2014-2015

Master 1 Cultures et Critiques du Texte en Lettres, Langues et Civilisations

Parcours Anglais

"I am two Mowglis":
The impact of Gothic duality on Mowgli and Nobody's construction of identity in Kipling's *The Two Jungle Books* and Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*

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Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Ms. Ryan-Sautour for her precious advice, support and patience. I have to give a special mention to the inspirational lectures she gave on *Wuthering Heights*, three years ago; they were a true revelation and greatly influenced my wish to pursue an academic career.

I am also thankful to my family and friends for their encouragement throughout the year, and to Dinah Ward and Misha Gray for their valuable wisdom.

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Introduction

The Gothic has always occupied a significant place in children's literature and fairy tales. In the nineteenth century, “children's literature emerged as a genre largely in reaction to the popularity of the adult Gothic romance” (Jackson et al. 1). Undoubtedly, “[c]hildren […] have always had a predilection for what we now categorize as the Gothic, [...] fear and the pretence of fear,” and it is believed that “this appetite” was partly stimulated by scary tales “effectively secur[ing] docile behaviour” (Jackson et al. 2). Moreover, Karen Coats justifies the strong connection between Gothic and children's literature by stating that “[t]he dark landscapes, inappropriate lusts, and ravenous villains correspond to the dangerous impulses and aggressions that children actually experience as part of their own mental topographies” (Coats 78). In other terms, the legitimisation of children's fears through Gothic literature allows them to confront their anxieties by transposing them onto imaginative situations and characters, and enables them to contemplate these issues from a secure environment. Accordingly, “these stories increase children's emotional preparedness for the times when” they are challenged in real life (Coats 83).

Not only was the Gothic mode able to mature in nineteenth-century children's literature, but it also started infiltrating youth fiction in the past few decades. In *The Gothic in Children's literature: Haunting the Borders*, this continuity in time is partly explained by the capacity for the “Gothic chronotope” to “be allegorized as the mind”; a parallel is drawn between the Gothic “place, […] haunted by a past that remains present,” and the “child [who] grows, [accumulating] more and more experiences, […] forming the intricate passages where bits of his or her past get lost, only to re-emerge at unexpected times” (Jackson et al. 4). Interestingly, this comparison is significantly representative of “the vicissitudes of adolescent

identity," as the complexity of teenagehood, where childhood is left for adulthood, follows a similar process as for the Gothic (Jackson et al. 4). In this sense, when encountering Gothic motifs, children as well as teenagers are able to discover their emotional selves through a journey punctuated by situations they can easily identify with: "When we interact with gothic elements, we learn what frightens us, and what we find fascinating. We learn that we are not always in control of our own imaginations" (Howarth 2). The more children mature, the more they are able to gather elements from their childhood they will later abandon to create an actualised form of their identity, thus building a past comparable to the haunting nostalgia present in the Gothic.

A similar perpetuation is observed with fairy tales, which never ceased to seduce children throughout the centuries. In *The Uses of Enchantment,* Bruno Bettelheim explains their timeless and universal popularity:

> In order to master the psychological problems of growing up […] a child needs to understand what is going on within his conscious self so that he can also cope with that which goes on in his unconscious. […] [T]he child fits unconscious content into conscious fantasies, which then enable him to deal with that content. It is here that fairy tales have unequaled value, because they offer new dimensions to the child's imagination which would be impossible for him to discover as truly on his own. Even more important, the form and structure of fairy tales suggest images to the child by which he can structure his daydreams and with them give better direction to his life. (6)

Once again, children's unconscious identifications, here to fairy tales, constitute a fundamental element in their construction of moral values and personalities. This similarity to Gothic literature enhances the dynamic between both genres, which explains their efficiency through generations and time. What is more, this synergy intensifies in contemporary children's literature, in which "an average Joe can [now] have his princess without slaying any dragons" (Coats 79). Hence, this lack of adventure and defiance prevents the educative and enlightening role of fairy tales from being fulfilled. Bettelheim's psychic triangle effectively illustrates this role; in *The Gothic Fairy Tale in Young Adult Literature,* it is

described as a system "which states the need, [in fairy tales], for the equal growth and maturation of a persons imagination, intellect, and emotions" (Abbruscato 75). In regard to this operation, the Gothic acts as a crucial element by reinforcing the challenging character of children's literature (Coats 79).

To fully appreciate the interconnections between children's and Gothic literature, it seems essential to characterise the Gothic. In *The Gothic,* David Punter retraces the evolution of the term "Gothic" through history, and turns the origins of the term into a primordial key to the understanding of the notion. The first major element to acknowledge is the invasion of the Roman empire by the Goth tribes, during the fifth century. From this point, the word "Gothic" "became a highly mobile term […] revolving around the concepts of the primitive and the civilized" (Punter). For a long time, the Goths were only known as "the invaders and destroyers of the great Roman civilization," mainly because nothing else in their culture could be identified (Punter). Owing to limitations in knowledge, the "Dark Ages" was, during the Renaissance, attributed to the Middle Ages, and the term "Gothic" soon grew to mean "medieval," as it was strongly associated to the end of Antiquity. The artistic dimension of the term "Gothic" was also highly influenced by history, and was "erroneously attributed […] to those Germanic tribes that sacked Rome" (Punter). Thus, Gothic architecture was qualified as "barbaric, disordered and irrational in opposition to the classical style" (Punter).

Subsequently, David Punter states that "[t]his equation of the Gothic with a barbaric medieval past served not only to establish through difference the superiority of the more classical traditions of Greece and Rome, but also to confirm the virtues of the equally civilized, ordered, rational present". By going back to the roots of the term, Punter establishes an unwavering base built on historical facts as much as social phenomena encompassing the essence of the Gothic: "Gothic was the archaic, the pagan, that which was prior to, or was

opposed to, or resisted the establishment of civilized values and a well-regulated society" (Punter). The association of the terms "civilized values" and "well-regulated society" testifies of the importance of the Gothic in social structures and places it at the core of social contrasts and at the heart of the division of social spheres; it acts as a revealer of the fundamental differences between opposed environments, variations built upon two elements stressed by Punter: civilisation and primitivism.

Evidently then, the Gothic is, above all, a binary system working through oppositions; civilisation and primitivism, past and future, old and new: the themes exposed in the Gothic are always diametrically opposed, and the scheme of dual polarities is systematically used. From the Latin *duālis*, formed on *duo*, "two," "duality" designates a "two-fold condition or character" (Oxford Dictionary Etymology 292). This idea can be found in David Punter's description of the Gothic:[1]

> Gothic stood for the old-fashioned as opposed to the modern; the barbaric as opposed to the civilized; crudity as opposed to elegance; old English barons as opposed to the cosmopolitan gentry; often for the English and provincial as opposed to the European or Frenchified, for the vernacular as opposed to an 'imposed' culture.

This list of contrapositions, established within the mode itself, divides its elements into two opposing categories, clearly testifying of the fact that duality is the key to the dynamic of the Gothic. Although it cannot be argued that "duality" inevitably means "Gothic," the reciprocal is, however, undeniable. In fact, aside from thematic duality, the literary construction of the mode itself functions through a binary synergy. Indeed, according to Baldick, affective stimuli constitute a principal requirement "[f]or the Gothic effect to be attained," as "a tale should combine a fearful sense of inheritance in time with a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space, these two dimensions reinforcing one another to produce an impression of sickening descent into disintegration" (xix). Thence, the critic underlines the dual nature of the Gothic literary recipe, comprising two main ingredients, that is to say, a focus on specific

spaces and temporality.

Concerning its technical, classificatory characteristics, the status of the Gothic is eminently debated. Whereas some specialists like to see it as a type of literary genre, this dissertation will be based on the idea that "the Gothic is [generally] more to do with particular moments, tropes, repeated motifs that can be found scattered, or disseminated," thus making it a mode (Punter). Just like the term, the Gothic mode is "highly mobile," coming and going, creeping and sneaking into other literary genres (Punter). It could then be considered that "there are very few actual literary texts which are 'Gothic'" (Punter). One of the criteria to define the mode is, according to the critic Richard Bleiler, to do with a typical narrative frame, usually identifiable and largely necessary in Gothic literature:

> … in general the narrative tone of a work of Gothic fiction is overtly sensational, in the sense that the narrative is intended to generate sensations in the reader. The tone of the Gothic also frequently conveys heightened emotions, generally concentrating on depicting scenes of excitement and an urgency. More, the Gothic concentrates its narrative on its depictions of […] "horror, madness, monstrosity, death, disease, terror, evil, and weird sexuality." (Bleiler 276)

In this sense, Bleiler's statement correlates with Baldick's preeminence of the affect in the Gothic, and implies a rather active reading from the audience, participating in the uniqueness of the mode.

In addition, the complexity of the Gothic prism is expressed in Richard Bleiler's statement when he argues that "one piece of Gothic furniture does not necessarily transform an entire edifice into a Gothic castle" (246). Here, the critic emphasises the capacity of the mode to infiltrate any literary genre without necessarily turning it into a Gothic piece of work, and insists on the fact that the definition of the Gothic must be thoroughly nuanced for it to remain characteristic. In fact, he does so by criticising Bradford Morrow and Patrick McGrath's anthology *The New Gothic* and by accusing them of "being unable to define what they have assembled" (Bleiler 269). His main criticism is the following:

> … in casting their net, Morrow and McGrath cast it too widely, for virtually any reader should be able to locate stories that feature "horror, madness, monstrosity, death, disease, terror, evil, and weird sexuality," and to say these are all Gothic is, again, to show that the term is so widely applied that it has lost all meaning. (270)

Bleiler suggests that the danger of such generalisations resides in attributing the characteristics of the mode to any literary work, therefore causing the specificities of the Gothic to disappear because of their normalisation. In the same way, Bleiler reckons that modern critics have tended to embrace a larger definition of the Gothic that no longer corresponds to the original meaning and foundations of the mode:

> … the word [Gothic] is defined partially in terms of its history, partially in terms of its "furniture," and partially in terms of the emotions it evokes or is intended to evoke. At this point, any literary work possessing, among other elements, stylistic bleakness, thematic morbidity, and outré characters, behaviors, settings, or descriptions may be called and considered Gothic by somebody, and there are few who would disagree. (Bleiler 270)

What ties Neil Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book*, written in 2008, to the Gothic mode is the way Victorian elements are used in his book according to the characteristics of nineteenth-century Gothic:

> Victorian Gothic is marked primarily by the domestication of Gothic figures, spaces and themes: horrors become explicitly located within the world of the contemporary reader. The romantic Gothic villain is transformed as monks, bandits and threatening aristocratic foreigners give way to criminals, madmen and scientists. The exotic and historical settings that serve to distance the horrors from the world of the reader in earlier Gothic are replaced with something more disturbingly familiar: the bourgeois domestic world or the new urban landscapes. (Punter)

Interestingly, Gaiman's environment seems largely influenced by this definition: the "domestication of Gothic figures" and the "bourgeois domestic world" is greatly represented by the fact that the author twists the safety and comfort of the domestic place by turning it into a graveyard. Moreover, the "new urban landscapes" quite obviously correspond to the outside world, that is to say the city in which the graveyard was built, its modernity being found in the reactualisation of Kipling's jungle in the twenty-first century. Gaiman also uses "bandits" and "criminals" by including the Jacks of All Trades, the crooked organisation the

man Jack belongs to. Finally, the “historical settings” are depicted with the Victorian graveyard, and even through references to the Roman empire with Caius Pompeius' tomb, which was “now only a weathered lump of rock, [as] two thousand years earlier he had asked to be laid to rest on the mound beside the marble shrine, rather than to have his body sent back to Rome” (Gaiman 15-16).

By rewriting *The Two Jungle Books*, Neil Gaiman demonstrates the adaptability of these Gothic patterns over children's literature and plays around with the mode. With *The Graveyard Book,* he creates an original literary tribute to Rudyard Kipling and the Victorian era, fully acknowledged at the end of his book: “I owe an enormous debt, conscious and, I have no doubt, unconscious, to Rudyard Kipling and the two volumes of his remarkable work *The Jungle Book*” (Gaiman 311). *The Graveyard Book* depicts the story of Nobody Owens who, alike Mowgli, is a little boy deprived of his biological parents, savagely murdered in the first chapter of the book. After he manages to escape from his family's executioner, and in spite of his very young age, Nobody finds shelter in a graveyard whose late inhabitants decide to adopt and raise him before they give him the Freedom of the Graveyard, thus enabling the boy to use the same powers as the dead in their afterlives. In both Nobody's and Mowgli's cases, the two boys experience life amongst either animals or dead people, and find themselves confronted to numerous adventures that will help them grow up, mature and, eventually, become adults. As Abbruscato underlines, the main link between the books resides in the fact that “Bod […] is identity-less from the start: he had no name, no family, and effectively, no home to which he can return,” just like Mowgli (67).[2]

For its part, *The Two Jungle Books* originally gathers, amongst other tales, Mowgli's adventures, divided into eight short stories. From his adoption by the Wolves of the Seeonee Pack until his maturation and parting from the jungle, each episode raises questions of

identity, particularly regarding his integration within the animal and the human spheres. Just like Nobody, Mowgli embarks on a quest for answers, in a back and forth journey between two different worlds. Animality and humanity, life and death: both Kipling and Gaiman's characters travel from one environment to another, hoping to finally find a place to belong. In "Alice and Mowgli revisited: Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book*," Franziska Burstyn analyses the intertextuality between the books and states that " the parallels between both novels are already suggested by the title" (76). Similarly, "crucial characters from *The Jungle Books* have also found their way into *The Graveyard Book*" (Burstyn 76). It is the case of Mowgli's mentors, Baloo and Bagheera, "transferred to a Gothic environment" and turned into Bod's instructors, Silas and Miss Lupescu, a vampire-like creature and a werewolf (Burstyn 76). In the same way, Nobody engages in a long lasting battle against the man Jack, compared to Shere Khan "in rather animalistic terms" (Burstyn 77). Indeed, Gaiman calls the murderer "an old tiger scenting prey" as he tries and fails to kill the child for the second time, at the very end of the book (256).

Accordingly, *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book* are largely about childhood and identity. Indeed, Gaiman defines his version as being about "growing up," "learning" and "moving on," thus putting individual development at the heart of his novel ("Neil Gaiman – on writing"). In this way, Gaiman's rewriting acts as a reminder of the bildungsroman tradition used in *The Two Jungle Books*. Indeed, the Mowgli stories respond to Bleiler's definition of a tale "depict[ing] the maturation and education of a child over time," with "philosophical discussions" and a "didactic" dimension (Bleiler 276). Given the hybrid status of *The Graveyard Book*, coupling Gothic elements with characteristics of the bildungsroman, this dissertation will explore the reasons why the Gothic mode and children's literature are such an efficient combination regarding identity matters.

In this sense, the analysis of *The Two Jungle Books* appears equally essential, not only because it constitutes the source of inspiration for Nobody's adventures, but mainly because through his rewriting, Gaiman seems to recuperate and bring to light unsuspected Gothic patterns already present in Kipling's fiction. Mowgli stories, just like Nobody's adventures, are largely infiltrated by Gothic motifs, as this study will demonstrate. In fact, the relationship between the books echoes Kohlke and Gutleben's observations on neo-Victorian Gothic and "its ethical determination to question norms, to value otherness, to nuance identity politics, to interrogate limits and boundaries, and to deconstruct Manichean distinctions – between good and evil, right and wrong, […] life and death and, perhaps most importantly, past and present" (43-44). Interestingly, these themes and concerns are all present in Kipling and Gaiman's fictions, and the expression "Manichean distinctions" reflects both the duality of the Gothic mode and the nature of the issues tackled in Mowgli and Nobody's adventures.

In this regard, the aim of this dissertation is to suggest that it is the very duality of the Gothic which enables the mode to be particularly efficient with children's literature, specifically regarding questions of identity. Therefore, the following question will be addressed: how does Gothic duality influence Mowgli and Nobody's construction of identity? The first section of this dissertation will focus on the dynamic of Gothic duality as a theme through morality, temporality and determinism, all largely interfering with the main protagonists' self-development. Subsequently, the binary schemes perpetuating throughout the books will reveal a fundamental division placed at the very core of both Gothic as well as identity concerns: human and non-human identifications. Ultimately, the question of humanness will appear to be anchored in a more specific binary pattern, found in the Gothic-tainted territories created by Kipling and Gaiman. Again, these physical spaces, which will be classified into "spheres," will be closely linked to Mowgli and Nobody's identitary quests.

1. Gothic duality as a theme: morality, temporality and determinism in Kipling and Gaiman's fictions

Gothic duality holds a significant place in both *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book*, and subtly influences the themes discussed in Kipling and Gaiman's fictions. According to Fred Botting, the binary nature of the Gothic is to be found in the opposition between the Roman and post-Roman periods: “After the Renaissance, the classical tradition was associated with civilised, humane and polite civic culture, its moral and aesthetic values privileged as the basis of virtuous behaviour, harmonious social relations and mature artistic practices” (3). *Per contra*, “the word 'Gothic' assumes its powerful, if negative, significance,” as the term was “[u]sed derogatively about art, architecture and writing that failed to conform to the standards of neoclassical taste, [and] signified the lack of reason, morality and beauty of feudal beliefs, customs and works” (3). Again, the term “Gothic” seems to define itself through confrontation, as the critic paints a rather binary picture of its comparison to the “classical tradition”: when the latter is “virtuous,” “harmonious,” and “mature,” the Gothic is “negative,” “failed to conform” and “lack[s] of reason [and] morality”. Above all, the mode only exists as a result of the oppositions between two different periods, the Roman and post-Roman eras.

Furthermore, “there is a broad agreement that the Gothic represents the subject in a state of deracination, […] in a condition of rupture, disjunction, fragmentation” (Miles 3). This very “fragmentation” responds to duality in a sense that it “problematizes the whole issue of identity” by splitting it into several parts: if identity is divided, then its coherency is put into question, as it does not form a whole anymore (Punter). This first section aims at studying the application of the dual nature of the Gothic mode through similarly constructed

and divided themes structuring *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book.* Indeed, the way Kipling and Gaiman use binary motifs to constitute the stories of their main protagonists, Mowgli and Nobody, will be analysed in order to understand to what extent the Gothic mode and its inherent duality interfere with their construction of identity. In the first instance, the division observed in the protagonists' sense of morality will be examined, splitting a part of their identity to make them complex characters. Thus, Kipling and Gaiman's ways of teaching good and evil highly influence Mowgli and Nobody in their construction of identity. Subsequently, temporal duality will be analysed, as an attempt to emphasise the fractures between Mowgli and Nobody's development, and the other characters' evolution. Finally, determinism and free will will be probed in relation to the ghostly Gothic, dividing the fate of the main protagonists.

1.1 Teaching Good and Evil

Dual morality can be seen as a foundation of the binary structure of *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book* : Kipling's manichaeanism, coupled with Gaiman's voluntarily indeterminate moral (and, of course, the Gothic motifs evoked in *The Graveyard Book*), correspond to the aesthetic of the Gothic mode. In fact, Botting states that "'Gothic' signified the lack of […] morality," as opposed to the civilised values of the Roman Empire (3). Thus, morality is at the heart of Gothic preoccupations, and responds to Miles "fragmentation" of the self; it is what shapes the individual in their judgements and opinions, parting them into what is right or wrong, good or evil. Interestingly, Kipling and Gaiman recuperate morality to make it one of the main themes of their novels. In this section, the way

in which it is taught in both books will be analysed, to understand its impact on the main protagonists' construction of identity and values, as in both Mowgli's and Nobody's cases, the authors underline the importance of following the rules, be they clearly defined or challenging to understand.

Often associated to *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in popular culture as much as in literary studies, the theme of good and evil, that Stevenson managed "to appeal both to the general conscience and universal experience of mankind," is revisited in Kipling's and Gaiman's fictions in two very distinct ways (Jeffs x). Although the comparison between these three authors might seem surprising, Gaiman's reconceptualisation of Kipling's moral values actually echoes Henry Jekyll's vision of duality: "It was on the moral side […] that I learned to recognise the thorough and primitive duality of man" (Stevenson 79). Indeed, Christine Robertson argues that "[p]art of Gaiman's critique of his predecessor also involves complicating the binary opposition between good and evil that Kipling offers up in his work" (169). For the latter, "the representation of good and evil is clear-cut and easy for a reader of the younger set to identify: the animals who break the Jungle Law are characterized as being evil, while those who remain obedient to the Law are commended for being good" (Robertson 169). Contrariwise, "Gaiman's characters are always morally ambiguous," and "[t]he possibility or potential for evil exists in all of [his] characters, including those characters with whom the reader sympathizes" (Robertson 174; 170).

This ambiguity can be observed in the way morality is taught to Mowgli and Nobody, by Baloo and Miss Lupescu, who both fulfil similar roles in the stories. In *The Two Jungle Books*, "[t]he big, serious, old brown bear [is] delighted to have so quick a pupil" as Mowgli (Kipling 46). On the other hand, Gaiman gives Miss Lupescu a much less tender role as an instructor, and complicates her relationship to Bod, who soon after meeting her for the very

first time, qualifies her as “horrible” (Gaiman 67). Yet, her resemblance to Baloo is reminded in the text through animal connotations included in her description: “Miss Lupescu said nothing. She sniffed. Then she looked at Silas and said, 'So. This is the boy.' She got up from her seat and walked all around Bod, nostrils flared, as if she were sniffing him” (Gaiman 66). Of course, as the reader will discover later, Miss Lupescu's animal side, emerging here with the term “sniffing” and her prowling “all around Bod,” also comes from the fact she is a Hound of God, defined as the following: “*Those that men call Werewolves or Lycanthropes call themselves the Hounds of God, as they claim their transformation is a gift from their creator, and they repay the gift with their tenacity, for they will pursue an evildoer to the very gates of Hell*” (Gaiman 97, emphasis in the original).

The comparison between Baloo and Miss Lupescu deepens the contrast between Kipling's morally stable character and Gaiman's complex creature, and justifies these moral differences with the way education is provided in both books. On the one hand, the bear can be relied upon, as the author gives him the exclusive entitlement to teach the Law of the Jungle to the Seeonee Pack. Indeed, in “The Law of the Jungle,” Kipling associates the rules to Baloo: “I have translated into verse (Baloo always recited them in a sort of sing-song) a few of the laws that apply to the wolves” (113). In fact, Baloo considers himself as an “old and sometimes very foolish Teacher of the Law to the Seeonee wolf-cubs” (Kipling 62). Clearly, the laws taught by the bear carry strong moral meanings, as the following examples testify:

> Keep peace with the Lords of the Jungle – the Tiger, the
> Panther, the Bear ;
> And trouble not Hathi the Silent, and mock not the Boar
> in his lair.
>
> When Pack meets with Pack in the Jungle, and neither
> will go from the trail,
> Lie down till the leaders have spoken – it may be fair
> words shall prevail.

> When ye fight with a Wolf of the Pack, ye must fight
> him alone and afar,
> Lest others take part in the quarrel, and the Pack be
> diminished by war. (Kipling 114)

Here, the emphasis is made on the respect for the elders and, more generally, authoritative figures (“Lie down till the leaders have spoken”), with orders like “trouble not,” “mock not,” given in regard to a selective list of “Lords” to esteem: “the Tiger, the Panther, the Bear” and “Hathi the Silent”. In addition, the expression “fair words” inducts a straightforward sense of righteousness which is meant to “prevail”. Thus, morality in *The Two Jungle Books*, represented by Baloo, is clear-cut and trenchant: there is a right side and a wrong side, defined in a strictly outlined law.

By contrast, Miss Lupescu is not Bod's exclusive teacher: “'I have teachers. Letitia Borrows teaches me writing and words, and Mr. Pennyworth teaches me his Compleat Educational System for Younger Gentlemen with Additional Material for Those Post Mortem. I do geography and everything'” (Gaiman 70).[3] However, she still personifies knowledge, as she presents herself as being an “historian” (67). Thus, Gaiman's reconceptualisation of the good and evil can be partly perceived in the way the author changes the rule of teaching by increasing the number of teachers for his protagonist's instruction. Consequently, Nobody's education and morality is much more confusing than Mowgli's, as the little boy is confronted to different kinds of lessons from different people. As a result, Gaiman's morality is made more flexible because it is represented and influenced by a mosaic of grown-ups, permitting a less strict view of the rules and a higher relativity on certain matters.

More importantly, this relativity can be found in Miss Lupescu's character, who is strongly ambivalent. As mentioned earlier, “Gaiman never once refers to Miss Lupescu as a 'werewolf,' instead repeatedly referring to her as a Hound of God,” and “inverts stereotypes surrounding several mythological and religious figures, transforming the way in which

Western culture has conditioned us to think about these creatures" (Robertson 170). In spite of her positive role in the book and the good values she tries to teach, her moral sense is put into question. By avoiding the term "werewolf," Gaiman does not make it clear that her morality is to be trusted, and turns the expression "Hound of God" into a suspicious title, perhaps trying to hide her true nature as a werewolf. Indeed, replacing the way she is designated does not mean the author changes her nature, and a werewolf, with the bestial, negative *clichés* it implies, is usually more likely to be an enemy than an ally. As a result, Miss Lupescu's morality and reliability are doubted: she might be an excellent teacher, but a good lesson will not be listened to if it is taught by a potentially evil and therefore morally ambiguous creature.

Nobody himself is extremely confused when he sees Miss Lupescu's animal appearance for the first time and calls her a "*monster*" (Gaiman 91, emphasis in the original). Indeed, she is described as a "huge grey animal, like a dog but larger, […] with flaming eyes and white fangs and huge paws" (91). As Nobody discovers her animal shape when he is captured by the Ghouls and taken to Ghûlheim, without knowing he is actually facing Miss Lupescu, Robertson argues that he and "the reader [are] meant to share this sense of panic, not knowing which side is good and which evil" (170). As it turns out, Miss Lupescu eventually saves him from the devils and becomes a reassuring, even motherly creature: "Bod clambered onto her huge, grey back once more and he buried his face in her fur and held on tightly, and it seemed only moments later that he was being carried – awkwardly, as a grown woman carries a six-year-old boy – across the graveyard" (95 – 96). Because Gaiman "change[s] [the reader's] preconceptions surrounding the werewolf, even going so far as to change the very language we use to label this supernatural creature," and due to the fact that Nobody did not recognise the evil protagonists from the good ones until the very end of his

adventure with the Ghouls, morality is clearly made difficult for him to understand (Robertson 170).

On the contrary, in Kipling's corresponding episode, “Kaa's Hunting,” when Mowgli is kidnapped by the *Bandar-log*, the little boy knows from the start that he should have listened to Baloo, and the bear's righteousness seems immutable:

> 'All that Baloo has said about the *Bandar-log* is true,' he thought to himself. 'They have no Law, no Hunting Call, and no leaders – nothing but foolish words and little picking thievish hands. So if I am starved or killed here, it will be all my own fault. But I must try to return to my own jungle. Baloo will surely beat me, but that is better than chasing silly rose leaves with the *Bandar-log*'. (Kipling 69, emphasis in the original)

Here, Mowgli, as much as the reader, is able to fully understand the benefits of a law controlling a society, be it human or animal, through a contrast between Baloo's teachings and the monkeys' lack of authoritative figure. By stating that being hit by Baloo is “better than [being] with the *Bandar-log*,” the young boy surrenders to the bear's authority and chooses his teacher's punishment over the lawlessness of the monkeys. In this sense, and as Mowgli admits it is “all [his] own fault,” he confirms the superiority of pre-established rules and accepts to position himself under the law.

On his part, Gaiman's complex morality does not mean that there is no need for defined rules, or no dual pattern between good and evil, but on the contrary reinforces the cruelty of the evil side by blurring the lines between right or wrong to warn his readers of this danger. This way, his main protagonist is more likely to be confused regarding the situations and characters he is confronted to. Thus, Gaiman acts as a teacher himself, and “shows us that monstrosity can take any one of a number of different forms” (Robertson 175). According to the critic, Gaiman “suggests the more radical and frightening possibility that no one is inherently good or evil but that each individual has elements of both in his or her personality” (175). This destabilising idea consolidates the author's privileged place as a teacher. More

specifically, it puts forward the challenging side of determining what is right or wrong.

1.2 Temporal duality: ageing differently

Along with moral oppositions, Botting adds a temporal value to this contrast by stating that the Gothic "resonates as much with anxieties and fears concerning the crises and changes in the present as with any terrors of the past" (3). This argument underlines the existence of a haunting historicity, inherent to the Gothic; the mode is build upon a "broken" time axis, constantly implying a divided temporality, thus signifying an interchangeability and overlapping dynamic between past and present. In "Gothic Darkly: Heterotopia, History, Culture," Botting states that the

> Gothic remains ambivalent […], reflecting the doubleness of the relationship between present and past. Indeed, Gothic continues to stand as a trope of the history of the present itself, a screen for the consumption and projection of the present onto a past at once distant and close by. (22)

This argument supports the idea that the Gothic mode is inherently linked to a temporal dimension, a constant journey back and forth between the past and the present. In fact, Botting's expression, "the history of the present itself," perfectly carries the temporal value of the ghostly Gothic. Thence, past and present constitute a time axis articulated around two distinct time periods, simultaneously parting and merging: this is temporal duality. The notion of temporal duality is found in *The Gothic in Children's literature: Haunting the Borders,* which states that "[b]oth the Gothic and children's literature begin as genres haunted by both the future and the past" (Jackson et al. 3). In both cases, ghostly structures are developed, regarding, for the Gothic, the historicity of the mode, and for children's literature, the experience of childhood.[4]

By rewriting Kipling's Victorian tale, Neil Gaiman allies the Gothic motifs and

children's literature, and becomes part of this time travel by blending past and present, correspondingly to the neo-Victorian tradition. Nadine Boehm-Schnitker and Susanne Gruss describe neo-Victorianism as “an ongoing cultural and academic venture to analyse the manifold overlaps and intersections, the continuities and the breaches between 'us' and 'them'” (1). Later, the critics add: “the neo-Victorian project looks into the desires and contexts that tinge and shape the perspectives of our contemporary construction of memory; moreover, it explores the changing purposes with which we fashion the past – and with it, ourselves” (1). Thus, neo-Victorianism seems to be a constant exchange between now and then, “'us'” and the Victorians, or in other words, today and yesterday. In their description, Boehm-Schnitker and Gruss mention “overlaps” and “continuities” between the Victorian period and the twenty-first century and, most importantly, create a fusion between the way “we fashion the past – and with it, ourselves”. This implies that neo-Victorianism inherently links history to our present selves, ancient tales to modern ones, blurring the lines between two different time periods. This corresponds to the definition of the Gothic mode and its historicity, following the idea of a haunting element non-dissociable from the present. Therefore, in the mere act of rewriting the Victorians, Gaiman uses dual temporality.

In *The Graveyard Book*, this translates into a paradox in the author's choice of scenery: on the one hand, Mowgli's jungle travels from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century; on the other hand, the supposedly “modern” space it becomes turns out to be an old Victorian graveyard. Thus, Gaiman never completely lets go of the past, and illustrates the haunting atmosphere of his novel by setting it in a graveyard. Furthermore, “[a]lthough the novel is not […] specifically set in the Victorian period, Gaiman uses certain touches in order to bring a Victorian atmosphere” (Robertson 66). For example, Gaiman describes Silas' bag as the following: “It was at least a hundred and fifty years old, a thing of beauty, black leather

with brass fittings and a black handle, the kind of bag a Victorian doctor of undertaker might have carried" (66). What is more, Nobody makes friends with "a family of Victorian children who had all died before their tenth birthdays" (65). Consequently, these allusions respond to Botting's "history of the present itself," or in other terms, temporal duality, melting Gaiman's twenty-first century location with the past of its inhabitants.

However, "Gaiman's novels are not only transformations of the Victorian classics into a twenty-first-century setting; they also take a new approach towards the identity and rite-of-passage theme inherent in […] Kipling's books" (Burstyn 77).[5] Indeed, the critic notices "a change in attitude towards childhood" since the nineteenth century (84). This change is visible in the way Kipling and Gaiman deal with the passage from childhood to adulthood in their novels. According to Robertson, "the tone that each author adopts in the scene in which the protagonist leaves his adoptive family is drastically different, suggesting the ways in which our understanding of individual identity has changed across time" (175-176). On the one hand, Mowgli, on his last spring in the jungle, experiences "a feeling of pure unhappiness" and comes to the following conclusion: "'I have surely eaten poison,' he sighed at last" (Kipling 290; 294). His thoughts demonstrate the "painful rupture between Mowgli's child and adult selves" (Robertson 176). On the other hand, Gaiman rewrites this episode by throwing a positive light on Bod's passage from childhood to adulthood by implying "that Bod has already developed a fully formed sense of self in the graveyard and that, rather than leaving this identity behind, he will carry it with him into his adulthood" (Robertson 176). The very last page of *The Graveyard Book* leaves the reader full of hope for Nobody's future: "The midsummer sky was already beginning to lighten in the east, and that was the way that Bod began to walk: down the hill, towards the living people, and the city, and the dawn" (Gaiman 307). Thus, the author highlights the fact that Nobody is leaving the nest at sunrise,

not sunset, which is a synonym of optimism supporting the idea that the little boy “seems more eager than sad to be finally leaving the graveyard” (Robertson 177).

This modern reconsideration of childhood carries an interesting temporal duality, put in relation to identity matters. While in both Kipling and Gaiman's stories, childhood seems to follow Mowgli and Nobody into their adult life, thus testifying of the fusion of the past in the present, their respective histories interfere differently with them. In the first case, childhood is a haunting, almost incapacitating element for Mowgli's future development. In fact, “Mowgli never truly leaves his childhood home behind,” as Kipling gives him “an extension of the control that he increasingly displays over the jungle” in a book published before *The Two Jungle Books*: *In the Rukh* (Robertson 169). Here, the author depicts Mowgli's adulthood as a Forest Officer, a few years after the young boy leaves the jungle. This indicates the stranglehold of the past on the boy's present and future. On the contrary, Nobody seems to move on by reason of the positive impact of his childhood on his evolution. This rejoins Robertson's statement, arguing that Bod “will carry it with him into his adulthood”.

Moreover, the mere fact that Nobody, a breathing, well-alive human being, evolves among dead people, constantly reminds the reader of the temporal fracture between the little boy and the inhabitants of the graveyard. Indeed, while the child is growing up, the age of his late friends remains the same throughout the book: “In the graveyard, no one ever changed. The little children Bod had played with when he was small were still little children; Fortinbras Bartleby, who had once been his best friend, was now four or five years younger than Bod was, and they had less to talk about each time they saw each other” (Gaiman 229). Equivalently, in *The Two Jungle Books*, Kipling emphasises the consequences of the passage of time over the main characters' conditions, particularly the ones considered as Mowgli's

mentors, like Baloo, “nearly blind with age,” and Akela, whose loss is remembered with the presence of his “empty seat” (Kipling 311). Mowgli, as a human being, is naturally given a longer life expectancy than the other animals, who grow old faster than the boy does:

> Father Wolf and Mother Wolf died, and Mowgli rolled a big boulder against the mouth of their cave, and cried the Death Song over them; Baloo grew very old and still, and even Bagheera, whose nerves were steel and whose muscles were iron, was a shade slower on the kill than he had been. Akela turned from gray to milky white with pure age. (Kipling 242)

Thus, both Kipling and Gaiman's central protagonists are confronted to different speeds of development regarding their own aging process: while Nobody grows up faster than the other characters, Mowgli remains young for longer.

Here, temporal duality once again disrupts the time axis by blending the main characters' stages of life with the past of their companions. Indeed, the age of the animals of the jungle or the inhabitants of the graveyard interferes with Mowgli and Nobody's present selves. More specifically, they have a real impact on their identity, as temporality is one of the significant elements differentiating the boys from their environments. Indeed, their age acts as a constant reminder of a contrasting development between them and the others: because they do not belong to the same species or, in Bod's case, dimension, it is impossible for them to fully identify with their substitute families and friends. This identification is, however, made possible when they rejoin the humans. When Mowgli leaves the jungle to reach the village, after he is cast out from the Seeonee Pack, he is mistakenly taken for Nathoo: “'By my honour, Messua, he is not unlike thy boy that was taken by the tiger'” (Kipling 122). Thus, Mowgli is compared to someone with a similar age, and goes back to a “normal” biological development among his own species. Correspondingly, when Nobody starts going to school, he belongs to an environment shared by young people which, symbolically, means he is part of a group with the same maturity as him. Indeed, the mere fact that Gaiman

mentions his grade, “Eight B,” allows the reader to place Bod in a well-established category in the human world (181).

These processes of identification, appearing for both protagonists in the human society, is significant of the gap created between Mowgli and Nobody, and their substitute families and friends. By switching environments, the reader is reminded that if the boys had evolved in the human society from the start, there would be much less of a temporal fracture than in the present situation. Moreover, the boys would have been able to evolve without confronting their present selves to the haunting history of their substitute relatives. Accordingly, the temporal duality found in both *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book* seems to serve two purposes. Firstly, the influence of the Gothic, haunting past over Mowgli and Bod's construction of identity is highlighted through temporal fractures, emphasising the different developmental paths taken by the boys in the jungle and the graveyard, as opposed to the way they would have evolved in the human society. Finally, this “broken” time axis testifies of a difficult identification process for Kipling and Gaiman's protagonists who, surrounded by characters ageing different ways, are constantly reminded of their contrastive selves.

1.3 Gaiman's ghosts at the heart of determinist divisions: Mowgli and Nobody's fate and free will

It is this very temporal duality that puts determinism at the heart of a third division. While fate, another main theme of Kipling and Gaiman's books, is well-anchored in Mowgli's story, it is reconsidered in Nobody's case, specifically because of the presence of ghosts in the boy's life. Indeed, these ghosts embody Botting's “history of the present itself” and therefore,

a form of temporal duality inherent to the Gothic mode. The link between ghosts and determinism can be found in Punter's following explanation: “[The popularity of ghost stories] is often attributed to the rise of positivistic science and the decline of religion in the increasingly materialist and secular nineteenth century: ghosts challenge or at least question the authority of science and reason”. Accordingly, ghosts can be seen as a way-out from biological determinism, undoubtedly influenced by Darwin's discoveries, published in 1859 with *The Origins of Species*. At a time when evolutionary theories are brought to light, “science and reason” seem to lock humanity into a rational thinking, as people progressively understand that their fate is sealed, and their destiny controlled by genetic processes. “Determinism” is, by definition, “the belief that people are not free to choose what they are like or how they behave, because these things are decided by their surroundings and other things over which they have no control” (Oxford Learner's Dictionary 417). Thus, scientific discourses correspondingly frame the human race into an unstoppable development that human beings not only “have no control” over, but most importantly, reduces their possibilities for evolution – and as a result, behaviour and free will – to a finite, narrow prospect. Interestingly, determinism also appears to be linked to identity matters, as it asks the question of “what [we] are like” or, put differently, who we are. In this sense, the themes of fate and free will are intrinsic to Mowgli and Nobody's construction of identity, raising a subtle dilemma between a pre-defined path or the freedom to choose who they are.

In *The Two Jungle Books*, Mowgli seems condemned to a particular destiny, consisting in killing his lethal enemy, Shere Khan. From the very beginning of Kipling's story, Mother Wolf predicts what would irrevocably influence the relationship between the boy and the tiger: “'O thou Mowgli – for Mowgli the Frog I will call thee – the time will come when thou wilt hunt Shere Khan as he hunted thee” (15). Just like a prophecy, the main

protagonist is, from this moment onwards, constantly reminded of his duty, be it by Mother Wolf (“Mother Wolf told him once or twice that Shere Khan was not a creature to be trusted, and that some day he must kill Shere Khan”) or Bagheera (“'Little Brother, how often have I told thee that Shere Khan is thy enemy?'”), which progressively frames him into an inescapable calling (Kipling 26; 27). As a result, Mowgli promises that he will accomplish his goal: “'and when I come it will be to lay out Shere Khan's hide upon the Council Rock'” (41). When he finally fulfills his pledge, Mother Wolf reacts as if it were always pre-destined: “'I told [Shere Khan] on that day, when he crammed his head and shoulders into his cave, hunting for thy life, Little Frog – I told him that the hunter would be the hunted. It is well done'” (150). Thence, it seems like Mowgli was never free to choose a simpler life. On the contrary, “the Frog” was tasked with a dangerous mission, and even obsession, from his earliest age. Consequently, he was never granted his own free will, that is to say “the power to make [his] own decisions without being controlled by [...] fate” (Oxford Learner's Dictionary 619).

Shere Khan's evil twin, the man Jack in Gaiman's fiction, is also at the heart of a well-defined prophecy, explained by one of the members of the Order of Jacks of All Trades, a secret, fraudulent organisation:

> 'Long time ago, one of our people – this was back in Egypt, in pyramid days – he foresaw that one day, there would be a child born who would walk the borderland between the living and the dead. That if this child grew to adulthood it would mean the end of our order and all we stand for. We had people casting nativities before London was a village, we had your family in our sights before New Amsterdam became New York. And we sent what we thought was the best and the sharpest and the most dangerous of all the Jacks to deal with you. To do it properly, so we could take all the bad Juju and make it work for us instead, and keep everything tickety-boo for another five thousand years. Only he didn't.' (270-271)

Clearly, Nobody's life was, by all appearances, arranged in advance, before the boy was even born. However, Gaiman's protagonist never once acts like his fate is doomed and, in fact, knows very little about the evil organisation and their previsions. Indeed, Nobody explains

that “'[his] guardian only says that the man who did it is still alive, and that he'll tell [him] the rest of what he knows one day'” (Gaiman 240). By contrast with Mowgli, Bod does not, and actually, cannot premeditate a confrontation with the man Jack. On the contrary, Nobody admits that he “'[doesn't] know what to do'” (250). He adds: “'I think I can find out about who killed my family. Who wanted to kill me. It means leaving the graveyard, though'” (250). Nevertheless, “leaving the graveyard” is exactly what Bod is not allowed to do, by reason of the protection of the ghosts, who reckon it is “'not safe for [him] out there'” (229). This is precisely how Gaiman puts into question the determinism that could have led his main character to a pre-destined obsession with the man Jack, as the role of the ghosts was always to protect him from doing so. Therefore, the Gothic dimension of the inhabitants of the graveyard, residing in their haunting historicity and their spectral nature, acts as an obstacle to Bod's doomed destiny, and enables the boy to grow up without Mowgli's sense of constraint.

Consequently, Mowgli and Nobody evolve in different ways. One is protected, the other is not; one grows up carrying a dangerous, seemingly inevitable responsibility, while the other is given the choice to live the life he wants, free from any pre-determined vocation. Therefore, Gaiman's use of the Gothic is a veritable shield against determinism, and allows greater hopes and expectations for his main protagonist. Just like ghost stories enabled the Victorians to forget about their fate, Gaiman gives Nobody the possibility to escape from reality and reason with the help of supernatural creatures, thus preserving his chances to build whatever identity – to a certain extent – he wishes to build. Kipling, however, reduces, and even suppresses his protagonist's insouciance by turning him into a fierce hunter from his earliest age.

Furthermore, Mowgli's fate also resides in the fact that he is constantly reminded he

will have to leave the jungle at some point. Indeed, the young man is never given the choice to stay or go, nor to forget about his future departure. From his youngest age, Bagheera seems to warn him: “'and even as I returned to my jungle, so thou must go back to men at last – to the men who are thy brothers, – if thou art not killed in the Council'” (Kipling 29). Many years later, just before Akela dies, the Lone Wolf, formerly leader of the Seeonee Pack, gives Mowgli the answer to the boy's concerns: “'Mowgli will drive Mowgli. Go back to thy people. Go to Man'” (Kipling 277). However, Mowgli refuses to believe in Akela's words and struggles to accept his advice: “'Now Akela said to me many foolish things before he died, for when we die our stomachs change. He said... None the less, I *am* of the Jungle!'” (298, emphasis in the original). Ultimately, leaving the jungle appears to be an inevitable decision, in spite of the fact that it was never what Mowgli wanted. Yet, in the last of Mowgli's stories, the boy comes to an obvious conclusion, planned by the other animals since his very arrival in the jungle: “Gray Brother was silent. When he spoke he growled to himself, 'The Black One spoke truth.' 'And he said?' 'Man goes to Man at the last. Raksha, our mother, said –' 'So also said Akela on the night of Red Dog,' Mowgli muttered. 'So also says Kaa, who is wiser than us all'” (309; 310). Again, there is something prophetic in the way Mowgli's path is paved from the beginning of his existence: his fate was always clear to his companions, and could not be avoided. In fact, the boy has absolutely no control over his destiny, determined by other beings and circumstances for him: “'What need of talk?' said Baloo slowly, turning his head to where Mowgli lay. 'Akela by the river said it, that Mowgli should drive Mowgli back to the Man-Pack. I said it. But who listens now to Baloo? Bagheera – where is Bagheera this night? – he knows also. It is the Law'” (312). With expressions like “What need of talk” and “It is the Law,” Baloo definitely frames Mowgli into a pre-established, non-negotiable determination that, unsurprisingly, the young boy will finally follow.

On the other side, Gaiman adopts a different strategy regarding Nobody's fate and free will. Indeed, the live boy is never asked to leave the graveyard, nor pressured into respecting a certain destiny. Contrariwise, Bod never truly thinks about the moment he will have to go, and until the very end of the novel, understands with difficulty that he is about to leave: “why did Mr and Mrs Owens stand like that, arranged on each side of the tomb like characters from a stained-glass window? He could not read their faces” (Gaiman 299). Unable to detect the fact he is expected, by all the inhabitants of the graveyard, to depart, Nobody does not feel like he is completing any sort of fate, as the young man was never pushed out from the graveyard during his childhood, in contrast to Mowgli. When his witch friend, Liza Hempstock, tells him she is going to miss him, Bod replies: “'Where are you going?' […] Then, 'Of course, I will miss you, wherever you go...'” (Gaiman 300) Clearly, Nobody does not consider himself going anywhere, which will cause him to be called “'[t]oo stupid...'” by Liza (300). Aside from Bod's innocence, Gaiman insists on the fact that he is free to do what he wants in his future life, once again breaking any determinist possibility. Indeed, when the boy leaves the graveyard, Mrs Owens sings the following words: “'Face your life / Its pain, its pleasure / Leave no path undertaken'” (306). The idea that there is a multitude of paths for him to explore makes anything possible for him, and definitely prevents fate from existing in Gaiman's world. In fact, the author himself, in the last lines of his novel, writes:

> There was a smile dancing on his lips, although it was a wary smile, for the world is a bigger place than a little graveyard on a hill; and there would be dangers in it and mysteries, new friends to make, old friends to rediscover, mistakes to be made and *many paths to be walked* before he would, finally, return to the graveyard […] But between now and then, there was Life; and Bod walked into it with his eyes and his heart wide open. (307, my emphasis)

By writing about the uncertainty of his character's future, Gaiman gives Nobody the opportunity to choose and shape his life, far from Mowgli's determined destiny. Initially verbalised by Mrs Owens, the idea that Bod has several paths to follow, and the fact that it is

intimated by a ghost, strongly indicates the evasion from rationality, reality and determinism aforementioned by Punter, and suggests that Nobody is very much encouraged to keep dreaming, in spite of his human, live condition.

2. Gothic identity and the question of humanness

Inevitably, environmental divisions, such as time, morality and fate, seem to gradually push Mowgli and Nobody to confront their inner duality and to reconsider their very nature as human beings. By being constantly faced with divided external elements, it is quite naturally that Mowgli and Bod progressively question the coherence of their selves, as they start dealing with simultaneously humanising and dehumanising identifications. Unsurprisingly, Kipling and Gaiman's fictions never cease to raise the question of humanness, which represents a fundamental aspect of identitary fragmentations, inherently linked to the Gothic mode. As Punter explains, a new conceptualisation of humanness appears in nineteenth-century Britain, due to the growing industrialisation of the country:

> The Gothic novel began to emerge at a time when the forces of industrialisation were transforming the very structures of society. […] Emergent capitalism led to a growing sense of isolation and alienation, as increasing mechanization divorced workers from the products of their labour, and the urban centres disconnected them from the natural world. The very ideas of what it meant to be human were disturbed in the face of increasing regimentation and mechanistic roles.

As a result, this unnaturalness questions identity in relation to humanness, particularly regarding its construction as much as its definition. While differentiating human beings from machines becomes more and more difficult when both prove themselves to be equally useful to society, the individual is clearly made “replaceable,” and therefore put at the same level as non-human, automatic devices.

Aside from the industrial phenomenon,

> [t]he literary monstrous body […] begins to take on a particularly significant role in Gothic fiction of the Victorian Decadence (q.v.), a move that seems tied in with the discoveries of the evolutionary sciences, and accompanying anxieties about the autonomy and stability of the human subject. (Punter)

Clearly, as Darwin's *The Origins of Species* reconsiders the roots of humanity, monstrosity is seen as an alternative to the process of dehumanisation: are we monsters if we are less human? More specifically, Kelly Hurley observes a "general anxiety about the nature of human identity permeating late-Victorian and Edwardian culture, an anxiety generated by scientific discourses, biological and sociomedical, which served to dismantle conventional notions of 'the human'" (5). These anxieties appear to be central to the Gothic *fin-de-siècle*, which "rematerializes as a genre in many ways unrecognizable, transfigured," and testifies of its obsession regarding mutation, be it scientific as much as literary (Hurley 4).

The question of human identity is extremely present in *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book*. While Mowgli evolves amongst the animals of the jungle, Nobody grows up with the dead, a twisted, typically Gothic representation of the human body. Throughout their childhood, both protagonists construct their selves within non-human environments, which eventually challenges their own humanness. This is reflected in the importance given by the authors to the naming process of their main characters, considered as the foundation of their identification in each book. The names themselves, both humanising and dehumanising, prove the boys to be caught in an in-between state, disrupting the way they are perceived by the others and, withal, their own perception of who they are.

More importantly, the question of Gothic humanness raised in *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book* responds to Kohlke and Gutleben's statement on "the neo-victorian Gothic [which] frequent[ly] repris[es] […] the typical Gothic inter-generational plot surrounding genealogy, inheritance, contested legacies and family secrets" (10).

Paradoxically, the fact that Mowgli and Nobody are orphans puts the “inter-generational plot” at the heart of the books, by reason of the non-existence of a genealogical tree. In the boys' cases, it is specifically their mysterious “genealogy” and the inscrutability of their familial origins that lead them to identify with non-human groups and substitute families, as they constitute their only point of reference. While their human nature is undeniable, their humanness is, however, put into question because the reader is given no proof of their human “inheritance”. The first part of this section will be an attempt to analyse the value and significance of Mowgli and Nobody's names in relation to their construction of identity, and to establish to what extent these denominations participate in the designation, or rejection, of the protagonists' human identity. Subsequently, other forms of identification will be studied, such as animalistic and monstrous, to determine whether Kipling and Gaiman's protagonists are oriented towards a progressive dehumanisation or, contrariwise, towards a toughening of their human identity, in the way they interact with the other characters.

2.1 Naming Nobody and “The Frog”

The nomination process observed in *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book* is undoubtedly serving the main protagonists' purposes in their quest for identity, whilst carrying Gothic issues related to the question of humanness. For both Mowgli and Nobody, a particular accent is put on their names and their importance. From “Mowgli the Frog” to “The Master of the Jungle,” Mowgli is also called “the hairless wolf of the Seeonee Pack,” and “Little Brother” by Bagheera, which suggests a familial, even biological affiliation with the panther (Kipling 15; 311; 298; 25). This continual change echoes the character's identitary issues and instabilities, in the mere fact that Mowgli himself has no referential point

concerning what names him. The child carries multiple nominations that considerably jeopardises the clarity of his identity: he is too many things as the same time which, as a result, causes him to ignore what/who he really is. By re-naming his main protagonist, Kipling draws attention to the blurry lines of the child's identity, and leaves the readers with a confused vision of the boy. This is what Walsh suggests when she points out that "'Mowli the Frog's' amphibious identity" is "a potential source of trouble to any impulse towards categorization or classification," particularly regarding his status amongst the humans and the animals (52).

Correspondingly, Nobody

> goes through what can be seen as a naming ceremony. When he is first discovered by the denizens of the graveyard […], they gather, argue and bicker about what the child's name is to be. Voiceless, the infant Bod is subjected to who each of the ghosts believe him to most closely resemble from their own lives, with potential names (and with them, histories and identities) ranging from Marcus, to Stebbins, to Harry. (Abbruscato 67)

An agreement is finally found: "'He looks like nobody but himself,' said Mrs Owens, firmly. 'He looks like nobody.' 'Then Nobody it is,' said Silas. 'Nobody Owens'" (Gaiman 25). Furthermore, Abbruscato suggests that "[a]s there is no name, and consequently, no histories associated with him, he is able to truly grow into whoever he is supposed to be" (67). Ultimately, Gaiman's fiction reaches its "climatic moment […] during the last fight between Bod and his nemesis, the man Jack" (Burstyn 83):

> 'You want to know your name, boy, before I spill your blood on the stone?' Bod felt the cold of the knife at his neck. And in that moment, Bod understood. Everything slowed. Everything came into focus. 'I know my name,' he said. 'I'm Nobody Owens. That's who I am.' (Gaiman 282)

In this episode, "the name is of central concern and the rite of passage seems to be complete once Bod becomes assured of his self. [...] Bod is able to keep the name he is given upon entering the graveyard suggesting that the self is not dependent on others**"** (Burstyn 83). In other terms, Gaiman highlights the inherent link between name and identity by describing

Nobody's naming process in details, and brings to light the protagonist's acceptance of his self through a validation of his own name. Indeed, the latter could have been willing to hear the name initially given by his family, but instead decides that he does not need it to define himself: he already has a name, the one he has always known and remembered, and this is enough for him. Although Bod seems less confused than Mowgli, who "is renamed as Nathoo by his human adoptive mother when he decides to live amongst humans," both Kipling and Gaiman stress the fundamental value of their names in their construction of identity (Burstyn 83).

Most importantly, this "naming ceremony" puts into question Mowgli and Nobody's humanness. In *Kipling's Children's Literature: Language, Identity, and Constructions of Childhood*, Sue Walsh notices that "Mowgli goes through a process of re-naming himself over and over again" and analyses the animalistic complexion of his name, in a chapter called "Red Dog": "'Mowgli the Frog have I been,' said he to himself; 'Mowgli the Wolf have I said that I am. Now Mowgli the Ape must I be before I am Mowgli the Buck'" (Walsh 52; Kipling 261). Here, the little boy summarises the different animal identities he has embodied since his arrival in the jungle. In this sense, he is constantly animalised, which creates, according to Walsh, "an ambivalence about the relation of the body to identity" (53). While "his exteriority, or body, identifies him to the 'Jungle People' as man, he is nevertheless identified […] as in some way 'essentially', or interiorly, of the Jungle" (Walsh 53). Thence, his human, physical appearance is not enough to define the boy, and is of less weight than the animalistic names given to Mowgli. Besides, the multiplicity of the terms used to designate him does not enable him to identify to one particular species but, on the contrary, allows a greater confusion as to what Mowgli's nature is.

Even more striking is Gaiman's choice for Nobody's name, which "serves as a bit of

grim irony, because when broken down into its two root parts, his full first name reads 'No' and 'Body'" (Abbruscato 67). Yet, "[a]s the only human in the graveyard, Bod happens to be the only inhabitant of the graveyard who does in fact have a body" (67). Correspondingly to the Victorian context aforementioned, Gaiman effectuates a manipulation, almost a mutation of the image of the human body by creating a fragmentable name following the dehumanising pattern. In other words, Gaiman illustrates the twisted body through a proportionally twisted name, reminder of the dehumanisation of the Victorian society and imagination, simultaneously recalling the context in which the Gothic novel was created. Along with this, the author focuses on the ghostly dimension of the name, in reference both to the dematerialised inhabitants of the graveyard and to the Gothic conventions.

However, Kipling and Gaiman's main protagonists are also humanised through their nomination. When Mowgli is found in the jungle, he is designated as the "man's cub" by Father Wolf, becoming "Man-cub," a proper name, along the pages (Kipling 10; 57). Moreover, he is also called "child of man," "Manling," and introduces himself as the following: "'Mowgli, the Frog. Man-cub they call me!'" (Kipling 41; 311; 57). Accordingly, when meeting a new character, Mowgli emphasises the fact he also belongs to the human species, bringing to light his incapacity to frame himself into an exclusively animal condition. Eventually, in "Red Dog," while Kipling's main protagonist is enumerating his animalistic names, the boy ultimately declares: "'At the end I shall be Mowgli the Man'" (261-262). Again, this suggests that in spite of numerous dehumanising allusions, Mowgli's different names always carry a reminder that he is more than a child compared to an animal: he is a human being.

For his part, Nobody's name, or rather his nickname "Bod," evokes the word "boy," which paradoxically humanises his full name, No-body (Abbruscato 67). Surprisingly,

Gaiman's protagonist seems at ease with correcting his interlocutors: “'Bod,' said Bod. 'It's Bod. Not boy' (67). In this sense, he is not afraid to rectify one of his classmates when she calls him “Bob Owens”: “'It's Bod, actually'” (Gaiman 187). While both “boy” and “Bob” constitute an attempt to humanise, even normalise Nobody, Gaiman's protagonist indicates that he is comfortable in the knowledge that he does not need another name, and shows that he is secure enough in his human identity to bear a name referring to a dematerialised, twisted representation of humanness.

Consequently, although Mowgli and Nobody deal with their names in different ways, they both carry the ambiguity of their identity in the way they are designated by other characters. Be they references to animals or ghosts, their names illustrate the fracture between their human and substitute identities. Moreover, this is encouraged by the authors who verbally manifest this division by choosing meaningful names for their protagonists, thus somewhat forcing the boys to display their identity card from the moment they introduce themselves. Finally, in spite the fact that Nobody seems more at ease with his name than Mowgli, both Kipling and Gaiman's characters are proven to value their nomination, and consider it a valid element in their construction of identity. While this idea adjoins the patent link between the question of humanness and the Gothic, the mode therefore influences Mowgli and Bod's identitary establishment.

2.2 Animal and monstrous identifications: dehumanisation..?

While Mowgli and Nobody's names participate in the division of their human and, respectively, animal and monstrous natures, dehumanisation is also encouraged by the boys'

identifications. This strong necessity for identification is largely influenced by the characters' status as “adopted” children and their lack of genealogical past. Indeed, the main protagonists both grew up with substitute families, the wolves and the ghosts, which puts Mowgli and Bod in a particular position, that could be named “trans-species adoption”. Interestingly, their situation carries strong similarities with interracial adoption, which designates a family “involving people of different races,” specifically regarding the question of identification (Oxford Learner's Dictionary 813).

In *The Ethics of Transracial Adoption*, Hawley Grace Fogg-Davis explains that “[t]he practical need for flexible racial self-identification is made explicit in [transracial adoption], as children are forced to integrate the racial difference between themselves and their adoptive family” (93). Correspondingly, Mowgli and Nobody are confronted to a physical gap between their adoptive families and themselves, constantly recalling an obvious “schism, plus the absence of a genetic tie, [which] upsets the conventional wisdom that […] self-identification ought to be acquired wholesale from a genetically tethered family” (93). Thence, Mowgli and Bod's fantasised and fictionalised adoptions are transposable to a more realistic kind of adoption, the interracial one, justifying their need for identification and, in their case, dehumanisation, in order to position themselves within a family structure. Interestingly, this need for identification responds to Kohlke and Gutleben's Victorian and neo-victorian focuses on an “inter-generational plot”.

As a result, because he belongs to a family of wolves, and as a means for identification, Mowgli develops lycanthropy, a “common [phenomenon] in the Gothic tradition” (Hughes 258). According to Gary Melhorn, “[c]linical lycanthropy is defined as a rare psychiatric syndrome that involves a delusion that the affected person can transform into, has transformed into, or is a non-human animal” (86). Amongst the criteria of the disease,

Mowgli has “delusions, [which] fits clinical lycanthropy because a person believing that he or she turns in to an animal is a delusion” (86). Indeed, numerous times in *The Two Jungle Books*, Kipling's protagonist claims to be a wolf: “[Mowgli] would have called himself a wolf if he had been able to speak in any human tongue” (26). Moreover, the boy also talks about times “before [he] was a Wolf,” which testifies of his belief he “can transform into [or] has transformed into” a wolf (Kipling 33). Secondly, lycanthropy involves “disorganized speech. The people who have the diagnosis of clinical lycanthropy often take on the sounds of the animal in which they believe they turn into.” (Melhorn 86). With Mowgli, this translates into the fact he does not know the human language, as aforestated, but only learned the language of the jungle, taught by Baloo the Bear: “'I am now teaching him the Master Words of the Jungle that shall protect him with the birds and the Snake-People, and all that hunt on four feet, except his own pack'” (Kipling 48). In addition, Mowgli clearly cannot communicate with human beings: “'What is the good if a man,' he said to himself at last, 'if he does not understand man's talk?'” (123).

Eventually, “[t]he last symptom […] is grossly disorganized behavior. This is appropriate because individuals with clinical lycanthropy often act like the animal they believe they have become, including living outside and picking up their diet” (Melhorn 87). By living amongst the animals of the jungle, and more specifically, by behaving just like them, Mowgli completely acts as a wolf:

> He grew up with the cubs, though they, of course, were grown wolves almost before he was a child, and Father Wolf taught him his business, and the meaning of things in the jungle, till every rustle in the grass, every breath of the warm night air, every note of the owls above his head, every scratch of a bat's claws as it roosted for a while in a tree, and every splash of every little fish jumping in a pool, meant just as much to him as the work of his office means to a business man. When he was not learning, he sat out in the sun and slept, and ate and went to sleep again; when he felt dirty or hot he swam in the forest pools; and when he wanted honey (Baloo told him that honey and nuts were just as pleasant to eat as raw meat) he climbed up for it, and that Bagheera showed him how to do. Bagheera would lie out on a branch and call, 'Come along, Little Brother,' and at first Mowgli would cling like the sloth, but afterward he

> would fling himself through the branches almost as boldly as the gray ape. […] He would go down the hillside into the cultivated lands by night, and look very curiously at the villagers in their huts, but he had a mistrust of men because Bagheera showed him a square box with a drop-gate so cunningly hidden in the jungle that he nearly walked into it, and told him that it was a trap. (Kipling 22-25)

This extract is a thorough demonstration of Mowgli's "training" as a wolf, and more generally as an animal. The enumeration ("every rustle in the grass […] in a pool") underlines the boy's sharp knowledge of the jungle and, by extension, the time he spent in adapting to this new environment. What is more, the comparison to "a business man" constitutes a striking contrast with Mowgli's dehumanisation, and brings to light the fact that by becoming an animal, the young man becomes divorced from society. This separation between men and animals is, in fact, strengthened by Mowgli's "mistrust of men," which marks a clear fracture with his own nature, making him more capable of identifying with animals rather than with human beings.

In *The Graveyard Book*, a similar dynamic is observed, as part of Nobody Owens becomes a ghost: "[i]n order to help protect Bod on his quest to find meaning and identity, he is given the Freedom of the Graveyard" (Abbruscato 68). Indeed,

> this gift is given to Nobody in order to assist the ghosts in protecting him. Ultimately, it effectually alters who and what he is for the time being, enabling him to survive and grow up in the graveyard. Through numerous gifts awarded with the title, Bod becomes an amalgamation of human and ghost, while being not quite either: despite being alive and corporeal, he is given the ability to see and interact as easily with ghosts as he can with "normal" humans. Also, he is provided with ghostly attributes such as "Fade," "Fear," and "Dream-walking". (Abbruscato 68)

In other terms, Gaiman's character starts his monstrous transformation. The notion of monstrosity, in this dissertation, specifically refers to "'subjects' who fail to fulfill the criteria of human subjects, [and] points out the human as the icon of what is normal, and thus the monster as what is not human" (MacCormack 293). In his statement, Abbruscato efficiently designates Bod as an "amalgamation of human and ghost," thus emphasising his hybrid nature. This singularity is notably revealed when the boy uses his powers to scare the bullies

of his school, in another graveyard of the city, as his performance is generously complimented: “'That was good, dear,' said someone behind him, a tall woman in white. 'A nice Fade, first. Then the Fear'” (Gaiman 189). However, when he introduces himself, the late inhabitant is surprised: “'The *live* boy? From the big graveyard on the hill? Really?'” (189, emphasis in the original). Paradoxically, the word “*live*” serves a dehumanising purpose for Bod, who is reminded that by reason of his human nature, he should not be able to use these powers. Nevertheless, the young man is not impressed, and responds to compliments in a very nonchalant way: “'Thank you,' said Bod. 'I hadn't even tried the Fear out on living people. I mean, I knew the theory, but. Well'” (189). The fact he acknowledges his attempt on “living people” is highly symbolical of his detachment from human beings, and deepens the gap with the latter. Later on, as Nobody infiltrates Nick Farthing's dreams (one of the bullies), he is depicted as a “dead-faced man,” once again contrasting with the child who is dreaming, a “normal” boy (195).

Most importantly, Nobody is more directly called a “monster” by the only human friend he ever manages to make during his life in the graveyard, Scarlett. Firstly, Gaiman starts revealing the girl's apprehensions towards his main character:

> She was scared: scared of nice Mr. Frost and his scarier friends; scared of this room and its memories; even, if she were honest, a little afraid of Bod. He was no longer a quiet boy with a mystery, a link to her childhood. He was something different, something not quite human. (276)

The fact that Bod is designated as “something not quite human” corroborates with Abbruscato's “amalgamation”: it does not prevent him from being a human being, yet does not quite fit in any category. Later on, Scarlett uses stronger, more severe words: “Scarlett took a step away from him. She said, 'You aren't a person. People don't behave like you. You're as bad as [the man Jack] was. You're a monster'” (Gaiman 286).[6] Repeatedly, Nobody's monstrosity is established in relation to what a “normal” person is, and his difference is

pointed out by, after Nick, another child his age. By contrast with Mowgli, who claims his self-identification to wolves, Bod is somewhat forced to acknowledge he is not like the others, and receives more credits from the ghosts than from the humans for his use of powers and for what differentiates him from “normal” children. As a result, this monstrous identification seems difficult for him, particularly regarding Scarlett's reaction: “Bod felt the blood drain from his face. After everything he had been through that night, after everything that had happened, this was somehow the hardest thing to take” (286-287). Nevertheless, his interrogations on the matter remain unanswered: “'That girl,' said Bod. 'Scarlett. Why was she so scared of me, Silas?' But Silas said nothing, and the question hung in the air as the man and the youth walked of the bright pizza restaurant into the waiting darkness” (291-292). The incapacity for Bod to solve this mystery appears as challenging, and ultimately, the boy chooses to confide it in Silas, who is not a human being. The trust established between Nobody and his guardian is quite symbolic of the fact that Gaiman's protagonist, just like Mowgli, seems more comfortable with non-human characters, perhaps revealing more similarities between the boy and the monsters rather than with the humans: Nobody feels understood, and closer to his substitute relatives.

Although Mowgli and Bod have different reactions to non-human identifications, they are both normalised in their animalistic and monstrous behaviours, at least in their substitute environments. Interestingly, in each case, the boys come to an acknowledgement of their differences by comparison, or rather contrast, with a certain type of human “normality”: Mowgli develops symptoms of lycanthropy, while Nobody is confronted to Nick and Scarlett. Just like Kipling's protagonist is made different by reason of his behaviour, Gaiman's main character is mainly dehumanised because he is prevented from identifying with the human norm.

2.3 … or humanisation?

Paradoxically, these constant animalistic and monstrous identifications recall Mowgli and Nobody of their human identity, and reveal that some limits cannot be transgressed; for example, the boys never actually transform. More specifically, both protagonists either feel the need to reject the idea of resembling an animal or monster, or are confronted to fundamental differences largely preventing them from being fully part of trans-species groups. Indeed, as much as Mowgli wants to belong to the Seeonee Pack, he soon realises that his eyes will always make it impossible for him to do so: "[t]he clearest marker, in the story 'Mowgli's Brothers', of Mowgli's apparent difference from the Jungle animals is his look or stare" (Walsh 53). In fact, "the Frog" "discover[s] that if he stare[s] hard at any wolf, the wolf would be forced to drop his eyes" (Kipling 25). Even Bagheera, despite their closeness and complicity, is a victim of his gaze: "'Not even I can look thee between the eyes, and I was born among men, and I love thee, Little Brother. The others they hate thee because their eyes cannot meet thine – because thou art wise – because thou hast pulled out thorns from their feet – because thou art a man'" (Kipling 30). The panther's explanation as to why Mowgli's eyes are disturbing ("'because thou art a man'") "enacts and fixes a division between the human and the animal, and organizes Mowgli's relationship to the animal as one of mastery" (Walsh 53). In other words, Mowgli's gaze testifies of a certain superiority of men over animals, and partly enables the young man to become the master of the jungle. Therefore, "it is primarily in the *act* of looking that Mowgli becomes or reveals himself as human, rather than through any external marker on the body. It is only in the description of Mowgli's eyes that difference is marked bodily" (Walsh 58, emphasis in the original).

In fact, Bagheera explains to Mowgli that his gaze is difficult, if not impossible to read: “'The mouth is hungry,' said Bagheera, 'but the eyes say nothing. Hunting, eating, or swimming, it is all one – like a stone in wet or dry weather'” (Kipling 284). As Walsh states,

> the eyes of the panther tell the truth of his intentions whereas, in contrast to the transparency of the Jungle animals, Mowgli is constructed as having a 'depth' (a meaning beneath what his eyes 'say' which is nothing), or a hidden core, that cannot be accessed, or read in his eyes, but is only manifested in the stare that bears witness to its repressed existence. (54)

Again, Mowgli's human complexity constitutes the main differentiating factor between him and the animals, an element that could not, even if the boy wanted to, be changed or corrected. Thence, this fundamental difference represents an impassable chasm between Mowgli and his substitute family and friends.

Unsurprisingly then, “[h]is gaze is the reason given for the wolves' rejection of him” (Walsh 53). Shere Khan clearly declares: “'He is a man, and none of us can look him between the eyes'” (Kipling 36). Eventually, Mowgli's humanness results in his mere rejection of the Pack: “'I go from you to my own people – if they be my own people'” (38). During this episode, the very first fracture between Mowgli and the wolves appears, motivated by the young man's biological difference. More importantly, this confrontation turns into a means for Kipling's protagonist to re-evaluate his identity and at the same time, the others':

> 'Listen, you!' he cried. 'There is no need for this dog's jabber. Ye have told me so often tonight that I am a man (and indeed I would have been a wolf with you to my life's end), that I feel your words are true. So I do not call ye my brothers any more, but *sag* [dogs], as a man should.' (37-38, emphasis in the original)

As Sue Walsh stresses, “identity seems to be a matter of choice” (“'I would have been a wolf'”) and, at the same time, is also deeply influenced by external designations, the wolves', shaping the boy's identity (“'I feel your words are true'”) (58). Here, Mowgli evidently accepts this human qualification, if in return he is given the opportunity to frame them into a new condition: “'I do not call ye my brothers any more, but *sag* [dogs], as a man should'”. By

changing the term designating their species, the boy recuperates his human condition as a master dominating the animals, and gives himself the power to partly control them through words. Besides, an ultimate element validates his recent humanisation, tears. Just before Mowgli leaves the Pack, the boy cries for the very first time: “'What is it? What is it?' he said. 'I do not wish to leave the jungle, and I do not know what this is. Am I dying, Bagheera?' 'No, Little Brother. Those are only tears such as men use,' said Bagheera'” (Kipling 40). The dramatic dimension (“'Am I dying'”) of the situation, coupled with Bagheera's humanisation of Mowgli's behaviour, justify the young boy's transformation into a man, just like a rite of passage: “'Now I know thou are a man, and a man's cub no longer'” (40). Mowgli's metamorphosis is complete: he has now acknowledged his humanness.

Similarly, Nobody reaches a limit when he meets the Sleer, a frightening, supernatural creature living in the oldest tomb of the graveyard, and in a constant quest for a master to protect. Although Bod could have had the opportunity to identify as his new master, he refuses to be qualified as such:

> It whispered into Bod's head, then, in a voice that was a sleek insinuating glide, THE SLEER WAS SET TO GUARD THE TREASURE UNTIL OUR MASTER RETURNED. ARE YOU OUR MASTER? 'No,' said Bod. And then, with a hopeful whine, WILL YOU BE OUR MASTER? 'I'm afraid not.' IF YOU WERE OUR MASTER, WE COULD HOLD YOU IN OUR COILS FOREVER. IF YOU WERE OUR MASTER, WE WOULD KEEP YOU SAFE AND PROTECT YOU UNTIL THE END OF TIME AND NEVER LET YOU ENDURE THE DANGERS OF THE WORLD. 'I am not your master.' (Gaiman 250-251)

As Abbruscato underlines, Bod could have “simply identif[ied] himself as the Sleer's master, [but instead] realized the need to be nobody before he could become Nobody,” which means that Bod seems to value his quest for identity, and despite all the difficulties it implies, decides that it is worth the struggle (81). Moreover, Gaiman's protagonist is aware of his human condition, and it is precisely this condition which leads him to refuse: he feels that there is one limit not to be transgressed, his complete loss of humanness.

In addition, Bod also refuses another monstrous identification, or rather this time, transformation, by refusing to join the ghouls who try and kidnap him to Ghûlheim. According to Abbruscato, becoming a "nameless ghoul" is specifically what he does not want:

> This erasure of Bod's past and surrogate home is the complete antithesis of what he is searching for: an identity. Should he become one of the ghouls, he would have no chance at discovering himself and his purpose. As the other Ghouls, his physical self and identity would be stolen and transformed, his emotional self would be completely erased, and what was left of "him" would ultimately steal the name and "identity" of another. (74)

Clearly, being identity-less is frightening for the child, especially when it involves "cannibalization" in order to be transformed, just like in Bod's case, into a ghoul (Abbruscato 74). What Abbruscato particularly emphasises is the fact that "[t]he threat of becoming consumed, of personal nonexistence, or existence simply as part of somebody else, is both deeply seeded in society and found in the classic fairy tales, particularly the tale of "Little Red Riding Hood" (74). Thus, "[b]e it personified Ghouls or Big Bad Wolves, children can place their fears of lacking an identity into the fairy tales, enabling themselves to face life around them as a maturing person" (76). This is extremely true for Gaiman's young readers who see that Nobody, in spite of identifying with a "monster" like Silas, refuses to do so if it compromises his entire identity. Accordingly, for him, identification is more to do with a complementary process rather than a total exposure of his self to a potential reduction or consumption of what and who he is.

Ultimately, the final humanisation process for both Kipling and Gaiman's protagonists is found in the way they leave their adoptive environments. Mowgli rejoins Messua in a village, while keeping a strong link with the animals of the jungle: "'Little Frog, take thine own trail; make thy lair with thine own blood and pack and people; but when there is need of foot or tooth or eye, or a word carried swiftly by night, remember, Master of the Jungle, the

Jungle is thine at call'" (Kipling 313). For his part, Nobody progressively understands that the graveyard will never be the same again: "'If I change my mind can I come back here?' And then he answered his own question. 'If I come back, it will be a place, but it won't be home any longer'" (Gaiman 304). In fact, during his last months in the graveyard, Gaiman explains that "[s]ometimes he could no longer see the dead," making it "impossible for his protagonist to retreat immediately back into the safe confines of his childhood home" (Gaiman 295; Robertson 182). Furthermore, what ultimately validates Bod's human identity is the fact that Silas gives him "'a passport […] made out in the name of Nobody Owens'" (Gaiman 304). In fact, the guardian adds that it "'was not easy to obtain,'" which is representative of the obstacles overcome by the young man in his quest for identity.

Although Mowgli and Nobody do not establish identical links with their adoptive environments when they leave, both protagonists legitimise their humanness by going back to the human society. By comparison, Bod clearly appears more confident in his decision than Mowgli, who is never quite independent from the jungle. Therefore, it can be argued that there are different extents to which the protagonists "feel" human, and in Mowgli's case, the line seems irrevocably blurred between the animals and the humans. In the knowledge that he will always be welcome in the jungle, his departure looks like a compromise; he is a human, but there will always be more to his identitary nature.

3. Gothic territories: mapping and dividing the self

Be it environmental or identitary, duality in *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book* is embedded in the territories created by Kipling and Gaiman, in which Gothic binary systems are manipulated to impact on the split identity of the main characters and their in-

betweenness. Clearly, identitary divisions are well-anchored in the environments Mowgli and Nobody grew up with, and highly influenced by the authors' choice of settings. The complexity and significance of these territories are, in fact, important revealers of the Gothic aspects of the novels, as the notion of the territory and the Gothic mode are very closely linked. Indeed, since the "Italian art historians of the early Renaissance first used the term 'Gothic' in an aesthetic sense, [and] erroneously attributed a style of architecture (q.v.) to th[e] Germanic tribes that sacked Rome," the intrusion of the Goths can be considered as the starting point of the Gothic (Punter). According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, "intrusion" is "the act of entering a place which is private or where you may not be wanted" (817). This definition highlights the necessity for a "place" to exist, or in other words, a defined territory, for it to be later violated. Therefore, "territory" and "intrusion" form an intrinsic unity, as there is no invasion without definite limits. If the term 'Gothic' originates, even mistakenly, in the Goths' encroachment, this infringement, or at least its inaccurate representation during the Renaissance, is significantly illustrative of this term. Consequently, the notion of the territory is naturally designated as one of the central parts of the Gothic mode.

The inherent dynamic between the Gothic and the ideas of intrusion and territory present in architecture led to a literary aesthetic of the mode, rooted in the eighteenth century:

> The other principal application of the term 'Gothic' was, as it still is, in the field of architecture (q.v.), and here it was used to refer to medieval architecture, principally churches and cathedrals, from about the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. Alongside its taste for 'ancient' literature, the late eighteenth century acquired a pronounced taste for medieval buildings, whether real or fake. Wealthy land-owners even went to the extent of building Gothic ruins, ready-made, in the grounds of their mansions, and occasionally to the expense of hiring hermits to live in custom-made adjacent cells. The most famous example of Gothic building in the period was Horace Walpole's (q.v.) Strawberry Hill, a Gothic castle in appearance even if surprisingly small in scale. […] What later flowed from this taste was to be the 'Gothicizing' mania of the Victorians. (Punter)

Here, David Punter testifies of a transition, initially from history to architecture, later from

architecture to a more generalised form including literature, in which the evolution of the term 'Gothic' seems deeply ingrained. Thus, the territory-intrusion unity is carried through these transpositions, firstly because of the enclosed and bounded nature of the spaces aforementioned, such as “churches and cathedrals,” and secondly because of the ghostly and historical nature of these locations. This Gothic-tainted definition of the territory is mirrored in *The Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book*. The following section analyses the extent to which Kipling and Gaiman's uses of the territory correspond to the aesthetic of the Gothic mode. It will also measure the impact of these Gothicised territories onto the characters' identities by placing two main spaces, the “native” and “adoptive” spheres, at the heart of Mowgli and Nobody's in-betweenness.

3.1 Kipling's and Gaiman's Gothic territories

In the light of Kipling's years in America, it is very tempting to value the influence of the key setting of traditional American Gothic over Mowgli's jungle: wilderness.[7] In *The Gothic World,* Matthew Wynn Sivils examines the terrifying origins of such locations:

> For the Puritans, the dark wood that lay beyond the village lamps was no pleasure ground: it was a dangerous realm that posed an assortment of threats, both physical and spiritual. Their sermons and captivity narratives portrayed the wilderness as the abode of monsters: it was where hapless colonists went to die, or worse, to lose their souls. (123)

This fascination and terror regarding the virgin landscapes of the New World can partly be explained by the “ghostly” dimension the European colonists attributed to it:

> Pourquoi l'Amérique est-elle dès le départ un continent 'fantôme'? Sans doute parce que les Européens y projettent leurs espoirs mais surtout leurs fantasmes et leurs croyances. Incapables de faire table rase du passé, les calvinistes décryptent le Nouveau Monde avec la Bible. Face à l'indicible *wilderness*, ils sont hantés par l'idée d'un espace païen, l'équivalent physique d'un chaos mental […]. (Guillaud

Persistances Gothiques 32)

Thus, Sivils and Guillaud establish a link between wilderness and its spectral construct, where people go “to die, or worst, to lose their souls,” and make it a haunted land in the eyes of its new colonisers. The terms used by the critics, such as “threat” and “monsters,” emphasise the evil and troubled aspects of wilderness and focus on the unknown past of the territory. It is, in fact, what Guillaud does when he states that the colonisers are not able to “faire table rase du passé”: the unknown past of wilderness is feared and misinterpreted through European beliefs. Therefore, it is precisely the historical aspect of wilderness that seems to obstruct its relation to men. Consequently, historicity holds a crucial place in America's wild spaces as much as in the Gothic, which suggests that wilderness perfectly corresponds to the aesthetic of the mode. Furthermore, this argument corroborates with Guillaud's definition of a Gothic place, which is “avant tout cet espace historique clos et nocturne où l'homme vacille, confronté à la terreur ou à l'horreur” (Retour des Morts 46).

Interestingly, Kipling seems to have transposed these elements onto Mowgli's jungle. Indeed, the latter gathers a lot of similarities with the American Gothic wilderness aforementioned. Correspondingly, the jungle is presented with a mysterious, almost sacred past, as it is narrated just like a myth in Kipling's book:

> In the beginning of the Jungle, and none know when that was, we of the Jungle walked together, having no fear of one another. In those days there was no drought, and leaves and flowers and fruit grew on the same tree, and we ate nothing at all except leaves and flowers and grass and fruit and bark. […]
>
> And the Lord of the Jungle was Tha, the First of the Elephants. He drew the Jungle out of deep waters with his trunk; and where he made furrows in the ground with his tusks, there the rivers ran; and where he struck with his foot, there rose ponds of good water; and when he blew through his trunk, - thus, - the trees fell. That was the manner in which the Jungle was made by Tha; and so the tale was told to me. […]
>
> In those days there was no corn or melons or peppers or sugar-cane, nor were there any little huts such as ye have all seen; and the Jungle People knew nothing of Man, but lived in the Jungle together, making one people. (101- 102)

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary's definition of “wilderness,”

Kipling's jungle is “a place that people do not take care of or control” (1746). Thence, it does belong to the broad category of wild spaces. No men were at the origin of its conception, and consequently, able to control its development. In this way, the absence of human witnesses during that process of creation participates in the ghostly dimension discussed by Sivils and Guillaud: the land was shaped by inhuman hands, thus implying a monstrous, haunting history. Just like the New World, the genesis of the jungle calls into question the position of humans in an unfamiliar environment. Ignorant of the rules of a virgin land and blinded by its blankness, men instinctively fear it.

In “'Tiger! Tiger!'”, Mowgli personifies the frightening dimension of wilderness, here specifically attributed to the jungle, when he decides to take refuge in the humans' village after he is excluded from the Seeonee wolf-pack:

> At one end stood a little village, and at the other the thick jungle came down in a sweep to the grazing-grounds, and stopped there as though it had been cut off with a hoe. All over the plain, cattle and buffaloes were grazing, and when the little boys in charge of the herds saw Mowgli they shouted and ran away, and the yellow pariah dogs that hand about every Indian village barked. (Kipling 120)

Clearly, Kipling depicts the young boy as a monster invading the villagers' lands. In this episode, wilderness is, symbolically, creeping into the human world, and this effect is reinforced by the presence of a “village gate,” stressing the idea of a threatening enemy (Kipling 121):

> Mowgli walked on, for he was feeling hungry, and when he came to the village gate he saw the big thorn-bush that was drawn up before the gate at twilight, pushed to one side. 'Umph!' he said, for he had come across more than one such barricade in his night rambles after things to eat. 'So men are afraid of the People of the Jungle here also.' (121)

By moving forward to the village, Mowgli embodies an active and moving wilderness, as opposed to a passive, peaceful representation of nature. Thus, wilderness can be seen as an aggressive, scary and dangerous environment, rejoining Sivils and Guillaud's idea of a Gothic space.

In *The Graveyard Book,* Gaiman responds to wilderness by creating a graveyard controlled by the laws of nature. Indeed, through many descriptions of the setting, the author insists on the savage, neglected aspects of the place, particularly when he depicts the unconsecrated grounds: “The graveyard proper ended at the bottom of the west side of the hill, beneath the old apple tree, with a fence of rust-brown iron railings, each topped with a small, rusting spearhead, but there was a wasteland beyond that, a mass of nettles and weeds, of brambles and autumnal rubbish [...]” (99). Gaiman creates a scary wilderness, not only by placing it into a graveyard, but also through its very characteristics.

In spite of an evidently gloomy atmosphere created by the author, it seems essential to understand why the graveyard is, by essence, a Gothic space. Firstly, it complies with Guillaud's “espace historique clos et nocturne où l'homme vacille, confronté à la terreur ou à l'horreur,” historicity translating into the presence of corpses, well-alive in the past and only existent in the present through haunting forms (Retour des Morts 46). Secondly, it appears as one of the “éléments constitutifs presque stéréotypés” shaping the Gothic, among the “manoirs délabrés, ruines, galeries souterraines, cadavres, etc” (Guillaud Retour des Morts 46). Undoubtedly, the graveyard does belong to those *clichés* used as horror devices in literature as much as in dreadful visual representations. Indeed, Punter qualifies the Gothic film as “photographically inventive,” and points out its “remarkable set of persistent images of doom,” be it “realistic or unrealistic”. Gaiman plays with these stereotypes by placing “a brambly patch of weeds” here or there in the graveyard, or by depicting the “unmown grass in the moonlight,” thus manipulating the reader with classic series of scary images (107).

However, the jungle and the graveyard are not the only territories presented in Kipling and Gaiman's books. In each case, they are opposed to a different environment. In Mowgli's stories, the author creates a village bordering the jungle: “At one end stood a little village,

and at the other the thick jungle" (Kipling 120). Not only does he geographically place them side by side, but he also establishes a conflicted relationship between the inhabitants of the jungle and the villagers. In "How Fear Came," Hathi the Elephant explains the origins of the tensions between animals and humans. To do so, he begins his story by addressing the People of the Jungle the following warning: "'Ye know, children, [...] that of all things ye most fear Man'; and there was a mutter of agreement" (Kipling 101). Ultimately, the tale ends with a strong empowerment of tigers towards the humans: "[f]or one night in each year […], if [tigers] meet the Hairless One – and his name is Man – [they] shall not be afraid of him, but he shall be afraid of [them], as though [they] were judges of the Jungle and masters of all things" (Kipling 107). Along these lines, the dominator/dominated relationships amongst the animals of the jungle (including Mowgli), and between these animals and the humans of the village, divide men and animals into two very distinct entities, alternatively threatening one another.

Similarly, Gaiman follows Kipling's model by opposing two strictly defined territories: the graveyard and the rest of the city. This division appears from the second chapter of the book, as Nobody starts questioning the fact that he cannot leave the graveyard:

> "Why amn't allowed out of the graveyard?" he would ask, or "How do *I* do what *he* just did?" or "Who lives in here?" […] His guardian could always be counted upon to explain matters clearly and lucidly and as simply as Bod needed in order to understand. "You aren't allowed out of the graveyard – it's *aren't*, by the way, not *amn't*, not these days – because it's only in the graveyard that we can keep you safe. This is where you live and this is where those who love you can be found. Outside would not be safe for you. Not yet. (Gaiman 36, emphasis in the original)

The safety matter raised by Silas, the guardian, is, of course, an allusion to the man Jack who, years earlier, had killed Bod's family and unsuccessfully tried to murder the young boy. This lethal threat represented by the slaughterer can be interpreted as a response to Kipling's Shere Khan.

Because of the strict nature of the territorial delimitations drawn in *The Two Jungle*

Books and *The Graveyard Book,* a strong sense of community and belonging is developed in the jungle as well as in the graveyard. Indeed, outside threats such as the villagers and the man Jack can be seen as factors of solidarity between the inhabitants of the jungle and the graveyard, who must live together against these dangers. In Kipling's fiction, this sense of community translates into the terms used in *The Two Jungle Books* to name the animals of the jungle, with the “Free People” or “Jungle-People” (19; 47). In fact, there are communities inside of a community, with “the Seeonee Pack” for the wolves or the “Monkey-People,” amongst which Mowgli is trying to find a place (Kipling 42; 55). Similarly, Gaiman chooses to surround his graveyard with protective structures, such as “old gates [with a] heavy padlock and chain,” and a “high brick wall [running] around […] the graveyard” (14; 15). This considerably intensifies the closed off, and therefore sheltered aspect of the territory.

3.2 “Adoptive” and “native” spheres

Consequently, Mowgli and Nobody evolve in rather communitarian environments that are yet not their own: they are neither animals, nor dead. By nature, the boys are, above all, human beings, maturing in spaces where they were initially accepted or, in other terms, adopted. As a result, a familial dimension is also created in the jungle and the graveyard. In both Kipling and Gaiman's fictions, the boys' substitute parents are designated with the terms “mother” and “father,” thus implying that Mowgli and Bod complete their adoption process by affiliating themselves to a group of different species. In fact, “Mother Wolf,” “Father Wolf” and even “Gray Brother” are titles that directly attach Mowgli to an animal family (3; 135). Similarly, Nobody's adoptive parents clearly announce their status: “'If you'll be its mother, I'll be its father'” (Gaiman 17). In addition, the adoption process is highlighted in *The*

Two Jungle Books, as Kipling imagines a process where

> [t]he Law of the Jungle lays down very clearly that any wolf may, when he marries, withdraw from the Pack he belongs to; but as soon as his cubs are old enough to stand on their feet he must bring them to the Pack Council […] in order that the other wolves may identify them. (15)

Thus, when Mowgli is found in the jungle, Mother Wolf and Father Wolf take him to the Council, where the little boy's adoption is debated. Baloo speaks in his favour: "'The man's cub – the man's cub?' he said. 'I speak for the man's cub. There is no harm in a man's cub. I have no gift of words, but I speak the truth. Let him run with the Pack, and be entered with the others. I myself will teach him'" (Kipling 20). Later on, he is followed by Bagheera:

> 'O Akela, and ye the Free People,' he purred, 'I have no right in your assembly; but the Law of the Jungle says that if there is a doubt which is not a killing matter in regard to a new cub, the life of that cub may be bought at a price. And the Law does not say who may or may not pay that price. […] Now to Baloo's word I will add one bull, and a fat one, newly killed, not half a mile from here, if ye will accept the man's cub according to the Law'. (Kipling 20-21)

Eventually, the author concludes: "And that is how Mowgli was entered into the Seeonee wolf-pack at the price of a bull and on Baloo's good word" (Kipling 22).

In the graveyard, when Bod escapes from the murderer's knife to find shelter among the dead, a similar discussion is engaged by the late inhabitants to know whether the baby-child should be kept and raised in the graveyard or not: "A graveyard is not normally a democracy, and yet death is the great democracy, and each of the dead had a voice, and an opinion as to whether the living child should be allowed to stay, and they were each determined to be heard, that night" (Gaiman 29). Thence, the adoption of the main characters is made official in both novels through ceremonious deliberations, making it clear from the start that Mowgli and Nobody are outsiders.

Thus, the jungle and the graveyard can be considered as "adoptive" spheres. In this section, a new category of territories will be created: the "native" sphere, with the village and the city. These locations will be so named since they are both inhabited by human beings and,

consequently, correspond to Mowgli and Nobody's biological origins, and to the human society they were born in in the first place. The main argument of this section is that not only are the jungle and the graveyard Gothic-tainted territories, but the confrontation between the two spheres aforementioned also reveal ghostly dynamics proven to be Gothic devices deepening Mowgli and Bod's in-between state.

In both Mowgli's and Nobody's cases, the two protagonists develop their personalities and identities in their “adoptive” space through various adventures, and eventually leave to go back to the humans. In reality, Mowgli and Bod already experience similar excursions back to their “native spheres” before they definitely rejoin the human society, in two parallel chapters respectively called “Tiger! Tiger!” and “Nobody Owens' School Days”: Mowgli starts living in the village bordering the jungle after he is cast out of the Wolf Pack, and Bod decides he wants to start going to school. The following comparative analysis between these episodes aims at suggesting that the notion of the Gothic territory is not only physical, but is also part of the main characters' selves, as the two boys prove when they switch environments.

First of all, when Mowgli and Nobody change worlds, they re-adapt quite easily to their “native” territories, implying that, unsurprisingly, a part of them is moulded to receive and get used to the human habits. To begin with, they are both efficient when it comes to learning the fundamental principles: Nobody is qualified as a “smart lad” by his teacher, and Mowgli, initially ignorant of the human language, “would imitate it almost perfectly” (Gaiman 182; Kipling 123). Furthermore, the boys adjust to the customs and, in Bod's case, even enjoy being surrounded by his peers again, as he tells Silas: “'It's not just the learning stuff. It's the other stuff. Do you know how nice it is to be in a room filled with people and for all of them to be breathing?'” (Gaiman 193). Contrarily to Nobody, Mowgli's adaptation

seems more difficult:

> For three months after that night Mowgli hardly ever left the village gate, he was so busy learning the ways and customs of men. First he had to wear a cloth round him, which annoyed him horribly; and then he had to learn about money, which he did not in the least understand, and about ploughing, of which he did not see the use. (Kipling 127)

Yet, eventually, Mowgli fits in the human environment as much as Nobody. The author of the jungle tales ultimately finds his protagonist a proper role and a goal in his new society, as the little boy explains to Gray Brother, one of his wolf companions, that he is "a village herd for a while" (Kipling 133). This label testifies of a defined utility attributed to the child, a box Mowgli now belongs to within the village. Correspondingly, Nobody discovers a new side to his already multifaceted identity by becoming the stereotype of the

> … model pupil,forgettable and easily forgotten, and he spent much of his spare time in the back of the English class where there were shelves of old paperbacks, and in the school library, a large room filled with books and old armchairs, where he read stories as enthusiastically as some children ate. (Gaiman 182)

Accordingly, a certain humanisation of the boys is engaged from their early experiences in the village and at school, and from rediscovering their "native" territories and accepting a new influence over their identities.

This humanisation is strongly Gothic, as it carries a characteristic element of the mode: historicity. Clearly, the fact that Nobody and Mowgli re-adapt so easily to the human world testifies of a haunting past, their early babyhood in human environments or simply, their genetic past, coming back to the surface. Here, it is almost a form of atavism. In *Keywords and Concepts in Evolutionary Developmental Biology*, atavism "commonly refers to the reappearance of a character state typical of a remote ancestor in an individual that really shouldn't have it. That is to say, the state has been lost, or more commonly transformed, long ago within the history of its lineage" (Stiassny 10). In this definition, three main points are relevant to Mowgli and Nobody. First of all, accordingly to Stiassny's statement, the boys'

human “state has been lost” in their “adoptive” spheres: they both partially integrated the animal and the dead worlds, in a way that reconsidered their human nature, as will be further discussed later. Secondly, and as a result, Mowgli and Nobody's experiences in their “native” spheres encourage the “reappearance” of these human characteristics in their behaviours. Finally, the main characters can be considered as “individual[s] that really shouldn't have” these specificities again, because of the loss of humanness observed in their behaviours, which is explained by their semi-belonging to their “adoptive” spheres. Atavism, here, could be considered “short-termed,” as it does not develop through several generations, but only through the few maturational years of the boys' childhood. This – here, simplified - form of atavism is often used in the Gothic fictional mode, as testifies Robert Mighall: “With such concepts as atavism, reversion, and survival, evolutionary, ethnological, and criminological discourses helped to demarcate a new territory for Gothic representation, with the body providing a site for ancestral return” (153). In *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book*, through brief experiences in their “native” spheres, the main characters quickly retrieve an essential element to their human nature, an “ancestral return” translating into a new place in men's society. This reveals an intrinsic link between territory and identity: since Mowgli and Nobody's human nature is intensified in their “natural habitat,” and if this very form of habitat provokes an atavistic reaction in the main protagonists' behaviours, “native” spheres act as revealers of their biological identities.

Nonetheless, in spite of their partial adaptation to the human space, it remains quite clear that Mowgli and Bod do not fully understand this new society. Consequently, both protagonists feel the need to bring with them a part of their “adoptive” territory in order to survive the change they are experiencing, and keep an identitary point of reference. The most manifest element to serve this argument is the way the two boys apply without fail their own

moral system of justice to any kind of situation, regardless of the rules and laws established within the human sphere. On that account, Kipling explains that

> … Mowgli had not the faintest idea of the difference that caste makes between man and man. When the potter's donkey slipped in the clay-pit, Mowgli hauled it out by the tail, and helped to stack the pots for their journey to the market at Khanhiwara. That was very shocking, too, for the potter is a low-caste man, and his donkey is worse. (127-128)

Because the boy is not aware of the social hierarchy ingrained in the village, he reckons that his sense of righteousness is to be found in what the jungle taught him, and naturally adapts his own ethics to an environment already controlled by different values. Identically, Bod breaks the power structure of his new environment when he decides to help Paul, a child caught in the clutches of Nick Farthing and Maureen Quilling, the bullies of the school. In the same way as Mowgli is indifferent to what is socially acceptable or not, Nobody gives Paul the keys to his infallible moral system:

> 'Tell them that you think the police and school authorities could be a lot more interested in a couple of kids who are getting younger kids to steal for them and then forcing them to hand over their pocket money than they ever would be in one kid forced to steal a CD against his will. That if they touch you again, you'll make the call to the police. And that you've written it all up, and if anything happens to you, anything at all, if you get a black eye or anything, your friends will automatically send it to the school authorities and the police.' (Gaiman 185)

Once again, the protagonist applies a justice developed in his “adoptive” sphere, here the graveyard. Just like Mowgli did not know about the castes, Bod does not value the social organisation deep-rooted in his school, and decides to question and trust his own moral system under any circumstances, which will ultimately cause him to leave the school.

Not only have Mowgli and Nobody dug a gap between them and their “native” environment by importing their own ethic scheme, but they also differentiate themselves from the other humans because of their incommensurable knowledge regarding their “adoptive” territories. In “Tiger! Tiger!”, this translates into Mowgli's disdain for Buldeo's tales of the jungle, causing the little boy to “cover his face not to show that he was laughing”

at what he calls “cobwebs and moon-talk” stories (Kipling 129). In fact, when the chief of the village tries to explain to the inhabitants how Shere Khan is a “ghost-tiger […] inhabited by the ghost of a wicked old money-lender,” Mowgli interrupts and corrects him: “'That tiger limps because he was born lame, as every one knows. To talk of the soul of a money-lender in a beast that never had the courage of a jackal is child's talk'” (Kipling 129). Later on, he adds that “Buldeo has not said one word of truth concerning the jungle, which is at his very doors” (Kipling 130). Here, Mowgli proves his advantage over the other inhabitants of the village, as he and only he knows the truth about the jungle. This asset enables him to rationalise what other humans cannot understand, and on a more symbolic level, he is the one who knows, as opposed to the supposedly less ignorant chief of the village. In “Nobody Owens' School Days,” Gaiman gives his protagonist a favoured position in History classes, “a subject Bod mostly enjoyed, although he often had to resist the urge to say that it hadn't happened like that, not according to people who had been there anyway,” that is to say, the inhabitants of the graveyard (191). Furthermore, he intensifies the boy's knowledge by making him “throw in little made-up details, stuff not in the books” in his essays (182). Thus, the expertise brought by Mowgli and Nobody in their respective subjects testifies of another side of their identity uprooted from their “adoptive” spheres only to help them (re)adapt to their “native” sphere.

Again, the ghostly, Gothic dynamic of a haunting spectrum comes back to the surface, with the shade of the main characters' childhoods spent in their “adoptive” territories. Not only are the boys carrying their humanness in their behaviours, but they also bring with them a substitute created by what they have learned in the “adoptive” sphere. This idea rejoins the fundamental historicity of the Gothic mode, since Mowgli and Nobody seem to carry two ghosts in their adventures: the ghost of their biological nature, from their “native” sphere, and

the one of their childhood spent in “adoptive” territories. Thence, the haunting past of both spheres acts as an indicator of the impact of Gothic duality on the boys' lives and, consequently, their maturation.

3.3 In-betweenness

As a result, this Gothic, haunting past makes the protagonists' adaptations difficult, if not impossible at this stage of their development, since both Mowgli and Nobody end up being excluded from the human society. More precisely, neither of them know where they belong, which testifies of the fact they are in-betweeners: they are “in a middle position; neither one thing nor the other” (Oxford Leaner's Dictionary 134).[8] Indeed, if they do not fit in a human environment, and if the jungle and the graveyard only are for them “adoptive” territories, their chances for feeling legitimate in any of these spheres are therefore considerably reduced. In “Mowgli's Song,” Kipling puts into words the torments of the young boy:

> Waters of the Waingunga, the Man-Pack have cast me out. I did them no harm, but they were afraid of me. Why?
> Wolf-Pack, ye have cast me out too. The jungle is shut to me and the village gates are shut. Why?
> As Mang flies between the beasts and the birds, so fly I between the village and the jungle. Why? (Kipling 155)

In these verses, Kipling strengthens the parallel established between “Man-Pack” and “Wolf-Pack” through similar designations: he could have written “the humans” and “the wolves,” but instead chose to nominate these groups in terms of “Pack”. This reveals an equivalence between men and animals, notably in the way they impacted on Mowgli. What is more, the boy's reaction is made very expressive and emotional, particularly in the first line, with an

assonance in [a:]. Aside from participating in the melodic dimension of "Mowgli's song," this sonority stands out as a cry for help from the protagonist. Subsequently, several repetitions are observed: "cast me out," used twice in this extract, illustrates the idea of rejection at the origin of Mowgli's distress. Later on, it is followed by a double "shut," attesting of the definite, absolute character of this rejection, and of the total incapacity for the young boy to access either the jungle or the village. Unsurprisingly, this exclusion is at the heart of Mowgli's incomprehension, who keeps wondering "Why?". As the format of the song – as opposed to a dialogue or a duet – does not allow any answer, this repetition can be seen as an introspection through rhetorical questions, thus marking the loneliness of the child and his suffering regarding the lack of explanation he is given as to why he is not accepted anywhere.

Furthermore, Mowgli draws interesting comparisons, firstly concerning Mang the Bat and himself ("As Mang flies […] so fly I").[9] By doing so, Kipling's protagonist effectuates his own animalisation and intensifies the very core of the problem: man or animal, he does not know where he belongs. In the same sentence, the young man puts in parallel "the beasts and the birds" with "the village and the jungle," which constitutes a second animalisation of humans into "beasts". In fact, the villagers are even made monstrous as they are not compared to any species in particular, but rather to images of fierce, violent creatures. Again, Mowgli cannot help blurring the lines between what is human and what is animal. Above all, he seems extremely confused regarding what it means to be one or another, as he does not recognise himself in any of these categories. This perplexity translates into a totally disoriented state represented by the lexical field of confrontation, almost childish, with terms like "harm," "afraid," and "beasts". Accordingly, this extract particularly efficiently recalls the in-betweenness Mowgli is suffering from, along with the boy's troubled reaction and grief.

With *The Graveyard Book*, Gaiman faithfully transposes Mowgli's turmoil into Bod's situation. In "Nobody Owens' School Days," the main protagonist finds himself obliged to leave school after a few days only, and seems tempted by the prospect of running away from the graveyard, too:

> Bod put his hands in his pockets and began to walk, not certain where he was going. He would leave the school, he thought, just as he had left the graveyard. He would go somewhere no one knew him, and he would sit in a library all day and read books and listen to people breathing. He wondered if there were still deserted islands in the world, like the one on which Robinson Crusoe had been shipwrecked. He could go and live on one of those. (Gaiman 197)

In this extract, Gaiman uses the lexical field of the movement ("walk," "going," "leave"), clearly recalling Mowgli's comparison to Mang the Bat and the idea of flying, moving and wandering. Just like Kipling's protagonist, Nobody seems to be floating on in-between waters, impression strengthens by the mentioning of Robinson Crusoe and his wreckage. Additionally, a parallelism is created between the school and the graveyard ("He would leave the school […] just as he had left the graveyard") showing that both environments are equally important to Bod and, once again, constituting a knowing wink to Kipling's "Man-Pack" and "Wolf-Pack" in the previous extract. Besides, an enumeration sums up Bod's most spontaneous desires: "He would go somewhere no one knew him, and he would sit in a library all day and read books and listen to people breathing". This list, articulated with the repetition of the word "and," appears as very childish and impulsive, absolute and trenchant, which suggests that going to the library is Nobody's very first response to his rejection from the school and the graveyard. While Gaiman gives a voice to his protagonist's reaction after very little time to think things through, the author also allows a comparison between the "deserted islands in the world, like the one on which Robinson Crusoe had been shipwrecked," and the place Nobody longs to find. In so doing, Gaiman creates a similar phenomenon as to Mowgli's animalisation, but instead of splitting his character's identity

between human and animal, enables him to fictionalise his life. Accordingly, a *mise en abyme* can be observed, where a fictional protagonist identifies with another fictional work, Robinson Crusoe. Clearly, this element brings to light Bod's unique status as an in-betweener, dividing his self between his own reality and fiction or, in other terms, between the humans and the supernatural creatures he grew up with in the graveyard.

Besides, Sue Walsh interestingly stresses the fact that Mowgli "is cast out from both Jungle and village on similar grounds. In both cases he is cherished at first for his 'super-natural' powers which derive 'quite naturally' from the other sphere, whilst he is also feared as a 'representative of an external threat or aggression'" (66). This is very clearly illustrated in "Tiger! Tiger!," as Mowgli is, at first, praised for his strength, before he is cast out for the very same argument. Indeed, Kipling writes: "He did not know his own strength in the least. In the jungle he knew he was weak compared with the beasts, but in the village people said that he was as strong as a bull" (127). Later on, Messua, Mowgli's adoptive mother in the village, convinces the boy to run away: "'Oh, my son, my son! They say thou art a sorcerer who can turn himself into a beast at will. I do not believe, but go away or they will kill thee" (148). Thus, the rejection experienced by Mowgli demonstrates the difficulty that the main character has to entirely adapt to any of the spheres, and the obstacles created by the skills acquired in his ghostly past. Indeed, only half of him is considered legitimate and acceptable by the humans, which, unfortunately for the boy, prevents him from freely expanding and developing his growing identity as much as affirming it.

This is also true for Nobody, who experiences the same situation with his classmates; at first, "his presence [is] almost ghostly", which does not seem to be a problem, as Bod's guardian, Silas, recommends him to stay discreet (Gaiman 183). Nevertheless, when the boy starts using the Freedom of the Graveyard he was granted to scare the school bullies and

haunt their dreams, Nobody excludes himself because of his apparent difference, soon noticed by everyone in his school: “Mo and Nick had begun to talk about him, probably the year sevens had as well. Other kids were looking at him, pointing him out to each other” (Gaiman 192). Here, Walsh's motif of aggressiveness is observed, and eventually forces Silas to prevent Nobody from going back to school. Consequently, the critic's argument strengthens the fact that the young boys are stuck in a state of in-betweenness.

Accordingly, by sending their main characters back to their “native” environments, Kipling and Gaiman demonstrate that territory and identity are non-dissociable in their fictions; Mowgli and Nobody are, within limits, part of two distinct worlds at the same time and carry them both inside of them. They can adapt to a school or a village thanks to their human nature, but only to a certain extent, as they feel the need to bring a part of the values attached to their “adoptive” territory to survive, which eventually casts them out. This in-betweenness, provoked by the protagonists' haunting pasts and habits developed in their “adoptive” spheres, compromises their attempt to integrate their biological spheres. In this sense, the historicity of the Gothic strongly affects their construction of identity and prevents the main characters from building a coherent self. This state of in-betweenness is, in fact, perfectly illustrated by Kipling's character's words: “'I am two Mowglis'” (156).

Conclusion

Gothic duality influences Mowgli and Nobody's construction of identity in many ways, and finds its efficiency in its flexibility and adaptability. Firstly, it infiltrates the main themes of the books to help the protagonists' developmental process. Indeed, it interferes with

their interrogations regarding their moral values, age, and more generally, fate. In doing so, the Gothic highlights clear-cut fractures between the main characters and the other protagonists. This translates into a great incapacity for them to identify with their substitute families and communities, and constitutes a first marker of their fundamental differences.

Secondly, these contrasts engage with inner dualities, and with what it means to be human or non-human, thus forming a fundamental, Gothic fragmentation in the main characters' identities. Through symbolic names, alternately humanising and dehumanising the young boys, the Gothic mode reveals its particular concern for the question of humanness. The latter, largely explored in *The Two Jungle Books* and *The Graveyard Book*, is rather challenging for Mowgli and Nobody who, after multiple animalistic as well as monstrous identifications, struggle to come to an acceptance of their human nature.

Finally, Gothic duality is found in Mowgli and Bod's environments, as the territories are split to reflect the identitary divisions of the characters. The creation of “adoptive” and “native” spheres within Gothic-tainted spaces allows a clearer understanding of the characters' status as adopted children, and reinforces the differentiating dynamic already generated by thematic dualities. Moreover, it emphasises the physical and psychological inability for Kipling and Gaiman's protagonists to fully identify to one sphere or another. As a result, Mowgli and Nobody find themselves caged in an in-between state, preventing them from freely developing their personalities.

Consequently, the Gothic can be seen as a “guide,” subtly leading Mowgli and Nobody in their quest for identity. By infiltrating and splitting their environments and selves according to its binary structure, the mode cuts the characters open to analyse their inner beings. In this sense, it deconstructs Mowgli and Nobody's selves in order to expose every part of their identity before their eyes. Thus, the guiding dimension of the mode appears in

the way it enables the protagonists to choose between one side or another – one identity or another – which they eventually do by leaving their “adoptive” spheres at the end of both books. By fragmenting Mowgli and Nobody's existence, the Gothic helps Kipling and Gaiman's characters acknowledge their state of in-betweenness, which seems essential for them to construct themselves as individuals.

While this study focuses on the interactions between the Gothic and children's literature, specifically regarding identity matters, and suggests that the inherent duality of the Gothic mode is a fundamental actor of its efficiency with the bildungsroman, further examinations could be considered. Firstly, a more developed historical background would constitute an essential interpreting factor as to why Mowgli and Nobody leave their childhood home – and by extension accept their humanness – in different ways. Indeed, the evolution of the conception of childhood throughout the centuries, although briefly mentioned, is not taken into account, as this dissertation limits itself to the impact of Gothic duality on the protagonists' identities. However, it would be interesting to consider the change of both the Gothic mode and childhood from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century for a better understanding of Mowgli and Nobody's different reactions.

Furthermore, a complementary study on the reader response would be useful; this dissertation examines the way Gothic duality affects the characters' construction of identity, but does not analyse the impact of the mode on young readers. Yet, a parallel could be established between Mowgli and Nobody's situations, and their influence on Kipling and Gaiman's audience, particularly concerning adopted children and young adults: how do they identify with protagonists sharing similar difficulties as they do? Thus, further analysis could be made on the way children's literature is a helpful tool of representation for a minority of the population in need for identification.

Nevertheless, this study values the Gothic mode and its challenging dimension, underlines its efficiency with children's literature as well as identity issues, and puts forward its bright future in the young readers' imagination.

Notes

1. Here, Punter is dealing with the Romantic vision of the term.

2. “Bod” is Nobody's nickname.

3. Amongst them, Nobody could also include Silas, his guardian, and the Owenses, his adoptive parents.

4. This point is developed in the introduction of this dissertation: "...a parallel is drawn between the Gothic 'place, […] haunted by a past that remains present,' and the 'child [who] grows, [accumulating] more and more experiences, […] forming the intricate passages where bits of his or her past get lost, only to re-emerge at unexpected times' (Jackson et al. 4)."

5. Here, Burstyn also talks about Gaiman's novel *Coraline.*

6. Here, Scarlett's idea of what “monster” means largely corresponds to MacCormack's definition of monstrosity.

7. In *Something of Myself,* Kipling's autobiographical work, the author explains that the seeds of *The Two Jungle Books* were planted for the very first time in Vermont, USA: “My workroom in the Bliss Cottage was seven feet by eight, and from December to April the snow lay level with its window-skill. It chanced that I had written a tale about Indian Forestry work which included a boy who had been brought up by wolves (*In the Rukh* nb). In the stillness, and suspense, of the winter of '92 some memory of the Masonic Lions of my childhood's magazine, and a phrase in Haggard's Nada the Lily, combined with the echo of this tale. After blocking out the main idea in my head, the pen took charge, and I watched it begin to write stories about Mowgli and animals, which later grew into the Jungle Books” (67-68).

8. This definition refers to the word “betwixt”.

9. Kipling refers to “Mang, the Bat” at the beginning of the song (154).

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