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Neo-Victorian Adaptations through the Media: The Representation of the Gothic New Woman in *Penny Dreadful*

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Penny Dreadful is a popular television series created by American playwright John Logan and directed by English director Sam Mendes, which aired in three seasons between 2014 and 2016.¹ The series, set in Victorian London, features several well-known characters from nineteenth-century British literature, including Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), as well as various witches, monsters, and vampires who contribute to the overall gothic and supernatural atmosphere. The main protagonists of the series are brought together in a fantastical representation of late nineteenth-century London and revolve around the prominent figure of Vanessa Ives, a fictional character who serves as the focal point of the plot, which develops and becomes increasingly intricate over the course of the twenty-seven episodes.

In this 'exemplary piece of pastiche',² the *Penny Dreadful* characters do not think or behave in the same way as their literary predecessors, but they are part of a broader narrative universe and can therefore interact with each other, creating multiple and original storylines in which the viewer also participates in the co-creation of meaning.³ As Benjamin Poore asserts:

Penny Dreadful is neither an adaptation of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, nor of *Dracula*, nor of *Frankenstein*, but rather a hybrid appropriation, combining fragmented and transformed characters and plots from British Victorian fiction, as well as cultural references of the period, [...] such as spiritualism, [...] the late-Victorian fascination with Egyptology and imperialism.⁴

The narrative complexity of the contemporary serial format serves as a powerful tool to subvert and reinterpret the established literary archetypes embodied by iconic characters, such as Frankenstein or Dorian Gray, as well as to narrate their quest for identity, a central theme of the series. In fact, as Lourdes Monterrubio Ibáñez argues, 'the mythical characters gain density and complexity thanks to the deep relationships they establish among themselves and the gradual

revelation of their past life experiences'.⁵ This is evident from the first season, in which Vanessa Ives and Sir Malcolm Murray embark on a mission to rescue Mina Harker, Sir Malcolm's daughter and Vanessa's childhood friend, from the grasp of a vampire. They are assisted by the gunslinger Ethan Chandler, who turns out to be a lycanthrope, and Dr Victor Frankenstein. As the series progresses, the intrigue and mystery becomes increasingly centred on Vanessa, whose mission to assist Malcolm in finding Mina is revealed to be, at its core, a search for her own identity.⁶ Nevertheless, considerable space is also devoted to a number of subplots involving the other characters: Doctor Frankenstein's scientific experiments result in the generation of three different creatures, each of which will search for their past identities: Dorian Gray, a charismatic yet isolated individual who possesses immortality, seeks to rediscover the joy of life through the pursuit of hedonistic pleasures; Sir Malcolm Murray portrays the archetypal British explorer, while Dracula assumes the role of a sophisticated and refined gentleman in the third season, revealing a strong connection with Vanessa. All these characters establish relationships with one another that are constantly evolving, thereby revealing their respective virtues and vices.⁷ The result of this cross-textual contamination leads to a significant reshaping of their identities, exemplifying the postmodern trend for reconfiguring and appropriating mythology to illustrate one's search for identity.

As Linda Hutcheon highlights in her seminal work, *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), we 'retell – and show again and interact anew with – stories over and over; in the process, they change with each repetition, and yet they are recognizably the same'.⁸ This is especially true in *Penny Dreadful*, which, in a complex network of intertextual and intermedial references, engages in both the deconstruction and reconstruction of iconic gothic characters and plotlines from the nineteenth century while still feeling familiar to the modern viewer. According to Hutcheon, stories of this type can be classified as 'memes of modernity',⁹ referring to narratives that can be retold in various forms within different cultural contexts and media forms. Similar to genes, which possess the ability to adapt to new environments through mutation, such stories 'do get retold in different

ways in new material and cultural environments; [...] And the fittest do more than survive; they flourish'.¹⁰ In fact, as Alison Lee and Frederick D. King point out, the coexistence and interaction in the series between characters who originally appeared in novels written approximately eighty years apart, such as *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*, is of secondary importance. What matters, instead, is the way these texts and the original characters intertwine with one another, reconfiguring the viewer's connection to the past. The popular characters of the TV show have thus become 'cultural memes that continue to live on in contemporary culture as much as they did in nineteenth-century British literature'.¹¹ They represent and address anxieties and concerns that arose in the late Victorian era but are still relevant and universal to Western society. These include the abuse of power, psychological harm, women's struggle for autonomy against patriarchy, rape, the use of technology to control human creation, and the marginalization of individuals who deviate from societal norms.

As the name of the TV series suggests, director John Logan chose to interpret nineteenth-century British fiction and culture through the literary perspective of the 'penny dreadful', the cheap popular fiction of the time aimed at a mass audience. Published serially on a weekly or monthly basis for the affordable price of a penny, they were notable for their sensational and thrilling content, often featuring gothic narratives, bloody murders, and horrifying violence, which entertained the impoverished Victorian urban population. Authors combined stories from a variety of sources, reusing plots and repeatedly using stock characters such as super heroes and mad scientists to create 'a world of dormant peerages, of murderous baronets, and ladies of title addicted to study of toxicology, of gypsies and brigand-chiefs, [...] grave-diggers, resurrection-men, lunatics, and ghosts'.¹² Like the original penny dreadful, the television series uses similar literary tropes and narrative techniques, capturing the attention of contemporary audiences by drawing on their familiarity with pre-existing works of fiction and using them as a basis for the development of a new narrative.¹³ In this sense, it can be argued that *Penny Dreadful* is a form of

media that caters to the ‘age of contamination’,¹⁴ because it combines the terror of penny dreadfuls with iconic Victorian gothic characters and renowned film and television actors.

Most of the action in *Penny Dreadful* is set in a late-Victorian decadent London, depicting the opulence of the fashionable West End, where social events and spiritualistic sessions take place, and the degradation of the East End, marked by horrific crimes such as the massacre at the Mariner’s Inn. The characters move fluidly between these two urban environments, demonstrating the versatility of their cultural and social contexts. Such representation of the urban space is significantly shaped by the nineteenth-century concept of the flâneur, a nomadic seeker of urban views and experiences. This figure is prominently embodied by the character of Dorian Gray, who, through his mobile gaze and desire for sensory experiences, provides the audience with a deeper understanding of the diverse forms of entertainment available to different social classes in London.

A notable aspect of *Penny Dreadful* is the redefinition of previously marginalized or secondary female characters as strong and leading figures. Miss Vanessa Ives, Hecate Poole, and Lily Frankenstein exemplify this transformation as they navigate the British fin de siècle, a period of cultural anxiety and social change in which women began to demand new rights of access to education, work, and politics.¹⁵ In fact, the series alludes to the first feminist movements’ attempts to alter societal norms regarding gender roles, and thus to the New Woman, a character who appears in late Victorian literature as an emancipated woman seeking independence. Both an icon of the female avant-garde and a symbol of decadence, the New Woman was seen as a threat to Victorian morality and social order because of her alleged sexual immorality and her anti-maternal instincts. Similarly, the women in *Penny Dreadful* strive for independence and attempt to break free from Victorian restrictions while displaying almost supernatural abilities and embodying characteristics typically associated with gothic heroines.

Miss Vanessa Ives, played by the French actress Eva Green, embodies the multifaceted figure of the gothic New Woman, a complex character who emanates mystery due to her psychic abilities and profound gaze, but who also undergoes a personal and painful transformation

throughout the narrative. Usually dressed as a mournful Madonna in black or purple, Vanessa is an adventurous and sophisticated woman who is an active member of the investigation party established by a league of gentlemen – Sir Malcolm Murray, Victor Frankenstein, and Ethan Chandler – with the purpose of finding Mina. Throughout the series, the league must descend into a world known as the Demimonde, which serves as a bridge between the real and the fantastic, while Vanessa undergoes a personal journey in search of her identity and social acceptance. Her Catholic faith is put to the test when she discovers she is a witch, and she must therefore come to terms with this new identity.¹⁶ The classical figure of feminine monstrosity is thus reinterpreted by combining elements of a vampire, an Egyptian goddess, and a demon to create the ultimate version of Miss Ives, whom Dorian Gray defines as ‘the most mysterious thing in London’.¹⁷ Similar to earlier gothic heroines, who were often encouraged to ‘explore the limits of identity’,¹⁸ Vanessa is subjected to a great deal of physical and mental suffering and is called upon to demonstrate her personal integrity as the narrative unfolds.

Vanessa also displays behaviours and attitudes typical of the New Woman. From the beginning, she shows herself to be autonomous, but also a fine intellectual and a writer, as evidenced by the many letters she writes to her friend Mina during her research. She also often walks alone through dangerous districts at night and is frequently seen smoking with her companions. In contrast to the typical Victorian conception of the woman as the ‘angel of the house’ – an ideal exemplified by the character of Mina – Vanessa has strong sexual inclinations, going so far as to seduce Mina’s future husband, and interacts with male partners without being submissive. In fact, she is often more capable of making important decisions and taking action than male characters.

Another notable female character who best exemplifies the idea of the gothic New Woman is Lily Frankenstein, played by Billie Piper. She is introduced in the first episode of the second season, when Dr Victor Frankenstein reanimates the corpse of the prostitute Brona Croft. First introduced in the first season as the romantic partner of Ethan Chandler, Lily is created to be a

female companion for his first creature, named John Clare. Previous versions of the bride of Frankenstein's monster, like the female partner in Shelley's and James Whale's *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935), were created from human remains and then destroyed. Lily, on the other hand, is a new industrial creation made from the entire body of a woman.¹⁹ The scene of her birth, set in a dark dungeon filled with enormous machines, embodies the industrial gothic subtext that permeates the entire series, and the motif of unnatural disorder caused by technological advancement. As exemplified by some of the texts on which *Penny Dreadful* draws – *Frankenstein*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and *Dracula* – the 'eruption of horrific fantasy into the everyday' becomes a common theme aimed at exploring the concept of a brutally mechanized urban civilization with its repressive institutions.²⁰

Victor names his new creature Lily after 'the flower of resurrection and rebirth',²¹ associating her with the values of chastity and purity that are traditionally connected to the symbolism of the *Lilium* flower.²² Lily emerges from the mechanical gears of her creator's laboratory as a beautiful, innocent young woman with no memory of her past. She becomes the object of desire of her creator, Victor, who proceeds to shape and train her according to the conventional Victorian ideals of femininity, beginning with her outer appearance: he dyes her hair from brown to blonde and dresses her in high-necked lace garments and constricting corsets. He also teaches her how to speak and read properly, as well as how to behave in social contexts as a perfect Victorian wife, gentle and submissive.²³ Victor views Lily as his own property and desires control over her. This is evidenced by his growing possessiveness and jealousy, to the point where he no longer wants her to be with John Clare, for whom she is destined. However, things take an unexpected turn when she undergoes a radical personal transformation, partly due to the resurfacing of painful memories from her former life as a prostitute. This brings out her darker and more violent side, which leads her to rebel violently against patriarchal authority, beginning with her rejection of Victor and his creature, John. As a result, after serving as a symbolic

representation of chastity and purity, Lily undergoes an antiphrastic transformation in which she acquires opposing values associated with death and revenge.

A first glimpse of Lily's emancipation comes in the scene where she puts on a corset for the first time. Barely able to breathe, she asks Victor why she should wear it. Victor ironically answers that it prevents women from 'tak[ing] over the world',²⁴ reflecting the general attitude towards Victorian women who were constrained not only by clothing, but also by social norms of obedience and submission. Lily realizes that everything women do is to please men: 'Keep their houses. Raise their children. Flatter them with our pain',²⁵ which is exactly what Frankenstein intended when he created the bride. After this dialogue, Lily frees herself from the corset and, together with Victor, attends a ball given by Dorian Gray, with whom she develops a close friendship: from this moment on, things change significantly. As time passes, Lily begins to remember the violence and suffering she endured in her former life as a prostitute, but she also realizes that she possesses an extraordinary strength that is almost impossible to destroy.²⁶ She understands that she no longer needs to be submissive like a child or dependent on Victor, and she wants to take revenge on men for the cruelty and abuse she has experienced. As a result, she becomes a rebellious and murderous female character who, according to Stephanie Green, 'reconfigures the *fin de siècle* persona of the proto-modern New Woman to embody the far more forceful gothic New Woman and become the harbinger of a world without men'.²⁷

As noted above, the New Woman emerged as a trope of social and cultural change in the late nineteenth century, becoming a popular theme and character in the periodicals and novels of the time. The figure arose as an emblem of emancipation, giving voice to women's interests, and developed alongside the first women's movements, with public campaigns for property rights, the right to vote, and access to higher education.²⁸ The concept of the New Woman also became intertwined with the cult of decadence, associated with literary figures such as Wilde and the artists of *The Yellow Book*.²⁹ Seen as someone who deviated from conventional norms in order to pursue a more liberated lifestyle, the New Woman was also perceived as a sexually promiscuous figure,

and thus as a potential threat to moral values. Wilde's first British edition of his play *Salome* (1894), with the popular and controversial illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley, best exemplified the image of the dangerously sensual woman, depicting the protagonist as she eagerly grasps the severed head of Jokanaan, her lips parted in a lustful manner.³⁰ Such images embody the essence of feminine desire and revenge which is also reflected in Lily Frankenstein, who, from being destined to be a disciplined and faithful 'angel of the house', becomes a cynical and evil figure seeking revenge on her exploiters.

As Stephanie Green claims, Lily incorporates aspects of the New Woman archetype as a symbol of independence. However, a more accurate characterization of Lily is that of a gothic New Woman as she exhibits threatening and evil elements: 'she is darkly independent, seductively resistant to domination, brilliantly articulate, refusing the rules of femininity and feminism in favour of power's bloodier embrace'.³¹ In fact, Lily's extremist political philosophy does not really coincide with the late Victorian feminist movements, which she dismisses as too naïve in their aims and strategies. Indeed, in a scene from season three, Lily is sitting in a café in a London square when she sees a group of suffragists marching and remarks on their efforts as:

so awfully clamorous, all this marching around in public and waving placards. It's not it. Our enemies are the same but they seek equality. And we? Mastery... How do you accomplish anything in this life? By craft. By stealth. By poison. By the throat... quietly slit in the dead of the night.³²

Originally created by men, Lily undergoes a process of self-transformation: she rejects each man's attempt to romanticize her, and rebels against the predetermined role they have assigned to her life. In episode seven of season two, when Lily is seduced by a man in a pub after an evening out with her new friend Dorian, she commits her first revenge murder, strangling her lover during intercourse and lying next to his body until morning. This event is the first demonstration of Lily's new-found power and aggressiveness: she is neither horrified nor afraid of who she is but embraces her villainous strength in all its forms. This episode is only the beginning of the character's development into a vicious and murderous 'predator',³³ unveiling her frightening manifesto to John

Clare: 'We were created to rule, my love. And the blood of mankind will water our garden. We are the conquerors. We are the pure blood. We are steel and sinew, both. We are the next thousand years. We are the dead.'³⁴ According to Sarah Artt, the series effectively draws attention to the risks and consequences of 'creating a gendered body through deliberate technological invention', emphasizing 'how that body is then subjected to narratives of abjection and monstrosity'.³⁵ If, at the start of season two, Lily is secretly testing her strength under the tutelage of her adoring creator Victor, by the end of the series she has become aware of her incredible power and found her purpose in the bloody plans to eradicate the male gender.

Lily's extremely violent behaviour and her aim of world domination reflect some of the deepest fears of the late nineteenth century. The New Woman was heavily criticized and labelled as a 'beast of regression' and 'a threat not only to the social order, but also to the natural order'³⁶ because of her alleged sexual promiscuity and her anti-maternal instincts, as she eschewed the reproductive duties ascribed to her sex. Lily perfectly embodies this image, becoming a cynical and coarse woman who regards marriage as slavery and manipulates men like Victor with promises of love or false admiration. She becomes the embodiment of the common *fin de siècle* fear that women are not interested in men and could live quite well without them.³⁷ Moreover, Lily's ultimate plan to create a superior race of female warriors in order to destroy male dominance echoes the theories that emerged within the New Woman discourse, such as that of the Edwardian suffragette Frances Swiney. The feminist theosophist argued that from a biological point of view women represented a more advanced stage of evolution than men, and that they had the ability to alter human evolution through their will. Thus, she focused on the idea of woman's 'cosmic progression' towards a supreme, androgynous being with a feminine essence that would eliminate gender differences.³⁸ Evolution would reach its highest stage only in a future sexless society.³⁹

Lily's plan to create a super race of women is strengthened by her encounter with Dorian Gray, a fellow immortal whom she first meets at a ball at his mansion. The two form a special bond, much to the disappointment of both Victor and his creature John. In the final episode of

the second season, Victor, having discovered Lily's recent actions, is determined to confront and destroy her. He attempts to shoot Lily and Dorian, but they remain unharmed and indifferent. They taunt him and Lily reveals that she has always been aware of how she was created and finds him repulsive. Immediately afterwards, Lily and Dorian dance a sophisticated bloody waltz in Dorian's ballroom, in a concluding scene that is aesthetically decadent and macabre, combining elements of monstrosity, beauty, and sensuality. As the couple elegantly circle the room, blood flows down their backs, staining their clothes and creating a red stream behind them. Victor is horrified by the scene of undying evil unfolding before him, and Lily tells Dorian: 'let him live with what he has created, a monster race'.⁴⁰ Together, the characters anticipate a new narrative of supremacy that will be further developed in the third and final season of the series.⁴¹

In the concluding chapter of *Penny Dreadful*, Dorian and Lily have begun to implement their plan for supremacy by gathering some formerly victimized women with the promise that they will take revenge against those who hurt them. Meanwhile, a visit to the graveyard reveals an important moment of Lily/Brona's traumatic past, the loss of her one-year-old daughter Sarah. The viewer understands that Lily was a mother in her previous life and begins to comprehend the depth of her existential ambiguity as a woman who has endured abuse and loss and now turns her pain into revenge.⁴² Having had her body exploited by men and then reanimated for male scientific purposes, she now decides for herself how she wants to use it, and embarks on a personal crusade against patriarchal society. In an act of revenge reminiscent of Wilde's Salome and her demand for the severed head of Jokanaan on a platter, Lily instructs her followers to bring her the severed hands of every man in London.⁴³ The dead hands are, in fact, horrific trophies representing the sexual and physical abuse perpetrated by men now rendered lifeless.⁴⁴ Lily demonstrates to her subordinates the power of female agency in reclaiming ownership of their bodies. Then, determined to go one step further, she sends out her army of women to kill men in the night.

At this point in the story, Lily's alliance with Dorian will soon prove fatal; like the other men in her past, he betrays her out of fear of her growing power. As a result, he forms an alliance

with Victor and Dr Henry Jekyll, who have developed a serum capable of erasing Lily's memory and restoring the submissive 'angel of the house' to obedience. The three men kidnap Lily and take her to Henry's laboratory, where 'a very powerful multiplex-image of this myth syncretism materializes': three male literary characters, Victor, Dorian, and Henry, are shown in the process of subjugating a female figure who comes from a contemporary appropriation of one of the three narratives and represents the feminist struggle against male power.⁴⁵ With a syringe in his hand, Victor threatens Lily and assumes the patriarchal role: 'We are going to make you better [...]. We're going to make you into a proper woman.'⁴⁶ However, when she breaks down and reveals the tragic loss of her baby daughter in her past life, Victor decides to release her, recognizing her restored feminine role as a mother: 'It is too easy being monsters, let us try to be human.'⁴⁷ Motherhood, then, is the experience that softens the previously unbeatable and formidable female warrior. Indeed, Lily is terrified by the idea of losing her past because, as she explains in her final conversation with Victor, it would imply losing the memory of her daughter. Her identity is made up of memories of her traumas, and even the most painful can contain beauty. In other words, erasing her past would be to erase who she was as a person.

Lily realizes that violence is not always a productive solution, and that her vulnerability has ultimately saved her life. Like Frankenstein's original creature, she escapes from her creator and has a last encounter with Dorian, who has since disbanded the female army. In a final monologue, Dorian explains the sad loneliness to which immortals are doomed, but Lily leaves in search of a new life that can counteract such a sad fate, and thus disappears from the narrative without a clear resolution. Lily finally experiences a new sense of independence as she distances herself from the man who created her and breaks off her relationship with Dorian. However, she must now confront her past and process her traumatic memories. As Monterrubio Ibáñez observes,

she does not renounce commitment but transforms it by facing her otherness, her past existence. By accepting and integrating it into her current identity, she gives a powerful example of feminist resilience, another feature of the series' female characters.⁴⁸

By the end of the series, the viewer is aware of the non-linear development of a multifaceted character who is much more than just a vindictive immortal. As Barbara Braid maintains, the act of transforming the classic plot of *Frankenstein* into a narrative that centres around the female creature serves to highlight underlying themes concerning the position of women in a patriarchal society, as well as the significant influence of trauma on the formation of one's identity.⁴⁹ While Vanessa dies at the end of the series, Lily's narrative remains open to potential future developments, maintaining her character as ever-evolving with the potential to reconcile her darkest sides and inner traumas.

The multiple narrative possibilities created in *Penny Dreadful* through the appropriation and adaptation of various Victorian source texts enable its creators to present new perspectives which appeal to the contemporary audience. In this context, Lily's story transcends the boundaries of time and space, as it encapsulates the point of view of a marginalized character who is objectified and manipulated against her will. In fact, the traumas experienced in her life become the driving force in shaping her identity and resilience.

¹ *Penny Dreadful* (Showtime, 2014-16).

² Michael Fuchs, 'It's a Monster Mash! Pastiche, Time, and the Return of the Victorian Age in *Penny Dreadful*', in *Horror Television in the Age of Consumption: Binging on Fear*, ed. by Kimberly Jackson and Linda Belau (London: Routledge, 2018), pp. 148-60.

³ Stephanie Green, 'Lily Frankenstein: The Gothic New Woman in *Penny Dreadful*', *Refractory: A Journal of Entertainment Media*, 28 (2017), <https://refractoryjournal.net/green/> [accessed 13 July 2023].

⁴ Benjamin Poore, 'The Transformed Beast: *Penny Dreadful*, Adaptation, and the Gothic', *Victoriographies*, 6.1 (2016), 62-82 (p. 66).

⁵ Lourdes Monterrubio Ibáñez, '*Penny Dreadful*. Postmodern Mythology and Ontology of Otherness', *Communication and Society*, 33 (2020), 15-28 (pp. 15-16).

⁶ Elisabete Lopes, 'The Curious Case of Vanessa Ives: The Portrait of a Witch in *Penny Dreadful*', *Journal of Dracula Studies*, special edition, *The Witch* (2020), 119-43 (p. 120).

⁷ Monterrubio Ibáñez, p. 17.

⁸ Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 177.

⁹ Hutcheon refers to Richard Dawkins's conception of 'meme', which he defined in *The Selfish Gene* (1976) as a 'unit of cultural transmission' that evolves much in the same way that genes evolve over time (p. 189). Hutcheon takes this further in postulating that stories, as units of cultural transmission, 'change with time' and are 'subject to constant mutation' (p. 177).

¹⁰ Hutcheon, p. 32.

¹¹ Alison Lee and Frederick D. King, 'From Text, to Myth, to Meme: *Penny Dreadful* and Adaptation', *Cahiers victoriens et édonardiens*, 82 (2015), <https://journals.openedition.org/cve/2343> [accessed 13 July 2023].

¹² George Augustus Sala, *The Seven Sons of Mammon: A Story* (Boston: T.O.H.P. Burnham, 1862), p. 148.

¹³ Lee and King.

- ¹⁴ David Greetham, *The Pleasures of Contamination: Evidence, Text, and Voice in Textual Studies* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), p. 1.
- ¹⁵ Green, p. 5.
- ¹⁶ Lopes, p. 120.
- ¹⁷ 'Demimonde', *Penny Dreadful*, season 1, episode 4 (2014).
- ¹⁸ Claire Kahane, 'The Gothic Mirror', in *The Mother Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation*, ed. by Shirley Nelson Garner, Claire Kahane, and Madelon Sprengnether (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1985), p. 342.
- ¹⁹ Green, p. 7.
- ²⁰ Martin Parker, 'Organisational Gothic', *Culture and Organization*, 11.3 (2005), 153-66.
- ²¹ 'Verbis Diablo', *Penny Dreadful*, season 2, episode 2 (2015).
- ²² In classical and religious iconography the lily, or *lilium*, is the white and fragrant flower symbolizing candour, purity, and nobility of the soul.
- ²³ The showrunners create a humorous allusion to George Bernard Shaw's play *Pygmalion* by addressing Frankenstein's amazement at Lily's ability to speak.
- ²⁴ 'Evil Spirits in Heavenly Places', *Penny Dreadful*, season 2, episode 4 (2015).
- ²⁵ Ibid.
- ²⁶ Green, p. 6.
- ²⁷ Ibid., p. 7.
- ²⁸ Sandra Stanley Holton, 'The Making of Suffrage History', in *Votes for Women*, ed. by June Purvis and Sandra S. Holton (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 13-33.
- ²⁹ Sally Ledger, *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the Fin de Siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997), p. 94.
- ³⁰ Green, p. 8.
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 9.
- ³² 'Good and Evil Braided Be', *Penny Dreadful*, season 3, episode 3 (2016).
- ³³ Meghan Harker, 'Till Death Do Us Part: Reinventing the Bride of *Frankenstein* on *Penny Dreadful*', *Girls in Capes* (17 July 2015), <https://girlscapes.com/2015/07/17/reinventing-the-bride-of-frankenstein-penny-dreadful/> [accessed 3 November 2023].
- ³⁴ 'Memento Mori', *Penny Dreadful*, season 2, episode 8 (2015).
- ³⁵ Sarah Artt, 'An Otherness That Cannot Be Sublimated: Shades of *Frankenstein* in *Penny Dreadful* and *Black Mirror*', *Science Fiction and Television*, 11.2 (2018), 257-75 (p. 258).
- ³⁶ Ledger, p. 5.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ These ideas were also based on the latest theories on eugenics by Francis Galton, whose anthropological vision aimed at improving human evolution through selective breeding.
- ³⁹ George Robb, 'Between Science and Spiritualism: Frances Swiney's Vision of a Sexless Future', *Diogenes*, 52.4 (2005), 163-68.
- ⁴⁰ 'And They Were Enemies', *Penny Dreadful*, season 2, episode 10 (2015).
- ⁴¹ Green, p. 12.
- ⁴² Monterrubio Ibáñez, p. 23.
- ⁴³ 'No Beast so Fierce', *Penny Dreadful*, season 3, episode 6 (2016).
- ⁴⁴ Stephanie Green, 'The Killing Characters of *Penny Dreadful*', in *Serial Killers in Contemporary Television: Familiar Monsters in Post-9/11 Culture*, ed. by Brett A. B. Robinson and Christine Daigle (London: Routledge, 2018), p. 112.
- ⁴⁵ Monterrubio Ibáñez, p. 24.
- ⁴⁶ 'Ebb Tide', *Penny Dreadful*, season 3, episode 7 (2016).
- ⁴⁷ 'Perpetual Night', *Penny Dreadful*, season 3, episode 8 (2016).
- ⁴⁸ Monterrubio Ibáñez, p. 25.
- ⁴⁹ Barbara Braid, 'The Frankenstein Meme: *Penny Dreadful* and *The Frankenstein Chronicles* as Adaptations', *Open Culture*, 1 (2017), 238, <https://doi.org/10.58079/shop> [accessed 3 November 2023].