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The Good Doctor Hesselius: Le Fanu's Invisible Narrator and the Framing of *In a Glass Darkly* from Gothic to Sensation Fiction

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In a Glass Darkly (1872), composed of five previously-published short stories, is the final fiction published before the death of Joseph Thomas Sheridan Le Fanu (b.1814) in 1873. It is framed by the fictional, late Doctor Martin Hesselius, a “*metaphysical physician*” whose unique experience of the early Victorian era darts between experiences of the occult and the scientific. Accompanying these stories, five corresponding prologues written by the Doctor’s former assistant describe the relevance of the story to follow and often, its significance to the late Doctor’s work. Current critical conversation surrounding Hesselius borrows from established critical authors in identifying the Doctor’s role as a framing device to the narrative. Scholarly voices have also explored Hesselius’s role in bringing reader closer to experiencing desired authorial effect. Le Fanu’s literary legacy is most often placed in discussions of the Gothic, but critical voices have also argued for the consideration of Le Fanu’s “Green Tea”, included as the first chapter of *In a Glass Darkly*, as a piece of Sensation Fiction, prompting the need for consideration of Le Fanu’s relationship with genre beyond a single example. Where other considerations of Le Fanu’s work regard the role of biographical and historical context, there is a void in current study which would see this established knowledge applied to Hesselius’s significance to Le Fanu’s late work, genre studies, and Doctor’s relationship with reader. Most importantly, Le Fanu’s implementation of Hesselius as a framing device is in dire need of critical reanalysis. The scope of critical work including discussions of Le Fanu’s relationship with genre – specifically, Sensation Fiction and the Gothic – suffers from this deficiency. Hesselius, too frequently regarded as the near-invisible narrator must instead be considered as a character, implicated in the story he posthumously tells, in order for a critical audience to inform their understanding of his framing relationship to genre and the Victorian reader. This research argues that critical discussions concerning Le Fanu’s methods of framing have not considered this coexistence of genre which, I further argue, is present in *In a Glass Darkly*. This research will examine Hesselius’s role in the framing of *In a Glass Darkly* in historic and literary context, arguing that Le Fanu’s use of the Doctor supports a coexistence of genre, and that Hesselius effectively bridges the gap between these genres. Further, I identify and analyse a key mode by which Le Fanu supports Hesselius’s role in framing genre, evidencing a consideration of genre synchronicity which examines Hesselius’s parallel role in establishing a relationship with the Victorian reader and

imposing the desired effect of the author. Through examining these voids via close reading – including analysis of its prologues and with a weighty focus on “Green Tea” – this research aims to evidence the validity and necessity of a closer consideration of Hesselius in making critical arguments pertaining to the stories within *In a Glass Darkly*.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements	5
Chapter 1 - An Introduction to the Text in Context and Basis for Research Framework ...	6
1.1 Relevant Recapitulation of Text Details and History of Publication	6
1.2 Research Basis: Highly Relevant Existing Research	13
1.3 "He Writes in Two Distinct Characters": An Introduction to Le Fanu's Doctor Hesselius	18
1.4 Research Methods, Contribution Goals, and Preventative Considerations for Error	21
Chapter 2 - Critical Context: The Historic, Biographical, and Literary Coherence of <i>In a Glass Darkly</i>	25
2.1 Le Fanu and Genre: Biographical, Historic, and Critical Context Framing the Publication of <i>In a Glass Darkly</i>	25
2.2 "His Fate is Sealed": The Medical, Historic and Literary Significance of "Green Tea"	31
2.3 The Invisible Prince meets the Good Doctor: Framing Le Fanu's Literary Relationship with Doctor Martin Hesselius in Context	39
Chapter 3 - He Writes in "Two Distinct" Genres: Tracing Doctor Martin Hesselius's Relationship to Sensation Fiction and Gothic Horror in <i>In a Glass Darkly</i>	43
3.1 Critical Context: Le Fanu and Genre in Victorian Britain	43
3.2 Sensory Deprivation: Tracing Le Fanu's Coexistent Genres Through an Identifiable Literary Marker	47
3.3 "The Silence Too, Was Utter": Sensory Deprivation And The Body Under Hesselius's Fictive Medical Gaze	49
Chapter 4 - Physician, Frame Thyself: Hesselius, Reader, and the Synchronous Framing of <i>In a Glass Darkly</i>	61
4.1 Framing Victorian Reader Experience: Critical, Historic, and Biographical Context	61
4.2 Between Doctor and Reader: Hesselius's Framing of Genre	64
4.3 Closing the Gap: How Hesselius Frames Reader Experience as He Bridges Genre	66
Chapter 5: Conclusion, Critical Implications, and Future Research	77
Works Cited	81

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Let's keep laughing at locksmiths.
(Le Fanu, 277)

Chapter 1: An Introduction to the Text in Context and Basis for Research Framework

The academic community has regarded Le Fanu's work in biographical and historic context, but there exists an important void in current scholarship: Doctor Hesselius's significance to Le Fanu's breadth of work, to studies of genre, and to the Doctor's relationship with reader are infrequently critically addressed. In tandem with these concerns, Le Fanu's use of the Doctor's character as a framing device suffers lack of reanalysis. Likewise, discussions of Le Fanu's relationship with genre – specifically, of his relationship with sensation fiction and the Gothic – suffers from the absence of critical discussion in recent years. Hesselius must be considered as a character in order for a critical audience to appropriately inform their understanding of his role in framing genre and bridging the gap between narrative and Victorian audience. This research argues that a coexistence of genre which is present in *In a Glass Darkly*, conveyed by the Doctor's character. This research further argues that the Doctor's role in bridging genre gap is paralleled by his role in uniting reader with narrative and realising authorial intent.

This chapter aims to provide a critical audience with an interpretive overview of the full text of *In a Glass Darkly* in the context of this research's framework, arguments, and scholarly intent detailed fully in the extended abstract above. I will accomplish this through the consolidation of the work's history for the purposes of contextual review, relevant recapitulation of details relevant to interpreting the text, and through framing the critical contributions which most heavily relate to all subsequent arguments herein. In this way, this chapter will introduce self-designed research framework, evidence my reasoning for approaching the research methods within that framework, and account for the potentiality of error in literary interpretation, also detailing the steps which have been taken to combat this margin of error. Additionally, this chapter serves as an important introduction to Doctor Hesselius's character, which, as with the weightily-relevant work of critical authors mentioned in this chapter, will itself frame my own research.

1.1 Relevant Recapitulation of Text Details and History of Publication

Throughout the prologues framing each story within *In a Glass Darkly*, written by the late Doctor Hesselius's assistant, the reader is informed that the assistant publishes these carefully-selected cases from among the many which Hesselius has left behind after his death — we are quoted as many as nearly “two hundred and thirty” which bear similarity to the cases of “Green Tea” and “The Familiar” alone, for example (Le Fanu 41).

It is through these prologues, and the assistant's voice, by which audience is given sporadic detail about Hesselius's work and so, character. Audiences are made to gather these details from the writing Hesselius has left behind – this sense of vacancy, an early indicator of the gothic imagery to follow the initial prologue in “Green Tea” which introduces him. In this way, audiences receive information as it is presented: second-hand, from his assistant-made - “literary executor”, after his death (Le Fanu xxiv). It is these details from which critical conclusions about the late Doctor's character must be drawn as much as through his narration of “Green Tea”: the only story in the book narrated explicitly through the Doctor's own words.

As the mouthpiece for information on Hesselius's character, an important aspect of the prologues to consider in critical review before all others is found within an undisclosed aspect of the assistant's character. It is imperative to note that the gender of Hesselius's assistant and protégé is never disclosed – neither via pronoun use nor direct self-reported indication of identity. While it is a certainty that men constituted the majority of medically-trained surgeons at the time the assistant would have been studying medicine, it cannot and should not be assumed that the assistant's character – and consequently, Le Fanu's *fiction* – is reliant on a statistic, particularly given Le Fanu's noted adeptness at portraying female narrators and protagonists in fiction penned after the death of his wife in 1858 (Sage 5). In this case, regarding information which is omitted or otherwise absent is of equal critical value to considering the established details present in the work and discussed in critical review. For this reason, I have chosen to refer to the assistant as ‘they’ for all parts of this research for which a pronoun is required where other critical authors have assumed the assistant is male so as not to ascribe baseless suspicions on the gender of the character, and to leave this avenue open to future critical interpretation, particularly given a rise in critical discourse exploring gender and sexuality norms of the Victorian era in relation to Le

Fanu's later works.

An interpretation of the prologue's information, therefore, commands attention be given first to the intermediary mouthpiece which effectively asks for reader trust in their deliverance of the late doctor's word. This narrator explains first how they came to enter the medical world, describing their medical and surgical education briefly, and explaining the end of their career before it began through an unfortunate scalpel-related accident which cost them two fingers. Rendered ineffectual in their original vocation, they depict their life since as having held a meandering quality, though not by choice, and this lifestyle's fortuitous introduction to Doctor Martin Hesselius. Post brief self-introduction, the narrator prefaces the purity of their intentions in an explanation of their relationship with the doctor:

In Dr Martin Hesselius, I found my master. His knowledge was immense, his grasp of a case was an intuition. He was the very man to inspire a young enthusiast, like me, with awe and delight. My admiration has stood the test of time and survived the separation of death. I am sure it was well founded. (Le Fanu 5)

This level of professional intimacy acquaints reader with the esteem resulting from the assistant's twenty years of service to the Doctor. It reads, in this short place, more as an obituary, elegy, or memoir to a fallen friend and compatriot than as an appeal for the trust of the reader, but effectually, this frames the compulsory research question which presents itself next and opens an additional margin of error – how can we trust the assistant's character to first select, then present these cases as Hesselius would have wished it done?

It is this undertone of grief for the loss of their close friend and peer, I argue, which supports the need to consider the assistant's adept proficiency at selecting the stories which form the narrative to follow. The assistant's character, perhaps cognisant of the unbelievability of the tales to come, details their intentions below, admitting their very minimal editorial changes to the work and fostering a sense of editorial decorum and believability imparted upon them, it is safe to assume, partly by Hesselius: "I am a faithful, though I am conscious, by no means a graceful translator, and although here and there, I

omit some passages, and shorten others and disguise names, I have interpolated nothing” (Le Fanu 6).

As with many other incidences in literary research, there are moments which depend on faith in argument which themselves hinge on the choice to believe, or disbelieve, a character. Thorough consideration for the scope of this research has led me to the reasonably-held belief that the assistant’s character presents, with minimal alteration, cases which are demonstrative of Hesselius’s character and influence, informing a clear view of Hesselius’s character and Le Fanu’s intent in portraying that character.

I allow an understanding both of Le Fanu’s acquaintance with loss and grief, supported by a deeply human understanding of this experience to inform my belief that the assistant’s grieving character is all the more equipped for the selection of the cases which carry the greatest poignancy in representing the Doctor’s work, and so, his character.

The setting time of “Green Tea”, the first story in *In a Glass Darkly*, dates from “about sixty four years ago”, the assistant explains in the prologue (Le Fanu 6). The account, originally correspondence between Hesselius and a colleague, has been returned after the doctor’s death, and follows Hesselius’s interactions with the case of the Reverend Mr Jennings, whose indulgence in green tea parallels the incidence of a demonic vision of a simian character with glowing red eyes, encouraged by the Reverend’s concurrent indulgence in occultist spiritual studies. The Reverend’s eventual, haunted suicide amid his afflictions, delusions, or haunting, frames the remaining narrative with distinctly shocking, gothic overtones. Given that the prologue to “Green Tea” was the only prologue (and thus, the only mention of Hesselius) included in the original, serialised, periodical publication of the story, this places the time of the story at the close of the first decade of the nineteenth century (c. 1805). This story, published originally in four parts in *All the Year Round* in 1869, was later edited by Charles Dickens (b. 1812) (Le Fanu 321). In this account, reader is first introduced to Le Fanu’s inspiration via the contextual mention of the nonfictional work of Emmanuel Swedenborg, prompting an introduction to the dichotomy between occult and religious, metaphysical and scientific which is to follow in subsequent stories in the later-published *In a Glass Darkly*. An eighteenth century, Swedish-born philosopher, theologian, and mystic whose ‘Swedenborgianism’ movement continues to inform

parishioners' Christian worship in modern society as "the New Church", Swedenborg's influence on Le Fanu appeared less implicitly clerical, and more expressly occult. Several references throughout "Green Tea" include direct reference to the Reverend Mr. Jennings's study of a full volume of Swedenborg's *Arcana Coelestia* (1749), roughly translating from Latin to "Heavenly Mysteries", which grapples not insignificantly with occultist themes in Swedenborg's theological interpretations of Biblical books "Genesis" and "Exodus" (Le Fanu 321).

The prologue preceding "The Familiar", inclusive of a copy of Hesselius's written remarks on the case which follows, is itself an account written by an 'Irish Clergyman' (Le Fanu 41). An adapted version of an earlier-published story of Le Fanu's titled "The Watcher" was first released as part of his *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery*, published in Dublin to suit an Irish audience in 1851 (Le Fanu 322). Unlike the other four stories in *In a Glass Darkly*, this story was not re-introduced in serial form prior to its inclusion in the work (Le Fanu 322). In the first pages of the story – still set in Dublin in the republished incarnation – we are informed that the account of the Reverend who pens the story dates to "somewhere about the year 1794", placing the story's approximate setting date within about a decade of "Green Tea" (Le Fanu 42). The original published form of the story, "The Watcher", included a distinctively different introductory paragraph, indicating that it had been "more than fifty years since the occurrences" had occurred, which, given the original publication date in 1851, sets the story occurring at approximately the same time as the setting time indicated in "The Familiar", corroborating Le Fanu's intent to leave this sense of time present, but vaguely veiled (Le Fanu 323). The assistant, acknowledging the case's similarities to "Green Tea", and speculating that there had been "about two hundred and thirty" cases which bore similarity to their similar themes, provides an extended note in Hesselius's hand accompanying the file (Le Fanu 41). "The Familiar" follows the case of the Reverend Thomas Herbert, who pens the account which follows the Doctor's attached note. The case closely mirrors the cognitive decline of the Reverend Mr Jennings from the previous "Green Tea", providing for a different, patient-based perspective on a similar metaphysical affliction.

The third story, "Mr Justice Harbottle" is described by the doctor to be best conveyed in an account written in June of 1805, which he notes to have preferred over an account

provided to him at “a much later date” (Le Fanu 81). Included in the assistant’s prologue, the Doctor’s note indicates the existence of these two accounts of the case, and Hesselius’s preference for the aforementioned account, written by a woman in 1805, over the other, penned by a man, which places events as having occurred “thirty years ago” (Le Fanu 84). Regrettably, the prologue concludes with the admission that the former account could not be retrieved for the sake of publication (despite the assistant’s best efforts), placing the time of the later account’s reflection as occurring in approximately 1840 (Le Fanu 84). Though it is unclear as to whether the Doctor’s preference for the reflection written at a closer date to the happenings of the case implies a distrust for a gap between when the events transpired, and the subsequent conveyance of them through reflective prose, it can be safely inferred that the story’s setting falls, approximately, at the turn of the 19th century given the preferred account’s time of writing, as with the other works in the narrative. The case, and the patient it features, is used by Hesselius in an academic essay featuring the “opening of the inner sight”, paralleling the fate of the Reverend Mr Jennings in “Green Tea” (Le Fanu 84). Edited by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (b.1835) – an English author of sensation fiction – for its release in *In a Glass Darkly*, the story first appeared as “The Haunted House in Westminster” in *Belgravia* in 1872 (Le Fanu 326). The story is critically considered an even further adaptation of Le Fanu’s “An Account of Some Strange Disturbances in Aungier Street”, released in the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1853, prior to Le Fanu’s later ownership of the publication (Le Fanu 326). The story follows the tortured and guilt-ridden descent of Mr Justice Harbottle, a judge of reasonably high social standing and arguably fewer scruples, into a state of haunting and eventual death under bizarre circumstances. The Doctor’s preference for the account of the story presented within the same window of time as the others mandates critical notice of his posthumous influence over the direction of the narrative through his assistant. This evident direction builds further trust between reader and assistant, bolstered by their presentation of Hesselius’s preferred material as the doctor’s influence begins to wain (Le Fanu 83-84).

The prologue describing “The Room in the Dragon Volant” sees the assistant’s employment of far more succinct terms, claiming its inclusion in the collection for its relevance to an essay of Hesselius’s implied to have held great significance to the Doctor’s academic work. Identifying this account as a heavily-cited and centrally supporting source to Hesselius’s fictional academic essay (not included), which is said to have described at

length the impact, history, and potential contemporary implementation of medieval psychoactive or otherwise nefarious poisons, the assistant indicates: “this particular statement from among many cases equally striking”, implying again their publication of accounts which reflect Hesselius’s favouritism of the account in life, mandating consideration of its contents and building trust between reader and assistant (Le Fanu 119). While its narrator is never expressly self-identified, the young man’s story is stated to have been set in “the eventful year, 1815” (Le Fanu 119). Published in 1872, and serialised for *London Society: An Illustrated Magazine of Light and Amusing Literature for the Hours of Relaxation*, it follows the romanticised tale of an affluent young Englishman on his quest for romance, love, wealth, and power in politically-tense France, and is critically considered more for its aspects of suspense than of horror (Le Fanu, 119, 333). Though the longest story in the book, “Dragon Volant” represents a key turning point in the relationship between Hesselius, assistant, and reader, in that a sense of distance is markedly imposed in the brevity of the prologue.

Finally, our introduction to “Carmilla”, opened with an almost-hurried prologue, describes Hesselius’s attached and “rather elaborate note” to the narrative which follows minimally, doing little to explain or include the contents of that note apart from its significance to another medical essay penned by Hesselius. The contents of that essay, this time, we are very minimally privy to — mostly for their mention of the case alone (Le Fanu 243). However, the assistant does indicate Hesselius’s “remarkable directness and condensation” in that work, explaining that the entire file will encompass “only one” volume of the late doctor’s entire body of work – comparatively minimal as opposed to the three volumes which the assistant approximates will encompass the entirety of “Green Tea” (Le Fanu 243). The story, perhaps Le Fanu’s most famous, follows the declining health of young and affluent protagonist Laura, who recounts her experience one youthful summer under the influence of an unexpected, beautiful vampiric guest, Carmilla, who seduces Laura’s curiosities and acts as a syphon to her health. The story originally appeared in serial in the short-lived, London-based literary magazine *The Dark Blue* in 1871-2, which also published work by Alfred Perceval Graves (b. 1846), Algernon Charles Swinburne (b. 1837), and many other prominent Victorian literary figures (Le Fanu 344, McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu*). Though divulging of no setting date in prologue or in text, the story is itself a retrospective narrative written by Carmilla’s victim, Laura through

a line of communication which initiated by Hesselius “so many years ago” (Le Fanu 243). When the late doctor’s assistant, admittedly anxious, attempts to re-open communications with Laura prior to the publication of her account, they find she has since passed away – too late to establish any confirmations to include with their assemblage of the account (Le Fanu 243). Since Laura was a young girl burgeoning on adolescence at the time her story occurs – feasibly between the ages of thirteen and seventeen – and since it is implied that a great deal of time has passed since she re-told her story to the Doctor, I argue that the setting time may well mirror the others’ placements in history exactly – a theory supported by specific details within the story which will be addressed later — not the least of which being the setting at her father’s “Schloss”, an antiquated term even then placing the probable setting at the term of the century (Le Fanu 244). The emergence of a pattern at this point becomes increasingly verifiable, and the turn of the century setting time identifies Le Fanu’s intentionality to employ Hesselius’s character in introducing his use of time, an understanding of which will be critical to evaluations of reader relationship with time and narrator in the chapters to follow.

1.2 Research Basis: Highly Relevant Existing Research

To revisit the information considered in the extended abstract which initially frames the thesis of this dissertation, historical and literary context will be heavily considered in framing all analyses which follow. For this reason, I open this section with details pertaining to the critical work which informs my assertions. Further, this section identifies the basis of this research’s potential value to the field through critical example and some discussion of key source material.

The Victorian Gothic popularly implicated imagery which drew upon romantically-informed themes: shadow and blackness haunt architectural ruins, natural environments are beset by decay and gloom with only the faintest sense of hope emergent in unexpected and harrowing locales. To follow, themes of illness — of isolation, sadness, loss, grief, and the state of being spiritually or emotionally uncertain with full understanding of approaching death most vividly informed audience perspectives. Sensation fiction, building on the most human aspects of the gothic imagery, invokes vibrant themes of secrecy, of betrayal, shocking affairs, illicit activities, crime — high drama abounds as audience is pulled into

an ever-increasing awareness of the social ramifications of its plots. Poe, Stoker, and Radcliffe are credited with the greatest successes of the Victorian Gothic. Braddon, Collins, Woods, of sensation fiction. The social and scholarly significance of all six, I argue, hinge as much on the scope Le Fanu's work as any other titan of Victorian literature. For the purposes of this research, focus will not drift as closely to contributors to contemporary genre theory as it will to theory which surrounds Le Fanu's specific contributions to that theory — instead, a preliminary understanding of the effect and interactions of genre on the human condition is tantamount to evidencing the critical considerations which follow.

Le Fanu's track record of blurring the lines between different time periods, cultural, historical, and literary movements are regarded differently across the critical field. However, the voices of established Le Fanu scholars unifying most all recent research pertaining to Le Fanu, make for fertile ground upon which to test and base literary theory. It is established critical fact, reiterated by the writing of M. R. James and others, that Le Fanu's literary legacy is defined in part by his significant contributions to the development of genre in the Victorian era (Sullivan 1978). Here, noted Le Fanu scholar Victor Sage not only frames his discussion of Le Fanu's relationship to the Gothic, but effectively illustrates the author's complicated relationship with time not only from an historic perspective, but a literary (and importantly, critical) one:

In studying Le Fanu's Gothic, I want to begin by taking a closer look at this formal point; at how Le Fanu's self-conscious habit of holding narrative at bay in the telling, relates to the cultural contexts of his writing: for example, he has a habit of layering and back-dating his texts which sometimes gives them a double or triple sense of time, *affecting their reader's point of view*. Uncle Silas and "Carmilla" are both cases in point. So the discussions in this book tend to start from formal points — the nature of framing, layering, gaps in the text, angles of narration, the production of seams and fissures — and move out beyond them into the contexts implied by language" (Sage 3) [my own italics for emphasis]

Doctor Hesselius's character, though mentioned less frequently in critical discourse, is well established for its overall role as a literary framing device for the book. Zoë Lehmann Imfeld, in a discussion of the 'gap' between reader and character in gothic horror

which builds not insignificantly upon the work of Wolfgang Iser, relies heavily on Iser's assertion that "the text represents a potential effect that is realised in the reading process" (Imfeld 159). She thus constructs a response to James Walton's argument that Hesselius's character fills the distance between the reader's curiosity and the character's subjective insights. Arguing that Walton's approach does not offer a guided method of analysing or imposing order on this gap, she builds on established understanding that Hesselius's character is a framing device, introduced by Le Fanu, which expresses an intent to impose order on this void, suggesting a gap in Walton's analysis itself (Imfeld 162).

Wolfgang Iser describes the process of reading as the actualisation of what is given by the text: 'the text represents a potential effect that is realised in the reading process'. Indeed, the dominant theme of this book has been that of potency and act, of bringing into being what is promised in the tales. For Machen, MRJ and Le Fanu, the demonic or terrifying appears as a manifestation of the world as porous. Moreover, it is a catalyst for the emergence of the porous self. For both the haunted characters and the reader, apparitions contribute to a repositioning of this self by opening out a suspended space between the natural, supernatural, and super-natural. Iser calls such spaces 'gaps', writing that: 'These gaps give the reader a chance to build his own bridges, relating the different aspects of the object which have thus far been revealed to him. It is quite impossible for the text itself to fill the gaps (Imfeld 159)

Sage's reliance on language, acknowledgement of Le Fanu's relationship with gaps in the texts he creates, and exemplification of the author's layered time affecting reader experience in "Carmilla" mandates consideration of the Doctor's posthumously imposed language on reader experience of the story – especially as it relates to Imfeld's discussion of gap, narrative, and character as included above. Discussions of Hesselius's character as in the context of Imfeld's considerations exemplify a deficit in the critical field: analysis of Hesselius does not often consider the possibility of duality of genre as potentially informative to critical understanding. The introduction of this possibility provides theoretical basis to past arguments, and offers the imposition of the desired sense of order upon the gaps Hesselius's character bridges or even closes.

The edition of *In a Glass Darkly* upon which I have chosen to rely for the purposes of referencing this research is the most standardly-accessible Oxford's World Classics

edition, as introduced by Robert Tracy, not only for its dependability, but for its accessibility. It is my hope that, in so doing, any critical voice which is to follow this research might be better able to consult the material in an identical context, imposing a control upon any research which follows my own. This is not to say that I have deliberately devalued the stories' in their original, serialised or first-edition context, but rather that, as this research presents an analysis which depends upon heavy consideration of Hesselius's character, the Oxford edition represents a further-unifying source and instates a scientific control. This edition, a reprint of the first edition printed in London by R. Bentley and Son in 1872 in three volumes, boasts only minimal alterations which exist to suit the modern linguistic palette (Le Fanu xxiv). These slight "comfort" revisions from the work's original format, I argue, further the accessibility of the text to a broad critical audience. I believe this to be of further value to this research as I implicate broader discussions of genre in Victorian literary culture in evidencing my arguments, and believe that the use of a dependably-edited version opens the possibility of promoting both academic intersectionality and topic approachability.

In fact, it is within the first pages of this version of Le Fanu's work where Oxford Press itself evidences the very void I am to discuss. I choose to address the incidence of this indication of it early in the hopes of evidencing the often-systemically held beliefs surrounding Hesselius's role. The relevant portion of the passage is included here for the purposes of absolute clarity in critical consideration:

In a Glass Darkly presents the five stories as cases collected by Dr Martin Hesselius, now edited and published by his literary executor. Hesselius appears as a character only in "Green Tea"; otherwise, *he is simply a framing device to connect the stories and testify as to their sources*. All of the stories appeared earlier in periodicals; information about these previous publications is given with the notes for each story. Apart from "Green Tea", none of the stories were presented as from Hesselius's files when published in periodicals. (Le Fanu xxiv) [my own italics for emphasis]

The presence of this academically-dismissive view of Hesselius's character (indicated through the italicised text within the segment above) meets the eye of the reader before they are immersed in Le Fanu's words in the least. Its mention precludes the edition's later, rich scope of critical context otherwise very beneficial to academic interpretation. In so doing, the edition itself mirrors the widely-accepted, long-held, and

already-established considerations of Hesselius's character as half-present, and unmoving, and dismisses him as thus: secondary to the content of the narrative Le Fanu has imposed *his character* to posthumously present.

This research at no point seeks to impose the presence of the Doctor where it does not exist, arguing instead for more careful consideration of his presence as the invisible, primary narrator, and how this presence, waning as the narrative develops, informs critical understanding of his role as a framing device interactive with genre. Consequently, my arguments are not reliant on the refutation of fact: I argue that Hesselius be considered as voice reflective of Le Fanu's intent.

However, it is particularly disheartening as the passage above directly implies the cause for this dismissal being the fact that Hesselius was only mentioned in "Green Tea" in the initial, serialised publications of the work, and was later introduced to frame *In a Glass Darkly*. While this concept is most certainly true, its attachment to a suggestively dismissive and further, unevidenced reason as to why the Doctor is, in their words, "simply" a framing device, implies the preclusion of the possibility of a work of literature taking on new meaning through an author's reintroduced or reframed format. Beyond, somewhat ironically, immediately excusing itself as a viable critical source in light of this implied belief, this assertion in turn mirrors the sentiments of critical authors, past – some of whom spoke to this effect in Le Fanu's own day – that Le Fanu, later in life, had taken a lackadaisical approach with the framing of his prose (Sage 2-10).

If this sentiment is to be considered factual in this presentation, and is supported by sources as established and, in some ways, antiquated, as the above, I move to question whether the hour has not arrived for the critical community to explore the potentiality of more than one interpretation of the author-introduced character behind the very 'framework' of the book? While Oxford University Press notably puts forth only the most well-established critical concepts, I further move: does this interpretation of Hesselius's character not indicate and evidence the impact that stagnation in studies of the character has imparted upon interpretations of the text at the most widely-accessible and dependably academic level?

Through the introduction of a single word affecting a dismissive tone of Hesselius's broader potential for impact on academic considerations of the work, Oxford University Press itself has highlighted the need for further study on his character, and indeed, Le Fanu's implementation of the character in the framework of narrative. In every way but this, the Oxford edition of *In a Glass Darkly* is an excellent, dependable source of supporting information which will be referenced in analyses which follow for its well-sourced context.

1.3 "He Writes in Two Distinct Characters": Our Introduction to Doctor Martin Hesselius

Given that the prologue to "Green Tea" is the audience's first introduction to the stories' composite form as they appear in *In a Glass Darkly*, and contains perhaps the most biographical detail about Hesselius's life and personality, our consideration of this section is deservedly first in any analysis of the Doctor's significance in any context which considers his role as a unifying framing device and bridge between thematic gaps. For this reason, this first prologue is where we will begin an analysis of Hesselius, and entirety of "Green Tea", deserving of its own analysis, will weightily support the research which follows. *In a Glass Darkly's* prologues are as introductory of the characters implicated in the cases which follow them as they are relevant to the presentation and evolution of Hesselius's character. Critical consideration of the Hesselius-specific character information offered forth in an examination of all prologues, therefore, as well as information to be inferred from "Green Tea", provides a necessary introduction to, and overview of, the Doctor's character.

This section aims to provide this introduction, and importantly, to place it in the context of argument. This introduction also informs an understanding of my arguments' relevance in the context of the historic, biographical, and cultural information in the chapter which immediately follows. In so doing, Hesselius is shaped in context, preparing a critical audience for the establishment of analytical conclusions reliant on his character in the third and fourth chapters of this dissertation.

The prologue to “Green Tea” exists uniquely as a monument to a critical as to a Victorian audience: it is, to both, the first incidence of their introduction to Hesselius’s character. As the only one of the stories previously published with the accompanying prologue as it would later appear in *In a Glass Darkly*, our consideration of Le Fanu’s use of the doctor as a framing device should extend beyond the realm of the character’s introduction as mere editorial suggestion. As the publication of the serial version of “Green Tea” in 1869 predates the publication of the book by several years, it can be noted that, while these stories were commissioned to be written for an English audience, Le Fanu considered Hesselius’s character during the time both new and previously-unpublished stories, “The Room in the Dragon Volant” and “Carmilla”, were written and serialised. Given also the unchanged format and content of the prologue from its original published form in *All The Year Round*, Le Fanu’s intention to introduce the character can be further evidenced even when acknowledging the possible influence of consulting editors, outside literary influencers, and confidantes. Going forward, the dismissive belief that Hesselius serves as “simply” a framing device can be more accurately questioned if for no other reason than the amount of time Le Fanu would have had to deeply consider the character’s role from the date of its first appearance to the publication of *In a Glass Darkly*.

To begin, then, with an overview of the information divulged in this first prologue by Hesselius’s assistant, it is important to first note (in addition to the assistant’s indication of Hesselius’s prolific career and good moral calibre) the prologue’s title in an introduction to the character: “Martin Hesselius, The German Physician” (Le Fanu 5). It is here we find the first indication of an underlying occultist influence if not upon the entirety of the work which is to follow, at least upon one of its central characters. Le Fanu’s use of the German name ‘Hesselius’ is derivative of a cousin of Emmanuel Swedenborg, Andreas Hesselius (b.1677), (Le Fanu, 320, Swedenborg 163).

From the 16th through 19th centuries, it was common practice for highly-learned men of Scandinavia to Latinise their names in a reflection of their educated and worldly, scholarly, or moral status and achievement (Le Fanu 320). Le Fanu’s choice to portray a character which, it is highly possible, bears the name of a family member of Swedenborg himself, beyond encouraging consideration of the presence of Gothic themes, encourages faith in the character’s well-rounded educational status. Further, Swedenborg’s life of

travel to Germany and connection to the German Idealism movement of the eighteenth century inform an academic interpretation of Hesselius's nationality and name, which will be discussed fully in chapters to follow. Swedenborgian references prompt critical consideration of biblical and occult imagery's relationship to theme, genre, and character going forward, the latter of which becomes the central marker by which this research is primarily evidenced (Swedenborg 238).

Le Fanu's consultation and apparent personal interest in Swedenborgian studies, when considered in light of his religious upbringing to be discussed in full in the chapter to follow, further affects a layered sense of time. Gothicism's connectedness to Hesselius's still-new character at this early point in the narrative evidences audience recognition of this aspect of Le Fanu's writing to originate within the Doctor's character, further evidencing the need for careful consideration of this character's relationship with the work as vastly more than a posthumously-absent narrator.

But it is a short sentence which carries the most weight in "Green Tea"'s brief introduction to Hesselius, in which the assistant employs a description of his former master's choice of language and "curious" writing in reflection on the cases (Le Fanu 5).

He writes in two distinct characters. He describes what he saw and heard as an intelligent layman might, and when in this style of narrative he had seen the patient either through his own hall-door, to the light of day, or through the gates of darkness to the caverns of the dead, he returns upon the narrative, and in the terms of his art, and with all the force and originality of genius, proceeds to the work of analysis, diagnosis, and illustration." (Le Fanu 5-6) [My own italics]

The assistant's very initial presentation of Doctor Hesselius's duality of rhetoric is of high importance to evidencing the arguments in chapters to follow. In exacerbating Le Fanu's sense of layered time through the Doctor's retrospective, dichotomous medical gaze, this encourages an understanding that going forward, the Doctor's rhetoric is an informative place upon which reader may base both their faith in fact and their consideration of doubt, a central theme in Victorian Britain (Jay 1980).

This alone, for its considerable presence of critically-noted Victorian themes – faith and doubt, science and religion, nationalism and globalisation, feminism and misogyny –

mandates close reading of the work which monitors for details surrounding the Doctor's presence (Jay 1980). The dichotomy betwixt the two "characters" of Hesselius's writing thus parallels other dualities which this research seeks to examine in a critical light – chiefly, the book's relationship with Gothicism and Sensation Fiction – and, identified clearly by Le Fanu himself in the above passage, further evidences the need for scholarly review of *In a Glass Darkly* for Doctor Hesselius's role as a bridge between thematic gaps.

For this reason, this first prologue is imperative in informing any academic consideration of Hesselius's writing style — and as this is the only mode by which the audience may establish a relationship with the character, this consideration is of paramount importance to all other critical considerations. This consideration will further inform scholarly speculation into Hesselius's reasoning for the selection of (or favouritism of) the accounts which appear in *In a Glass Darkly*, which are implied by his assistant to have been, at times, some of his most significant for their impact on the Doctor's life and work.

The careful consideration of this prologue evidences the need for review of the other four prologues in context of these findings and considerations, and imparts the potential for new interpretations of the text, or at minimum, the stories therein. Most critically: this prologue encourages a critical view of Le Fanu's genre-bending which rests in the Doctor's dichotomous, but capable hands.

1.4 Research Methods, Contribution Goals, and Preventative Considerations for Error

Building on the above concepts, this research's framework, reliant on the examination of Hesselius as a mode by which Le Fanu's "desired effect" "affects the reader's point of view" and contributes fresh perspective to the critical field on an established and too-frequently dismissed piece of Le Fanu's late writing. The above critical concepts, I argue, illustrate a similar idea and further evidence a niche for this research's framework, exemplifying further the need for consideration of *In a Glass Darkly*'s broader literary significance as it applies to the examination of literary 'gaps'. Examination of Hesselius's character, then, as applied to this extant problem, should be used as a method by which to

impose order on this gap, and further, offer new insights with which future research may be informed.

The chronologically-first case presented in the book, “Green Tea”, which I will discuss at length for the following reason, is the only story in the collection which is an account penned directly by the late Doctor’s hand as he writes in confidence to a professional colleague. An informed analysis of the Doctor’s rhetoric in “Green Tea”, therefore, holds the potential to inform further interpretations of the cases which follow it. Building on Sage’s noted importance of language in analysis of Le Fanu’s gothic, the Doctor’s writing, therefore, must be considered in any analysis which considers Hesselius in the context of theme or genre.

As the narrative is unified through the presentation of the Doctor’s most important files, it is the details within their prologues and within them, I argue, which are insufficiently critically examined in light of their interactions with the Doctor’s character. Beyond this story, we are given minimal if any direct input through Hesselius’s writing into the stories which follow under his posthumously-imposed framework. Never again do we receive a direct narration of a case by the Doctor, and thus, to the Victorian audience he addresses, he fades from view like a ghost leaving the room. This waning of Hesselius’s direct influence as the narrative progresses weans audiences from first his narrative, then, steadily, his commentary.

I argue that, as cases which the Doctor relied upon heavily to inform his own work, the favouritism of these cases duly reflects aspects of the Doctor’s character implicated in the prologues, particularly considering his favouritism of them often over other, near-identical cases or accounts. This mandates consideration of the cases themselves as also indicative of his invisible character: for his favouritism of them in life, and influence on their presentation, even in fictional death. I argue that this fact brings reader closer to an experience of genre in narrative, a concept derivative of Iser and informed by Sage and others. For this reason, the framework of this research relies most heavily upon examination of “Green Tea” in its entirety, and all subsequent prologues for their interactions with the text, stories, and relevant revelations on Hesselius’s character.

In keeping with critical understanding of Hesselius's role as a framing device for the book at large, I further argue the 'gap' reintroduced into critical discussion by Imfeld could be informed by further consideration of Hesselius's role as a character implicated in the story he delivers. In the context of this research, I argue, Hesselius indeed serves as a framing device through his introduction of 'potential effect', which introduces the reader, gradually, to the coexistence and arguably, unification, of gothic horror and sensation fiction in *In a Glass Darkly*: the presence of which I evidence not insignificantly through analysis of Hesselius's character as it is presented in prologues and, where appropriate, prose (Imfeld 159-162). Further, I argue that Le Fanu's relationship with a "layered" sense of time is mastered in his portrayal of Doctor Hesselius, and further imparts potential effect on the reader as Hesselius's role in the narration and delivery of the stories within *In a Glass Darkly* lessens chronologically before fading almost entirely from view.

The most important aspect to note in accounting for the possibility of scientific error in interpretations of the text in context of the Doctor's character is the limited scope of information provided in the prologues and "Green Tea" comparatively to the large volume of text which is not attributable to the pen of the late doctor. At the time of the original publication of "Green Tea" and its subsequent re-publication within *In a Glass Darkly*, Le Fanu's English publisher had requested Irish-style ghost stories, framed in a way which would appeal to an English audience (Hughes 45). To combat the potential for error and to prevent over-interpretation, this research places available information in the context of historic, anthropological, and biographical information in the chapter which immediately follows, framing arguments in future chapters heavily dependent on established work in the critical field while consciously considering this aspect of the material.

If we are to consider the Doctor's role in the stories he presents to us posthumously, it follows that a consideration of his impact on his devoted assistant is necessary. Particularly, as the prologues are of such importance to the considerations of Hesselius's character which follow, an understanding of inter-character dynamic is demanded. Any audience uncertainty regarding the assistant's trustworthiness in conveying the late Doctor's work, I argue, can be considered an intentional extension imparted by Le Fanu meant to mirror audience doubt surrounding Hesselius's bizarre line of work itself, confusing the senses and further blurring Le Fanu's use of layered time. In fact, the

limitation of these prologues further evidences their importance to this study: I argue that the limited scope of information they present reflect the waning presence of the doctor, cordoning audiences off into world Le Fanu presents to them, subconsciously preparing a Victorian audience for an experience of genre which mandates the use of open eyes with which to better see what is coming.

Chapter 2: Critical Context: The Historic, Biographical, and Literary Coherence of *In a Glass Darkly*

This chapter offers relevant critical insight into the cultural, historic, and biographical context which surrounded the publication of *In a Glass Darkly*, and its relation to genre. Further, it offers critical evidence for consideration in later analysis of the work's themes and imagery as they relate to Doctor Martin Hesselius. Effective analysis of the book's relationship to its setting time, Hesselius's relationship to that period, and to the time of the book's publication mandates consideration of the history and cultural relationship between Ireland and England, as with Victorian social norms, class structure, and Le Fanu's relationship with these social aspects. Additionally, Le Fanu's noted relationship with and influence on the rise of the historical novel informs our considerations of authorial relationship with historic fact, as with other Victorian genres. Chiefly, this basis informs arguments implicating sensation fiction and Gothic horror in the chapter to follow. Particular attention will be given to the historic contextualisation of "Green Tea" for its importance to framing Hesselius's medical character in relation to genre.

The consideration of this information in context will provide an additional control to this research's framework. This will establish in inarguably factual context support for subsequent chapters' consideration of Hesselius's character as a marker of genre which "realises" in the reader the effects of these genres (Imfeld 159). Importantly, it will also offer a biographical exploration of authorial relationship with Hesselius's character and with *In a Glass Darkly*, providing additional basis for understanding Le Fanu's interactions with genre and theme. The following considerations are thereby critical in evidencing my arguments for consideration of the work as a critically-overlooked piece in the convergent evolution and existence of Victorian Gothic and sensation fiction.

2.1 Le Fanu and Genre: Biographical, Historic, and Critical Context Framing the Publication of *In a Glass Darkly*

Further informing a critical understanding of Le Fanu's near time-travelling narration style, it is important to note what the author's life would have been like at the time the stories were published in their original and, in some cases, updated versions. Born in 1814,

Sheridan Le Fanu would not have been of age at the right time to experience the full extent of turn of the 19th century politics in Dublin. Nor, due to his young age, would he have had the opportunity to engage in any experiential grasp on the new century in the decades immediately following its dawn, at which point the stories within *In a Glass Darkly* are set. However, the lives of his parents which informed his upbringing would certainly have informed an analogous cultural understanding of this period in history, as much as would the cultural climate of Dublin into which he was born – that which he favoured so deeply later in his life (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 12-17).

The turn of the century in Dublin included three significant politico-historical events which, McCormack evidences, directly affected the populous for decades to come and were in no small part influenced by the maintenance of mounting religious tensions. First, and perhaps most significantly, the Irish Rebellion of 1798, which sought to overthrow English rule in Ireland, saw a group of revolutionaries inspired by American and French contemporaries eventually fall to English forces (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 9). Second, the dissolution of Irish Parliament in 1800, and finally, Emmet’s rebellion – the latent effects of rebellious seeds – in 1803 (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 9-10). The Act of Union of 1800, which promised Ireland’s Catholic majority emancipation, sought to heal the broken ties between Ireland and the distantly-held authority of England (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 7-20). But however peaceable the act’s intentions, in practice, it was plagued by an imbalance of power between the lower classes and the “mutinous estates” of the upper classes, which placed clergymen, powerful families, barristers, doctors, and lawyers at the centre of society, leaving outlying citizens bereft of the same privileges and promoting a toxic atmosphere of exclusivity within the already-powerful church (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 9-11). At this time, Dublin became the centre of Irish “eccentricity” rather than “genius”, McCormack notes, informing the frame through which English Victorian audiences’ viewed its artistic and literary contributions in the decades which followed, and putting pressure on its authors to establish unique literary voices — an intent which carried over to explorations of genre (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 9-11).

The Le Fanus, a prominent Dublin family whose connection to the Sheridans saw opportunity open doors, included many civil servants, authors, and playwrights (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 12-17). Sheridan Le Fanu's father, Thomas Le Fanu (b. 1784), was a clergyman of significant standing in Dublin who served for some time as chaplain to the Military School (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 11-14). This societal position would have placed Le Fanu's father at an ideal vantage point from which to witness historic happenings in Dublin at the turn of the century, the effects of which would unquestionably have influenced the upbringing of his children. A gifted child, Sheridan Le Fanu was impressionable and morally aware, but his upbringing, McCormack notes, was "regulated by their father's clerical duties and by the military tone of a social world governed by the comings and goings of the highest dignitaries in the land" (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 15). *Seventy Years of Irish Life*, penned by his brother William R. Le Fanu, in 1893, offers a mirroring perspective on Joseph's affection for and reputation in Dublin, informed by a tone of familial fondness — as a well-loved child and deeply respected man in the context of Irish culture and history: "When scarcely fifteen years of age my brother Joseph had written many pieces of poetry, which showed a depth of imagination and feeling unusual in a boy of that age" (Le Fanu, *Seventy Years of Irish Life* 9).

Exposure to powerful agents of social change – clerics, politicians, and social elite – would have even more deeply acquainted Le Fanu with history from an early age, affording him a religiously-tinged perspective which he would value highly in his adult life, as evidenced by his pursuits in journalism and, at one point, running (albeit unsuccessfully) for political office (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 12-36). These religiously-informed social aspects inform literary consideration of Le Fanu's injection of religious imagery in his brand of Gothic horror. Additionally, an understanding of convention in society would have strongly informed his understanding of "shocking" themes implicated in sensation fiction, as will be discussed in the third chapter of this work.

Dublin's history of internationally-inspired revolutionary historic events at this time saw Le Fanu fall in love with the city: itself, a practical spawning ground for revolutionary ideas well into the new century despite the persistence of its reputation for outlandishness.

The occurrence of many of these events so close to his childhood home would inform Le Fanu's later brand of Irish Gothic: particularly, those events which took place in the shadowy world beneath the great trees of the now-historic Phoenix Park in Dublin. Widely critically considered to have informed Le Fanu's use of imagery, his experience of culture became intimately tied to Dublin-brand revolution and political involvement (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 16).

During the decades which preceded the publication of the stories in their anthologised form in *In a Glass Darkly*, in 1872, Sheridan Le Fanu had led a very tragic life, informing a visceral perspective into Gothic themes. In studying his life in the context of the period between 1850 and 1872 particularly, a critical audience is better informed of authorial relationship to the work's settings and audiences as a result. It is first important to note Sheridan Le Fanu's acquaintance with a dichotomous experience of class and poverty at the time of his father's death in 1845. After his passing, the family was so poor that Thomas Phillips Le Fanu's extensive library had to be sold – a crushing blow to the family given the meaningful relationship with education and literature their father had instilled in them (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu*). The later death of Joseph's wife Susanna Le Fanu (née Bennett) after an "hysterical" episode in 1858 plunged Le Fanu into a deep period of doubt and, likely, internalised grief, preceding the death of his beloved mother and letter-writing companion by only a few years. Throughout the personal tragedies which further informed his adept conceptualisation of Gothic themes, Le Fanu confided in his Mother via post, and after her death in 1861, it is widely believed that he slipped into an even deeper depression, impacting his already-reclusive image in Dublin which had earned him the moniker 'The Invisible Prince' (Sage 3-4).

[...] his emotional life had been shattered by the death of his wife, a disaster which generated painful self-scrutiny and self-accusation. These were not propitious circumstances in which to resume a career in writing; nevertheless they were the personal energies which shaped Sheridan Le Fanu's later fiction. His mother's death probably silenced the only voice which could have identified his experience had he expressed it in fiction; apart from her he had no intimate friends and no confessors. The children were too young to recognise their father in Austin Ruthyn, the narrator's father in *Uncle Silas* [...] (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 138)

Susanna's mental health crises and high nervousness throughout their marriage, complemented by her manic pursuit of truth through religion and the church in the years which preceded her death, correlate with a time in Joseph's life at which his church attendance at their local Saint Stephen's Church in Dublin declined significantly despite its convenient location within visible distance of their marital home (McCormack 126). Susanna's illness, which I speculate, was a persistent anxiety condition exacerbated by the deaths of many of her family members in a short space of time, demanded Le Fanu's consistent marital support and attention (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 126). While it is not immediately discernible whether husband or wife pursued this avenue, there is also evidence to suggest that either Joseph or Susanna sought the advice of a homeopathic doctor for her conditions, presumably, I argue, feeling they had run out of traditional spiritual and medical options (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 130).

By all accounts, Sheridan Le Fanu was a devoted husband who loved his wife Susanna "almost to idolatry", but was not impervious, I speculate, to the strain of not only domesticity, but of serving as primary caregiver for a wife whose illnesses, psychosomatic or no, frequently rendered her unable to either stand or lie down fully (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 120-140). The mid-1850s saw Sheridan Le Fanu communicate prolifically with his sister-in-law "Bessie" – an intelligent and flirtatious banter which some critics have interpreted as an emotional affair, but which Susanna was not aware of, for lack of evidence to the contrary (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 124-125). When Susanna succumbed in April of 1858 (two months after what her brother-in-law termed a "fit of the grumps") to an "hysterical attack", Sheridan Le Fanu was overcome by loss, and, I speculate, guilt, writing to his mother immediately after Susanna's death in an expressive description of his grief (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 128).

The subsequent years, particularly after the passing of Le Fanu's beloved wife, left him to raise their children without her, providing for himself and the family often with only his literary career and loans from his brother to sustain them. Until the death of his mother in 1861, Le Fanu did not pen any fiction, but as McCormack notes: "Bereavement naturally disoriented Joseph, but a particularly disturbing feature of his wife's tribulations was its apparent conformity to a pattern already described in his fiction" (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 129).

The passing of his mother marks the commencement of Le Fanu's most notable literary contributions. The subsequent decade was arguably Le Fanu's most prolific, and saw both his acquisition of the *Dublin University Magazine* in 1861, and publication of some of his most critically-acclaimed and widely debated work, including *The House by the Churchyard* (1861-3), *Wylder's Hand* (1864), and *Uncle Silas* (1864). These contributions were accompanied by his political involvement and journalistic contributions, all despite continuing financial difficulties and unpaid loans to his more successful brother William (Le Fanu xxxii). This string of successes, all of which implicate shocking Gothic portrayals, hint at his last contribution's significance to genre in *In a Glass Darkly*.

His acquaintance with invalidism, noted for its presence in "Authentic Narrative of a Haunted House" (1862) — which presents a portrait of an invalid couple retiring to a hideaway — and his intimate familiarity with themes of unseen mental and physical illnesses as they play upon crises of faith describe personal conditions preceding the compilation of the stories within *In a Glass Darkly* perfectly. These conditions further inform an understanding of Le Fanu's relationship to Elisabeth Jay's aptly-phrased condition of *Faith and Doubt in Victorian Britain* (Jay 15). Le Fanu's body of work has been thoroughly critically examined, predominantly for his connection to not only the Victorian gothic, but his influence on other writers. Perhaps most notably, his influence on Bram Stoker resulted in the derivation of inspiration for *Dracula* (1897) from Le Fanu's "Carmilla" — published between 1871 and 1872 before its release as the fifth and final story in *In A Glass Darkly*, twenty-five years prior to the release of Stoker's most famous work.

The critical field notably considers authors W.J. McCormack, William Hughes, and Victor Sage to be the top, authoritative voices on the entirety of Le Fanu's fiction and life, with McCormack's biography, *Sheridan Le Fanu* (1980), existing as a commonly-cited and thorough investigation into all nuances of Le Fanu's upbringing, life, and cultural surroundings. Hughes, whose work spans a myriad of gothic interests, is known to discuss Le Fanu in the context of his contemporaries, notably for the influence of "Carmilla" on Stoker's *Dracula* (Briggs 233). Sage's work, while also insightfully biographical in nature

in his *Le Fanu's Gothic: The Rhetoric of Darkness*, particularly, at times deviates from McCormack's interpretations of Le Fanu's life and literature, and focuses predominantly on intersections with the Gothic in Le Fanu's work (Sage 6-12). Where nuanced opinions of Le Fanu's literary detail and theory abound per expected, academic discourse, consensus is reached on the profundity of Le Fanu's influence on authors of his time including Montague Rhodes (M.R.) James (b.1862), and George Oliver Onions (b. 1873) (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 36). In order to impose another literary control on the framework of this research, the theories of the above, established critical authors will be used to ground argument based in biographical detail, particularly, where connected to considerations of genre in original argument.

2.2 "His Fate is Sealed": The Medical, Historic and Literary Significance of "Green Tea"

This section will closely examine the first story in *In a Glass Darkly*, "Green Tea", offering a close reading of Doctor Hesselius's interaction with genre and the historic context framing the story. This section is significant in evidencing the role of Doctor Hesselius in the remaining stories in *In a Glass Darkly* for its basis in this context and immersion in fact which will inform discussions of genre and narrative framing to follow. Where the concluding section of the previous chapter aims to explore information posed about Hesselius's character in the prologue of "Green Tea", this section will impose upon future analysis of the Doctor's character the historic, cultural, and literary context so relevant to the narrative which follows its prologue, upon which this research will rely heavily. In so doing, this section builds on the aforementioned section's findings and frames analytical conclusions reliant on this contextualisation to follow.

Le Fanu's inclusion of green tea as the abused substance of choice within the book's first story mandates special examination of green tea's significance to the Victorian era itself through a literary lens — particularly as it is the only story in the work narrated by the voice of Hesselius directly, as he writes in confidence to a colleague. A careful consideration of the significance of green tea as a beverage to a Victorian audience further informs critical view of the Doctor's half-medical character in the context of authorial information discussed in this chapter. The substance's association with nationalism, class

issues, illness, and even nefariousness, provides insight into the Doctor's fictional interactions with the substance. Critically, this informs discussion on his interactions with the greater themes implicated as a result of green tea's presence and their relationship with genre in the four other stories in *In a Glass Darkly*. Critically, it is important to contextualise the substance's role not only for this reason, but because Doctor Hesselius's character, and its support through his assistant, a trained but not practising medical doctor, would have been aware of the findings and murmurings of his medical peers and the social circle to which he was exposed (Le Fanu 5).

As the key character of examination for the purposes of this research, familiarisation with Hesselius's fictional, somewhat-factually-based cultural environment is also crucial to thorough understanding of Le Fanu's literary contribution through "Green Tea", and its significance to current Victorianist scholarship. A contextually-scrutinous gaze upon "Green Tea" is an essentially important base upon which to rest critical inferences pertaining to the Doctor's character, and its interaction with larger themes at play within the work, their cultural and historical significance, and their relationship with modern literary genre theory.

Current critical examinations of "Green Tea" consider a multiplicity of established academic concepts, making it a strong piece for scholarly review, particularly given the rise in popularity of the medical humanities. Given this field's rising popularity alone, the examination of the Doctor's character further promotes academic intersectionality and provides ground upon which to base future research. Recent critical attention paid to Green Tea given in light of this field has been given for the story's inclusion of themes of addiction, medicine, invalidism, and mental illness (Dickson 90). Additionally, acknowledged for its relevance as a piece of sensation fiction edited for Le Fanu by Mary Elizabeth Braddon (an English novelist noted for her contributions to sensation fiction), examination of the Doctor's character provides ground upon which this research may further evidence the methods by which Le Fanu interacts with this genre and others (Le Fanu 321).

The most notable critical work to date which seeks to contextualise green tea's role in Victorian society as it relates to Le Fanu's story sees Melissa Dickson review its cultural,

medical, and global impact in “Confessions of an English Green Tea Drinker: Sheridan Le Fanu and the Medical and Metaphysical Dangers of Green Tea”. This piece of research serves as an essential foundation for contextualising the arguments made in sections to follow. Within, Dickson examines Victorian social norms as they relate to green tea, delving into their more specific applications to the story. Consideration of these social norms in factual socio-historical context provides further literary control by which future arguments are more soundly based (Dickson 81).

As the title suggests, Dickson parallels Thomas De Quincey’s *Confessions of an English Opium Eater* (1821), one of the most influential addiction narratives of the century (DeQuincey 2). Explaining that, like Jennings, De Quincey maintained the habit of tea drinking in the wee hours of the morning, Dickson thusly suggests substantiation for the idea that tea itself – particularly the late night taking of tea – may have been socially considered by a 19th century audience as a gateway drug to other nefarious habits. Given the similarities in effect and symbolism to Jennings’s flirtation with occultist literature, this mandates, I argue, consideration of Doctor Hesselius as a lens through which to view this gateway given his medical and cultural experience, and given the careful consideration of historic context by Le Fanu. In an analysis of Hesselius in the context of a broader discussion on green tea as an early-Victorian near-illicit substance, Dickson remarks on the Doctor’s specificity in pinpointing the causality of the Reverend’s afflictions (Dickson 90). She explains the Doctor’s aptitude in representing the dichotomy between the metaphysical and the physical characteristics of addiction and mental illness – highlighting, I argue, the need for future study of the character for its role in realising in the audience the ‘potential effect’ Iser discusses (Dickson 90).

As noted in the first chapter of this dissertation, the stories within *In a Glass Darkly* were set in the early 1800s, as is noted by the assistant – “*from about sixty-four years ago*” in the case of “Green Tea”, specifically (Le Fanu 6). At the setting time, Dickson argues, tea drinking was yet a novelty enjoyed by mostly the upper echelon of British society, and that many in the medical field considered green tea an immense danger of uncertain effect (Dickson 79). Building on this assertion, many skilled in the domestic arts – or, women – would read of its dangers in various publications for decades to come (Lea 255). It is important to note that, as an imported item from China, green tea would have been viewed

at this time as a foreign, yet-unknown substance. In the eyes of the medical community, it was even perceived a threat capable of inciting all manner of personal and medical chaos for which there appeared no immediate medical or spiritual remedy — importantly, a malady which no dependency on faith could have cured. “There remains”, Dickson explains, “a sense of the potential dangers brought upon oneself by dabbling in a foreign market and, in this case, trading with the Chinese”. In her explanation of political fears surrounding the substance, Dickson’s analysis includes several political cartoons (burgeoning on propaganda) of the era which express paranoia and racial fears attached to the importation of what was once termed “Death in the Teapot” (Koon, 1874). This attitude informed a culture of both curiosity and fear, which accentuated its own insidious relevance to a misinformed and fearful society (Jay 24). These considerations, and the fear they imbue, inform our understanding of Le Fanu’s relationship with Gothic horror.

However, not all fears attached to green tea were as irrationally based in racial prejudices – in fact, the era’s concerns over ‘adulteration’, the process of introducing artificial dyes to improve the aesthetic of products meant for human consumption, were very well founded, with early and mid-century discussion in *The Lancet* held over the possibility of lead poisoning as a result of adulterated tea drinking (Dickson 90). Modern medical science regards multiple possible symptoms of lead poisoning which are reminiscent of Jennings’s case as Hesselius (or Le Fanu) presents them. High blood pressure, difficulties with memory or concentration, headache, mood disorders, and more are all potential symptoms of lead poisoning — symptoms which would certainly have been exacerbated through lack of sleep and repetitious use of caffeine. These considerations substantiate the scientific relevance, and perhaps overall accuracy, of Jennings’s case and provide perspective to Hesselius’s management thereof as both a spiritual and medical affliction. Further, the historic context provides evidence to support analysis of Le Fanu’s employment of the substance as a symbolic device for its immense cultural relevance, and prompts critical considerations of his deployment of the Doctor’s character to grapple with those cultural themes.

As doctors and Victorian social elite distributed word of its danger, Dickson suggests that the dangers “must be read in relation to social and financial circumstances”, citing Jane Austen’s portrayal of hypochondriac character Arthur Parker in *Pride and Prejudice*,

who openly asserts a delicate countenance, but is later unaffected at having taken green tea without his knowledge (Dickson 79). Weighing this argument in correlation with other portrayals of ‘fashionable disease’ in the Victorian era necessitates the consideration that it is possible that green tea, intolerable to the delicate, for a time became itself a proving ground upon which to base classist ideals of purity, further evidencing authorial consideration of historic and social context. As Dickson explains: “Further, if tea in general is seen as a symbol of luxury and indolence, then a nervous reaction to tea represents an (at times contemptible) emblem of that genteel life” (Dickson 80).

Given also that the only individuals who would have had access to this newly-introduced fad in the British empire were the upper classes, it is important to consider the substance as a potential harbinger of privilege, and its overtaking of Jennings, thereby a possible result of this privilege. Characteristically, during this time, the Irish social elite would not have had access to the substance as immediately as the English. In the setting time and place, this would transform the substance’s significance to a contemporary Victorian audience to be a harbinger not only of classism and privilege itself, but more specifically, potentially a symbol of English classist privilege, a motif which correlated with many Irish political sentiments of the early 19th century. The Doctor’s interaction with Jennings’s flirtation with this harbinger of privilege, danger, and obscurity, bridges the gap between the Reverend’s experience of the spiritual and medical, and foreshadows Hesselius’s interactions with a duality of genre.

Beth Kowaleski-Wallace argues that many social complaints expressed during this time over working-class access to tea and green tea stemmed from the upper classes’ fears of loss of control over the lower classes. Specifically, the classist fear that a taste for more than ones’ status afforded would result eventually in the systematic deterioration of the working class, and so, infrastructure, thinly veiling an implication that this would also result in a potential deterioration of the upper class way of life (Kowaleski-Wallace 138). Correlating this with the earlier Jane Austen example provided by Dickson in her discussion of tea as a symbol of high class and luxury, it stands to reason that the Reverend’s character in “Green Tea” is worth examining with this idea of classism in mind. It follows that Hesselius’s rhetoric and aforementioned ‘duality’ of prose is the method by which the audience may interpret these themes, and the Reverend’s character,

again providing confidence in Hesselius's abilities (enforced by his assistant), that we may trust him to provide both factual information and humanist presentation.

Dickson also notes that essayists of the time (effectively, I would argue, cultural journalists) distributed their opinions on green tea to the populous in magazine and periodical publications for decades, including, she notes, English writer E. V. Lucas's contribution to *Cornhill Magazine* in 1897. There, Lucas expressed fear and implored the need for moderation: "There is something Asiatic about the reserved undergraduate – and today the conscious ones are all reserved – that stimulates tea to do its best for him [...] Once a man looks upon tea when it is green, his fate is sealed" (Lucas 72 - 76). As late as the late 1870s, British physicians outwardly expressed their fears surrounding green tea in scholarly journals as rumours continued to circulate amongst an unsure and ever-speculative public (Dickson 81). Medical evidence substantiating these concerns, distributed by Doctors in the form of pamphlets or articles, in many cases mirror the fictional case of Mr. Jennings (Dickson 81). Dickson provides an example of particular relevance provided by a Doctor Harvey, published in 1817 concerning the effects of Green Tea which bears particular resemblance and relevance to Mr. Jennings's case. This account is worth mentioning in so far as it provides valuable historic context into how cases of green tea 'abuse' were presented to the public eye prior to and after the publication of Le Fanu's "Green Tea". In the account, "Doctor Harvey" describes a scene of similar dramatic calibre to the last stages of Le Fanu's Jennings's life, which will be addressed in later discussion:

I happened to answer the door myself, as all my domestics were out, looking at some public spectacle. He appeared to me to be actuated by great terror; and upon my asking him what was the matter, he said, 'I have called upon you to request you would let me in, and allow me to die in your house.' (Percival 12)

Even as demonstrated by the minimal discourse in the above passage, it is evident that Victorian medical rhetoric (or even, that posed in a sensational way to appear as having had a medical author) retains dry, direct, and analytical undertones. Given Le Fanu's attentiveness to accurate cultural and historic setting, the value of this account and others like it to analyses of his work is critical to contextualising the characteristics of

medically-themed writing in Victorian Britain — including, not insignificantly, the potential it would have held to impart propagandistic fear upon an audience unsure on the potential effects of globalisation. Critically, this account also reflects a tone of the Gothic concurrently to the shocking quality of sensation fiction.

But where Dickson considers this account primarily in her examination of its application to a broader cultural context surrounding the publication of “Green Tea”, its relevance to Hesselius’s character comes far more clearly into focus for the scope of this research. It is possible, I argue, to use the above as a prime example of reflective Victorian medical rhetoric when contextualising the era in which the fictional Doctor Hesselius would have been practising his brand of arguably-experimental ‘metaphysical’ medicine. The similarities and differences in discourse between the fictional Doctor’s account of psychological decline and Doctor Harvey’s account (presented as a factual case) reveal a disparity between the two which is identifying further of Hesselius’s role as framing device and bridge between genre gaps. Harvey’s account, while framed in a sensational way, is comparatively lacking in subjective detail — a product, certainly, of the concurrent rise in medical technological advancement which mandated more objective medical prose, even from a reflective voice. Doctor Hesselius’s “two distinct characters” therefore, would have been an atypical portrayal not because this portrayal overly romanticised a standard of clinical language, but because it effectively struck a peaceable balance between past, more florid standards of medical writing and contemporary standards, further connecting Hesselius as a bridge between both time periods and genre in the mind of the Victorian reader.

Julika Griem fuses the psychological with the sexual in her analysis of Simian characters in late Victorian horror, asserting that in the case of the Reverend Mr Jennings, the presumably-demonic monkey which appears to him is representative of shame, guilt, and other subconscious workings which may have impacted a clergyman’s indulgence in taboo interests. Griem places these ideas in context of the rise of Darwinist theory in the Victorian era at the time of the work’s original publication (Griem 73). Reflecting on this idea, Dickson notes that, without hard and persisting evidence of the Clergyman’s religious or spiritual doubts, there is little reason to assume the attribution of one specific theme’s personification in or attachment to the Reverend’s character. This mirrors some of Sage’s

aforementioned, Gothically-informed opinions on McCormack's conclusions regarding Le Fanu and religious imagery (Dickson 88).

Critical discussion surrounding the Reverend's character has tended more towards gender role, masculinity in crisis, and representations of Victorian gender norms, but rarely considers Hesselius's interactions with that character. Examinations of Hesselius's character in this context regard him in light of his relationship with Jennings only minimally. As an almost-coldly analytical documenter of the Reverend's downward spiral, critical consideration of Hesselius's depictions of Jennings's condition at times hint at a condemnation of the stark objectivity so typical of the Victorian medical community (Rocha 1). Lauren Rocha, in her analysis of masculinity in "Green Tea", relies heavily upon the factual and objective account of Doctor Hesselius in evidencing the simian creature's significance with regard to the Reverend's relationship to established masculine gender norms of the Victorian era (Rocha 1). As the only character with whom Hesselius intimately interacts in the context of *In a Glass Darkly* (discounting the assistant), this contextualises his relationship with Jennings from an informative perspective.

Notably, doubt and its surrounding feelings of shame and guilt are personified by a man of the cloth in a time of social change (Dickson 88). Given the current critical popularity of gender and sexuality studies, the relevance of this still-developing field to Victorianist scholarship, and the significance of "Carmilla" to this field for its inclusion of eroticised portrayals of homosexuality, establishment of Doctor Hesselius's character in other contexts is again made critical for establishing a baseline or scientific control. Rocha's account again effectively intersects the medical humanities with gender studies, but is intimately reliant on Hesselius's minimally-examined character, weakening her arguments by virtue of a deficit in the field (Rocha 3). More importantly, her reliance is based on Hesselius's objectivity as a trained medical professional, which, while valuable and a sound argument, does not consider the aforementioned duality of Hesselius's writing style as it is introduced in the prologue to "Green Tea" by his assistant — which so mirrors his eclectic professional style. Only in examining his interactions with the characters, case files, and ultimately, the fictional primary sources of early Victorian writing which comprise the narrative, can the stories in fact be examined as a contribution to Victorian literature independent of their original, serialised formats.

William Hughes, in his paper, “The Origins and Implications of J.S. Le Fanu’s ‘Green Tea’” is critical of the scholarly community’s scant attempts to, or intent to, research “Green Tea” in light of its “explicit” Swedenborgian references in favour of criticism surrounding Hesselius’s role as a ‘metaphysical physician’. Hughes also disagrees with W.J. McCormack’s conclusions surrounding “The Familiar” and to some extent “Green Tea” made in his 1993 *Dissolute Characters*, in which McCormack explores the possibility of Le Fanu’s authorial intent in representing character fusion between the Reverend and the Doctor informed primarily from a clerical perspective (Hughes 45). McCormack’s attention to clerical themes within the work, Hughes’s attention to an occultist influence within, and an overriding lack of recent scholarship surrounding the Doctor mandates consideration from future scholars that discussion of the convergence of biblical and occult themes both relates to discussions of genre gap and gap between reader and text (as discussed by Iser and Imfeld) (Imfeld 159).

2.3 The Invisible Prince meets the Good Doctor: Framing Le Fanu’s Literary Relationship with Doctor Martin Hesselius in Context

Le Fanu’s invention and implementation of the Doctor’s character would have come at a time in the author’s life when trusted medical and spiritual professionals had been ultimately unable to save his wife, whose battles with mental illness and corresponding spiritual crises plagued their otherwise-happy marriage until her death (Sage 5). As the last piece published in life before his death in a state of abject poverty and debt in 1873, Le Fanu’s unseen protagonist’s responsibility in framing and in some cases, re-framing Le Fanu’s later pieces of horror fiction cannot be ignored for its role in this context. The intersections Hesselius’s character is charged with representing thusly cannot be overlooked as coincidence given the writer’s personal history in the historic and cultural context detailed in sections above. This section considers the parallels between Hesselius’s character and Le Fanu’s life, informed in full context of authorial intent and fully regarding of relevant historical context, establishing the groundwork for evidencing the doctor’s relationship with genre in the chapter which immediately follows.

Le Fanu's publication of the prologue to "Green Tea", composite of its inclusion of Hesselius, predates the publication of *In a Glass Darkly* by three years. This provides context to the conditions under which Le Fanu wrote or reframed the remaining four stories in *In a Glass Darkly*. Regardless of editorial input surrounding Hesselius's character, this fact mandates consideration of Hesselius as a present thought for Le Fanu throughout the years preceding the book's release, during which time, I argue, the author would have had ample time to consider the character's potential impact and applied use in conveying narrative. Therefore, we must consider Hesselius's case files – whether republished versions of Le Fanu's existing work or new pieces entirely – to be potentially as representative of Hesselius's character as they are descriptive of Le Fanu's intent in presenting them as such.

Hesselius's preference for accounts which emanate from the turn of the 19th century — and his noted favouritism of accounts written close to it over more recent retrospectives — is important to note for text interpretation in context of genre. Further, this evidences the impact of Le Fanu's lingering fascination with this time in history, and the need for scholarly consideration of authorial interaction with that time in analyses of his later work. Le Fanu's previously stated familiarity with invisible illness and its effects on his personal and professional life should be noted in critical interpretations of "Green Tea" and "The Familiar", which can be read as containing elements of an illness narrative alongside the more prevalent, Gothic themes of addiction and mental illness. I argue that these considerations are further substantiated by Le Fanu's consultation with a homeopathic doctor at the height of Susanna's mental and spiritual health crises before her death, and that this Doctor's dichotomous skill set may have informed Le Fanu's perspective into the creation of Doctor Hesselius.

Given Le Fanu's English publisher's request for Irish ghost stories framed for an English audience, it is plausible to assume that Le Fanu might have injected underlying political commentary into the earliest stages of the work to further frame the narrative. A proud Dubliner, Le Fanu, perhaps conflicted at the need to rebrand his iconic Irish Gothic to suit popular English tastes, may have dreaded, to a degree, the potential for cultural appropriation despite his amicable relationships with English authors from Dickens to Braddon. This possibility is further evidenced through biographical record, detailed above,

including Le Fanu's political interests, journalistic endeavours, and "thinking deeply" on the religious matters which so often parallel social issues (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 20-31). Le Fanu's portrayal of green tea's effect on the clergyman is, in this regard, no mistake, as accessibility to the new substance would have been distinctly English at that point, and as the social elite of England very much mirrored the social elite of Ireland at least in structure – clergy, medical professionals, and law workers (for government or otherwise), making up the upper classes almost exclusively (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 14). The Reverend's indulgence in the substance, then, an import from still-new British ties with China, would have borne colloquial connection to nationalist fear. Dublin's revolutionary influence, I argue, however tempered by the experiences afforded through a childhood which so familiarised him with political events preceding his birth, would have acquainted Le Fanu intimately with the parallels between turn-of-the-century politics and the era in which he was most prolific. In addition to providing literary insight into his historic influences, Le Fanu's reliance on his complicated relationship with his faith in times of personal crisis and mental illness, I argue, informed both the Gothic aspects of the stories in *In a Glass Darkly* and their placement in historical setting which made them more relevant as pieces of sensation fiction.

Having established this research's reliance on the information in this chapter, I base the following conclusions, and will implement them in the central arguments presented and evidenced in the chapters which follow. I speculate that Le Fanu's choice of green tea to open the narrative implies the possibility of authorial beliefs correlating traditionalist Victorian views with closely-held fears of the substance as a social and medical taboo – particularly, fears of religious commitment embodied in the Reverend. This implied connection makes the Reverend Mr Jennings's first indulgence in and later, implied reliance on the substance, while knowingly or unknowingly acknowledging its dangers, particularly correlated with the secrecy which is the hallmark of sensation fiction. Beyond demonstrating authorial consideration of sociocultural context, the story's reliance on Gothic imagery to deliver this parallel is itself reliant on the narrative of Doctor Martin Hesselius, and thus, the Doctor is implicated in the story he tells. I argue that Le Fanu's own, dichotomous experience of class – a fringe experience darting between poverty and affluence which afforded him the education and experience of the latter with all the emotional turmoil of the former – informed his creation of the Doctor's character and its

presentation in this context in “Green Tea”. It is thus that “Green Tea” in its entirety establishes, then heightens, reader intimacy with Hesselius as a character while evidencing him as a framing device for theme, genre, and symbolism.

Importantly, the sensory detail provided by Hesselius in “Green Tea” duly provides a window into the auditory and visual experience of the patient where nonfiction Victorian medical prose is lacking. This aspect is not atypical of short pieces of Victorian Sensation fiction which seek to bequeath voice back to the patient, and, in the cases of the widely-popular ‘autopsy narratives’ of the day, the corpse. When considered in conjunction with Hesselius’s dependency on Gothic imagery devices to convey characteristics of this sensory experience, Le Fanu triple-layers time and so reveals Hesselius’s dependency on time to frame the gap between genres which his character begins to close. It is here where Le Fanu’s Hesselius indeed frames the book as a piece of Gothic-sensation Prose for his audience. This aspect of Hesselius’s writing – echoed in the assistant’s early mention of his “two distinct characters”— informs the reader’s experience of genre and contributes strongly to the realisation of “desired effect” in the audience (Imfeld 159)

Further, I suggest that Le Fanu’s experience of religion, informed by his experience and observance of grief, care-taking, invalidism, and corresponding mental illness shaped his representation of genre in the book. Hesselius’s dichotomous immersion in both spiritual study and traditional science, and his written presentation of this immersion in “Green Tea”, injects the possibility of Le Fanu’s consideration of faith’s evolving role in Victorian society, informing interpretations of the Doctor’s character and its relationship with Le Fanu.

Chapter 3: He Writes in “Two Distinct” Genres: Tracing Doctor Martin Hesselius’s Relationship to Sensation Fiction and Gothic Horror in *In A Glass Darkly*

This chapter aims to inform and evidence an understanding of the presence of both the Gothic and Sensation Fiction in *In a Glass Darkly*, and to establish the framework for a more specific discussion on Hesselius’s relationship with audience in the chapter to follow. By placing this analysis in further contextual overview of Le Fanu’s relationship with genre in Victorian Britain, this chapter identifies and defines an easily-identifiable literary marker by which the dichotomy of genre can be traced throughout the work in relation to Hesselius. It provides examples which demonstrate the existence of this marker as it relates to Hesselius’s character across all five stories in the book, and illustrates author-narrator relationship with genre. In so doing, subsequent and final analyses of Hesselius’s relationship with reader are cogently based in established lines of argument.

3.1 Critical Context: Le Fanu and Genre in Victorian Britain

The Gothic in Victorian Britain, as argued by noted Le Fanu scholar Victor Sage, was an underlying and almost-dead movement which Le Fanu is heavily responsible for resurrecting into contemporary Victorian relevance (Sage 5). Le Fanu’s brand of Gothic is worth noting for its contributive value to understanding the progression of the genre:

It is commonplace that the Gothic finished as a genre in the narrow, commercial sense in 1820 with Maturin, when readers move on to the historical novel after Scott took over. But there is a kind of literary-historical black hole about what happened to it in the 1830s, which still needs some work. Le Fanu is a key figure here, because he reinvents it, just at the point when literary history assumes it was exhausted, and he places it dynamically in the context of Irish cultural nationalism. (Sage 5)

The Victorian ‘Gothic horror’ genre (or Gothic) to which I refer, I define for the purposes of this research’s scope as possessing typical imagery, themes, and plots from Gothic works. The most widely noted and critically-discussed authors of the Gothic genre include Ann Radcliffe (b. 1764), Bram Stoker (b. 1847), Edgar Allan Poe (b. 1809), and Mary Shelley (b. 1797) — some of whose relationships with Le Fanu’s work has been

noted in previous sections. The movement enjoyed continued popularity into the fin de siècle, but the genre's influence in the mid-nineteenth century was largely dismissed by many critical writers of the day (Sage 6-12). Le Fanu's influence on Gothic horror is indisputably sound and widely noted across the critical field. As an established element of his artistry, critical focus in recent decades has turned to analyses which consider Le Fanu's relationship with genre in light of its cultural relevance to the Victorian era, redefining focus on the linguistic implications within Le Fanu's brand of Gothic Horror. Victor Sage explains the scope of his position on Le Fanu's linguistic relevance both to history and to the field in a passage which presents a comparison of Shakespeare's rhetoric in *Macbeth* to some aspects of Le Fanu's writing style:

These are transgressive moments, epiphanies of darkness, when the past (several layers of it) usurps the present, and an older universe of 'superstition' and barbarity rushes momentarily into the vacuum left by civilised, 'modern', reasonable doubt. They are framed by the play itself (Sage 4)

Sage's mention of Shakespeare's arguably-darkest play, *Macbeth*, in the context of Le Fanu's writing, calls upon Gothic imagery in reader framing of Sage's arguments themselves — providing a layered effect to his criticism which, perhaps intentionally, mirrors Le Fanu's sense of layered time in framing narrative and indeed, genre. While Sage's work is highly relevant to this research, and while I agree with many aspects of his writing and will draw upon his conclusions in evidencing the arguments to follow, I argue against any critical assumption that frames Le Fanu's later style of writing as universally possessive of a purely Shakespearean tone of Gothicism. Rather, there exists a dichotomy in his style – a tenderness and emotionality which emerges at peak form, I argue, in *In a Glass Darkly*. This style allows reader to “realise” more intimately the Sensation Fiction elements obfuscated purposefully by the latent and evolved aspects of the Gothic for which Le Fanu is so principally famous. Without the existence of this blended genre, the critically-established themes within Le Fanu's work would not be as accessible to a critical audience which seeks to analyse Le Fanu's relationship to a Victorian audience or his literary peers.

This dichotomy in Le Fanu's style mirrors the duality described so early in the assistant's descriptions of Hesselius, further evidencing a potential parallel drawn by Le

Fanu himself between his own style of writing and the Doctor's character. This inserts further cause for consideration of a potentially-autobiographical undertone to the Doctor's character, further supported through the previous chapters' biographical contextualisation. It is equally important to consider that Le Fanu could have sought to recognise Gothicism's genre roots in the second half of the eighteenth century, paying tribute to its literary aspects in the evolved genre hybridity he creates in *In a Glass Darkly*, especially given the stories' setting at the turn of the 19th century in England.

Achieving peak popularity in the 1860s and 1870s, Sensation Fiction involved themes which were equally melodramatic and realistic. In its most popular form, the 'Sensation Novel' played upon themes which implicated the Gothic and Romantic in a cross-genre style indicative of the blurred social lines within the period itself. Sensation Fiction is critically acclaimed for its authors' unique style of blending these romantic elements, themes, and imagery with realism, which, theretofore, many scholars believe, had not been achieved eloquently, if at all (Talairach-Vielmas 40). Winifred Hughes extrapolates this idea in her 1980 *The Maniac in the Cellar* to explain that the more abstract elements of sensation fiction's plots and imagery left room for authors to explore allegorical angles. This approach, Hughes argues, allowed a Victorian audience the introspective room to grapple with the circumstantial social change of the era. The concurrent rise of the industrial revolution furthered the distributive abilities of Sensation Fiction's printers, and the reach of the genre was expansive for this reason: fuelling the popularity driven by its sometimes-shocking themes, including adultery, addiction, criminality, and more (Muller 13). The nature of these popular thematic taboos earned the Sensation Novel the critical sobriquet "the novel with a secret", opening room for scholarly discourse surrounding themes of identity in Victorian Britain (Talairach-Vielmas 35-40).

This wide distribution resulted in a duly wide readership. Similarly, the Gothic was kept alive in new formats through the rise in technology and resulting vast distribution of 'penny dreadfuls' – an originally-derogatory term referring to the inexpensive, easily accessible, and often, low-print-quality publications. These serialised weekly stories which frequently contained a coexistence of gothic and sensational themes, and were targeted towards young, working Victorian men (Louis 20). However – two of the most famous

sensation novels, Ellen Wood's *East Lynne* (1861) and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) feature themes arguably geared towards women, with Wood's book featuring themes of disfigurement (almost invalidism), adultery, motherhood, and disguise, and Braddon's text describing the life of a murderous *femme fatale*. It stands to reason that readership of these works particularly, and others which echo similar themes, would have appealed to a yet-awakening, heteronormative Victorian female audience. Lyn Pykett's analysis of Audley's character mirrors the obfuscated lines of mental illness which Hesselius's character deeply explores: "is Lady Audley in fact mad? The novel blurs the issue" (Audley xxi).

The presence of medical context in these publications illustrates perfectly the brand of sensational and gothic blending which occurred in many stories distributed in this fashion. The buried alive and autopsy narrative, which illustrated the viewpoint of a typically-immobilised but otherwise sentient corpse, or patient, was particularly popular. This type of rhetoric, retaining many elements of the Gothic while featuring the trademark "shocking" themes of sensation fiction, bears striking similarity to Le Fanu's much more skilful implementation of this fusion through Hesselius. Similarly, allowance is given for the audience to determine the protagonist or characters' level of sentience or jurisdiction over their afflictions — whether they were alive, dead, or somewhere in between.

Importantly, Le Fanu's work is well-analysed critically for his portrayal of and relationship to female characters. His demonstration of connectedness with the female psyche and adeptness at portraying young women, particularly, as in the case of Maud in *Uncle Silas*, and Laura in "Carmilla" is critically attributed to his closeness to women throughout his personal life, and begs further consideration for its relationship to genre (Sage 5-7).

Most critical attention pertaining to Le Fanu's relationship with Sensation Fiction's themes is centred upon "Green Tea", for its inclusion of themes of secrecy, addiction, and a crisis of identity in the victim, the Reverend Mr. Jennings. Providing perhaps one of the most important bases for this consideration, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, the aforementioned Sensation Novelist edited "Green Tea" for Le Fanu (Le Fanu 321). "Green Tea" is also noted for its embodiment of both Gothic and Sensation characteristics, embodying the

relationship between the movements in mid and late-Victorian Britain, and evidencing the possibility of this inter-genre relationship extending throughout *In a Glass Darkly* (Talairach-Vielmas 32-40).

Given Sensation Fiction's reliance on themes of addiction, secrecy, identity crisis, and its outright representation of Victorian social feelings of faith and doubt, it is mandatory to consider Hesselius's blended role as an occultist doctor in the context of genre. As this aspect of his character mirrors the same, aforementioned polarity between Sensation Fiction's Gothic and Romantic elements, his character becomes representative of this time through his own blended – some might say, contradictory – interests and qualifications. By branching to include critical analysis of characters within Victorian short stories in critical analyses of Sensation Fiction's themes and literary influence, we extend the possibility of regarding Sensation Fiction's wider influence on Victorian popular fiction and culture. Additionally, the three best known works of Sensation Fiction were penned by English authors (Collins, Braddon, and Woods) – and as an Irish writer producing for an English audience in his compilation of the stories and narrative in *In a Glass Darkly*, Le Fanu's influence on the movement is deserving of more critical attention. Hesselius's character is an avenue by which the vying of the Gothic elements to emerge in a Sensation Fiction context may be made relatable and relevant to the field. Further, Le Fanu is of critical importance in examining these genres for his role as an intellectually-influential Dubliner – particularly since, as acknowledged by McCormack, Dublin had earned a stereotype as the “seat of eccentricity, rather than of genius” at the turn of the 19th century when Le Fanu lays his scene in *In a Glass Darkly* (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 7).

3.2 Sensory Deprivation: Tracing Le Fanu's Coexistent Genres Through an Identifiable Literary Marker

The indication that Hesselius's writing style encompasses a more traditional, clinical voice, and a retrospective, abstract, narrative analysis encourages academic consideration of the narrative for sensational themes. It is exactly this duality of style which appears less obviously in so many popular works of Victorian sensation prose: appealing to the height of the senses, to the height of realism and rationality, while allowing for a window into the inexplicable, the unreal, the melodramatic, and the unbelievable. The occult and blended

“metaphysical” nature of these files, particularly given the presence of Christian references throughout, supports the undertone of Gothic horror for which Le Fanu is most widely regarded in the critical field. This concurrence mirrors the duality reflected in Hesselius’s prose in “Green Tea”, and supports critical assertion that Hesselius frames not only the narrative, but the evolutionary gap between gothic horror and sensation fiction. Critical consideration of Doctor Hesselius’s role through the close reading of *In a Glass Darkly* which is to follow further informs established critical understanding of Le Fanu’s relationship to the Gothic: its themes, imagery, and its relationship to the evolution of sensation fiction.

I argue that Le Fanu’s interactions with genre in *In a Glass Darkly* can be traced through consideration of a mode which, I evidence, is most relevant to this research. This mode, which I refer to as ‘sensory deprivation’, will be considered in the context of the scope of Hesselius’s writing and role in *In a Glass Darkly*. For the purposes of this research, I define “sensory deprivation” as an umbrella term which acknowledges the specific aspects of Le Fanu’s imagery which provide the illusion of, or encourage, a removed or lessened sense of sight and sound in the reader’s experience of scene. I have chosen to define this mode entirely due to its apparent and easily-recognisable prevalence throughout the work, and will rely heavily on it to inform the conclusions which follow. Particularly, I define this mode for its relationship with and dependence upon the Doctor’s posthumous brand of narration. In stripping the reader of their experience of the innately human qualities which inform our understanding of “vacancy” in Le Fanu’s Gothic, I argue that the resulting sense of heightened nerves in the reader employs aspects of both the Gothic and Sensation Fiction to its advantage. This argument is based upon the previous chapters’ concluding assertions — among them, that the Doctor, though deceased, was given agency in the posthumous presentation of his cases due to his favouritism of them in life, and that this favouritism reflects a similarity to the character’s own writing.

This analysis of two distinct genres using a defined literary marker will also employ considerations of the assistant’s presentation of detail concerning Hesselius’s case files. As is elsewhere noted, the importance of “Green Tea” as a tool by which this research gains insight into the Doctor’s character in supporting prologues and, where applicable, notation, is heavily present as an analytical tool. While the remaining four ‘cases’, I acknowledge,

are not written by the Doctor's hand, I argue that they remain dependable reflections of the Doctor's character. By virtue of his favouritism of them in life and career, they can and should be monitored for their inclusion of sensory deprivation as a unifying theme hinging on Hesselius's character. Due to Le Fanu's critically-acknowledged tendency to inform his stories with a "layered" sense of time, consideration of the assistant's selection and presentation of these stories is of critical importance to any well-rounded analysis of *In a Glass Darkly* (Sage 20). Evidencing and garnering an understanding of the Doctor's interactions with this literary device (which plays upon both Gothic and Sensation Fiction's themes) will better inform future consideration of his role. This analysis will follow chronologically Hesselius's interactions with sensory deprivation throughout *In a Glass Darkly* to inform the chapter which follows. Further discussion of his character's related effect on the reader, its role as a frame to the convergence of genre, and implications of his overall impact on Victorian literature follows in the footsteps of this literary marker.

3.3 "The Silence Too, Was Utter": Sensory Deprivation and the Body Under Hesselius's Fictive Medical Gaze

In this section, I argue that Hesselius can be used by a scholarly audience as a metaphor for *In a Glass Darkly's* relationship with two genres due to the character's duality of training, written rhetoric, and the presentation of his voice both directly and posthumously. Evidencing Le Fanu's implementation of the aforementioned marker (sensory deprivation) through Hesselius's character is integral to understanding the Doctor's relationship with genre. Chiefly, evidence will be provided of the presence of this marker as it relates to Hesselius's interactions with genre in the context of each of the five stories in *In a Glass Darkly*. Hesselius's implementation of sensory deprivation in "Green Tea", I argue, primes the reader to experience the concept's presence in the stories which follow. As both the Gothic and sensation fiction have literary relationships with the employment of Romantic devices, I further evidence a coexistence of genre through examples of sensory deprivation which can be tied back to Romantic themes and imagery, instating a literary control. Where applicable, this evidence will also be considered for its plausible demonstration of authorial intent, contextualised with information discussed in prior chapters. These considerations will provide basis to the analysis of Hesselius's

relationship with “realising” desired effect in the reader in the penultimate chapter which follows.

Frank Kermode, in an analysis of the romanticisation of artist characters in literature, considers the following qualities which relate duly, with Hesselius’s character as an unconventional scientist. In a description which mirrors the romantic traits of Hesselius’s patients’, Kermode’s analysis of classic romantic character traits and imagery informs our perspective of Le Fanu’s interaction with the Gothic. As with Pykett’s analysis of Braddon’s sensational *Lady Audley* – potential mental illness, as obscured by the narrative’s blurred lines mirrors Hesselius’s relationship with his patients and often, casts them in a romantic light (Braddon xxi).

He must be lonely, haunted, victimised, devoted to suffering rather than action – or, to state this in a manner more acceptable to the twentieth century, he is exempt from the normal human orientation towards action and so enabled to intuit those images which are truth, in defiance of the triumphant claims of merely intellectual disciples. (Kermode 9)

The following examples are dependent on a chronological consideration of Hesselius’s relationship with sensory deprivation in *In a Glass Darkly*. The existence of this aspect is first presented in the prologue to “Green Tea”, wherein the audience is introduced to Hesselius’s character. The Doctor’s relationship with imagery, allegory, and foreshadowing relies on his conveyance of sensory experience. I argue that this establishes a baseline for his interactions with patients and their stories in the narratives which follow.

In the prologue to “Green Tea”, the assistant describes Hesselius, at thirty-five years their senior, as “an old man”, adding to an already-growing sense of layered time (Le Fanu 5). As the assistant reveals more detail, it becomes apparent that this ‘invisible’ ‘old man’s’ influence over the presentation of the work to follow is informed by a deep admiration and lasting respect for his character in the assistant. This admiration, which “has stood the test of time and survived the separation of death”, immediately injects Gothic imagery of loss, desperation, and death within first glimpses into Hesselius’s character and its relationship to time. We are given the information that the assistant has been entrusted with the task of “arranging, indexing, and binding” the entirety of Hesselius’s “immense collection of

papers”, further prompting Gothic imagery of vacancy and, even, Romanticism, while heightening our perception of layered time (Le Fanu 5). Critically, I argue that the presentation of Hesselius’s work in this way can be considered an extension of his character, presented posthumously. This calls for a connection to be considered between details given in “Green Tea”’s prologue and *Sensation Fiction*’s popular ‘autopsy narrative’, in which corpses are aware but incapacitated to act on their own human desires.

This parallel can be extended, as the story progresses, to consider the inclusion of the Reverend Mr Jennings’s rapid decline into madness, illness, spiritual possession, or an interpretive combination thereof. This furthers an interpretation that Hesselius plays a role in layering now not only time, but time through his interaction with other characters. This consideration of time, placed in historic context, informs discussion of genre. The relative incapacitation of both Jennings and Hesselius, and to a degree, the assistant’s limitations due to the unfortunate early-career amputation which cost them the ability to act upon their craft, unites characters across time frames in a common loss of sensory experience. This incapacitation is further realised in the reader by Le Fanu chiefly through the inability of Hesselius to speak to these accounts himself, rendering him voiceless: a ghostly primary narrator.

The Reverend Mr Jennings’s shame, confliction, and suffering are captured most vividly within scenes which rely upon the loss of sensory experience in scene. Presented to the reader through the Doctor’s “two distinct” characters, this can be traced through observation of the Reverend’s condition as it relates to the interior spaces in which he partakes of both green tea and his occultist studies:

The silence, too, was utter: not a distant wheel, or bark, or whistle from without; and within the depressing stillness of an invalid bachelor’s house. I guessed well the nature, though not even vaguely the particulars of the revelations I was about to receive, from that fixed face of suffering that so oddly flushed stood out, like a portrait of Schalcken, before its background of darkness. (Le Fanu 21)

A sense of auditory deprivation overpowers this earliest scene of quasi-confrontation through Hesselius’s description. Itself overpowered by the strikingly dark visual descriptions of the Reverend’s countenance, it is important to note that the Reverend’s

expressions are described as considerate and cheery in scenes outside of the study (Le Fanu 9). Here the audience is truly introduced to the relationship between the Doctor and the Reverend, imposing a confession-style conversation into a dark, occult-tainted environment as a copy of Swedenborg lies just meters away. In presenting the characters Hesselius and Jennings, Le Fanu's use of sensory deprivation demonstrates his attention to Gothic detail as it informs his earliest introduction of sensational themes.

Le Fanu's portrayal of Jennings's spiritual and mental health crisis – itself implied to be the result of addiction to a substance which embodies ties to foreign entities – represents a deep resonance with a Victorian audience. Sensation fiction authors' desire to explore unbelievable, or melodramatic themes allows the reader to fully experience the details and happenings of a story to the maximum. Because Jennings's case is never closed — his afflictions never decisively diagnosed as purely medical or spiritual, the result of an occult influence, a medical problem, or some combination thereof – the reader is left to draw their own conclusions, a typical feature of sensation fiction. Reflecting the controversial religious themes of the day, Mr Jennings directly confronts the presence of Darwinism which would see the Victorians question their faith, concurrently to their empire's motives in importing such mysterious substances as green tea (Griem 75). Indeed, in an era where many doctors had begun to view the substance as a poison, its literary inclusion would not have gone unnoticed for its heavy significance both at the time of setting and of publication (Dickson 81). In presenting a barrage of controversial, shocking, and melodramatic themes for the Doctor to confront alone, Le Fanu foreshadows these sensation-brand motifs in the context of scenes presented by Hesselius via the descriptive relief of sensory experience therein. Hesselius's account is directly responsible for the affected removal of the reader's sensory perception. He is used by Le Fanu in "Green Tea" to prime a shift in their expectations — guiding audience towards recognition of foreshadowed descriptions which implicate descriptions of vacancy, sightlessness, shadow, and unseen depths.

Imagery which presents or implies cameo portrayals of characters in Victorian fiction necessitates the consideration that Hesselius is not unaffected by romantic portrayals of 'fashionable disease' in the Victorian era. The consistency with which Gothic imagery appears narrows audience focus to rest upon artistic portrayals of disease. The most

poignant visual descriptions of the body provided or favoured by Doctor Hesselius are given, often, in framed contexts of this nature — through a doorway in “Room in the Dragon Volant”, framed by a mirror in “Green Tea”, and Millarca’s portrait in “Carmilla”. These artistic descriptions — or Hesselius’s favouritism of accounts which are similarly artistically-inclined — inform Hesselius’s medical gaze and parallel his duality of prose, of training, and perhaps, of opinion on the nature of his patients’ conditions. I argue that this primes scene for the melodramatic themes which follow: in every mentioned context, portraiture demonstrates a figurative stripping of the affected patient’s sensory agency, an effect which is made more evident through simultaneous, Gothic depiction of darkened scene.

It is worth critical consideration that the violent visual hallucinations Jennings suffers are borne of the same environment which Le Fanu’s Hesselius uses to first introduce this type of imagery — the Reverend’s library. Here, the Doctor’s words present a portrait of depressing bleakness and austerity, connecting a Gothic portrayal of romanticised landscape with the realism which will serve as a believable base for the melodramatic aspects which continue to mount. The romantic mention of Schalcken’s deep use of contrast as a comparative tool to the Reverend’s declining countenance accomplishes two things in this context. First, it foreshadows the later inclusion of Millarca’s (Countess Karnstein) portrait in “Carmilla”, which itself serves as a foreshadowing device for Millarca’s alter ego Carmilla’s eventual, final attack on Laura. Second, as framed in an interior space, Jennings’s countenance and its similarly-presented and two-dimensionally framed condition early in “Green Tea” reflect the stillness of space and patient inability to act upon his own desires to heal himself, hinting at the dichotomy of his intellectual interests. Hesselius’s apparent shock and surprise in a Gothic context denotes the first incidence of a merging of genre.

I was running the head of my pencil-case along the line as I read it, and something caused me to raise my eyes. Directly before me was one of the mirrors I have mentioned, in which I saw reflected the tall shape of my friend, Mr. Jennings, leaning over my shoulder, and reading the page at which I was busy, and with a face so dark and wild that I should hardly have known him. (Le Fanu 16)

Audience ability to recognise this foreshadowing device at a much later point in the narrative in “Carmilla” is dependent on Hesselius’s first mention of portraiture which frames the mounting incidence of sensation fiction’s themes throughout the work. Carmilla’s denial of the portrait’s perfect likeness is demonstrative of her monstrosity – she lies, denying its similar qualities to her countenance, keeping her secret. In some ways, from this point forth, she becomes her portrait — romanticising her image while dehumanising her, and again, Gothic imagery becomes a foreshadowing agent for her eventual, sensational appearance in her truest form when her secret is revealed.

I remembered it; it was a small picture, about a foot and a half high, and nearly square, without a frame; but it was so blackened by age that I could not make it out. The artist now produced it, with evident pride. It was quite beautiful; it was startling; it seemed to live. It was the effigy of Carmilla! (Le Fanu 272)

Critically, Laura’s excitement in the discovery of the portrait is emblematic of the innocence in her character which comes into play in interpretations of the story from a gender and sexuality perspective. As her health declines in a similar way to Jennings, she is similarly unable to note the very close causality of her afflictions in Carmilla. Laura’s earliest mention of the portrait itself is made in the context of a conversation held between adults as they passed beneath the archway of a Gothic church while her health was in the last stages of decline (Le Fanu 305). In this way, Hesselius’s early description of Jennings’s countenance has informed the realisation of genre-pattern in themes to follow, aiding not only critical interpretations of character, but of genre. In both Laura’s and Jennings’s cases, the systematic decline of health is framed in a Gothic context before the suspenseful and melodramatic conclusions.

Le Fanu’s affinity for Gothic foreshadowing relies on the romanticisation of character through figurative or literature portraiture. It must be remembered that all characters which appear in *In a Glass Darkly* are also, for the purposes of narrative, patients or patients by extension of Hesselius’s. Their accounts, as is often denoted by the assistant, greatly informed the Doctor’s progress as a researcher and an academic, and are often elected for inclusion for this reason. Hesselius’s interactions with authorial

preference as a character aids in the conveyance of sensory deprivation. His medical gaze frames the steady revelation of melodramatic and shocking conclusions which follow the revelation of character secrets throughout *In a Glass Darkly* — integral to the unmasking of genre duality therein.

Le Fanu's noted, adept portrayals of female protagonists in his later fiction mandates critical notice of female characters' interactions with sensory deprivation in *In a Glass Darkly*. Critical notice of this concept's presence in female context indicates authorial reliance on the female identity, particularly for female interaction with sensory deprivation in narrative development. I argue that Le Fanu's female characters — and Hesselius's interactions with those characters — makes audience reliant on female identity to gauge situational danger, and underpins this reliance as an additional mode by which genre study of *In a Glass Darkly* may be supported.

"The Room in the Dragon Volant", critically considered for its suspense themes, is narrated from the view of a privileged English male youth swept up in the romance and gaiety of travel in France, but does not neglect female characters. The Countess's veil in "The Room in the Dragon Volant" is idyllically symbolic of another incidence of sensory deprivation, as is Laura's progressive health decline in the constant presence of Carmilla. The removal of an informative reader experience of visual description of the Countess's face by the narrator in "The Room in the Dragon Volant" in earlier parts of the narrative is suggestive of its indication of danger to follow: "I was instinctively aware that the lady was looking on me with no unwilling eyes; and, through her veil, I felt the power of her gaze" (Le Fanu 121). Early reliance on the stripping of outward indicators of sensory experience in female characters is present, too, in the inclusion of Lewis Pynewick's widow in "Mr Justice Harbottle", Miss Montague in "The Familiar", and again, notably, in descriptions of Carmilla in gazing upon her own portrait: "Carmilla sat looking listlessly on, while one after the other the old pictures, nearly all portraits, which had undergone the process of renovation, were brought to light" (Le Fanu 270-2). Frequently, these barriers in interpreting female emotional experience and their sensory implications — figurative or literal — are regarded as an inconvenience by supporting characters, further highlighting their significance to narrative, and thus, genre.

Within these contexts, it is important to note that there is frequent comorbidity with discussions of portraiture, figurative or literal, as discussed above — particularly relevant as applied to female characters. Considerations of interior space, female, portrait-centred imagery, and the sensory deprivation imbued by scenes which contain both are best represented by “The Room in the Dragon Volant”, for its narrator’s description of the Countess de St. Alyre:

I might, indeed, have mistaken it for a picture; for it now reflected a half-length portrait of a singularly beautiful woman. She was looking down upon a letter which she held in her slender fingers, and in which she seemed absorbed. The face was oval, melancholy, sweet. It had in it, nevertheless, a faint and undefinably sensual quality also. Nothing could exceed the delicacy of its features, or the brilliancy of its tints. The eyes, indeed, were lowered, so that I could not see their colour; nothing but their long lashes and delicate eyebrows. She continued reading. She must have been deeply interested; I never saw a living form so motionless—I gazed on a tinted statue. (Le Fanu 122)

Comparatively considered for the narrator’s later note of the Countess’s husband, it is plausible to consider Hesselius’s favouritism of the account partly on the basis of a unique presentation of analogous depictions of arguably, equally-malevolent parties. Here, portraiture merges with sensory deprivation to foreshadow the narrator’s later poisoning and immobility at the hands of a stranger in the context of clandestine operations:

It was the Count de St. Alyre, who had been, as I have told you, reported to me to be, for some considerable time, on his way to Pèe la Chaise. He stood before me for a moment, with the frame of the doorway and a background of darkness enclosing him like a portrait. His slight, mean figure was draped in the deepest mourning. He had a pair of black gloves in his hand, and his hat with crape round it. When he was not speaking his face showed signs of agitation; his mouth was puckering and working. He looked damnably wicked and frightened. (Le Fanu 226)

The narrator’s romanticised, dichotomous descriptions of the couple encapsulate a duality of the occult and the real, present also in Hesselius’s narration of “Green Tea” and all other cases which comprise the narrative. The narrator frames the young Countess’s position in a romantic light: for her apparent close-guarded inability to express agency due to her husband’s possessive and greedy behaviour. Conversely, and mirroring the duality of Hesselius’s very work, the narrator’s account of the Count de St. Alyre is cryptic: dark, and demonstrative of his self-isolation at the hand of his own faults. The sensory deprivation of

characters implicated in-scene of these portrait-like descriptions, I note, supports critical consideration of the cases Hesselius valued, and raises questions about his portrayals of female and male identity. These portrayals, exemplified by the narrator's romantically-driven, avid pursuit of the Countess's time and acquaintance in "The Room in the Dragon Volant", echo Hesselius's depictions of Jennings's lack of agency in "Green Tea", and Laura's perhaps-subconscious suspicion of Carmilla's likeness in the portrait.

In perhaps one of the most tactile examples of sensory deprivation as enacted literally among Hesselius's patients, the protagonist in "The Room in the Dragon Volant" foreshadows his fate and falls victim to a poisoning which renders him motionless in the early stages of the story. Helpless to act on his ability to move or speak as he was robbed in a stagecoach in the first stages of his interactions with the mysterious Count and Countess de St. Alyre, protagonist turns to portrait: immobilised by his curiosity with the mysterious. The narrator's own experience with immobility and sensory deprivation — in his case, presented in its most highly literal form by Le Fanu — indicates the height of its foreshadowing and relationship with genre through Hesselius's favouritism of the account.

I would have rubbed my eyes, but I could not stir my hand, my will no longer acted on my body—I found that I could not move one joint, or muscle, no more than I could, by an effort of my will, have turned the carriage about. Up to this I had experienced no sense of horror. Whatever it was, simple night-mare was not the cause. I was awfully frightened! (Le Fanu 151)

Providing a key piece of supporting evidence for considerations of Hesselius's medical gaze in reviewing the collection of cases as a narrative unified under the Doctor's character are the parallels between these accounts and the buried alive narrative. Hesselius's favouritism of accounts which implicate the presence of sensory deprivation is indeed mirrored in protagonist fate. He values reflective discourse which focuses on patient experience of this aspect, an area of importance foreshadowed to audience through his focus on Reverend Jennings's opening of his "inner sight" (Le Fanu 14). The removal of exterior sight then, or the implication thereof, is always important to note from the Doctor's perspective. In "The Room in the Dragon Volant" with a noted resurgence of this theme in "Carmilla", the mutual presence of a coffin in both accounts darkens scene with clearly Gothic imagery and delivers shocking theme while removing sight from protagonist or antagonist, respectively. The reliance on first-person narrative in accounts which feature

this theme most strongly, I speculate, is no accident, and is responsible for uniting character with experience of narrative.

I was not left long to conjecture what was coming, for in a few seconds more something slid across, a few inches above my face, and entirely *excluded the light*, and *muffled sound*, so that *nothing was not very distinct reached my ears* henceforward; but very distinctly came in the working of a turnscREW, and the crunching home of screws in succession. Than these vulgar sounds, no doom spoken in thunder could have been more tremendous. (Le Fanu 234) [my own italics]

In addition to reflecting most significantly the aspects of Penny Dreadful publications discussed in historic context in previous chapters, the narrator's account in "The Room in the Dragon Volant" offers critical perspective to the incidence of affliction by association. The narrator's account demonstrates a similar quality of noting in others' the presence of a deeply disturbing and mysterious affliction, and its symbolic ability to affect one's own condition. This aspect is notable for its first mention by Hesselius's character upon being deeply disturbed by the Reverend Mr Jennings's case details so early on in "Green Tea":

We parted cheerfully, but he was not cheerful, nor was I. There are certain expressions of that powerful organ of spirit—the human face—which, although I have seen them often, and possess 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. (Le Fanu 18)

The implication of an associative aspect to metaphysical contagion, I argue, accomplishes two things. The first, pertaining to the Doctor's character: it heightens Hesselius's awareness as a practitioner and academic in all future contexts of the effects of sensory deprivation on his patient or subject. The second, pertaining to Le Fanu's impact on audience: it informs the reader's perception on subsequent accounts which foreshadow the deprivation of character experience of sense in place and time. The prologue to "Carmilla", itself the last incidence of the Doctor's presence in the narrative, is provisional of few details concerning the Doctor's input on the case file. I argue that its almost-hurried tone is perhaps demonstrative of the case's effect on the assistant themselves in this associative way:

I was anxious on discovering this paper, to reopen the correspondence commenced by Doctor Hesselius, so many years before, with a person so clever and careful as his informant seems to have been. Much to my regret, however, I found that she had died in the interval. (Le Fanu 243)

While it is naturally plausible that the use of the term ‘anxious’ by the assistant is colloquially of different significance to modern medical and social rhetoric, its incidence in context of this consideration is important for critical considerations, particularly considering the brevity of the prologue. The assistant’s implied esteem for the narrator, Laura, is achieved solely from her writing — their prologue, though brief, reflects an overall sense of helplessness to reflect fully on the account due to Laura’s passing, a melancholy and mystery paralleled by Laura’s immobilisation and decline in health throughout the narrative to follow. Hesselius’s first mention of this figurative and literal pseudo-paralysis in “Green Tea” frames audience consideration that the Doctor considered the cases which follow for this point of commonality.

Indulgent of Gothic portrayals through Romantic depictions of landscape and scene, the accounts favoured by Hesselius frequently foreshadow the shocking with the realistic. These portrayals are made clearer to the narrative not insignificantly through Le Fanu’s use of symbolic objects which remain despite the advancing darkness. This is perhaps best indicated in the description of scene which accompanies Justice Harbottle’s quasi-premonitory dream of his own damnation in “Mr Justice Harbottle”:

The Judge clutched at the check-string. The coach pulled up. He stared about him. They were not among houses; but through the windows, under a broad moonlight, he saw a black moor stretching lifelessly from right to left, with rotting trees, pointing fantastic branches in the air, standing here and there in groups, as if they held up their arms and twigs like fingers, in horrible glee at the Judge's coming. (Le Fanu 105)

Le Fanu’s detailed descriptions of interior space and of landscape are uniquely dependent on imparting a desired effect on the reader’s senses. His imagery in *In a Glass Darkly*, reliant on romanticised, dark depictions of landscape, travel, interior spaces, and experiences of youth parallels a description style first imparted upon the reader by Hesselius in “Green Tea”. These identifiably gothic ties ascribe themselves to one of

Hesseliuss's "two" distinct voices, the other, more sensationally-based, imparts a sense of realism which balances the other. The tortuous scenes which follow our introduction to Harbottle's dream state, inclusive of demonic ox-monsters, gallows, and glowing red chains are both emphasised and made more believable through the focused application of gothic imagery.

The lamps seemed all to have gone out, and there were stoves and charcoal-fires here and there, that threw a faint crimson light on the walls of the corridors through which he passed. The stones that composed them looked now enormous, cracked and unhewn. He came into a vaulted smithy, where two men, naked to the waist, with heads like bulls, round shoulders, and the arms of giants, were welding red-hot chains together with hammers that pelted like thunderbolts. (Le Fanu 109)

In a perfect example, the fading light of the scene directly affects the implicated character, Justice Harbottle, and deprives him steadily of his ability fully use his vision. Preceded by Gothic portrayals of landscape, Le Fanu portrays the gravitation from plausibility to fantastical in foreshadowing and framing. In the Doctor's clinical and academic preference for these accounts and in trusting in the assistant's aptitude in selecting files which would be most reflective of the Doctor's legacy, there is solid critical ground upon which to assert the possibility that Le Fanu presents Hesseliuss's character as having placed importance on accounts which favoured his own narration style — or at minimum, recognised within them the same clinical and spiritual aspects through the inclusion of sensory deprivation.

Chapter 4: Physician, Frame Thyself: Hesselius, Reader, and the Synchronous Framing of *In a Glass Darkly*

This chapter will consider the scope of information reviewed in all prior chapters in context of considerations which evidence the significance of Hesselius's character for his role in narrative framing. Here, I argue and evidence his role in framing genre, and his parallel role in closing the gap between reader and desired authorial effect. Using a close reading of *In a Glass Darkly* to best evidence his posthumous character development, I will build on Doctor Hesselius's critically-established role as a framing device and apply this to discussions of realising the "desired effect" in the reader. Perspective on this topic is achieved via conclusions drawn from prior considerations of historic, literary, and biographical context, and examine his parallel influence on genre theory. This analysis will conclude the examination of Hesselius's character, draw inferences concerning Le Fanu's relationship with it, and evidence the need for further study on this topic which are explored in the fifth and final, concluding chapter to follow. In so doing, this section is perhaps most critical to this research's intent to fill a void in current study surrounding the fresh application of critical context to future examinations of Hesselius's concurrent framing of genre duality and narrative.

4.1 Framing Victorian Reader Experience: Critical, Historic, and Biographical Context

Chronological analysis of Doctor Hesselius' character development through the narrative he posthumously presents in *In a Glass Darkly* embodies the Victorian Doctor's literary role at a time of cultural transition and change. The mid-Victorian emergence of Darwin's evolutionary theory, as Elisabeth Jay notes in *Faith and Doubt in Victorian Britain* encouraged a climate of religious transition in which agnosticism flourished – concurrently prompting an increase in simian imagery in popular culture, Griem notes (Griem 76-80). Clerical devotees clamoured for the attention of a populous otherwise occupied by fears of increasingly-globalised foreign markets and the resulting pockets of nationalist ideology in England (McCormack, *Sheridan Le Fanu* 4-20). Ireland's still-contentious relationship with the Crown, lingering revolutionary seeds, and Le Fanu's political involvement after the death of his wife and mother would have informed his

fictive portrayals. His choice of Hesselius, the “metaphysical physician” as both framing device and bridge between genre gaps is no accident. The Doctor’s dichotomous nature of study embodied a unified front against the moral, historic, and social issues his cases symbolise, making his character a trustworthy and authoritative, if distant mouthpiece further exemplified by Le Fanu’s use of layered time in framing narrative.

Hesselius’s preference for cases which consider themes of shame, hidden illness, disease, secrecy, and religious crises demonstrates authorial awareness of contemporary social concerns culminating at the time of publication — all of which correlate with turn of the 19th century politics in Dublin.

Considering green tea as a symbolic embodiment of literal dependency on foreign markets frames Hesselius’s character in light of his wariness of a tempting and potentially insidious foreign agent with the potential to impart unseen illness on those willing to welcome it into the culture. In his account, Hesselius includes the Reverend’s description of the power of the monkey itself, saying:

“There is in its motion an undefinable power to dissipate thought, and to contract one’s attention to that monotony, till the ideas shrink, as it were, to a point, and at last to nothing – and unless I had started up, and shook off the catalepsy I have felt as if my mind were on the point of losing itself. There are other ways,” he sighed heavily; “thus, for instance, I pray with my eyes closed, it comes closer and closer, I see it.” (Le Fanu 30)

Le Fanu’s portrayals of globalisation, addiction, sin, and occultism in this first presented account is evidenced by Hesselius’s potentially selective illustration of the Reverend’s story. Importantly, notations in context like the Reverend’s use of the term “*catalepsy*”, above foreshadows future instances of sensory deprivation, and places them in a medical and spiritual context. Victorian social context frames the Doctor as a competent, respectable, and trustworthy figure, corroborating the accolades provided by the assistant in the prologue to “Green Tea” (Le Fanu 5). Hesselius’s relationship with “Green Tea” erects three important tenets of his character development upon which reader relationship with the Doctor will build as narrative continues. First, narrator and doctor are unified in the framing of narrative. Second, a familiarity with Hesselius’s “two distinct”

writing styles is established, allowing reader to recognise verbal similarity in case files to follow as Hesselius's influence fades from view. Finally, the introduction of Hesselius's preference for blended or coexistent theme and genre in narratives to follow his own can be inferred as a result of these two "desired effects".

Le Fanu's 1850 – 1873 experiences with death, loss, grief, and the ignorance of mental illness in Victorian Britain, I argue, informed his implementation of Gothic rhetoric and shaped authorial portrayals of time. This period in Joseph's life would have seen him grapple with his humanity, informing his interactions with genre in his later work — a relationship embodied in Hesselius. Where the Gothic embodies the reflective, dark, sombre tone of his earlier works, sensation fiction's expressive, emotive, and shocking themes flirt with his progressive portrayals of female characters. Their coexistence through Hesselius is the mode by which audience can interact with and access genre relationships. The resulting relatability of a Victorian audience to the appearance of the themes in Le Fanu's later work, as narrated through Hesselius's gaze, is thus framed for the Victorian audience through a sensational lens.

Le Fanu's deeply personal understanding of Gothic themes allowed for an acutely astute resurrection of, what Sage notes to have largely been a "presumed dead" movement in the Gothic (Sage 5-8). He employs this experiential understanding to his benefit through the use of Hesselius in telling the stories which so often implicate the presence of Le Fanu's personal tragedies lying just beneath the surface. The incorporation of sensation fiction's themes, I argue, provisional of an almost adventuresome tone, bequeath fervour back to what Sage describes as dormancy in the Gothic, and allow it to be born anew through a genre marriage which Hesselius embodies.

The literary and linguistic choices which frame and provide emotional density to Le Fanu's stories also provide for and contribute to the reader's heightened experience of 'layered' time and cultural periods, allowing for his writing to reflect "the violent, the dreamy, the learned, and the grotesque, sometimes all at once" (Sage 3). Doctor Hesselius is an emblematic capstone of this technique and informs our understanding of *In a Glass Darkly's* relationship to cross-cultural time periods. Hesselius's trace character, waning as

the narrative progresses, sees gaps turn to Le Fanu's written bridges, and is critical to the modern-day scholars who seek to cross them.

The "metaphysical physician", then, and his posthumously-compiled collection of cases detail a clear record of cross-disciplinary study which intersected – and in many cases, blurred the lines between – spiritual crisis and mental illness. Le Fanu himself is mirrored in Hesselius's assistant's "trained but not practising" status in medicine, having trained in law before abandoning his pursuit of a barrister's life for his writing and journalism. It can further be argued that he is as much mirrored in Hesselius's apparent training and education across two fields: the spiritual and deep and evolving science of western medicine. This evidences further our consideration of the Doctor and his assistant as a dependable team, both reflective of a similar authorial intent and relationship — one which seeks to deliver narrative through a layered sense of time which divides narrative to conquer genre. Consequently, contextualising the Doctor's role in "transmission and adaptation" of the Gothic is dependent on perspective through a sensational lens: "The Gothic mutates everywhere and survives from then on, self-consciously, as an agent of textual hybridity across genres" (Sage 5). I argue that, across Le Fanu's fiction, the most impactful transmission of the gothic is the genre fusion which occurs in *In A Glass Darkly*, and further, that this fusion is itself transmitted and framed not insignificantly through Le Fanu's use of Hesselius's character, which epitomises the hybridity pinpointed above by Sage.

4.2 Between Doctor and Reader: Hesselius's Framing of Genre

Alongside careful note of biographical context and criticism, considerations of Hesselius's character development more plausibly frames reader experience of genre. The Doctor, therefore, is as much a cornerstone piece in tracing the presence of Le Fanu's duality of genre as he is a framing device for reader experience of that genre. I argue that these considerations are best evidenced when considered for their concurrent role in supporting reader understanding of the Doctor's character.

Hesselius frames audience experience of Le Fanu's Gothicized sensation fiction through his character's posthumous presentation of cases which detail the incidence of

sensory deprivation described in the chapter above. Considering this, it is possible to trace the ‘potential effect’ of the character in all stories within the work (Imfeld 159). Doctor Hesselius’s character growth through narrative can be seen as it was intended most effectively through examination of the stories’ progression in *In a Glass Darkly*.

The entrance of the historical novel allowed the Gothic to exist in the background, and its popular aspects, duly, to survive in evolving genres like sensation fiction. Le Fanu’s blend of the Gothic with the historical novel in his notable *Uncle Silas* is a breakthrough work in this respect. The Doctor’s connection to the Gothic, and ability to keep its elements active in his work as is demonstrated in “Green Tea”’s Gothicized rhetoric, so mirrors Le Fanu’s own ability to do the same, contributing, I speculate, to the heightened emergence of newly-applied Gothic themes in the author’s later work. It is this survival of the Gothic which Le Fanu was instrumental in influencing. Hesselius’s early demonstration of both “distinct voices” fosters an intimacy between Reverend and Doctor which is the direct result of Hesselius’s notation of sensory deprivation. His use of this mode to foreshadow critical scenes inclusive of Gothic imagery realises a ‘desired effect’ in the reader while unifying genre. Here, Sage’s aforementioned idea of layered framing techniques which impose a “double or triple sense of time” fuses with his (albeit not directly stated) mention of themes which can be considered sensational. This draws a notable parallel between Le Fanu’s brand of Gothic and elements of sensation fiction. Further, Sage reflects on Victorian progression of the Gothic in an historic and cultural light which brings additional relevance to consideration of the Doctor’s character in this context:

“I think we need to see the Gothic in this period as a cultural response, rather than a bounded genre, and this, indeed, is a key to the question of how it comes to flourish in such a diversity of forms in the nineteenth century after its own genre-death. Le Fanu is crucial to that process of transmission and application” (Sage 5)

Hesselius’s role in framing the coexistence of genre is benefitted, then, by a revisitation of Hughes’s assertion that sensation fiction’s abstract aspects allowed for exploratory room and the emergence of an authorial creative license, providing Victorian authors further ability to contend with social issues in writing (Hughes 50). It is plausible

to consider, then, from this critically-supported angle and via an independently achieved deduction, that Le Fanu's brand of sensation fiction as it appears in *In a Glass Darkly* effectively reincarnates the Gothic. Further, it can be claimed that this demonstrates the evolution of Victorian Gothic in an historically-relevant way, the study of which is all-the-more informed by our consideration of Doctor Hesselius's role in facilitating this fusion.

Importantly, Sage's notation of Le Fanu's methods of affecting reader perspective, specifically, his "habit of layering and back-dating his texts which sometimes gives them a double or triple sense of time, affecting their reader's point of view" identifies Hesselius's character as a chief vehicle of conveying genre (Sage 5). Placed in cultural and literary context, Hesselius comes into view not only as a well-timed narrative framing device, but as a relatable and socially-relevant character. In evidencing aspects of Hesselius's character which accord with Sage's considerations of the Gothic, and Hughes's analyses of sensation fiction, reader is effectively brought closer to an experience of genre which evolves jointly with the Doctor's character. Following Hesselius's character development realises in the reader every aspect of genre his character is responsible for bridging: bringing reader into an experience of narrative through the Doctor's waning influence.

4.3 Closing the Gap: How Hesselius Frames Reader Experience as He Bridges Genre

Considerations of Hesselius's voice in *In a Glass Darkly* are dependent on an understanding of his waning influence as that narrative proceeds, and how that influence interacts with reader experience (Victorian and modern). Effective consideration of his voice provides the most critical basis to realising his character's impact on closing the gap between reader and narrative as he simultaneously bridges genre — and importantly, how those two roles interact with and play upon each other. The most effective way of analysing Hesselius's relationship with reader, and his character's posthumous ability to draw reader into an experience of narrative, is accomplished through a careful survey of his presence beginning in "Green Tea", and continuing throughout subsequent prologues. This informs final considerations of the character's role in "realising" effect in the reader, and opens avenues for further study.

Though a minimally-regarded character, analyses of the Doctor's role in narrative-framing lean heavily on "Green Tea", and accurately so, as the only case in the book narrated by the Doctor's voice. But current scholarship does little to apply insight gleaned from these analyses to subsequent prologues, or to overall narrative. These prologues implicate the Doctor as a character posthumously interacting with the cases which follow. This is supported by Le Fanu through the assistant's presentation of information pertaining to Hesselius, and often, samples of the Doctor's very prose, within these prologues. Hesselius, though disembodied in presence and layered in time, is the very frame through which we view the portraits Le Fanu constructs. He is the element which guides our figurative eye through verbal composition.

Within the first moments, "Green Tea"'s prologue introduces the Doctor's "two distinct" writing styles and prepares audiences for the Doctor's immediately-waning influence. As the only account narrated by the Doctor, "Green Tea" is the closest to Hesselius the reader will ever be. Le Fanu's introduction of this role in this manner primes audience for the duality of genre to follow. Foreshadowing genre unification, the prologue also marks this genre-blending's contingency on Hesselius's developing character. Heavily descriptive of his character's devotion to his work, the assistant's voice informs reader understanding of the case which follows, Hesselius's posthumous interactions with it, and the Doctor's overall character. Indeed, the Doctor's posthumous character presence is never more strongly noted than in both prologue and narrative in *In a Glass Darkly's* first story. Therefore, examination of Hesselius's experience as a bridge between both reader and character and between genres builds on this research's prior considerations of Hesselius's character — particularly, conclusions drawn surrounding his preferred case files.

Hesselius's favouritism of written accounts which are inclusive of sensory deprivation and feature a similarly-framed narrative style to his own accomplishes two things. First, this identifies sensory deprivation as a literary marker by which reader can easily recognise the Doctor's presence and retreat into the Doctor's private mental workspace. Secondly, its unified importance and ever-increasing presence across all case files as they are assembled and presented in narrative form offers forth the suggestion that

sensory deprivation itself is a central symptom of the overarching “metaphysical” contagion the Doctor’s life was spent addressing. “Green Tea”’s occultist themes and explicit Swedenborgian references indicate a strong presence of the gothic before its melodramatic ending. The presence of themes and imagery which support genre cues also support early audience interaction with and later dependence upon Hesselius’s narrative framing, supporting reader progression to the second case in the book from this informed vantage point. The Doctor’s waning presence in the stories which follow “Green Tea” mandates audience trust be gained in the Doctor’s character by the close of the first account. Having seen how the Doctor personally interacted with and retrospectively documented his relationship with Jennings, reader analysis of all information to follow is informed by an understanding of what Hesselius himself would have, and did, extract from these, his most important case files.

The second case, “The Familiar”, is met with a prologue of similar length to that of “Green Tea”. This prologue is itself representative of the true beginning of Hesselius’s lessening presence after a very thorough introduction in “Green Tea”. Included in this prologue, the assistant has transcribed a note of Hesselius’s, attached to the case file, which contains a passage of particular importance:

In a rough way, we may reduce all similar cases to three distinct classes. They are founded on the primary distinction between the *subjective and the objective*. Of those whose *senses* are alleged to be subject to supernatural impressions – some are simply visionaries, and propagate the illusions of which they complain, from diseased brain or nerves. Others are, unquestionably, infested by, as we term them, spiritual agencies, exterior to themselves. Others, again, owe their sufferings to a *mixed condition*. The interior sense, it is true, is opened; but it has been and continues to be open by the action of disease. (Le Fanu 41) [my own italics for emphasis]

Above, Hesselius’s direct revelation of his analytical classification style informs audience consideration of his presentation of accounts which follow. This notation carefully considers cases in which a blurred line between the spiritual and the medical is present. As all accounts which follow arguably meet this criteria, I argue that this is a preparative course by Le Fanu which introduces the audience to the tools they will need to further realise the parallels between genre and narrative which Hesselius embodies. In so

informing audience experience of desired effect, Hesselius sees Le Fanu's audience wade into the Doctor's work a little more alone than before, as Hesselius's character begins to slip from the room. Presented with the rigour of a scientist, the Doctor's self-reported classification style encourages a further association between Hesselius's vigilant realism and Gothicism. Building on "Green Tea"'s many Gothic elements, a layered, posthumous voice begins to transform the Gothic as sensation fiction's aspects are introduced. The trust this fosters between audience and Doctor will heighten audience reception of the sensation-brand themes which follow.

Unlike "Green Tea"'s prologue, the content of this second prologue is almost entirely composite of Hesselius's word, rather than the assistant's, due to the presence of the Doctor's attached note. The note relays Hesselius's full confidence in the truthfulness of the narrative to follow while denoting its potential for scientific error — further informing audience understanding of the Doctor's dedication to truth and realism in his analyses of the metaphysical, and building trust between character and audience. Validating the existence of a duality of health early in the narrative, the note hints at the scientific potentiality of "mixed condition" a few words later. Most critically to this research, Hesselius creates a place for both the objective *and* subjective to coexist in the medical gaze: an atypical consideration among most Victorian physicians, fictive and real.

Given this prologue's significance in framing the Doctor's fading character, Hesselius's acknowledgement of the relationship between these clinical aspects reflects this research's argument for the coexistence of genre in the narrative. As Hesselius's relationship with patient is thrown into sharper relief, his presence in prologue wains. Simultaneously, Le Fanu establishes a relationship between Doctor and reader which parallels the Doctor's relationship with patients in life: a relationship which is considerate of their agency, duality of spirit and body, and place in society. Critically, this provides further basis for consideration of the Doctor's dual purpose in both representing a coexistence of genre and uniting reader with an experience of narrative. As the layers of Hesselius's presence are peeled back in prologues to follow, his presence plays upon Le Fanu's use of "layered" time.

At the close of second prologue, the assistant provides closing words to Hesselius's included note: "Thus writes Doctor Hesselius; and adds a great deal which is of interest only to a scientific physician." (Le Fanu 42). Building on the assistant's notation in "Green Tea"'s prologue which disclosed their selection of cases which would be of interest to a non-medical audience, this closing note identifies the intent of the omission of information. Conjoined with consideration of the Doctor's prefacing note in "The Familiar", audience arrives at the inevitable taking of interest in words of Hesselius's which are extant, but not included. The interest in the note's remaining words almost appears to have escaped the assistant's notice where this relevance is not lost on audience. As Le Fanu builds developing interest in Hesselius as a character, the audience, I argue, loses no trust for the assistant's intentions. This, I argue, is an intentional course by which Le Fanu further unites reader with Doctor while employing a "layered" use of time and narration.

The Doctor's identity then, just beginning to fade from view, is also experiencing a posthumous development of character. Indeed, as audience notes the use of his reflective voice, his narrator's voice simultaneously drifts from view, further injecting Gothic themes. Coupled with his preference for cases which include sensory deprivation and its relation with genre discussed in chapters above, the dead Doctor Hesselius's fading from view thusly becomes correlative with audience experience of his character's development through framing of narrative.

At the close of "The Familiar"'s prologue, reader trust in the assistant's character, were it lessened or altered, is duly reaffirmed in their inclusion of a postscript indicative that Hesselius's original file remained unaltered from his original version (Le Fanu 82). I argue that this point in the narrative introduces a bond between reader and Hesselius which informs reader notice of the increasing prevalence of sensation fiction climaxes as they are framed by Le Fanu's preferred brand of Gothic setting and theme. This offers reader a more confident ability to interpret Hesselius's agency in exploring all cases which follow. Considering Le Fanu's intentional presentation of an introduction to objectivity and subjectivity in the context of the Doctor's writing, it is at this point that audience begins to relate heavily with his character. Audience begins to see in themselves the discernibility of a worldly spiritual scientist, and are simultaneously filled with confidence and apprehension with which they proceed to a more informed interaction with the narrative to

follow. Armed with their considerations of Hesselius's clinical and scholarly practice in the prologue framing "The Familiar", the reader more adeptly recognises the account's similarity to Hesselius's own writing style in "Green Tea". Reader progression through narrative is, past this point, duly grounded in audience familiarity with Hesselius's narrative style and its interactions with genre and theme.

The prologue to "Mr Justice Harbottle", nearly the exact same length as that of "The Familiar", introduces the audience to a more heavily clinical context of the account which follows. In it, the assistant indicates the importance of the case to Hesselius's "extraordinary Essay on 'the Interior Sense, and the Conditions of the opening thereof'" (Le Fanu 83). This is the first incidence of reader interaction with a case which is specifically noted for its contribution to the Doctor's body of published scholarly work, drawing reader closer to an experience of Hesselius's personal impact on the world he has left. While this prologue is also inclusive of a note in the Doctor's hand, the assistant foreshadows the waning influence of Hesselius's rhetoric in the prologues and cases which follow in their passive indication that Hesselius has inscribed "nothing more than the words 'Harman's Report', and a simple reference to his own extraordinary Essay [...]" (Le Fanu 83). Hesselius's note, included by the assistant in the prologue, considers the two disparate accounts of the Harbottle's story. The additional written content of the Doctor's note details the influence of the case for its significance to his studies of interior sight (Le Fanu 83).

Beyond the obvious parallels between mention of "interior sight" and this research's previously-defined considerations of sensory deprivation, mention of two accounts of Harbottle's experience is very significant. This informs the audience's relationship with the accounts which most heavily influenced the late Doctor's research, drawing reader closer to Hesselius's character. Le Fanu's inclusion of an indirect examination of the factors which earned the Doctor's favouritism posthumously advances Hesselius's character as a sense of layered time is implicated in framing the account which follows. "Mr Justice Harbottle", as the first true incidence of this opportunity for the audience, is duly informative of reader-doctor relationship as the narrative advances from this veritable midpoint. Henceforth, reader is made to apply their improving comprehension of

Hesselius's character to the narrative, and thus, their experience of genre hinges on Hesselius's experience of case.

Conclusions drawn from the "Harbottle" prologue's self-imposed reader independence are driven by Hesselius's prior mention of "mixed condition" and "subjective and the objective" within the context of case files. As tidbits of information on Hesselius — the method and the man — appear in prologues, they begin to more concretely build upon themselves at this point in narrative flow, representing further interaction between the Doctor and reader. As a further sense of realism is fostered, gap between reader and narrative is lessened in tandem. The reader is informed and growing closer to Hesselius's character: they are privy to and increasingly implement an additional, interpretive angle in their experience of the Doctor's cases and his posthumous influence on their presentation. In turn, reader begins the opening of their own "inner sight". Preying upon the heightening semblance of intimacy (or even secrecy) between doctor and reader, Le Fanu's horrifying Gothic primes the literary palette for reader reception to surprise. As noted, the narratives' unification in their employment of sensory deprivation by Le Fanu represent a favouritism of this aspect by the Doctor. This is further realised in the audience by Hesselius's continued mention of and allusion to the 'opening' of the interior sight (Le Fanu 83).

Further development of reader-doctor relationship in the narrative is informed by consideration of the aforementioned role of sensory deprivation in realising genre. By the end of *In a Glass Darkly*, it becomes clear to the reader that their progression through Hesselius's case files has developed in a way which brings them closer to a sensory patient experience. Analyses of Hesselius's character presence in both remaining prologues and cases follow an experience the audience gains through the first three parts of the narrative. This experience, it can be argued, is contingent on the reader's opening of their own figurative "interior sight" — the permission and foreshadowing of Hesselius's attention to the objective and subjective which parallels Le Fanu's duality of genre. It is important to note past this point a fundamental shift in the voice of the case file narrators in the final two cases in the narrative.

These final two accounts, “The Room in the Dragon Volant” and “Carmilla”, are both illustrated from the first-person voice of the narrowly-escaping victim – bringing reader closer to the patient loss of sensory experience most vividly portrayed therein. From distant to very close — from objective to subjective: Hesselius’s fading from view is counterbalanced as the reader experiences a sense of growing closer to his character, and indeed, to patient experience presented through the Doctor’s work. It is important to consider in analyses of Hesselius’s character going forward that both final stories, comparatively to the preceding three, were recently-published work by Le Fanu, in 1872 and 1871-2, respective to their chronology in narrative. The order of stories in the narrative is potentially demonstrative of authorial, rather than editorial, intent and critically, potentially demonstrates a sense of self-awareness of his own evolving relationship with genre and Hesselius.

The prologue of “The Room in the Dragon Volant” signals the commencement of the final stage of the Doctor’s relationship with reader. Distinctly a shorter length, it is inclusive of none of Hesselius’s own words – only implicated mention of the case to follow for its heavy citation in his essay, *Mortis Imago*, which pertains to the use of ancient poison by thieves in near-history borrowing from the work of the medieval masters (Le Fanu 321-4). The essay title, itself reminiscent of the Gothic significance of the Doctor’s Latinised name, translates to “the appearance or semblance of death”, foreshadowing the account’s central inclusion of the poisoning and immobilisation of the story’s protagonist and again highlighting the importance of sensory deprivation as a overarching theme.

As perhaps the most significant case in evidencing Le Fanu’s parallels between the Gothic and sensation fiction, it is important to note the case’s similarities with the buried alive narrative, popular in penny dreadfuls concurrently with the rise of sensation fiction. In tandem with parallels previously drawn between Le Fanu’s use of sensory deprivation in bridging genre, the prologue’s exclusion of any portion of Hesselius’s mentioned essay ushers in the final exit of the Doctor’s character in the final prologue to “Carmilla” which follows.

Sage’s invocation of Le Fanu’s near-Shakespearean Victorian Gothic and Hesselius’s introduction of poison in framing “The Room in the Dragon Volant” evidence Sage’s

critical considerations. Harkening back to imagery in *Romeo and Juliet*'s famous poisoning scene, and even Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking in the wake of her guilt, sensory deprivation exists at its height in this case. Critically, this is supported by Sage's findings and Le Fanu's Gothic roots — interesting for the purposes of this research due to the now-obvious presence of sensation fiction's themes spread liberally throughout this longest case's narrative structure. As Hesselius's immediate presence reaches a new low, reader advances towards intimacy with the subjectivity of patient experience, armed with the objectivity of heightened familiarity with Hesselius's methodology from prior accounts. Where before, reader considerations were made in light of the Doctor's initial, verbally-informed context, the reader is introduced to fledgling self-interpretation, nearly alone with the remnants of Hesselius's influence conveyed only by his assistant. The assistant, as with the case of "The Familiar", presents the account "from among many cases equally striking, but hardly, I think, so effective as mere narratives" (Le Fanu 119). Encouraged by the case's heavy citation in the Doctor's essay, the reader is informed of the account's relationship to the Doctor. The case's citation in the Doctor's noted essay lends it further credibility in the eyes of the reader. However, the mention of multiple accounts cautions audience of the potential for interpretive bias of the narrator, again establishing ties to the "subjective and the objective" framework imposed by the Doctor in the prologue to "Mr Justice Harbottle" (Le Fanu 41).

In this way, audience is made to continue their considerations of the Doctor's work armed with little more than a preemptive hinting at the cataleptic qualities in the narrative to follow, reflecting previous cases' mention of "inner sight" and sensory deprivation. Thereby, the reader is actively prepared for experiencing the case as it engages with Hesselius's posthumous influence on the assistant's imposed presentation framework — preparing audience for an immersive experience of genre which coincides with the penultimate incidence of the Doctor's influence on narrative. It is the final preparation for the Doctor's final vanishing in the prologue to "Carmilla" which follows.

This final prologue, while illustrative of the importance and deep poignance of the case to follow on the Doctor's work, is most minimally descriptive of any aspect of the Doctor's character or work, completing his exit from narrative and uniting said narrative with reader. The assistant, indicating the Doctor's "rather elaborate note" and its valuable

context to an accompanying essay referencing the case to follow, does little to describe the note, the essay, or the Doctor's position on the case itself (Le Fanu 243). The assistant is also unsuccessful in their attempts to contextualise the case with supporting, additional commentary from its writer, protagonist Laura, who has passed in the years which followed her first recording of her illness narrative. But amid the assistant's now-typical indication that the account has not been altered, restorative of trust in doctor-assistant relationship, their presentation of a single line of Doctor Hesselius's commentary informs audience understanding of Hesselius's final role in framing the narrative:

As I publish the case, in these volumes, simply to interest the 'laity', I shall forestall the intelligent lady, who relates it, in nothing; and, after due consideration, I have determined, therefore, to abstain from presenting any precis of the learned Doctor's reasoning, or extract from his statement on a subject which he describes as *'involving, not improbably, some of the profoundest arcana of our dual existence, and its intermediates'* (Le Fanu 243) [my own italics for emphasis]

This minimal explanation cloaks the account in secrecy, and serves as the reader's farewell to the Doctor's posthumous voice in framing the narrative. This introduces audience to the most intimate-yet experience of narrative while concluding a full-circle revisitation of all prior accounts' Doctor-and-assistant-imposed framework. The reintroduction to Le Fanu's use of Swedenborg's *Arcana Coelestia*, or "Secrets of Heaven", holds new relevance for its interaction with sensation fiction's secrecy. Swedenborg's own mention of inner sight in the *Arcana* provides context to considerations of Hesselius's character:

Why so much is said in the internal sense concerning the union of the Division Essence of the Lord with the human, and concerning His perception and thought... The difference between perception and conscience, there are interior and exterior perceptions, more and more. (Swedenborg 238)

It is important to consider the manner in which the assistant describes Laura's great intellect and competency in conveying her illness narrative, particularly for the supporting presence of the Gothic within. The parallels drawn between Hesselius's "usual learning and acumen" and "remarkable directness and condensation" and Laura's "intelligent", "clever and careful", "conscientious particularity" are difficult to miss (Le Fanu 243).

Laura's analytically accurate denotation of her account loses nothing to her inclusion of the subjective, balancing her case's relevance to Hesselius's mentioned note accompanying the file "involving, not improbably, some of the profoundest arcana of our dual existence, and its intermediates" (Le Fanu 243). Le Fanu's placement of the assistant as the tie between two parallel descriptions of writing style evidences the argument for Hesselius's favouritism of accounts which mirror his own style of writing. Importantly, this notation also lends consideration to interest in gender and sexuality studies — no prior account's authors are described in such an effusively favourable light. Arguably, the one which comes closest prior to this point is also that of a woman in the prologue to *Mr Justice Harbottle* — Mrs Trimmer of Turnbridge Wells is lauded by the assistant for her fastidious attention: "minute and detailed, and written, it seems to me, with more caution and knowledge" (Le Fanu 83). Importantly, if we are to regress further into narrative, the second section of "Green Tea", titled "The Doctor Questions Lady Mary and She Answers" indicates an early level of trust and confidence in the female medical gaze (Le Fanu 11). Explorations of narrative at this point become dependent on existing critical notation of Le Fanu's adept portrayals of female protagonists in his later fiction, and strengthening arguments for considerations of the assistant and other characters which transcend traditional assumptions of gender role in support of genre.

Overall, this progression through the work informs reader interpretation and consideration of time, effecting upon them Le Fanu's "layered" use of time which interacts with genre and is never more evident than in the last prologue and case. As audience witnesses the effective re-death of Hesselius's character, itself "laughing at locksmiths" and making its final exit in this last prologue, they are acquainted with the presence of the ageless, ancient Carmilla (Le Fanu 277). As a character capable, in her inherent vampiric form, of reaching into the past and, conceivably, possessive of the ability to experience more of the future than could Laura, assistant, doctor — and, importantly, reader — her relationship with Le Fanu's use of time in realising genre is critical. The height of secrecy in "Carmilla" unites with the characteristics of Le Fanu's Gothic to complete a genre-marriage which hinges in no small part on Hesselius's role: as Doctor fades completely from view, the reader is instilled with confidence in their own ability to marry the subjective and objective in opening their own "interior sight".

Chapter 5: Conclusions, Critical Implications, and Future Research

The inclusion of the Doctor's final words in the prologue to "Carmilla" should be noted above all for their "mixed" and "subjective" quality — a quality paralleled in its own reference to the 'secrets' of coexistence. The final piece of context given by the narrative's overall framing device, Doctor Hesselius, is a verbal embodiment of duality and its convergence: an acknowledgement of the lines the Doctor's work, and so, reader, has crossed, blurred, and intersected. On this, I evidence the final argument this research considers: for critical consideration of the Doctor as the method by which the coexistence of genre is mirrored by his role in uniting reader and narrative.

Evidenced through a composite overview of all above chapters, the dual nature of this final piece of the Doctor's prose sees the reader grapple with the realisation of his existent, subjective stance. Where prior inclusions of the Doctor's rhetoric had employed an "objective" voice in acknowledgement and description of the importance of the "subjective" voice, the prologue to "Carmilla" implicates a dreamier, softer, and less scientifically aggressive tonality. In tandem to his fading character and rising character development, in a final act of humanising the Doctor, Le Fanu's "desired effect" is realised in the reader: the narrative has come full circle. The Doctor indeed is self-responsible for his own posthumous framing of character: echoed in the voiceless patient, realised in the duality of the first-person illness narratives, and understood in the reader through Le Fanu's use of genre. As his character fades from direct influence through the sequential progression of the prologues, progressively, the reader grows closer to patient within the stories through Hesselius's work. This loss of the Doctor's grip of narrative, I argue, does not devalue Hesselius's control on the presentation of these cases, but further parallels the injection of Gothic imagery, fostering a sense of realism and vacancy itself provisional of creative space in which Le Fanu explores allegorical angles and injects sensation fiction's themes.

In establishing first the connection between reader and Doctor's rhetoric, then its relationship to genre, and finally, to Hesselius's role in advancing reader experience of cases, authorial intent, or "desired effect" is realised. Reintroducing what I argue to be a

unification of Hesselius's "two distinct characters" in final context in "Carmilla"'s prologue echoes the duality of genre present throughout the work. When considered in conjunction with the reader-Doctor relationship, the Doctor's disappearing influence mirrors the method by which Le Fanu realises an experience of genre in reader. A blended experience of these authorial intentions asks the audience to apply their accumulated knowledge of the doctor's character in consideration of the final case: itself perhaps most heavily inclusive of sensation fiction's themes of secrecy, affairs, and their sexual undertones.

"Green Tea", as a case narrated by the Doctor, prefaces audience understanding of cases which follow. Both "The Familiar" — a similar case to the first not insignificantly for its narration by a Reverend, imposes a control upon the first — and "Mr Justice Harbottle" are devoid of direct patient narration, hinting the presence of sensory deprivation which rises to its fullest embodiment in the final two chapters. The themes present in the final two stories — near escapes from danger, adventure, and death are incarnated in high Gothicism as Le Fanu pairs them with sensation fiction's shocking themes. As the rising presence of secrecy conjoins with metaphysical contagion, the Doctor's earliest considerations of hidden illness in "Green Tea" are echoed, and duly, the reader is brought full-circle in an experience of genre informed by the Doctor's delivery.

With critically-acknowledged help from his assistant, Hesselius defines his own character after his death: the prime mode of evidencing the existence of the Gothicism which frames critical consideration for sensation fiction's themes of secrecy, madness and insanity, theft, and seduction throughout the work. Though abstract, this is truly the rawest incidence of sensory deprivation's presence in supporting genre and overall, authorial intent: the Doctor's posthumous relationship with his own, latent presence adds value to critical examinations which consider authorial intentionality and its relationship to genre studies. The doctor's posthumous autonomy over his work is made possible as much through his assistant as through audience understanding of his character. Hesselius's character development, then, is itself contributive to the presence of both the dark, gothic imagery Le Fanu invokes, and the shock of sensation fiction's themes.

With minimal recent critical attention to Hesselius's character, this research's arguments are limited in their application to current Victorianist scholarship until such a time as additional critical voices have contributed. The motivation of this research remains, above all, to encourage these discussions and further considerations of Hesselius's parallel and indeed, intersecting, roles in framing genre and reader experience. Arguments presented in prior chapters underlie a greater need for further study in the application of these considerations to each of the indicated contexts: to biographical and historic context, to genre study, to discussions of framing, and importantly, to studies of gender.

My final argument for the purposes of this research, therefore, is for greater critical consideration of Doctor Martin Hesselius in the context of existing, Victorianist, Le Fanu scholarship: in light of the medical humanities, gender and sexuality studies and theory, Irish – English crossover literature, and genre studies. The applicability of this research's central arguments to those fields promotes academic intersectionality at a time when cross-field fusion itself mandates a closer look at Hesselius's blended role. Consideration of these findings in light of the context fully described in the first two chapters of this research evidences Le Fanu's fringe experience of class, exposure to history, and education – all of which informed Le Fanu's fictive portrayals of class's interaction with history. Hesselius, as a vessel by which "potential effect" is "realised" in the reader, mandates concurrent considerations of the Victorian audience's experience of class in the context of history and culture.

In a Glass Darkly's portrayals of members of the upper class as victims both accords with Victorian Gothic depictions of fashionable illness among the social elite and ascribes the dichotomous nature of these illnesses to the upper class. Hesselius's attention to socio-political contextualisations frames an adaptive Gothic which employs portrayals of sensation fiction to further convey an experience of class. Informed by Sage's consideration of Le Fanu's role "in the context of Irish nationalism", Hesselius's preference for cases within this demographic – whether itself illustrative of his fictive clientele or a further indication of his preference – contributes to the framing of *In a Glass Darkly* for an English Victorian audience daily and directly affected by class issues (Sage 5-20). For this reason, I argue that the coincidence of Gothic and sensation fiction in the narrative sees Le Fanu's application of Hesselius's posthumous influence address class

concerns in a thoughtful and figurative way which mirrors the ambiguous nature of the patient cases within.

Le Fanu, a man who thought deeply on religious matters, includes immediately recognisable biblical symbolism throughout the works in *In a Glass Darkly* which substantiate the cause for this conjecture (McCormack 20-31). From the conclusion of “Mr Justice Harbottle”, which references the biblical parable of Lazarus and Dives, to the title itself, an adapted phrase from 13:12 Corinthians (King James), Hesselius’s character implicates considerations for Le Fanu’s relationship with class as he frames his narrative. Given Le Fanu’s influence on other impactful English and Irish writers of the period (including Joyce and Stoker), considerations of Hesselius’s role in context of this idea may shed light on authorial intent, and so, history itself.

Hesselius’s embodiment of dichotomous Victorian themes is evident: faith and doubt in “Green Tea”, privilege and poverty in “Mr Justice Harbottle”, illness and sanity in “The Familiar”, and lust, love, thievery, and folly in “Room in the Dragon Volant” and “Carmilla”. It is the truly sensational context introduced by his character which demands greater critical attention — for his operative role in bridging the gap between genres and, through his waning presence, his concurrent introduction of reader and desired authorial effect. His “two distinct characters” paint the portrait of a character instrumental to academic realisations of unity between the Gothic and sensation fiction — iconic of his duty to author, to literary history, and to reader, beyond the frame.

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