

Gothic Sublime in Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde

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Abstract

This research work is an attempt to prove Robert Louis Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde as a Gothic novel. It answers the question: why does the writer use the elements of Gothic in the text? Stevenson applies the Gothic to invoke the sublime thereby exploring possible plurality of human consciousness as well as the dual nature of late Victorian society. The research comes across the fact that two distinct personalities inhabit the same self. This thesis establishes Stevenson's chosen work as an urban Gothic novella which adds new dimension to the existing research on the author's literary works. It uses Gothic Aesthetics as theoretical tool drawing on concepts from Edmund Burke's 'sublime' from his classic aesthetic philosophical discourse titled Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the sublime and beautiful. The application of Gothic Aesthetics aids to explore Victorian Romantic horrors and reveal the real intention of the author.

Keywords: Gothic, Sublime, Aesthetics, Human consciousness, Subjectivity

1. Introduction

"No more let Life divide what Death can join together."

-Percy Bysshe Shelley, Adonais: An Elegy on the Death of John Keats

The chief intention of this project is to discuss Gothic sublime as it applies to Stevenson's novella The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This work seeks to answer the question why Stevenson applies the Gothic elements in the novella. It hypothesizes that the author aims at unearthing duality existing in the mind of humans as well as society by utilizing the components of the Gothic sublime. It also establishes that the main concern of Gothicism is to study horror and terror present in the text.

The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is Stevenson's masterpiece. This Victorian literary blueprint covers the issue of human identity, with a special focus on good and evil. It revolves around the mystery of the title characters Jekyll and Hyde. It engages us with the ironic linkage between the two characters. The protagonist Jekyll creates monstrous Hyde with an experimental potion to fulfill his repressed desires, which he couldn't express due to the strict moral decorum of the Victorian society. Hence, it is revealed that Jekyll and

Hyde are the parts of the same individual. This work has earned the reputation of detective thriller and horror fiction. Stevenson outlines the picture of a fallen world in the narrative through all aspects of the novella: plot, setting, characterization and themes. Now, the researcher will serve a short background and historical development of Gothic fiction and Burkean sublime.

Gothic: Gothic means many things to many people. One cannot simply come up with a satisfactory definition of the term ‘Gothic’. Many writers, academics, critics and readers have tried to define Gothic literature but their efforts have never met complete contentment. Gol Man Gurung (2001) desperately notes: “To explain Gothic is beyond due to its impenetrability and the Gothic remains no longer Gothic if it can be explained” (p. 21). The term was first introduced by the Italian writers of the late Medieval period Renaissance. It historically refers to the Goths, one of the several Germanic tribes, “barbarians who destroyed classical Roman civilization and plunged the civilized world into countries of ignorance and darkness” (Ellis, 2001, p. 122). Since then, it has become a substitute for barbarism.

Gothic fiction came into being in the eighteenth century with the publication of Horace Walpole’s novel *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764. At the time of its release, the term “Gothic” was a derogatory term “used to denigrate objects, people, and attitudes deemed barbarous, grotesque, crude, formless, tasteless, primitive, savage and ignorant” (Frank, 1999, p. 7). Gothic novel took shape mostly in England from 1790 to 1830 and it falls under the Romantic literature. It is commonly regarded as a reaction against neoclassicism. Gothic relies on many of the traditions of romance but doesn’t conform to the rigidity and formality of other Romantic forms. Gothic literature takes its origin from the Gothic architecture of the medieval period. Childs and Fowler (2006) argue: “Gothic initially conjured up visions of a medieval world of dark passion enacted against massive and sinister architecture of the Gothic castles” (p. 100). Aligning with this line of thought, it stages a fictional world of darkness, wild landscapes, ruins, abandoned castles, hideouts, underground rooms, tombs and secret corridors. Furthermore, it portrays strangers, ghosts, spirits, skeletons, corpses, vampires, demons, bandits, monks, nuns, evil aristocrats and other mysterious objects. Gothic fiction is usually set at night. The authors of Gothicism lend a helping hand of the unnatural acts of nature like sudden and fierce wind as well as dreadful weather and atmosphere. By creating uncanny effects through the use of the listed features, they aim at excavating societal problems, inconsistencies and evils.

At the end of the nineteenth century, a new mode of Gothic appeared. Its narrative focused on urban life through the lens of a literature of terror. Moreover, it drove attention towards the modern settings and concerns. The re-materialized modern Gothic of the late-Victorian period preferred science as the hub of terror over magic and superstition. Fred Botting (1996) sums up this transformation of Gothicism as: “At the end of the nineteenth century familiar Gothic figures -the double and the vampire - re-emerged in new shapes, with

a different intensity and anxious investment as objects of terror and horror” (p. 135). Gradually, this critical enterprise became the hub of epitomizing human suffering, conflict, ambiguity and predicament.

The authors of Gothic try to dig out societal problems, inconsistencies and incoherencies with the use of dreadful themes and supernatural elements. Moreover, they reveal that man is inherently evil, whatever outwardly -civilized he may be, inside there is deeply rooted violence, cruelty and evil which he suppresses because of the fear of the society.

Gothic Aestheticism: Gothic has three major associations: historical, cultural and aesthetic. In this study, we will restrict ourselves to the analysis of the last one. Stating simply, aestheticism is a philosophy of art and life. This literary and artistic movement, which started in France during the latter part of the nineteenth century and flourished in England in the 1880s and 1890s (Childs and Fowler, 2006) upholds the view of ‘art for the art’s sake’. To be clear, aesthetics is the study of mind and emotions in relation to the sense of beauty. It deals with the concepts such as the beautiful, taste, and the sublime. Gothic Aesthetics is a part of Goth subculture that connects romance and dark elements to create suspense, mystery, fear and horror in our psychology. Longinus, Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, David Hume, Francis Hutcheson, Thomas Reid, Joseph Addison, and Jean Francois Lyotard are some of the major English-speaking aestheticians. Sublime occupies an important place in Gothic aestheticism.

Gothic Sublime: One of the primary preoccupations of Gothic fiction is to stimulate sublime. Burke, a renowned eighteenth-century aesthetic theorist, proposes a theory of imagination specializing the concept of sublime. His *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* stands as the philosophical bedrock of Gothicism. The English esthete associates sublime with terror: “Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling” (Burke, 1992, p. 305). His fear-based sublime embodies pain, danger, terror, surprise, obscurity, loneliness, vastness and infinity. It brings the irrational, the unknown and the terrible into aesthetic experience thereby changing pain and danger into parts of beauty. Botting (1996) attempts to simplify this paradox: “Such terrors, emerging from the gloom of a castle or lurking in the dark features of the villain, were also the source of pleasure, stimulating excitements which blurred definitions of reason and morality and, critics feared, encouraging readers’ decline into depravity and corruption” (p. 4). The bottom-line of Burke’s philosophy is that the mind’s terror is the source of sublime.

The main essence of sublime aesthetic is to produce terror and fear which are the basic tenets of Gothicism. Horror and terror appeal to our emotional faculties. Gothic fiction is full of the characters who experience horror and terror. In turn, the readers of such literary creations share those emotions. Donna Heiland’s (2006) deliberation is of note:

Sublime experience is a terrifying experience that threatens to subsume individuals into something larger than themselves; it is an experience in which boundaries blur and differences of all sorts threaten to vanish: the difference between subject and object, between self and other, even between one time or place and another . . . Sublimity and pain are related to each other in complex ways, the former arguably resulting from and also mirroring the latter. (p. 127-8)

The critic underlines the fact that pain and pleasure are relative terms. In turn, they impact each other. People admire the tales of terror and horror as they bestow the readers with terrifying and painful experiences, which surge catharsis.

Terror and Horror: One issue the researcher wishes to redress in this work is to fill in the gap between terror and horror. The practitioners of Gothic fiction tend to regard these two as separate and unrelated fields. They usually associate horror with a tensed hero-villain relationship and focus on the psych of the characters and moral degeneration. Accordingly, terror, in the contrast, signifies an affiliation with the supernatural and the suspense. We would like to diverge from such demarcation. Terror and horror are the hallmarks of the Gothic. These two Gothic components cannot be alienated from each other. They portray a more effective and complete picture of Gothicism when considered as the complementary entities. One more concern needs an address here. The Gothic scholars argue that only terror can ignite the sublime. To reiterate, we are not in the favour of viewing terror and horror as the genres having independent existence. We maintain that Gothicism is the field in which these two elements exercise their prowess. Hence, we will stick to the fact that both terror and horror possess cathartic sublime powers. Lastly, many research works conducted prior to this project have studied Stevenson’s novella in the light of the horror genre. My stance is slightly different: I will view the work under investigation as a Gothic fiction featuring both terror and horror constituents.

Review of Literature: At this moment, it is relevant to introduce some of the works which have been conducted prior to this study. The researcher has presented only highly relevant research works. The first one, in that regard, is a BA dissertation entitled “If he be Mr. Hyde . . . I shall be Mr. Seek: Robert Louis Stevenson’s The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and its place within crime fiction”, in which Frida Kristindottir (2011) examines Stevenson’s novella as it pertains to the crime fiction with respect to its embodiment of the elements of mystery, crime and detective (p. 24). Similarly, Irving Saponisk, an American author, argues about the appropriateness of the choice of London as the setting of the narrative. He thinks that London serves as the most suitable place to replicate Victorian behaviours (Saponisk, p. 717). Critiquing the setting of the novel, essayist Valerie Mack (2012) argues that the Victorian values were harmful to the people they governed and forced Victorians to choose between the parts of themselves that would lead to success, like measured behaviours and those that contain basic human desires, such as sexual desires (p. 7).

In another prominent work, a Ph.D. dissertation entitled “Dr. Jekyll, His New Woman and the late Victorian Identity

Crisis”, Laura Ferguson (2016) explores the potential origins of Jekyll’s decision to divide himself, the psychological roots of his desire to reveal and conceal himself (p. 3).

In the article entitled “Review of Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde”, Andrew Lang (2014) discusses the absence of women, the moral allegory underpinning the novella and the fact that the novella comprises the various aspects of duality (p. 1). Likewise, James Campbell (2008) in his article “The Beast Within”, prefers to attribute Stevenson’s novella as Freudian fable, sexual morality and gay allegory with supports from variety adaptations of the same. Mary Rosner (1988) in “Total Subversion of Character: Dr. Jekyll’s Moral Insanity” foregrounds the moral insanity in Stevenson’s work. The author portrays Jekyll as a good man who is transformed to a morally insane person and points out that Stevenson may have presented the concept of moral insanity too (p. 27). Prativa Upadhaya (2009) complements Rosner’s stance and goes to the extent of seeing Stevenson portraying professionalism during the Victorian era as restrictive, repressing human emotions and desires. She blames the same repression caused by the societal pressure to be responsible for Dr, Jekyll’s shadow consuming his consciousness (p. 10).

One work that deserves a special mention here is an M. Phil thesis, titled “Intersection of Gothic Economic and Fear in Little Dorrit, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, and Dracula”, by Gol Man Gurung. The Nepalese scholar seeks to demonstrate how economic apprehension and gothic fear influence the writing of Stevenson (Gurung, 2011, p. 1). One significant divergence between Gurung’s thesis and this project is that the latter focuses on the Gothic sublime, unlike the former which hybridizes Gothic fear with economy. We shall see later that Gothic fear is just a part of Gothic sublime. In a much closer work to this study, Akhanda Khanal (2012) uses the same theoretical framework as mine as he evaluates the use and significance of Gothic sublime in three novels *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Castle of Otranto*. The selection of the text is the difference in these two projects.

From the above survey, it is evident that the researchers have failed to address Stevenson’s use of the elements of urban Gothic sublime. The researcher came across the fact that even though Stevenson’s work has received some investigation in the light of Gothicism, the sublime aspect has gone unnoticed. Due to this lack of academic attention, I find the subject of our thesis to be relevant as well as worthy of studying. The researcher argues that an analysis of sublime as it applies to the selected novel, one can explore the inherent social evils of the late Victorian society.

The Elements of Gothic Sublime in The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde:

This section traces down the major components of Gothic sublime inherent in the text. The researcher will primarily focus on the setting, the plot and the characterization of the novel in our exploration. The analysis also consists of the theme of dualism: firstly, in the setting of place and secondly, in the characterization of the protagonist.

The first aspect to consider in terms of the Gothic in the text is the setting. It comprises of social environment, atmosphere, geographical locations, time, social circumstances, and the weather. The novel is set in a late nineteenth century London. The date of novel's publication, was the period of intensive social and economic change. Crime and poverty flourished as an outcome of Industrial Revolution during Stevenson's lifetime. Unlike the classic settings, Stevenson stages his work in modern metropolitan city depicting its horrors. He chooses London as it provides the house for ghostly appearances of intended meaning. He connects the Victorian society to the darkness and gives a frightening impression about it.

Victorian London was regarded as an emblem of civilization and excellence. It was popular for its magnificent morals and social customs. It was seen as an era of peace, prosperity and perfection for England. It set strict moral values and norms for its inhabitants. People behaved within the boundaries of the highest moral standards. In high London society a man's reputation was everything and he behaved accordingly. The etiquette criticized people who expressed behaviour that didn't match their social code. Moreover, the code ignored natural and essential and natural components of people's personalities. As a result, peoples' desires and personalities became suppressed. Unfortunately, perfection of this manner was a façade since it hid the reality of life. It failed to take account of realities of human nature. Stevenson shapes a frame of London that shows the imperfections of its residents thereby presenting the duality of the city. He denounces the then Victorian society for only upholding the decent virtues of the Londoners. The members who did not fit the resolute moral propriety had no choice but to inhibit their desires. This kind of repression prompts the misfits to devise anti-social defiance.

Stevenson's protagonist, Dr. Jekyll, serves as an exemplar of such stifling who responds by forming two different subjectivities within his body. The author aims at warning us that if we repress our inner motives too forcibly, they start finding ways to come out. Jekyll degenerates and becomes Mr. Hyde to live up his forbidden urges: "Hence it came about that I considered my pleasures and that when I reached years of reflection and began to look around me and take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to profound duplicity of life" (Stevenson, 2008, 52). Stevenson uses the Victorian London as setting since the values of then society and their suppressive qualities push Jekyll into creating Hyde. Every character in the novel attempts to adhere to the decorum, except Hyde. Hence, the author uses Hyde to comment the Victorian values that denies the existence of dualities leading to the destruction of both the repressed and the society.

The main setting of Stevenson's story is the slum of London. The gloomy neighbourhood of Soho, which is populated by the lower-class people, especially criminals and prostitutes, is the home for Mr. Hyde. The dwelling place of the Victorian monster represents dirt, crowdedness and uproar, in its part. The civilized London professionals can't risk wandering around that vicinity. The author describes the Soho as 'like the district of some city in a nightmare' (p. 22). It presents an explicit image of the urban Gothic-horror setting.

Moreover, Stevenson converts Soho into an environment of terror by applying a dismal atmosphere. The use of fog to characterize this setting serves the strongest implication of such endeavour. Fog is a very strong sublime element bringing the obscurity. The same fog hides Hyde's numerous crimes without anyone's notice. In the last chapters the fog becomes horrible storm, it rains and the streets are empty signifying that something bad is going to happen soon. It symbolizes the problematic visibility and knowledge with which the novel is preoccupied. *The Routledge Companion to Gothic* (2007) writes:

The fog obscures but also reveals the true character of the city. The 'London particular', was not always that particular about where it drifted, and could potentially lend 'nightmare' properties to any districts. Its mobility and obscurity are emblematic of the terms of the tale, and of late-Victorian urban Gothic. Fog makes certainty difficult, and yet reveals the city's sinister and menacing aspect: much like Jekyll's misty potion and much like his house. (56)

Mr. Utterson has a nightmarish sight of the city in his dream: "He would be aware of the great fields of lamps of a nocturnal city . . . The figure (of Hyde) . . . haunted the lawyer all night; and if at any time he dozed over, it was to see it glide more stealthily through sleeping houses, or move the more swiftly . through wider labyrinths of the lamp-lighted city, and at every street corner crush a child and leave her screaming" (Stevenson, 2008, p. 13). Dreams have special room in Gothic fiction. Nightmares, as the one described above, haunt and arouse the dreamer. They invoke strong emotions in the attendees. Through dreams and nightmares, we can also track down the actual horror the subject is undergoing in his or her real world. In this regard, Stevenson's use of dreams also contributes to the sublime making of his work.

Although the Victorian people like to conceal those places, they are located in the popular places and couldn't be hidden. Soho is the other side of London which cannot be separated which is evident in the failure of the people in hiding it. The people make futile effort to give better image of London but the dark side of it continues to problematize. The following lines create a dark, deserted and scary picture of London:

It was a wild, cold, seasonable night of March, with a pale moon, lying on her back as though the wind had tilted her, and a flying wrack of the most diaphanous and lawny texture. The wind made talking difficult, and flecked the blood into the face. It seemed to have swept the streets unusually bare of passengers, besides; for Mr. Utterson thought he had never seen that part of London so deserted . . . there was borne in upon his mind a crushing anticipation of calamity. The square, when they got there, was all full of wind and dust, and the thin trees in the garden were lashing themselves along the railing. (p. 48-9)

The experiences of terror are more intense during the night setting. Stevenson evokes frightening sublime in the form of overwhelming awe and fear on the characters and the readers with the aid of darkness and gloom. Time, atmosphere and weather in the above

description resets the mood of Gothic horror and terror. It reveals the obscured identity of London as a terrifying industrial city. Most of the events in the story are set in the winter season to make it sound cold and chilling. Here, Stevenson depicts a fragmented personality of the place of perfection.

Within the divided London lies another split setting: Dr. Jekyll's Victorian style mansion. Like London, Dr. Jekyll's house hosts dual nature. We can see the duality of good and evil in the setting of Jekyll's house and the laboratory. The house matches the personality of Dr. Jekyll while the laboratory stands for Hyde. The same structure contains two completely separate identities. The building provides home for both goodness and darkness. These two buildings are adjoined hence the outsiders won't recognize them as separate parts. However, they face two different streets so we call them two different places. The house is described as a "comfortable, hall, warmed by a bright, open fire, and furnished with costly cabinets of oak" (p. 16). On the other hand, the laboratory is presented as "sinister" and "a place of negligence":

. . . a certain sinister block of building thrust forward its gable on the street. It was two stories high; showed no window, nothing but a door on the lower story and a blind forehead of discoloured wall on the upper; and bore in every feature, the marks of prolonged and sordid negligence. The door, which was equipped with neither bell nor knocker, was blistered and distained. (p. 5)

Enfield tags the building as 'Blackmail-house' (p. 8). The door that Hyde uses as an entrance to his hideout and his hideout are described as neglected, rusty, discoloured and sinister. These adjectives set the foundation for the evil character of Hyde. The window imitates Hyde's private nature. He doesn't enjoy people peeping and disturbing his business. The lack of knocker and untidy doorway stands to reason that he doesn't expect any visitors. They perfectly sum up his character. London's twisting and fogged medieval street, the door, and the lab stereotypes Gothic architecture as they present gloomy atmosphere and evoke terror, suspense and doom. Jekyll's fancy house that gives room for the tumble-down lab presents the fact that despite the respectable and civilized residents, the houses host the evil. The presence of the suspenseful supernatural in the chosen landscape adds to the fear and awe of the characters. In this way, the description of the setting builds up a sinister atmosphere in Stevenson's story.

The second element that evokes Gothic atmosphere in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is its plot. Stevenson's plot is mysterious and suspenseful. Mystery is an integral part of detective fiction. Hence, detection and Gothic are interrelated terms too. The story begins like a detective story and it doesn't open the mystery or secret till the end. Roger Luckhurst (2008) points out in his introduction to *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and Other Tales*: "Perhaps the strangest thing is the way the story is structured: it starts out like a detective fiction but like a dream it gets distracted, seems to veer off course, and transmogrifies into something far more Gothic and unnerving" (p. xii).

Firstly, the title *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* stands for a detective story. ‘The Strange Case’ in the title refers to the mysterious relation between two title characters: Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This is the most thrilling mystery in the novella. The whole story moves around the exposition of the same. Hyde makes his mystifying appearance in the first chapter of the story. Enfield relates the incident of the door that he witnessed to Mr. Utterson. Referring to the door that leads to Dr. Jekyll’s laboratory, Enfield says to Utterson, “Did you ever remark that door?” . . . and when his companion had replied in the affirmative, ‘It is connected in my mind’, added he, ‘with a very odd story” (p. 5). ‘Very odd story’ in his voice sets the mood of mystery and suspense on the hearers. We, along with Mr. Utterson, are curious to hear that ‘Odd Story’, which Enfield describes as:

I was coming home from some place at the end of the world, about three o’clock of a black winter morning, and on my way lay through a part of town where there was literally nothing to be seen but lamps . . . All at once, I saw two figures: one a little man who was stamping along eastward at a good walk, and the other a girl of maybe eight or ten who was running as hard as she was able down a cross street. Well, sir, the two ran into one another naturally enough at the corner; and then came the horrible part of the thing; for the man trampled over the child’s body and left her screaming on the ground. It sounds nothing to hear, but it was hellish to see. (p. 5-6)

Instead of satisfying up, the story gives rise more curiosities about the grim little man in the picture. Who is this Hyde? Where does he come from? Why does he enter Dr. Jekyll’s building? What is his relation to the respectable Dr. Jekyll? Why is Dr. Jekyll behaving so oddly? Why does he let Hyde stay in his house? What is going on inside the lab? Stevenson creates a suspenseful environment without giving clear and complete answers or hints.

After hearing out from Enfield, Utterson opens the written Will of Dr. Jekyll addressed to him. The receiver reaches his wit’s ends at his friend’s desire of passing down all his possessions into the hands of Hyde, in case of the former’s death or disappearance (p. 12). This testament gives some hint that Hyde has some control over Jekyll. The lawyer sets to solve the enigma. Further mysteries greet him as he sets up further journey: Why does Hyde attack Sir Danvers Carew, an important member of the parliament, without any known reason? How and where does Hyde disappear after committing crime? What does Hastie Lanyon see that brought on his death? Why couldn’t he open up everything to Utterson about Dr. Jekyll? Most of the narrative builds around Mr. Utterson’s inquiry into the strange case. He uses many methods of investigation. First method consists of questioning different people who possess some relevant information like Enfield (p. 8), Poole (p. 20-1), and Dr. Lanyon (p. 12). He strives to gather as much information as he can draw from them in relation to the case. Next, he visits Jekyll’s neighbourhood like a detective with the anticipation of discovering something related to the mystery. The chapter entitled ‘The Carew Murder Case’ seeks the attention of police. Another chapter ‘The Last Night’ sets a horrific and frightening tone. Similarly, the final chapter of the novella that

bears the title ‘Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement’ presents criminal’s final explanation and his confession of his crime.

Another most significant element that contributes to the suspenseful nature of the plot is that the story is told through the multiple narratives. There are at least three prominent narrators even if we discount Enfield: Mr. Utterson, who narrates the most part of the narrative, duo of Hastie Lanyon and Dr. Jekyll, who narrate one chapter apiece. Gabriel John Utterson, a close an associate of Dr. Jekyll, the man in question, provides us with a lens to see the story moving. Stevenson assigns the closest of Dr. Jekyll’s companions to solve the mystery in the first chapter. Then the sincere detective starts making futile efforts to solve Stevenson’s quite unsolvable jigsaw puzzle. He sets forward with a strong determination nevertheless: “If he be Mr. Hyde . . . I shall be Mr. Seek” (p. 16).

Stevenson sets up an actual murder case of Sir Carew demanding immediate detective attention. Tension builds around the detective too rapidly. He is the only person who knows about the whereabouts of the murderer. Rushing to the residence of the murderer he finds Dr. Jekyll begging the detective to let go of Hyde for one last time. He promises that Hyde will never make an appearance again from that time forth. Utterson acts kind on Jekyll but desperation continues on his head: What could possibly make such a reputable personality protect such a brutal man? The search for the truth reaches at tip point.

In the final few chapters, the narrative shifts too quickly. In ‘The Last Night’, through Utterson’s eye Stevenson serves the death scene of the villain. The lawyer cannot see the trace of Dr. Jekyll on the deceased body. By showing the body belonging to Mr. Hyde, the novelist intends to show evil taking over good. However, with the demise of the both, he rules out the possibility of setting up the single self. One can argue that the author is reluctant to declare either of the facets of life as victor. On his death, Lanyon left an envelope containing yet with the direction that it is not to be opened until the disappearance or death of Dr. Jekyll. As Utterson opens Lanyon’s letter, which he left along with another sealed document to be opened after Jekyll’s death or disappearance. Stevenson uses Lanyon’s narrative to show the scientist’s reluctance in accepting Mr. Hyde’s transformation into Dr. Jekyll. This storyline lays bare the fictional invention of the novel.

The final narrative ‘Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of the Case’ brings about the confession where Jekyll admits that he is Mr. Hyde himself. This narrative refutes Lanyon’s claim. In this way, the story presents a fact only to be counterattacked by another narrative. These disjointed and multiple narrative voices conspicuously confuse the readers. As the truth comes in fragment, they are forced to ask: what is the ultimate truth? By using multiple fictional or implied authors, the real writer’s originality is put at a risk. Stevenson’s conventional god-like authorship is challenged. He contests to establish a coherent and firm narrative voice in the world of multiple narratives, with no positive result. This lack of unified subjectivity terrorizes the characters and the readers simultaneously. With the suspenseful and captivating narrative style, the novelist arouses sublime. In this regard, the

focus is laid on the loss of two selves: author and narrative. Now the researchers will seek to explore the loss of another subjectivity: the character.

The most important aspect of the narrative that maintains Gothic make-up of the novella is its portrayal of the characters. Stevenson uses his crafty characterization to create sublime terror in his readers and characters. Centring on the psychological exploration of the characters, he attempts to voice moral decay, corruption, greed and evil of the modern occupants of London. To accomplish his cause, the author utilises the motif of ‘double’ or ‘doppelganger’, which is one of the most typical assets of Gothicism.

Duality in Gothic fiction alludes to the split-personality which holds the view that there are at least two distinct personalities within one person or self. As Roderick Watson (2004) argues: “It is a structured convention which seeks to deal with the fluidity and the multiple complexities of our inner lives by setting up a more formal system, indeed a binary system, of doubts, doppelgangers for psychological counterparts” (p. 10). This sort of fragmentation takes place in the mind of a person.

Stevenson uses the two men-in-one doppelgangers in his work. The most apparent specimen of dualism in this text is that of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. A hideous brute coheres in the revered Victorian doctor. This exemplar of dualism creates ambiguity in the character’s self. The question arises: Is Dr. Jekyll a hero or villain? Or Does he epitomize good or evil? This kind of fragmented subjectivity creates perplexity on the characters as well as the readers. As a result, fluid identity becomes the reservoir of sublime terror.

Dr. Jekyll creates Mr. Hyde, an entirely different person, with the help of a compound chemical potion to split the good side of man from the bad. He views that: “Man is not truly one but truly two” (Stevenson, 2008, p. 90). However, with the attempt to separate the good from the evil, he draws out his darker self, which begins to take over and the poor doctor faces the risk of existing no more. While Stevenson was trying to finish a story about double life, he fell into a feverish sleep: “All I dreamed about Dr. Jekyll was that one man was being pressed into a cabinet, when he swallowed a drug and changed into another being. I awoke and said at once that I had found the missing link for which I had been looking so long, and before I again went to sleep almost every detail of the story, as it stands was clear to me” (Hammerton, 2020, p. 85). Why does Stevenson use dualism then? Gurung (2011) writes:

Stevenson’s target is Victorian hypocrisy. His book satirizes a society where the clothes one wears and the company one keeps is of more importance than whatever personal qualities one may possess; it is a world not very unlike our own, where surface frequently carries more value socially than substance. These double standards are manifest in the character (s) of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: the latter malformed reflection of the former. Behind the respectable exterior of this middle class doctor and pillar of the community lurks an evil inner self. The message is clear: the faces we put on for the world may conceal a darker, uglier truth. (p. 43-4)

Dr. Jekyll appears as the polar opposite of his Other, Mr. Hyde. The latter is the epitome of evil in contrast to pure goodness of his creator. Stevenson sets on Gothic with the naming of his prime doppelgangers. He prescribes symbolic names to the duo: ‘Hyde’ comes from a Danish word ‘hide’ meaning ‘a haven’ or ‘a safe place for hiding’ whereas ‘Jekyll’ comes from ‘Jokulle’ which means ‘an icicle’. In this way, Hyde is supposed to be hiding place for the doctor or a safe place to fulfill his secret desires. Jekyll uses Hyde’s guise to do all the evils which he can’t afford to bring into effect as a highly honoured scientist and doctor. Moreover, he is released to transgress the societal boundary: “Temptation of a discovery so singular and profound, at last overcame the suggestions of alarm” (Stevenson, 2008, p. 76).

The theory that a man has a good and a bad side fascinates Dr. Jekyll. He risks his death and gives rise to an evil that society always fears. He not only writes a script of his death but puts entire mankind under a dark shadow. He brings a life into existence enabling combination of a killer and a human saviour into one self. Mr. Hyde does all those evil, cruel, improper and socially unacceptable that Dr. Jekyll’s reputation denies him to do so. These two characters appear as separate individuals throughout the most part of the narrative. Stevenson is careful not to drop a single hint that tells his other characters and us about their duality. They are so different in their nature, appearance, habits, taste and all other conventions. On the one hand, there is a handsome, revered, and well-liked Victorian gentleman and aristocrat (p. 18). Contrastingly, his evil dimension is an ugly, dark and deformed of an unknown origin and social stance. Since he represents the purely evil in Dr. Jekyll he is symbolically presented as being smaller than his maker in both age and height. But what Hyde possesses becomes part of Jekyll too. A point that proves this is when Jekyll recalls in the sun on a bench “the animal within me licking the chops of memory” (p. 89). Punter and Byron write: “Writing complicates the division even further: Hyde retains the same hand as Jekyll, and so a new signature must be created for him, but when Hyde writes the letter to Lanyon, it is not only in the hand of Jekyll, it is entirely Jekyll’s voice” (p. 228).

Every character in the story who encounters Hyde experiences fear and disgust: Jekyll’s servants cringe in horror when he is about at home, Lanyon grows trauma which ultimately leads to his death and so on, all because of his unspectacular appearance. In the first chapter Enfield describes about Mr. Hyde to Mr. Utterson: “It wasn’t like a man; it was like some damned Juggernaut” (p. 6). But Utterson wants a better glimpse of this unknown novel inhabitant. But Enfield’s description does not quench his thirst: “He must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity . . . He’s an extraordinary-looking man . . . No sir; I can make no hand of it; I can’t describe him” (p. 10). When he decides to confront this creature, he observes: “Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile . . . these together could explain the hitherto unknown disgust, loathing and fear” and the watcher blurts out: “the man seems hardly human! Something troglodytic” (p. 19). He feels a “shudder of blood” as “the face of Hyde sat heavy on his memory” (p. 20). Enfield’s ‘Juggernaut’ (p.

10) and Utterson's 'troglodytic' attest Hyde's super-human appearance. He is connected to a monster that crushes whoever comes on the way and a primitive caveman. Hastie Lanyon's experience of meeting this devilish Promethean monster doesn't differ much from the previous watchers' make-up: "There was something abnormal and misbegotten in the very essence of the creature that now faced me-something seizing, surprising, and revolting" (p. 68).

The crimes of Hyde are more wicked than his appearance. Most of his preys are weak and defenseless. He "tramples over a girl of 8 or 10" and "leaves her screaming" (p. 5). The most genuine victim of his monstrosity is Sir Danvers Carew, whose murder scene creates a grim and brutal picture of Stevenson's Gothic hero: "with ape-like fury, he was trampling his victim under foot and hailing down a storm of blows, under which the bones were audibly shattered and the body jumped upon the roadway. At the horror of these sights and sounds, the maid fainted" (p. 27). Fromm (1973) deliberates on this aggression: "What is unique in man is that he can be driven by impulses to kill and to torture, and that he feels lust in doing so: he is the only animal that can be a killer and destroyer of his own species without any rational gain either biological or economic" (p. 218). Stevenson's description in the above extracts as "ape-like," "troglodytic," and "hardly human," along with Poole's hearing of Hyde "cry out like a rat," (Stevenson, 2008, p. 53) Utterson's hearing of "hissing," (p. 17) testify Fromm's statement of Hyde as an 'animal'. Mr. Hyde appears clearly barbarian and supernatural with some questionable qualities.

Dr. Jekyll doesn't reconcile with his alter-ego in any respect. The real problem begins as the fearsome devil has to deal with human society rather than a fictional and supernatural. Unlike Dr. Jekyll, he doesn't fit into the 'social'. He becomes a complete outcast. But most importantly he makes his creator also isolated from the human world. He hardly welcomes guests and is barely seen out which match exactly to the disposition of Mr. Hyde. He stops giving away dinners and doesn't appear in any social gatherings. The only people even to whom he hardly sees are his servants, Mr. Utterson and Dr. Lanyon. It is again important to note that he has no interest in seeing them as well. Jekyll seldom meets his house-servants to order them not to interfere in any of the activities of Mr. Hyde in his house. They have "all orders to obey him" (p. 21). He announces to his servants that "a Mr. Hyde (whom I described) was to have full liberty and power about my house in the square" (p. 80). Poole attempts to describe the unusually odd behaviour of his master to Mr. Utterson:

All this last week (you must know) him, or it, or whatever it is that lives in that cabinet, has been crying night and day for some sort of medicine . . . there have been orders and complaints, and I have been sent flying to all the wholesale chemists in town. Every time I bought the stuff back, there would be another paper telling me to return it, because it was not pure, and another order to a different firm. This drug is wanted bitter bad, sir, whatever for. (p. 51-2)

The drug is for the transformation from Hyde to Jekyll. Jekyll actually goes short of the chemicals recently and remains in the body of Hyde.

Hyde prevents the fragile doctor from speaking to them. He fears that Jekyll will seek their help. He alienates the poor man from every friend and relative of him. When Poole invites the lawyer to the doctor's house to help with the strange circumstance building in the latter's house, a new voice answers from within "Tell him I cannot see anyone" (Stevenson 50). It is Hyde/ Jekyll's final words we can hear before his death. Jekyll is compelled to write a forged letter to Hastie Lanyon asking for assistance. His letter requests the latter to prepare the dose of the chemicals whose description leaves Lanyon shattered. He thinks Jekyll has gone insane, but he sets out to help his colleague and old school-companion. He serves Mr. Hyde in the exact manner as Dr. Jekyll dictated. But the transformation scene from Hyde to Jekyll sends the beholder to his deathbed:

He (Hyde) put the glass to his lips and drank at one gulp. A cry followed; he reeled, staggered, clutched at the table and held on, staring with injected eyes, gasping with open mouth; and as I looked there came, I thought, a change—he seemed to swell—his face became suddenly black and the features seemed to melt and alter—and the next moment, I had sprung to my feet and leaped back against the wall, my arm raised to shield me from that prodigy, my mind submerged in terror...for there before my eyes -pale and shaken, and half-fainting, and groping before him with his hands, like a man restored from death—there stood Henry Jekyll. (p. 71-2)

The scene is so violently set on his mind that changes him physically and mentally so vastly that devastates Utterson when he pays Lanyon a visit on his bed asks whether the patient had recently seen Dr. Jekyll, Lanyon's face changes and holding up a trembling hand he answers: "I wish to see or hear no more of Dr. Jekyll . . . 'I am quite done with that person; and I beg that you will spare me any allusion to one whom I regard as dead'" (p. 40).

Hyde becomes impossible to deal with or confine (Stevenson 76-7, 89-90). The blackmailer is a wanted murderer so he can't afford to walk openly in public places. It is then he approaches Lanyon for the drug to change back into Jekyll. There was another incident too:

I was stepping leisurely across the court after breakfast, drinking the chill of the air with pleasure, when I was seized again with those indescribable sensations that heralded the change; and I had but the time to gain the shelter of my cabinet before I was once again raging and freezing with passion of Hyde. It took on this occasion a double dose to recall me to myself. (p. 92)

The above scene describes Hyde's unavoidable reappearance. Jekyll who imprisons Hyde for a long time in his mind, now gets locked on himself with the release of the beast within. Now it's Hyde's turn to repeat that action on his previous ruler.

By splitting himself into two halves, Jekyll remains only half a man. He takes note of this in his own narrative and says: "I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said either, it was only because I was radically

both” (p. 84) He loses his control over his own original self and body. Jekyll without Hyde is not Jekyll at all. His self gets a complete identity in the mixture of both. Now such a situation has developed that both of these halves start seeking the identity of their own upon one body of Dr. Jekyll. Dr. Jekyll now realizes: “Between these two, I now felt I had to choose” (p. 84). With the creation Dr. Jekyll neither becomes good nor bad but both. He feels trapped on his own body. Moreover, he is the refugee in his house. Hyde is the new ruler: both oppressive and unbearable. The power of Hyde has grown with the sickness of Jekyll. He pays for the love and affection with vengeance and cruelty. The clueless Jekyll has nothing to do but to lament with a tragic swan song: “That night I had come to the fatal cross-roads. Had I approached my discovery in a more noble spirit, had I risked the experiment while under the empire of generous or pious aspirations, all must have been otherwise, and from these agonies of death and birth, I had come forth an angel instead of a fiend” (p. 79). He has only one alternative to choose from to finish off this double-barreled life: to kill himself. His final words are of particular importance: “God knows; I am careless; this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself. Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end” (p. 96). Through these words, the Victorian doctor repents his foolish act of playing with the laws of nature.

We have already explored the duality working in the setting of the novella and character of Utterson. Now, let us reveal some other doubles existing in the text. Throughout the story the people and events that look innocent and straightforward become dark and scary when observed closely. One of such double characters is that of Utterson. The lawyer is regarded as a respectable bourgeoisie. He is described as “a man of rugged countenance, that was never lighted by a smile; cold, scanty and embarrassed in discourse; backward in sentiment; lean long, dusty, dreary, and yet somehow loveable” (p. 3). ‘Somehow’ suggests that the claims are quite ambivalent. Disregarding the demand of his profession and the strict decorum of the society, he sets to seek a way to help the troubled friends. He must be aware of the fact that he is risking his reputation and social rank by involving in so-called anti-social activity. He knowingly gets entangled with the socially boycotted person, Mr. Hyde. Utterson’s complete opposite is his distant kinsman, Richard Enfield, who doesn’t want to associate himself with moral insanity.

Almost all the characters in the novel appear happy and sound. The show of their disposition in the society is unquestionably perfect: they are gentle and civil in every manner. But the following description speaks in contrary to this: “It was reported by those who encountered them in their Sunday walks, that they said nothing, looked singularly dull, and would hail with obvious relief the appearance of a friend. For all that, the two men put the greatest store by these excursions, counted them the chief jewel of each week” (p. 4). The description clearly stands to prove the isolated and lonely lives of these high-class professionals. The similar emptiness is visible throughout the novella. Mr. Hyde comes out of emptiness in Dr. Jekyll’s life. The other so-called respectable residents of the Victorian society are no

exception to this double personality either. Kristindottir (2011) clarifies this point further as she states:

The degeneration of Jekyll's psyche is an important topic in Stevenson's story but he also explores the degeneration of common citizens. In a brutal scene at 3 o'clock in the morning, when Hyde practically tramples down a girl, it is particularly interesting notice the reaction of the girl's family and a doctor as they arrive to confront Hyde. The doctor is described as turning "sick and white with the desire to kill him" and "the women had to be physically prevented from attacking Hyde" (6-7). This vivid description would be more suited to a herd of animals, certainly not the civilized people of a modern society. (p. 17)

The above description views that the morality or respectability of the modern denizens of Victorian society is doubled with degeneration. It comments on the evil part of the Londoners which they have hidden with the fear of then society. It somehow manages to come out despite their efforts to restrict it.

3. Conclusion

This thesis aimed at analyzing the use of the elements of Gothic sublime in Stevenson's novella. We started with the introduction of Gothic and its conventions. We established a connection of horror and terror with sublime. Then we had a quick glance at the relationship between Gothic and detective fiction. A brief overview of the novella followed the next. Similarly, we discussed that there were many Gothic aspects in the story ranging from the setting, characters to a certain level of supernatural within them. The key to this analysis was the Gothic use of the double in the text. Gothic fiction had examined the concept of the alter ego many times before but Stevenson's brilliance with Jekyll and Hyde was to manifest the dual nature not only of one man, but also of the entire society where that man lived. The novelist exposed many flaws and evils like hypocrisy, immorality and degeneration prevalent in a deeper and baser surface of the society and people.

Good and evil are the two sides of the same coin. They exist side by side. Stevenson cautions that the act of separating good from evil inherent in a person is unattainable. As Jekyll tried to divide himself, it brought about more detriment to him and the society. By applying science as an instrument fulfil his cause, the writer also makes a statement that abuse of science and technology may occasion unthought consequences. Stevenson also warns that 'Othered' people like Hyde can be a massive source of terror for the society. What urges Dr. Jekyll's to invent Mr. Hyde? It is his hypocritical society. Mr. Hyde gives society the taste of their own medicine. Creation of the monster and the subsequent repercussion could have been avoided had the Londoners been less hypocritical, oppressive and uncivil.

Many critics treat Stevenson as an expert of detective and crime fiction. However, his identity as a proper Gothic writer is not widely acclaimed. This paper establishes his novella as an exemplary Gothic literature and its writer as a stellar practitioner of the genre in the question. Exploring the modern Gothic characteristics like doppelganger, fantasy

and supernatural, he exposes the inner psyche of his characters. Finally, the use of Gothic, sensational and supernatural further strengthens its grip with crime fiction.

Research is a continuous process. One can always add something new to the already extant research finding. This project is not complete yet. This demands many other supplementary research works. The researchers have instituted Stevenson as the author of Gothic sublime. The future researchers can carry out further Gothic probes into this novel from other perspectives, including imagery, symbolism, and modernism. They can also undertake the perspectives discussed in this project to review the works of other Victorian writers. Finally, the potential scholars can study any other detective and crime fictions through the lens of Gothicism.

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