend's illness was solely psychological, or even worse, a sign of moral weakness from a man who is not *unable* to work, but just *unwilling* to do so, Jennings would not function as he does in the story. In "Green Tea" the reverend is a sympathetic figure only because he professes a desire to be "normal" yet cannot do so due to the betrayal of his sick body. Furthermore, Jennings is worthy of medical treatment, and of being treated back to normalcy, simply because his illness is real (meaning corporeal and therefore visible) and not imagined (meaning purely psychological or supernatural, and therefore completely invisible).

<10> In "Green Tea" it is imperative that Hesselius believes, and that the reader is made to understand, that Jennings's illness is physical and can be treated as such. It is the digestion of green tea and the reading of Pagan texts that are the root cause of Jennings's problems, and Jennings's case can be depicted as a sympathetic one only when his sickness appears to have physical and not psychological origins. This sort of medical materialism that attributes mental or even spiritual issues to bodily causes became highly criticized as the century wore on, although many physicians today operate under the same medical materialist ideology. In "Green Tea" it is a specific kind of medical materialist ideology that prevents Jennings from being perceived as a lost cause. In describing Dr. Harley, Jennings's previous physician, Hesselius remarks that Harley's ideology is "a little leaning to the materialistic school" to which Jennings replies "a *mere* materialist" (14). The difference between a materialist and a "mere" materialist is evident in Hesselius's evolved sort of medical materialism that takes into account spiritual and supernatural

matters, but still understands them solely in corporeal terms. I will return to this point later, but is it important to note here that the visibility of any illness is a key concept of medical materialism, and Hesselius adds to this his belief in the visibility and corporeality of spiritual matters.

<11> In order to guarantee the readers' sympathy Hesselius must assure himself and the reader that Jennings's illness is medically valid, and the doctor finds that the best way to prove such a thing is to comment on the ability of the illness to be observed, thereby privileging empirical data over any other form of knowledge. The doctor assures us that "there is no doubt that Mr. Jennings's health does break down" (5) as it has been witnessed that in the course of performing his sacred duties

he has on a sudden stopped short, and after a silence, apparently quite unable to resume, he has fallen into solitary, inaudible prayer, his hands and eyes uplifted, and then pale as death, and in the agitation of a strange shame and horror, descended trembling, got into the vestry-room, and left his congregation without explanation, to themselves. (5)

Hence Jennings's illness is verified and made real through visible evidence, along with other characters' ability to visibly identify illness in him, and then verbally define him as being unwell. His congregation has *seen* his body fail, and has *seen* him unable to perform his duties. Hesselius uses this visual proof to validate Jennings's threatened masculinity. If Jennings was suffering from a spiritual/religious crisis, or even a purely supernatural demon-possession of some sort, then a physician like Hesselius would find his power over the patient to be limited. After all, how much could a physician, especially a medical materialist like Hesselius, do for a subject who experiences religious doubt, or who finds his self suffering from a mental illness that cannot be visibly validated? In order to increase the physician's power over the subject, Hesselius must first turn the spiritual into the visible, and then easily diagnose the physical/visible "symptoms" as medical problems.

<12> Once the spiritual has turned into the visible, thereby making Jennings's case a medical one, Hesselius's power over the patient is full and complete. According to Srdjan Smajic, Le Fanu and other nineteenth-century Gothic/horror writers find their characters to be in a "disconcerting double bind between instinctive faith in the evidence of one's sight and the troubling knowledge that vision is often depictive and unreliable" (1109). While Jennings expresses doubt about the reliability of his ocular perception, we see no such bind for Hesselius who is entirely convinced of the validity of empirical evidence. Visual proof is all that is required for the physician to be convinced of the presence of disease, and of the need for Jennings to be free from that illness. It becomes vital that the patient's body be cured and his masculinity fully restored. Even though Jennings sometimes doubts the authenticity of his visions, it seems clear to both Jennings and Hesselius that this cure can only be accomplished through the doctor's medical practice.

<13> To further de-masculinize and present his body as disabled and to make his illness valid and treatable, we are told that "[Jennings] always takes care to provide a clergyman to share his duty" (5) because his illness has forced him to admit his inability to perform his own duties and responsibilities autonomously. The independent man, due to this illness, is transformed into a

dependent, non-working man who must seek medical care. Adding even more evidence that Jennings's body is indeed sick (and is therefore in need of corrective normalizing treatment) Hesselius relays the information to the reader that other people have begun to "remark something odd" (5) about the reverend. This oddness about Jennings stems from his habit of looking along the carpet as if his eyes were following the movements of an object that no one else can see. The language used by Hesselius to describe this "odd" habit positions Jennings in the realm of the un-masculine (i.e. disabled) man because his body (in this case his eyes) are noticeably out of his control. Sally Shuttleworth finds that in mid-nineteenth-century England disease was "marked by a crucial gender distinction [where] male health was believed to be based on self-control [while] women's health depended on her very inability to control her body" (57). If a man's health is determined by bodily self-control then in the first few sections of the story Jennings has already appeared incredibly unhealthy. Whether it is his body failing him in front of his congregation, or his undisciplined gaze as he looks along the carpet instead of focusing on the person speaking to him, Jennings body is not under his own control. Even though Jennings is a "perfectly gentlemanlike man" his travelling gaze provides people with "an impression a little ambiguous" and, according to Hesselius's observations, "there is something both shy and anxious" (5) in his looks.

<14> If Jennings is represented here as ambiguous then this definition also places his character in the tradition of eighteenth and nineteenth-century gothic and horror writing, in that one convention of the gothic is to depict boundary-less, hard to categorize creatures that inspire unsettling and ambiguous responses from others. In looking into this convention of gothic fiction, Fred Botting argues that "gothic excesses [and] the fascination with transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries continue to produce ambivalent emotions and meanings in their tales of darkness, desire and power" (2).

<15> In calling "Green Tea" the "archetypal ghost story" (115) Jack Sullivan finds Jennings's character not as an ambiguous, gothic monster, but as a sort of everyman who is being tortured by his hallucinations and physical ailments for no reason. Sullivan refers to Jennings as "the victim" arguing that "the truth is that Jennings has done nothing but drink green tea" and that he "is ceaselessly pursued and tormented for no discernable reason" (124-125). Robert Tracy, in his examination of Irish identity in nineteenth-century fiction, makes a similar point about the victimhood of Jennings when he describes the visitation as "arbitrary and apparently unprovoked" (62). (5) However, in terms of nineteenth-century middle-class Victorian masculine ideals, Jennings has done more than just "drink green tea" and his victimization is anything but "unprovoked." Lady Mary informs Hesselius that she and Jennings have had conversations about the reverend drinking the tea, and in fact she tells the doctor that "green tea was a subject on which we used almost to quarrel" (8). Jennings's apparent overindulgence in green tea points towards an excess in his character, but also shows an interest in the foreign and non-Christian. British gothic writing has often dealt with protagonists and villains who are either foreign themselves, therefore making their motives immediately suspect, or who are English but who dabble in foreign ideas and customs such as Eastern philosophies and foreign medical practices. Jennings defends his intake of tea by arguing that every man he knows "does his work...on something," (17) yet also begins to describe his growing addiction to the tea that points to an excess in his character. It is interesting that Jennings first began drinking black tea, which was then and still is now the most common type of tea sold in the U.K., before moving on to the more

foreign, untypical green tea. Also, green tea is rawer, and less oxidized than black tea, which undergoes the oxidization process that enables it to keep its flavor far longer than green tea. For these reasons we can read green tea as being more primitive, and definitely more foreign in comparison to the more traditionally English, and more industrialized, black tea. The fact that Jennings's demon is represented as a monkey is also tied to this difference between green and black teas. Hesselius's medical philosophy argues that these visions experienced by Jennings are in direct relation to the type of indiscretions committed by the patient. His exposure to pre-industrial beverages and Pagan texts results in his demon appearing as a primitive, "foreign" animal, such as a monkey.

<16> In "Green Tea" the influence of non-Christian ideologies and intoxicating foreign substances is a cause for alarm, as we can see by Lady Mary's concern over Jennings's move from black tea to green tea, and his increasing dependence on the substance. However, it is his research into the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg, specifically those dealing with evil spirits, and other pagan texts, that lead Hesselius to believe that Jennings's studies have gone too far into the realm of the supernatural and the unknown. Jennings describes these, and other readings, by remarking that those texts are

not good for the mind—the Christian mind, I mean. Paganism is all bound together in essential unity, and, with evil sympathy, their religion involves their art, and both their manners, and the subject is a degrading fascination and the Nemesis sure. God forgive me!  
(17)

Jennings's intake of green tea and his research into non-Christian/Pagan texts has allowed him to be stricken with this illness. It is not, as Sullivan argues, that "he has done nothing but drink green tea" but that he has opened both his body and his mind to foreign, non-Christian forces that are, as Jennings describes, "with evil sympathy."

<17> The drinking of green tea and the process of opening his mind and spirit to Pagan texts results in Jennings's illness which has begun to show itself physically. We have already seen the stigmatizing social gaze functioning in the story as his congregation has seen his body fail, Lady Mary has witnessed his excessive green tea intake, and others have noted something "odd" in his manners and appearance. Hesselius understands the importance of Jennings's invalid condition, and the fear evoked by the threatened position of the reverend's masculine gender identity. Furthermore, both Jennings and Hesselius believe that it is only the physician's ability that can rescue the sick body so that it can again function as a conventional nineteenth-century man.

<18> Jennings's immediate need for treatment is made clear by how quickly Hesselius begins to put into practice his corrective and penetrating medical gaze. Specifically, once the doctor learns about his patient's interest in evil spirits and Pagan texts his interest in Jennings increases. In the section titled "Four Eyes Were Reading the Passage" Hesselius turns to find the reverend looking over his shoulder. Jennings's "gaiety of manner" upon catching the doctor reading his personal notes is countered with Hesselius's ability to observe "a slight flush in his face" and to "perceive that he was inwardly much perturbed" (13). Earlier the doctor "penetrated [Jennings's] thoughts without his being aware of it" (7) and here Hesselius's gaze is able to penetrate beneath the

surface of the reverend's body in order to see the man's perturbed state. The doctor's confidence in the ability of his medical gaze to pierce through the outward appearance of Jennings, or rather to read the human body in order to perceive the illness within its confines, is the cause of much disturbance to the doctor as we are told that

[t]here are certain expressions of that powerful organ of spirit—the human face—which, although I have seen them often, and possesses a doctor's nerve, yet disturb me profoundly. One look of Mr. Jennings' haunted me. It had seized my imagination with so dismal a power that I changed my plans for the evening, and went to the opera, feeling that I wanted a change of ideas. (14)

<19> According to Hesselius's specific type of medical materialism, the human face, which he refers to as the "organ of spirit," reveals, through observation, the health or sickness that exists inside one's body. In explaining this philosophy, Hesselius believes that "the entire natural world is but the ultimate expression of that spiritual world from which, and in which alone, it has its life" (6). He insists that the intangible elements, such as the spirit or the soul, are made tangible in the natural world. In other words, Hesselius can perceive the invisible in the same terms that we recognize and analyze any tangible substance. Everything, including disease, mental illness, and demon-monkeys from Hell are readable through ocular perception. He goes on to explain that

I believe that the essential man is a spirit, that the spirit is an organized substance, but as different in point of material from what we ordinarily understand by matter as light or electricity is; that the material body is, in the most literal sense, a vesture, and death consequently no interruption of the living man's existence, but simply his extraction from the natural body. (6)

In this section Hesselius argues that health, be it spiritual or merely physical, is always made corporeal, and can be understood through the powers of a keen and educated observation. He is not the only person who is fully convinced of the epistemological value of sight, as Jennings approves of Hesselius's medical ideology, telling him that "[y]ou are a philosophic physician. You give spirit its proper rank. If this thing is real—" (23).

<20> Again, in order to maximize his authority and control over a patient Hesselius must turn the spiritual into the visible, making it possible that "this thing" can be perceived as "real" and therefore treatable. After first falling prey to the monkey's persistent observation, Jennings desperately attempts to convince himself that his illness is merely physical and not spiritual (or even psychological) so that he can be easily cured and normalized. He tells himself that "the thing is purely disease, a well-known physical affection, as distinct as smallpox or neuralgia" (20). He admits that he did not believe this assurance at the time, and so he seeks out Hesselius's treatment in the chance that his sickness is indeed physical and can be treated by the doctor. Hesselius urges him "that he must regard his illness strictly as one dependent on physical, though subtle, physical causes" (27). Hesselius, and now Jennings, firmly believe in the readability of the human body, and of the visibility of spiritual crises.

<21> Due to the increasing seriousness of his illness Jennings becomes isolated not only from his workplace, but from the social realm entirely. Jennings's move from "in town" to a highly secluded, hard to find location symbolizes the reverend's increasingly un-masculine-like behavior as he has removed himself fully from the social realm and began to place himself increasingly in the domestic sphere. After this his position as a strong, independent man is fully replaced with his position as submissive patient. Hesselius begins to use his penetrating medical gaze on Jennings, and the reverend's concern about his illness, and its ability to prevent him from working, extends to an anxiety over being viewed by others. He writes to the doctor urging him not to "mention my name to my friends. I can see no one," but that "if I should feel at all able to see you, I shall write to ask you kindly to call" (15). By internalizing the doctor's medical materialist philosophy, Jennings has fully understood the need for Hesselius's corrective medical gaze, and soon begins to plead with the doctor to "pray come to me today" and "that you know not how much I need help" (15). Hesselius learns that Jennings had stayed in his home "in town" for a day or two but found it "insupportable" and had moved further out to a "very old-fashioned brick house, darkened by the foliage of these trees, which overtopped and nearly surrounded it" (16).

<22> Jennings's move from "in town" to a "very old-fashioned brick house" far outside the visibility of a more heavily populated area points to a growing confusion and uncertainty about what characteristics should define a middle-class Victorian man. A move away from the public sphere, and towards an isolated, non-working definition of masculinity is a regression towards an earlier version of masculinity that had become outmoded by the time "Green Tea" appeared. Concerning the role of gentleman in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Robin Gilmour argues that "it was theoretically possible for the self-made man to get into the aristocracy, if he had a great deal of money, some luck and not too thin a skin, but it was more comfortable (and cheaper) to buy a place in the country and set himself up as a weekend squire" (5). The role of "weekend squire" would make it appear to others that the individual was a respectable gentleman, but the Industrial Revolution was quickly changing and complicating those male social roles in that it soon became "essential that a gentleman should be able [in quoting sixteenth-century clergyman William Harrison] to 'not live without manual labour,' but also without too visible an attention to business, for it was leisure which enabled a man to cultivate the style and pursuits of the gentlemanly life" (7). In his relocation to the old brick-house Jennings has moved too far into older, out-dated definitions of masculine-like behavior that stressed the importance of leisure and of occasional seclusion from the business world, and away from the emerging definition of masculinity that values physical labor (and the visibility of that labor) over too much leisure time. In response to flamboyant and vehemently non-working class Regency-era notions of masculinity, John Ruskin would write that "gentleman have to learn that it is no part of their duty or privilege to live on other people's toil" (191). Jennings's seclusion in his country home, away from his work and from the visibility of the town, becomes a large threat to his more modern Victorian middle-class masculine identity. Indeed, Jennings himself notices the danger of moving away from the visibility of the town by noting that, before the influence of Pagan texts and foreign teas caused his illness he "used to go into town every day...I met my friends pretty much as usual, and enjoyed their society, and on the whole, existence had never been, I think, so pleasant before" (18). His life now, away from his friends and from his work, appears to both Jennings and Hesselius as incredibly unhealthy.

<23> To further prove the point that Jennings has become in desperate need of Hesselius's corrective medical gaze, the doctor, upon entering the old brick-house, describes it as an "invalid bachelor's house" (17). Hesselius's early description of Jennings as a "bachelor" seemed to not contain any value judgments about his unmarried status, but his usage of the phrase "invalid bachelor's house" here denotes a kind of disgust and worry about Jennings's bachelorhood specifically, and his removal from the social sphere in general. In "Green Tea" Jennings speaks repeatedly of his earlier life spent amongst friends, and his current unhealthy life where he is "afraid to go into town" and "afraid of anyone's seeing and recognizing [him]" (21).

<24> The idea that visibility in the social realm is a positive, healthy aspect of a man's life is clear for Jennings, but yet his illness has made it increasingly difficult for him to remain in the sight of others. In attempting to hold on to his presence in the social realm, Jennings tells of his endeavor to reconcile his illness with his normal (meaning social) daily activities. He tells Hesselius about an experience he had venturing "out one day with a party of friends for a walk" (26) and that his "persecutor" the demon-monkey was with him the entire time. Jennings began to walk behind his friends until he was separate from them, but remained walking beside his niece because she "knew nothing of [his] sufferings" (26). The monkey urges Jennings to commit suicide by throwing himself off a cliff, yet it is the notion that this suicide would be visible, namely by his niece, that prevents Jennings from going through with the act. Jennings explains that "the one consideration that saved [him] from that hideous death was the fear lest the shock of witnessing the occurrence should be too much for the poor girl" (26). The idea of being seen as disabled, or in the least being seen as unhealthy, pushes Jennings towards thoughts of suicide, but it is the same anxiety over being observed that prevents his suicide attempt.

<25> Anxiety over being seen and observed becomes the main source of tension in "Green Tea." In the last few sections of the story, Le Fanu begins to set up a dichotomy between two types of observation: that of the physician and of the monkey. Jennings seeks the healthy, corrective observation that Hesselius's medical gaze can provide, while trying to rid his self of the unhealthy observation experienced with the monkey. Just as the story creates a similar dichotomy between the primitive form of green tea and the more processed, industrialized type of black tea, the two gazes here function in much the same way. The monkey's gaze, which is a result of Jennings's dabbling in foreign drinks and Pagan texts, is the primitive gaze contrasted with the educated and civilized gaze of Hesselius. From the beginning the monkey is understood in terms of his ability to see Jennings at all times. The "two small circular reflections" (18) that Jennings first perceives, and which later become the monkey's eyes, perform an unrelenting observation of Jennings that enables him to be perceived as unhealthy or sick for the first time. After thinking he has ridden himself of the monkey, Jennings leaves the bus and pays his driver while noticing that "the man look oddly" at him. Jennings explains to Hesselius that "I dare say there was something unusual in my looks and manner, for I had never felt so strangely before" (19). The driver is the first person to notice something "unusual" about Jennings, and here the story sets up most clearly the difference between the monkey's gaze and that of Hesselius's medical powers of observation. The monkey's gaze marks Jennings as sick by causing his "looks and manner" to be thought of as odd, while Jennings believes that Hesselius's abilities of observation will work in the opposite way to bring him and his body back from being perceived as un-masculine, disabled, and ill.

<26> Beginning with the driver, and remarked upon by others in the story, the visible perception of Jennings's illness causes a social stigma that starts to separate him from the rest of "normal" society. This sort of social stigmatization is described by Erving Goffman as a process where

while the stranger is present before us, evidence can arise of his possessing an attribute that makes him different from others in the category of persons available for him to be, and of a less desirable kind...he is thus reduced in our minds from a whole and usual person to a tainted and discounted one. (131)

In this relatively quick glance, the driver has, through his observation of Jennings's face, stigmatized him by marking him as different from others, and something less than a whole and usual man. Jennings believes that if he can get rid of the monkey then he will no longer be socially stigmatized, making it possible for him to again work and be present in the social sphere. Yet, the monkey's relentless observation begins to wear on Jennings to the point that he feels he is entirely under the monkey's control, and he worries that "it is gaining such an influence over me...and I'm growing so helpless" (26).

<27> To the rescue comes Hesselius's medical gaze, which will seek to cure Jennings from the demonic primitive gaze of the monkey. Hesselius brings Jennings back from the literal darkness by insisting that the patient have more candles lighted around the house so that the doctor can see Jennings more clearly, as well as making sure that he leaves "the room looking cherry and inhabited before I left him" (27). The importance of observation is again made clear by Hesselius as he urges the servant "to make a point of frequently looking into the room" (27) while Hesselius is away. Though it is curious that Hesselius leaves the task of Jennings's observation to the servant while he drives miles away to his room, and some critics have pointed out, humorously, that the doctor should not have left such a patient alone, Hesselius's belief in the curative, corrective powers of observation remain clear. When he learns of Jennings's suicide the next morning, he quizzes the servant about his observation of Jennings the previous night. After telling Hesselius that he checked on Jennings about every half an hour, the servant admits that he did fall asleep for a few hours, at which time the unobserved Jennings slit his own throat.

<28> In terms of expressing his failure to cure his patient, Hesselius can only understand the situation in tangible bodily terms. He summarizes the meaning of this tale by mixing mental, spiritual, and physical issues together arguing that "it is the story of the process of a poison, a poison which excites the reciprocal action of spirit and nerve, and paralyses the tissue that separates those cognate functions of the senses, the external and the interior" (30). For Hesselius there is no real separation between the "external and the interior" at least in terms of his medical philosophy. A suicide is not explained in terms of intangible and invisible mental and spiritual issues, but only in terms of "tissue" and "nerve." The suicide was made possible because Jennings's physical body was not observed at all times.

<29> W. J. McCormack sees the suicide in psychoanalytic terms, combining Jennings's throat slitting with the narrator's amputated fingers, writing that "interpreters of a Lacanian disposition might see the [narrator's] trifling accident as an act of self-mutilation, symbolic of castration perhaps" (152) with Jennings's suicide acting similarly. While not dismissing this reading,

perhaps we can also see the suicide as a final act of stigmatization that completely separates Jennings from a role of normal, masculine man. According to Gale Kern Paster, women in early modern England were often portrayed as “leaky vessels” whose bodies appeared out of control due to the discharge of fluids during menstruation, lactation, or urination. If women’s bodies were leaky and out of control, men’s bodies, if they were healthy, were meant to be closed-off. Shuttleworth argues that “the primary categories of male sexual dysfunction in the Victorian era [were] masturbation and spermatorrhea” both of which “focus on the male need to retain vital force” (56). The Victorian fear of the “disease” spermatorrhea focused on its primary symptom, which “was the uncontrolled emission of semen” (57). The emission of fluids from the male body was to be avoided as much as possible, in comparison to the female body which also needed to be regulated, but which was understood to be “naturally” leaky. Through this lens Jennings’s suicide appears in the text as his final push away from the conventionally masculine body towards an ambiguous creature that is male but not masculine. With Jennings’s suicide Hesselius’s attempts to normalize Jennings’s body fail completely, as he finally appears in the story as a leaky, sick body.

<30> For Hesselius, however, this suicide was not a failure as he urges the reader to remember that “he had not even commenced to treat Mr. Jennings’ case” (31). In the final pages of the story Hesselius states repeatedly that he could have cured Jennings had he continued to treat him. His diagnosis of Jennings’s illness helps us in understanding how the story promotes the healthiness of the closed-off male body and the corrective power of the medical gaze. Hesselius argues that there is a fluid, whose nature is spiritual “though not immaterial,” (32) that circulates through the brain. It is through the abuse of various substances, “green tea is one,” that enables a surface of the brain to be “unduly exposed, on which disembodied spirits can operate” (32). Contained within Hesselius’s theories are a warning for men against the use of foreign substances, like green tea, but we can add the exposure to foreign texts and ideas as well, that serve to unnaturally expose areas of the body. To be healthy the male body must be regulated, controlled, and closed off, not “leaky” like Jennings’s body at the end of the story. “Green Tea” endorses the powers of the medical gaze to cure and correct abnormal bodies, and provides the reader with suggestions on how, and how not, to behave properly. Jennings’s masculinity becomes threatened and eventually done away with when his illness prevents him from working and from entering into the social realm. Hesselius’s evolved type of medical materialism could have, we are told, saved Jennings from his illness. “Green Tea” joins other gothic fiction in its depiction of narratives that contest the boundaries of acceptable behavior, but finally restore those boundaries by punishing those characters that move outside their acceptable social and gender roles.

## Endnotes

(1) See Thomas Carlyle’s *Past and Present*, for example. (^)

(2)Bivona and Henkle (2006) argue that middle-class authors sought to equate writing with the manual labor performed by the working-class as a way to legitimize their masculine gender identity.(^)

(3)This anxiety produced by middle-class men can be seen in many Gothic works during the Victorian period. For example, the protagonist in Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) is forced to give up his leisurely days spent reading French novels in order to successfully enter middle-class society.(^)

(4)Jonathon Crary, in his book *Techniques of the Observer*, argues that in the early decades of the nineteenth-century "a new kind of observer took shape in Europe" (6), one that began replacing the disembodied observer of early centuries with one that was emphatically concerned with the corporeal subject.(^)

(5)To further emphasize most critics' evaluation of the "innocent" Jennings, in "Blue Devils And Green Tea: Sheridan Le Fanu's Haunted Suicides" Barbara T. Gates goes as far as to argue that it is difficult to "account for the appearance [of the monkey] to such a decent man," and that Jennings's only vices seem to have been green tea and ancient metaphysics, and he has wholly given up green tea," (21).(^)

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