HAUNTOLOGICAL ENGAGEMENTS WITH THE HAUNTING HOUSE MOTIF IN SHIRLEY JACKSON'S *THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE* AND HELEN OYEYEMI'S *WHITE IS FOR WITCHING*

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the construction of the motif of "the haunting house" and the characters' responses to the haunting in Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) and Helen Oyeyemi's *White Is for Witching* (2009) in light of Jacques Derrida's concept of *hauntology.* In doing a hauntological reading of these novels, thesis proposes that the haunting house motif can be read as a specter in the sense that Derrida introduces in his *Specters of Marx* (1993) and the characters' responses to the spectral haunting house vary in their adherence to the hauntology's main requirements for speaking with the specter. These readings have the purpose of illustrating that while *The Haunting of Hill House* portrays an unsuccessful communication with the haunting house as a specter, *White Is for Witching* features genuine hauntological engagement as an achievable possibility. By taking the novels' timeframes and cultural background into consideration, this thesis proposes that "the haunting house" motif in Gothic literature has been used to convey greater concerns about the social issues of the past and the present in a way that aligns with the hauntology's precepts.

Keywords: gothic, hauntology, haunted house, Shirley Jackson, Helen Oyeyemi

ÖZ

SHIRLEY JACKSON'IN *THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE* VE HELEN OYEYEMİ'NİN *WHITE IS FOR WITCHING* ESERLERİNDE MUSALLAT OLAN EV MOTİFİYLE MUSALLATBİLİMSEL ETKİLEŞİMLER

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Bu tez Shirley Jackson'ın *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) ve Helen Oyeyemi'nin *White Is for Witching* (2009) romanlarında kendisi musallat olan ev (the haunting house) motifinin inşası ve karakterlerin dadanmalara olan cevaplarını Jacques Derrida'nın musallatbilim kavramı ışığında analiz etmektedir. Bu romanların musallatbilimsel bir okumasını yaparak, bu tez musallat olan ev motifinin Derrida'nın *Marx'ın Hayaletleri*'nde (1993) bahsettiği anlamda hayalet olarak yorumlanabileceğini ve karakterlerin bu musallat olan evlere yanıtlarının musallatbilimin temel gereksinimlerine bağlılıklarına göre değiştiğini ileri sürmektedir. Bu okuma, *The Haunting of Hill House* hayalet olan musallat ev ile başarısız bir iletişimi tasvir etmekteyken, *White Is for Witching*'in hakiki musallatbilimsel iletişimin erişilebilir bir olasılık olarak içerdiğini göstermektedir. Bu eserlerin yazıldığı zaman dilimini ve kültürel arka planı da göz önüne alarak bu tez musallat olan ev motifinin Gotik edebiyatta geçmişin ve şimdiki zamanın toplumsal sorunlarıyla ilgili daha büyük endişeleri musallatbilimin talimatlarıyla uyumlu bir şekilde ifade etmek için kullanıldığını önermektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: gotik, hayaletbilim, perili ev, Shirley Jackson, Helen Oyeyemi

To My Parents, Mümin and Birgül Kolsal

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Specters	*Specters of Marx*
Hill House	*The Haunting of Hill House*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the earliest examples of the genre onwards, Gothic fiction has given importance to the construction of location as a backdrop to supernatural phenomena that is closely associated with the properties of the location. Inspired by the significance the house has held in Gothic fiction, this thesis aims to examine *the haunting house* motif in two works in which the house functions actively as a conscious entity, Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959), and Helen Oyeyemi's *White Is for Witching* (2009), by using the deconstructionist framework of *hauntology* which is based on Jacques Derrida's writings on the topic. Hauntology, as coined by Derrida, is a portmanteau term describing an alternative to classical ontology, which separates the physical and the real from the non-physical and the non-real. Hauntology introduces the notion of the specter which arrives from the past or a potential future to emerge as a (non-)entity in the present without actually manifesting itself. The specter leads us to pose the following questions: "What is a ghost? What is the effectivity or the presence of a specter, that is, of what seems to remain as ineffective, virtual, and insubstantial as a simulacrum? Is there *there*, between the thing itself and its simulacrum, an opposition that holds up?" (*Specters of Marx* 10).

While Derrida's *Specters of Marx* (1994) applies hauntology to the history and politics of the late twentieth-century, hauntology has been utilized in the discipline of literary studies with great interest. Inspired by existing research in literary studies that utilizes a hauntological approach and the inherent spectrality of haunted houses within the Gothic tradition, this thesis will attempt to examine the haunting to which the characters are subjected in view of Derrida's notions of what a ghost/specter/spirit and haunting are. Taking Derrida's idea that the hauntological (an alternative to ontology and an ethical injunction in the face of the notion of injustice and inheritance) way to interact with these metaphorical ghosts is "learn[ing] to live with ghosts, in the upkeep, the conversation, the company, or the companionship, in the commerce without commerce of ghosts" (*Specters of Marx* xix), this study aims to investigate in what ways Derrida's notion of welcoming and listening to the ghost as the Other can be applied to the situations that are depicted in the selected novels. This thesis claims that haunting houses are a worthwhile topic of study from a hauntological lens, because they go

beyond being a site for revenants, as these locations are technically the revenant that has never gone away, inanimate forms that possess sentience and bear witness to the omnipresence of the revenant. Like the difference that distinguishes a specter from a spirit, or the element that renders a spirit a specter as a "becoming-body, a certain phenomenal and carnal form" of it, the haunted/haunting house both lives and houses living beings (*Specters* 5). The house outlives the human while never becoming alive in the first place; likewise, beyond housing the souls of those departed, in the case of a haunting house, the house itself displays willpower while not possessing a mind or soul. These dichotomies that the motif of the haunting house contains further align with hauntology's (non-)existence outside ontology.

For the purposes of this study, two examples where the haunted house motif includes a sentient house that conjures up supernatural elements, and acts as a haunting location for the characters, have been selected. The first novel, Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House,* published in 1959, is one of the most well-known examples of the haunting house motif in fiction. Set in the titular Hill House, the novel chronicles the haunting experienced by a group of individuals who visit the house to observe supernatural phenomena experience. By focusing on one of the characters, Eleanor Vance, the novel offers the possibility that Hill House is a sentient entity that fashions the acts of haunting in a way that targets individuals, basing physical acts of haunting on their names, pasts, and the sensations they can recognize. As this mismatched group of researchers tries to observe supernatural phenomena, Eleanor finds herself in a volatile position in which she feels like the house directly communicates with her. After a series of supernatural occurrences, at the conclusion of the novel, both other characters and the readers are left not knowing whether it was the house or Eleanor's mental state that led to her subsequent suicide on the site of Hill House. With a recent 2018 loose adaptation into a TV series and various studies on the haunting Hill House employs (Rubenstein 1996; Castricano 2005; Vinci 2019), this work has been selected in this study as a highly typical example of the type of fiction where it is the house that does the haunting. *The Haunting of Hill House* is a novelty in terms of the role the house or the location plays in Gothic narratives as it can be considered the example through which the house as the perpetrator of transgression has emerged.

The second work, Helen Oyeyemi's 2009 novel *White Is for Witching,* has been chosen as an example of contemporary Gothic, where the house acts as a haunting presence that exercises direct control over both the physical world and the minds of the matrilineal descendants of Anna Good, the great-grandmother of Miranda Silver, whose disappearance sets off the narrative. In addition to an evil influence that results in entrapment for most female

descendants of Anna Good, the house is also offered its own point of focalization through which its intentions, unlike those of Hill House, are accessible. This inherited residential location turned into a guest house by Miranda's father functions as a xenophobic entity aiming to exile those it considers the Other. This exclusion operates on two levels: the desire to expel everyone it does not want from its boundaries, and in a broader sense, from the nation. In addition, the Silver House actively seeks to confine the female descendants of the family within its borders, going as far as turning them into parts of the house immured inside its walls, blurring the lines between the individual's body and space, and its own consciousness and that of others. Like Dover the house is placed in, the Silver House acts as the site of xenophobic violence against immigrants and people of color who inhabit both the city and the house (Stephanou 1246). This hegemonic quality of the specter that actually stands in opposition to the Other raises interesting questions about the nature of spectrality.

The main reason for selecting these two works is twofold. Firstly, these two works' similarities as fictions where the haunting house motif is explicitly observable and occupies a crucial part of the plot make them suitable for a comparative study. The *haunted* house initially emerged as a setting and later evolved into a location that can directly interact with its inhabitants in a cognizant fashion, thus becoming *haunting*. The first claim of this study is that these haunting houses are a form of the hauntological specter from the past that only exists via their interaction with the present and their attempts at bringing about a change in the present. Secondly, the inhabitants who are directly haunted engage with the haunting these houses exercise on them by attempting to practice what Derrida, through his hauntology, advises with various degrees of success. Eventually, this communication establishes that these houses need to be heard even if they express yet to be addressed truths, wishes and crimes of the past. Due to the nature of what they express, in turn, the houses are symptomatic of the deeper social issues that bring about the very existence of the malicious powers of the houses. Secondly, because of the lapse of fifty years between their publication, both the portrayal of the nature of the hauntings and the Derridean notion of hauntology significantly differ. The decision to choose works that contain crucial differences regarding their contexts is partly inspired by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's response to Derrida's atemporal and aspatial hauntology in "Ghostwriting," where she proposes that it is not enough to conceive of specters; one needs to consider what group is being haunted or is doing the haunting, the specificity of the haunting. While, like Derrida, Spivak evokes specters and *ghost dancing* to discuss the worldly and economic indignities and exploitation, she argues that the struggles of the subaltern through time and in specific locales cannot be grouped under one broad category of haunting. This idea of localized and temporal specters that originate from their specific conditions, while maintaining their nature as a non-

entity that exists atemporally by virtue of their non-ontological existence is essential for this study. Since these works are influenced by and draw from different social realities of two different societies with different histories and fifty years apart, this study claims that both the failure of the characters of *The Haunting of Hill House* at employing the hauntological approach, and the relative success of those of *White Is for Witching* originate from the distinctiveness of each hauntological condition that manifests itself in these works as haunting houses.

While *The Haunting of Hill House* will be taken as a prototypical example of the haunting house novel, in which the subject's haunting has traces of personal and social factors that require acknowledgment by those who are being haunted, e.g., Eleanor's traumatic past involving parental abuse and her relationship with her mother, and the contemporary conditions of the 1950s America in terms of gender politics and women's liberation, *White Is for Witching* is chosen as a present-day example where a more explicit critique of the issues with which the Gothic and Derridean hauntology have been concerned comes to the fore through the characters' attitudes to the kind of haunting that is based in the social policies of twenty-first century Britain. In this type of contemporary Gothic, the critique intended by the haunting can be related to "racism, sexism, ageism, and man's inhumanity" (Wisker 25). This subtype of Gothic tackles haunted spaces and histories as elements that "must be enacted, embodied, faced and lived beyond" (25).

Consequently, this study aims to examine the development of the sentient house as a site of haunting and the use of hauntology in inspecting the way the characters deal with the sentient haunting house. Furthermore, this study positions the haunting house as a location that reflects the social concerns of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in the values upon which they appear to be built and which they impose back. In light of this comparative analysis, this thesis proposes that while *White Is for Witching* displays the employment of a hauntologically-appropriate approach to the haunting house through its characters' modes of engagement, and the book itself envisions a form of haunting that cannot be independent of the past, inheritance, and suppression, *The Haunting of Hill House*, on the other hand, portrays an unsuccessful attempt at communicating with the specter in the form of Hill House as those who are haunted prove incapable of sincerely engaging with the presence of the specter without trying to repress it or inscribe their own thoughts and desires onto it.

There already exists research on the motif of the haunted and haunting house in the twentieth and twenty-first century works of fiction which offer a connection between the haunted house as a location and the notion of the return of the repressed with unaddressed past histories and

memories. Among these, we can count Rebecca Janicker's article "'It's my house, isn't it?': Memory, haunting and liminality in Stephen King's *Bag of Bones*," and her following monograph titled *The Literary Haunted House: Lovecraft, Matheson, King and the Horror in Between* which investigates the haunted house motif in the works of those authors. In "What Does a House Want? Exploring Sentient Houses in Supernatural Literature," Cristiana Pugliese explores the concept of sentient houses by offering a historical overview of the features that have qualified as a sign of sentience in houses for other scholars. Since her scope excludes houses that are energized by old energies of former inhabitants or any past event, it does not offer a study of *The Haunting of Hill House*. Theses on the haunted and haunting houses in recent years include Amanda Bingham Solomon's "Haunting the Imagination: The Haunted House as a Figure of Dark Space in American Culture" (2012) which interprets *The Haunting of Hill House* alongside Kubrick's "The Shining" and The Winchester Mystery House based on the Freudian notion of the uncanny. While the claims of Solomon's thesis include that the uncanny of fiction, cinema, and tourism as evinced by these examples mirror the elements of uncanny in contemporary society, it does not offer a hauntological reading. Similarly, in her thesis "Haunted by a House: The Terrors of Postmodernity in American Haunting House Tales" (2015), Rahel Sixta Schmitz analyzes *The Haunting of Hill House*, Stephen King's *The Shining* (1977), and Mark Z. Danielewski *House of Leaves* (2000) in a way that exhibits the similarities between the Gothic mode and postmodernism.

As a work that was first published in 1959, *The Haunting of Hill House* has been analyzed from a variety of perspectives and the titular Hill House has become established as a haunted/haunting (depending on the emphasis the relevant scholarship makes) par excellence. Bernice M. Murphy's *Shirley Jackson: Essays on the Literary Legacy* (2005), Darryl Hattenhauer's *Shirley Jackson's American Gothic* (2003) are valuable sources to consult for critical analyses of *The Haunting of Hill House.* The question whether there is a connection between Hill House's haunting influence over its visitors and the past and present conditions of women is an area of inquiry that stands out for the hauntological focus of this thesis. Tricia Lootens problematizes the nature of the haunting Eleanor experiences as a remnant of misogynistic ideologies from which Eleanor cannot escape by reading both the published version and the unpublished manuscript versions of the story in "'Whose Hand Was I Holding?': Familial and Sexual Politics in Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House*." (1991). Rebecca Munford's book chapter "Spectral Femininity" draws attention to the specters' ability to make the gender inequality and the "historical dispossession" of women visible in *Rebecca* (1938), *The Haunting of Hill House,* and Ali Smith's *Hotel World* (2001). Melanie R. Anderson's "Perception, Supernatural Deception, and Gender in *The Haunting of*

Hill House" (2016) similarly points out Jackson's strategy of using hauntings to highlight the patriarchal horrors to which the society subjects women. A recent study on *The Haunting of Hill House* that utilizes hauntology is Tony M. Vinci's "Shirley Jackson's Posthumanist Ghosts: Revisiting Spectrality and Trauma in *The Haunting of Hill House*." (2014) where he reads the haunting house as posthumanist in light of Spectrality Studies. However, there are no studies that attempt to analyze *The Haunting of Hill House* by reading Hill House as a hauntological specter or one that seeks to determine whether Eleanor Vance is successful at employing an hauntological approach against the specter of Hill House.

The existing work on *White Is for Witching* is limited to journal articles and a collection of essays on Helen Oyeyemi's body of work to date at its date of publication titled *Telling it Slant: Critical Approaches to Helen Oyeyemi* (2017) by Chloé Buckley and Sarah Ilott. Chapters on *White Is for Witching* deal with doubling, subjectivity, intersectionality, and race. Giselle Liza Anatol's *The Things That Fly in the Night: Female Vampires in Literature of the Circum-Caribbean and African Diaspora* reads the figure of the soucouyant in the novel as a reconfiguration of an indigenous mythological figure to represent the dangers of the colonizing nation. In addition to her chapter in *Telling it Slant,* Anita Harris Satkunananthan's article "Otherworlds, doubles, houses: Helen Oyeyemi's *The Opposite House* and *White Is for Witching*" (2018) investigates the doubling in two of Oyeyemi's works where the house has a prominent relevance to the plot. Most closely to the focus of this study, in "The Spectral Queerness of White Supremacy," Amy K. King interprets the vampirism and the haunting house motifs in the novel as signifiers of British white supremacy and reads their failure as the failure of what they represent. However, once again, no study that attempts to read the haunting presence of the Silver House in the form of the goodlady as a hauntological specter or to determine the level of success characters display at dealing with this spectral return of the imperial past that remains unsolved.

This thesis aims to contribute to the rich and currently active field of hauntology in Gothic studies by approaching the novels belonging to the subgenre of what this thesis termed haunting houses, and which have not been compared before. By analyzing these works from a viewpoint that takes the hauntological moral obligation of engagement with the ghosts into account, this study proposes that Gothic fiction lends itself very suitably to the symbolic expression of problems of the past social issues that influence individuals', families', and societies' present.

The importance that the location holds in Gothic fiction can be traced back to the emergence of the genre in the second half of the eighteenth century. Considered the father of a new mode

of writing that was to be named after the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), subtitled *A Gothic Tale*, Horace Walpole described his work as an attempt at blending two types of romance, the ancient genre of medieval literature and the contemporary genre, in which great attention was paid to factual details such as "the scene [which] is undoubtedly laid in some real castle" (Walpole 8). With *The Castle of Otrant*o, Walpole set the rules for the genre's convention with a story in which both the supernatural events and the characters' chance encounters and adventures are related to the rooms, galleries, and other locations in the castle. This continuous emphasis on location, which started with Walpole, foregrounded the importance of the house as both the site for the plot and as a symbolic identifier of tradition and order.

It can be said that the importance the location plays has not lost its relevance as the Gothic as a genre developed, and the symbolic identification of the house changed alongside this development. Its lasting importance can be seen in a range of titles such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbaybe* (1789), *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851), and other works which do not explicitly mention a location but feature locales that are important to the plot development. In *The Literature of Terror* (1997), David Punter offers the following as a general definition of the Gothic as a subgenre, emphasizing the importance of where it takes place, and especially of the haunted house:

> *When thinking of the Gothic novel, a set of characteristics spring readily to mind: an emphasis on portraying the terrifying,* a common insistence on archaic settings, *a prominent use of the supernatural, the presence of highly stereotyped characters, and the attempt to deploy and perfect techniques of literary suspense are the most significant. Used in this sense, 'Gothic' fiction is* the fiction of the haunted castle, *of heroines preyed on by unspeakable terrors, of the blackly lowering villain of ghosts, vampires, monsters and werewolves* (1).

The works considered traditional Gothic were usually set in a place distant from the intended audience, either in temporal (e.g., a medieval castle or Victorian manor house in the later twentieth-century works) or in spatial terms. This effect was sometimes achieved by featuring a foreign location, the locals of which usually different in their customs and faiths, such as Catholic Italy, Orthodox Transylvania, or the non-Christian Near East. Jerrold E. Hogle connects the "antiquated or seemingly antiquated place[s]," like those abovementioned, with their suitability to function as locations where characters can be haunted by secrets from the past in the form of ghosts, specters, or monsters (2). These places can be considered to establish a temporal or spatial distance between the reader and the events as a practice of mere exoticism (Varma 61), or they can be suitable backdrops for supernatural events with elements that can be perceived as taboo in light of dominant social conventions. In addition to these,

Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall illustrate that, right from the early beginnings of the genre, for some authors like Scott, the goal of this distancing was to create a setting towards which the audience was expected to be hostile (278). Thus, early Gothic fiction offered alternative settings for plots that could not occur in more domestic locations, either because the reader was likely to be unable to suspend their disbelief or because the plot elements ran counter to local sensibilities. In addition, being ancient and inherited through generations, these locations allowed for the existence of ghosts and hauntings. Later, these locations underwent a localization process and evolved into Victorian manors, where, once again, old family secrets could be unearthed. From the twentieth century onwards, they have been turned into places of nostalgia with an identifiable eerie aesthetic for the books' audience, like the image of the medieval castles of the late eighteenth-century Gothic held for its contemporary readership. The prominence of these locations, such as castles, becomes significant in a mode like the Gothic, which can be said to draw from a limited number of metaphors, the potency of which lie in their easy identifiability through an equally limited number of motifs that get featured in abundance (Punter, *Metaphor* 29).

In modern and contemporary Gothic, the convention of portraying the house as a symbol of tradition and order has undergone a change with examples where the house does not represent the order that needs restoration, just as the ending does not necessarily provide any return to order. In her study of contemporary female Gothic, Gina Wisker identifies the traditional Gothic fiction with the tendency to have plots where women are pursued by "rapacious men of power" and are saved by another male figure, usually a lover, at the price of being subjected to male ownership via marriage (39). The change which sets twentieth and twenty-first century Gothic apart from its traditional precedents is a gradual shift from the house as a locale for this spectacle to the fictions in which the Gothic elements function to problematize the relationship between the conventions of the mainstream society and the protagonist without necessarily offering a resolution. Unlike the haunted house as a site for the restoration of the status quo, the newer forms of Gothic sites are places where the protagonist's personal, psychological, and societal struggles play out. As examples of twentieth and twenty-first-century Gothic literature both *The Haunting of Hill House* and *White Is for Witching* fall under this type of work that exposes a sort of power imbalance and ongoing injustice and questions the social conditions that contribute to the emergence of the haunting.

Another adjustment in the evolution of the haunted house motif has been the emergence of the house as a haunting presence on its own as opposed to a neutral location that is haunted by the former inhabitants of the house or any other type of ghost or poltergeist. The emergence of

this subgenre of haunting house fiction, where the source of the haunting is left ambiguous, unlike the earlier examples written similarly to *The Castle of Otranto,* can be traced down to the changes to the haunted house formula that can be best seen in the canonical works of Edgar Allan Poe and Nathaniel Hawthorne. "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839) and *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) resolve the tension created by the ambiguity regarding the credulity of the supernatural phenomena in a view that usually favors the existence of the supernatural (Bailey 20). Moving the focus from the exorcising of the ghosts that inhabit edifices in earlier traditional Gothic stories, in these narratives, the ghosts, existing and exerting power as long as the house stands, cannot be got rid of through an easy purification ritual or the retribution of past wrongdoing. In the twentieth century, the further evolution of this trope is to be found in works in which the haunting houses acquire an implied consciousness.

As for the theoretical basis of this study, it adopts a hauntological reading of the haunting houses in the selected works. This is a reading which assumes that the haunting houses come into being as a result of some lost yet unaddressed past and analyzes the ways the characters in both works engage with the specter of the haunting house. Hauntology as a theory replaces "the priority of being and presence with the figure of the ghost," which defies both being and presence as a figure that is "neither present nor absent, neither dead nor alive" (David 373). In addition, it tasks us with the obligation to listen to the ghost, the revenant from the past in the present as "an ethical injunction" (373). Davis summarizes Derrida's specter as "a wholly irrecuperable intrusion in our world, which is not comprehensible within our available intellectual frameworks, but whose otherness we are responsible for preserving" (374).

This thesis has chosen the motif of the haunting houses in order to look into the ontological conundrum that ghosts and the sites in which they physically manifest pose. The ghost blurs the boundaries between the past and the present and being and non-being as an ontological uncategorizable for whom no side of the mentioned binary oppositions apply. The haunting itself "exceeds a binary or dialectical logic, the logic that distinguishes or opposes effectivity or actuality (either present, empirical, living—or not) and ideality (regulating or absolute non-presence)" (*Specters of Marx* 78). Similar in its possession of oppositions, the haunting house is the tangible repository that contains the intangible through its physical manifestations. Since these manifestations fall short of scientific observation and require an engagement which challenges the scientific and rationalistic conventions of post-Enlightenment thought, this motif shares similarities with the spectral (non-)entity that is at the center of Derridean hauntology.

There is also the question of whether the characters in the novels can respond to the specter in a way that fulfills the obligations hauntology assigns to the living subject and whether all revenants can be successfully heard and communicated with. The notion Derrida proposes as an alternative to ontological binaries is evocative of the Gothic tradition, firstly because the Gothic has existed as an alternative to more mainstream modes of writing during different epochs, secondly because the Gothic mode has functioned as a subversive agent that works with the symbolism and themes that are closely bound to the dominant culture. For this reason, the evolution of Gothic fiction and the questions of its subversiveness are relevant to this inspection. Whether any success at subversion is attained in Gothic narratives that are preoccupied with the norms of the societal order and a possible deviance from them is a contestable topic. However, this does not negate the fact that Gothic fiction has been closely allied with the theme of the subversion of social norms or the transgression of the established order.

The next chapter of this thesis provides a theoretical and historical framework for the study by offering a chronological history of Gothic fiction in relation to the importance of the location and its potential for subversion. It will deal with the emergence of the haunted house motif as further evolution of the ever-present motif of the Gothic castle. In addition, Derrida's description of the revenant and what it means to interact with this revenant and exercise a form of hauntology will be explained as the basis against which the hauntings and the hauntological engagements in the novels will be explored.

The third chapter will offer a reading of *The Haunting of Hill House* in which Hill House is a presence that exists as a contradiction that is not bound by the spatial or temporal rules of ontology and exercises a form of haunting that draws from both its former inhabitants' experiences and Eleanor's own relation to her own past during the course of her stay. It will analyze this haunting as one that functions as a Derridean specter yet will posit the interactions with the ghost as a failed and unrealized attempt.

The fourth chapter will explore *White Is for Witching* from the same perspective by looking at the haunting Miranda Silver experiences within and by the Silver House. Brought into being as a harmful, xenophobic representation of the feeling and notions of Miranda's grandmother, the Silver House develops into an entity called the goodlady that can inflict those sentiments back on the inhabitants as it entraps the matrilineal descendants of the house. This chapter will mainly inspect how different characters' fears and beliefs shape the way they deal with the haunting, just as the haunting becomes a fluid entity that symbolizes the past that impacts the present in different ways through the examples of Miranda, who is at risk of becoming a

soucouyant under the house's influence, her Nigerian-British partner, Ore, and the first-generation immigrant housekeeper Sade, who is well-versed in juju.

CHAPTER 2

THE GOTHIC, HAUNTING HOUSES AND HAUNTOLOGY

2.1. Working Definitions of the Gothic, Ghost Story, and Haunting Houses

In the twenty-first century, it has become impossible to speak of a single Gothic that has a uniform definition with features that manifest themselves in the same manner regardless of the medium or the genre. The definition of the Gothic and its identifying qualities depend on many factors as today, alongside referring to specific fashion trends, countercultures, and popular culture items, the Gothic permeates diverse forms of written, visual, and digital media. Even when we restrict our working definition to literary works of the last two and a half centuries, Gothic emerges as a mode which has lent itself to the employment of various forms of speculative and literary fiction. For this reason, alongside the more traditional examples of Gothic fiction, it is now possible to describe a quite diverse catalog of works such as Stephen King's horror novels, young adult romance fiction series such as *The Twilight Saga* (2005-8), Sarah Waters' historical novels, and Toni Morrison's award-winning literary fiction *Beloved* (1987) as Gothic. With so much variety, it is not possible to talk of Gothic with a capital G. Instead, there is a multitude of Gothics that are defined with further specification denoting a time period or genre such as traditional Gothic, eco-Gothic, postcolonial Gothic, and various ethno-Gothics (Gothic productions originating from a single location or culture). Robert K. Martin argues that more than constituting a sub-genre or even a mode, the Gothic "coheres, if it can be said to cohere, around poetics (turns and tendencies in the dismantling of the national subject), around narrative structuration, and its situation of the reader at the border of symbolic dissolution" (vii).

As it stands, the existing definitions of Gothic fiction offer a range of traits these different manifestations of the Gothic or the multitude of Gothics have in common. Emphasizing the malleability and the endurance of the Gothic within other genres, in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, Jerrold E. Hogle defines a Gothic story as one that

> *takes place . . . in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space –be it a castle, a foreign palace, an abbey, a vast prison, a subterranean crypt, a graveyard, a primeval frontier or island, a large old house or theatre, an aging city or urban underworld, a decaying storehouse, factory, laboratory, public building, or some new recreation of*

> *an older venue, such as an office with old filing cabinets, an overworked spaceship, or a computer memory. Within this space, or a combination of such spaces, are hidden some secrets from the past (sometimes the recent past) that haunt the characters, psychologically, physically, or otherwise at the main time of the story* (2).

While the hauntings can change form, they always "rise from within the antiquated space … to manifest unresolved crimes or conflicts that can no longer be successfully buried from view" (2). The tension is usually created as the character placed in one of these locations as a target of hauntings oscillates between acknowledging the ontological existence of the haunting, thus what it represents, and denying it. In a similar definition, Chris Baldick argues that for a story to have a Gothic effect, "a tale should combine a sense of a *fearful inheritance* in time with a claustrophobic sense of *enclosure in space*, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an effect of sickening descent into disintegration." (xii-xiv; emphasis added). In *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick prefers to list the themes with which the traditional Gothic of the eighteenth century was preoccupied, among which are the following: "the priesthood and monastic institutions," "the discovery of obscured family ties," "apparitions from the past" (9-10). The Gothic fiction's tendency to be preoccupied with themes such as guilt, haunting in the form of one's personal, familial, or national history, and the importance placed on the features and the symbolic significance of specific locations have never lost their importance. In addition, while refusing to view the Gothic as a distinct sub-genre with identifiable plots, Eric Savoy does not fail to mention the centrality of the house as "a trope of American Gothic's allegorical turn" ("American Gothic: New Interventions" 9).

One of the initial points Fred Botting emphasizes in his introductory work to Gothic literature is the persistence of the role locations play throughout the progression and the diversification of the mode. Echoing Sedgwick's list, Botting mentions "[s]pectres, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats, monks and nuns, fainting heroines and bandits" as the Gothic tropes in the eighteenth-century (2). At the same time, he offers "scientists, fathers, husbands, madmen, criminals and the monstrous double signifying duplicity and evil nature" for the nineteenth century (2). In this historical progression, as the Gothic moved away from foreign settings to the local ones, the villains turned into figures that could be easily found within the metropolis, and the house replaced the castle as the Gothic site par excellence. According to Botting, the haunted house and other symbolic locations are "the site[s] where fears and anxieties returned in the present" (2). However, Botting also cautions the critic not to assume that the Gothic is a simple accumulation of motifs resulting in a genre but a hybrid "mode" that keeps shifting historically and thematically (141). Taking this one step further, Manuel Aguirre argues that the castle in the traditional Gothic fiction is "alive" and possesses an enigmatic power over its inhabitants (92).

The importance of the location in traditional Gothic is not only a retrospective assertion of recent scholarship as it was identified as one of its most central features in the genre's earliest descriptions. In one of the most famous and early criticisms of the Gothic mode of writing and Gothic elements in fiction, the anonymous critic of "The Terrorist School of Novel Writing" (1797) sarcastically urges aspiring authors to utilize "an old castle, formerly of great magnitude and extent" with decaying furniture, barely habitable rooms upstairs and subterraneous passages and describes them in great length. Similarly, various pieces of criticisms from the late 1790s attack the shared formula of the works that are, from today's perspective, considered Gothic, listing various elements such as hauntings, murders, and helpless heroines as essential elements of this type of fiction. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and at the present time, while the medieval castles on foreign shores and foggy moors of eighteenth-century Gothic might not have remained as prominent within Gothic writing, location as a symbolic signifier has been the cornerstone of the Gothic mode. In her discussion of the importance of spaces for the Gothic mode, Gina Wisker similarly proposes that these traditional locales and others, such as haunted houses, are symbolically important because, through their repetition, they become "visual architectural forms through which fears are projected" (17).

This idea of something, someone, or one's historical past returning to haunt (in Gothic literature, it is not always in the form of a specter or a ghost—but also monsters who wish to enact revenge, mysteriously appearing relatives, the secret contents of a letter, will or correspondence), and the prominence of the location as a symbolic signifier and site for the past to return are at the center of this study. The haunting houses or houses that haunt will be explained in more detail in the proceeding sections of this chapter. However, at this stage, it is important to state that they are rooted in and emerge from the trope of the haunted house, where the house functions as an inanimate site in which the supernatural event plays out, shaped in part by the existing anxieties of the inhabitants.

As for the works that are chosen for this study, both of them are what I prefer to call *haunting house fiction*, where the act of haunting is not performed by a ghost or another entity presumed to be supernatural, as is the case in classical ghost stories, but the houses themselves possess sentience and are capable of haunting their inhabitants with what history has bequeathed them.

The similarities between the concerns and contents of these haunting house fictions and the theory of hauntology put forward by Jacques Derrida have led to the adoption of a hauntological approach in this study. Through this hauntological lens, the haunting houses are viewed as consequences of an unresolved, suppressed past encroaching on the present,

obfuscating the boundaries between the strictly linear time descriptors as past and present. The haunting generated by the haunting house coexists through its non-existence in both the past and the present and assigns the living recipient of these ghosts a duty. This study investigates to what extent the characters in these novels succeed in communicating with the haunting house as a specter when viewed from the framework of hauntology.

To these ends, the rest of this chapter will first illustrate the historical progression of the Gothic to highlight its associations as a possibly subversive genre and to emphasize location as an essential aspect of traditional Gothic. Next, it will talk briefly about the emergence of the haunted house motif within ghost stories and how this nineteenth-century trend led to the emergence of the motif that this study is specifically concerned with, i.e., the haunting house. Finally, a summary of the existing scholarship in the field of hauntology and how this study plans to utilize a hauntological outlook to analyze the haunting houses in Shirley Jackson's *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) and Helen Oyeyemi's *White Is for Witching* (2009) will be laid out.

2.2. The Historical Development of the Gothic

Everything that can be described as Gothic today, from fashion trends to horror media's borrowings from literature, can trace their origins to what is termed the traditional Gothic, a series of works written in the late eighteenth century that utilized tropes and storylines that came to be associated with the genre which came to be known as the Gothic from the twentieth century onwards. In light of the existing scholarship on the categorization regarding traditional Gothic, this section will begin by summarizing the emergence and creation of a Gothic mode in the eighteenth century with the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) which was followed by the publication boom of Gothic works under the name of historical romances in the 1790s, including those of Ann Radcliffe. For the nineteenth century, this chapter will give a summary of the Romantic adaptations of some features of this genre and their consequent influences on the Gothic, and its incorporation into mid-century realist fiction as a Gothic mode or aesthetic, and lastly, the question of subversiveness in the fin-de-siècle Gothic of the 1890s. For the twentieth and the twenty-first century, the genre's connection to the haunting house motif will be made.

2.2.1. *The Castle of Otranto* and the 1790s Gothic

For most of the twentieth century, Walpole was viewed as the progenitor of what is now perceived as Gothic with his *The Castle of Otranto* (Clery, "The Genesis of 'Gothic' Fiction"

21). Prior to his definition of the novel as "a Gothic Story" (not to be confused with the full title *The Castle of Otranto: A Story*, without the adjective "Gothic") in his "Preface" to the first edition of the novel, Gothic originally functioned as an adjective denoting, in the literal sense of the word, an association with the Germanic peoples who arrived in Europe between the third and the fifth centuries, their language, customs, and architecture (Bailey xii). In a more general sense, by the eighteenth century, the word was a derogatory descriptor for anything perceived as medieval, which, in turn, stood in opposition to the qualities associated with Enlightenment values, the emphasis on reason, and the Western Greco-Roman heritage to which the Enlightenment viewed itself as an heir. In this understanding, as opposed to Greco-Roman orderliness, harmony, and reason, the Gothic stood for chaos, the superstition of a past bookended by the fall of the (Western) Roman Empire, and the arrival of the Renaissance. (Botting, Gothic 15; Clery, "The Genesis of 'Gothic' Fiction" 21; Punter 5). Botting asserts that the Gothic as a mode was invented by Enlightenment thought, a process that can be explained by a society's need to entrench its values by being reminded of their opposites ("In Gothic Darkly" 15). This idea was further supported by the existing negative associations with the medieval period; by utilizing medieval settings, thought to be barbaric, corrupt, and superstitious, Gothic writing presents history as "an inverted mirror image of the present" for an eighteenth-century reader (15). Similarly, Mary Ellen Snodgrass explains the emergence of Gothic fiction as a result of the literary flight from the high-brow artifice-oriented literature of the Age of Reason, with the authors finding the inspiration for their fictions in the Middle Ages that contained contrasts of both perceived development and backwardness, and which stood in stark contrast to the Augustan Age of Reason that prioritized moderation and order (xiii).

Following the publication of *The Castle of Otranto*, only a limited number of works were defined as Gothic by their authors, Clara Reeves' *The Old English Baron* (1778) being the most well-known example among them (Clery, "The genesis of 'Gothic' fiction" 21). It was only in the first half of the twentieth century that Gothic became a popular way to describe a type of literature that shared some elements in common by drawing similarities with the Gothic Revival in architecture. Clery provides evidence of this situation by sharing the first publications to use the Gothic as a genre descriptor, namely Henry A. Beers' *History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century* (1899), Wilbur L. Cross' *The Development of the English Novel* (1899), and later, Edith Birkhead's *The Tale of Terror* (1920) and Montague Summers' *The Gothic Quest: a History of the Gothic Novel* (1938).

This twentieth-century decision, or consensus, to call this mode/genre of writing Gothic resonates with the eighteenth-century understanding of the Gothic as the opposite or adversary of anything Classical. The first examples of writing that can be termed Gothic today coincide with the two decades that followed the publication of *The Castle of Otranto,* where works similar in content and theme to *Otranto* came to be written a few years after its publication. The original formula and Clara Reeve's interpretation, with some additions, to create her recipe for a romance "within the utmost verge of probability" in *The English Baron*, inspired similar works to be written in the following decades. Familiarity with the reception of these works and the formulas they offered as an alternative to the Augustan standards of writing soon rendered the yet unnamed Gothic a genre that came to be associated with a specific type and effect of writing. This type of writing is and was characterized by being set in a distant past, and sometimes in distant locations, preferably in a castle or abbey, by having the heroine face an imminent danger to her life or, freedom; the hidden family secrets expressed through supernatural phenomena; the themes of inheritance and unrighteous usurpation; and the utilization of suspense. (Cornwell 66; Punter 1). These elements established in the initial examples of what was to become traditional Gothic were utilized in abundance in the 1790s proliferation of Gothic literature.

The popularity of this emerging mode, with its commonly shared tropes and sensibilities, reached its zenith in both the novel and the theatre in the 1790s (Botting, Gothic 40; Cox 126; Miles 40). In addition to the famous works of Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis, in the 1790s, the number of works that were marketed as historical or romantic and utilized elements that came to be associated with the Gothic such as ghosts, symbolic locations, names perceived as exotic or outdated steadily increased throughout the decade. This is attributable mainly to the publications of the Minerva Press, a publishing house that valued the commercialization of the Gothic as a mode and convention, as most of its output was produced by unknown or anonymous authors to be read by the circulating libraries' audience (Miles 58). In his analysis of works marketed with catchwords that allude to Gothic content, Robert Miles shows that compared to a paltry average of 1.5 books per year for the years 1780-89, between 1790-99, the yearly average of publications reaches sixteen, with a steady increase from ten books in 1790 to twenty-five books in 1799 (42).

However, the significance of the 1790s for establishing a Gothic aesthetic and the foundations of its associations with subversion cannot be explained simply by an increase in popular publications. In a decade defined by the French Revolution, and the Reign of Terror, it is of little surprise that a genre preoccupied with the nobility of the past and, with the questions of

tyranny and cruelty became adopted in defense of or against Republican ideas. From this point onwards, the subversive or reactionary nature of Gothic became a point of contention.

It was also during the 1790s that the writings of Ann Radcliffe attained widespread popularity, leading her to be considered one of the co-founders of what is thought of as traditional Gothic with the departure she offered from the Walpolean model in her most famous romances, such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1796). Unlike Walpole's ambiguous approach to haunting or Matthew Lewis' embrace of the supernatural and the terrifying, in the novels of Radcliffe, the steady escalation of feelings of terror and suspense leads to a resolution that involves the rationalization of the seemingly supernatural mysteries and the restoration of conventional dynamics.

As a result of the similarities within the genre, such as common motifs of helpless heroines, stolen inheritances, hauntings, and gloomy ancient locations, the works produced to create very different results, such as the novels of Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), got grouped under an umbrella genre of writing. While popular for marketing purposes, this grouping also received various disparaging appellations such as "the terrible school," "the Terrorist System of Novel Writing," and "the Terrorist Novel Writing" (Clery, The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 148), with some of its critics offering advice on how to write such romances by listing a series of common motifs that occur such as secret hideaways, dark galleries and corridors, mysterious murders and the like. Both the popularity of the 1790s Gothic and the negative criticism it received have been regarded as a consequence of the interest in the macabre and a desire for the subversion of the existing status quo which was engendered by the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror (Clery, "The Rise of Supernatural Fiction" 134; Miles 44). During this period, the discussions around subversion and excess of this mode went beyond the perceived stylistic excess of the Gothic romances and their artistic merit, and concern for the romances' impact on the social order and conventional morality emerged.

Marquis de Sade is one of the first to draw a connection between the revolutionary atmosphere of the period and Gothic fiction, considering the genre of writing in which he includes Matthew Lewis and Ann Radcliffe "not without merit . . . [as it was] the inevitable result of the revolutionary shocks which all Europe has suffered." (109). In more negative criticisms of Gothic writing, the following two points are the primary sources of censure: the incredulity of the plot and the assumed negative effect of the terror the stories evoke in the reader. The anonymous critique titled "The Terrorist Novel Writing" (1787) evinces both of these points as it describes a useful novel as one that "ought to be a representation of human life and

manners, with a view to direct the conduct in the important duties of life and to correct its follies" unlike those that "make terror the order of the day" and "carr[y] the young reader's imagination into such a confusion of terrors, as must be hurtful" (227-28).

A feature of Ann Radcliffe's novels and other Gothic romances of the period inspired by her work is the centering of the plot on a young, single woman faced with the threat of entering a marriage to a malicious man she wishes to avoid, plagued by parental secrets and placed in peril by the villain. The crux of the story almost always follows the rewarding of the heroine with what the conventional society has to offer to women—marriage to a wealthy suitor who risked his life for her and the restoration of her inheritance after her trials. This tested and proven formula led to Gothic's popularity and the proliferation of imitations of Radcliffe's style. Hoeveler cautions against assuming that this formula originated in Ann Radcliffe's fiction, offering earlier examples of the trope in Charlotte Smith's fictional works, Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1783-85), and Anne Fuller's *The Convent; or The History of Sophia Nelson* (1786) (57). However, the lasting popularity of Ann Radcliffe's fiction among her own contemporaries and her relevance for the nineteenth-century literary scene are evidenced in the interest other authors such as John Keats and Walter Scott showed in her work. Taking both this and the central position that her work held in early feminist literary criticism of the 1970s as the originator of what Ellen Moers terms female Gothic into account, it seems fair to attribute the endurance of the trope of "the imprisoned and h(a)unted heroine within a gloomy location" to her extremely popular novels.

To sum up, the 1790s can be regarded as the time when the divergence between different Gothic forms emerged. While Ann Radcliffe's novels and the quickly churned-out and highly commercialized imitations of them solidified the traditional formula of what Holland and Sherman present as "*the woman-plus-habitation* and the plot of mysterious sexual and supernatural threats in an atmosphere of dynastic mysteries within the habitation" (227; emphasis added), the reactions to the genre led to different trajectories dependent on the authors' political ideologies. While the repetitive and highly marketable side of the genre maintained a conservative approach by the nature of its repetitiveness, the influence of the Reign of Terror and the conflicting approaches to the portrayals of aristocracy, tyranny, and a fictionalized past led both the authors and the critics to revise their approach to these motifs and question the corrupting influence of the genre's excess on an already politically agitated youth, connecting the Gothic with the historical legacy of political engagement. Thus, from its early beginnings, the Gothic emerged as a mode that contains both the seeds of disruption

and subversion while being capable of disseminating the dominant ideologies of the period at the same time.

2.2.2. Nineteenth-Century Gothic

Despite the early twentieth century's tendency to divorce the high Romanticism of the nineteenth century from popular Gothic as a lowbrow genre, today, it is more difficult to dismiss the links between Romanticism and Gothic. Various critics point out that Romanticism directly engaged with the Gothic (Hume 282; Punter, The Literature of Terror 87, 100; McEvoy 20). Both Romanticism and Gothic function as modes of writing that house a diverse web of works sharing points of similarity with the rest of the works under the same umbrella without subscribing to a uniform understanding of aesthetics. Similar to the post-1800s public reception of Gothic, most of these authors have distanced themselves from the label and the notion of a melodramatic and commercialized Gothic. An inarguable decline in the demand for the formulaic and mass-marketed Gothic meant that the overt existence of the Gothic as a clearly identifiable genre of writing had lost its respectability. Nevertheless, the Gothic managed to continue its existence in works of critical acclaim as a mode that both blended into and became further diversified through the Romantic adaptations of the 1790s tropes, leading to the creation of the Byronic (anti-)hero, the individual who stands against a hostile environment, now free of its bounds within a castle, the figure of the wanderer, and the vampire. The relevance of the developments of the Gothic mode during this period for this study is the introduction of individuals who exist at the margins of conventional, ordered society as a series of archetypal characters who were to become utilized repeatedly. We can consider these characters' secrets which are revealed as the story develops as a precursor to the encounter with the ghostly Other whose return signals trouble from one's past. The difference distinguishing these characters from the ghosts of the 1790s fiction is that there is a more nuanced interpretation of amending the past wrongs, which goes beyond exacting revenge.

The next time Gothic appears in a different guise as distinctly Victorian, it partly owes its return to the transformation it underwent during the Romantic period through Radcliffian Gothic as well as the historical works of Scott. During a period riddled with ambiguous opinions on a new reign, the relevance of monarchy, and the possibility of ushering in a new golden age, in the 1840s, fiction concerning itself with royalty and the issues of monarchy was at the center of the employment of a Gothic mode (Milbank 145). Without getting into the political specifics of the monarchist Gothic ushered in with the reign of Queen Victoria, the impact of this trend can be regarded as be the first step in the gradual domestication of the

Gothic terrors and power struggles, bringing them within the confines of Britain away from the Mediterranean castles and the Swiss Alps. Unlike the ancient despotism and defunct aristocracy of medieval societies, the early fictions of the 1830s and 1840s, like those of William Harrison Ainsworth, focused on the endurance of ancient structures and the localized histories of past oppression (146). The introduction of the supernatural into the bourgeois settings led to the adaptation of the castle into Victorian everyday life in the form of country estates, townhouses, and apartments (Aguirre 115; 199). Further temporal localization of the Gothic, away from the past, into the present of the British Empire, can be seen in the fiction of one of the most famous mid-century authors, G. M. W. Reynolds. Different approaches to the monarchy during this period also further diversified the divide between conservative and subversive Gothic writing. Serving both purposes, the Gothic as a mode was able to be utilized both as a tool that drove home the idea of the continuity of lineage and tradition, and as a form that called for an end to the follies and cruelties of the past within the present through the evocation of the ghosts of the past.

Another significant development during this period was the incorporation of the Gothic mode, motifs, objects, and characters into the everyday setting of nineteenth-century Britain. This was achieved by its adaptation into the mainstream realist fiction of the mid-century with examples such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853), Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1855-57) and his last and uncompleted novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870). In his analysis of the employment of the Gothic in realist fiction, Martin Willis explains that both the key tropes of secrecy, alienation, and monstrosity, all of which are borrowed from the Gothic, and the more tangible aspects of the Gothic introduced through objects, characters, and sites are essential to the meaning-making of realist fiction (22).

During these mid-century explorations of the Gothic mode within realist fiction, a further bifurcation regarding the Gothic setting takes place with the emergence of a domestic Gothic and an urban Gothic. The type of Gothic aesthetic the Brontë sisters offered in the image of an everyday heroine whose conflicting feelings and search for identity and freedom are at the center occupies perhaps a more prominent place than even the likes of Emily St. Aubert [1] or Matilda[2] in contemporary imagination when we picture a Gothic heroine. Alexandra Warwick defines this shift as one that was to a "bourgeois domestic setting," while the fiction of G. W.

[1] The protagonist of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Ann Radcliffe.
[2] One of the protagonists of *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole

M. Reynolds and, later, Charles Dickens' usage of the Gothic mode in his metropolitan fiction was the urbanization of the Gothic (Willis 31-3).

The latter shift from the primarily rural, pre-industrial seats of the aristocracy to crowded urban settings as the site of terror and fear can be explained by the threats the rapidly industrializing and commercial society viewed as pressing: poverty, crime, social injustice, all symptoms of sprawling cities where people were living among strangers in unsanitary and unsafe conditions at a rate unseen. While concerns with the social and political problems of the present always existed in Gothic writing, for the traditional Gothic of the eighteenth century, and to a large extent, the Romantic employment of the mode, this was achieved by reflecting on the problems of the present by portraying the distant past. The return of the Gothic that was now "Victorian" meant that the issues of the nineteenth century were articulated through stories set in a present that inherited the murky legacy of ancient lineages yet also maintained contemporary elements (Willis 33).

On the other hand, the domestic space of the Brontës is an inversion of the Victorian understanding of the home as a place of protection. Such novels utilized the qualities of the house with barred windows, locked attics, and dark and drafty halls to drive the point that the house is not a safe place home (Willis 30). These novels employed the domestic sphere to explore the questions of entrapment, self-emancipation, and the desires of the heroines in a way that did not apply only to the individual houses in those works, but instead, reflected the existing anxiety around the position of women and the notion of gender in the Victorian social and political sphere.

2.2.3. Fin-de-siècle Gothic

Unlike the above examples of mid-century Victorian Gothic, the fin-de-siècle is one of the few periods that have an output of works that are considered distinctly Gothic such that in most survey courses and introductory material for the Gothic as a genre, after the 1790s Gothic, the subsequent encounter is the fin-de-siècle Gothic of the 1880s and 1890s. Despite this reception, following the mid-century Gothic, a clear delineation of Gothic tropes and its interaction with other genres become even harder to distinguish, with its ubiquity evident in a wide range of works from what can be termed the science fiction of H. G. Wells to detective fiction (Warwick 34). However, if anything can be said about fin-de-siècle Gothic, the Gothic of the period is concerned with the contemporary questions of its time, such as the adverse effects of modernity and the dark side of progress. Like the broader fin-de-siècle culture that is characterized by an ambivalent attitude towards modernity (Ledger & Lockhurst xiii), the

fin-de-siècle Gothic concerned itself with the themes that laid this ambivalence bare such as excess, the boundaries of the self and the body, the limits of scientific development, and the threat of the Other in the form of the inhuman, the foreigner, the criminal, and the doppelgänger These new questions are attributable to the Darwinian theories of evolution, evolutionary biology, social anthropology, the newly emerging psychology, and the now pseudoscientific theories of social degeneration and criminology. In the works of fin-de-siècle Gothic, we see the social and political fears and anxieties of the day transformed into supernatural threats. It is for this reason that the lasting legacy of fin de siècle Gothic is that it portrays different manifestations of the fear of degeneration in different domains (Luckhurst 118).

Kelly Hurley prefers to view Gothic's historicity from the viewpoint of Annette Kuhn's concept of cultural instrumentality, in which a genre gains a specific function for the culture it is produced in for the expression of important concerns and problems its readership may have, preferring to describe the Gothic as a genre that helps "negotiate anxieties for its readership by working through them in displaced (sometimes supernaturalized) form" ("British Gothic fiction" 194). She further illustrates with relevant examples how the fin-de-siècle Gothic offers an opportunity for the expression of societal unease and fears in various areas, such as the question of personal corruption in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), the anxiety of colonial encounters in *The Beetle* (1897), social decay in *The Time Machine* (1895), alongside the threat of the foreigner, the transgressive women and the question of gender boundaries in *Dracula* (1897).

Through fin-de-siècle Gothic, the transgressive Other emerges fully as a threat and a potential for change. Unlike the easily identifiable aristocrats and monks with fixed roles and identities found in the traditional Gothic, the protagonist and the antagonist of fin-de-siècle Gothic are marked alike by their potential for fluidity and transgression. While they could be prowling the cities, shapeshifting from inhuman into human and back, wearing the guise of civility like Dr. Henry Jekyll and Dorian Gray, this idea of the transgression of the social and biological boundaries becomes the real source of anxiety and the real threat that needs to be fought off.

2.3. Haunted Houses and Houses that Haunt

This study adopts an approach that views the haunted house as a motif that originated from a blend of the elements of the ghost story[3] and the traditional Gothic, bringing in new developments to the nature of haunting from the moment of its emergence. The haunting house motif, on the other hand, is a further development that takes the original premise of the haunting associated with a domestic location and re-locates the ghost in the house itself. Instead of identifying the element of the haunting in an independent ghost that inhabits the house, the haunting house motif associates it with a conscious house that cannot be exorcised. Melissa Edmundson Makala mentions that for the majority of the nineteenth-century ghost stories, the presence of the ghost is an incident that is malignant and tragic, as the same entity that seeks to harm the living also looks for reprieve in one kind or another, be it in the form of fulfilled vengeance, revealing of foul deeds, or completing unfinished business through contact with the living (93). This type of haunting presence in a type of domestic habitation has been such an integral part of Gothic fiction since its first examples and consequent interpretations that, by this point, it is interwoven into the fabric of both Gothic literature and the Gothic aesthetic. What made the motif of the haunted house come to prominence within the story is its prominence in the nineteenth-century ghost stories, and the significance of Edgar Allan Poe's "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1859). Due to its long-lasting influence in Gothic writing, the portrayal of the house as an edifice, the ghosts of which cannot be exorcised without the house itself crumbling down, and of the haunting as tied to the family's history and secrets fashioned the future portrayals of haunted houses. In his study of the closed space symbolism in Western philosophy and literature, Manuel Aguirre points out that the haunted house can go beyond an edifice, instead, standing for "a lineage, a title, a family" that is haunted regardless of the spatial boundaries (95). Clive Bloom also identifies "The Fall of the House of Usher" as a departure point in narratives with ghosts in them, the shift being from the dangers from outside to internal threats of the mind (3). The abundance of studies on a short story like "The Fall of the House of Usher" points to the work's ambiguity concerning haunting.

[3] Ghost story is a specific sub-genre of supernatural/Gothic writing in which the characters encounter a series of hauntings in the domestic setting of the house. The difference that sets it apart from the traditional Gothic featuring ghosts is its emphasis on the psychological reasons and impact of haunting and ghosts with an inward turn into the characters' minds. For more information on the emergence and the inner-workings of the ghost story, see Julia Brigg's chapter titled"The Ghost Story" in *A New Companion to the Gothic.*

Prior to *The Haunting of Hill House*, for most of the first half of the twentieth century, it was assumed that Gothic writing went into a decline in popularity and interest, while adaptations of Gothic literature into the white screen proved popular (Spooner, "Gothic in the 20th Century" 39). However, examples such as Edith Wharton's ghost stories, where modernism refashions the haunted house once again, show that, although with a decreased interest, the Gothic survived into a new century. In addition, these modernist additions to the house turned the haunted house into one where ghosts exercised their haunting by drawing from technology (Liggins 178). In addition, May Sinclair's collection of stories *Uncanny Stories* (1923) and *The Intercessor and Other Tales* (1931) are examples of the continuation of the ghost story with heroines who feel restrained in the domicile that harbors ghosts as an expression of the anxieties of adapting to a changing lifestyle that necessitated smaller living spaces (195-96). It is in this diffused but culturally absorbed transfer of the Gothic mode to the cinema, to the realist and then modernist fiction, that *The Haunting of Hill House* emerges as the haunting house novel par excellence where there is no doubt that the house haunts, despite the various theories on how. In the decades to come, as a culmination and further diversification of this motif, the haunting house finds itself a place in both literature and cinema, its hauntings shapeshifting and adapting according to the setting, the period, the characters, and the conditions that generate the specter.

2.4. Hauntology and Spectralities

While various scholarly approaches such as feminist literary criticism and psychoanalysis have widely been employed to read and interpret Gothic literature and the motif or figure of haunting and ghosts, this study adopts an alternative approach and attempts a hauntological reading of the phenomenon of haunting within the framework of Derrida's ideas presented in *Spectres de Marx* (Specters of Marx) (1993, published in English translation in 1994).

Derrida's theory of hauntology is inspired by Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok's earlier concept of the phantom. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok were psychoanalysts whose work on "transgenerational communication," and the transmission of trauma between generations constitute one of the two main sources for the concept of hauntology (Colin; "État Présent" 374). Drawing from the Freudian model of the psyche, Abraham and Torok interpreted phantoms as "the gaps left within us by the secrets of others" (171). Their interpretation does not entail the literal "return of the dead", but the presence of "the unfinished business" of the deceased which is transmitted to the next generations (167). In their understanding of the phantom, the past, with its crimes and repressed memories, comes to haunt us in the present

by way of inheritance from our ancestors and can be overcome only by "uncovering [our ancestors'] shameful secrets, understanding their nameless and undisclosed suffering" (167).

Derrida's association with Torok and Abraham's work start with his "Preface" to Abraham & Torok's *The Wolfman's Magic Word* titled "Fors: The Anglish Words of Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok." (1986), in which he discusses the notion of the crypt, Abraham and Torok's notion of an essential part of one's lived reality that cannot be accessed by the processes of mourning. Since *Specters of Marx* does not directly draw from "Fors" or *The Wolf Man's Magic Word* by Abraham and Torok, this preface can only be considered as an indicator that Derrida's hauntology has significant links with the psychoanalytic model of Abraham and Torok. As a term coined by Derrida, yet clearly drawn from his readings of Abraham and Torok's work on the phantom and the crypt, hauntology reinterprets the phantom as the specter and the haunting it brings as something that goes beyond the psychological obstacles one needs to remove from their psyche.

It is important to note that in *Specters of Marx,* Derrida introduces the concept of hauntology as a sociopolitical praxis that is directly applied to the politics of the end of the second millennium. Written as a response to Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), which Derrida interprets as a symptomatic reading of history, and in particular, the philosophical and political legacy of Karl Marx by neoliberalism at the end of the twentieth century, *Specters of Marx* refuses the eschatological notion of Fukuyama that humans have reached the apex of their sociopolitical evolution. Using the metaphorical specters of collective history, mainly in the form of the importance of Marx's political and philosophical legacy during the rise of Western liberalism, in *Specters of Marx,* Derrida showed that history was not as dead as it was proclaimed to be, and its specters continued to influence the sociopolitics of the end of the second millennium and the twenty-first century that was to come.

Specters of Marx received a mixed reception as a work of sociopolitical analysis or as a leftist reading of deconstruction (Ahmad 1994; David 373; Spivak 66; Sprinker 2). However, it drew the attention of other disciplines, which found a view of reckoning with one's past that goes beyond psychoanalytic readings useful, thus leading to a hauntological turn in various academic fields, among which literary criticism is included. Mark Fisher interprets hauntology as something that was simply identified by Derrida instead of generated by him; it is "a zeitgeist, something which is already in place, and which demands critical commentary" ("Specters of Accelerationism"). This idea can be an explanation for the interest in hauntology in wide-ranging fields such as architecture and literature. With the popularity of the usage of "specter" and "spectrality" in discussing already familiar elements of ghosts and hauntings,

their state of existing in the liminal space between concepts such as "visibility and invisibility, life and death, materiality and immateriality" led to the employment of these terms and concepts for the theorization of "a variety of social, ethical, and political questions" in various humanities and social sciences disciplines (Del Pilar Blanco and Peeren 2). The fact that both Abraham and Torok in their discussions of the phantom and Derrida in his introduction of the specter utilize literature in the form of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* show that hauntology is a method that lends itself well to the analysis of literary ghosts.

To offer a brief list of works that have been picked up for the application of hauntology, we can list a variety of works including but not limited to Brendan Behan's "The Hostage" (1958) (Hickey 2020), Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938) (Korkut-Nayki 2021), Deborah Levy's play "Macbeth – False Memory" (2000) (Lorek-Jezińska 2013), Sarah Waters's historical novels *Affinity* (1999) and *The Little Stranger* (2009) (Klonowska 2017), Stuart Neville's Northern-Irish thriller *The Twelve* (2009) (Robin 2021), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) (Gordon 2008), William Gibson's science-fiction short story "The Gernsback Continuum" (Moryń 2020), and Zadie Smith's *NW* (2012) (Shaw 2018). For a hauntological reading of the canonical works of Victorian literature such as Alfred Tennyson's "In Memoriam A. H. H." (1850), George Eliot's *The Lifted Veil* (1859), Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), and Charles Dickens' oeuvre, Julian Wolfreys's *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* is a valuable source. *Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction* (2001). *Haunting and Spectrality in Neo-Victorian Fiction* (2018) edited by Rosario Arias and Patricia Pulham offers hauntological readings of various texts that are considered Neo-Victorian. Similarly, Wolfreys's monograph *Haunted Selves, Haunting Places in English Literature and Culture* (2018) reads different works of fiction, and poetry from the 1880s to the present day from the framework of spectrality.

The second source which reveals Derrida's hauntology is the section titled "Spectographies" in *Echographies of Television* (1996) by Derrida and Bernard Stiegler. Written as the script of an interview that takes place between these two philosophers, "Spectographies" approaches the focus of hauntology, the phantom and the specter, in relation to technology and media. It is important because the interview repeats the principles of hauntology that were established in *Specters of Marx* that include the contrasting non-ontological existence of the specter, the visor effect, which will be explained in detail below, and the responsibility the living has toward the specter with direct references to *Specters*.

As to how hauntology can be defined, we can turn our attention to the components of the term. Hauntology ("hantologie") is composed of the French words for "ontology" ("ontologie") and

"to haunt" ("hanter"), and in a matter fitting to this term, Derrida starts with the question of who haunts:

> *One does not know if it is living or if it is dead. Here is—or rather there is, over there, an unnameable or almost unnameable thing: something, between something and someone, anyone or anything, some thing, "this thing," but this thing and not any other, this thing that looks at us, that concerns us [qui nous regarde], comes to defy semantics as much as ontology, psychoanalysis as much as philosophy* (*Specters of Marx*, to be referred to as *Specters*, 5).

Hauntology is concerned with the existence of the specter; this specter is an embodied presence of the spirit. Since the spirit is technically a non-presence which no longer exists in the material realm, as the visible version of the spirit, the specter can be defined as a presence that appears in the present as a remnant of something from the past that no longer exists. By its manifestation into existence as a form that does not exist, this specter acts as a revenant (retaining both the English sense of the word and the French: the one who returns). One of the identifiable traits of the specter remains its "non-presence [that] demands that one take its times and its history into consideration, the singularity of its temporality or of its historicity" (*Specters* 126). This revenant goes beyond the dichotomy of existing and not existing, of the past and the present, of genesis and eschatology in Derrida's alternative to ontology, hauntology. The revenant of hauntology is always associated with return, reoccurring, repetition of the one whose origins are hidden in this coming back, or in Derrida's words, it is "[a] question of repetition: a specter is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because it begins by coming back" (11). Similarly, in "Spectographies," a *specter* is defined as "both visible and invisible, both phenomenal and non-phenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance" (117).

For this reason, Pierre Macherey defines hauntology as "a science of ghosts, a science of what returns" (18). This does not involve an unwavering belief in the continuation of existence after death or a return from the dead. Quite the contrary, Fredric Jameson makes a point of emphasizing that for Derrida, "spectrality does not involve the conviction that ghosts exist" (39); rather, it thinks of the possibility of an engagement with the specter where we do not necessarily believe in the corporeal or spiritual return of the dead, but remain capable of engaging with it "beyond the opposition between presence and non-presence, actuality and inactuality, life and non-life, of thinking the possibility of the specter, the specter as possibility" (*Specters* 13). In a hauntological interpretation, "[e]verything that exists is possible only on the basis of a whole series of absences, which precede and surround it, allowing it to possess such consistency and intelligibility that it does" (Fisher, *Ghosts of My Life* 18). This is very similar to Michel de Certeau's opinion that the Otherness is formed as a

result of what an order "eliminates" and excludes while it is being founded (4). This exclusion "produces a 'residue' condemned to be forgotten," and unable to disappear, what is excluded "reinfiltrates the place of its origin – now the present's clean place; [i]t resurfaces, it troubles . . . this 'wild,' this 'obscene,' this 'filth,' this 'resistance' of 'superstition' – within the walls of the residence" (4). Likewise, hauntology as a theory urges the one who encounters these revenants or specters to suspend their disbelief rooted in ontology and physics and to practice acceptance toward the possibility of a haunting by the Other in order to pursue the entity that is ghostlike in its haunting and its demands of justice (del Pilar Blanco and Pereen 9; Jameson 39). The specter is also defined by its atemporality which coexists with the fact that a prior ontological existence is required for something to return as a revenant.

The qualities Derrida uses to describe the ghost of Hamlet's father in *Hamlet* are applicable to the specter in general. As it reappears in the sense of the return of someone who was once living, it is also an appearance for the first time of the specter form; there is a moment any apparition reappears for the first time (*Specters* 2). Blurring the boundary between the past and the present, the embodied and the disembodied, spatiality and non-spatiality, the specter brings about the necessary initial manifestation for the dialogue between these dichotomies between us and the specter to take place. Once having arrived, the return of the revenant, "its comings and goings," cannot be controlled because, according to Derrida, the specter "begins by coming back" (11; emphasis in the original). "A ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back" (99). This "haunting is historical . . . but it is not dated" (3; emphasis in the original). To encounter the specter means to find oneself at the crossroads of the erasure of multiple boundaries in time and space because hauntology contains in itself both the past, the present, and the promise of what is to return again and again (Shaw 7).

Because of this, Derrida draws from the return of the ghost of Hamlet's father to illustrate the nature of the revenant. While coming from the past to the present, this presence manifests itself regarding matters of the future. Likewise, other asymmetries between us and the revenant and the nature of the revenant itself are found in the ghost of King Hamlet: the inequality of visibility between the specter and the humans, what Derrida calls the *visor effect*, his presence which manifests itself through his non-presence, his incorporeality expressed through a semblance of former corporeality. The visor effect is the idea that, like King Hamlet choosing when to be seen by utilizing his armor and visor but seeing who is in front of him at all times, the specter "looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there" (6). Even when it manifests itself in front of our eyes, it is still "nothing visible" (5), although one speaks of having seen it. Furthermore, when it decides not to be seen by us, it is still capable of observing us, and

prior to the initial re-apparition, the living can feel themselves observed by the specter "outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on [their] part" (7) as a result of the temporal anteriority of the specter's existence before our generation.

These revenants of the past within the present are not atemporal in the sense that they are timeless or do not bring about any questions of the past, the present, and the future. Instead, the mere existence of the ghost disturbs the clean-cut boundaries between these concepts, calling into question the self-sufficiency of the present. Drawing from the famous exclamation "The time is out of joint" (*Hamlet* 5.1.186), Derrida interprets the existence of the ghost in *Hamlet* and, also, in hauntology, as the burden of being given the duty of righting this disjointed time. From this interpretation, Hamlet's real burden and tragedy are the awareness of the wrongness of time and his duty to set it right, which are evoked by the return of the revenant. This self-awareness that he has a duty combined with his traits of hesitance and indecision stops him from either accepting to live in a time which is out of joint or taking the necessary action to set it right. His inability to act on his awareness leads to a continuation of this state, for which Hamlet knows his inactivity is responsible. Derrida generalizes the state of Hamlet as follows:

> *There is tragedy, there is essence of the tragic only on the condition of this originarity, more precisely of this preoriginary and properly spectral anteriority of the crime—the crime of the other, a misdeed whose event and reality, whose truth can never present themselves in flesh and blood, but can only allow themselves to be presumed, reconstructed, fantasized. One does not, for all that, bear any less of a responsibility, beginning at birth, even if it is only the responsibility to repair an evil at the very moment in which no one can admit it except in a self-confession that confesses the other, as if that amounted to the same* (*Specters* 24).

In light of Hamlet's burden, the idea that we should "speak always of the specter, to speak to the specter, to speak with it, therefore, especially to make or to let a spirit speak" (11) gains meaning. By letting the specter speak to us, by hearing it beyond attempting to see what is unobservable, hauntology "give[s] the ghost a voice and the ability to see without being seen: the power of the dead to watch over and address the living, to hold us accountable to their memory" (Raphael 20). Avery Gordon points out the necessity of the present and existing social conditions in hauntology, for haunting gains any other meaning only through "contact with the living time of the now" (179). Similarly, for Fisher, hauntology deals with "[what] is (in actuality is) no longer, but which remains effective as a virtuality (the traumatic 'compulsion to repeat,' a fatal pattern)" (*Ghosts* 19). Although the past form of the specter used to entail an embodied and corporeal existence, the specter is no longer *here* in the sense a living body is. Yet when it appears as something the living knows to not materially exist, it

is nevertheless a form of manifestation in the present. The reasons for the appearance of the specter in both hauntology and most Gothic works are related to the conditions of the present moment which make the very non-existence of the ghost possible.

In Gothic fiction, such conditions are usually related to the unsolved murder of the person whom the specter manifests as, the loss of inheritance in the present moment as a result of disobeying the wishes of the spirit that formed the specter, or current acts of wrongdoing from the likeness of which the specter's living form suffered. Like the ghosts of Gothic fiction, hauntology interprets the specter as bound to the past without being confined to it. The specter of hauntology becomes engendered through the inheritance from the past of the living in the present and the future. Associating the past where the specter comes from and the way the living inherits from the past, in a way that echoes the themes of Gothic literature of two and a half centuries, Derrida claims "[o]ne never inherits without coming to terms with [s'expliquer avec] some specter, and therefore with more than one specter" (*Specters* 21). This inheritance is never passed down without trouble; it is "never a given . . . always a task (67). Independently from Derrida's notion of hauntology and its ties with *Hamlet*, Manuel Aguirre precedes the Derridean connection between ghosts and *Hamlet* by defining Elsinore as "the first haunted house in western literature" that contains all that comes to define one: "the confining building, the atmosphere of dread, the crime committed *in illo tempore*, the secrecy, the ghost demanding reparation" (66; emphasis in the original).

This study will be adopting this idea of haunting and the revenant as a specter in hauntology for the analysis of the haunting houses in the works, *The Haunting of Hill House* and *White Is for Witching* to question how a connection between the past and the present, the memories, and the forms of haunting are established in these novels. In addition, the responses to the haunting houses in these works will be analyzed to determine whether the responses can be considered satisfying from a hauntological perspective. These two novels, written in different countries and centuries, will be examined to find the extent of their employment of the revenant of Derrida's hauntology in the form of houses already burdened with and by their history. This study will first investigate how these haunting houses fit into the idea of a specter and whether their attributes and strategies to reach the living in the present are similar to what Derrida describes as the features of a revenant or a ghost. It will explore how the characters deal with this burden of speaking with and to the haunting that comes from and reminds them of the past in general or their past in particular (and whether these two can be fully separated). Furthermore, accepting the moral injunction that the ghost should always be heard but problematizing the possibility of not seeing it as the Other, this study will look into how

Eleanor Crain in *The Haunting of Hill House* and Miranda Silver in *White Is for Witching* interact with the revenant that talks to them.

CHAPTER 3

A HAUNTOLOGICAL READING OF *THE HAUNTING OF HILL HOUSE*

Opening with an imposing description of its titular haunting house, the 1959 novel *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson establishes the prominence the house is to occupy for the entirety of the novel right from the start:

> *No live organism can continue for long to exist sanely under conditions of absolute reality; even larks and katydids are supposed, by some, to dream. Hill House, not sane, stood by itself against its hills, holding darkness within; it had stood so for eighty years and might stand for eighty more. Within, walls continued upright, bricks met neatly, floors were firm, and doors were sensibly shut; silence lay steadily against the wood and stone of Hill House, and whatever walked there, walked alone* (*The Haunting of Hill House*[4] 3).

By implying the uncanniness of Hill House as not inanimate and lifeless and emphasizing, in fact, that the qualities that make Hill House dangerous are those that require a certain consciousness that is *un*sane, this description constructs the house as the focus of the novel as a protagonist from the start. The very quality of being not sane is contingent upon Hill House being a live organism, as the first two sentences of the excerpt evince that sanity or insanity in the face of absolute reality applies to the living. Built on this notion of the house as a conscious and living organism with malicious intent, the novel chronicles the events that befall the occupants of Hill House during a week-long stay. In the novel, the reader accesses Hill House through the perceptions of visitors who stay in the house following the invitation of a professor who wishes to investigate the supernatural/paranormal phenomena of Hill House with a group of people he believes to possess paranormal talents. For this reason, beyond being the setting at which the events unravel, Hill House functions as the central preoccupation of the characters and the plot's primary focus.

Like any haunted house novel, in *The Haunting of Hill House*, the secluded inhabitants spend their time surrounded by the architectural features of the house and its environs, having little contact with anything or anywhere else in their search for supernatural occurrences. Described as having no connection to the rest of the world "[e]xcept for the wires which ran to the house

[4] From that point onwards to be cited as *Hill House.*

from a spot among the trees" (*Hill House* 49), for these visitors, Hill House becomes the sole location in which any ghosts of the house or its inhabitants can reappear. The audience receives a third-person narration of the events that utilizes Eleanor Vance whose narration is somewhat unreliable as a focalizer. Eleanor agrees to take part in the project of Hill House as a means of escape from the problems in her life and during her stay, she falls under the sway of Hill House. As a result, she gradually starts to identify with the house she once disliked and, in the process, loses her individuality, becoming fixated on belonging to Hill House.

The effect of Hill House and its hauntings of the characters is best traceable through Eleanor's internal monologue regarding the house. Imposing itself as a dangerous, disliked presence for almost everyone who gazes upon it, Hill House reflects what the characters think they came to investigate: a hostile, haunted house. For example, Eleanor's first impression of the house after seeing it close-up upon arrival was "vile . . . diseased; [that she should] get away from here at once" (39). This is the culmination of her doubts for the duration of her road trip regarding why she is going to Hill House, and these doubts only intensify as she enters the estate where the house with its spires looms as a clearly unwelcoming presence. In this initial assessment of the house, assuming there is something wrong with it, Eleanor "looked along the lines of its roofs, fruitlessly endeavoring to locate the badness, whatever dwelt there" (35), all the while experiencing fear and an atavistic, almost instinctive repulsion towards the house. However, when the influence of Hill House is at its high, for Eleanor, this once-horrible location becomes home, and she says, "I have broken the spell of Hill House and somehow come inside. I am home" (232). Thus, what is at the center of *The Haunting of Hill House* is a house, the abnormality of which can be read in its physical qualities and which, through a form of consciousness, or will that it possesses, can influence the people who are vulnerable to the type of haunting it subjects its inhabitants to.

This chapter is going to look into both Eleanor's and other inhabitants' interactions with the haunting presence that is Hill House by establishing the qualities that render Hill House unwelcoming and an object of supernatural investigation in order to work toward the claim that the way Eleanor and other characters deal with being haunted by the house is an example of a failed attempt in terms of a hauntological engagement with the specter. This is because most characters display a strictly ontological and a self-centered approach to the specter. For Eleanor, her inability to understand the hauntological reality of the house is a result of her aversion to loneliness and her traumatic past emulated by the hauntings of the house. Failing as a result of these and the lack of alternative modes of existence that the 1950s American suburban communities could offer a woman of Eleanor's conditions, single and unemployed

in her mid-30s with no education and financial dependence on her sister's family, Eleanor comes to identify with the hauntological Other embodied in Hill House in an uncontrolled and uncritical manner, while the others, in their self-proclaimed pursuit to understand the haunting neglect in their duty to perceive and listen to a rapidly deteriorating Eleanor who is slowly becoming othered.

Eleanor's engagement with the supernatural presence that is Hill House fits into a pattern in Jackson's novels. Melanie R. Anderson finds that the elements that can be considered supernatural in Jackson's fiction are featured alongside female characters "who use the supernatural either as a bid to gain power, or more likely, as a symbol of *their ghostliness* and lack of agency" (35; emphasis added). Similar to this description, having attempted to gain power and failed, Eleanor's identification with Hill House highlights her lack of options, agency, and an outlet for self-expression. This chapter argues that it is not that Eleanor does not attempt to communicate with the house and its specters in a Derridean sense, but Hill House, as a sentient presence, fashions its ghosts in a way that culls out the vulnerable, thus targeting Eleanor. It utilizes its power against the inhabitants' weaknesses. Such an experience results in Eleanor's suicide by crashing her car into a tree in the front yard of Hill House. The ending may initially appear ambiguous, but the finishing paragraph leaves no chance for Eleanor's wish to belong to Hill House to come true; the meeting does not end in a lovers' meeting as Eleanor keeps quoting Shakespeare throughout the novel and "whatever walk[s]" in Hill House "walk[s] alone" (*Hill House* 246). With Hill House unchanged, once more "not sane" and "holding darkness within" as it stands "against its hills" (246), Eleanor loses the final hope of belonging to Hill House through her act of self-sacrifice. In the end, the house which has come to stand in the place of the lover and the home she sought desperately has no need of her. Haunting remains a mainstay feature of the house itself; it needs no human spirits to thrive and to continue haunting, and those haunted like Eleanor, who could not see the boundaries between the haunted subject and the haunting subject, always remain on the haunted side of the equilibrium. As Tricia Lootens puts forward with this portrayal, Jackson conveys the idea that for sacrifice, one needs "to be allowed to develop a self, and one must have a choice" (167). Possessing neither, Eleanor, with her final sacrifice, repeats the sacrifices she had made in order to look after her mother when they both were alive, feeling resentful for the sacrifices while remaining unable to resist them.

Contrary to the clarity of the closing remarks about Hill House, Eleanor appears to have deduced the idea that she can become one of the ghosts of Hill House under the direct influence of the house. Since there is no way for her to emancipate herself, all her attempts, which will

be explained in detail, fail, and the failure makes her cling to the idea of belonging to a house she found very unwelcoming and evil at one point. Tony M. Vinci claims Shirley Jackson utilizes spectrality in a way that makes ghosts represent the trauma of the hegemonic ideologies of the United States of the 1950s (55). Although she is aware of her specters, guilt, and trauma, Eleanor cannot envision a way of existing, an ontology, that is free of those personal specters and all they entail in such a society. Therefore, all her attempts at escape, both from the influence of Hill House and the conditions in her life, having failed, Eleanor's consciousness succumbs to the notion that she can find belonging by becoming one with the house in the final chapters.

This chapter will investigate Eleanor's failure to identify the specter and communicate with it effectively by first examining the descriptions of Hill House as a malicious presence constantly described as evil and one that possesses sentience and willpower. Then, it will explain how Hill House's willful haunting unearths Eleanor's unsuccessfully suppressed traumas and enumerate the instances Hill House has drawn in inhabitants similar to Eleanor, all of whom have died on the grounds of Hill House. It will look into how Eleanor becomes an ontological Other in the form of a specter that was not listened to when she was alive, how her fears and past make her susceptible to the influence of Hill House in light of the concept of hauntology Derrida has established. This thesis argues that Eleanor's failure further illustrates the claim that "one must reckon with [the spirits]. One cannot not have to, one must not not be able to reckon with them, which are more than one: the more than one/no more one" applies to Eleanor's case (*Specters* xx; emphasis in the original).

3.1. "A house without kindness": Hill House as a Malicious Specter

Without any background information regarding the history or potential threats the house contains, Hill House is described as a house that is perceived as evil by the senses from the start:

> *This house, which seemed somehow to have formed itself, flying together into its own powerful pattern under the hands of its builders, fitting itself into its own construction of lines and angles, reared its great head back against the sky without concession to humanity. It was a house without kindness, never meant to be lived in, not a fit place for people or for love or for hope. Exorcism cannot alter the countenance of a house; Hill House would stay as it was until it was destroyed* (*Hill House* 35).

Uninhabitable, without kindness, and unable to be exorcised, Hill House is the logical conclusion to the haunted castle/house of the Gothic imagination and convention, having evolved from presences that dissipate once the wrongdoing that binds the ghost to the house

is resolved to those that exist dependent on the memories, traumatic experiences, and the past of its current inhabitants. Next, the haunted house turns into a haunting house which, instead of hosting ghosts, is an otherworldly and sinister entity. Whomever the haunting house preys on, the house does it alone without the need for the presence of a specific individual, a death, or a ghost with unresolved business on its grounds. Getting rid of the ghost that haunts the site of its death or trauma, the haunting house exists in a way that defies the idea that past wrongdoings can be addressed with ease and that equilibrium can be restored.

It is firmly established that the house does not appear as an unsettling, evil presence only to Eleanor, as the other visitors of different ages, life experiences, and beliefs regarding supernatural phenomena attest to the fact of Hill House making them uncomfortable. While it cannot be determined what it is that makes a house, or Hill House in particular, unpleasant, as "[n]o Human eye can isolate the unhappy coincidence of line and place which suggests evil in the face of a house," because of "a maniac juxtaposition, a badly turned angle, some chance meeting of roof and sky. . ." Hill House has become "a place of despair" (35). In Eleanor's first encounter with Theodora (another visitor invited for her psychic abilities) which also happens to be Theodora's first few minutes inside Hill House, she expresses her intense dislike of the place, describing it as "[t]his bloody house" and mockingly calling it "the home [she has] always dreamed of" in the form of "[a] little hideaway where [she] can be alone with [her] thoughts [p]articularly if [her] thoughts happened to be about murder or suicide. . ." (*Hill House* 42). Similarly, Luke, the future inheritor of Hill House, likens Eleanor and Theodora to ghosts in his introduction to the two women, the assumption he makes being that Hill House must be haunted and tells them Doctor Montague, who has invited them all, is "gloating over his haunted house" (58). In turn, the doctor, who is the reason for the others' visit to Hill House, avoids giving details about the house until the other three insist on knowing what they are encountering. His reasoning for this avoidance is related to the nature of Hill House and how people have previously reacted to its haunting:

> *Hill House has a reputation for insistent hospitality; it seemingly dislikes letting its guests get away. The last person who tried to leave Hill House in darkness—it was eighteen years ago, I grant you—was killed at the turn in the driveway, where his horse bolted and crushed him against the big tree* (67).

Furthermore, since it may be thought that the group of visitors to the house in this instance are investigators of the supernatural, albeit from a scientific vantage point, and that they are prepared to view the house as haunted and dangerous, the novel makes a note of Hill House's infamy as haunted, and uninhabitable among people with no particular interest in the supernatural. Doctor Montague explains that the concept of houses, or places of habitation in

general, being perceived similarly to Hill House is an ancient phenomenon, giving Biblical and mythological examples of "the houses described in Leviticus as 'leprous,' *tsaraas*, or Homer's phrase for the underworld: *aidao domos*, the house of Hades," moving onto an explanation that Hill House is one such house that is "born bad" as it "has been unfit for human habitation for upwards of twenty years" (70). Deconstructing a convention of the Gothic, that of the house haunted by evil deeds, by leaving the question of whether the house is evil because of such a cause unanswered, Doctor Montagu lists conventional Gothic possibilities of equal weight: "What it was like before then, whether its personality was molded by the people who lived here, or the things they did, or whether it was evil from its start are all questions I cannot answer" (70).

This claim of the uninhabitability of Hill House proves true right from the very construction of the house. Upon her first inspection of the inside of the house, Eleanor supposes the construction workers were "with a kind of indecent haste, eager to finish their work" (38). Built eighty years ago by a man called Hugh Crain as a country home for his family and future progeny, Hill House's history begins with the rushed construction of the building due to the unease the workers are thought to have felt and the death of the wife of Hugh Crain within minutes of seeing Hill House for the first time, her carriage having overturned on the driveway of the house. The future wives of Hugh Crain likewise die young of various causes, such as tuberculosis while living abroad in Europe and, pertaining to the house, of a fall of unknown causes and means. Later, when the heirs of Hugh Crain, his two daughters, come of age, and one chooses to continue to live in Hill House, it leads to an inheritance dispute between the sisters which causes the house to pass into the hands of the companion of the elder Crain sister, instead of the younger, married sister. This companion, under attack by the sister and some of the townsfolk, later allegedly kills herself by hanging herself from the turret on the tower. Likewise, the inheritors of the house to whom Luke is related, the Sanderson family, choose not to live in Hill House after a brief period of sojourn, and ever since, whomever the house has been rented out to moves out, citing inexplicable causes. These series of events that attest to the uninhabitability of Hill House lead Doctor Montague to finally, in his own opinion, conclude that "the evil is the house itself . . . [i]t has enchained and destroyed its people and their lives, it is a place of contained ill will" (82). This seems to be the unanimous reception of the house among its former inhabitants and the nearby town of Hillsdale. Despite the town itself being "a tangled, disorderly mess of dirty houses and crooked streets," a place where people leave instead of coming, the inhabitants of it still view a visit to the house with distaste. Eleanor also thinks of the town as her "last chance" (23) before arriving at Hill House, positioning the everyday rationality of the town of Hillsdale, despite its unpleasantness, in

opposition to Hill House's enigmatic presence of absolute reality. The description of Hill House in this manner establishes it as a place that people do not wish to inhabit, an unfriendly location that causes visitors to describe it as "wicked" and "evil". This portrayal of Hill House brings to mind the importance Manuel Aguirre attributes to closed spaces in the formation of the literature of terror, claiming that the horror "manifests itself in haunted buildings, in labyrinths and prisons, catacombs and caves" (2) and the entire horror genre under which he classifies gothic fiction is "an embodiment of the Closed Space symbol" and contains humanity's confrontation with that spatial symbol (84).

Furthermore, beyond being an unsettling presence, Hill House is constantly implied to be a house that possesses a certain cognitive capacity. This chapter illustrates this by both quoting characters' impressions of the house as an acting agent and the conscious actions the house takes in the form of the manifestation of hauntings. First of all, Hill House is given anthropomorphic qualities in its description mentioned above as an evil house. Since assuming sanity requires cognitive abilities, capable of being evil and not sane, Hill House's uninhabitability is tied to the house's own intentions. Although Doctor Montague makes no scientific assertions regarding whether Hill House was evil from the beginning or whether subsequent traumatic events and deaths rendered it hostile, his shifting opinion and the portrayal of the house point toward the notion that it was inherently built into the house as it was designed and got built by Hugh Crain, a severe man whose misogyny, and fixation on sin and damnation gradually played a role in the emergence of traumatic events for the inhabitants ever since its inception. Dennis R. Perry and Carl H. Sederholm point out that the strange features of the house directly shaped by Hugh Crain do not seem limited to its strange angles, and other products of his "'sad and bitter' mind" played a role in shaping Hill House (98-9). As for the house inheriting the intents of Hugh Crain, the fact that the house can choose what kind of haunting to utilize against the visitors and that it drives its power from the supernatural abilities and consciousness of its inhabitants in the case it does with Eleanor show that the specter of the house seeks to revive the sternly moralistic notions of Hugh Crain in the 1950s America by tapping into the similar, enduring traumas of the characters.

This is to be found in its architectural features as a construction that was ever so slightly off in a calculated and intentional manner that leads anyone living there to feel like the house does not follow the rules of nature and physics. Containing "concentric circles of rooms" at the center of which there stands a parlor which is surrounded by "a series of rooms" with no windows or access to the outside, which in turn are encircled by other rooms, and at last, the veranda which all the rooms with outside access open to, Hill House is a mixture of

unconventional architecture (*Hill House* 105). Furthermore, the house is not perpendicular to the ground as expected, nor is it simply tilted against a hill. Instead, in Hill House, "angles which you assume are the right angles you are accustomed to, and have every right to expect are true, are actually a fraction of a degree off in one direction or another," stairs are on a slant, the doorways are off-center, and "the result of all these tiny aberrations of measurement adds up to a fairly large distortion in the house as a whole" (105-6). Perry and Sederholm connect Hugh Crain's message to his daughter in his creepy religious lessons where he instructs her to "have faith … in [him], [her] father . . . author of [her] being and the guardian of [her] virtue" with the purpose of Hill House which is infused with Hugh Crain's patriarchal puritanism (99). In addition, Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrant mention the religious associations of concentric circles, like the ones Crain uses in his construction of the house, the inner circle standing for "the first cause" and the outer ones representing "the radiating outward of God's creation" (Qtd. in Perry & Sederholm, 100). However, at this point, Aguirre's concept of two spaces, one square and symbolizing order, and the other circular, symbolizing "the unity of form and chaos," found in Irish literature and culture, and represented by Tara and Uisnech, seems more relevant (10). While his argument elaborates on the interactions between these spaces and what they symbolize throughout various cultural turns in Western history and literature, what it offers to the understanding of the architecture of Hill House is that the circularity can endow a structure with an Otherness that symbolizes the opposite of order, ordinary world of law and harmony (10-1). Refusing to create a place of order and harmony by distortions and a shift in the center, Hugh Crain upsets the balance between Tara and Uisnech in the direction of Uisnech, or if we are to use terms other than Aguirre's concepts, sacrifices the ordinary in favor of the uncanny. As a result, he creates a house that cannot exist in the controlled reality of the world. In more practical terms, as the patriarch figure and the assumed authority during their stay in Hill House, Doctor Montague figures out that these "tiny aberrations" lead to their trouble with keeping the doors open or navigating through the rooms. Whatever they do, if the house wants them to get lost or stumble upon a location in it, the will of the house wins against practical measures (*Hill House* 106). Like a living being, the house directs them to locations it wishes and imbues these places with the meanings it believes will keep the visitors following its lead. The threshold to the nursery being cold while the temperature drop in this specific location cannot be scientifically measured is the foremost example of its drawing the guests' attention to a room. However, similarly, its ability to lower the temperature in other rooms when a haunting occurs and the characters' discovery of other significant locations, like the library being marked by a sensory warning, are strong indicators that the house acts as if it were alive.

Also, the rooms the characters are assigned are, in ways, fitting to their personalities in terms of color symbolism. Whether this can be taken to mean Hill House has housed these people with a plan is open to interpretation; however, the fact remains that the rooms are arranged in a way that makes characters grow closer or more distanced. This is at its truest at the adjoining chambers of Eleanor and Theodora, who are portrayed as twins in the fashion of both narrative foils and Theodora as Eleanor's unrepressed side. In *Shirley Jackson's American Gothic,* Darryl Hattenhauer affirms that they are doubles of each other, drawing from Shirley Jackson's own note that states, "theo is eleanor" and the feedback Jackson received during the manuscript stage of the novel from Kenneth Burke, who found a likeness between their relationship and the house's behavior: "the behavior of your House scenically parallels the relationships btw. Theodora and Eleanor (as though it were expressing what in them is left somewhat latent)" (162).

Sharing a room and spending their days initially together in close proximity, in physical and emotional terms, Eleanor and Theodora get along very well, different as they seem. Through their physical proximity they are established as both similar and contrasting, or in Hattenhauer's words, "they are at their closest figuratively when they are at their closest literally" (162). On the day of their meeting, after talking about a list of shared (whether they are made up on Eleanor's part or not remains unclear) similarities, Theodora says, "I'm positive we're cousins" (*Hill House* 54). Later that evening, in a simultaneously developing game of identifying themselves by the traits the other does or does not have, Eleanor joins in with "[a]nd you are Theodora . . . because I am Eleanor", and Theodora responds with "[t]herefore you are wearing the red sweater" (61). Eleanor remains fixated on these images of harmonious similarity and doubling as her feelings toward Theodora grow more negative. After the destruction of Theodora's wardrobe, the message conveyed in a red fluid, and the following altercation between the two women over this assumed haunting, Theodora sarcastically remarks they "[s]hare a room and share [their] clothes . . . [they] 're going to be practically twins," and Eleanor recalls the initial intentional identifying with each other both women underwent by correcting her with "Cousins" (158).

By pairing Eleanor and Theodora, the novel (and possibly Hill House as well) manages both to bring them closer and to convince Eleanor that what is happening is not her imagination or contained inside her mind, and in the process, alienates the two women from the other half of their group. This is best displayed on their second night at Hill House, where the incessant knocking on their door wakes up the women. What strikes Eleanor as the oddest amidst a freezing sensation and inexplicable conditions of being visited by a visitor who knocks on the

door at a height none of them can reach is that Theodora can also hear and experience what she does. This shared experience dispels the doubt that Eleanor, in her volatile mental state and likening the knocking to her mother's when she was sick, is hallucinating or dreaming these sensations. In addition, this pairing leads to a situation where only those who have taken the adjoining rooms experience the sense stimuli of cold, the noise, and in the second haunting, the house shaking. In a way, this is how the house proves it can actively haunt whomever it chooses, as these sensations are only felt by Eleanor and Theodora, while Luke and Doctor Montague have been awake for hours in pursuit of an animal they believe to be "[a]t least, some animal like a dog" (134). Thus, these two simultaneous instances of haunting separate them, but in addition, Hill House manages to single out and speak to Eleanor through the likeness of the knocking sound to Eleanor's memory of her mother knocking on the adjoining wall for her to wake up and help her while proving that it is not Eleanor's own imagination producing these sensations to both the reader and Eleanor herself.

This singling out further develops and functions as a means of drawing Eleanor and Theodora apart, as the positive feelings between the two women start to be replaced by enmity and jealousy. The rest of the group gradually begins to view Eleanor as both a potential danger and potentially in danger. This is displayed best when Eleanor sees her name written in a red substance of unknown origin (blood, ink, and paint are all possible candidates) with a message directed to her. Having no memory of having written it herself, Eleanor believes it must be a prank, while the rest of the group is more inclined to blame Eleanor as an attention seeker who orchestrated it herself by writing it by hand or through the employment of her poltergeist powers. Regardless of the veracity of each option, the divide between Eleanor and Theodora, and Eleanor and the rest becomes explicit. Also, since Eleanor has no recollection of it, even if she wrote it or it had been written as a result of the manipulation of her poltergeist powers, Eleanor is not deceiving others. Either Hill House is directly guiding her into influencing the house, and she is suppressing this influence, or Hill House is making things appear in order to create this divide that will later help Eleanor become drawn toward Hill House, and she is refusing to face this as well. As for the others' perception of Eleanor as someone in danger, we can see it through the statements Eleanor lets slip and the others' increasing concern over the sentiments contained in those statements. When Eleanor expresses the likelihood of none of the events of Hill House being real, and her having imagined everyone and everything, Doctor Montague's warning functions as a foreshadowing: "If I thought you could really believe that, . . . I would turn you out of Hill House this morning. You would be venturing far too close to the state of mind which would welcome the perils of Hill House with a kind of

sisterly embrace" (140). And Eleanor agrees by saying if she has started siding with the house against its other inhabitants, she is in a state where she needs to be sent away.

Thus, through its physical properties, their manipulation, its ability to create specters that can be perceived by the senses, and possibly controlling Eleanor's own poltergeist ability, Hill House manages to establish itself both as an unwelcoming, hostile presence that has inherited the legacy of Hugh Crain's ideas, and the unresolved enmity between the Crain sisters. By utilizing displays of hauntings that can be perceived by everyone but carry a significant meaning for Eleanor, Hill House conveys that it has singled out Eleanor as a target both to the woman herself and the other visitors.

3.2. "Journeys end in lovers' meeting": Eleanor's Loss of Self as a Result of Unaddressed Specters

This connection between the house and Eleanor, which is first established by the house in its direct address to Eleanor through its hauntings, strengthens as Eleanor starts to feel distanced from others and closer to the house as a self-fulfilling prophecy of her fears. One of the ways in which the house achieves this is by awakening Eleanor's heavily suppressed poltergeist powers. As Eleanor's enmity toward Theodora increases, and her sense of acceptance among this medley crowd decreases, she comes to view herself as someone chosen by Hill House, and the house itself, or her application of poltergeist powers on it, responds in what she takes to be a confirmation. The attack on Theodora's wardrobe with what is assumed to be red paint aligns with Eleanor's feelings of resentment toward Theodora, her outgoing nature, and how she feels Theodora represents everything Eleanor was not allowed to become by her mother. We see this repression Eleanor experiences when Theodora paints Eleanor's nails red, and this elicits an emotional response from Eleanor that combines her anxiety about a preconceived notion of propriety and the thought of what her mother would think. Upset over how her nails now look, she says, "[i] t's horrible . . . it's wicked" (117), and when Theodora tries to calm her down, she reveals she is thinking of her mother, followed by the repeat of the wickedness of an act as simple as painting her toenails. The fact that Theodora's wardrobe is ruined with an unidentifiable red material parallels this instance of Eleanor finding herself stuck between choosing something her friend (her double, an aspect of herself she suppressed) wants her to do and doing something she thinks her mother would disapprove. This example proves her estrangement from Theodora and shows that she is moving closer to identifying with Hill House. However, despite Theodora's earlier accusation when everyone sees Eleanor's name painted on the wall, as an unreliable narrator, Eleanor has no recollection of doing anything such as painting the wall or vandalizing Theodora's wardrobe. By the writing "HELP

ELEANOR COME HOME" (146) painted in red on the hallway wall and "HELP ELEANOR COME HOME ELEANOR" (155) written this time on Theodora's wallpaper, she is addressed by the house directly. Since she does not recall directing her poltergeist energies to achieve this, even if she feels flattered at being chosen by the house, these hauntings are results of Hill House's willpower. It just happens that there is an alignment in her wishes and desires and what is happening around at Hill House. Her giggling remark about the destruction of Theodora's wardrobe with red paint being similar to the instance when they painted their nails evinces this: "I've been standing here looking at it and just wondering why. I mean, it's like a joke that didn't come off; I was supposed to be much more frightened than this, I think, and I'm not because it's simply too horrible to be real. And I keep remembering Theo putting red polish . . ." (156-7). The house acting according to Eleanor's innermost wishes and fears brings two possibilities to mind. Either the house's sentience extends to knowledge about what lies in the minds and the hearts of its visitors and inhabitants, or the house can draw from Eleanor's poltergeist powers to act according to its wishes.

Poltergeists are important and distinguished early in the novel. The reason why Doctor Montague invites Eleanor Vance in the first place is that she "has in the past been intimately involved in a poltergeist phenomenon," which she wishes to repress by accepting her mother's claim that "that was the neighbors" because they were jealous (73). However, the report that reaches Doctor Montague goes beyond a few stones thrown at their house, as twelve-year-old Eleanor's response to losing her father was in the form of making stones rain down on their house for days which constitutes a poltergeistic instance. In the novel, the difference between ghosts, those who are dead and stuck in this world, a haunting presence like Hill House, and a poltergeist is laid down by Doctor Montague. Explaining poltergeists as beings who "deal entirely with the physical world . . . throw stones . . . move objects . . . smash dishes," he classifies the poltergeist as "rock-bottom on the supernatural social scale," because it is nothing more than a "destructive, but mindless and will-less . . . merely undirected force" (141). After these explanations, Eleanor starts to feel awkward yet understood. She "want[s] to run to the head of the table and hug the doctor, . . . to reel, chanting, across the stretches of the lawn, . . . to sing and to shout and to fling her arms and move in great emphatic, possessing circles around the rooms of Hill House" and thinks "I am here; I am here" as if all these explanations regarding poltergeists activate the unconscious energy she has hidden and make her feel understood (141-42). Of course, since it is repeatedly mentioned that poltergeists are "mindless and will-less" in contrast to Hill House, which is described as "not sane" and is implied to be a "[l]ive organism," the interpretation one reaches is that possibly Hill House is

utilizing Eleanor's poltergeist powers in order to create targeted hauntings and to lead Eleanor into thinking the house understands her.

Eleanor continues to attribute the house's actions to herself and to assume that only she is attuned to the house until this bond between her and Hill House, which leads to her demise, is firmly established. Questioning whether one could be homesick for a place like Hill House, whether the two little girls of Hugh Crain got upset when they were sent elsewhere, Eleanor moves away from her strict position of dislike toward the house and her incapability to imagine anyone would belong there. At one point, finding an element of the house charming, she asks herself "if she was the first person ever to find Hill House charming," emphasizing her unique attitude towards the house. However, next, she wonders if "[D]o [all the visitors] think so, the first morning?" showing an awareness that she may have something in common with the former inhabitants of Hill House who were targeted by the house.

However, her sense of commonality with other people soon gives way to the idea that Hill House has singled her out. When they find the writing on the wall in red that addresses her directly, she thinks, "[she is] outside . . . [she is] the one chosen," yet her speech tries to conceal the titillation she feels at this thought, and instead she expresses outward concern: "Did I do something to attract attention, more than anyone else?" (147). As has been mentioned, during their joking banter early on, she jokes about all three being in her head, merely imaginations, and towards the conclusion of the novel, when they are revisited by whatever haunts them by knocking and shaking the house, Eleanor asks if she is the one doing it, feeling "it's inside [her] head and it's getting out, getting out, getting out—" (202). Thus, Hill House successfully ties Eleanor's mind and subconscious to its conscious state of being not sane by degrees. The ready acceptance of this identification leads to the loss of Eleanor's sense of identity, to her becoming not just emotionally but physically one with Hill House.

Alexis Shotwell touches upon the question of Eleanor's responses to loneliness which draw her toward Hill House, and her feeble attempts at overcoming her internalized and ongoing repression. She claims that Eleanor's initial interest in Luke, who is expected to inherit Hill House, can be explained by the promise of a relationship through which she can attain both "appropriate heterosexuality and a permanent house-home," things Eleanor, through her life experiences, has come to lack (135). Yet, as her conversations with Luke slowly lead her to the realization that Luke wants her to fulfill a role she has grown to dislike, that of the mother, and the house continues to hammer her solitude and alienation home, Eleanor's friendship with Theodora becomes imbued with undertones of both rivalry and attraction. Michael T. Wilson mentions that woman characters in Jackson's novels have a strained relationship with

men “to the point where homosexual alternatives are considered and then rejected” (“Shirley Jackson's Sustained Critique of Husbands and Marriage” 419). In *The Haunting of Hill House,* Eleanor is jealous of Theodora for her flirtatious banter with Luke. Since she views Luke an idealized lover, the source of her jealousy is straightforward. However, at the same time, she desires a meaningful relationship with Theodora, because the other woman is presented as Eleanor’s narrative foil, her potential self, and someone towards whom she can direct her yearning for a home. After her idealization of Luke becomes destroyed by reality, Eleanor redirects her desire to belong to Theodora. Wishing to resume the connection she thinks she has built with her in Hill House, Eleanor wants to accompany Theodora to her flat. In the process, she confesses that she lied earlier when she described her own apartment, and that she lives at her sister’s house as an unwanted visitor. This is one of the few attempts Eleanor makes to refuse the dominant ideology her mother and the house, which was built according to the patriarchal norms of the preceding century, impose on her. By trying to choose the possibility of a life with her unconventional double, Theodora, Eleanor tries to deny the specter of religious and sexual repression that tells her she belongs to the house. However, after Theodora’s refusal and cutting question whether “Eleanor always [goes] where [she] is not wanted” (*Hill House* 209), Eleanor attempts to make sure she gets something out of her stay at Hill House, that she does not return to her sister’s house in more trouble than before, thus reverting to a state of compliance with the dominant ideology that animates the revenant.

This is how Eleanor arrives at a stage at which the house can completely manipulate her reality. Convinced that she shares a bond with the house, Eleanor’s slippery grip on reality loosens even more, and she starts to believe she is sensing what the house can do as her self dissolves into the more dominant identity of the house. Thinking “[s]he could even hear, with her new awareness of the house, the dust drifting gently in the attics, the wood aging” (223), she makes one exception for the library. This is the library which she found impossible to enter earlier over a stench that only she could smell and where the book Hugh Crain created for his daughter’s purported moral edification is kept. The same night, when she realizes she is hearing a melody, one from a game she used to play, and no one else can, instead of being horrified at being singled out, Eleanor thinks “with joy”: “None of them heard it . . .; nobody heard it but me” (226). This is the last proof she needs to be convinced she belongs to Hill House and lose her touch with reality entirely.

In the following chapter, we find Eleanor acting in an uncharacteristically unrestrained fashion and drawn to the one part of the house which she believes she has been kept away from either reunification or dissolution: the library on the tower. Not thinking in a line of logical reasoning,

Eleanor does not connect her sudden urge to go to the library with this earlier sensation; instead, she tells herself she is "going downstairs to get a book" because she "can't sleep" (227). Nevertheless, the house wants to keep her out with its stench and an unexplained association with her mother. By searching for her mother in the library, laughing, running along the corridors, and dancing with the statue of Hugh Crain, Eleanor acts in an unrestrained manner that would have gone against both her mother's and Hugh Crain's value judgments.

Eleanor does not question why Hill House reminds her of her recently deceased mother or why the library of a religious fanatic like Hugh Crain becomes associated with the stench of rot and her mother. This is a clear sign that she cannot engage with the spectrality in a manner that applies what Derrida proposes. Instead, she thinks she can escape anything troubling her by making a home out of Hill House. Since she has been a woman who was never solidly entrenched in reality since the beginning of the novel, it is not surprising that Eleanor compares her newfound interest in Hill House — and potentially Hill House's interest in her— to her old fairytale-like daydreams: "No stone lions for me, she thought, no oleanders; I have broken the spell of Hill House and somehow come inside. I am home, she thought, and stopped in wonder at the thought. I am home, I am home, she thought; now to climb" (232). Once Eleanor's attempt to climb the tower fails as a result of her rescue by Luke, Doctor Montague, and the rest attempt to send her home. Having lied to everyone about a small flat she made up, Eleanor finally confesses to the truth, saying she has no home outside of Hill House. Having failed to arrive at a new self at Hill House and having dissolved her old identity in identification with the house, when Mrs. Montague says, "Arthur could see that she gets there safely," Eleanor asks, "Gets where?" When the doctor answers with "Why, . . . home, of course," and Theodora reminds her of the home she has made up, Eleanor clings further to the idea of staying at Hill House, and her belief that Hill House is her new home is solidified (239).

Hill House performs these acts of haunting with the purpose of convincing Eleanor she is chosen by the house. In order to convince the woman, Hill House first dispels any doubt regarding its supernatural existence, illustrating that far from being the products of the visitors' imagination, the hauntings in Hill House are performed by the house and can be observed by other people who are not Eleanor. Next, it shows to Eleanor that she has been chosen when she is feeling unwanted both by the found family they formed during their stay at Hill House, and her own biological family after she ran off with the family car. Failing in her daydreams of belonging to different houses along the way, with Luke or Theodora, Eleanor becomes convinced that if Hill House has chosen her, she must stay there at all costs. This further

advances the claim of this study that Hill House does not conjure any individual ghosts of its former inhabitants, instead preferring to be a spectral presence itself. It draws its powers for haunting from the specters of the past and completes the haunting through the remnants of this past in the present, in the process utilizing what was already spectral in the characters' lives. Wilson suggests that the final realization Eleanor arrives as she asks, "Why am I doing this? Why am I doing this? Why don't they stop me?" is a reprieve from the constant dreaming she utilizes against facing the reality of the specters present in her own life and at Hill House ("The Role of the Ineffable" 182).

One of the reasons why Eleanor falls under the influence of Hill House is her loneliness. Eleanor is introduced as someone who became reserved and shy "[w]ithout ever wanting to," someone who "had spent so long alone, with no one to love, that it was difficult for her to talk, even casually, to another person without self-consciousness and an awkward inability to find words" (*Hill House* 7). This is because she took care of her invalid mother for eleven years. Connecting her wish not to be alone and her past with her mother, this brief instruction provides the reader with the reasons why Eleanor, and not someone else, becomes the target of Hill House. We see she is lonely and does not like that through her admissions, daydreaming, and internal monologue.

Looking into her daydreaming first will be helpful for our purposes since romantic idealism is an aspect of her personality that was apparent before the influence of Hill House, and it reveals information about her strained relationship with her mother and inability to face reality. As she journeys, Eleanor comes across different buildings on her way to Hill House, and each time she makes up a scenario. In these scenarios, either her ability to be all alone or the fact that she is not lonely and has someone to be with takes center stage. At one point, seeing a house with stone lions on its steps, Eleanor imagines what her life would be like if she lived there, and thinks of a different life where she looked after the stone lions and kept house, and in turn, was looked after by an old lady, and though in solitude, she would be "bowed [by the people] on the streets of the town because everyone was very proud of [her] lions" (18). Next, she imagines walking into an enchanted oleander square, the spell of which she breaks to discover she is the missing princess of a kingdom whose return is waited patiently by the queen, her mother (20). As she gets closer to Hill House, after witnessing an encounter between a little girl and her mother in which the little girl refuses to drink from any other cup but her "cup of stars" and which Eleanor finds personal enough to silently beckon the girl to "insist on [her] cup of stars; once they have trapped you into being like everyone else you will never see your cup of stars again; don't do it" (22), she imagines another scenario where she

lives in perfect solitude with a white cat, visited by people to have their fortunes told or got love potions. By having Eleanor escape from reality constantly by constructing fantasies and alternate selves who are more beloved and cared for, by having her prefer the dainty fantasies of stone lions and cups of stars, Jackson portrays her as a dreamer who is unhappy with her conditions in life, especially her solitude.

We see that Eleanor does not like to be alone. Even before others arrive, Eleanor's negative feelings toward Hill House are amplified by the fact she is the first one to arrive, as she states, "I gather I'm the first one here," and thinks, "I think I'm going to cry . . . I don't like it here" (*Hill House* 37), yet after some time, when she reminds herself "there are other people coming; [she is] not going to be here all alone," she runs "across the room and into the hall, to look down the staircase into the hallway below, in the process "almost laughing" (42). When Theodora arrives, Eleanor is impressed and, to some degree, intimidated by her lively presence, but most importantly, she is comforted by the promise of having company. In the first couple days of their stay at Hill House, the thought that she has friends fuels Eleanor's fantasies of belonging and having a family. Seeing each as someone who could fill a certain role in her life, Eleanor "tell[s] herself that this was real, these things existed, from the tiles around the fireplace to the marble cupid; these people were going to be her friends . . . I am the fourth person in this room; I am one of them; I belong" (60). This idea that her status as one who belongs can be revoked at any time makes Eleanor anxious. It also plays a role in the deterioration of her relationship with the others. Anxious that she may stop belonging among them, she scrutinizes her own behavior, feeling guilt for even appearing "foolishly, childishly contended, almost happy," scolding herself because she "said silly things . . . and of course, they noticed" and promises that "[t]oday [she] will be more reserved, less openly grateful to all of them for having me" (93). Yet, this fails, and Eleanor finds herself clinging to others, as her fear of being disliked or abandoned works against her. This fear extends to physical abandonment, and when she expresses this, one of the first cracks in her relationship with Theodora begins to appear.

The reasons behind Eleanor's fear of loneliness, abandonment, and not belonging are evident in her character history. Raised in solitude, having no contact with other people except her mother, who is implied to have been mistreating Eleanor, she feels she has lost the necessary qualities for human connection. In addition, she worries she has wasted her life as a woman in her early 30s. Described as "having taken to wondering lately, during these swiftcounted years, what had been done with all those wasted summer days; how could she have spent them so wantonly," she views herself as someone who is "foolish [but] . . . grown up now and know[s]

the values of things," Eleanor is someone who wants to escape the monotony of the "swiftcounted years" she believes she has spent idly (15). Repressed due to her mother's implied teachings and disliked by her sister, Eleanor has also spent her life in the company of people she hates but remains incapable of expressing this hatred. Thus, when she withdraws into her dream world as a means of escape, she imagines non-realities that are magical, where solitude either does not exist like her entry into a kingdom waiting for her, or solitude as it exists is a peaceful feeling accompanied by the distant admiration of people.

Eleanor's constant references to her mother, the sort of moral repression she exhibits, and the hauntings of Hill House reminding her of her mother point in the direction of a traumatic past that involves the maternal figure. We see Eleanor has cared for her for eleven years, yet the third-person omniscient narration of her hating only her sister now that her mother is dead leaves no doubt that she did not harbor overwhelmingly positive feelings for her. Furthermore, her guilt casts doubt on the cause of Eleanor's mother's death. While Eleanor confesses that her mother called for Eleanor before she died, her likening of the knock on their door to that instance may point in the direction of regret and guilt she clearly expresses later ("It was my fault my mother died . . . She knocked on the wall and called me and called me and I never woke up" [212]), which is born as a result of Eleanor causing her mother's death by failing or refusing to help her.

In fact, the question of the mother pervades the entire narrative. Besides Eleanor's mother's looming presence even after her death, Luke never knowing his mother, and the story of the two Crain sisters who grew up without a mother are details that impact Eleanor. In her conversation with Luke, her attraction toward him vanishes when he expresses a human need she perceives as trite, about wanting to have known her mother. By viewing Luke's emotional unavailability to women, or at least to Eleanor, and his reasoning that this unavailability has to do with his orphan status as selfish, Eleanor finds this selfishness entirely contradictory to her desire "to be cherished" (167). She keeps repeating, "Journeys end in lovers meeting," which is taken from Shakespeare's romantic comedy *Twelfth Night* (1602). This acts as another indicator that what Eleanor seeks from a lover is the rather conventional gender dynamic of the fairytale and, in some part, the idealized narrative of the 1950s society, where the woman is cared for by the man; yet she finds herself unable to fulfill the traditional roles of the wife and the mother. Likewise, when they visit the nursery of Hill House, Eleanor feels unable to enter and finds herself more discomfited than the others. This discomfort goes beyond a dislike for the cold spot at the threshold of the nursery. We see it not only in her reluctance to enter the nursery but also in her wish to help the child-like presence that visits

them during the second night of the haunting. She feels a connection to this presence that haunts Hill House and an aversion to the idea that whatever it is, it is suffering. The screams and the pleas of this specter of a child who is familiar to her from her nightmares and who says, "Please don't hurt me. Please let me go home," makes her think that "[she] will take a lot from this lunatic filthy house but [she] will not go along with hurting a child, no, I will not; I will by God get my mouth to open right now and I will yell I will I will yell 'STOP IT,'" (163). The fact that the haunting stops when she shouts and that she finds this event familiar to her, just like the knocking sensation during the first haunting, indicates that Hill House is drawing from her traumatic memories in which the mother and the child occupy an important space.

When we do not limit our understanding of the house to specific cases, as, for example, an embodiment of Hugh Crain's misogynistic puritanism, Hill House, as a specter, embodies the ideas of womanhood and motherhood that patriarchy endorses. Tricia Lootens calls Hill House "a parental house . . . furnished with symbols of the destructive power of motherhood" fashioned after the ideas of its patriarch (157-8). Citing beyond the nursery mentioned above and the library's connections to Eleanor's mother, and Luke's opinion of Hill House as "a mother house, Lootens also likens the good qualities of Hill House, such as good food and beds to a "womb/tomb" dichotomy which aims to entrap" (*Hill House* 212) (158). The connection between the mother and the house, the mother being not in the form of a comforting presence but an extension of the oppressive force of the patriarchy, is found in Jackson's manuscript notes as "Leaving house = betrayal of mother. Eleanor does not belong anywhere" (qtd. in Lootens 158).

Another factor contributing to Eleanor's sense of loneliness is her relationship with her sister, which is represented as another symptom of her failure to live up to her mother's ideals and the dominant social role in the 1950s for women. Older than Eleanor and married with children, the sister represents what Eleanor has failed to achieve according to the ideals of the 1950s heteronormative patriarchy. As Michael T. Wilson analyzes in his article, Jackson's novels of the period, starting from the late 40s and reaching into the early 60s, focus on female characters who experience "psychological crises that overlap elements of the uncanny with a focus on failed relationships between mothers and daughters," while at the same time, criticizing marriage as an institution ("Sustained Critique" 423). Jackson's portrayal of women impacted by different aspects of the marriage institution, be it adultery, a loveless marriage, or in Eleanor's case, the lack of options for the fulfillment of it, is directly influenced by the society of the mid-century America. According to Stephanie Coontz, "[m]arriage in the long

decade of the 1950s was simply the be-all and end-all of life" (qtd. in Wilson "Sustained Critique"; 421), and Shirley Jackson's familiarity with this ideological outlook cannot be debated considering her status as a married woman with children for whom another avenue of writing consisted of domestic life writing for homemaking magazines. Joanne Meyerowits, likewise, notes that "domestic Ideals . . . coexisted in ongoing tension with an ethos of individual achievement that celebrated nondomestic activity, individual striving, public service, and public success" (qtd. in Wilson "Shirley Jackson's Sustained Critique of Husbands and Marriage"; 421). These domestic ideals, or the overarching domestic ideal of the woman as a homemaker, wife, and mother, find expression in *The Haunting of Hill House* in the form of what Eleanor lacks and her sister possesses. Dave Bailey terms this ideal of the perfect homemaker as "the June Cleaver ideology," named so after the 1950s sitcom heroine who embodies the traits of the ideal housewife and uses it to describe the prescribed role of the woman in the two decades following the Second World War as one that functions "as a domestic life-support system for family members who functioned largely outside the home" (33).

By being unable to participate in the ideal she has internalized or refuse it altogether, Eleanor drifts through life looking for a way to belong to the mainstream society. Her daydreams about belonging to a small community are also crucial for emphasizing her need to perform acts of caring and service for others as an internalization of these values (Bailey 36). Following her mother's death, she can no longer identify with the feminine role of the caretaker, and she finds herself unable to fulfill any domestic role in her sister's, barring her, nuclear family. The fear of the reality of the nuclear family is directly displayed when Eleanor and Theodora stumble upon an enchanted vision of a family picnic they witness in which Theodora gets frightened of something unseen and shouts, "[D]on't look" (*Hill House* 130). This scene generating a sense of terror in Theodora rather than the more overt manifestations of hauntings implies that Hill House is terrifying through its "absolute reality" of the domestic existence either Hill House has imposed on itself, or the women of the era, Eleanor and Theodora included, feared experiencing (Wilson "The Role of the Ineffable"; 120).

Another factor that solidifies Eleanor's loneliness and, thus, drives her closer to the house is the sense of rivalry she feels toward Theodora. Eleanor is very much used to the type of enmity toward a sister figure, first experiencing it as a result of the conviction that she is making a sacrifice by taking care of their mother while her sister gets married. Afterward, this feeling persists as she feels othered and controlled by her sister's family. As a result of the repression she experiences through the internalization of her mother's teachings and this habit, Eleanor

comes to substitute Theodora for her sister in terms of making an enemy out of her. As an unconventional woman who lives with a partner of unspecified gender yet stays unmarried and one that is not afraid to be outside of this domestic ideal, Theodora is very different from both Eleanor and her sister. However, symbolizing not what Eleanor has been inculcated on but her desires, Theodora serves as Eleanor's double and counterpart. Bailey points out that, contrary to Eleanor's perceptions of Theodora, nothing about the woman's criticized or censured behavior merits such a reaction; in fact, she represents "positive directions for female growth toward independence, self-confidence, and self-determination" as a contender to the domestic ideal Eleanor simultaneously has internalized and detests (38). This is also paralleled in the narrative of Hugh Crain's family of the two sisters who fall out. The older sister finds refuge from the prescribed roles of heterosexually and patriarchally determined womanhood inside Hill House with a female companion and no marriage or children. Yet her identification with Hill House is the main source of the rift between her and her younger sister, who has assimilated into society by assuming the role of the wife and the mother she is expected to perform. Likewise, in the case of Eleanor, while the reason she clings so much to Hill House is her sister, her relationship with Theodora sours following the instances of haunting they are made to experience by Hill House.

Derrida highlights the insufficiency of perceiving the specter and urges those who want to employ a hauntological approach to actively listen to and engage with the specter. Unable to face the traumatic experiences of her past and her present conditions, Eleanor cannot also understand how the way she views Hill House and how Hill House's interaction with her are shaped by those experiences. As a result, she is incapable of actively engaging with the haunting or the specter in a meaningful way. Eleanor's failure and the others' additional neglect to engage with the haunting and the deteriorating condition of Eleanor are the reasons why, despite direct interaction with a willful, intentional presence that haunts, no one manages to actively coexist and communicate with Hill House in the house's terms. Instead, they devise alternative strategies for dealing with Hill House's haunting presence. One of the attempts we see displayed is the rationalization of the supernatural phenomena. Namely, Doctor Montague, like scholars who think that "looking is sufficient" and remain ineffectual when they are expected to do "what is necessary: speak to the specter" in Derrida's example of *Hamlet* (*Specters* 11), refashions the hauntological presence of the house into a conventional ontological paradigm. Derrida reasons that such an attitude emerges because scholars, by virtue of their training, subscribe to "the sharp distinction between the real and the unreal, the actual and the inactual, the living and the non-living, being and non-being . . . in the opposition between what is present and what is not, for example in the form of objectivity" (11). Suitably,

Doctor Montague constantly provides scientific explanations for the hauntings they witness and utilizes scientific measurement tools to calculate and understand the otherworldly reality of Hill House and its hauntings. Another approach is the normalization of everything Hill House makes manifest in their lives by bracketing off the life at Hill House, as Theodora attempts. Instead of paying attention to what the hauntings may mean for them as individuals, what the specter says, and why it has returned as a revenant, Theodora evaluates the reality of Hill House as separate from the rest of the world and her life outside the bounds of it. Her attitude to Hill House is best expressed when she turns down Eleanor after the latter expresses her wish to go with Theodora: "This is just a summer, just a few weeks' visit to a lovely old summer resort in the country. You have your life back home, I have my life. When the summer is over, we go back. We'll write each other, of course, and maybe visit, but Hill House is not forever, you know (*Hill House* 209).

Eleanor escapes into a dream world, unable to face the absolute reality of Hill House, and stands as a counterpart to Doctor Montague's scientific rationalism and Theodora's exceptionalism. Both Eleanor's attitude, the others' treatment of her, and her reactions to haunting push her toward an unhealthy engagement with Hill House. First getting along with her, and then slowly realizing Eleanor's idiosyncrasies, yet not realizing these are the factors that make Eleanor a potential victim, the rest of the group starts to find Eleanor self-centered, scared, and after a point, direct blame at Eleanor for having orchestrated the events that happen at Hill House. This loneliness precipitated by the haunting at Hill House and her othering makes her start to hate Theodora and experience a sense of betrayal when they stop being so close. Likewise, this fear of loneliness and search for home leads her to pursue Luke and Theodora in rather implicit terms. Rejected by both, according to Alexis Shotwell, Eleanor is left with no choice but to find what has been denied to her in the house. This becomes obvious when we consider how she begs Theodora to take her to her home before she embraces Hill House fully and how the friendship between Luke and Theodora and the fact that they leave her alone in the forest appear to wound her emotionally. Eleanor's escapist tendency is ultimately what prevents her from understanding the haunting Hill House displays without any illusions. Since she cannot face the elements of patriarchy that influence her life in the present moment, she is incapable of comprehending that Hill House hides the malicious intent it aims to transmit to the present moment behind the invitation it extends to her. Eleanor's failures to hauntologically engage with Hill House and to understand the underlying social factors that shape her present are not independent of each other. These two facts are contingent upon each other, and Eleanor's failure in both areas reminds us of Derrida's claim that the mode of

communication and co-existence, as much as the specter can be said to exist, he recommends leads to "a politics of memory, of inheritance, and of generations" (xviii).

3.3. "In the Upkeep with the Ghosts": (Un-)hauntological Responses to Hill House

When we interpret the characters' engagement with Hill House through a hauntological lens, we find that Eleanor and other visitors cannot communicate with the specter that Hill House actually is. What it says is not listened to; instead, everyone ascribes their own wishes and desires to the specter. However, to better understand why the characters fail at employing hauntology, a summary of how Hill House's evil and conscious presence fits under Derrida's notion of the specter despite being a non-human non-being with some human attributes (willpower, malicious intent) will be helpful. The entire purposefulness of Hill House, the unpredictability of its wickedness, and its ability to be observed at will fall under what Derrida would consider the visor effect, i.e., the specter's ability to observe the living without revealing when it observes or being observed back. Appearing in the form of hauntings only when it wishes, yet constantly capable of observing the characters, moving objects around, and even, possibly, interfering with the spiritual energies and thoughts of the inhabitants, as the possibility of the house using Eleanor's poltergeist powers evince, the visibility of Hill House and the visibility of people to Hill House are asymmetrical. Hill House fulfills the role of the specter as "not simply [something] we see coming back . . . [but something] by whom we feel ourselves watched, observed, surveyed, as if by the law: we are 'before the law,' without any possible symmetry, without the law" (Derrida; "Echographies" 120). This effect that is also voiced by the concept of the visor effect is what enables the pervasiveness of the specter's influence in the present moment while remaining distinctly associated with unearthed pasts or potential futures that are not allowed to emerge. Since one cannot observe the specter as a concrete object, but feels oneself constantly observed and evaluated by it, the lack of balance in perception and comprehension remains an inherent aspect of communicating with the specter in a hauntological manner.

The all-too-visible presence of Hill House, which manifests itself as a presence to every single member of the group, albeit in different forms of haunting, aligns with Derrida's idea of the specter as the visible invisible. In describing the features of the specter in an interview given three years after the publication of *Specters of Marx* in its original French, as

> *first and foremost something visible, . . . of the visible, but of the invisible visible, [the specter] is the visibility of a body which is not present in flesh and blood. It resists the intuition to which it presents itself, it is not tangible. Phantom preserves the same reference to phainesthai, to appearing for vision, to the brightness of day, to*

> *phenomenality. And what happens with spectrality, with phantomality – and not necessarily with coming-back [revenance] – is that something becomes almost visible which is visible only insofar as it is not visible in flesh and blood. It is a night visibility* ("Spectographies" 38).

Hill House, with its knocking, smells, sounds, animal forms, and children's screams, is every bit visible or perceptible to the senses of the inhabitants without a single appearance of a ghost in the typical sense of a person's silhouette or anything that can be measured in scientific terms. The visions it sends its inhabitants are real to them, unanimously perceived by everyone it chooses, and the dog Luke and Doctor Montague chase and the scene of the horrifying domestic picnic of a family Eleanor and Theodora witness are examples of this. Like Hill House's horrifying visitations that become almost missed by Eleanor and rationally dismissed by the others, for Derrida, a specter "is both visible and invisible, both phenomenal and non-phenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance" (Derrida; *Specters* 39).

While Derrida talks of the spectral effect, what he has in mind is mass media that can be recorded and repeated, replayed at any time, the idea that "through historical reading, historical interpretation, even through mimicry," we reproduce what was past ("Spectographies" 47). The element of reenactment in haunting implied in this statement can also be observed in Hill House through its archival recordings. Having absorbed the lives of its former inhabitants and the ideas of its founder, Hugh Crain, the house continues to prey on potential victims who fit the pattern of its initial constitution by the Crain family. As these specters of the past of this family are unsolved and pushed away from the confines of everyday life by a refusal to inhabit Hill House, the unwillingness to counter this legacy is employed by Hill House to make the revenants of the tragedy of the two sisters' falling out and the death of Crain's wives return. These specters of the misogynistic repression and oppression of women haunt in a way that targets those who can, on a level, relate to the events because they are also influenced by the reverberating effects of the initial conditions that enabled the specters. As someone with a heavily implied history of parental abuse, and current struggle to form a stable identity rooted in various forms of womanhood (the ideal housewife or the modern, liberated woman), Eleanor is a victim of Hill House as a specter, because the house's spectrality is rooted in similar unaddressed problems from the past. Utilizing this existing connection between the factors that rendered it spectral and Eleanor's current situation, Hill House re-enacts the events that caused its emergence through its hauntings by ensuring the same dynamic between the sisters is established in Eleanor's relationship with Theodora and achieves the aimed repeat of female oppression and erasure with Eleanor almost jumping down to her death from the tower, and her eventual suicide in the courtyard. By showing what remains unresolved does not die

down quietly even if it is left alone like Hill House, *The Haunting of Hill House* creates a powerful allegory for the status of women and the identity politics of womanhood under patriarchy in the form of a haunting house that cannot be exorcized.

Also, the failure to engage with the specter mentioned above brings to mind Derrida's particular injunction to the scholars, for it seems more difficult for them to grasp the non-ontological, non-veritable existence of a non-entity such as a specter. In this regard, we would benefit from drawing parallels between Derrida's idea of ethically communicating with the specter and Mrs. Montague's feigned sympathy for the ghostly to illustrate that speaking to and listening to the ghost are two different things. The primary example of people ascribing to the specters their own goals and expectations is Mrs. Montague and her companion, Arthur, who claim to be interested in the occult and communicate with spirits through a Planchette board. Despite this seemingly correct practice, all their interactions remain a self-congratulating gesture of the living that further alienates the non-ontological, hauntological other. Making up facts about the assumed ghosts that inhabit Hill House with no actual evidence beyond the spiritualist clichés rooted in Gothic fiction, Mrs. Montague claims she is there to "help these unfortunate beings," "those who have passed beyond," by "think[ing] of them lovingly," and "extend[ing] the hand of heartfelt fondness," (*Hill House* 183; 196). She assumes they "are only waiting for an opportunity to tell their stories and free themselves from the burden of their sorrow" (195). Ignoring every account of the tangible manifestations of Hill House, the history of the house, and its inhabitants, Mrs. Montague appropriates the notion that those who lived before had traumatic experiences, which require her display of sympathy. In contrast with her avowed sympathy for the departed and their pains, Mrs. Montague constantly shuns Eleanor; even when Hill House communicates through the Planchette that she wants to talk with Eleanor, she ignores the other woman. Far from reading the meaning behind Hill House's request, Mrs. Montague does not advise any caution against this attempt at communication and looks down on Eleanor's psychic abilities. This hypocritical portrayal serves as a warning against an insincere (or primararily ontology-based) engagement with the spectral.

Thus, in their distinct ways, by ignoring Eleanor's alienation from the group and her loss of self through identification with Hill House, Theodora, Luke, Mr., and Mrs. Montague fail to understand Hill House, its intentions, or its history. Hill House never conceals that it is an unwelcoming presence for humans and exudes an air of hostility which everyone who sees the building can sense. In addition, during their stay, Hill House reveals that its current state is, in part, shaped by the events that befell its previous occupants by drawing the investigating

visitors to its library where Hugh Crain's ideas regarding women and morality, in addition to his treatment of his daughters can be unearthed. Hill House also reveals that its state of being a specter is tied to the trauma of childhood as the qualities of the nursery and its haunting in the form of children in pain show. This honesty of intent becomes misinterpreted by all its visitors, and each finds a different, personally influenced interpretation that speaks over Hill House. Since the house lays its nature bare in its architecture and history, the dismissal of the danger of submersion into the patriarchal ideologies it poses to the already vulnerable women by recourse to science, normalization, and faux spiritualism proves dangerous, especially when combined with their dismissal of Eleanor's vulnerability as attention-seeking. On the other hand, Eleanor constructs a dream scenario in which the intentions of Hill House are not what the house portrays to the world but what she wishes to be. Inscribing her desire to belong, to have a home, a mother-like presence in her life onto Hill House, Eleanor interprets the house's attempts at taking her spiritually and mentally hostage as an act of caring. The unwillingness to face the haunting as it is without attributing the wishes, goals, and dreams of the self to the specter and an inability to refer to the consequences of the specters of the past in the present moment are what prove disastrous and lead to Eleanor's suicide.

The haunting in and of Hill House is portrayed as connected to the gender ideologies and their disastrous influence on women, both those who lived in the past, and those who were still far from being liberated from patriarchal norms and demands when Jackson wrote this novel. This chapter attempted to illustrate how societal injustices and internalization of dominant ideologies are portrayed through the supernatural phenomena of Hill House. It also claimed that the manner in which haunting is depicted in *The Haunting of Hill House* can fall under Derrida's notion of specters and leads to an inspection of the characters' success at utilizing hauntology to understand this spectrality. To that end, the conclusion of the analysis of *The Haunting of Hill House* can be made with Derrida's understanding of the ghostliness as belonging to "those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence, nationalist, racist, colonialist, sexist, or other kinds of exterminations, victims of the oppressions of capitalist imperialism or any of the forms of totalitarianism," and the sense of justice that exists independently of state laws as something that is possible only if those who encounter the specter can show the responsibility of respecting those who no longer exist (xviii). Since the characters in *The Haunting of Hill House* prove incapable of such a responsibility in a variety of attitudes that have been discussed above, the novel's interpretation from the perspective of hauntology leads to the confirmation that Hill House is a spectral presence, and those who try to understand it cannot communicate with it in an ethical and hauntological manner.

CHAPTER 4

A HAUNTOLOGICAL READING OF *WHITE IS FOR WITCHING*

The Nigerian-British author Helen Oyeyemi's third book, *White Is for Witching* (2009) chronicles the events that lead to the disappearance of Miranda Silver, a girl aged eighteen with a history of pica. She is haunted by the Silver House at 29 Barton Road where she lives with her father Luc and twin brother Eliot. Following a non-linear chronology, the story commences in the aftermath of Miranda's disappearance, and establishes conflicting accounts of her disappearance in the form of those of her brother Eliot, Miranda's girlfriend Ore, and the Silver House itself, which first gained consciousness when it was owned by Miranda's great-grandmother. In narrating Miranda's haunting by the house which leads to her disappearance, and which commenced on the eve of the death of the twins' mother, *White Is for Witching* utilizes a timeline with gaps and blanks to intensify the sense of being haunted. It is worth noting that *White Is for Witching* attributes willpower and consciousness to the house through its own point of view and narratorial power, which, at times, contradict other characters' accounts.

This chapter seeks to interpret the nature of Miranda's disappearance, which, through the polyphonic narration, can be viewed in a variety of ways from the vantage point of hauntology. The narrative does not favor one interpretation over another. All the time, it remains likely that the specter of the Silver House and its *goodlady* persona are the figments of Miranda's and Ore's imagination and that the chapters dedicated to the house on 29 Barton Road are fabrications. However, this possibility is not posed in a way that nullifies the alternative that the Silver House possesses a hostile consciousness and can influence both the generations of the Silver women and those it considers the enemy. For this reason, for a novel that does away with reliable accounts, *White Is for Witching* offers sufficient support for the interpretation that the haunting exists and is not merely psychological. One of the ways Miranda's disappearance is interpreted is that she is imprisoned inside the walls of the Silver House as a ghost after her death by suicide. This chapter will utilize this interpretation since it lends itself to a reading that explores the success of the characters' hauntological engagement and approaches to the highly hostile Silver House most effectively. Drawing from this reading, this study also argues that Miranda attempts to engage with the house by utilizing a

hauntological approach, in the process unearthing the truth of her family legacy as steeped in xenophobia and the unaddressed consequences of imperialism. Here this study's argument pertaining to *White Is for Witching* that the specter is not always the Other, the emergence of which While she first engages with the house as it wants her to by showing a willingness to believe its benevolent appearance, once she has begun to understand what the house wants, she offers resistance to the house's power over her. While her resistance to the house creates a conflict of interests, it is nevertheless the result of her having actually listened to the haunting presence of the house. Not ceasing this two-way communication with the Silver House, Miranda continues to learn more about herself and the spectral presence of the house. This full understanding leads her to an act of self-sacrifice as a means of averting the house's never-ending, cyclical grip on generations of the Silver women. In her understanding, she expresses a refusal to be submerged into its value system of neocolonial dominance. In this way, more astute in her engagement with the house than Eleanor Vance of *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) had been, Miranda Silver displays that listening to the specters may not always be with the purpose of rehabilitating them or serving them the due justice. Instead, this chapter argues that just like the specter or the revenant may be that of the subaltern masses, the voiceless victims, what returns as a specter can also be the remnants of whitewashed crimes of the past that carry themselves into the present. Here embodied by the Silver House, the specters of the past are carried into the present in the form of "British border politics" (Ilott; *New Postcolonial British Genres* 62) and other forms of microaggressions against non-white Britons.

Similar to the outline of Chapter 3, this chapter will commence by attempting to illustrate how Silver House is a haunting house, first by looking at its traits of consciousness, then moving to the features it exhibits in terms of malicious intent. After having addressed the house's racist, xenophobic, and discriminating perspective and actions, it will look into the influence the Silver House exercises on the Silver women in general and Miranda Silver in particular. At this point, a distinction between a ghost and a soucouyant, which is heavily featured in the novel through Miranda's pica and the influence the house exerts on her and other Silver women, will be made. The adoption of an indigenous creature of folklore closely allied with the Western figure of the vampire in a haunting house narrative that centers on the legacies of racism and xenophobia is significant enough to warrant discussion. In addition, the fact that Oyeyemi crafts her fiction by drawing from a variety of alternative cultural and folkloric narratives means that "cultural and social contexts . . . the imaginative spaces Oyeyemi constructs" and how these "intersect with lived contemporary and historical, social and political realities" become distinctly important (Buckley and Ilott 3).

After covering that, this study is going to look into the danger the house poses to Miranda by rendering the girl a danger to others and how both Miranda and the Black and immigrant characters try to come up with strategies that help them deal with the spectral hatred of the Silver House by starting to understand that the house's haunting and the larger mechanisms of oppression and imperialism are connected. This is only achievable by hearing what the house has to say and compare it with the everyday acts of aggression. This chapter claims that while Miranda is at risk of succumbing to the wishes of the Silver House and the figure of the goodlady that is an amalgamation of the house's hostile spirit and the minds and bodies of Silver women, she nevertheless hears what the house wants to convey, and in the process, understands its desires. What makes Miranda's situation different from Eleanor's is this understanding of the house's true nature that actually provides her with the necessary information to stop her from unwillingly fulfilling what the house wants. In addition, other characters' engagement with the Silver House and its haunting will be discussed by posing the attitude of the Nigerian housekeeper Sade, and the Black British adopted daughter of a white British couple Ore against Miranda's brother Eliot Silver and their French father, Luc Dufresne. Showing their different reactions to the haunting and the social problems of the 2000s Dover, this chapter aims to emphasize the idea that hauntological engagement is not possible without an awareness of the issues of the present, the legacies of the past, and a willingness to face the unsavory aspects of one's personal, national, and familial history.

In an interview dating back to 2014, Oyeyemi describes *White Is for Witching*, as a novel "in a way . . . unlikeable" because it talks about racism and eating disorders and hauntings" and "doesn't want to be read, in some way" (Quinn). This layered narrative where racism, mental disorders, hauntings, and mythological figures merge can be described as a challenging read only in the sense that it requires an engagement from the reader without offering a neatly solved mystery or a sterically excised ghost. In their "Introduction" *to Telling It Slant: Critical Approaches to Helen Oyeyemi*, Chloé Buckley and Sarah Ilott describe Oyeyemi's narrative style as falling under Barthes' notion of "writerly text" (2). Writerly texts, in contrast to "readerly texts," which offer a relatively stable, mediated meaning, are "ourselves writing, before the infinite play of the world . . . is traversed, intersected, stopped, plasticized by some singular system" (qtd. in Buckley & Ilott 2). Natalya Din-Kariuki makes a similar claim in her analysis of Oyeyemi's work, which she describes as "challeng[ing] the conventional (particularly nineteenth-century) Western novel's conception of space, time, and narrative voice" ("Natalya Din-Kariuki on Helen Oyeyemi"). In the case of *White Is for Witching*, this is achieved with the utilization of a variety of themes and motifs such as Caribbean folklore, World War II political discourse, eating disorders, the gothic tropes of the haunted house, and

more “in an exploration of twenty-first-century racism” (Din-Kariuki, “Natalya Din-Kariuki on Helen Oyeyemi”). With the house’s point of view that contradicts those of other characters, Oyeyemi utilizes a fractured narrative technique that does not privilege one account of the events as the truth. The narrative purpose of this focalization of the house is twofold: on the one hand, it unsettles the reliability of the other characters’ focalization (if they are shown to lie about one thing, what else can they possibly be hiding from the reader?); on the other, it is a reliable way of conveying the goals of the Silver House. Through the multiplicity of narrative voices, and a fragmentary narration, *White Is for Witching* does not offer closure; instead, it displays a catalogue of possibilities that challenge the dominant modes of writing and reflects the social issues that haunt the text. This mode of writing makes this haunting house novel very suitable for hauntological inquiry. In addition to its subject matter’s ties to the ghostly and the ontological Other, the style of the novel, like hauntology, offers an alternative mode to realism’s attempts to bracket off the specter.

4.1. “There’s something wrong with this house, isn’t there?”: The Silver House as a Haunting Entity

This quality of not wanting to be read Oyeyemi which locates in the narrative is also reflected in the Silver House at the center of the narrative. Not eager to have any visitors other than generations of Silver women, the house tries to get rid of most of its visitors. We see evidence of this in its attempts to toy with the sensations of Miranda’s father, Luc, and its dislike of the immigrant workers in the house, such as the family with two daughters and, later, the new Nigerian housekeeper Sade. In addition, the house dislikes being turned into a holiday resort and directs this dislike toward the Black holidaymakers. The Silver House acts as an allegory for the nation’s ideals of whiteness at large (King 62), with the vengeful spirit of the house acting as a direct reflection of the “growing xenophobia in Dover” and Britain (Satkunananthan; “Monsters” 129).

In *White Is for Witching*, the Silver House is portrayed as a specter, a revenant whose comings and goings are unpredictable in the sense Derrida utilizes; born out of an unaddressed legacy, the specter comes into existence by means of a return to haunt the present moment. This consciousness of the revenant is focused on two complementary pursuits: keeping the Silver women within its bounds and shutting out and harming anyone it considers an outsider. Since the house’s foundation as a haunting presence is rooted in the unaddressed hateful impulses of the great-grandmother of Miranda, Anna Good, the notion of the outsider which the house accepts is anyone who is not a white British citizen. As was the case for Hill House, the starting point for the claim that the house displays hostile tendencies is the notion that the house is a

conscious presence. The most direct evidence for the house's consciousness comes from chapters with its own focalization. From the house's point of view, the readers are privy to its thoughts and machinations. This is a departure from the ambiguous willpower of Hill House in *The Haunting of Hill House* that is felt by everyone who enters the house without the location of its source.

The best evidence for the hostile origins of Silver House and its rise to a conscious entity is found in an account the house gives of the xenophobic great-grandmother of Miranda Silver, who raised the mother of Miranda. Having married into a wealthy family through her marriage, Anna Good learns of her husband's death while on duty as an RAF pilot during the Second World War when she was the sole occupant of the Silver House. Recounting an event where it "cried and cried for an hour or so, unable to bear the sound of [its] voice, so shrill and pleading, but unable to stop the will of the wind wheeling through it, cold in [its] insides," the house traces its birth to this event when it heard its voice for "the first and last time" (*White Is for Witching* 23). We can interpret the lack of response the house got from Anna Good despite its cries and the fact that the house has hazy memories of this nascent emergence as the point where it began to gain consciousness. Its coinciding with Anna Good's residence creates a connection between the two. In addition, the house develops into a more advanced stage of consciousness through Anna Good's response to grief. She expresses hate toward the enemy soldiers, in addition to Black people, immigrants, and anyone whom she thinks of as an outsider and, more importantly, as a disrupting force to the comfort with which the British Empire provided her. When she says, "I hate them . . . Blackies, Germans, killers, dirty . . . dirty killers. He should have stayed here with me. Shouldn't have let him leave. Bring him back, bring him back, bring him back to me," Anna Good expresses her ill wish on anyone who is not a white British citizen quite openly (118). When communicating with Miranda through its identity as the goodlady (an entity the Silver women believe to exist and, in the end, can be interpreted as an embodiment of the will of the house by the Silver women themselves), the house claims it "chose to be created," in answer to the question whether it chose "to be good, or [was it] so created" (68). Besides the curious omission of goodness as a quality in the answer, this response points in the direction of the idea that while some form of weak potential for emergence lay dormant in the house, it was through the specific conditions in which the house and Anna Good interacted that it came to be a fully sentient being. The Silver House never forgets its origins, and by the time Miranda Silver moves in, it has become a spatial replication of Anna Good's intent and desires.

When viewed from a hauntological lens, the connection between the house's current hostility toward minorities becomes connected to its history. Having internalized Anna Good's hatred, the Silver House interprets this xenophobic, hateful side of Anna Good as "that part of her that was older than her" and thinks this "will always tie [it] to her, to her daughter Jennifer, to Jennifer's stubborn daughter Lily, to Lily's even more stubborn daughter Miranda" (*White Is for Witching* 118). This idea that whatever hatred was in Anna Good's heart, it was older than she, opens itself to a Derridean reading of the return of the revenant quite well. Just as the 1940s Great Britain was very well connected to its eighteenth and nineteenth-century colonial past, the early twenty-first century setting of the novel relies on the legacy it derives from the post-war history of immigration, discrimination, and imperialism. Thus, in the present moment of the novel, as a result of this identification with Anna Good, the Silver House maintains extreme hostility toward strangers while attempting to entrap the female descendants of Anna Good, whom it considers "a mother of [it]," having given it "a kind of life, its, the kind of alive [it is]" (24). Having emerged from the conscious and subconscious crevices of Anna Good's mind, the house outlives her hatred and her existence, making the revenant a constant that never departs yet keeps returning. It can resurrect Anna Good "to play in [its] puppet show," like a specter, and assumes that Anna Good "will forgive [it]" because when she is resurrected, "it is not really [her]" (24). This difference between the house and Anna Good is akin to the distinction between the spirit and the specter Derrida makes when he says, "[t]he specter is of the spirit, it participates in the latter and stems from it even as it follows it as its ghostly double" (*Specters* 156-7). In this understanding, when one stops to distinguish between the two, the spirit "incarnates itself, as spirit, in the specter," and the specter becomes "the carnal form of the spirit," which embodies its essence and appearance (5). However, when both become manifest simultaneously, the specter causes the spirit's departure at the moment of its reappearance (5). In addition, the house knows Anna Good would have agreed with its reasoning since it was fashioned into existence and action by her faulty, unaddressed trauma response under the direct influence of the dominant ideologies of the period. The Silver House becomes a fixture that reutilizes its founding energy as a never-ending revenant. This state of constant return of one's spirit, long after their corporeal existence is lost, makes Silver House a rigid and demanding place. Since Anna Good was hateful of others, it continues to attempt to oust anyone who is not a female descendant of the woman; since Anna Good hated Black people, it is openly hostile toward Black people, other people of color, and ethnic minorities. On the flip side of this expulsive tendency, since Anna Good felt comforted in the idea that the house can protect her and that Andrew Silver would have lived if he had stayed in the house, the Silver House fashions itself into a prison for the Silver women, which can extend its influence even when they are away from it and always attempts to bring them back.

One of the applications of the house's urge to keep the Silver women near is its refusal to let the Silver women leave its premises. We first see this fixed intent of keeping these women within its bounds in its refusal to let Miranda's mother, Lily, go. Complaining about her as "[s]tupid, stupid Lily," the Silver House claims, "Lily had been warned not to go to Haiti," it also says it "warned her" (*White Is for Witching* 8). However, speaking to the living is not the only talent the Silver House boasts of. Unlike the gauzy ghost of Hamlet's father, the Silver House admits to having played a role in the mysterious disappearance of Jennifer, Lily's mother, by creating a space inside its walls for Jennifer to continuously exist in a state of unending adolescence, frozen in time in her mind, yet continuing to age otherwise. This example shows that even if the house does not like the personality of a Silver woman (in the case of Jennifer Silver, this becomes obvious through its opinions on the woman who wanted to leave Anna Good and her newborn daughter, Lily), it has retained Anna Good's initial wish for keeping people near her, in the confines of the house. The house justifies the alleged imprisonment of Jennifer in its walls as "necessary" because "Jennifer really meant to abandon her daughter, and how could [it] allow that?" (83). Here, in addition to the desire to maintain its inhabitants, the house assumes a moralizing personality which dictates what is proper and allowed and what is not. In the present, the same wish to keep the Silver women close is displayed through the attempts the house makes to keep Miranda home. To that end, it interferes with her studies at Cambridge University, causing her to return home and exacerbating her eating disorder.

For the displays of the house's consciousness and the rest of its abilities, we can turn to other characters' accounts of living in the Silver House and the house's confessions about its influence over various people. Elliot describes the house in physical terms as follows:

> *Our new house had two big brown grids of windows with a row of brick in between each grid. No windows for the attic. From the outside the windows didn't look as if they could be opened, they didn't look as if they were there to let air or light in, they were funny square eyes, friendly, tired. The roof was a solid triangle with a fat rectangular chimney behind it. . . The steps leading up to the house bulge with fist-sized lumps of grey-white flint, each piece a knife to cut your knee open should you slip. Opposite our house there is a churchyard, a low mound of green divided into two. The graves beneath it are unmarked* (16-7).

Anthropomorphic features of the Silver House that resemble the descriptions of Hill House are evident in this excerpt. While, unlike Eleanor and the narrative voice of *The Haunting of Hill House*, Eliot does not call the Silver House categorically evil, the lack of windows and other forms of access from the outside is read as unsettling. Despite the house's apparent unwillingness to let in air and light, the purpose of the windows is to appear friendly. This

first-impression of friendliness is hollow, and the steps of the house reveal the impulse to keep others away which the Silver House continuously displays, the flint material of them functioning like "kni[ves] to cut your knee open" (17). The Gothic formula of a house with a personality is rendered complete through the existence of a churchyard with unmarked graves near it. Once inside, the house offers its inhabitants the loftiness of a castle with winding staircases and narrow hallways. Miranda describes the sensation "the tallness of the house" with its rising walls has on them as "like [they] 're in a castle" (17). After an initial survey of the house, Elliot describes it as a "[w]icked house," but Miranda arrives at the conclusion that it is "[m]agic" (18). Five-storied, the Silver House contains a run-down lift with which the floors are connected and a "dim and long and deep" shelter "beneath the sitting room with the fireplace," which can be accessed with a trapdoor (20). On the third floor, the bedrooms of the owners of the house, Luc, Miranda, and Eliot, can be found. Of all these, Miranda's room contains eccentric features and is entirely dark. Called the psychomantium by Miranda's mother, Lily, for its darkness, the room is the location Miranda finds a ball of chalk when she enters it for the first time, and later Miranda is often found eating sticks of chalk, as if the house encourages her pica.

In addition to its qualities as an imposing, late Victorian structure, the Silver House does not have a fixed size or angle. There is once again a display of willpower reminiscent of the powers of Hill House in the spatial dimensions of the house. Making itself smaller and easier to see for Miranda when she is sick and unable to see properly because of her eating disorder, the Silver House proves it can "[depress its] floors" and "[make] angles of descent that led her across the hallway and through [its] rooms and up [its] stairs with the decisiveness of someone who could see properly" (193). Just as it can put this power to good use as it does in Miranda's case, the house can become more imposing or crushing in an attempt to intimidate people. This is what happened years ago when the children were young when the Silver House paralyzed Luc, and he found himself unable to move when he encountered the twins playing with Lily in a game that turned violent and resulted in the twins' aggressive tugging of Lily's hair. The house explains that the reason why Luc could not move was that "[it]'d leant all [its] weight, every wall and corridor, on his shoulders," and boasts that Luc should consider himself lucky for having been allowed to remain on his feet (74). This account of the house exercising the kind of power where it can change shape and weight ends with a picture of the perfect nuclear family of the "[g]ood mother, good father, good children, all watched over by [the Silver House]," (75) once again confirming that all the consciousness of the house is geared toward the control of its inhabitants through various means of aid and hindrance. The house's observation of its inhabitants and its control over them also show that, as a haunting house,

the Silver House utilizes the visor effect of the specter, i.e., it can observe the living without being observed in return or without making the observed party know when they are being observed.

Inhabiting the body of inanimate and animate objects is another quality the house possesses and utilizes to select who can and must stay and who must leave. The most overt display of the house possessing other objects is when it inhabits the body of a mannequin Miranda bought for a sewing project. Possessing its body, the Silver House makes an apple from the tree outside of Eliot's window fall inside and makes it roll out of Eliot's room down the hallway to Miranda's door, which it finds closed. When the apple is found by the housekeeper Sade, the house makes her eat it in an attempt to poison her and render her incapable of stopping it. In that instance, the house expresses a preference for inanimate objects like the mannequin over "the looking people" because "things progress quite slowly for them" (137). As an earlier reference to the looking people was used to describe the people the house captures as a sort of phantom to inhabit its walls, we can deduce that it can control those specters. The house resorts to the same trick to attack the American couple staying for vacation: after the woman consumes the apple, she experiences a trance-like state where she admits she feels like choking on the apple. In another instance, the same mannequin is used to carry leaflets with politically hostile messages against minorities to Ore's room when she visits Miranda in order to intimidate Ore.

The first utilization of the mannequin offers clues to some of Miranda's experiences, which can be likened to possession or doubling, where she has no recollection of what happened in events in which she is thought to have played a role. A minor example of this is the contents of the one half of Miranda's plate being devoured by an entity that is not her. Although "there was no one else at the table" when she sat, "[a]ll the vegetables" on the other side of the plate "disappeared" (78). While she can account for "the line she'd drawn in the middle of the plate," "the residue of gravy on her side," the clean lack of any sign on the other side unsettles her. Miranda ends this awkward episode of a presence being with her by thinking she sees a girl sitting on the other side of the plate with jagged teeth and a quality of being unreal without a third dimension (78). Thinking, "She was perfect. Miranda but perfect," Miranda describes this double as "purer than crystal, so pure that she dissolve[s] and Miranda [can't] see her anymore but still [feels] her there" (78-9). This Miranda is similar to the girl Miranda is found to be dreaming about at another point in the book in which she discovers her mother's old drawings of a girl who looks like Miranda in the present. While it is possible that the vision is a product of Miranda's hallucination, if we consider the existence of the house as a vengeful

and conscious entity and its manipulation of various objects, what seems more likely is that this girl with jagged teeth is either a direct manifestation of the darker side of Miranda the Silver House wishes her to see and embrace, or the house is conjuring a form of model or puppet that looks like Miranda.

The possibility that the Silver House possesses or directly influences Miranda Silver and the other Silver women, not just through its haunting of them but through using or imitating their bodies, reaches its completion in the notion of "the goodlady." First appearing as a tale Lily told to Miranda, the goodlady is a presence Miranda both admires and fears, leading her to make the decision to eat, to get better, to go away, or to stay according to the wishes of this entity. It can be discerned that Lily told Miranda about the goodlady while she was growing up. In a memory Miranda has about the goodlady and her mother, Lily describes the goodlady as "very beautiful . . . but very strict" and claims that "[e]verything she does is necessary, and she makes no exception to any rule," and equating her impact on herself with motherhood, she says that the goodlady is "in [their] blood," and she is "like a tradition, it's very serious when she's disobeyed" (66). However, this severe goodness of the goodlady contains the following threat: "she's told me that if I can't get you to eat, she will. You must eat real food, and you must eat as much as you can manage, or you might end up with the goodlady for your mother" (66). Since Lily grew up with Anna Silver as a parental figure, who is called GrandAnna by her and her children, the equation of the goodlady with Anna Good and the Silver House is hidden in Lily's warning to Miranda. Lily fears that if she fails at motherhood by being unable to make Miranda eat again, she may lose her daughter to the goodlady like her own mother, Jennifer, who could not be made to raise her daughter. The implication of tradition and the idea that the goodlady is in their blood show that the Silver House has successfully imparted the belief that its consciousness and goals are ultimately tied with that of the Silver women. Just as Lily has raised Miranda on the legend of the goodlady, Lily was also raised by the house. We learn that figures of random people Lily made up and drew in her childhood talked to her, and she claims they were alive because they "talked and moved and told [her] who [she] was" in the form of "Lily Silver, you are more precious than gold" (71). This is in keeping with the idea that the Silver House believes the descendants of Anna Good are special, and that is why they need to be protected from the outside world, which, once again, considering Anna Good's views of the world, is a dangerous place.

It is also mentioned that the house can make the apples in the garden outside grow. These are called all-season apples, named for their ability to grow independently of the season and the temperature. The house describes them as having "a strange, dual colouring" with one side

"coma-white, and the other side is the waxiest red" (138). Based on Ore's disgust toward and Miranda's fear of the apples, if we also consider Sade's poisoning by them, these apples become dangerous items the Silver House can use for its own gains, making those it wishes sick and sending the apples out as a form of threat.

4.2. "We are the goodlady": Clinical Hauntings and Soucouyant Legacies

Once the narrative goes back to the years before Miranda's disappearance, it becomes apparent that Miranda is targeted by the Silver House and the goodlady to be shaped into someone else the house wants her to become. The influence of the house over Miranda and the other Silver women becomes relevant with the allegations against Miranda for doing things that she does not remember. While Miranda battles with the grief of losing her mother and her deteriorating eating disorder, she also has to deal with the anger of the Kosovan immigrants from school, who are furious with her because they believe she was responsible for the attacks on their relatives. They claim Miranda has been involved with them prior to the attacks on their cousins, brothers, and other relatives, while Miranda swears that she was at a mental health facility following her relapse during the period the Kosovan boys were attacked. If we take the abilities of the house, including but not limited to conjuring people who died in flesh and bone and using inanimate objects for physical movement, into account, it is easy to draw the conclusion that the house's hatred of immigrants and its fixation on allegedly protecting the Silver women make these targeted attacks related to it. In addition to this ominous clue, the readers get a glimpse of the house's thoughts on Miranda's eating practices and eating disorder. The house encourages her not to eat edible foods so that she can become sicklier and ready to be molded into the identity it wants her to adopt. The Silver House even praises her sickly appearance while rearing her to make her become a soucouyant, an indigenous folkloric vampire that survives by eating people's life energy at night.

In the beginning, raised by her mother Lily on the legends of the goodlady, Miranda listens to the Silver House and obeys its wishes. Right before Lily's death, when Eliot makes her concerned about Lily's safety and says that if she falls asleep, Lily is going to die, Miranda counters it by saying, "[t]he goodlady will take care of Lily" and "[s]he promised" (6). While it is probable that it was Lily who made the promise about the goodlady's protection, Miranda's belief in an entity she has never seen and in the idea that "[s]he likes [them]" evinces that she also believes that the house favors them (6). This belief in the house or its manifestation as the goodlady as a protective, guarding presence matches with how the house views itself, constantly justifying its actions as necessary for the well-being of its inhabitants

or the fulfillment of what is right according to the worldview Anna Good and the house created together.

After Lily's death and Miranda's return home from the facility, hints as to the true intentions of the house can be seen in its displays of hostility against other people rather than its direct engagement with Miranda. While it feels like she is being accompanied in her grief for her mother by the house, as in the example when she leaned against a wall, it "had a damp, high temperature to it, like tears on skin" (58), in reality, the house harbors hostile feelings for even the recently deceased Lily for going to Haiti. More importantly, in this period, it starts to target the non-white visitors and residents of the house directly. After the entrapment of one of the daughters of the housekeeper in the elevator, the entire family leaves, saying that they feel their stay is only going to make them "more afraid and then something bad will happen" (50). This fear is not unfounded, as when they find the girl, Deme, she is unable to give any reason for spending the night in the elevator, answering questions of "Why did [she] get into the lift so late, when everyone was sleeping?" and "[W]here is [her] sense? Why didn't [she] just ring the alarm?" with "I don't know" (36). After this instance, despite the normally friendly and cheerful nature of the girls, when Miranda visits them to see if they are doing fine, they do not open their door for her and stop talking once they learn Miranda is at their door. At another time, right before their departure and after their unease toward Miranda softens, they write a farewell letter in which they warn Miranda to be careful in the house. The letter says, "<u>This house is bigger than you know!</u> There are extra floors, with lots of people on them. They are looking people. They look at you, and they never move. We do not like them. We do not like this house, and we are glad to be going away" (57; emphasis in the original). The mentioning of looking people is significant, considering that the house also uses the same term when expressing its preference for the inanimate mannequin. Since Miranda, Sade, and Ore later encounter the generations of Silver women who live inside the walls of the house, the looking people may mean the humans the house conjures up in death, surviving through their ties to the house in a palimpsest form. Even before the house appears as a threat to Silver women, and Miranda discovers the existence of the extra floors and all these people, the house makes its hostilities known to those it considers an outsider, not sparing the little girls Suryaz and Deme from its attacks.

Likewise, when the new housekeeper Sade starts work, she immediately senses something is wrong because the house has no reason to conceal its true nature from people it considers unwanted. Combined with Sade's knowledge of the indigenous Yoruba beliefs in the supernatural, the threat the house poses becomes all too obvious. One of the first things Sade

does is to create a juju doll for protection, citing its function as "[c]ompany," before murmuring to herself during this process of juju making that "[s]omething is wrong" (97). Her instincts prove correct, and Sade finds herself directly targeted by the house. After the cumulation of more minor incidents and Sade's interactions with Miranda to better understand what is amiss, the Silver House decides to attack the woman with the all-season apples when Sade comes across the one the house was trying to place in Miranda's room. While Sade's juju offers protection, it is not enough in the end. The mannequin controlled by the Silver House manages to manipulate a catatonic Sade whose heart appears to have stopped into chewing the poisonous white side of the apple. In this event, the house's monologue proves that everything it does is racially charged: "Juju is not enough to protect you. Everything you have I will turn against you. I'll turn sugar bitter for you. I'll take your very shield and crack it on your head. White is for witching, so ti gbo? Do you understand now? White is for witching, Sade goodbye" (175). The book acquires its title from this address to Sade, and the "white" in *White Is for Witching* is shown to be alluding to whiteness as a racial concept. "Witching," both in the sense of doing witchcraft and a form of enchantment that can influence others, is reserved for those who possess whiteness. In addition, the attacks on minorities that take place outside the confines of the house play an important role in the novel as they become connected to Miranda. Considering that the house sees itself as a refuge for the Silver women and is tolerant of white visitors, it would not be far-fetched to argue that it extends this territorial claim to the entirety of Dover and, on a symbolic level, all of Britain. For this reason, the attack on Kosovan refugees of different ages, all of whom are men, is traced back to the house for the fact that all of the victims had prior contact with a girl who looks like Miranda, who "has short hair and smokes . . . weird red and white cigarettes" (112) and most importantly, claims her name is Anna, the name of Miranda's GrandAnna.

While this hostility the house as the Goodlady shows overtly targets non-white people who are not family members, the house also cites its unfavorable opinion of Luc, Miranda, and Eliot's father, whom she views as another outsider. It also makes Luc and Eliot feel unwelcome compared to Miranda and Lily. Both Eliot and Luc experience nightmares of being locked out of the house, and all the elements of these dreams are the same for both men. I will be quoting the following excerpt despite its length as it provides insightful information about the message the house is trying to convey and the role Lily and Miranda play in the house's plans:

> *[Luc] The key breaks when I try to turn it in the lock, the handle breaks under my hand. It's pathetic, really, but I walk around to the front of the house and start pleading. Let me in! I don't know who I'm talking to. The house just stands there,*

> *dark, absolutely silent. I put a rock in my pocket and climb a tree in the garden, thinking I can open a window, and climb in. But I can't even touch the windowsill—it gives off a strange, feathered static that bites me. Back on the ground I shout out, Lily. I shout out, Lily can you let me back in? A light goes on in the house. It goes on on this floor. And each time I dream this, I try to work out what room the light goes on in, as if that matters. But I just can't work it out. It's not mine, not yours, it's not the light in the psychomantium. It's not the bathroom light. It's like there's an extra window, or an extra room I haven't seen before. Three figures come to the window. One is in the middle and has her arms around the other two. I can't see them, just their silhouettes through the blind. They're standing there watching, waiting for me to go away. They want me to go away. I know who they are; it's Lily and Miranda. I don't know who the other one is. But suddenly I'm glad that the blind is over the window, because I have this feeling that they look different, not the way I thought they did. I'm cold then, as cold as I was hot. Then I wake up*. (133-4).

Three things can be discerned from this dream sequence. Either the house or its more well-meaning inhabitants and their subconscious (Lily and Miranda are likely candidates) are sending a warning message to Luc and Eliot. Although they are both white, and Eliot is a titular Silver, the house excludes these men from the list of people it considers its own and worthy of protection on the basis of their gender. Lastly, through whichever means, in the dream sequence, Luc is able to sense that the existence of the Silver women he sees in his dreams is different from their existence in the world. The house maintains them as revenants while subjecting them to changes it considers necessary and desirable, rendering them different. Also, while admonishing Jennifer, Lily, and Miranda at times, the house is always protective of them according to its own understanding, and it fawns over Miranda in order to turn her into the version of her it desires. Unlike this treatment, it approaches Eliot with distrust, viewing him as unreliable. Taking away the credibility of a human character and his focalization, the Silver House urges the reader to "take Eliot with a pinch of salt" because "[h]e is a terrible liar" and gives examples about Eliot's past and present for proof (226). Most of these are minor scale lies such as how although he did not need prescription glasses, he faked being unable to see. What is more interesting is the build-up to the revelation that Eliot was Miranda's stalker at Cambridge while he claimed he was on an internship in South Africa. Miranda and Eliot both apply to Cambridge University after Miranda comes home from the treatment facility. While Eliot is seen as the candidate more likely to be admitted, partly because Miranda spent her senior year battling a serious eating disorder, it is Miranda who receives a letter of acceptance. After spending an aimless summer, Eliot decides he is going to travel to South Africa on an internship. For this reason, for the majority of the narrative where Miranda feels like she is being followed by someone in Cambridge, this unease is attributed to her mental health or the house's influence until the house claims that the stalker was Eliot who never went to South Africa. This account serves two purposes. It disrupts the narrative reliability of every character, including the house itself, and shows that, unlike those

of the Silver women, the house is unwilling to protect Eliot's secrets. As for Luc, the house's tolerance of him seems rooted in the idea that it considers him inefficient, thus not a threat to its plans. Considering Luc never suspects the house of being haunted, that he discards Lily's wishes not to move there, and that once Miranda is sick, he keeps his unwavering belief that he can fix her by making the right kinds of food, the Silver House's estimation of him as incapable of stopping it is correct. In fact, when Luc is trying to help Miranda with her eating disorder by cooking special recipes for her and restricting her access to non-edible items like chalk, the Silver House neutralizes his positive impact on the situation with ease. The primary example of this is its ability to hide the food Luc cooks for Miranda and make it disappear even after the father banned her daughter from hiding non-edible items like chalk in the drawers.

A quality Miranda has in common with Eleanor is her tendency for a loss of identity. This idea that Miranda is particularly vulnerable to the house because of her unstable sense of self and her tendency to dream is once again reminiscent of Eleanor Vance and the way she has been chosen by Hill House. Hospitalized after her touch with reality is shattered following her mother's sudden death in Haiti, an event she says that took place on "the splinter night," on first glimpse Miranda can be likened to Eleanor in her consolidation into the house as a part of it (181). Like Eleanor, toward the end of *The Haunting of Hill House*, Miranda loses track of time and location, thinking she was at school when, in fact, she did not go there because she was sick and believes she is no longer alive when everyone tells her differently.

Like the older woman from Jackson's novel, Miranda feels disassociated from her thoughts and body. In terms of her body, Miranda is dissatisfied with her appearance in a way that goes beyond concerns over beauty yet nevertheless contains that preoccupation as well. At the start of the book, she is found imagining how an alternate Miranda, one with the surname Dufresne after her father, would have turned out and pictures "a thin, already tall girl towering on heels" with "very straight black hair in a bob," who looked and felt more adult than Miranda did (47). Similarly, at another point, partially in a way that aligns with her eating disorder's symptom of a preoccupation with perfection, she thinks that "[a] perfect person has no joints" (48). Instead, they have "[e]yes without eyelids or eyelashes," and "arms unmarked by the ripple of skin that shows where the limbs bend," as their "portrait is lifelike despite their strange clothes, a black dress that fastens without buttons or a zip, just a straight line across the material to show that it was not pulled on over the head" (48). Her elaborations on the perfect person her late mother sketched draw her in the direction of the construction of the perfect Miranda: A swanlike neck that met the jaw at a devastating but impossible angle. Me, but perfect. . . Me

after the clinic, but perfect. Lily did you know? How did you know?" (49). Finding the ideal of herself but improved according to her standards in her mother's drawings, Miranda experiences a longing for something she cannot become as a living, breathing human being.

Her disassociation makes her feel as if her body does not belong to her, and she interprets these sensations with the possibility of having been "supplanted by someone that she only was vaguely aware of," unable to even experience pain (125). At another point, this dissociative state extends to her brain and thoughts, and she expresses a strong desire to escape the body and mind that did not feel hers: "The skull was temporary, the skull collected the badness together and taught it discipline, that was all" (96). Feeling like the face is not hers, she thinks, "[t]hat is not my face," it becomes something she needs to "get away from," "peel . . . back" (96). As her condition worsens, she cannot remember factual information about herself, such as her date of birth, and checks her twin's ID card to know her age and, in order not to forget, she writes "1982 large on a sheet of paper" in her room (132). As she starts to lose track of her reality, her strange fascination with the perfect version of herself turns into terror at the thought of actually "becoming as perfect as the person shown to her on paper in Lily's studio" (132).

However, in all her confusion and disassociation, unlike Eleanor, who, while indeed haunted by Hill House, is led into believing the house wants her to become a part of it without any encouragement, Miranda has plenty of reasons for believing the house is after her. While both women lack a stable identity and a grounded notion of reality, in Miranda's case, the house is directly interfering with her physical and mental health, transforming her into a person who looks and acts differently to an extent we have no proof for in Eleanor's case. When Miranda claims her mother drew people who look like her after the clinic, there is actual visual proof of it in collaboration with the sightings of another girl who is like the drawing and Miranda at the same time; when Miranda says she feels like she is disappearing slowly, there is the strong argument that everyone who has seen her before claims she looks nothing like her old self. Also, the final revelation that another Miranda lives under her soucouyant's skin according to Ore's story shows us that Miranda does not imagine a change that is not there. Since sufficient proof can be given in favor of Miranda being encouraged to feel that way by the house instead of a form of psychosis completely independent of supernatural causes, this threat of loss of self can be considered one of the biggest the house poses to her.

In addition to having harmful intentions of its own, the house as a haunting presence activates any generational tendency toward harming others by tapping into the women's inherited eating disorder. In time, it plays a role in the metamorphosis of their eating disorder into soucouyant tendencies. This is why Miranda is also portrayed as a danger throughout the novel, with

increasing potential to harm others in accordance with the house's plans. For this reason, the biggest threat the Silver House poses is its attempts to fashion Miranda into a soucouyant who feeds on others' blood and energy. After all, attempts to make her believe she does not exist or she needs to become more perfect, like the images it shows her in the form of old drawings or mysterious shadow visitations, serve the purpose of making Miranda cave into the demands of the Silver House and become a soucouyant who has given into her urges. The danger the house poses, at least in the form of the goodlady, first arises when she faces the Kosovan girls from school who want retribution for their injured relatives through her doubt in her account of the truth. Wondering if the perpetrator can really be her, Miranda feels guilt for something she does not remember committing and logically should not have been able to commit. The readiness she shows in believing she can lose her identity and become someone else is a reoccurring and contrasting fear and desire she experiences. She fears this experience, as it means she can be a danger to others, and the novel implies that if she attacked those boys, it was in the form of a soucouyant. However, a part of Miranda desires to be this other, perfect Miranda who does not need to eat, sleep, or breathe at the cost of this harmful creature. Since the house tries to rear her into the image of that perfect Miranda, it can only mean that this is the Miranda that the house expects will emerge once she gives into its wishes and starts to do what it asks of the girl: feeding in a way that goes beyond pica, into the territory of the vampiric practices of a soucouyant. We see how the house wants her to get sicker and sicker, more likely to succumb to soucouyant habits when Miranda comes back home from Cambridge for the holidays:

> *My Miranda came home from college and her change had almost come full circle. She looked so beautiful. Tiny. Immaculately carved; an ivory wand. Her eyes were oracle's eyes, set deep, deep in the smooth planes of her face. She had six and a half ulcers on the insides of her mouth (one was not yet complete), jewels formed by the acid her stomach had hopefully, uselessly produced. She was no longer able to eat comfortably, even if she wanted to* (*White Is for Witching* 192-3).

So, what is a soucouyant, the creature Miranda is at risk of becoming? Despite the variety of its names ranging from the colloquial hag (Bahamas), fire-hag (Barbados), old-higue (Guyana and Jamaica), old suck (Jamaica) to the more specific soukouyan and soucouyant across the Caribbean, parts of South America and the Bahamas, this folkloric figure of legend can be described as a blood-sucking "evil, wrinkled old woman, who hides by day, but by night sheds her skin wh[ich] she carefully hides in a jar" in order to become "a ball of fire … seek[ing] out . . . sleeping victims . . . whose blood she sucks before returning to her skin" (Allsopp and Alsopp 520). *The Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* from which this description is taken also notes that the only means of defeating the soucouyant is to pour pepper and salt to the

insides of her skin while she is away (520) and points to the generally accepted view that due to the shared characteristics of blood-sucking, transformation into a ball of fire, and ordinary daily appearance, this figure may have in part derived from West African folkloric vampires (520).

In *White Is for Witching*, the soucouyant enters the narrative immediately on the first page in Ore's account of what happened. Even when its role is relegated to the backdrop, the figure of the soucouyant establishes its relevance through Miranda and Ore's shared interest in the figure and Sade's folkloric precautions against the unsettling presence of the house. The next time a description of the figure is made again by Ore, she is narrating about a time before she met Miranda, recalled because of a book on the Caribbean legends her mother gave her as a gift. Ticking off all the criteria mentioned in the dictionary, Ore describes the soucouyant from her favorite story as "the wicked old woman who flies from her body and at night consumes her food, the souls of others—soul food!—in a ball of flame. . . [a]t dawn she returns to her body, which she has hidden in a safe place" (*White Is for Witching* 147). It is not a coincidence that Ore rereads this story right after encountering Miranda for the first time since the day of their interview for Cambridge. Just like the pull she feels for Miranda's mysterious brief appearances, at this point, despite being familiar with the story and its logic, Ore feels sympathy for the figure of the soucouyant, thinking she "seemed more lonely than bad" (148). Yet, aware of the discourse she is engaging in, she enthuses about the possibility of this vulnerability being a trick, "her ability to make it so you couldn't decide if she was a monster" (148). Once she starts Cambridge, unable to get the soucouyant out of her mind, Ore finds herself filled with curiosity about the other vampiric figure after working on her assigned reading of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. She thinks she wants to write about the soucouyant for a possible thesis or a book because, for Ore, this seemingly parasitic figure of folk legend is also a discontented woman who cannot interact with the world. She describes the soucouyant as "a double danger—there is the danger of meeting her, and the danger of becoming her" (155). Not surprisingly, this second mention of the soucouyant marks Ore's second encounter with Miranda, which leads to Miranda's invitation to a walk on campus at night. Later the same day, when Ore meets Miranda in the latter's dorm room, Miranda asks Ore whether "the woman with the covered face" was her mother, and Ore immediately thinks of the soucouyant despite never having seen a woman that fits this description (161).

Miranda is also interested in the soucouyant in a way that shows she understands the specter of the Silver House correctly. The interest Miranda shows in the figure of the soucouyant when Ore tells her the story of the girl who kills the soucouyant evinces some degree of sympathy

or self-identification toward the figure that surpasses Ore's desire to figure out the soucouyant, implying a potential connection through Miranda's strange appetite for non-edible foods because of her pica. At another level, the implication that she listens to the house and can decode its message that it wants her to be like a soucouyant can be detected from her attitude to the soucouyant legend. Miranda views the obliteration of the soucouyant as a victory for the creature as a foreshadowing of her destiny, asking Ore whether the soucouyant getting away counts as the girl in the story getting away, whether she "count[s] as a girl" (166). She also problematizes the boundary between the monster and the girl, questioning what makes the soucouyant a monster in stories in which it is clearly implied this is her nature and ability, prompting the following dialogue:

> *"The soucouyant gets away though. Doesn't she count as a girl?"*
> *". . . No, she doesn't. . . She is a monster. She dies."*
> *"Does she?"*
> *"All monsters deserve to die."*
> *Miranda didn't say anything.*
> *"Miranda . . . Come on. The soucouyant is bad. She sucks the life out of people."*
> *"That is true"* (166-7).

This shared interest in strange tales like the ones Miranda tells and that of the soucouyant is one of the things that brings Miranda and Ore close. Miranda tells a very dark story in which the assumed protagonist, who is on a quest to find someone named Eden, turns out to be looking for a child to eat, and Ore follows it with the story of the girl who kills the soucouyant. The stories establish their different vantage points as the one who has hidden, impermissible appetites and the other who is burdened with defeating the creature with disastrous appetites. As their relationship develops, Ore and Miranda are paired up in a conventionally Gothic predator and prey dynamic, hearkening back to Sheridan Le Fanu's characters Carmilla and Maura and the fairytale couple from "Beauty and the Beast". All the while, it is Miranda's pica that is fast evolving into actual soucouyant feeding urges that acts as an instigator.

The figure of the vampire, used here to mean any form of blood or life-force-draining creature among which the geography-specific figure of the soucouyant belongs, has long been used as a symbol for corruption, danger, and evil. In *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Nina Auerbach aptly describes the adaptive propensities of the figure of the vampire and claims that, unlike the other more rigidly described monsters, "they can be everything we are," "blend[ing] into the changing cultures they inhabit" (6). The vampire, or the blood-sucking figure of any other name, has been used to refer to a number of perceived dangers by various communities, at times stigmatizing particular minorities such as the Jewish people, the Irish, and the immigrants, at others, becoming a representation of the status quo, such as the clerical class,

aristocratic landowners, and capitalist employers (Robinson 15; 75-7; 120; 128-9; Malchow 74). Sara Libby Robinson mentions that "the metaphor of blood allowed any aspect of economic and political power to translate itself into charges of vampirism" (102), while for those who hold this economic and political power, those who stand in opposition, like the anarchists became the counter-cultural vampires. Like the Derridean specter with its timelessness yet specificity in time, vampires who become vessels for powerful and political symbolism are not creatures that manifest themselves the same way for everyone, every culture, and every period. This study aligns itself with the claim that Oyeyemi "recontextualizes" the vampire by taking it from the Stokerian context of the fears of "reverse colonization" embodied by the foreign count and places it in the twenty-first century setting of Dover, where white British Miranda is a danger for Black British Ore through her "fetishistic desire" (Buckley and Ilett 10). Oyeyemi's novel posits the soucouyant not simply in opposition to or as a synonym to Stoker's *Dracula*, but without effacing the figure of Dracula, it situates them side by side, providing the white British soucouyant as an anti-Dracula to the old count who wished to conquer Britain as an outsider as much as he wanted to drain the blood of his victims.

In the context of colonialism and imperialism, the figure of the vampire becomes an even more prominent symbol. Dracula may have become the most well-known and critically acknowledged figure that stands in both for the vampire and the outsider, embodying what Stephen Arata termed "the anxiety of the reverse-colonialism" and is characterized by the fear of the loss of imperial dominance and the acts of colonialism being turned back on the colonizer (623). However, in the Western literary and cultural context, the troubled history of colonial practices, of others like Dracula, or of the Western Self, being likened to sucking one's blood did not start with it. More straightforward depictions of the colonial officers and the colonizing nations as draining vampires who feed on the colonized nations and peoples existed in the discussions of imperialism and slavery (Anatol 7). In Colin Dayan's *Haiti, History, and the Gods* (1995), Haitian folkloric figures such as *soucriants* are interpreted as the symbolic remnants of slavery and the people's recollections of enslavement (qtd. in Anatol 8). Similarly, in the case of the African continent and the similar figures to the soucouyant, in *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa*, Luise White identifies the narratives of vampirism in the region as a distinctly colonial genre (89). Oyeyemi's positioning of the biological daughter of an immigrant who is adopted by a white couple as the figure interested in the soucouyant legend and fighting off the soucouyant turns the tired symbolism of the immigrant as the harmful Other on its head. The fact that Miranda's inherited pica is equated with the development of her soucouyant powers points further toward the notion that

White Is for Witching uses the soucouyant as a powerful metaphor for the problematic legacy of racism and xenophobia the haunting house attempts to bequeath to the new generations, which finds embodiment in Miranda Silver.

The idea that Miranda is not simply haunted by the house, that she is capable of victimizing while simultaneously being a victim, is presented early in the story. The text is laden with Miranda's potential for violence and consumption, leading to the interpretation that Miranda can't escape being an embodiment of the inherited legacy of white British imperialism. Amy King makes a similar argument, emphasizing the inescapability of Miranda's inherited instinct for devouring the Other as a white Briton. While accepting that the potential for violence is portrayed as an inheritance, and that Miranda has to realize that she has been in the position of a beneficiary of this systematic violence; this study concurs with Katie Burton's claim that Miranda, in fact, tries to fight against this violent and dangerous tendency and "dispel her internalized racism" (76). This struggle results in Miranda's suicide which can be interpreted as a last attempt to stop the house's intentions becoming a reality through her body. With this interpretation, the possibility of honest engagement with the specter of the systematic and hegemonic practices of discrimination while one continues to benefit from the system which the specter inhabits is called into question. That is also why Miranda is portrayed as someone who can become a soucouyant. The unsettling power of the soucouyant is the manifestation of a racially motivated desire to subsume the Other and result in its erasure. However, instead of being encouraged, this tendency Miranda inherits is suppressed, both by the girl and her immediate family. Miranda can be said to have succeeded in stopping this influence through her sacrifice only after she accepts that she carries that tendency. Her family's efforts fail because they refuse at first to accept the existence of such an inheritance. While Luc tries to see her pica as fixable through his own efforts, her mother Lily denies Miranda having ever tasted the blood of Anna Good after Miranda claims their GrandAnna fed Eliot and her with her own blood and only Eliot "rubbed it off" (*White Is for Witching* 72). In addition to showing the family's refusal to face the survival of any legacy from Anna Good, this memory also contains past attempts of the great-grandmother that align with the Silver House's current goal of changing Miranda's diet. This suppression is an example of the factors that enable the return of the specter and its continued (non-)existence in the present. Without addressing the past and the present conditions of the specter, it is impossible to begin to communicate with it, and as a consequence, understand, and live with it.

Other portrayals of Miranda as a danger associated with the consumption of blood are found in the descriptions of her physical features, appetite, and eating disorder. Miranda's red lipstick

is likened to blood in various instances; even her brother Eliot thinks that "[t]he red on her mouth was so strong; maybe it was just the early morning but [he'd] never seen a red as startling, as odd . . . [like] she'd bitten her lip" (62). At a much later point, when Miranda confides in Ore that she believes she is not alive, but there is something that is giving her "the appearance of life," Ore thinks it is "that rouge of [hers]" like the blood that sustains the continued existence of a vampire (185). Miranda's association with the house and her family legacy, and the way this legacy of draining blood is connected to their pica, and eating habits are seen when Miranda discovers or hallucinates, depending on one's interpretation of the plural narratives, one of the hidden rooms of the house where Lily, Anna Silver, and Jennifer Silver welcome her to a feast where "[f]ood steamed and sizzled and swam in juices and sauces hot and cold and rich and sweet, there were even sticks of chalk and strips of plastic . . . mak[ing] Miranda hungrier for what was not there" (127). In this instance, Miranda also discovers a fact about the women who welcome her. Anna Silver and Jennifer Silver cannot eat as their mouths are locked with metal padlocks, and Anna Silver conveys the message "Eat for me" with her eyes to Miranda, supported by Jennifer's plea "Eat for us" (128). David Punter mentions that as a symbol, "blood . . . guarantees continuity with the past," and this is utilized by the Silver House with its influence over "female generations, the female bloodline" (32). Miranda also learns that it was Lily who padlocked the mouths of Anna and Jennifer, and her mother tells that to her with pride. This indicates that neither Lily nor Miranda ever wanted to inherit this family legacy. Lily's attempts to get away from the house and her initial hesitation to move there might be related to that. As the next generation, Miranda is expected to take it further, break the family's influence on her, now that the ghost or the presence of her mother is also there, trying to aid her. The connection between the family's and the house's influence on Miranda's personal life is visible in the visions she gets right after, seeing the boy named Jalil, whom she has kissed at a party and who has brought Miranda flowers, drained of blood in her vision. Once again, unable to trust her version of reality, Miranda thinks she "knew that she had done this, in a period of inattention," reasoning that "it was not unlike watching someone else take her hand and guide it and the pen it held into putting down a perfect copy of her signature" (*White Is for Witching* 128-9). If what happens to Jalil in Miranda's dream sequence/visitation to the inner chambers of the house is her own doing, this acceptance leads to the conclusion that the Kosovan refugees who were injured were also harmed by Miranda. This is only made more complicated because Jalil is safe and unharmed in real life, and Miranda realizes she did not kill him only after seeing him in person in school. Miranda's susceptibility to the notion that she can harm others does not mean she harmed anyone; it means that she either views herself as capable of being culpable or the house tries to convey yet another message through the vision of someone she personally remembers and

the message is that she, possessed by the goodlady, indeed, can harm minorities. Hauntologically, we can interpret Miranda's experiences with the influence of the goodlady, her subsequent resistance, and momentary lapses as an honest attempt at communicating with the specter. While by no means Miranda wishes to obey the wishes of the ghost, unlike the example of *Hamlet* Derrida makes much use of in *Specters of Marx,* I argue that this should not be interpreted as a failure to utilize hauntology in her interaction with the specter. Miranda does not try to rationalize her situation, thus silence the voice of the haunting presence with ontology, and her resistance is a direct result of her initial willingness to communicate with the house. The haunting presence itself and its relevance to the contemporary setting of the novel and its characters is an example of the historicity of the haunting without being dated (*Specters* 3). The Silver House and its goodlady persona that influences the Silver women and the environment is a result of the history of Dover, United Kingdom, and perhaps, Western civilization at large without an expiry date of its influence, for its continued influence in the twenty-first century is yet another proof of that claim. Although the hatred exhibited by the Silver House is concentrated in its intensity, based on a postcolonial understanding of Gothic literature and the role locations play in the formation of a national identity, the Silver House as a haunting house can be said to be a metonymy for the city, the country, the nation and its history.

4.3. "I'm going down against her": Resistance to the Specter of Racism

In order to combat her sense of loss of self, deteriorating eating disorder, and the influence the house has on her, Miranda chooses to listen to the house and directly communicate with it. Her approach can be likened to Derrida's advice that one must "speak of the ghost . . . to the ghost and with it" (*Specters* xviii). Instead of suppressing this metaphorical and literal haunting of the legacy of her family and the sickness it manifests itself as, Miranda accepts its existence and tries to communicate with it so that she can understand what it is. Miranda's acceptance of the goodlady's existence and her belief in the goodlady as an entity lead her to directly engage with her in the form of a correspondence with this being. She achieves this by allowing the goodlady to control her hand to answer the questions Miranda writes. There is the question of whether Miranda makes up the goodlady under the influence of the house to justify her own actions and illness or whether the house can, in fact, become the goodlady via the Silver women, among which Miranda is the latest vessel. However, the answer to that question does not change the outcome. A hauntological approach goes beyond the belief in the existence of literal metaphysical ghosts and requires, instead, accepting that the ghost is a non-ontological entity that is related to one's past, present, and future with "the furtive and

ungraspable visibility of the invisible, or an invisibility of a visible X" (*Specters* 6). Even if Miranda imagines things, the nature of these imaginings, like her pica, is shaped by her environment and family. A hauntological approach should allow the multiplicity and heterogeneity of voices and inheritances. As for the more literal understanding of Miranda's haunting by the house, such a haunting would explain the rapid worsening of the girl's psychological condition following Lily's death. As the sole remaining Silver woman, she becomes the object of the house's attention and attempts to exercise control in the world of the living. In her communication with the house or the goodlady, instead of assuming and placing words into the mouth of the house by accepting the gothic conventions of the books she reads, Miranda asks questions to the goodlady, allowing the specter to take the lead. As her handwriting turns into an unfamiliar hand that she normally would not be able to imitate, she starts to receive answers. Instead of questioning her existence, Miranda starts by asking,

> *Goodlady, are you really good?*
> ***yes***
> *Even when no one is looking?*
> ***of course***
> *But do you understand your nature?*
> ***my nature?***
> *Did you choose to be good, or were you so created?*
> ***i chose to be created***
> *Is that really an answer?*
> ***yes*** (68; emphasis in the original).

This exchange is followed by Miranda getting her hand cut with the paper and her dissatisfaction with this answer. She attributes the paper cut to the goodlady and accuses her of not being good. The response "neither are you" stands in contrast to Miranda's handwriting, resembling another "she'd seen before in Christmas and birthday cards, shaky but elegant, the g's and the y's straight legged rather than curled" (68). This confirms that the goodlady is the embodiment of the Silver House created by the spirit of Anna Good. In time, becoming divorced of Anna Good as a person, it has evolved into a form of specter, constantly returning to remind one of Anna Good's legacy and influence and shape new generations of the Silver women in light of this legacy.

Even after Miranda goes to Cambridge and becomes friends and then starts a romantic relationship with Ore, a Black girl who was raised by white adoptive parents, she cannot get away from the influence of the Silver House and the goodlady. Physical distance only results in the house doubling down on the pressure it exerts on Miranda. As it will be apparent to both the reader and Miranda toward the end of the book since the goodlady is not an entity solely under the influence of the Silver House, and in fact, its influence can reach and be molded by

the Silver women, her condition worsens. One night after almost sleepwalking into jumping off the window, Miranda shows that she understands that the house wants her back, but she does not remember anything she has done or said once the sleepwalking episode is over. While she is in a dream state, she says Silver House or the goodlady "doesn't care how [Miranda] come[s] back" it just wants Miranda back, and she tells Ore that only she can hear "how we… how they are calling [her] back" (176-7). Even if she is not yet ready to admit to herself when fully conscious, Miranda acknowledges what is beckoning her is not the brick-and-mortar physical confines of the house or a spirit that needs to be exorcised; it is her own family of which she is under risk of becoming a part of at the cost of her own personality and life. While this makes the notion of family legacy as unescapable relevant, in the novel, Miranda's continued attempts to overcome the house's influence and the previous generations' lack of or insufficient resistance to the goodlady, the Silver House, the racism and xenophobia at its core, posit family legacy and specters from the past as things with which one needs to seriously and hauntologically engage.

The difficulty of such an engagement can be found in Miranda's deteriorating state. Becoming thinner, unable to eat or study, during her relationship with Ore, Miranda comes face-to-face with the notion that her eating disorder cannot be merely identified as pica. The inherited disease that trails down from Anna Good also embodies tendencies that fit the description of a soucouyant, where after a point, the consumption of chalk, earth, or other inedible items is not enough, and the need for human blood, flesh, and energy arises. Trying not to give in to it, Miranda successfully identifies it as connected to the goodlady and the Silver House. When she and her father are in the Dean's Office to talk about suspending her studies so she can focus on her mental health, she writes down in her notebook in Anna Silver's hand, showing an awareness that after the initial correspondence, Miranda connected the goodlady with her GrandAnna. She writes, "*I am lucky*," "*Behave yourself*," "*Eat*." and notes down "*Manage your consumption*" under "*I am lucky*" (*White Is for Witching* 191; emphasis in the original). Miranda may have as well been wishing to hear those words from someone and have them be effective; however, the advice is not contradictory to what the Silver House and the goodlady want her to do. The specter wants her to behave according to what it considers correct, to eat and to consume according to her needs. What Miranda writes in her own handwriting next is a tacit acknowledgment that she understands the wishes of the specter. What follows next when she adds "*Ore is not food. I think I am a monster*" displays that understanding and endorsement are different acts, and any meaningful refusal of the specter's wishes can only be a result of initial and deep understanding (192; emphasis in the original). At an earlier point, Miranda evinces an understanding that she figured out or instinctively knows that her

relationship with Ore would be a concern for the goodlady, letting herself think about "what the goodlady would have to say about [them kissing]" and berates herself for focusing on Ore because she fears she may "witch her to death" (170).

While harboring a side that is indeed capable of harming Ore or anyone, like the abovementioned Jalil, Miranda acknowledges the existence of the urge but rejects giving into it. The question of "[h]ow is consumption managed" becomes her preoccupying thought. It is worth noting that this follows her thinking that she should not witch Ore and is directed to the women of her family, her mother, Lily, grandmother Jennifer, and GrandAnna. She admits she "smell[ed Ore], r[an] her nose over the other girl's body, turn[ed] the beginning of a bite into a kiss whenever Ore stirred" as she went to sleep by Miranda's side, even going as far as accepting she "had needed Ore open," that the other girl's heartbeat resembled an oyster that she "could have taken" (191). Miranda accepts that she can be dangerous; she just refuses to be.

Her resistance to this awakening appetite places her in a position that goes against the house's wishes. The veracity of this claim is found in the house's thoughts regarding Miranda after she returns home to the Silver House. The house admires Miranda's sickliness while urging her to eat only in a manner that can be termed soucouyant-like. During this evaluation of Miranda's state, we learn that the goodlady/the Silver House is enraged by Miranda's relationship with a Black girl. Describing Ore in derogatory terms with racist prejudices, the house does not spare the treatment it subjects Black holidaymakers staying at the house from someone important to a Silver family member. In fact, when the wish to protect the Silver women and the urge to keep out people Anna Good would have deemed as unwanted clash, the Silver House prefers to destroy Miranda Silver. As it also chose with Jennifer Silver, rather than allow its members to be one with strangers, the goodlady prefers them to be harmed directly by her. This tendency, which casts doubt as to whether Lily died in an accident if one accepts that the powers of the goodlady exist, is best displayed when the Silver House expresses the wish to suffocate Miranda in her sleep. While it textually remains open, Lily's residence in the Silver House, on one of those extra floors, although she has died in Haiti, may mean that once the Silver women are dead, the house can contain a revenant of them in its walls. This offers an alternative explanation to how Eliot can hear her knocks on the floorboards after Miranda commits suicide after swallowing batteries that goes beyond the possibility Eliot has started to hallucinate Miranda's ghostly presence in the house in order to cope with her death.

However, her final refusal to participate does not mean Miranda never succumbed to the house's power. Miranda's successful communication with the house and the resulting

understanding she reaches do not mean she can maintain her opposition to the Silver House without interruptions. Over the holidays, as her health worsens, Miranda invites Ore to the house even though she knows it is a bad idea with her appetite and the proximity to the house. With Ore's arrival, the house actively utilizes Miranda and all the other powers in its arsenal as a threat. Miranda gets ever the more soucouyant-like, draining Ore while they are kissing so much that Ore can sense "something leaving [her] . . . in a solid stream, heavy as a rope . . . from a hurt in [her] side, and . . . [going] into Miranda . . . into the same place in her" (213). During this, Ore cannot breathe, although she tries it "harder than [she has] ever tried at anything . . . [enough to feel] the strain on the blood vessels in [her] eyes and describes the sensation as "having [her] mouth blown into while [her] nostrils were pinched together" (213-4). While they do not talk about this, it is obvious Miranda has finally started to consume Ore. In the meantime, the house is not satisfied with this. In addition to paving the way for the potential demise of Ore, it also intimidates the girl with a series of strange encounters which are once again racially motivated. When Ore takes a shower, she finds that the color of her skin is coming off onto her towel, with "shreds of hard skin" and "hair suspended" in the towel (214). While this is happening, someone outside the bathroom door taunts her by saying, "[t]he black's coming off" and starts to whistle, "Rule Britannia" (214). This attempt at erasing her blackness is the Silver House's way of showing Black people are not welcome within its bounds, and the use of "Rule Britannia" are tools utilized to convey that this idea extends beyond the confines of the house and applies to Britain. The second event where Ore finds the same anti-immigration provocative leaflets her cousin showed her piled on her bed is a repetition of the message that she is unwelcome. When none of these drives Ore off, but Miranda's resistance to the house's wishes shatters, the Silver House attempts to make a prey out of Ore.

Although Miranda acts according to the wishes of the Silver House when she tries to consume Ore, she still cannot be considered to have failed at her hauntological engagement with the specter. On the contrary, when Miranda's resistance finally cracks, and she tells Ore, "Please understand. We are the goodlady . . . The house and I," she finally confronts and acknowledges the fact that she is a part of the harmful goodlady persona the house has created (218). Beyond understanding what the house wants of her, Miranda also knows the means to achieve its goals, and she is aware that if she accepts this legacy, she will no longer be any different from what she wants to fight against. That is why as an initial reaction and one last attempt at suppression, when she tells Ore she cannot let her leave, she refers to herself in the third person, becoming one with the goodlady while losing her identity as Miranda: "Miranda can't get away . . . She can let you go, but it will be bad for her because then they will be angry" (218). The inconstant

subjectivity David Punter points out about Miranda's situation (28) finally dissolves entirely as Miranda opts out of shouldering the responsibility for the legacy she is about to inherit by assuming another persona. Instead of addressing this legacy, she reverts to an earlier stage of selfhood. The next day when Ore wants to leave, Miranda appears in the guise of a little girl to stop her. Ore cannot describe the features of the girl who only says, "Please stay . . . Or I'll get into trouble. You've got to stay. You'll hardly feel it" (*White Is for Witching* 228). The difference here is that despite the layers of repression that resulted in her changed appearance, Miranda no longer refers to herself in the third person. The fear of the goodlady indeed causes Miranda to revert to a childhood stage quite literally, but when Ore throws salt at the girl as one would do against a soucouyant, Miranda appears beneath the guise of the little girl. Unable to contain her reaction to the salt, she reacts to the salt by embracing the truth of this second side of her and strikes at Ore, "spitting and hissing" (228). This revelation leads to her acceptance of her nature momentarily, and she starts to consume Ore by "lick[ing] the back of [her]hand, slowly, making tracks in the salt" and delivers her to the secret floor of the house (228). Ore finds herself capable of fighting the looking people she sees there, namely Anna, Jennifer, and Lily, by rubbing salt in their eyes. When she succeeds at defeating Miranda by going through the usual procedure against a soucouyant, Miranda's skin peels off to reveal another Miranda (230). This is the girl from the photograph in Miranda's dorm room, "all long straight hair and pretty pearlescence" (230). This Miranda of the past wails, "No, no, why did you do this? Put me back in . . . I don't want to come out. Put me back in . . . Please. I can't. . . . cope," clearly displaying the reason why Miranda was so susceptible to the influence of the goodlady was her inability to deal with the grief of losing her mother (230).

After Ore saves herself and departs, Miranda is left alone to face her family legacy. Although earlier, she viewed the house as a danger that could not be stopped and gave in to its wishes, following Ore's advice and request that she does not become the goodlady, and the final revelation of her soucouyant side, Miranda reaches a state where she believes she can be the one to put a stop to the goodlady's influence. In her new-found conviction, she is eager to continue engaging with the specters of her legacy. This is only possible after she refuses to bury her family history, which pretty much stands for the nation's history. She also acknowledges that the period of undoing the goodlady's influence may entail losing Ore for good. This stance aligns with Derrida's opinion that inheritance from one's past is never uniform; one always "must filter, sift, criticize, one must sort out several different possibles that inhabit the same injunction" because "[a]n inheritance is never gathered together, it is never one with itself. . . Its presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the injunction to reaffirm by choosing" (*Specters* 18). Through a careful engagement with the specter,

Miranda understands how it constitutes a part of her legacy, exhibiting behavior that falls under the notion that in order to inherit, one must "com[e] to terms with some specter, and therefore with more than one specter" (24). What Miranda encountered as the hostile specter of the Silver House has introduced her to the specters of her own prejudices, the specters of her family history with a racist columnist from which her family inherits their wealth. This specter is not alone; it is accompanied by those of the city, and of the nation: the specters of Dover's complicated history of immigration and enslavement, the specters of Britain which prides itself on its multiculturality without addressing its past to remedy its current problems. Miranda embodies the understanding that "[o]ne does not, for all that, bear any less of a responsibility, beginning at birth, even if it is only the responsibility to repair an evil at the very moment in which no one can admit it except in a self-confession that confesses the other, as if that amounted to the same" (24). She hopes that she will get away from the influence of the house but acknowledges that it cannot happen rapidly or without consequences. She seems willing to work on herself and undo the generations' worth of prejudice still influencing her life.

However, when she eats the apple pie Eliot made for her with the all-season apples, she works into a frenzy and loses all the faith she has had in the possibility of defeating the goodlady without sacrificing herself. Like most instances in the novel, the panic Miranda experiences after eating the apple pie can be interpreted as nothing more than the paranoid behavior she exhibits in the wake of Ore's departure. However, since the audience knows of other focalizations that recount Sade's and other people's poisoning by the Silver House with the apples, it becomes likely that Miranda is in a similar situation. The idea that Miranda was actually targeted by the goodlady with the apples is what Ore believes, and at the start of the book, she describes the current state of Miranda in a similar way to the fate of Snow White: "Her throat is blocked with a slice of apple / (to stop her speaking words that may betray her) / her ears are filled with earth / (to keep her from sounds that will confuse her) / her eyes are closed, but / her heart thrums hard like hummingbird wings" (*White Is for Witching* 1). After eating the pie, Miranda initially storms out of the house in anger, but soon she realizes she has eaten some of it already. Since she believes that if she consumes the apple entirely, the house will be able to control her, she returns to the house and commits suicide by consuming battery acid in a secret room accessible by a trapdoor, as one last recurrence of her eating disorder behaviors. While, in a way, she gives into her pica, she refuses to be a soucouyant who, if alive or dead as a direct result of the apples, can prey on others as the house wants her to. She clearly expresses that she intends resist the house when she says she is "going down against [the goodlady]" (234). However, this resistance has to possible outcomes: "going down *against*

her" and "going *down* against her" (236; emphasis in the original). The latter proves to be the case for Miranda, and she takes her own life like Eleanor in *The Haunting of Hill House*. However, unlike Eleanor, if the danger the apple poses is to be interpreted as the ability of the house to control Miranda[5], when she commits this act of self-effacement through her suicide, it functions as a countermove to stop the house's evil from spreading after a true understanding of its intentions.

As for the other characters' engagement with the specter of the Silver House, race becomes a point of divergence for the characters' interactions with its powers and influence. While Ore and Sade are quite different personalities. Ore is the adopted daughter of white parents who wants to blend in with the white British culture at the expense of her Black identity. On the other hand, Sade is a first-generation immigrant from Nigeria who is very in touch with her heritage. However, what they have in common is their ability to engage with the Silver House in a way that operates outside the confines of materialistic rationality. Their willingness to believe in the existence of the goodlady offer an alternative to the approach Luc and Eliot show toward the Silver House. Like Miranda, Ore and Sade move beyond attempts to explain events rationally, and through this willingness to suspend disbelief, they can get close enough to the house to hear its warnings. This understanding equips them with a notion of how to deal with its hostility.

Sade understands that there is something wrong with the house from the beginning and effectively deals with it thanks to her willingness to understand the workings of this hostility. Throughout the novel, she maintains her stable sense of identity despite continuous attacks against her person, identity, and blackness. Although at one point she falls under the influence of the Silver House after the house makes her consume one of its apples, she never fails to comprehend what enables the goodlady and the Silver House to operate, going as far as helping Ore figure out her escape when she finds the girl trapped in a white net of "tens of feet of white cotton" (*White Is for Witching* 231). Utilizing her traditional modes of dealing with supernatural phenomena, Sade resorts to juju magic after possibly getting an inkling of what the goodlady is and what house promotes. This awareness is rooted in a familiarity with the soucouyant through the existence of similar creatures in West African folk beliefs. Even before Miranda can accept the fact that the goodlady exists and is influencing her, Sade warns her about her ancestors. Non-white people, who are the immediate targets of the Silver House, are

[5] This idea is proposed by Sarah Ilott as one possible way of interpreting the apple pie episode in "'The Genesis of Woman Goes Through the Mouth': Consumption, oral pleasure, and voice."

better at reading its intentions. Like the little girls Suryaz and Deme, Sade understands that she is unwanted by the house and that it is not a safe place to inhabit. When Ore asks her if she lives there, Sade does not prefer to describe her state as living there, but instead snorts and answers with, "I keep house. As far as it can be kept" (209). Unlike the young girls, Sade chooses to stay and try to control the house after comprehending the message behind the goodlady's hatred. This willingness to deal with the house is seen when she and Ore talk about the house, and we learn that she is constantly targeted by the house by means of voices that tell her to "[o]pen the window and jump . . . [j]oin her old ones," because she has "no one" (211). Only through her belief in the third voice that tells her to "Wait," she is dissuaded from a spectrally motivated suicide (211). By understanding that the power the house possesses is its prejudice, Sade acts in defiance of the house's wish to empty itself of anyone who is not white. Later in the book, when Ore sees or hallucinates that she is trapped under a white net, Sade's (or if it is Ore's hallucination, the dream version of Sade) advice to Ore is that she should just get up, telling her to "[s]tand up and [the net] will unravel" (231). This shows that she understands the power the goodlady exercises on Black bodies is in the form of psychological warfare, making them feel unwanted through its political flyers, feel trapped through its poison apples and white nets. Yet once the characters see that for the house to influence anyone who is not a Silver woman, they need to subject themselves to the treatment the house sees fit unconsciously, the illusion that it can consume Black people fades away. Sade's instruction comes from having understood that the solution to the racism to which the house seeks to subject them lies in their staunch belief in its ineffectiveness. This is a practical example of *Specters of Marx*'s insistence that one cannot understand the specter without understanding its repercussions nor find a solution against the said repercussions without a willingness to hear the specter.

Sade makes Ore see that just as Miranda understands that only she can make the hateful heritage of the Silver House a reality by continuing its hateful, xenophobic practices and refuses this, Ore should also refuse to be something that can be consumed, subsumed, and whitewashed. While standing under the net proves way more comforting for Ore, and she contemplates not getting up, in the end Sade turns out to be right, and when she stands up, the web unravels. This act of undoing something supernaturally harmful by simple awareness hearkens back to acknowledging the power of both the specter and a hauntological engagement. It also serves as a reminder of the power one can gain from being firmly in touch with aspects of life that lie beyond the reach of Western ontology. This is achieved through the portrayal of Sade's ties to the local folkloric customs of Nigeria that show a belief in the supernatural. In addition, the attention she pays to those violated by the racism which the house

aims to spread, like the immigrants at the detention center render her receptive to comprehending the house's intents.

This idea also explains why Ore is particularly affected by the Silver House as someone who constantly self-effaces her identity as a Black woman in order to blend into her family, her school, and her relationship with Miranda. Expressing a wish to belong at the cost of her identity, Ore tolerates with her racist cousins, expresses a wish to have a more generic British name, and when people approach her with the intent of making her welcome her identity fully, she refuses to engage with them. This manifests itself as a distaste of the Nigerian student club and an unwillingness to believe Sade when she warns her about the soucouyant and Miranda. With all this, Ore replicates in her daily life what the Silver House wants to do to her on a supernatural scale. One of the most significant barriers to her admitting that Miranda might be a soucouyant, although she does not refuse the idea of a supernatural phenomenon right away, is her belief that "the soucouyant was the old lady" (219). In West African legends, the distinction is erased, and a soucouyant can be anyone of any age and gender, yet Ore wants to cling to carefully rationalized definitions she comes across in a book her mother gave her as a gift. It is not a coincidence that she can get away from the Silver House and all the dangers it poses to her only after she discusses her identity and the possibility of belonging in Britain with Sade. The acceptance of the fact that she has been attempting to erase her ties to her birth mother's origins and her own Blackness coincides with her acceptance that the soucouyant does not need to be an old woman. By facing the specter, she also manages to begin the lifelong work of fully accepting the aspects of her own inheritance in the present.

Compared to these, Miranda's family fails to utilize the hauntological approach favored by Derrida. While Luc clings to rationalism and hopes he can cure Miranda, Eliot replicates the house's hostility through his xenophobic ideas and inability to find anything wrong with the house. Eliot's insistence that Sade is insane shows a refusal of anything that can be interpreted as metaphysical and, for hauntology, non-ontological. Since hauntology is an alternative mode that exists alongside ontology but goes beyond it, Eliot's dismissal of Sade's beliefs in the supernatural and his refusal to accept that the people who accuse his sister may be telling a version of the truth prevent him from understanding the Silver House. This strictly materialistic outlook also parallels Eliot's latent xenophobia, which expresses itself in his downplaying of the attacks on refugees as "refugees killing other refugees" (30), his prejudice toward Ore's upbringing, his laziness to learn where his ex-girlfriend and friend are teaching English "in the third world," (244) and his plans to go for his internship anywhere "as long as English was spoken" (102). While not directly haunted by the Silver House's xenophobia,

Eliot is represented as someone who has internalized the disregard for foreigners that forms one of the many root causes of the specter of xenophobia and racism the Silver House comes to represent and attempts to pass on. This xenophobia is correlated with his inability to understand the behavior of the people who are influenced by the goodlady, as his taunting about Miranda's belief in the goodlady is what serves as the major crack in their relationship, and he dislikes Sade on the basis that she is acting in a manner he considers crazy. Their father, Luc, like Doctor Montague, exhibits an unwillingness to understand that Miranda's situation may not be related to what food she is served or what rules he sets forth. When she is already losing weight drastically, Luc refuses to buy Miranda new clothes that fit, believing if he makes her wear her loose clothes until they start to fit her, it will be motivating for her. Similarly, during Miranda's haunting and after her disappearance, Luc clings to a similar attitude of trying to identify a single root cause and providing a single cure-all solution, and therefore, ultimately fails.

As Derrida mentions, hauntings are essentially "historical" (3), and they require taking "the singularity of . . . [their] historicity" (126) into account. The originating force of the Silver House's goodlady requires some elaboration. That is why a brief discussion of Anna Good in relation to the Silver family, Dover, and Britain will be useful in fully expressing how a hauntological engagement with the Silver House and the goodlady equals taking a stance against present-day racism and a willingness to reckon with the unsavory practices of xenophobia and racism of the past. The Silver House's desire to activate the inherited soucouyant powers of its inhabitants for the enaction of ancient yet still ongoing forms of racism and hate crimes finds its roots in Anna Good, who, through her introduction as a woman from the 1940s, comes to represent the nationalist ideologies of post-war Britain regarding the immigrants and people of color. Burton traces the legacy of "the racist tendencies in a 1940s Britain affected by the Second World War" that is being passed down to the next generations in the house as a "neo-imperial space" (78). While agreeing with the notion that post-colonial (as a designator of the process of Britain's loss of former colonies, not as a label for any possible decolonization process) Britain keeps the "imperial nostalgia" alive through the construction of a non-white Other that is "contain[ed], control[ed], and ostracize[d]," I would like to point out that Anna Good is the link between the still colonial Britain of 1940s and the post-colonial Britain of 2000s (78).

With her surname reminiscent of binary distinctions of morality, Anna Good is constructed as a product of the nation in which she was born. Growing up as a girl "baptized in white . . . [and] buttoned into frilly white pinafores . . . [in which she] had been too frightened to move,"

Anna Good becomes inculcated with the hegemonic British values of the period in school (*White Is for Witching* 115). When her gymnastics class was filmed for a program on British sports and pastimes, she was the one who was chosen to become the figure of Britannia, wearing "a bronze-coloured helmet and a white gown and a blue sash [to] sit at the top of a chariot built of the other girls' bodies." (115). She recalls this experience, which was ironically very unpleasant for her (instead of the figure of the lion by Britannia's side, it was the girls' nails that dug into the flesh of her legs that reminded her of being bitten) as something to be proud of, admitting she would get angry when Lily found patriotism "embarrassing and dangerous" (115). Refusing the notion that times may change and what seemed widely accepted at one point can get scrutinized and criticized by future generations, Anna Good used to wonder, "Who gave [Lily her] mind?" and find herself unable to believe Britannia could "become embarrassing and dangerous," blaming "the incomers," in other words, the immigrants, for the loss of the popularity of patriotic notions of British imperialism. Interestingly, Anna Good's logic follows that "the incomers" do not like the imperial legacy because they were not a part of it because such a view ignores what the figure of Britannia entailed (115-6). The glory a girl like Anna Good could feel proud of in her gymnastics class could not exist without the immigrants, most of whom were coming from Britain's former colonies and now newly independent countries. Yet, this view of Englishness as distinct from Britishness while remaining inextricably tied to the British imperial space is not unique to Anna Good. Quite the contrary, by limiting the notion of Englishness to the boundaries of the island nation, the English citizen has been distinguished from the British subject who inhabited British territories in various discourses of nationality among which the British Nationality Act of 1948 can be counted (Baucom 6; 10). Likewise, Andrew Silver's career as a cartoon columnist for the Dover Post before his conscription for the Second World War confirms the family's allegiance to the ideas of imperial hegemony. Eliot finds newspaper clippings with Andrew's patriotic wartime cartoons dating between 1940 and 1943 in her great-grandmother's cupboard, and all of these cartoons are "on the theme of plucky Brits defeating the enemy by maintaining the home front" (*White Is for Witching* 69). The biggest cartoon Eliot finds contains the warning "Be careful what you say—you never know who's listening" and the illustration of two girls who speak on the bus while two secret agents, one symbolizing Nazi Germany with swastikas, the other Imperial Japan, with the racist characterization of the agent as "slit-eyed, uniformed, with a moustache that fell to his knees" (69).

The Silver-Good household's legacy of the hatred of foreigners and different ethnicities is not espoused overtly by the current generation, but this transformation in the family is not a conscious one. The disappearance of the racist legacy through generations is not the result of

a calculated, responsible reckoning with the damage the personal, familial, and national history inflicted. Anna's daughter Jennifer, at least the person who appears to be Jennifer inside the walls, holds similar opinions as her mother and the goodlady, showing her distaste upon learning Miranda is dating a Black woman. Lily, on the other hand, is thought to be a stubborn figure by the house. Combined with her act of putting a padlock on Anna and Jennifer's mouths and her opinions on patriotism, this may imply that, like Miranda, Lily did not want to do the house's bidding. However, Lily's praise of the goodlady implies she has been unable to sever all her ties with her, and the possibility that Lily traveled to feed around the world in places where the locals are viewed as discardable by her remains.

This legacy is also not unique to the Silver women as an anomaly. On the contrary, the Silver House that was rendered as it currently is by Anna Good merely acts as a magnifying glass under which the hostility of Britain toward foreigners and its imperial legacy intensifies. The unaddressed nature of the Silver family's troubled legacy, with no attempt at repairing past wrongdoings, comes to stand for the same problem at the heart of a post-colonial, yet not yet decolonial, Britain. It is a legacy, albeit dark, that needs reckoning and is being denied that. The colonial past of the nation, the significance of Dover in colonial trade networks, and later, in the arrival of immigrants who are neglected by the necessary state mechanisms, make the house Anna Good created a problem that concerns the whole of Britain. The proof that this is not limited to the lingering specter of Anna Good that made Silver House and the goodlady is evident in the attitudes of the other members of Miranda's family, the obstacles Black characters encounter, and the political environment in Dover.

Created by Anna Good, who, in turn, is shaped by the nation, and her energies, the house tries to revive the specter of this history, making it a revenant only because the conditions that enabled such hate are not eliminated. It is not a coincidence that the story takes place in what is seen as a gateway to the rest of Britain, in Dover. In her monograph, *Things that Fly in the Night*, Giselle Liza Anatol pays attention to Dover as a setting, its physical attributes, and its significance in the British public imagination. Rather than being geographical markers, the white cliffs of Dover are a symbol, a metonym of all of Britain and the notion of Englishness (Buckley and Ilett 5). This is reminiscent of Jamaica Kincaid's description of the white cliffs of Dover in "On Seeing England for the First Time": "they were not white; you would only call them that if 'white' meant something special to you" (40). Taking this significance Dover holds in the British public's imagination as the first thing British citizens see when they return from overseas territories to the heart of the empire, Anatol interprets Dover's cliffs "packed with the chalk Miranda eats," as "a representation of a nation impenetrable to outsiders," with

Dover itself becoming "the principal site of the battle for England's physical, cultural, and racial shores," its boundaries (210-1). Similarly, Din-Kariuki identifies Dover, which is described as "the key to England," as the site on which "national and racial anxiety" is inscribed ("'Nobody ever warned me about mirrors'" 65). As the center of the refugee crisis, Dover itself, on the whole, stands for Great Britain, the entry point from which those deemed "illegal", or "alien" are sent back or kept as the Other in detention centers. A detention center appears in the novel, and Sade frequently visits someone there. Although in the backdrop, or because it is only in the backdrop, the strife of the refugees becomes a central aspect of Dover, leading Sade to conclude, as the "[k]ey to a locked gate, throughout both world wars, and even before," Dover is "still fighting" (*White Is for Witching* 107). When Ore visits Dover despite her xenophobic cousins' warnings about life at Dover, she wonders whether the people she sees around town are those "who'd stone refugees," asking herself, "where were they, the baddies?" (203). This question answers more by being asked than any possible answer could provide. If there are not any easily identifiable "baddies" ready to commit acts of hatred and kill others, yet these things take place, does it not mean that the blame is to be shouldered by the entirety of the nation? It is the unaddressed neglect of the refugees in the present, which is at the same time interwoven with Britain's past, that makes someone like Anna Good and the specter of a haunting house like the Silver House possible. The soucouyant urges that the Silver House wants to activate remain dormant, waiting to return as a revenant through the body of the Silver women, but the incorporation of social concerns into the narrative makes it apparent that *White Is for Witching* envisions the whole of Britain as capable of these urges.

Even within Miranda's family, we see this ability to be neglectful as an enabling gesture of the house's uncloaked racism. Eliot's dismissive comments about the refugees and minority communities living in Dover and Britain serve to portray the type of citizen who employs othering practices without actively seeking to harm anyone. Although Luc argues against his claims when Eliot says the refugees are to blame for their persecution, implying they are dangerous, it is not enough. The fact that Eliot has evolved into a young adult who others immigrants, while being a member of a family the current generation of which would deny being racist, and is multi-ethnic, conveys that racism and xenophobia remain deeply woven into the fibers of society. Likewise, even though Eliot says he finds Ore beautiful when she wants to talk about the uncanny features of the house, he first assumes that Ore is going to accuse his family of being rich and makes up an image of Ore's family that is built on class and racial prejudices. As for Ore's family, we see that even in a family that has adopted a Black child, relatives who profess anti-immigration views bordering on racism exist. Ore's cousins are "skinheads" who endorse the anti-immigration views of the British National Party,

one of them reading out the contents of the very same leaflets which the goodlady piles on Ore's room when she is visiting, effacing any difference between their views and that of a haunting house that bases its ideological underpinnings on the racism of the 1940s (*White Is for Witching* 200). In fact, while far from being racist, even well-meaning members of Ore's family do things that imply Ore may not belong to the country of her birth as much as a white person does. Worrying she may wish for a connection with her biological mother, Ore's adoptive mother keeps gifting her books on various Black communities of which Ore's mother was not even a member. For the duration of their relationship, Miranda makes similar comments that fetishize Ore's skin color, contrasting Ore's against her own, thus constraining Ore to the role of the young Black woman that complements her own identity as a white woman.

This idea that even if Ore has always been British, it does not mean she will be viewed as such in a nation or community that still sees Britishness as an identity contingent upon one's skin color and the place of origin is voiced by Sade. She exhibits an awareness of the discourses on Britishness and Englishness which try to define being British and English by basing them on the location of the nation, and this location's assumed "identity-endowing properties" that can be found in "some type of imaginary, abstract, or actual locale" (Baucom 4). Baucom's understanding of how Englishness and Britishness are constructed is highly relevant to both the views of characters like Anna Good and the difficulties characters like Ore face at assuming Englishness. While Englishness is related to Britishness, at the same time, the English identity is constructed by opposing Englishness that is based on "the English soil . . . or certain quintessential English locales" to the Britishness of the imperial domains (12). We see an example of this when Sade asks Ore whether *she* believes she is a maid of Kent, after hearing the young people's conversation about the distinction between Men/Maid of Kent and Kentish Men/Maid that depends on ancient border distinctions of the Anglo-Saxon Kingdom of Kent. The ambiguity of the pronoun only leads Ore to ask if she means the soucouyant or Miranda. In addition to illustrating that Ore knows Miranda is the soucouyant, it brings to the fore that Miranda, who after all makes up a component of the goodlady, does not see a Black person as a symbolic figure of Britishness, as that would entail belonging to the history and the culture of the nation. The question Sade poses is the same one that makes Ore doubt whether she or a refugee girl like Tijana can ever belong at Cambridge, and enables the intense and hostile energies of the house and the goodlady.

With all this, Oyeyemi conveys that the legacy of Anna Good's views and Andrew Silvers' political cartoons are far from being dead, and their return as a revenant to the Silver family is

just a symptom of the larger issue of the injustices and displays of violence the immigrants and the people of color are being subjected to on a daily basis. For example, the messages of othering which insinuate that different groups of people do not belong in Britain as citizens are promoted across the country. While the nation's newspapers report the violence as unique to refugee communities and its politicians fearmonger about immigration, prestigious institutes like Cambridge deck their dining halls and buildings with portraits of upper-class white men who enabled the slave trade and created the networks of imperialism that created the empire. This refusal to encounter the continuing legacy of the past that is not unique to the attitude of the Silver family enables the very existence of the Silver House and the goodlady. The revenant in *White Is for Witching* is not the return of the one who was wronged and silenced; what returns with intensity and vengeance, although it never really left, is the practices of racism and imperialism, because those who experience injustice continue to remain silenced and affected in the present. The very fact that the exclusion of non-white Britons from the notion of Englishness has been an ongoing, rarely addressed practice that constantly feeds from its past roots in colonialism and imperialism enables the return of xenophobia and racism in the form of the Silver House's goodlady. This return is a result of the refusal to engage with one's inheritance, to accept that every act of inheriting an aspect of one's legacy entails the denial of some others. And as hauntology sets forward about the revenant, this is the return of something that has always been there, erupting from a fissure at a higher concentration to drive the point that it never departed home.

To conclude, in the first place, Miranda's haunting is a phenomenon that can only be understood by those who are willing to do the work of hearing what the house and its spirit of the goodlady demand without assuming the power of its wishes are solely tied to the past. As a result of this eager contact with the specter, characters like Miranda, Ore, and Sade figure out how to defeat its hostile energies. While Miranda may be interpreted as having failed to eradicate the Silver House's legacy of racism and hatred from her life, the sacrifice she undertakes nevertheless serves as an attempt to stop the spread of the goodlady's powers and influence. Miranda kills herself by her own means, and it is possible that she becomes one of the looking people the house can control. Yet, despite the pyrrhic victory of Miranda against the Silver House and the goodlady, the character's opinion that her self-sacrifice is a better alternative to continuation of the goodlady's specter of hatred and enmity is shared by the novel as well. The powers of the Silver House over someone who is no longer alive amounts to little compared to the influence it would have over a living, breathing Miranda who has consumed its all-season apples and is ready to do its bidding. While she gives up on the possibility of attaining freedom, Miranda's final act still displays a deep understanding of the

goodlady as a specter, her means of operating, her desires. The fact that she can sacrifice herself to avert the house's plans is a step in the direction of undoing the goodlady's legacy of hostility and racism.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study commenced with the intention of applying Derrida's notion of hauntology with its metaphorical specters to the literal specters that manifest themselves as haunting houses that act of their own volition in the novels, *The Haunting of Hill House* (1959) by Shirley Jackson and *White Is for Witching* (2009) by Helen Oyeyemi. Tracing the development of Gothic fiction from the late eighteenth century to the early twenty-first century, this study interpreted haunting houses in both novels as the current culmination point of the importance of location which Gothic fiction has consistently emphasized. Having emerged as a major element of Gothic fiction in the form of an atmospheric setting, and in time, having evolved into a motif through which metaphorical meaning is conveyed, the location in Gothic fiction has reached new forms in the twentieth and the twenty-first centuries. One of the main manifestations of this is the location's evolution into a character that plays a role in the creation of the elements of suspense and terror. In accordance with this opinion, this study attempted to illustrate that the houses in the two novels, namely Hill House, and the Silver House, take the role which Fred Botting ascribes to the haunted house as the site of the return of the fears (*Gothic* 2) one step further as they become the active instigators of events through which the past and its horrors can return.

After a discussion of what it means to employ hauntology as an approach, how specters and ghosts can be interpreted hauntologically, and how the hauntological approach instructs one to act when dealing with specters in Chapter 2, this study established its reasons for utilizing hauntology for the analysis of works using the haunting of a location symbolically and connecting this haunting with the return of the past. As they have a constant presence and are impossible to be exorcised, haunting houses are the high point of the idea of a place being troubled by the past deeds of an individual, family, or community. With this view, hauntology proved helpful in interpreting them as specters. In hauntology, a specter is defined as a non-presence of something or someone that once was but no longer is, and the arrival of which is made significant through this dissonance of its (non-)existence. Furthermore, the specter's initial emergence as a ghost that returns, a revenant, is marked by the impossibility of its emergence for the first time. As it is the reappearance of something that once corporeally

existed, even the initial sighting of a specter is a form of return. As both the haunting house formula and hauntology emphasize the return of the unresolved in the form of the revenant, the supernatural phenomena both houses subject their inhabitants in both novels were interpreted as a form of haunting by specters.

This study has found parallels between the hauntological principle of being always haunted by multiple specters and the Gothic interpretation that a haunted place is never merely an edifice, that it always contains something more crucial. According to Derrida, if one is being haunted, this seemingly singular haunting is always accompanied by other hauntings which through their connection to both the present and the past ensure their continued (non-) existence. In Gothic fiction, the location, especially the haunted house, and later, the haunting house, is always connected with family secrets, foul crimes, and unaddressed events from the past. In light of these two ideas, this thesis identified the causes and the impact of hauntings in these houses through close reading.

In relation to *The Haunting of Hill House*, this thesis interpreted the inherent hostility that can be found in the house as an outcome of the emotions and intentions of its first owner and builder, Hugh Crain, who, while alive, displayed a form of misogynistic fanaticism. Raised alone in the house, which was already home to several mysterious deaths, Hugh Crain's daughters got into a lengthy legal dispute over the ownership of the house after his death. Plagued by the death of Hugh Crain's three wives while he was alive and later and infested with the enmity the sisters had grown to feel for each other, following the death of the next owner of the house, Hill House started to earn its reputation as haunted and evil. However, following the logic of hauntology, this study claimed that since the emergence of the specter means that something has returned, the current state of affairs the characters who visit Hill House find themselves at the start of the novel points toward the continued survival of hateful notions of womanhood, sin, and sisterhood. The study found this in the constant repression of the protagonist Eleanor Vance, which was, then, traced to her traumatic and problematic relationship with her recently deceased mother, her rivalry with her sister, and her inability to establish herself as an independent woman in the patriarchal and misogynistic society of the 1950s United States.

In *White Is for Witching*, Oyeyemi makes an explicit connection between the consciousness of the Silver House as the goodlady and the great-grandmother of the protagonist Miranda Silver to highlight the endurance of xenophobia and racism of post-war Britain well into the early twenty-first century in the form of the immigration crisis, the treatment of refugees, and attitudes to a multicultural and multiracial Great Britain. Chapter 4 argued that the Silver

House, through the emergence of its subjectivity as the goodlady, has absorbed Anna Good's traumatic response of hatred toward non-white Britons and anyone deemed the Other following the loss of her husband during the Second World War. Tying this tendency of hatred to the Silver women's inherited eating disorder of pica, the novel turns the legacy of xenophobia and racism into a specter that aims to make Silver women ill in order to pass down its ideology onto the next generation. This study interpreted the connections the novel makes between the characters' pica and the encouragements of the house's goodlady persona toward the activation of the soucouyant energies as both an engagement with the legacy of the vampiric Other in traditional Western Gothic and a way of constructing a genuinely harmful specter that needs to be engaged with and understood to prevent it from haunting the present.

Starting with the question of the degree the characters can employ a hauntological approach in their response to the haunting house and their hauntings, this study analyzed the characters' responses. It showed that in both novels, the responses ranged from incredulity towards the supernatural to a willingness to interact with the paranormal. The difference that sets the two works apart is their protagonists' ability to truly comprehend the haunting houses' intentions and to formulate a response. While both Eleanor and Miranda are influenced by their respective haunting abodes, Hill House and the Silver House, only Miranda is able to face the realities of the house's interaction with her without giving into the fantasy that the house's desires and her wishes are in alignment. Eleanor, on the other hand, although able to hear the house, and witness its true intentions displayed in its hauntings and the accounts of its previous victims, cannot bring herself to accept the reality of the spectral presence of Hill House, because she is also unable to discern that the past conditions that generated Hill House apply to her own life.

While Eleanor starts to be influenced by the house due to her pre-existing responses to trauma, loneliness, and a mental predisposition to the loss of subjectivity, Miranda becomes someone else under the direct influence of the house. Since the Silver House is portrayed as more capable of physically influencing its inhabitants and those it wishes to control, Miranda exhibits the symptoms of this influence as a worsening of her pica, the loss of her subjectivity, a tendency to dissociate, and apparitions. While, as a result of her existing conditions, Eleanor gets in a mindset in which she interprets the house as a companion which can welcome her and function as a home for her, Miranda manages to understand the true intentions of the house through direct interactions and the acts the house has been pressuring her to commit.

This study has illustrated that from a Derridean perspective Eleanor adopts an erroneous approach as a result of her inability to understand that the spectral Hill House cannot be

understood without addressing her own traumatic and abusive relationship with her mother, the enmity she feels toward her sister, and by correlation to Theodora, or her status in the 1950s America. With the addition of the other characters' neglect of her worsening mental health, the investigators at Hill House prove incapable of understanding the nature of the supernatural phenomena at Hill House or showing genuine empathy for Eleanor's suffering and instability. This study further claim that these two shortcomings are indeed related, as scholarly rationalism or any lack of sympathy toward those who suffer in the present make one unable to begin conversing with the specters of the past that decide to make a return.

On the other hand, Miranda journeys from the state Eleanor finds herself in toward accepting one's duty of unmaking past legacies of trauma by starting with the present. Although Miranda is both metaphysically and physically (as a result of her pica that threatens to turn into vampiric practices) haunted, she manages to detect the legacy of the xenophobic desire to destroy and expulse in this haunting. This study claims that the racism of Anna Good, the jingoistic xenophobia of her late husband, Andrew Silver, and the racist past of imperial Britain are connected to the present moment through the house's placement in the politically strategic location of Dover, which highlights the maltreatment of asylum seekers, the othering of people of color, and the construction of the notion of Britishness on the whiteness of one's skin. The study shows that the house is motivated by this inherited legacy of imperial racism to continue perpetuating racism and xenophobia by utilizing its material reality as a physical entity and the bodies of the generations of the Silver women whom it can control through the women's soucouyant habits of consumption. Yet Miranda's willingness to take a stand against this intent that directly results from understanding the truth of the Silver House distinguishes the hauntological practice in *White Is for Witching* from the one in *The Haunting of Hill House*. What I argue is that Oyeyemi's novel envisions a two-way communication with the haunting presence that can fulfill what Derrida's notion of *hauntology* puts forward as an ethically necessary duty toward both the specter and ourselves. This is achieved by portraying the specter's motives more openly and by depicting more diverse responses to the specter.

Since multiple characters, one of which is the novel's protagonist, engage with the specter in a way that helps unearth what Derrida mentions must be addressed, coming to understand the specter, and possibly even generate a response are possibilities that can be pursued despite their difficulty. This study showed that when her attempts to defeat the house through distancing herself and a refusal to be what it wishes it to be fail, Miranda finds the solution in committing suicide by consuming battery acid rather than be a living actor that enacts the goodlady's acts of hostility and aggression for which the Silver House intends Miranda to be

a vessel. When compared to *The Haunting of Hill House,* this reading enables the possibility of engaging with the specter (not just of the Other, but of the dominant culture's past that has persecuted the Other); however, the fact that the only character who is a beneficiary of the legacy of the specter dies by committing suicide as an attempt at resistance does not offer a very optimistic portrayal regarding the possible success of the employment of hauntology. Instead, what makes it more promising is the notion that the characters who are rendered the Other through the influence of the specter of the Silver House and of the ideologies it draws its power from manage to formulate responses to both the specter and the identity politics of the period that aim to marginalize them in a complementary manner.

This thesis has analyzed two novels in which haunting houses act as constructions that contain the specters of past events that influence the present moment through the continued neglect that beget those specters in the first place. This has been done to illustrate that Gothic fiction's potential for subversiveness can only be meaningful if a hauntological approach that assumes responsibility for the inheritance of the past and addresses the ongoing conditions that enable the revenant to persist in returning is used. For this purpose, while *The Haunting of Hill House* was chosen as an example where the characters fail to utilize a hauntological approach in dealing with the specters of Gothic fiction embodied in the haunting house motif, *White Is for Witching* was analyzed to showcase what a hauntological engagement with a potential of success might entail.

Further research on the hauntological readings of haunted and haunting houses in Gothic literature can be conducted by applying Derrida's framework on works that feature such locations that act as revenants of a deeper social issue that remains relevant. In the 21st century, the Gothic as a subgenre or a mode has become so diffused into other narratives, and infused with other genres and styles that it is difficult to chart a course for the application of hauntology to a specific set of works. In his introduction to *The Palgrave Book of Contemporary Gothic*, Clive Bloom remarks the transformation of Gothic tropes through their utilization in new forms of media, "from film to television to the Internet and social media," leading to reworked, or revamped versions of familiar tropes of the Gothic (1). Thus, the motifs of the haunted house and the haunting house are not exempt from this process of being reworked for new settings and media. The utilization of this motif for the discussions of social problems, especially the questions of national legacy and systematic racism can be best found in works that can be considered to fall under the label "postcolonial Gothic," where the specter is used to explore the relevance of "the return of the repressed" to "landscapes . . . buildings, psychogeographies, identity, and language for both the once-colonized and the once-

colonizer" (Wisker; "Postcolonial Gothic" 511). In this state of permeation of the Gothic as a mode into everything, this study recommends applying a hauntological reading to contemporary Gothic works, in particular postcolonial Gothic, where the specter, the haunted/haunting house, and the ghostly are used for the exploration of personal and social issues.

This study shows how Derrida's concepts of hauntology, specter, and revenant can be employed in literary analysis. Since the Gothic is a fruitful genre and mode for ghosts, and it can produce counter readings that challenge the values of the established order, works that can be considered Gothic were chosen. In this study, both the interpretation of ghosts, and haunted/haunting houses as specters in the Derridean definition of the term, and the analysis of the character responses to hauntings with reference to hauntology have been demonstrated. An even further application of hauntology to Gothic literature could entail analysis of non-ghostly elements of any work from the framework of hauntology. Chapter 4's special attention to the connection between the soucouyant, a form of vampire, and the haunting house offers an example of how a non-ghostly figure can be associated with spectrality in a way that opens it up to a hauntological analysis.

In the end, what has been argued here is that haunting houses can, and often do, emerge as a result of social conditions and personal, familial or national histories, but their continued paradoxical (non-)existence is inextricably linked with the present. It is in the present that the characters have the option to utilize hauntology as an ethical decision when one encounters a specter. The different levels of success in these novels show that not all encounters with the specter are hauntological. I would also like to suggest that these varying levels of application of hauntology in these works could be related to their date of release. Like the historicity of the ghosts, these works are ultimately shaped by the dominant and counter discourses of their zeitgeist. Thus, a twenty-first century novel which follows poststructuralism and the hauntological framework that is influenced by it is unsurprisingly capable of envisioning a more successful hauntological encounter. In cases where this is not possible, the characters cannot step outside the boundaries set by ontology and society, as is the case in *The Haunting of Hill House*, and the spectral can only be an adversary against which one loses. Only when the characters can envision an alternative to the dismissal of both the supernatural and the suppression of personal and intergenerational guilt, the constant and demanding process of listening to, understanding and responding to the specter can begin.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, Gotik edebiyattaki musallat olan ev (haunting house) figürünü evlerin aktif olarak bilinç sahibi varlıklar olarak faaliyette bulunduğu Shirley Jackson'ın 1959 tarihli *The Haunting of Hill House* (*Tepedeki Ev*) ve Helen Oyeyemi'nin 2009 tarihli *White Is for Witching*[6] kitaplarında incelemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu amaçla, bu eserler Derrida'nın konu hakkındaki yazılarına dayanan yapısökümcü *musallatbilim,* yani *hauntology* (Fransızca ve İngilizce "ontoloji" ve "haunt" [musallat olmak] fiillerinin kaynaşması yoluyla türetilmiş bir tabir) çerçevesinden incelenmiştir. Derrida tarafından kazandırılmış bir kavram olan *musallatbilim,* var ve gerçek olanı var olmayan ve gerçek olmayandan ayıran geleneksel ontolojiye bir alternatif olarak geçmişten ya da olası bir gelecekten gelip fiziksel olarak mevcudiyet sağlamadan ortaya çıkan varol(mayı)uş hali olan *hayalet*'i *(specter)* öne sürer. *Hayalet,* Derrida'yı alıntılamak gerekirse, şu soruları sormaya teşvik eder: "Hayalet nedir? Hayaletin, diğer bir deyişle etkisiz, sanal ve esassız kalmış görünenin, etkililiği ve varlığı nedir? Şeyin kendisi ve onun simulakrumu arasında bulunan bir şey, devamlılık gösteren bir karşıtlık hali bulunmakta mıdır?" (*Marx'ın Hayaletleri* 10, kendi çevirim). Bu tez musallat olan evler motifinin musallatbilim lensinden çalışılmaya uygun bir konu olduğunu öne sürmüştür. Bunun için gerekçe olarak da bu evlerin *hortlak* (*revenant*) için bir konum olmaktan öteye gitmeleri, bu evlerin kendilerinin asla ortadan kaybolmamış, bilinci olan cansız nesneler olarak geri dönen hayaletin her yerdeliğine şahitlik yaptığını öne sürülmüştür. Bu evler, asla hayata gelmeden insanların yaşam süresinden daha uzun süre bir varoluş şekli sergilemekte olup, bu hayattan göçmüş olanların ruhlarına ev sahipliği yapmaktan öteye geçip, kendi ruhu ya da aklı yokken kişisel irade sergilemektedirler. Bu ikilik durumları musallat olan ev motifinin musallatbilimin ontolojinin dışında varol(mayı)uşuyla uyum halindedir.

Derrida'nın *Marx'ın Hayaletleri* (*Specters of Marx*) musallatbilim konseptini yirminci yüzyılın sonlarının tarih ve politik iklimine uygulamış olsa da bu konsept edebiyat çalışmalarında da ilgiyle uygulanmıştır. Bu tez, edebiyat çalışmaları alanında musallatbilim

[6] Eser, Haziran 2023 itibarıyla Türkçe'ye çevrilmemiştir, bu yüzden özetin geri kalanında İngilizce başlığı kullanılacaktır.

yaklaşımını kullanılarak oluşturulmuş çalışmalardan ve Gotik gelenekteki perili ev motifinin özünde bulunan hayalsellikten ilham alarak Derrida'nın hayalet/hortlak/ruh ve musallat olma konseptlerinin ışığında bu iki eserdeki karakterlerin deneyimlediği dadanılma vakalarını incelemiştir. Bu çalışma, Derrida'nın musallatbilime uygun bir yaklaşım olarak nitelendirdiği bir şekilde hayaletlerle etkileşimde bulunmayı karakterlerin ne ölçüde uygulayabildiğine bakmıştır. Derrida'nın öne sürdüğü Öteki olan hayaleti dinlemek ve kabul etme olgusunun seçilmiş olan romanlarda tasvir edilen durumlara uygunluğu incelendi.

Bu amaçla, perili ev motifinin kendi başına doğaüstü öğeler meydana getirebilen ve karakterler açısından hayaletli konumlar olarak görülen bilinç sahibi evler olarak kullanıldığı iki eser seçilmiştir. Shirley Jackson'ın 1959'da yayımlanmış *The Haunting of Hill House* adlı eseri edebi kurgunun en bilinmiş musallat olan ev motifi örneklerindendir. İngilizce başlığın bir kısmına ve Türkçe çevirisinin tamamına ismini veren Tepedeki Ev'de meydana gelen olay örgüsü evin doğaüstü öğeleri gözlemlemek için ziyaret eden karakterlerin birkaç haftalık sürede deneyimlediği dadanılmaları ve onların verdiği tepkileri içermektedir. Roman, karakterlerden genç bir kadın olan Eleanor Vance'a odaklanarak Tepedeki Evin kişileri hedef alan, dadanmalarını karakterlerin isim, geçmiş ve fark edebilecekleri duyusal deneyimlere dayandıran bilinçli bir varlık olduğu olasılığını öne sürmektedir. Farklı özelliklere sahip olan bu araştırma grubu doğaüstü olguları gözlemlemeye çalışırken, Eleanor kendisini evin onunla direkt iletişime geçtiğine inandığı tehlikeli bir durumda bulur. Doğaüstü olarak adlandırabilecek bir seri olayı takiben, roman hem diğer karakterlerin hem de okuyucuların Eleanor'un Tepedeki Ev'in arazisinde intiharıyla sonuçlanan olayların evin mi Eleanor'un ruhsal durumunun mu sonucu olduğunu bilemeyeceği açık bir sona sahiptir. Bu eserin seçilme amacı yazıldığı zaman türünün ilk örneklerinden olması ve sonraki yıllarda musallat olan ev motifinin ana örneği olarak deneyimlediği popülerlik sonucu bu alt türün tipik bir örneği haline gelmesidir. David Bailey'in "perili ev romanı" olarak sınıflandırdığı kitaplar arasında yer almasına rağmen, *The Haunting of Hill House* evin ve konumun Gotik anlatılarda oynadığı önemi merkezine alıp, evi kuralları ihlal eden konumuna yerleştirmesiyle bir yenilik olarak yorumlanabilir.

İkinci eser, Helen Oyeyemi'nin 2009 tarihli *White Is for Witching* romanı evin musallat olan bir varlık olarak davrandığı çağdaş Gotik türünde eserlere bir örnektir. Bu romanda ev hem içerisindeki cansız öğeleri hem de anlatının ortadan kaybolması ile başladığı Miranda Silver karakterinin büyük büyükannesinin anne soyundan gelenlerin zihinlerini kontrol eden bir varlıktır. Büyük büyükanne Anna Good'un kadın akrabalarının çoğunluğunun eve hapsolması ile sonuçlanan şeytani etkisine ek olarak, ev aynı zamanda Tepedeki Ev'in aksine, niyet ve

arzularının daha net anlaşılmasını sağlayan kendi odaklanmasının olduğu bölümlere sahiptir. Bu bölümlerden anlaşıldığı üzere, miras kalan ve konuttan tatil yerine döndürülmüş bir konum olan Silver Evi, Öteki saydıklarını uzaklaştırmaya çalışan yabancı düşmanı bir varlıktır. Bu dışlama süreci iki şekilde meydana gelmektedir: evin ulusun sınırları içinde istemediği kişileri uzaklaştırma arzusu ve ailenin kadın üyelerini kendi sınırları içerisinde, bazen duvarlarının içine gömülmelerine yol açan bir şekilde, hapsetmek. Konumlandığı yer olan Dover şehri gibi, Silver Evi mültecilere yönelik yabancı düşmanı saldırıların sembolü konumunda bulunmaktadır (Stephanou 1246).

Bu iki eserin incelenmesi sonucu, bu tez iki hipotezi test etmiştir. Bunlardan birincisi, musallat olan ev motifinin musallatbilimsel yoruma göre geçmişten gelen ve günümüzle olan ilişkisi sayesinde var olan ve şu anı değiştirmeye çalışan hayalet figürünün bir örneği olmasıdır. İkinci olarak ise, bu eserlerde musallat olunma durumundan etkilenen sakinler ve misafirler evlerin uyguladığı dadanmayla Derrida'nın musallatbilim aracılığıyla önerdiği şekilde değişen başarı oranlarıyla iletişime geçerler. Bu bilgiler ışığında görüntülendiğinde, evlerle kurulan iletişim bu evlerin henüz bahsedilmemiş doğruları, dilekleri ve geçmişin gizli tarihini açığa çıkarıyor olsalar bile duyulmaları gerektiğine işaret etmektedir. İfade ettiklerinin tabiatının bir sonucu olarak, bu evler ilk başta tehlikeli etkilerinin ortaya çıkmasına ortam sağlayan daha derin sorunların birer belirtisi konumundadırlar. Ayrıca, iki eserin yayımlanması arasında geçen elli yıllık süre zarfının bir sonucu olarak, bu evlerin musallat olunma şekillerinin tasviri ve karakterlerinin Derrida'nın musallatbilimini uygulama başarıları farklıdır. Her evin, kendi çevresindeki özel koşullar ve sorunlar aracılığı ile musallat olan ev özelliği kazandığı düşüncesi ve Derrida'nın her çağın ve konumun hortlaklarının farklı olacağına yaptığı vurgunun bir sonucu olarak, bu iki eser farklı karakterlerin musallat olan evlere verdiği tepkilerin farklılığını ve bu tepkilerin, tıpkı dadanmalar gibi, ardında yatan nedenler sebebiyle seçilmiştir. Bunların incelenmesi sonucu, bu tez *The Haunting of Hill House* karakterlerinin musallatbilimsel bir tutum edinemediklerini ve *White Is for Witching*'de özellikle baş karakter olmak üzere bazı karakterlerin her musallat olunma durumunun anın spesifik özellikleri ve sorunlarının bir sonucu olduğunun farkındalığını gösterip, musallatbilimsel bir tutumla iletişim kurabilen karakterler olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

Bu iki eseri musallatbilimin öne sürdüğü hayaletlerle iletişime geçmenin etik bir gereksinim olduğu fikrinin ışığında analiz ederek, bu çalışma Gotik kurgunun bireylerin, ailelerin ve toplumların kökleri geçmişe dayanan günümüz sorunlarının sembolik ifadesi için oldukça uygun bir edebi tür olduğunu önermiştir. Bunun için, ikinci bölümde yapısökümcü kurama ek olarak, Gotik edebiyatın tarihsel gelişimi ve bu tarihsel gelişimde konumun önemi

incelenmiştir. *Otranto Şatosu* (1764)'nun yayımlanması ile başlayan ve bu başlangıç sayılabilecek eserin isminden de anlaşılabileceği gibi Gotik edebiyatın merkezinde bulunan konum, türün gelişmesi ile zaman içinde sürekli şekil değiştirse de önemini korumuştur. Perili ev ya da musallat olan ev motifinin kökenleri orta çağı çağrıştıran şato ve kalelere dayansa bile, bu motif zamanla değişerek önce on dokuzuncu yüzyılda bu konumların yerelleştirilmesi ile Viktorya dönemi malikanelerine, daha sonra da her şekil ve yaşta evler olarak devamlılığını sağlamıştır.

Üçüncü bölümde bu eserlerden ilki olan *The Haunting of Hill House* incelenmiş olup, bu inceleme üç aşamada gerçekleştirmiştir. Öncelikle evin nasıl musallat olan ev motifinin ve Derrida'nın hayalet tanımlarına uyduğu karakterlerin ve sınırlı üçüncü şahıs anlatıcının betimlemeleri ve düşünceleri doğrultusunda gösterilmiştir. Bunu takiben, karakterlerin hayalsel eve ve evin yarattığı dadanmalara verdiği tepkilerin sebepleri incelenmiş, özellikle Eleanor Vance karakterinin Tepedeki Ev'in etki alanına girip kendi benlik duygusunu kaybetmesine katkıda bulunan toplumsal ve kişisel problemlerden bahsedilmiştir. Son olarak, bunların sonucunda hem Eleanor'un hem de diğer karakterlerin farklı sebepler doğrultusunda musallatbilimsel bir şekilde hayaletlerle iletişime geçemediği, bu sebeple de ne kendi toplumlarını etkileyen problemlere bir çözüm bulabildiği, ne de geçmişten günümüze etkisini sürdüren hortlakları anlayabilmeye yaklaşmışlardır.

Tepedeki Ev'i hayaletsel bir yapı haline getiren bilinç ve niyet sahibi olma durumu, evin fiziksel özelliklerine de ziyaretçilerine ve evle karşılaşan herhangi biri için düşmanca bir görüntü sergileme şeklinde yansımaktadır. Bunu göstermek için hem Eleanor'un yol boyunca ve eve ulaştığındaki hisleri, hem de diğer karakterlerden doğaüstü olayları araştırmak için hepsini Tepedeki Ev'e toplamış olan Doktor Montague'nün lanetli ya da temiz olmayan, şeytani evler konsepti, ve son olarak da evin kaldıkları süre içerisinde gerçekleşen musallat olma vakalarından örnekler verilmiş ve bunların içeriğinin evin emelleriyle ilgili nasıl bir ipucu verebileceği gösterilmiştir.

Sonra, neden Eleanor'un evin etkisi altına giren karakter olduğunu göstermek için yalnızlığı, annesiyle olan çocukluğuna dayanan travması, 1950lerin Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde bekar ve ekonomik olarak savunmasız olan konumunu incelenmiştir ve bunların evin Eleanor'u diğerlerinden daha rahat kontrol edebilmesinin nedenleri olarak listelenmiştir. Eleanor'un manipüle edici dadanmaların bir sonucu olarak eve ait olduğuna inanması bu faktörlere bağlıyken, bu faktörlerin çözümü de evin hayalet olarak geçmişten getirdiklerinin tanınması, anlaşılması ve dinlenmesi sonucu mümkündür. Bu yüzden, üçüncü bölüm bunların başarılamadığı ve Derrida'nın talep ettiği etik gereklilik olan diğerle iletişim kurmanın

gerçekleştirilemediğini öne sürmektedir. Bunu göstermek için Eleanor'a ek olarak, diğer karakterlerin nasıl bilim, mantık, yeni çağ ruhiyatçılık akımına sığınma ya da durumu normalleştirme gibi hataları sonucu, sadece hayalet anlaşılamamakla kalmamış, geçmişten ve gelecekten bir ses ve istekle gelen ama duyulmayan hayaletlerin saflarına Eleanor'un intiharı sonucu bir kişi daha katılmıştır.

White Is for Witching romanı, sırası değiştirilmiş bir kronoloji takip ettiğinden dolayı, hikâye Miranda'nın kayboluşuyla başlatmaktadır. Miranda'nın kayboluşu ikiz erkek kardeşi Eliot, Miranda'nın kız arkadaşı Ore ve Miranda'nın büyük büyükannesinin yaşadığı sırada bilinç kazanmış olan Silver Evi tarafından birbiriyle çelişkili şekillerde anlatılmaktadır. İkizlerin annelerinin ölümüyle başlamış olan ve Miranda'nın kayboluşuna sebep olan musallat olunma halini anlatarak, *White Is for Witching* boşluk ve belirsizliklere dolu, dadanılmış olma hissini güçlendiren bir zaman akışını kullanmaktadır. Burada musallatbilim için önemi olan bir detay *White Is for Witching*'in eve zaman zaman diğer anlatıcılarınkiyle zıt düşen kendisine ait bakış açısı ve anlatıcı gücü sayesinde irade ve bilinç atfetmesidir.

Bu birden çok anlama yer veren kitapta, Miranda'nın kayboluşunun yorumlanış yollarından birisi intihar ederek ölmesi sonucu Silver Evi'nin duvarları içinde bir hayalet olarak hapsedilmesidir. Tezin dördüncü bölümü oldukça düşmanca olan Silver Evi'ne karakterlerin musallatbilimsel yaklaşımlarını incelemede en etkili yorum olarak kullanmıştır. Bu okumadan yola çıkarak, bu tez aynı zamanda Miranda'nın musallatbilimsel bir yaklaşım kullanarak evle iletişime geçmeye çalıştığını ve bu süreçte de aile mirasının yabancı düşmanlığı ve emperyalizmin değinilmemiş sonuçlarıyla direkt bir şekilde ilişkili olduğunu keşfetmiştir. İlk olarak, evin istediği bir şekilde, evin iyi niyetli olduğuna inanarak ve bunu takiben, evin dadadan varlığını fark edip direniş göstererek, en son olarak da evin Silver ailesinin kadınlarının üzerinde olan bitmek bilmeyen etkisini sonlandırmak için kendini feda ederek, Miranda evi anladığını göstermiştir. Kendi anlayışına göre, Miranda evin neo-sömürgeci hakimiyet düzeninin içine çekilmeyi reddetmesini ifade etmektedir. Bu şekilde, *Tepedeki Ev'*deki Eleanor Vance'ın aksine daha ferasetli bir yaklaşım sergileyip, Miranda Silver hayaletleri dinlemenin her zaman onları rehabilite etme ya da adaleti yerine getirme amacıyla olmayacağını göstermektedir. Tam aksine, bu bölümde hayalet ya da hortlağın madun kitleler ve sessiz kurbanlara ait olabileceği gibi, hayalet olarak geri dönenin geçmişin günümüze taşınmış olan üzeri örtülmüş suçlarının da olabileceğini göstermiştir. *White Is for Witching*'de Silver Evi tarafından somutlaştırılmış olan geçmişin hayaletleri günümüze "İngiliz sınır politikaları" olarak taşınmıştır (Ilott; *New Postcolonial British Genres* 62.)

Dördüncü bölüm, bir önceki bölüm gibi, Silver Evi'nin nasıl musallat olan bir ev olduğunu göstermeye teşebbüs ederek başlamıştır. Bu, öncelikle evin bilince işaret eden özelliklere bakarak, sonrasında kötü niyetli olarak sınıflandırabilecek sergilediği davranışlarına bakılarak yapılmıştır. Evin ırkçı, yabancı düşmanı ve ayrımcılık yapan bakış açısı ve davranışlarını gösterdikten sonra, bölüm Silver Evi'nin genel olarak Silver ailesinin kadınları üzerindeki, özellikle de Miranda üzerindeki etkisine bakmıştır. Bu noktada, hayalet ile derisini döküp ateş topuna dönüşebilen bir cadı vampir olan Karayipler'e ait *soucouyant* figürü arasındaki fark gözetilmiştir. Bunun sebebi, kitapta *soucouyant* figürünün Miranda'nın yeme bozukluğu pika ve evin Miranda ve diğer Silver kadınları üzerinde sergilediği etki aracılığıyla önemli bir sembol olarak rol almasıdır. Batılı vampir figürü ile yakın bir şekilde bağdaşlaştırılan yerli bir folklorik inanış olarak *soucouyant'*ın ırkçılığın ve yabancı düşmanlığının günümüze olan miraslarını merkeze olan musallat olan ev romanındaki varlığı bu konu üzerine irdelemeyi gerektirmiştir.

Bunların sonucunda, tezin dördüncü bölümü *White Is for Witching*'de Silver Evi'nin Derrida'nın tanımladığı şekilde geliş ve gidişi tahmin edilemeyen bir hortlak, bir hayalet olarak tasvir edildiğini öne sürmüştür. Tepedeki Ev'de olduğu gibi, bu iddiayı doğrulamanın ilk adımı evin bilinçli bir varlık olduğunu göstermek olmuştur. Evin bilincinin olduğunun en kesin kanıtı evin kendisine ayrılmış ve kendi bakış açısından yazılmış bölümlerdir. Evin kendi bakış açısı sayesinde okuyucular evin düşünce ve planları hakkında bilgi edinmektedir. Bu durum, Tepedeki Ev'in açıklanamayan ama eve giren herkes tarafından kaynağı belirlenemeden hissedilen belirsiz iradesinden farklı bir ev profili çizmektedir.

Bu bilinç, hortlakbilimsel bir lensten incelenip, evin şu andaki azınlıklara karşı olan düşmanlığının geçmişiyle alakalı olduğu ortaya konulmuştur. Miranda'nın büyük büyükannesi Anna Good'un yabancılara karşı olan nefretini içselleştirmiş olan Silver Evi, kendisine bilinç vermiş bu kadının yabancı düşmanı ve nefret dolu yönünü "kendisinden daha yaşlı olan yanı" olarak betimleyip, bu yönün onu "her zaman [Anna Good'a], onun kızı Jennifer, Jennifer'ın inatçı kızı Lily ve Lily'nin daha da inatçı kızı Miranda'ya bağlayacağını" düşünmektedir (*White Is for Witching* 118, benim çevirim). Anna Good'un kalbindeki nefretin ne olursa olsun kendisinden daha yaşlı olduğu düşüncesi evi ve evin ruhunu Derrida'nın öne sürdüğü hortlağın geri dönüşü anlayışından okunmaya oldukça elverişli bir hale getirmektedir.

1940'ların Birleşik Krallığı, on sekiz ve on dokuzuncu yüzyıl sömürgeci geçmişiyle yakın bağlantılı olduğu gibi, romanın yer aldığı yirmi birinci yüzyılın başları da 1940'lar ve savaş sonrası dönemin göç, ayrımcılık ve emperyalizm mirasının üzerine kurulmuş bulunmaktadır. Romanda bunun nasıl Silver Evi üzerinden tasvir edildiğine bakılarak, evin şimdiki zamandaki

düşmanca varol(mayış)uşu tarihsel kökene oturtulmuştur. Bu durumda ev, Anna Good'un zihninden türemiş, ama onun kendi nefret ve varlığından daha uzun ömürlü ve asla ayrılmadan sürekli geri dönen bir hortlak haline gelmiştir.

Dördüncü bölüm, hayalsel bir varlık olarak Silver Evinin Miranda Silver ve diğer Silver ailesinin kadınları üzerindeki etkisinin ne şekillerde olduğunu, sadece musallat olan bir ev olmanın ötesinde fiziksel dünyayı insanların vücutlarını kontrol ederek, nesnelerin içine girerek ve kendi fiziksel boyutlarını değiştirerek etkileyebildiğini örneklerle göstermiştir. Evin direkt olarak etkileyebilen yüzü etkilenen kişiler tarafından *iyi leydi* (*the goodlady*) olarak adlandırılmıştır. İyi leydi figürü ilk olarak Miranda'nın annesinin ona anlattığı hikayelerde ortaya çıkmıştır. Miranda'nın sevdiği ve korktuğu bir hale gelen bu figür, onun ne yediğini ne düşündüğünü nasıl gözüktüğünü etkilemeye çalışmaktadır. Bu etki ve sonuçları kitapta ilk Miranda'nın kendisinin yaptığını hatırlamadığı konularda suçlanmasıyla ortaya çıkmaktadır. Annesinin vefatı sonrasında kötüleşen akıl sağlığı sebebiyle bir klinikteyken Kosovalı mültecilerle tanışıp onların zarar verilmesinde rol oynayan başka bir kıza benzetilip suçlanması sonucu, okuldaki diğer Kosovalı mülteci öğrencilerin öfkesiyle baş etmek zorunda kalan Miranda, ilk defa ev ve onun bir uzantısı olan iyi leydi kişiliği tarafından kontrol edilebiliyor olduğu şüphesiyle yüz yüze kalır. Bu tezde, evin içinde ölmüş olan insanları fiziksel olarak geri getirebilmenin de olduğu yetenekleri ve evin yabancı düşmanlığı göz önüne alındığında, insanların Miranda'yı suçlama sebebinin, evin onu kontrol etmesi ile alakalı olduğu öne sürülmüştür.

Yası, gittikçe kaybettiği benlik duygusu ve kötüleşen yeme bozukluğuyla baş edebilmek için Miranda evi dinlemeye karar vermiştir. Miranda'nın Silver Evi'ne olan yaklaşımı Derrida'nın tavsiyesine olan "hayalet hakkında, hayalete ve hayaletle konuşma"ya benzetilebilir (*Marx'ın Hayaletleri* xviii, benim çevirim). Ailesinin mirası olan metaforik ve hakiki musallat ve onun bir başka ortaya çıkış hali olan yeme bozukluğunu bastırmak yerine, Miranda bunların varlığını kabul edip, ne olduklarını anlayabilmek için iletişime geçmeyi dener. Miranda'nın iyi leydiye olan inancı bu varlıkla direkt olarak yakından ilgilenmesini sağlamaktadır. Bu iletişim sonucu, Miranda kendisinin de iyi leydinin kontrolünde başkaları için tehlike oluşturabilecek bir yönü olduğunu keşfedip, bu dürtüye teslim olmayı reddetmektedir. Kitabın sonunda, kız arkadaşı Ore'nin Silver Evi'ni ziyaret etmesinin sonucunda Miranda eve karşı olan direnişin kontrolünü kaybetse bile, bu anlık güçsüzlük evi anlamayı bıraktığı anlamına gelmemektedir. Kısa süreliğine evin isteklerine uygun davranmış olsa da bu tez, Miranda'nın bu güçsüzlük durumundan çıkabilmesinin altında aslında evin motivasyonunu anlayabilmesinin yattığını öne sürmüştür.

Ore kendisini kurtarıp ayrıldığında, Miranda tekrardan farkındalığını kazanmış bir şekilde ailesinin mirasıyla yüzleşmek için kendi başına kalmış bir durumda bulunmaktadır. Ore'nin ev tarafından hapsedilmesi sırasında keşfettiği kendisinin de evin etkisiyle sahip olduğu *soucouyant* eğilimlerinin ve iyi leydinin Miranda'nın kendisinin bir parçası olma isteğinin farkında bir şekilde, Miranda evin ve iyi leydinin emellerine karşı başarılı bir direniş gösterebileceğini düşündüğü bir aşamaya ulaşır. Korkup, bu geçmişi saklamak yerine, zaman ve emek gerektirse bile ailesinin, ulusun ve Silver Evinin geçmişiyle yakından ilgilenerek, evi durdurma isteğinde bulunan Miranda, hayaleti Derrida'nın sunduğu modele göre anlamaya oldukça yaklaşmış bir bireydir. Miranda'nın bu inancı, Derrida'nın birinin geçmişinin aslı nizami ve tek şekilli olmayacağını öne sürdüğü, birinin mutlaka "filtreleme, eleme, eleştirmesi gerektiği, birinin aynı uyarının barındırdığı farklı mümkünlük durumlarını arasından seçmesi gerektiği" çünkü "bir mirasın asla bir araya toplanmış bir durumda olmadığı, asla kendisiyle bir olmadığı . . . varsayılan birlik hali, eğer mevcutsa, sadece seçim yaparak tekrardan onaylamanın gerekliliğiyle var olabildiği" fikriyle uyum halindedir. (*Marx'ın Hayaletleri* 18, kendi çevirim). Hayaletle dikkatli bir etkileşim sayesinde, Miranda bu hayaletin kendi mirasının nasıl bir parçası olduğunu anlamakta ve bir şeyi miras olarak kabul etmek için, "hayaletle ve bunun sonucu olarak, birden fazla hayaletle uzlaşmak" gerektiği anlayışına uygun bir davranış sergilemektedir.

Diğer karakterlerden özellikle azınlık konumunda olanlar Silver Evi'nin hayaletsel varlığını anlamakta başarı gösterirken, Miranda'nın ailesinin diğer üyeleri aynı *The Haunting of Hill House* romanındaki karakterler gibi ya hayaletle yüzleşmekten kaçınarak ya da hayaletin geri getirdiği davranışı zaten günümüzde uygulayan insanlar olarak hayaleti anlamada başarısız olmaktadır. Bu tez, Miranda'nın dadanılmasının sadece evin, iyi leydinin ruhunun ne demek istediğini anlama zahmetine girmeye hevesli, evin gücünün sadece geçmişin bir ürünü olduğunu varsaymayacak kişiler tarafından anlaşılabildiğini öne sürmüştür. Bunun bir sonucu olarak, Miranda, Ore ve evin hizmetçisi Sade gibi karakterler evin saldırgan davranışlarına karşı koymayı başarabilirken, diğer karakterler evin ırkçılık ve emperyalizminin geçmişte kaldığını düşünecek dünya görüşlerine sahip olup, sorunları anlamaya çalışmadıkları için, aynı bilinç seviyesine varamamışlardır. Bu tez, Miranda'nın ölümü sonucunda Silver Evi'nin ırkçı mirası tamamen etkisiz hale getirilememiş olsa bile, evin etkisini azaltmak için Miranda'nın kendi hayatından vazgeçmesini, evin ve iyi leydinin etkisinin artmasına karşı etkili bir karşı koyuş olduğunu savunmuştur. Evin onu kontrol edip, kendi hayaletlerinden biri haline getirmesini istemediği için kendi kendini öldürerek, Miranda yok etmeye çalıştığı hayaletin bir parçası olmaktan kurtulmuştur.

Bu incelemelerin sonucunda, bu tez iki farklı eserde Derrida'nın öne sürdüğü yapısökümcü musallatbilim yaklaşımının kendisi musallat olan evler anlatılarındaki evlere ne derece uygulanabilir olduğuna bakmıştır. İki eserdeki evlerden yola çıkarak, fiziksel özellikleri, bilinç durumları ve paranormal etkilerini analiz ettikten sonra, musallat olan evlerin canlı-cansız, nesne-bilinç gibi ikiliklere karşıt varlıklarıyla musallatbilim gibi ontolojiye alternatif önerilmiş fikrin uygulanması için ideal motifler olduğu gösterilmeye çalışılmıştır. Bu tamamlandıktan sonra, bu evler eğer musallatbilimsel olarak hayalet olarak adlandırılabilecekse, bu hayaletlerin doğasında Derrida'nın bahsettiği geçmişin ve gerçekleşmemiş geleceklerin hata ve yanlışlarının nasıl vücut bulduğu kitaplardaki karakterlerin ve konumun tarihsel bağlamı açısından incelenmiştir. Ve son olarak, karakterlerin musallatbilimi bu evleri anlama ve dadanmalara çözüm üretmede ne derecede başarıyla kullanabildiklerine bakılmıştır. Bu incelemeler sonucunda, bu tez *The Haunting of Hill House* eserindeki baş karakter Eleanor Vance başta olmak üzere, kitaptaki karakterlerin evi okuyup, anlamak ve dinlemek yerine kendi amaç ve isteklerini eve atfettikleri için, Eleanor'un evin etki alanına girip, kendi hayatını almasıyla sonuçlanan musallat olunma serisiyle başa çıkamadığını öne sürmüştür. İkinci eser olan *White Is for Witching* eserinde ise, karakterin durumu kendi benliğini kaybetme tehlikesi ve ev tarafından kontrol edilmesi açısından benzer olsa bile, Miranda karakteri ve diğer iki karakter olan Ore ve Sade evi ve onun sunduğu hayaletin amaçlarını tarihsel bağlamında ve yaşadıkları anın koşulları ışığında anlamaya çalıştıkları ve rasyonelliğe bağlı kalmadan doğaüstüne inanabildikleri için, daha başarılı bir musallatbilim uygulaması gerçekleştirmişlerdir.

Özetlemek gerekirse, bu tez musallat olan evlerin başta bu hayaletlerin ortaya çıkmasına sebep olan koşullara karşı olan vurdumduymazlığın bir sonucu olarak şimdiki zamanı etkileyen geçmiş olayların hayaleti olarak faaliyette bulundukları iki eseri inceledi. Bu inceleme Gotik edebiyatın geçmişin hayaletlerinden bahsederek yıkıcı olma çabalarının ancak geçmişin mirası için sorumluluk üstlenen ve hortlağın dönüşünün devamlılığını sağlayan faktörlerin üzerine eğilen musallatbilimsel bir yaklaşım üstlenirse anlamlı olacağını göstermek için yapılmıştır. Bu yüzden, *The Haunting of Hill House* Gotik edebiyatın musallat olan evlerde vücut bulan hayaletleriyla baş etmede musallatbilimin başarıyla kullanılamadığı bir örnek olarak seçilmiş olup, *White Is for Witching* hayaletle başarılı bir iletişimde bulunma halinin nasıl olabileceğini göstermek için analiz edilmiştir.

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