

The Inner Beast: The Human/Animal divide in George MacDonald's *The Romance of Photogen and Nycteris* (1882)

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In George MacDonald's 1882 fairy tale *The Romance of Photogen and Nycteris*, Watho, a witch with 'A wolf in her mind,' experiments with the development of two children by controlling their environments from birth. Watho's wolf nature becomes the motivation for this protracted experimentation which places the children in the role of animals as they are kept as part of a scientific endeavour. As she loses control of her test subjects she also loses control of her inner wolf ultimately transforming and being killed. This paper explores how *Photogen and Nycteris* expresses the tension between the human and animal. From Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1818) to Darwin's scientific theory of evolution in 1859, and the concept of degeneration as popularised by Ray Lankester in 1880. The moral aspects of the interaction between scientific research and animals is explored in *Photogen and Nycteris*. MacDonald uses a fairy tale setting, and a werewolf antagonist to explore not only the human animal divide but also to question the motivation underlying scientific enquiry toward the end of the Victorian era; and by extension MacDonald questions what humanity is through his presentation of a Rousseau-esque child rearing experiment.

Rebecca Langworthy is a PhD candidate at the University of Aberdeen. Her thesis is on George MacDonald's fantasy writings. Her other research areas include children's literature, Gothic studies and Scottish literature. She has forthcoming publications on the *Harry Potter Series*, as well as on George MacDonald's influence upon C. S. Lewis.