Lycanthropic Landscapes: An EcoGothic Reading of Nineteenth-Century Werewolf Short Stories

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Abstract:

As a hybrid creature, being both human and animal, the werewolf is in a unique position to interact with both rural and urban landscapes – yet this relationship is critically neglected. This article utilises an EcoGothic perspective to interrogate how werewolves influence these settings, specifically examining tales published in the long nineteenth century because this era underwent significant environmental changes, such as the Industrial Revolution, the introduction of new plants and animals, and the extinction of native species. Authors utilized werewolves, and in particular the short story form, to examine the impact these changes had. This article postulates that werewolf literature is representative of a nostalgia for a bygone age as a direct reaction to Industrialisation; that werewolf literature is the most apt genre to demonstrate a conflict between the human world and the natural environment because of its hybrid state; that werewolves prefer nature in both their animal and human forms, indicating an affinity for this landscape; that nature returns this preferential treatment through subtly influencing the narrative and by claiming back human settlements; and that this harking back to a purer 'natural' landscape pre-figures our own ecological outlook.

Keywords: eco-criticism, EcoGothic, nature, nineteenth century, rural and urban landscapes, werewolf

Nineteenth-century Britain saw a dramatic shift in landscape; the Industrial Revolution triggered an influx of people from rural to urban areas, which caused disruption to native plants and animals, leading to some becoming extinct. Alongside these environmental changes, the Victorian period experienced numerous social changes, one of the most discussed in relation to werewolf literature being the fear of the 'animal within' due to Charles Darwin's seminal texts *On the Origin of Species* (1859) and *The Descent of Man* (1871); humans shifting into lupine form has clear links to personal atavism, social decline and a backlash against industrialisation. These social and environmental changes gave rise to varied literary representations of werewolves, which has led Andrew Barger to argue that the 'transformation of the werewolf in literature made its greatest strides in the 19th century when the monster leapt from poetry to the short story' (2013: 13). Traditionally, werewolf literature is a mode of horror that relies on the permanence of the natural world, such as the forest or, more recently, the moon, while exploring mankind's relationship with nature and the outdoors. However, the changing British environment affected werewolf literature in many ways and inspired authors as diverse as Catherine Crowe, Rudyard Kipling and G. W. M. Reynolds. This paper focuses on how the devolution of the natural environment is reflected in the literature of the era. By utilising an overarching EcoGothic perspective, this article postulates that most nineteenth-century werewolf short stories are set back in the Middle Ages as a reaction against the industrialisation of the land; that the Gothic ecology in these tales enacts the conflicts inherent within the relationship between the human world and natural environment; and that the natural landscape subtly influences the narrative, protecting the werewolves from the increasing threats posed by the human race, while the werewolves, although being hybrid creatures that could establish a balance between the two worlds, instead prioritise a return to nature that rejects industrialisation and society more generally, prefiguring our own ecological outlook.

As Andrew Smith and William Hughes note, Gothic fiction – with its focus on ancient castles, dense forests, wide open expanses of the American Frontier, and global disaster narratives – is the most appropriate genre for studying eco-criticism and the relationship between humans and the landscape, because it channels social anxieties into a specifically fearful tale that rose as one of the most influential genres over the nineteenth century. Smith and Hughes argue that to achieve this distinction from other genres, EcoGothic criticism critiques Romanticism's ideology that nature can be considered as natural, rather than cultural; discusses issues surrounding the naming of the environment and the implicit controlling of nature within this act; debates the meanings humans place on the landscape in

an attempt to tame nature and the wilderness; while also engaging with other theoretical paradigms, such as class, gender and national identities (2013: 1-14). Thus, EcoGothic criticism helps to make sense of nature for the writer and the reader by examining how the landscape acts as its own character to subtly influence narrative, characters' actions and the reader's response, in order to reflect or challenge human interaction with the environment. EcoGothic criticism has been applied to traditional Gothic texts, such as *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), to modern disaster films, such as *The Happening* (2008) and *2012* (2009), and this article will apply the theory to nineteenth-century werewolf short stories. Werewolves are an effective rhetorical device for examining ecological issues because they have a long folkloric history that demonstrates them evolving with their changing environments.

As a forerunner to werewolves, wolves in Western folklore and fables were depicted as stereotypically treacherous, conniving and aggressive males who used the natural forest environment as a cover for their predatory behaviour. For instance, *Aesop's Fables'* 'The Sow and the Wolf' (c.600 BCE) depicts a wolf preying on a sow who is in labour, thus using her vulnerable and isolated position against her (1993: 74-5); Charles Perrault's 'Little Red Riding Hood' (1697) has the deceptive wolf take the shortest route through the woods to Grandma's house, while Little Red Riding Hood takes the roundabout way, amusing 'herself by gathering nuts, running after the butterflies, and making nosegays of the wild flowers' (1989: 5) – the natural environment distracts her to the benefit of the wolf; and the Brothers Grimm's 'The Wolf and Seven Young Kids' (1812) has the wolf mimic another animal's form in order to eat the mother goat's children, before falling to sleep in the supposedly safe meadow – though the mother goat finds him and puts stones in his stomach (1855: 22-4). In these tales, wolves retain their deceptive traits in order to prey upon other animals and humans, while their relationship with the environment evolves from utilising woods to their own advantage, to having nature used against them.

This ambivalent though somewhat simpler relationship of animals with nature changes dramatically in the nineteenth century because of the radical environmental and social impact that humans had on the landscape of Britain. With the Industrial Revolution came an increase in people moving from rural villages to urban cities, which led to overcrowding, an increase in the spread of disease and dirtier air. Furthermore, the British agricultural landscape became more homogenous as wetlands were drained and heaths were limed, and native plant diversity dwindled while numerous alien plant species were introduced. Following on from the centuries-long extinction of the gray wolf, several other

native animals, such as wild horses, polecats and pine martins, were all but exterminated to reduce the risk to humans and livestock (Weddle 2002: 41-3). All of these factors generated a nostalgia for a bygone age; a rural British past that symbolised a purer, greener and simpler landscape where wolves roamed freely.

Echoing this nostalgia, the explosion of werewolf literature in the nineteenth century indicates a lamentation that the native British wolf had died out, specifically as the scientific rhetoric surrounding wolves evolved over the course of the century. The wolf as a destructive and demonized figure in both scientific and literary discourse gave way to an attempt to understand the wolf as an important species to Britain's natural history. The children's writer and basket-weaver, Thomas Miller, wrote his novel *The British Wolf-Hunters: A Tale of England in the Olden Time* in 1859, proclaiming that:

> WHEN writing my 'History of the Anglo-Saxons,' for the 'European Library,' I had occasion to refer to a great number of very scarce and valuable works, and it then struck me, while reading the laws made by the Saxon king, Edgar, who first compelled the conquered Britons to pay the tribute of wolves' heads, that if I gave a description of wolf-hunting in England at that period of time, with some account of the wilderness of forest which the darkened long leagues of land, it would make an interesting book for British boys. (Miller 1859: 4)

This book, published in London and New York, specifically begins with the history of the extinction of the wolf, a description of the by-gone landscape, and Miller's desire to educate – through entertainment – British boys, which all emphasize the desire to not forget Britain's past that ran throughout the Victorian period. Almost two decades later, the scientist, J. E. Harting, published the article 'The Extinct British Wolf' (1878) in *The Popular Science Review,* in which he noted that '[t]he interest which attaches to the history of extinct British animals can only be equalled by the *regret* which must be felt, by all true naturalists, at their disappearance beyond recall from our fauna' (53, my emphasis). Indeed, the book's blurb continues to note that: 'hundreds of organisms, both animal and vegetable, must have succumbed to the *progress of cultivation and the spread of population*, which have now attained such a pitch that one has to travel a considerable distance from London […] in order to find a bit of undisturbed land' (my emphasis). Thus, the scientific understanding of wolves and the popular public perception of them became more intertwined over the nineteenth century, strengthening the regret and nostalgia for the native species, which fed into the rise of werewolf fiction as a reaction against industrialisation.

The wolf therefore taps into a larger context of reactionary nostalgic literature, but it is the werewolf that is the most apt creature with which to discuss the environmental changes of Britain, specifically because it is a hybrid form: being both human and animal it interacts with both rural and urban landscapes. This harking back to a former era is evidenced not only by the folklore and fables that went before, but it remerged in many early nineteenth-century werewolf short stories, such as Richard Thomson's 'The Wehr-Wolf: A Legend of the Limousin' (1828), Leitch Ritchie's 'The Man Wolf' (1831) and James Sutherland Menzies's 'Hugues, the Wer-Wolf: A Kentish Legend of the Middle Ages' (1838). These examples prioritise nature through setting their tales back to what the Victorians perceived as the under-developed, densely forested Middle Ages, when wolves were still prevalent in Britain and across Europe, making the werewolf seem more a tangible – though mythic – form. In fact, as Simon Schama notes in *Landscape and Memory* (1995), Britain in the Middle Ages was not densely forested. Instead, the forests had already been decimated to make space for villages and agricultural pastures, and what forestry was left was micro-managed (1995: 142-4). Therefore, nineteenth-century Britain constructed its own version of the environment of the Middle Ages in its werewolf fiction to create a bygone era that distanced itself from the modern industrial age. This distancing effect was created by both setting the tales far back in time in the lost rural landscape of Middle Age Britain and also through setting the tales in far off lands, such as Lithuania, France and India. This culturally constructed nostalgic rural landscape kept werewolf short stories popular throughout the beginning of the nineteenth century, thus, only werewolf tales that are set in rural villages will be considered in this essay; they create a cohesive narrative that examines how these creatures interact with nature, reflecting the nostalgia of the age and the backlash against industrialisation. Werewolf fiction set in urban landscapes, such as G. W. M. Reynolds's *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf* (1846-7), Dudley Costello's 'Lycanthropy in London; or, The Wehr-Wolf of Wilton-Crescent' (1855) and, to an extent, R. L. Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), will only be briefly alluded to as foils, because their emphasis is on split identities, psychological experiments and the pressures of the human world.

Alongside the distancing techniques used, the other tradition in nineteenth-century werewolf fiction is that the transforming person can be either of the landed gentry, or a servant on the land, demonstrating that lycanthropy did not discriminate between the social strata. Instead, the emphasis was on the werewolf's transformation; its hybrid form allowed it to commune with nature as a wolf while the human side remained invested in the running of the rural estate. Unlike Kevin Corstorphine's analysis of Ambrose Bierce's post-frontier short

story 'The Damned Thing' (1893) that highlights how '[n]ature is reduced to "environment", or background for human concerns' (2013: 127), in werewolf literature nature is not side-lined in favour of human experiences, nor is the environment merely depicted as the natural habitat for the werewolf; it is an evolving living organism in its own right that helps the werewolf, as will be discussed shortly in relation to the forest, graves and stone.

The werewolf short story continued to be popular into the latter half of the nineteenth century, as these texts became influenced by both Darwinian evolution and the fears of atavism and degeneration these theories awoke. Mankind and animals were closer together than ever before and werewolves were particularly apt for exploring these fears. As Alexis Easley and Shannon Scott note, werewolves 'embodied cultural anxieties about social change' (2013: ix), therefore as a hybrid form, werewolves should be well suited to both rural and urban landscapes, yet as humans they are outcast from society, the transformation forcing a return to nature in the midst of busy rural life. This is depicted in Arthur Conan Doyle's 'A Pastoral Horror' (1890), in which a curate kills his parishioners only to be discovered while preaching a sermon. These humans are the Omega Wolves of the pack, excluded from the collective by an involuntary return to a savage, animalistic state suited to scavenging the dwindling wilds (Higley 2005: 337). For werewolves this means their affinity with nature is stronger, more of a 'natural' or instinctive state than the social order that humans have created.

As previously mentioned, though, the forest – the home of the werewolf – is also a culturally constructed environment in these tales; as Lisa Kröger notes, the forest is 'a unique space in the Gothic as it represents neither the Church-dominated convent nor the aristocratic power struggle found within the castle' (2013: 16). The forest has no religion, no social status, no governing body; in the forest, the environment is in control. Nature therefore promotes freedom from the restricting rules of civilization, meaning werewolves can roam free and let their base urges take over. In order to revel in this freedom the werewolf is dependent on the separation and binary opposition of the rural and urban worlds; the werewolf has to be completely removed from civilization in order to transform. The erosion of this barrier is recognised by the outskirts of villages, which, as the century developed, encroached further and further towards the tree line of the forest. This is depicted again in 'A Pastoral Horror' (1890) in Doyle's description of the village in which the curate attacks several people: 'the … thick woods stretch right down to the houses on every side, so that escape is made easy' (2013: 183). The ever sprawling villages continually cut back the forest edge, claiming more land and invading the werewolf's habitat, while simultaneously

surrounding themselves with forest, allowing the werewolf an effective means of escape. By moving the natural border between the forest and villages, humans intrude upon nature, forcing the werewolf into the populated villages for food and shelter. The animals therefore intrude back and reclaim the transformed land as their own territory, threatening the humans in return and staking their control over both the forest and the encroaching rural villages.

In order to claim both of these environments, werewolves mark the landscape with an indication of their intention and actions. In earlier werewolf poetry there was very little explanation of how werewolves interacted with the landscape. For example in *Eclogues,* Virgil describes how 'Moeris … turned wolf often and hid in the woods' (Higley 2005: 348); they merely run through the forest, or use it as a space to hide – just as in the previously references fables and folklore. Nevertheless, in the early nineteenth century, when werewolf literature morphed into the short story format, these interactions with the landscape, and their consequences, reveal themselves. For instance, there is usually 'an ecological dead zone' in the werewolf's territory (Hughes 2013: 2); there are no references to other animals or even birds of the forest. There are two explanations for this: most obviously is the naturalist explanation: the werewolf is killing them for a food supply, along with attacking humans who have encroached onto its land. Beyond this though are the supernaturally-inflected influences, such as the weather; it is traditionally winter, windy and snowing, so the other animals have either migrated or are hibernating. This use of extreme weather conditions in nearly all nineteenth-century werewolf short fiction indicates that dying nature, the harsh seasons and the forsaken landscape are all integral to the werewolves' existence.[1] Werewolves thrive in this desolate environment specifically because they are hybrid creatures. They have the hardy fur and sharp claws of a wolf, but can also retain their human consciousness that gives them an advantage over their prey.

The only time werewolves come into contact with other creatures is when they cross domesticated animals, such as dogs and horses. These animals' extreme reactions when werewolves are near indicates their instinctive repulsion of such an abhorrent creature; dogs and horses are obedient to man's commands and are therefore juxtaposed to the wild werewolf, suggesting the other forest animals could have fled for their own survival. Examples of animals' extreme reactions to werewolves are depicted in Clemence Housman's 'The Were-Wolf' (1890) when the dog 'lifted his head and gave utterance to a howl, loud, prolonged, most dismal' every time there is a strange knock on the door with no-one outside (2013: 211), and Rudyard Kipling's 'The Mark of the Beast' (1890) when the horses 'reared and screamed and nearly tore up their pickets; they sweated and shivered and lathered and

were distraught with fear' (2013: 196). These examples indicate werewolves are an unnatural, non-native species that out-compete the native wildlife, and even the top predators: humans. Werewolves are an aberration of nature and all other animals shun them, while the weather turns cold and kills the environment, suggesting werewolves drain the life out of all that surrounds them.[2]

Like real-life wild animals that live harmoniously with nature – marking their territory by urinating, utilising the wood's resources for their own purposes (e.g. making nests), and defecating on the forest's floor – werewolves treat the forest with respect; they leave no claw marks on bark and they do not destroy any vegetation. In fact it is the humans in these stories who often damage the landscape. These humans are usually huntsmen and woodcutters, who for a living, reap the forest for resources, albeit in an ecologically sustainable fashion. In Joseph Jacobs's 'Morraha' (1894) it is the werewolf's wife who demands he cuts off a tree branch so she can wield the magic of the tree. She uses the branch to turn him into several different animals – a raven, horse, fox and finally wolf (2013: 284-7) – indicating her intertwined destructive environmental attitude and morally condemnable social behaviour. It is also suggested that if her husband had not damaged the tree, he would not have been cursed with lycanthropy.[3] Also, in Gilbert Campbell's 'The White Wolf of Kostopchin' (1889), in their pursuit of a werewolf, the villagers, with 'a hundred eager hands collected dried sticks and leaves' to burn down an entire bush to condemn the werewolf to death (2013: 147). The villagers give no second thought to the damage they will inflict on the natural landscape, or the chain reaction it could have upon the other forest animals who may rely on the bush for food or shelter. In fact, throughout these examples of nineteenth-century lycanthropic short stories no werewolf damages the natural flora and fauna, and in this tale the werewolf emerges in human form from the bush to save it from incineration. Therefore, the respect for nature that is innate in the werewolf remains in its human form as well, distinguishing it from humans who are ultimately more destructive and have less respect for nature than the werewolves they hunt. This prefigures our own contemporary ideas of cleaner greener living, in that human actions are damaging the Earth's landscapes, causing significant harm to the environment.

In return for this consideration, the landscape seems to subtly protect, or at least favour, certain werewolves. For instance, in Menzies's 'Hugues the Wer-Wolf' (1838) the injured creature 'disappeared like a phantom amongst the dark shades of the forest, in which, aided by the wind, his howls and moans were soon lost to the ear' (2010: 39), and in Thomson's 'The Wehr-Wolf' (1828) the night becomes so dark the traveller loses his convoy,

leaving him prey to the werewolf (2010: 130). Even when the werewolf does leave a mark on the landscape, such as a footprint in the ground, the environment takes steps to cover it. For instance, in Housman's 'The Were-Wolf' snow covers the werewolf's tracks that lead up to the village hut (2013: 222), meaning the evidence for the beautiful woman's dual nature is destroyed, protecting her from the persecution of the villagers. In each of these cases the natural landscape assists the werewolf in its escape, by camouflaging it in the dark, covering its tracks, or by hindering the pursuers. This indicates the environment's preference for the animal side to the lycanthrope's nature as it recognises the werewolf's affinity for the natural environment and its separation from the socially constructed human way of life.

As a step beyond subtly aiding the werewolf's escape, in Eric Stenbock's 'The Other Side: A Breton Legend' (1893), the forest itself acts as a temptress, luring the child, Gabriel, from the safe, rural village, across the dividing river, to 'The Other Side' where devilish creatures roam. To entice Gabriel, the forest grows a 'large deep blue flower, whose strange intoxicating perfume reached him and fascinated him even where he stood' and once across the river bed, he sees more flowers 'stretching before him … each one lovelier than the last' (2013: 270). Similarly to Hansel and Gretel's breadcrumbs, which were destroyed by the forest's animals, thus trapping them within its borders, Gabriel's blue flowers assail his senses and entice him further into the forest in order for him to be captured, indicating that nature and the environment work together to actively aid werewolves in their pursuit of prey. Significantly, Gabriel disassociates from the other children of the village whose 'notion of excellence was slaughter [of] cats and sparrows' and the werewolf does not eat him (279); nature, the landscape and the werewolf recognise his affinity for the environment and so he is imprisoned as a surrogate child. Thus, alongside helping werewolves to escape humans, the landscape is further attuned to the werewolves' needs so acts as a temptress, intuitively responding to the creatures living within its borders by seducing victims so the werewolves' desires are obtained.

This argument is complicated though by the rare example of the environment helping humans in their detection of, their escape from, or their capture/killing of a werewolf, which is the exception that proves the rule. In 'The White Wolf of Kostopchin' the werewolf, Ravina, in her human form, is invited to live in the landowner's estate after a white wolf has killed several serfs. On some mornings, wolf footprints are visible outside Ravina's window, hinting at the dual nature of its inhabitant; the landscape therefore aids the serfs in their superstitious fancies that leads to Ravina's ultimate downfall. At the story's violent conclusion, Ravina's young slayer, Alexis, shelters himself 'behind every tree and bush until

he has arrived within ten paces' of her (Campbell 2013: 167). Alexis uses the landscape to his advantage, sneaking up and shooting her while she is feeding on his father's heart. Thus, while this tale is similarly thematic to Housman's White Fell in 'The Were-Wolf', in that they both depict the duality of feminine nature as alluring, yet deadly, nature's reversal of affinity demonstrates a potentially ambivilant reltionship to particularly female werewolves, questioning the 'natural' status of the female beast.

Similarly, the werewolf's preference for nature over human society is also complicated by 'Morraha' and 'The Other Side' because the protagonists in each tale attempt to return to their previous lives. Respectively, Jacobs's Niall saves himself by seeking refuge among the king's household, while Stenbock's Gabriel eventually breaks free from the werewolves and crosses the river back to his village, which would indicate the werewolves' preference for the human world. Nevertheless, both Niall and Gabriel are not 'natural' werewolves, like White Fell, Ravina or Christina, nor did they willingly chose to become werewolves either, like Hugues or the knight in Ritchie's 'The Man Wolf', and so their return to human society reflects their inate social conditioning as humanbeings. It is only Fleete in Kipling's 'The Mark of the Beast' who is cursed with lycanthropy and appears to prefer nature – 'he was literally plastered with dirt from head to foot. He must have been rolling in the garden' (2013: 198); however, as he does not physically transform into a wolf – it is a psychological disorder – this diminishes his affinity with nature as a hybrid creature compared to the other 'natural' werewolves.

The change from human into the werewolf's hybrid state and the developed affinity with nature is most prominent in Ritchie's 'The Man Wolf', which develops the landscape's subtle aid into a full celebration of the werewolf during its change. He writes:

> The knight listened at first in terror, but by degrees he began to howl himself as if in emulation [...] they formed a ring, and began to dance round a great stone standing on the end in the midst. Round and round danced the trees, and the rocks, and the hills, and whole world, in the eyes of the knight; and to his stunned ears every stone had a voice, every leaf and clod its individual howl. (2010: 63)

In this scene, not only does the forest come alive and dance in celebration of the knight's transformation into animal form, but his howl becomes one with the wind, and the stones, leaves and clod join in with his howl to create a single song, unifying them as one harmonious entity. This transformation contrasts significantly with G. W. M. Reynolds's depiction in his earlier novel, *Wagner, the Wehr-Wolf*. Reynolds writes of Wagner's

transformation: '[as] his body loses its human contours – his arms and limbs take another form: - and, with a frantic howl of misery, to which the woods give horribly faithful reverberations, and with a rush like a hurling wind, the wretch starts wildly away' (2006: 63). Both descriptions conflate the werewolf's howl with the sound of the wind, but while Ritchie's was a song, Reynolds's is a painful outcry, which the forest merely echoes across the landscape as 'reverberations'. Rather than joining in and celebrating the change, Reynolds's environment seems to pity the werewolf from a distance. Just as 'the caves and mountains rang with Ambrosio's shrieks' in Matthew Lewis's 1798 novel *The Monk* (1998: 376), the reverberations of Reynolds's urban werewolf's cry symbolises the lack of concern the novel has for the forest, reducing nature to a Gothic backdrop, rather than an active character, contrasting with the short story's depiction of this relationship.

Having argued so far that in nineteenth-century werewolf short stories the creature mainly lives in harmony with the environment, there is one object in and of the landscape that werewolves do attack: graves. In his 1865 text *The Book of Werewolves: Being an Account of a Terrible Superstition,* Sabine Baring-Gould offers an explanation for this behaviour when he postulates that:

> [t]he loup-garoux is sometimes a metamorphosis forced upon the body of a damned person, who, after having been tormented in his grave, has torn his way out of it. The first stage in the process consists in his devouring the cerecloth which envelops his face; then his moans and muffled howls ring from the tomb … through the gloom of the night, the earth of the grave begins to heave.
>
> (1865: 107-8)

Baring-Gould's explanation of how werewolves come into being would suggest that werewolves attack graves in order to release the tormented changeling from their prison, freeing them from the torture chamber that they themselves broke free from; however, this is not usually the case as depicted within literature.

Werewolves instead attack graves in order to consume the remains of the person inside; they use them as an alternative means of food supply, as evidenced by Menzies's 'Hugues the Wer-Wolf' when the eponymous creature, 'goaded by famine, had actually disinterred the dead' (2010: 22). It is Frederick Marryat's 'The White Wolf of the Hartz Mountains' (1849), though, that depicts the most chilling case of grave vandalism. The titular white wolf, Christina, is a manifestation of one of the spirits of the Hartz Mountains, able to assume human form but not actually human, returning to her wolf form when killed. Significantly, Christina digs up the graves of her step-children and eats their remains *while in*

human form – a pseudo-cannibalistic act that challenges Western European cultural and societal preconceptions about the sanctity of the human corpse. As the narrator, Krantz, notes: 'what was my horror, when I perceived my mother-in-law busily removing the stones from Marcella's grave' in order to desecrate the remains of his sister (Marryat 2010: 156). This removal of the stones, which were put there specifically so that wolves could not defile the grave, epitomises the werewolf's unnatural appetite for human flesh and thus demonstrates the worst of not only human nature, but wolf nature as well; wolf nature is made monstrous as it is exhibited in human form. Christina's actions reveal that nothing, no natural, social or moral construct, will regulate human or wolf behaviour when it comes to satisfying base urges.

A third explanation for the werewolf's reaction to graves is offered by Chantal Bourgault du Coudray when she notes that '[m]onsters […] are not content to be inanimate vessels for the expulsion of the social collectivity; they want to change or destroy those artifices which insist upon their residual, marginalised status, and their bodies are their weapons' (2002: 12). If one considers the grave as an object, it is in itself also a hybrid creation, built by humans to bury their dead, but they are also part of the landscape as they are made from the earth. As mentioned, internment of the dead is a particularly human practice that invites a socially acceptable intrusion onto the environment, while trying to restore the body back to the earth; burial is more invasive than exposure, consignment to water, or even cannibalism. Werewolves, without this social conception, defile graves to reclaim the materials and restore the natural environment. Therefore, there is the possibility that werewolves violate graves, not only to scavenge for food or to destroy evidence of human culture, but also because the object's hybrid status reminds them of their own liminality; the werewolf sees itself reflected in this object and seeks to destroy it, to purge itself of its own abhorrent nature. Thus, in direct contrast to Baring-Gould, the fourth possibility is that the werewolves are not digging other creatures up to free them, but are attempting to dig their way back down into the earth, to return to the peaceful slumber of death.

These werewolves' zealous reactions to graves are contrasted to humans' interactions with these objects. In Menzies's 'Hugues the Wer-Wolf', after his parents and siblings die, Hugues lays down on their graves, contemplating joining them: 'when he had laid the last within her parent earth, he hesitated whether he should not extend himself beside them, and share their peaceful slumber' (2010: 26). For Hugues, the graves of his family are a space to release his despair that ultimately provides solace and peace from the hardship of rural life,

indicating that even though some humans damage the environment and werewolves defile graves, other humans take solace from the liminal space and look after it as a means of maintaining their mental wellbeing. Furthermore, Hugues's act of digging graves directly in the forest, rather than in designated, consecrated Church burial grounds not only acknowledges his family's own hybrid history, and so he rejects the trappings of society and class, but it also pre-figures our own eco-funerals, whereby humans are laid to rest in ecologically friendly, biodegradable cardboard coffins (BBC 2004). These graves provide nourishment for the earth and so indicate humans giving back to the landscape to become one with nature, reinforcing the peace that some humans find in graves as a specific marked place to return to in order to visit the dead, which contrasts directly with the anguish and anger brought forth in werewolves for the desecration of nature.

As a final example which extends this grave analysis, stone, in a variety of forms, is another regular feature of nineteenth-century werewolf short fiction. Already mentioned are a stone pillar that is used as a dancing pole and the grave stones used to protect Marcella's final resting place, but in Ritchie's 'The Man Wolf' the werewolf uses a stone slab to mark where he can safely hide his clothes in order to undergo his transformation. For those who live in the forest and are attuned to its variations, stones also act as navigational landmarks, helping the werewolf deceive humans and avoid their snares. Furthermore, in Campbell's 'The White Wolf of Kostopchin' there is a cracked stone cross – again a natural material that has been transformed into a man-made object – which is used almost as an altar for killing humans: 'in the centre of the opening was a shattered stone cross, and at its base lay a dark heap' (2013: 142). This destruction of the stone cross, along with the violation of graves, support Kröger's previously referenced theory that that there is no religious authority in the forest; nature is paramount and will destroy any man-made constructs, returning them to their natural state. This is demonstrated most clearly in Bram Stoker's 'Dracula's Guest' (1914) when the traveller leaves his carriage to explore an abandoned village. The village was deserted hundreds of years before and has fallen into dilapidation, as indicated by there being only 'many old foundations' left (2013: 259). Nature is slowly, yet systematically, reclaiming the village, signalling that time and weather are no hindrances to its progression. Moreover, when a hailstorm hits, the traveller seeks shelter in the entrance to a stone tomb; however, a lightning bolt destroys it, 'blasting and crumbling the marble, as in a burst of flame' (261). By obliterating the last remaining building, nature and the weather work together to destroy his only shelter, forcing him into the open and exposing him to the elements. Nature not only eradicates the final remains of civilization but also emphasises mankind's powerlessness

against it. Thus, in these tales, stone once again indicates that nature, the landscape and the weather all act in unison to expel humans and their socially constructed way of life.

In conclusion, as nineteenth-century Britain began to take note of its dramatically transformed landscape it began a resurgence of tales of different transformations, reimagining werewolves that in the popular imagination dwelt within the purer, heavily forested medieval past. The werewolf's hybridity drew attention to the different urban and rural landscapes British society found itself torn between, articulating the tension between the metropolis and nature in a sensational fashion. Werewolves could gain the best of both the rural and the urban landscapes, but overall its human and wolf forms gave preference to nature, and nature subtly returned this preferential treatment. The socially constructed villages in these tales are the ones that are likely to deteriorate over time, crumbling into the ruins of a past age while nature, the environment and the weather continue to grow triumphant. These ideas of nature reclaiming the land, gaining justice for the damage inflicted onto it by humans, prefigures our own environmental concerns and eco-criticism. It is in true EcoGothic style that these landscapes can be considered lycanthropic themselves; not only do they produce and shelter the werewolves in these tales, but as the landscape itself is transformed by mankind, writers fancy they can perceive its growing hostility and resentment towards us.

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[1] The notable exceptions are W. B. Yeats's 'Where There is Nothing, There is God' (1896), in which the werewolf, Angus, lives in an outlying hut where birds and wolves willingly pass by. The climax of the tale being that Angus is not a werewolf, but a wandering Saint who lives with the wolves; thus, nature blooms around him, rather than dying off. Furthermore, in Catherine Crowe's 'The Story of a Weir-Wolf' (1846) it is bright sunshine throughout, with the sunbathing protagonist a notable difference to the usual woodsmen werewolves. This could be accounted for by the fact that the accused werewolf is condemned by society's gossip, and is again not an actual werewolf, so she participates more fully in society's activities.

[2] Although, it should be noted that the weather and the landscape can also work against each other. For instance, in Bram Stoker's 'Dracula's Guest' (1914) the hail storm inflicts as much damage to the trees as it does to the traveller who cannot find sufficient shelter in the forest: 'hailstones that beat down leaf and branch and made the shelter of the cypresses of no more avail than though their stems were standing-corn' (2013: 260-1).

[3] Notably in his wolf form he kills farm horses and sheep, indicating werewolves do kill animals, but only domesticated and agricultural ones, like the previously mentioned dogs and horses – rather than wild forest animals – because they have been conditioned to fit within societal structures.

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