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The last Victorian or the first modernist? Classic and modern elements in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886)

O último vitoriano ou o primeiro modernista? Elementos clássicos e modernos em O Médico e o Monstro (1886), de Robert Louis Stevenson

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Abstract

The purpose of this research article is to analyse how the Gothic elements work in Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) in order to investigate how it is possible for the same literary piece be classified within the three categories of the Victorian period, the 1840's Social Realism, the 1860's Sensation Fiction, and the 1880's/1890's *Fin-du-siècle* Fantasy. The methodology chosen to delineate the research is the detachment of the passages which contain such elements. The bibliography used is mainly based on the works of the Gothic scholars Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (1986), and Carol Margaret Davison's *History of the Gothic Gothic Literature 1764 – 1824* (2009). The result demonstrates that the elements are used to depict the issue of the turn of the following century.

Keywords

Gothic. Novella. Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. Robert Louis Stevenson.

Resumo

A proposta deste trabalho de pesquisa é analisar como os elementos Góticos funcionam na obra *O Médico e o Monstro* (1886), de Robert Louis Stevenson, para investigar como é possível para a mesma obra literária ser classificada dentro das três categorias do período vitoriano, o Realismo Social de 1840, a Ficção Sensacionalista de 1860 e a Fantasia de Fim do Século de 1880/1890. A metodologia escolhida é o destacamento das passagens que contêm tais elementos. A bibliografia usada encontra suporte principalmente nos trabalhos das especialistas Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, com *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (1986), e Carol Margaret Davison, com *History of the Gothic Gothic Literature 1764 – 1824* (2009). O resultado mostra que os elementos são usados para descrever os problemas da virada do século seguinte.

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Palavras-chave

Gótico. Novela. Dr. Jekyll e Sr. Hyde. Robert Louis Stevenson.

First published in August of 1886 in the United Kingdom, Robert Louis Stevenson's worldwide known novella *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* has been visited and revisited throughout the centuries. Not only due to its majestic structure that manages to create numerous horrifying scenarios, scaring the public reader for generations due to its construction of narrator, but also due to the fact that the Scottish novella deals with classic and modern themes of the literary universe. Taking into consideration that the act of reading is conscious and also that the public reader reacts to what is being depicted right in front of them, it is possible to analyse Stevenson's masterpiece through the Gothic lens that had already conquered a significant space specially during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Along with fundamental changes in the social and political world spheres, also comes the need for new aesthetical representations which is the case of both the novel and the Gothic genre.

The eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries witnessed two major changes in the in the way the world had been configured until that moment. It may be impossible not to mention the revolutionary processes that would impact not only social and political structures of society, but also the manners with which the western civilization would behave and think. In this point, we are discussing both Industrial Revolutions and the French Revolution. The former ones took place in the United Kingdom in the end of the 1700's and the mid of the 1800's, introducing the usage of coal to run factories and trains, transforming life into a faster way of living, without mentioning the invention of the car, which also contributed to make longer distances not so long anymore. Along with the fact that the world was becoming faster and shorter, the possibility of job occupation in the factories contributed to make the lives of regular citizens reach a better standard of living. With better living conditions, we are presented to the emergence of the middle class for the first time in History. The later revolution – the French Revolution – on the other hand, took place in the neighbouring country, and it also increased living conditions for the classes that were finally arising in the new world social order due to the fact that it fought for civil rights:

The spectres of both Industrial and French Revolutions and the many questions they raised about political economy, religion and spiritual reality, illegitimate and legitimate authority, the responsibilities, and socio-political repression and its impact on the individual, continued to haunt Britons well into the nineteenth century. (DAVISON, 2009, p. 48)

In this sense, it is impossible for the literary environment to keep on representing social reality with the poetical and heroic epics that preceded both centuries. A new form of representation comes to light and it is the case of the novel that in the English language presents the significant meaning of what is 'new' in order to depict more assertively the major changes as close to the representation of reality as possible, meaning, as close to the lives, dramas, and problems with commitment of the regular, common citizens who were already conquering and fighting for space. The new aesthetical representation works for those purposes, because it aims at the trajectory of a common character in prose fiction and not at some heroic journey in search of knowledge of a certain particularity of the human philosophy as it can be observed in the Greek tragedies, for instance:

This use of 'realism', however, has the grave defect of obscuring what is probably the most original feature of the novel form. If the novel were realistic merely because it saw life from the seamy side, it would only be an inverted romance; but in fact it surely attempts to portray all the varieties of human experience, and not merely those suited to one particular literary perspective: the novel's realism does not reside in the kind of life it presents, but in the way it presents it. (WATT, 1959, p. 10)

Even though the function of the novel opened room enough for the representation of that particular part of society, it was not sufficient to properly depict the numerous inconsistencies of both centuries, or the Enlightenment period, or the Age of Reason. According to professor Carol Margaret Davison (2009, p. 137), while the scientific movement was heading directly to rationalism, the literary movement seemed to be doing exactly the opposite and was heading directly to the core of sentimentalism in order to properly depict this rage of controversial emotions without hurting the decorum and the sublime in literature, a new genre was added to the novel, which is known until contemporary times as the Gothic literature. The Gothic genre comes to light approximately at the same time of the novel, having as its first appearance the narrative story of the English author Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) due to its exaggerated number of Gothic elements, such as dark rooms, secret passages, hidden figures, and moving eyes behind portraits on the walls.

The concept of Gothic used in this research is the classic definition of the professor and German psychiatrist, Sigmund Freud, who, in his essay entitled “The Uncanny” (1955, p. 221), states that this element is characterized as a dichotomy. After rummaging through several classic languages such as Greek, Latin, and Sanskrit, along with several modern languages as well as Portuguese, French, English, Italian, among many others, only in his mother tongue that he found the term that would serve to conceptualize this element as controversial, *Das Unheimlich*, which means the person or object that is able to cause in its viewer the effect that gives pleasure, satisfaction, comfort. However, at the same time, it can cause awkwardness since feelings once repressed in childhood make the individual aware once again of what goes on in the cellars of the human mind. At this point, the concept of the uncanny is extended in this research to the concept of the Gothic of the North American professor, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, who, in her work of reference, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (1986, p.14), explains that this element is not concentrated in the physical elements of the narrative, as in monsters, vampires, werewolves, or, even, doors that move by themselves, or pictures that move on the canvas. But, in the social sphere, that is, in the interaction among the characters that build that fictional environment that represents a possible image of reality:

For originally Gothic was one of a number of aesthetic developments which served to breach the “classical” and “rational” order of life and to make possible a kind of response, and a response to a kind of thing, that among the knowing had long been a taboo. In the novel, it was the function of the Gothic to open horizons beyond social patterns, rational decisions, and institutionally approved emotions; in a word, to enlarge the sense of reality and its impact on the human being. I became then a great liberator of feeling. It acknowledged the non-rational – in the world of things and events, occasionally in the realm of the transcendental, ultimately and most persistently in the depths of the human being. (HEILMAN, 1958, p. 131)

Thus, the Gothic element is expressed according to the triad: structure – both the way that novels are structured according to the pattern of a story within another story and also due to the fact of the function of the language, which Sedgwick names as the ‘unspeakable’, meaning, social taboos that must not be pronounced under any circumstance -, psychoanalysis – the literary process of reaching the deepest lairs of the mind, such as the unconsciousness -, and finally phenomenological aspects of the elements – what relates to the effects of the narrative and the description of passages that are able to reach the unconscious of the public reader, revealing secrets readers may not even know about their existence.

However, when it comes to the Victorian period, the Scottish novella, *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), it may be concluded that it is difficult to define what kind of Gothic literature it is being discussed due to the long duration of that same period and also due to the numerous events and changes that occurred throughout those six decades. For the purpose of this research, the Gothic genre is divided into three different categories, according to Professor Carol Margaret Davison and also to the major social changes of the century. To what the first period is concerned, the 1840's Gothic and Social Realism – which compasses not only all Brontë sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne, along with the publication of their masterpieces, *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853), *Wuthering Heights* (1847), and *Agnes Grey* (1847) and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), but also Charles Dickens urban novels, such as *Bleak House* (1851) and *Great Expectations* (1861). The relevant facts about this category is the fact that the old castles from the classic Gothic novels from the eighteenth century are replaced by the Victorian mansions and regular, common houses, depicting domestic life not only through the point of view of the hero-villain, but also and most importantly according to the point of view of female heroes. The perils and evils do not originate from the external environment, presenting as a consequence the substitution of the monsters and phantasmagorical creatures to the terrors and horrors from inside the walls, danger is located in the deepest secrets of the ones we know.

The second category, 1860's Gothic and Sensation Fiction, found fertile ground in the terrain of the improvement of laws of marriage and female rights within the domestic lives and roles women were supposed to subdue to and also in the terrain of detective wave that was spreading throughout the English literary environment. Wilkie Collins' *The Woman in White* (1859) is the perfect example of such combination since we are presented to the situation in which a husband finds his own way according to law and institution to be separated from his own wife. Finally, the third and last category of the century, 1880's/1890's *Fin-de-siècle* Fantastic Gothic, encloses the supernaturalised (DAVISON, 2014, p. 135) invasion of Europe by the advances in technology and also in the interest in space and the universe. H. G. Wells' works are examples of that wave, *The War of the Worlds* (1898).

In this sense, it brings us to the novel in question of this article due to the fact that its elaboration and the characterisation of its elements from the structure itself up to the construction of its characters. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) presents the steps of the London lawyer Gabriel Utterson in order to comprehend the

suspicious relationship between his friend and client Dr. Henry Jekyll and Mr. Edward Hyde. Thus, the objectives of this article are to investigate and observe how the Gothic elements work throughout the narrative, placing Stevenson's masterpiece as a fine example which contains or may be classified as a member of the three Gothic categories of the Victorian period, raising the following question: is Stevenson's work the last Victorian literary inheritance or is it the first modernist literary manifestation? In order to accomplish both tasks, the methodology adopted in this research is to highlight and detach the passages which contain the Gothic elements exerting their function.

The bibliography which is used to support the arguments of this article rely on the classic works of both professors Anthony Burgess' *English Literature* (1974) and G. M. Trevelyan *English Social History* (1985) in order to properly place the events that enclose the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries. The works of the professor and psychiatrist Sigmund Freud's 'The Uncanny' (1955), professor and literary critic Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (1986), and professor Carol Margaret Davison's 'The Victorian Gothic and Gender' (2014) and *History of the Gothic Literature 1764 – 1824* (2009) are the bases for the conception of both Gothic genre and Victorian subcategories. Finally, in order to properly discuss the concept and relevance of novel and novella as literary forms, this article is supported by the edited works of professors Robert C. Rathburn and Martin Steimann, Jr *From Jane Austen to Joseph Conrad* (1958).

The structure, the uncanny, and the double in the gothic narrative

Even though Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) may be considered a difficult literary sample to work with since its narrative and primary mystery – the duality between Jekyll and Hyde – is widely known due to its numerous adaptations for the theatre, for the movies, and even for children's cartoons, it is also a literary manifestation that distinguishes itself from the classic works of the Victorian period due to its structure. The Victorian Age is also known for the intense production of novels, however, in this case, Stevenson seemed to follow the other way around and surprise his public with a Gothic novella instead.

As it has already been suggested, the novel is qualified for its characteristic of depicting the common moral problems and commitment dilemmas of regular characters as close to the representation of reality as possible (RATHBURN, 1958, p. 6). The novella, on the other hand, does not present the same compromise since it is

supposed to express and depict the trajectory of a singular character coming and going from one core to the other, not necessarily exposing a personal growth of the protagonist in order to show and to prove that that particular character either learned or developed from the obstacles that one overcame, or that that particular character actually succumbed to one's convictions and, just as Goethe's *Faust*, died for one's cause. In the case of the novella in question, it may be considered that it improves the final effect of the Gothic elements and motifs to extract and, therefore, to terrify its public reader throughout and in the end of the narrative since the reaction of the protagonist towards the facts and events of the story, as it can be observed when Mr Utterson is given the two letters that explain the whole mystery, one from Dr. Lanyon, a close friend to Dr. Jekyll, who was also contrary to the doctor's scientific beliefs and was the very first to identify Mr Hyde's true identity what makes him terribly ill, leading to his shocking death, and another from Henry Jekyll himself.

In spite of the fact that the main distinction of Stevenson's work finds itself in the way it is structured, we may identify that the Scottish novella maintains the classic format of a story within a story since we, as the public reader, are presented to the character of Mr Utterson, who happens to be a lawyer, worried about the current decisions to change Dr. Jekyll's will for the benefit of a Mr Hyde. As we follow the events from the middle of the facts, meaning that we must catch up to the details of the story when those are already in motion. Nevertheless, the classic, Gothic format states itself since first the public reader must learn all the facts about the character of Mr Utterson, followed by the appearance of the figure of Dr. Jekyll, who leads and directs the reading to the appearance of the controversial creature that is Mr Hyde. The more the public reader dive into the mysteries of the three gentlemen, the more the terrifying suspicions deepens themselves in the sense that horrible crimes commence to mysteriously happen throughout the events of the narrative, as the assassination of the character of Sir Danvers Carew, one of Mr Utterson's clients. Afterwards, we learn that Sir Carew was seen beaten to death by Mr Hyde:

Near a year later, in the month of October, 18-, London was startled by a crime of singular ferocity, and rendered all the more notable by the high position of the victim. The details were few and startling. A maid-servant living alone in a house not far from the river had gone upstairs about eleven. Although a fog rolled over the city in the small hours, the early part of the night was cloudless, and the lane, which the maid's window overlooked, was brilliantly lit by the full moon. [...] Presently her eye wandered to the other, and she was surprised to recognize in him a certain Mr Hyde, who had once visited her master and for whom she had convinced a dislike. He had

in his hand a heavy cane, with which he was trifling; but he answered never a word, and seemed to listen with ill-contained impatience. And then out of a sudden he broke out in a great flame of anger, stamping with his foot, brandishing the madman. The old gentleman took a step back, with the air of one very much surprised and a trifle hurt; and at that Mr Hyde broke out of all bounds, and clubbed him to 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. (STEVENSON, 1994, p 30-31)

These horrible crimes in the story and also the quotation above lead us to the matter of the narrative of Stevenson's novella. As it may be observed, the Scottish author makes usage of a form of narrators that had already been developed by the classic authors of the novel, such as Defoe and Richardson, and that had been improved in the following centuries by the Gothic authors as the Brontë sisters. The form it is being discussed in this article is the possibility and the opportunity of several voices within the story, which means that there is more than one narrator in the novella in the sense that only do we learn about the facts of the events through the eyes of the secondary characters. This choice of narrative enhances the effect of the Gothic elements due to the fact that it leaves the responsibility of interpretation and the function to gather the facts in order to attempt to place the events in a linear and chronological order to the public reader. Another characteristic of Stevenson's narrative is the fact that he also makes usage of the epistolary form in order to reveal the true facts of the events, thus, solving the mysterious atmosphere around Jekyll and Hyde. Before the appearance of the letters, the secondary characters would report the events in their own manner, according to their time and place, however, the thought that such controversial qualities could possibly belong to the same respectable character of Dr. Jekyll had never crossed the reasoning minds of the characters nor of the readers. According to the professor and literary critic Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1986, p. 14), another trait of the classic Gothic literature that endures from the eighteenth century onwards is the element of the unspeakable, which refers to the central themes of Gothic stories, however, it is never mentioned; it is described and depicted accordingly to the situation of the characters in question:

The story does get through, but in muffled form, with a distorted time sense, and accompanied by a kind of despair about any direct use of language. At its simplest, the unspeakable appears on almost every page: "unutterable horror": "unspeakable" or "unutterable" are the intensifying adjectives of choice in these novels. At a broader level, the novels deal with things that are naturalistically difficult to talk about, like guilt; but they describe the difficulty, not in terms of resistances that may or may not

be overcome, but in terms of an absolute, often institutional prohibition or imperative. (SEDGWICK, 1986, p. 14)

Sedgwick's arguments contribute to the understanding and comprehension of the maid's report about the assassination of one of Mr Utterson's clients, Sir Danvers Carew, since she makes usage of the adjectives in question along with other parts of the speech, such as 'broke out', 'flame of rage', and 'ape-like fury'; however, never does she mention the possible duality of Jekyll's personality. A similar discussion has been taken about the social and personal conditions of the narrating characters, according to both professors and literary theorists Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their work of reference *The Madwoman in the Attic* (2000). In one of their chapters which analyses the work of Emily Brontë and Mary Shelley, Gilbert & Gubar state the importance of the choice of a character as the messenger of the facts since it may be discussed whether that same character had the proper conditions to interpret and comprehend the horrifying acts one had witnessed. Both professors also argue that characters that work as narrators within the story demonstrate a strong attachment to the substantiation of the events since the literary piece must show to be convincing apart from the supernatural events that occur throughout the narrative (GILBERT; GUBAR, 2000, p. 254). However, it must be taken into consideration the importance of the social and personal conditions of those characters, as it has been mentioned earlier in this article, due to the fact that it implicates in the manner that that particular character faces one's fate and ending in the story. As it may be observed, all the characters that succumb to the evils of Mr Hyde belong to the upper classes, presenting a respectful position in society, as it is the case of the first victim Sir Danvers Carew, Dr. Lanion, and also Dr. Jekyll himself, who is the very first one to make it possible for the emergence of Hyde's personality. The maid who witnessed the assassination of the first victim survived the physical and emotional attacks since she belongs to the lair of society which does not get involved in the central problems of the main structure of the house. In this sense, she was located where she honestly belongs, witnessing the attack from a far distance as it is expected of her. According to Gilbert and Gubar (2000, p. 254), this type of character stands out, because they present a greater mobility than the others since a character of a maid is never on the spotlight of social conventions.

On the one hand, secondary characters may stand out due to their position and visibility in society, on the other, they are not the ones to bring answers to the events

that are narrated; on the contrary, they increase the levels of horror and mystery since they are the ones to provide clues for the solving of such suspicions. The characters that answer the gaps which are left in the story for the public reader to gather are the victims of Mr Hyde, in this case of the novella in question. The solvation of the mystery is provided through the exposure of two letters left for Mr Gabriel Utterson, being one from Dr. Lanion and another from Dr. Jekyll himself, revealing all the details about Hyde's emergence, personality, and lack of control:

Next they turned to the business table. On the desk, among the neat array of papers, a large envelope was uppermost, and bore, in the doctor's hand, the name of Mr Utterson. The lawyer unsealed it, and several enclosures fell to the floor. The first was a will, drawn in the same eccentric terms as the one which he had returned six months before, to serve as a testament in case of death and as a deed of gift in case of disappearance; but in place of the name Edward Hyde, the lawyer, with indescribable amazement, read the name of Gabriel John Utterson. He looked at Poole, and then back at the papers, and last of all at the dead malefactor stretched upon the carpet. [...] They went out, locking the door of the theatre behind them; and Utterson, once more leaving the servants gathered about the fire in the hall, trudged back to his office to read the two narratives in which this mystery was now to be explained. (STEVENSON, 1994, p. 58, 59, 60)

To what the character of Mr Gabriel Utterson is concerned, it may be conceived that he makes the perfect protagonist and possible narrator due to the fact that the lawyer in question is the personification of reason in the story filled with supernatural events that all the characters, who find themselves in that fictional environment, may not explain. As it will be fatherly discussed in the next topic of this article, a rational and well respected central figure in Sensation Gothic stories is a highly common trait since this current of terrifying narratives rely on the questioning and exposing of the failure of the rational legal system related to the new and recent laws of marital rights (DAVISON, 2014, p. 133). It contributes to the narrative in the sense that both the story and the mystery do not lose credibility towards the public reader:

Mr Utterson the lawyer was a man of a 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 lovable. At friendly meetings, and when the wine was to his taste, something eminently human beaconed from his eye; something indeed which never found its way into his talk, but which spoke not only in these silent symbols of the after-dinner face, but more often and loudly in the acts of his life. He was austere with himself; drank gin when he was alone, to mortify a taste for vintages; and though he enjoyed the theatre, had not crossed the doors of one for twenty years. But he had an approved tolerance for others; sometimes wondering, almost with envy, at the high pressure of spirits involved in their misdeeds; and in any extremity inclined to help rather than to reprove. (STEVENSON, 1994, p. 9)

In this sense, it may be noticed that the character of the lawyer in the story functions as the gatherer of information provided by the other characters in the narrative in order for the public reader to be involved and to be able to conclude what may possibly be happening behind the dreadful crime events in the Scottish novella. Presenting a reliable character as the data keeper of the facts makes it difficult for the readers not to get involved in the frame Gothic pattern. Once Mr Utterson is the voice of reason within the Gothic plot, the characters of Dr. Jekyll and Hyde are the key to the suspicious acts that started to happen at that moment that Edward Hyde comes to the surface. It becomes more and more evident when the English lawyer traces Hyde to the mystery and deliberately commences to investigate him in order to understand whether he was involved or not. In the end of the narrative, we, as the public reader, learn that actually Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde were in fact the same person all along, leading to the climax of the plot twist, meaning to the effect that the Gothic elements had been creating and constructing throughout the story. Thus, it expands the Freudian concept of the Gothic as the uncanny once it is added by Sigmund Freud himself in the very same article the concept of the double as a Gothic element. According to the German professor and psychiatrist, the element of the double is the result of the development of the mind of the individual, aiming to the full growth of maturity. Presenting two phases of social restrictions during the infantile phase, the child must learn that, even though the figure of the mother may correspond to the source of all basic needs in order for survival, it must not last; the second social restriction the one related to the libido of the child who also must learn that, as one grows towards adult life, the libido must be controlled in order for individual survival as well so that one may be accepted according social standards. Having repressed all of these wishes and desires due to the necessity of the growth of the ego, the child develops a negative part of the personality; whether the child is aware of one's dual personality or not, it stays there hidden the deepest lairs of the individual's unconsciousness, and when it is called forth by literature, for instance, it represents the acknowledgement of one's darkest wishes:

These themes are all concerned with the phenomenon of the double, which appears in every shape and in every degree of development. Thus, we have characters who are to be considered identical because they look alike. This relation is accentuated by mental processes leaping from one of these characters to another – by what we should call telepathy-, so that the one possesses knowledge, feelings and

experiences in common with the other. Or it is marked by the fact that the subject identifies himself with someone else, so that he is in doubt as to which his self is, or substitutes the extraneous self for his own. In other words, there is doubling, dividing and interchanging of the self. And finally there is the constant recurrence of the same thing – the repetition of the same features or character-traits or vicissitudes, of the same crimes, or even the same names through several consecutive generations. (FREUD, 1955, p. 234)

Thus, it may be suggested that the double image of Jekyll and Hyde collides with the Victorian idea that the mind functions as a unity, however, it also points out to the modern idea that the mind presents its phases of development and most importantly it also contains the three lairs that define the individual's personality. Taking all these facts into consideration, it is possible to trace the movement of transition of the evil creatures that horrify the Gothic environment; firstly, to what the classic Gothic novels are concerned, the public reader is presented to external disturbing supernatural figures that persecute innocent damsels in distress, such as monsters, vampires, ghosts, tyrannical hero-villains, among others; secondly, regarding the modern Gothic novels from the beginning of the nineteenth century, the public reader is presented to inner horrifying figures, meaning that all the scaring creatures just mentioned move from the outside of castle walls to the inside of the walls of mansions in common neighbourhoods; finally, in the ending of the nineteenth century, those creatures move once again to the inside of character's personality, it is possible for the good and evil to co-exist in the same human nature.

Therefore, when the public reader comes in contact with the double personality of Dr. Jekyll, it is possible to observe that his character functions also as the uncanny element that extract the same human nature from the audience as individuals. On the one hand, readers must deal with the cracks that have opened in their notion of reality and, on the other hand, accept that, mending those fractures means that a new world is being formed and constructed in the turn of the century once more.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde: reality, sensation and the fantastic in gothic literature

The Victorian period is widely known as controversial. Not only for the fact that it lasted for six decades, providing enough time for several events to take place, but also due to the fact that it is filled with contradictory feelings and thoughts. As it has been mentioned before in this article, the nineteenth century found itself in a strong wave of rationality as a result of the Enlightenment period that had its utmost moments

in the century before. However, the more rational and civilised the English society tried to accomplish, the more the artistic movements pointed out to the wave of emotion and sentimentalism. In this sense, the concept of Victorian Gothic has been traced to the division of three categories; the first one is related to the 1840's Gothic novels and its main trait is linked to the high doses of realism within the social relations among characters and their stories; the second category corresponds to the 1860's sensational narratives that would base themselves in the detective stories also referring to social institutions, such as the matrimony; the third category refers to the 1880's/1890's *fin-du-siècle* Gothic that makes usage of fantastic elements in order to express the invasion of monsters which infiltrate society to accomplish its degeneration (DAVISON, 2014, pp. 127 - 137). *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) is the Scottish novella that chronologically belongs to the *fin-du-siècle*, however, as it may be observed throughout its narrative, there are elements that transit from one category to the other, point out to the modern century that was about to commence.

The realism of the first decades that invade the category of the 1840's actually presents its starting point in the previous centuries with the work of the English novelist Ann Radcliffe. The author of major literary pieces of the Gothic genre, such as *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*, decided to innovate the classic current of the genre in the sense that there was not space for horrifying passages of female weakness as scenes of persecution or even physical abuse. It was about time to provide narratives that would turn the focus to the dramas of domestic life, and, as it may be noticed, it is the moment in which the external horrors move to the inside. According to Mrs Radcliffe definition of the dichotomy terror and horror, it is possible for the public reader to understand and comprehend the current that invades the first half of the nineteenth century:

'[...] Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them. I apprehend that neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one; and where lies the great difference between horror and terror, but in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil?.' (RADCLIFFE, 2002, p. 06)¹

¹ Passage detached from Mrs Radcliffe essay intitled "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (2002), which portrays a conversation between two gentlemen in a train.

Another contribution for the high doses of realism was provided by another English novelist named Charlotte Brontë. According to professor Robert B. Heilman (1958, p. 120), the eldest of the Brontë sisters enhanced the effect of the Gothic elements in the narratives due to the fact that she invested not only in the physical characteristics of her heroes and heroines, but also she invested in the psychological features of her characters, introducing what professor Heilman calls as the 'new' Gothic:

Aside from partial sterilization of banal Gothic by dry factuality and humor, Charlotte goes on to make a much more important – indeed, a radical – revision of the mode: in *Jane Eyre* and in the other novels, as we shall see, that discovery of passion, that rehabilitation of the extra-rational, which is the historical office of Gothic, is no longer oriented in marvellous circumstance but moves deeply into the lesser known realities of human life. This change I describe as the change from “old Gothic” to “new Gothic”. The kind of appeal is the same; the fictional method is utterly different. (HEILMAN, 1958, p. 123)

As the century advances, a new wave of sentimentalism invades the 1860's, leading the focus of this discussion to the second category of the Gothic genre: the sensational fiction. To what these novels are concerned, it combines the elements of the Gothic genre along with the current of detective stories - that would become more common in the mid of the nineteenth century with investigative journalism and the publication of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes narratives -, which lead us to the third and last element of the combination that is the Newgate Novels from the beginning of the century - these novels would report the biographical narratives of notorious criminals from the day. In an effort to portrait the new age within the Victorian era, authors, such as Wilkie Collins through his narrative *The Woman in White* (1868), would turn their lens to the great mysteries and escapades of common characters in order to evade the most traditional social institutions as it is the case of matrimony and the laws of inheritance. In doing so, sensation novels not only deepened the issues of the central plots of Gothic stories, but also depicted the transition from the outside to the inside:

During an era characterised by mass social and geographic dislocations that saw millions of strangers brought together in unfamiliar urban environments, sensation fiction gave expression to a variety of anxieties around such questions as class mobility, changing marital legislation and the multifaceted nature of identity. Notably, it homed its lens in on the middle-class family – that class which possessed, unlike the working classes, the luxury of privacy. In doing so, like early Victorian Gothic but

with different implications, sensation fiction capitalised on the disjunction between public and private/secret selves. (DAVISON, 2014, p. 132)

In the meanwhile, two decades later, the Victorian era witnessed a new movement within the literary environment which is the fantastic *fin-du-siècle* Gothic. As the name suggests, these narratives make usage of marvellous elements in order to properly express the anxieties, fears, and contradictions of the end of the century. By this time, Queen Victoria would find herself in the sixth decade on the throne of Great Britain, which meant that the turn of the century was getting closer to the old generations, bringing insecurity towards the changes that would come. In addition to it, the increasing intensity in the transition of people coming and going from the islands due to the climax of the colonising processes would take the contrast of the other personally and physically to the eye of the common Londoner. Thus, it becomes extremely productive to illustrate the great immigration flood with images, such as H. G. Wells' aliens in *The War of the Worlds* (1898), or the double personality in Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886):

Jekyll and Hyde is set in London, and hence seemingly does not fit the category of imperial Gothic fiction [...]. Yet Hyde is an atavistic, apelike figure whose abhuman features suggest the stereotype of the Irish hooligan. Stevenson was well aware of Fenianism, a close-to-home rebellion against Britain's imperial domination of Ireland. David Punter notes that 'Hyde's behaviour is an urban version of 'going native' (1980:241), attributing his depiction to anxieties about imperial and racial degeneration. Jekyll and Hyde can thus be read as a version of the imperial Gothic motif of reverse invasion, in which something or someone alien and monstrous threatens to wreak havoc in the very heart of London. (BRANTLINGER, 2014, p. 207)

As it may be observed, Stevenson's masterpiece may be placed in the three categories of Victorian Gothic apart from the fact that it does chronologically belong to the latest period. To what the first category is regarded, in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde* trajectory, the public reader is presented to a high dose of representation of reality due to the fact that it portrays the movements of the extremely rational and well-mannered Mr Gabriel Utterson, a respectable lawyer who is trying to solve the mysterious relationship and secrets between his doctor friend and the strange fellow who had just appeared in the London society. Moreover, the public reader is also presented to a mixture of tarrying and horrifying elements in its narratives, according to Mrs Radcliffe definition since we, as the public reader, learn about the violent events committed by Mr Hyde, and we also have access to the details of such facts. On the one hand, it

may be considered terror and horror combined for the fact that the audience is presented by the veil of character narration apart from the aspect that one learn about the details.

The Scottish novella also belongs to the second category of Victorian Gothic for the fact that it presents as the central plot of its narrative the investigative tone of the mysterious relationship between the two gentlemen Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde. By a path around London streets left by the clues of the unstoppable impulses of the hideous figure, we, as the public reader, must deal along the protagonist with the dichotomy of the public versus the private to finally comprehend that the greatest fears of that English society had become true, good and evil may exist inside the same individual with the aggravating aspect that it may infiltrate social levels. Thus, it leads us to the third category of Victorian Gothic, which perfectly illustrates the unknown areas of the studies of the mind and also the constant insecurity with the innovations that the twentieth century was about to bring upon. With fantastic characterisations, Stevenson was able to depict the certainty that that world that we are a part from is actually a completely stranger:

As several *fin-du-siècle* Gothic works suggest, the greatest terror arises when, in a manner in keeping with eyewitness reports about Jack the Ripper who conducted his series of gruesome crimes in Whitechapel in 1888, the imperceptible monster infiltrates the public sphere under the guise of respectability, thus covertly threatening infection and social degeneration. (DAVISON, 2014, p. 127)

Conclusion

The eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries staged some of the greatest changes in the way the world was observed and organized. After both Industrial Revolutions, which improved people's financial conditions, making it possible for a third layer in the social level to emerge, the middle class, and also after the French Revolution, which enhanced and broadened people's personal views, according to individual rights and their representation in the court of law, it became more difficult to continually perpetuate the conventions and the values of the European aristocracy. Along with new perspectives and manners of organizing the new worldly panorama, new forms of aesthetic representation are required in order to properly depict the society which had just emerged. Consequently, this is the case of the novel and its subgenre the Gothic. While the former provided the literary space in which common characters could be described as well as their conflicts of morality and commitment,

the latter provided the source and the means with which those problems could be dealt with and properly depicted, not harming the public's decorum.

Through the metaphorical images of monsters and phantasmagorical creatures, the profound desires and impulses of such a society were able to be demonstrated in the pages of novels and novellas. However, the more the technological area aimed at the highly rationalisation that the hard sciences demanded, the more the literary trend seemed to undertake a complete opposite direction, and consequently dive into the supernatural. The concept of the Gothic used in this article is the one elaborate by Sigmund Freud (1955), the uncanny that refers to the ability of an object or an image be the source of familiarisation as well as awkwardness, extended by the modern concept of Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1986), who have stated that the element of the uncanny may be found in objects and images, but most importantly in the relationships among characters in a narrative. Thus, presenting the manners with which the Gothic element reaches and affects the public reader. Carol Margaret Davison's categories of the Gothic (2009) demonstrated the fact that not only the Victorian period was long, but also the different characterisations of the Gothic element throughout the numerous changes and advances. Both narratives and the Gothic followed the improvements and the evolution of their audience, making it possible for the existence of three distinguished categories, the 1840's Social Realism, the 1860's Sensation Fiction, and the 1880's/1890's *Fin-du-siècle* Fantasy. However, the inquiry remained, which refers to the novella in question of this article, Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), whether it would be the representation of the last Victorian product of the first modernist piece since its difficulty of portraying it in any of the aforementioned categories.

By depicting Mr Gabriel Utterson's, a respectable and well-known Londoner lawyer, anxious search for the truth regarding the awkward decision of his most complacent friend Dr Jekyll to change the reference of his will to a certain Mr Hyde, Stevenson has created an endless literary masterpiece for the fact that it makes its public audience dive into one of the greatest mysteries of human nature, the double personality that exists in every individual. Robert Louis Stevenson was the son of an engineer and lighthouse builder, Thomas Stevenson, and of a daughter of a Scots minister, Margaret Balfour, who would always encourage their son to the habiting of reading. In this sense, the Scottish author took advantage of his weak health and dedicated the large numbers of indoor hours to the writing and publication of his

narratives. Stevenson was highly prolific, dedicating his efforts to the writing of essays, adventurous stories for children; however, he became widely known by the publication of his most famous and short novella *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* in 1886. In an effort to accomplish his dreamlike fictional narrative, Stevenson contributed to one of the greatest movements in Gothic literature by using elements from the classic and the modern narratives. By demonstrating the path that the Gothic element undertook from its first appearances in the eighteenth century, in which we are presented to the perils of the external world, and in the nineteenth century, which relates to the dangers of the domestic environment, finally, shifting to the depiction of the turn of the 20th century, which refers to the dichotomy of the good and evil co-existing in the deepest layers of the human mind, *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) has become part of society's collective imaginary, as a modern literary piece.

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