

## **Elements of Gothic Romance in *Frankenstein* (1818) and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886)**

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« hors du texte, point de salut » (Greimas)  
« Rien que le texte, le texte seul » (Roland Barthes)

### Abstract

*The writer of the article tries to show that the two novels under study are, to a great extent, gothic romances. To reach his goal, he will first detect in the two novels some elements proper to the gothic romance such as the creation of monsters, the presence of horror, mystery, death, fear, the gloomy atmosphere and violence. Then, he will attempt to show how they interact and fit to the gothic romance tradition.*

### Theoretical principles of the article

The present article enters the context or the logic of the implementation of literary theory to works of fiction. In other words, the general principle which underpins the present study is the application of the theory of literature (in the event, the theory of the gothic novel and the gothic romance) to two novels. In the present case, it is a question of demonstrating, thanks to the theories of the gothic novel and romance, that *Frankenstein* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* belong to the gothic tradition of the novel.

Our method of approach claims to be semiotic<sup>1</sup> in the sense that it aims only at the text and nothing else. In other words, our object of analysis remains the text. The article is in fact an internal textual analysis which must be ranged in the prospect of new criticism which "...advocates close reading and detailed analysis."<sup>2</sup> This study also claims to follow the method of formal criticism which "...considers only the internal workings of individual literary works."<sup>3</sup>

### Introduction

Thanks to what we know about romance and the gothic novel, we are going to show in what *Frankenstein* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* belong to gothic fiction. This is the object of this comparative work. After the definitions of terms related to gothic fiction, we will analyse the elements of the gothic and the gothic romance common to the two novels. Let us first give the definitions of gothic fiction, the gothic novel and the gothic romance.

#### I- Definitions

##### I.a)- Gothic fiction

Gothic fiction is a "type of novel or romance popular in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> c. The word 'gothic' had come to mean 'wild', 'barbarous' and 'crude' [...] The plots hinged on suspense and mystery, involving the fantastic and the supernatural."<sup>4</sup> Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopaedia reads:

*Gothic fiction (sometimes referred to as Gothic horror) is a genre of literature that combines elements of both horror and romance. As a genre, it is generally believed to have been invented by the English author Horace Walpole, with his 1764 novel The Castle of Otranto. Prominent features of Gothic fiction include terror (both psychological and physical), mystery, the supernatural, ghosts, darkness, death, decay, atmosphere of doom plots hinging on suspense and mystery. In gothic fiction, characters are overcome with anger, sorrow and terror.*<sup>5</sup>

#### I.b)- Gothic novel

In *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, A. J. Cuddon tells us that the gothic novel was “a type of romance very popular late in the 18<sup>th</sup> c. and at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>, which had a considerable influence on fiction science.”<sup>6</sup> Martin Gray brings some precisions when he says:

*Works with a similarly obsessive, gloomy, violent and spine-chilling atmosphere, but not necessarily with a medieval setting, are also called Gothic: Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein (1818), for example. Indeed any work concentrating on the bizarre, the macabre or aberrant psychological states may be called Gothic. In this sense Gothic elements are common in much nineteenth and twentieth-century fiction.*<sup>7</sup>

One characteristic of the gothic novel is that there is a stupefying atmosphere of doom and gloom .

#### I.c)- Gothic romance

Gothic romance is a “type of novel that flourished in the late 18th and early 19th century in England. Gothic romances were mysteries, often involving the supernatural and heavily tinged with horror, and they were usually set against dark backgrounds of medieval ruins and haunted castles.”<sup>8</sup> When we compare the definitions of the gothic novel and gothic romance, we realise that the difference between the two terms is not significant.

Before analysing the elements of gothic romance found in the two novels, we are going, first of all, to summarize the two works of fiction.

### II- Synopses of the two novels

II.a)- *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley is the story of a scientist who first learns how to give life to corpses before putting his theories into practice. He is going to create a monster. Unable to master him and because of his ugliness, Frankenstein will try to destroy him. Frankenstein will haunt him up to the north pole. Full of despair, the scientist will die. Choked by the death of his creator, the monster will drown himself in the cold waters of the artic.

II.b)- *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) written by R.L. Stevenson, is the story of a doctor who attempts an experiment in order to discover his evil nature and isolate or reject it. But he becomes fascinated by the evil side of his nature. He will reach a point where he will no longer be able to control Mr Hyde, the character he has created. The

latter will begin to appear unexpectedly and succeed in ruling Dr Jekyll's life. The novel ends with the death of Mr Hyde and the mysterious disappearance of Dr Jekyll.

In the following subpart, we are going to lean over the elements of gothic romance in *Frankenstein* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

### III- Elements of Gothic Romance in the two Novels

In *Frankenstein* as well as in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, we find many elements proper to the gothic novel and the gothic romance such as the creation of monsters or supernatural beings.

#### III.a)- Creation of monsters or supernatural beings

It is one of the themes of the gothic novel and gothic fiction which is common to the two works of fiction. In *Frankenstein*, the hero decides to invent a creature that will resemble a human being. He says: "*I resolved [...] to make the being of a gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionally large.*"(p.25) He starts assembling materials: "*I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials.*" (p.26) The reader witnesses the creation of the monster in chapter 5. The weather is queer, it is raining, the narrator is anxious. The operation takes place in a "*dreary night*"(p.27). The time is symbolic: "*It was already one in the morning*"(p.27) The narrator describes the coming into life of the monster:

*I saw the dull yellow eye of the creature open; it breathed hard, and a convulsive motion agitated its limbs. [...] His limbs were in proportion [...] His yellow skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black, and flowing; his teeth of a pearly whiteness; but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips.(p.27)*

In the text, the monster is referred to through suggestive words and expressions such as "*the gigantic stature*" (p.39), "*deformity of its aspect*" (p.39), "*the wretch*" (p.28), "*the miserable monster*" (p.28), "*demoniac corpse*" (p.28), "*a thing*" (p.28), "*the filthy daemon*" (pp.26, 39), "*the devil*" (p.53), "*vile insect*" (p.53), "*fiend*" (p.54). The function of these words and expressions is twofold. First, they suggest negativity. They are clues to the bad behaviour of the monster through the story. Secondly, these words and expressions unveil, as a watermark, Frankenstein's hatred and disdain for the monster.

In *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Mr Hyde who is the evil side of Dr Jekyll's personality, is created thanks to a potion. The first mixture to perform the potion is seen in the chapter entitled "*Dr Lanyon's Narrative*". The reader is informed about the way the potion is made. The narrator states:

*The mixture, which was at first of a reddish hue, began, in proportion as the crystals melted, to brighten in colour, to effervesce audibly, and to throw off small fumes of vapour.*

*Suddenly and at the same moment, the ebullition ceased and the compound changed to a dark purple, which faded again more slowly to a watery green.(pp.34-35)*

The second melting is viewed three pages farther, the moment Dr Jekyll affirms:

*I had long since prepared my tincture; I purchased at once, from a firm of wholesale chemists, a large quantity of a particular salt which I knew, from my experiments, to be the last ingredient required; and late one accursed night, I compounded the elements, watched them boil and smoke together in the glass, and when the ebullition had subsided, with a strong glow of courage, drank off the potion.(pp.37-38)*

Dr Jekyll invents the potion because he wants to separate the good side of his personality from the bad one. In addition, he takes pleasure to become sometimes a good man and sometimes a bad man. Unfortunately, that desire will make him face disagreeable situations.

The first transformation of Dr Jekyll into Mr Hyde intervenes in the chapter entitled “Dr Lanyon’s Narrative”. The novel reads:

*He 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...(p.35)*

The second transformation of Dr Jekyll into a monster-like person occurs in the same chapter: “*The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death. Then these agonies began swiftly to subside, and I came to myself as if out of a great sickness.*”(p.38) The narrative instance adds: “*There was something strange in my sensations [...] I felt younger, lighter, happier in body [...] I knew myself, at the first breath of this new life, to be more wicked [...] I was suddenly aware that I had lost in stature.*”(p.38) The transformation from Mr Hyde into Dr Jekyll is witnessed four pages down when the protagonist states: “*...and hurrying back to my cabinet, I once more prepared and drank the cup, once more suffered the pangs of dissolution, and came to myself once more with the character, the stature, and the face of Henry Jekyll.*”(p.39)

Dr Jekyll is victim of unexpected transformations. The first one occurs in chapter 4. He tells us:

*I woke the next day in bed with somewhat odd sensations [...] the hand of Henry Jekyll (as you have often remarked) was professional in shape and size: it was large, firm, white, and comely. But the hand which I now saw, clearly enough, in the yellow light of a mid-London morning, lying half shut on the bed-clothes, was lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly*

*shaded with a swart growth of hair. It was the hand of Edward Hyde.(p.41)*

At Regent's Park, he undergoes another transformation:

*... a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering. These passed away, and left me faint; and then as in its turn the faintness subsided, I began to be aware of a change in the temper of my thoughts, a greater boldness, a contempt of danger, a solution of the bonds of obligation. I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs; the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy. I was once more Edward Hyde. (pp.44-45)*

These passages reveal the incapacity of the narrator to master his own invention. The drug he has made is overwhelming him. He is unable to control its effects. When the unexpected transformation occurs, he is obliged to take the potion: *"It took on this occasion a double dose to recall me to myself; and alas! Six hours after, as I sat looking sadly in the fire, the pangs returned, and the drug had to be re-administered."*(p.46) Let us mention that Dr Jekyll is so dependent on that drug that he is referred to as the *"ugly idol"* (p.38).

Another characteristic of the gothic novel and the gothic romance is the presence of murder and death. Most of the time, death is caused by the monsters who are created. It is the point we are going to deal with in the forthcoming subpart.

### III.b)- Killing and death

These themes are manifest in the two novels. We are in presence of a deadly environment. In *Frankenstein*, the narrator tells us: *"Our house was the house of mourning."* (p.49) It is because his niece has been hanged for a murder committed by the monster. The theme of death is witnessed once again in chapter 23, when the narrator says: *"I entered the room where the corpse lay and was led up to the coffin."*(p.102) Here, it is about someone who died in the sea. The narrator is accused of having killed him. An awful scene is viewed in chapter 23; the monster has just killed Victor's wife: *"I heard a shrill and dreadful scream. It came from the room into which Elizabeth had retired.[...] She was there, lifeless and inanimate, thrown across the bed, her head hanging down and her pale and distorted features half covered by her hair."*(p.113) There is a death atmosphere in chapter 23 when the narrator enumerates all the killings which took place and that he claims to be the person responsible for even though it is the monster who killed most of those people. On page 104, he cites four people who have been murdered by the monster he has created. Death atmosphere is patent through the narrator's hallucinations. He has the impression of dreaming. He seems to see again his late beloved.

In *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the theme of death is manifest in the chapter entitled "The Carew Murder Case". Mr Hyde is sticking Mr Carew to death:

*...and a trifle hurt; and at that Mr. Hyde broke out of all bounds and clubbed him to the earth. And next moment, 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.(p.12)*

The reader notices the atrocity with which Mr Hyde (the monster-like person newly created by Dr Jekyll) strikes the poor victim. He ends up killing him. In the passage, we underline striking words and expressions such as “*a storm of blows*”, “*the bones were audibly shattered*”. An obvious fury is perceived through the expressions “*ape-like fury*”, “*was trampling his victim.*” The function of all the passage is to show the unpredictable character and attitudes of supernatural beings. The theme of death is once more perceived in the chapter entitled “The Last Night”. The body of Mr Hyde has been found: “*Right in the midst there lay the body of a man sorely contorted and still twitching. They drew near on tiptoe, turned it on its back and beheld the face of Edward Hyde.*”(p.28) It is a striking and puzzling passage through its description and the choice of words. The scene takes place in a gruesome atmosphere. The characters present on the scene are surprised to see the face of Mr Hyde.

The characteristic of gothic fiction is that created monsters or supernatural beings die or disappear at the closure of novels. In *Frankenstein*, the monster is so saddened by the death of his creator that he jumps in the icy water of the Arctic and gets drowned. In *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, My Hyde is found dying in Dr Jekyll’s laboratory, while the latter remains unfindable; hence the mystery of that piece of fiction.

The next point of discussion will be the ugliness of the supernatural beings created by the main characters

### 3- Ugliness of supernatural beings

Ugliness is a characteristic feature of the gothic novel and gothic romance. In the two works, the created beings are ugly. Their ugliness is mainly seen through their descriptions. In *Frankenstein*, the monster is seen through striking passages. In chapter 5 for example, the narrator tells us how ugly the monster is: “*his eyes, if eyes they may be called, were fixed on me. His jaws opened, and he muttered some inarticulate sounds, while a grin wrinkled his cheeks.*” (p.28) In chapter 7, the reader comes across another description of the monster: “*its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect more hideous than belongs to humanity...*” (p.39) That ugliness leads characters to be horrified. In chapter 5, the creator of the monster is so horrified by his ugliness that he states: “*Oh! No mortal could support the horror of that countenance. A mummy again endued with animation could not be so hideous as that wretch.*”(p.28) At the end of chapter 15, the horror caused by the monster’s ugliness is manifest the moment when the tenants of a cottage enter their dwelling and find the monster in. The novel reads:

*At that instant the cottage door was opened, and Felix, Safie, and Agatha entered. Who can describe their horror and consternation on beholding me? Agatha fainted, and Safie, unable to attend to her friend, rushed out of the cottage. Felix darted forward, and with supernatural force tore me from his father...(p.76)*

The scene ends with the violent reaction of Felix who is one of the tenants of the cottage, and the escape of the monster. The last description of the monster is given before its death in chapter 24. The intradiegetic narrator enters the cabin in which Frankenstein is lying dead. He is surprised to find the monster, afflicted at Frankenstein’s bead head. It is at that instant that he describes the monster:

*Over him hung a form which I cannot find words to describe—gigantic in stature, yet uncouth and distorted in its proportions. As*

*he hung over the coffin, his face was concealed by long locks of ragged hair; but one vast hand was extended, in colour and apparent texture like that of a mummy.(p.128)*

The physical appearance of the monster, his queer stature and ugliness are pointed out through past participles taken as adjectives (uncouth and distorted, p.127), epithets (gigantic, ragged), expressions (long locks of ragged hair), and similes (like that of a mummy). Those groups of words and images are chosen by the narrator to convey the ugliness of the monster.

In *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the description of Mr Hyde is given in the chapter entitled "Search of Mr Hyde" where the narrator says: "*Mr. Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile...*" (pp.8-9) The second description is given in the chapter entitled "The Last Night": "*Right in the midst there lay the body of a man sorely contorted and still twitching.[...] the cords of his face still moved with a semblance of life...*"(p.28) The theme of ugliness is made present in the text by the writer through words such as "*the mask*" (p.26), "*that masked thing*" (p.26) That ugliness is synonymous with wickedness. The reader is going to see through the story how wicked Mr Hyde is. Unfortunately, in the two novels, the creation of such supernatural beings is not without consequences. The object of the next part of this article is about the aftermath of those inventions, what the main characters feel, what their states of mind are.

#### IV- Consequences of the characters' inventions

In the gothic romance, one of the related themes to this genre is the tribute paid by the main characters. In other words, the principal characters pay, in a way or another, the consequences of their deeds. This is revealed by the tormented existence which they live, their inner unrest and the fear which inhabit them.

In this part, we are going to discuss the consequences of the creations of supernatural beings in the characters. Among these consequences, we have the bad state of mind of the inventors, the feeling of failure, regret, remorse, sadness, fear and nervousness.

##### IV.a)- Regret, remorse and sadness of the inventors of the monsters

In the two works of fiction, the characters who invented monsters or supernatural beings regret what they have done. In *Frankenstein*, the narrator is unhappy for many reasons. In chapter 8, he has remorse because he knows that Mrs Justine (one of the characters of the novel) has been accused of a murder she has not committed. The murderer is the monster. The narrator feels responsible for because he is the inventor of that awful creature. He tells us what he feels in his heart: "*The tortures of the accused did not equal mine; she was sustained by innocence, but the fangs of remorse tore my bosom and would not forgo their hold.*"(p.45) He speaks of "*heart-sickening despair*" (p.45). Concerning the murder of the child by the monster, he avers that he is the true murderer (p.47) since he is the creator of the monster. In addition, his conscience reproaches him of being responsible for the deaths of Justine and William, "*...the first hapless victims to my unhallowed arts*" (p.47). After the death of Mrs Justine, the hero reproaches himself. That is why he says: "*...a weight of despair and remorse pressed on my heart which nothing could remove*" (p.47). Some lines down, the narrator adds: "*Anguish and despair had penetrated into the core of my heart*" (p.47) He adds one page farther: "*I was seized by remorse and the sense of guilt.*" To flee despair, the narrator is obliged to change space, to travel. He says: "*Sometimes the whirlwind passions of my soul drove me to seek, by bodily exercise and by change of place, some relief from my intolerable sensations.*" (p.50) In chapter 16, he is in "*...a state of utter and stupid despair*" (p.78) And

six pages later, the narrator tells us: “*I wept bitterly*” (p.84) In chapter 21, the narrator wonders: “*Why did I not die? More miserable than man ever was before...*” (p.102) The unhappiness of the narrator is perceived in chapter 94 when he asserts that the barbarity of the monster he has created has brought desolation in him and has filled his heart with bitter remorse. In chapter 24, remorse is still perceptible: “*...my heart was poised with remorse*”(p.129); and one page after, he adds: “*...torn by the bitter remorse...*” (p.131)

In *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, it is the sadness of Dr Jekyll (the inventor of the monster) in the chapter entitled “The Incident of the Window”, which shows that he is regretting his invention, namely having created the monster. The story teller states: “*The middle one of the three windows was half-way open; and sitting close beside it, taking the air with an infinite sadness of mien, like some disconsolate prisoner, Utterson saw Dr. Jekyll.*” (p.21)

As a corollary to the themes just cited above, the peruser comes across the themes of fear and anguish that we intend to discuss in the following sub section..

#### IV.b)- Fear and anguish

##### - Fear

After what they have done, Frankenstein in the first novel, and Dr Jekyll in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* live in permanent fear. In *Frankenstein*, after creating the monster, Victor Frankenstein is in a state of fright. The narrator tells us that even the fall of a leaf startles him. He is afraid of each sound. The passage shows how frightened the narrator really is after creating the monster. He uses expressions such as “*My heart palpitated of fear*” (p.28); “*I stepped fearfully in*” (p.29); “*fear overcame me*” (p.38). The fear of the narrator is perceptible when he uses the verb “*to tremble*” (p.38). The enemy of the main character is the monster. The character lives in daily fear because he dreads that the monster kills other people. He is obliged to go out at night. He fears the vengeance of the monster to whom he has promised a female monster. Since Frankenstein has not kept his promise, he fears the monster’s reaction after his disappointment. Fear overwhelms and haunts the main character. He says: “*I was miserable and overcome by a thousand fears...*” (p.93) One page after, he adds: “*Every moment, I feared to meet my persecutor*” (p.94) Sometimes, in the text, the narrator substitutes the term ‘fear’ to ‘horror’. They become synonymous. In chapter 21 for example, he says: “*I felt yet parched with horror*” (p.102) Finally, the theme of fear appears when the narrator affirms “*... a thousand fears arose in my mind.*” (*ibid.*) To sum up, fear haunts him throughout the narrative.

In *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, fear is felt by Dr Jekyll, Mr Lanyon and the other characters of the diegesis. In the chapter entitled “incident at the Window”, Dr Jekyll’s workers are afraid: “*They’re all afraid*”, said Poole. *Blank silence followed.*” (p.23) In the chapter whose title is “Henry Jekyll’s Full Statement of the Case”, Henry Jekyll, the inventor of Mr Hyde, is afraid. He fears for his own life as he states: *I feared for my life.*” (p.40) The main character is not at ease. He is not reassured. That explains his quick paces: “*He walked fast, hunted by his fear.*” (p.46) His apprehensions and dread are confirmed when he says: “*I still hated and feared the thought of the brute (the monster).*” (p.46)

Dr Lanyon is the second character who lives in fear. This state has inhabited him since he saw Mr Hyde transform himself into Dr Jekyll. In the chapter entitled “Dr Lanyon’s Narrative”, Dr Lanyon says: “*...my mind submerged in terror*” (p.35) Some lines down, he adds: “*...the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night*” (p.35) On page 41, he speaks of “*...terror woke up in my breast.*” (p.41)



In the two novels, characters are also in the grip of anguish, as a consequence of the monsters they have created, and because they fear the bad deeds those beings are likely to do.

#### - Anguish

In *Frankenstein*, the theme of anguish is present in the main character. In chapter 7, the novel reads: "...the anguish I was destined to endure." (p.38) One page down, Frankenstein says: "No one can conceive the anguish I suffered during the remainder of the night." (p.39) The anguish of the inventor occurs during some events and situations. For example, when Justine is being judged for a murder committed by the monster created by Frankenstein, the character says: "My own agitation and anguish was extreme during the whole trial: I could not conceal the horrid anguish that possessed me." ((p.46) Finally on page 50, he states: "Elizabeth read my anguish in my countenance." The monster also lives in anguish. He does not know what Frankenstein thinks of him after he has killed Elizabeth (Frankenstein's wife). Speaking of the monster, the narrator states: "He approached, his countenance bespoke bitter anguish..." (p.53) The monster says in chapter 16: "I gave vent to my anguish in fearful howlings" (p.76) Two pages down, the monster adds: "...filled my soul with anguish." (p.90)

In *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, the theme of anguish is present. In chapter 6, Dr Lanyon shows his anguish: "My life is shaken to its roots; sleep has left me; the deadliest terror sits by me at all hours of the day and night; I feel that my days are numbered, and that I must die." (p.35) As for Dr Jekyll, he discloses his anguish through his reaction after the change which has occurred in him: "I was suddenly aware that I had lost in stature. There was no mirror, at that date, in my room." (p.38) He lives in anguish. He is afraid of being transformed into Mr Hyde at any moment: "It was the horror of being Hyde that racked me" (p.46)

When characters are anxious, they are often nervous. They are nervous because they are not at ease. They are tense. This state of being brings some tension into the story. That is the point we are going to discuss in the following sub section.

#### IV.c)- Nervousness and tension

The protagonist's nervousness begins to be clearly seen at the end of chapter 4, and it continues in chapter 5. The character says that he is affected by fever. He becomes nervous and fearful to such an extent that the fall of leaves makes him startle. The nervousness of the protagonist comes from the fact that he is going to give life to the monster he spent two years creating. He does not know the consequences of the coming into life of the monster. So, he is anxious: "I grew alarmed at the wreck I perceived..." (p.27) In chapter 5, the author renders the theme of nervousness once again manifest. The hero is all the more nervous as he is presently going to give life to the monster. That is going to happen in a dreary night. The writer includes the night (an element of the gothic novel) to signify that something special is going to occur. The writer adds another significant element which is rain, a symbol of bad weather: "it was already one in the morning, the rain pattered dismally against the panes" (p.27) After the monster has come to life, the protagonist is unable to endure the features, the aspect of the being he has just created. Nervously, he rushes out of his room. Overcome by lassitude and the desire to forget everything, he throws himself to bed. Unfortunately, his sleep is not peaceful. He dreams that he is seeing Elizabeth, his deceased mother. It is a nightmare in which he kisses his dead mother. He says: "Delighted and surprised, I embraced her, but as I imprinted the first kiss on her lips, they became livid with the hue of death..." (p.27) When the monster opens his eyes for the first time, the hero is very nervous. He escapes and rushes downstairs. He takes refuge in the courtyard "walking up and down in the greatest agitation, listening attentively, catching and fearing each sound..." (p.28) The hero

is tense. He says: *"Sometimes my pulse beat so quickly and hardly that I felt the palpitation of every artery; at others, I nearly sank to the ground through languor and extreme weakness."* (p.28) His nervousness is perceived when he walks in the street, *"pacing them (people) with quick steps as if I sought to avoid the wretch whom I feared every turning of the street would present to my view."* (p.28) The tension the hero is in reappears in the passage when he asserts: *"My heart palpitated in the sickness of fear, and I hurried on with irregular steps, not daring to look about me."* (p.28) The tension of the narrative is clearly perceived on page 29 through the attitude of the protagonist. The hero tells us that he trembled excessively. His tense attitude is manifest through the way he walks: *"I walked with a quick pace..."* (p.28) The main character is tense because he has left the monster in his house, and he does not know what happened to him. He is so anxious that he decides to come back to his apartment. His anxiety and nervousness are conveyed by words and expressions such as *"I dreaded to behold this monster"* (p.29), *"I feared still more"* (Ibid.), *"I darted up towards my own room"* (Ibid.), *"I stepped fearfully in"* (Ibid.) The hero's nervousness is seen once again on the following page. The story takes place in the court. A lady is being judged for a murder committed by the monster. The protagonist is ill at ease since he knows that the lady is not guilty. He tells us that he was unable to contain himself. Farther, he adds that he felt his flesh tingle with excess of sensitiveness, and that his pulse beat rapidly. He was unable to remain for a moment in the same place. The character is unstable. He has visions. He has the impression that the monster is near him. He states: *"I imagined that the monster seized me; I struggled furiously and fell down in a fit."* (p.30) He says some lines down that this was the beginning of a nervous fever *"which confined me for several months."*(p.30)

There is dramatic intensity<sup>9</sup> in the dialogues. For instance, the dialogue between Frankenstein and the monster in chapter 10 is rich in dramatic intensity. In the passage Frankenstein accuses the monster of having killed his friends. He calls the monster with all the qualifiers such as *"fiend"* (p.53), *"wretch"* (Ibid.), *"devil"* (Ibid.), *"vile insect"* (Ibid.). The protagonist says:

*"Devil," I exclaimed, "do you dare approach me? And do not you fear the fierce vengeance of my arm wreaked on your miserable head? Begone, vile insect! Or rather, stay, that I may trample you to dust! And, oh! That I could, with the extinction of your miserable existence, restore those victims whom you have so diabolically murdered!"* (p.53)

Tension is maintained when, during the dialogue, the monster says: *"but if you refuse, I will glut the maw of death, until it be satiated with the blood of your remaining friends."* (p.54) The answer of the hero is harsh: *"Abhorred monster! Fiend that thou art! The tortures of hell are too mild a vengeance for thy crimes. Wretched devil! You reproach me with your creation, come on, then, that I may extinguish the spark which I so negligently bestowed."* (p.54)

Another dramatic scene occurs in chapter 20 where Frankenstein and the monster meet again. They quarrel because Frankenstein promised the monster a wife. Unfortunately he did not keep his promise. The monster is furious and promises revenge:

*Man! You may hate, but beware! Your hours will pass in dread and misery, and soon the bolt will fall which must ravish from you your happiness forever. Are you to be happy while I grovel in the intensity of my wretchedness? You can blast my other passions, but revenge*

*remains—revenge, henceforth dearer than light or food! I may die, but first you, my tyrant and tormentor, shall curse the sun that gazes on your misery. (p.96)*

The scene is striking. The protagonist answers: “*Devil, cease; and do not poison the air with these sounds of malice. I have declared my resolution to you, and I am no coward to bend beneath words. Leave me; I am inexorable.*” (p.96) In those scenes, the reader feels anger, disgust and discontent in the two characters.

Other two themes characteristic of gothic romance are mystery and suspense, that we intend to analyse in the following points.

#### IV.d)- Mystery and suspense

These themes are present in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. The story evolves around those two themes. For example, a mystery surrounds Dr Jekyll’s voice. His workers are astonished at his voice change. Mr Poole who is Dr Jekyll’s servant wonders if it is his Master’s voice. That is why he asks Mr Utterson, the lawyer: “*Was that my master’s voice?*” (p.24) the lawyer replies that it has changed. Mr Utterson tries his best to be rational about the mystery. Logically, he says, if someone had murdered Jekyll, why would he still be in there? Poole then explains more about whoever is in the room. “*Whatever it is “, he says, it has been crying night after night for some sort of medicine*” (p.24) Dr Jekyll used to cry out for certain medicines and write his orders on a sheet of paper and throw the paper on the stairs. The narrator tells us that one day, Poole came into the large room just below Jekyll’s private room and there digging among some crates, was a creature who was so startled at seeing Poole that he cried out “*and whipped upstairs*” (p.25) Mr Poole amplifies the mystery when he says:

*No, sir; master's made away with; he was made, away with eight days ago, when we heard him cry out upon the name of God; and who's in there instead of him, and why it stays there, is a thing that cries to Heaven, Mr. Utterson!" (p.24)*

Mr Utterson orders to take an axe in order to break the door. The narrator says: “*The lawyer took that rude but weighty instrument into his hand...*” (p.26) Mr Utterson reminds Mr Poole of the great responsibility they have taken for deciding to break the door. Mr Poole wonders why Dr Jekyll ran away. He adds that if it was his master, he would not have behaved like that. He also wonders why he wore a mask. Mr Utterson exclaims: “*These are all very strange circumstances.*” (p.25)

The narration on page 28 reminds us that the gothic novel is characterized by stirring narrations, narrations full of suspense. The reader is in a state of anguish as well as the characters. The mystery related to his voice change begins to be unveiled when they realize that it is not Dr jekyll’s voice. Mr Utterson says: “*Ah, that’s not Jekyll’s voice. It’s Hyde’s.*” (p.28) The mystery is solved and suspense ends when the narrator asserts:

*Right in the midst there lay the body of a man sorely contorted and still twitching. They drew near on tiptoe, turned it on its back and beheld the face of Edward Hyde. He was dressed in clothes far too large for him, clothes of the doctor's bigness the cords of his face still moved with a semblance of life, but life was quite gone. (p.28)*

There is another mystery in the storyline. It is about Dr Jekyll's body. The narrator says: "*Nowhere was there any trace of Henry Jekyll, dead or alive.*" (p.28) The reader who has followed the story knows that Dr Jekyll is within Mr Hyde. They are the same person. It is the same body, but the face has changed as well as his stature.

Dr Jekyll's transformation into Mr Hyde is also a mystery. In the chapter entitled "The Last Night", the reader comes across that transformation thanks to Dr Lanyon's account of what he saw:

*"O God!" I screamed, and "O God!" again and again; 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.35)*

However, the process of that transformation is known by the reader. Mr Hyde tells us how he proceeded: "*I once more prepared and drank the cup, once more suffered the pangs of dissolution, and came to myself once more with the character, the stature, and the face of Henry Jekyll.*" (p.39) The consequence of that metamorphosis is that Dr Jekyll feels "*younger, lighter, happier in body...*" (p.38)

The last point of discussion will be the themes of doom and gloom which are characteristic features of gothic romance.

#### IV.e)- Atmosphere of doom and gloom

The atmosphere of doom and gloom is another element of the gothic romance. In *Frankenstein*, we have the impression that the protagonist is condemned. Most of the time the dark colour and rain follow or surround him. It is the case in chapter 5. The protagonist is compelled to run because he is tracked by darkness and rain: "*...I felt impelled to hurry on...drenched by the rain which poured from a black and comfortless sky.*" (p.28)

The rain and darkness have a special meaning in chapter 7. They are related to the protagonist. The main character asserts for example: "*...grief and fear again overcame me. Night also closed around.*" (p.38) The presence of darkness and the rain which is tightly related to the character implies that the main character is condemned to die. In that effect, the darkness and the humidity of the setting are pregnant with meaning. They connote the misfortune of the hero, his bad luck and the sentence which is reserved to him at the closure of the novel. The character himself imagines what will happen to him later on: "*...I foresaw obscurely that I was destined to become the most wretched of human beings.*" (p.38) The presence of darkness and rain is manifest through words and expressions such as "*it was completely dark*" (p.38), "*the storm appeared*" (Ibid.), "*the dark mountains*" (Ibid.), "*the darkness and storm increased every minute*" (p.39), "*pitchy darkness*" (Ibid.) In that chapter, the presence of darkness, rain, and the thunder prepares the appearance of the monster in the mountains. The author has used those elements of gothic fiction as a technique. The reader witnesses the presence of the monster when the protagonist asserts:

*I perceived in the gloom a figure which stole from behind a clump of trees near me; I stood fixed, gazing intently: I could not be mistaken. A flash of lightning illuminated the object, and discovered its shape plainly to me; its gigantic stature, and the deformity of its aspect more hideous than belongs to humanity... (p.39)*

Darkness literally follows the main character. In chapter 10, he states: “*Darkness then came over me*” (p.55) Towards the end of the novel, the hero says: “*Darkness pressed around me*” (p.103) This gives the reader the impression that darkness is a living entity. It is sure that the scenery plays an important role in that novel. Mary Shelley gives importance to the setting. Here, darkness becomes a character. It controls the characters and decides of their lots. Even the monster is not spared, because when he dies, he is covered with darkness. The story narrator says in the last sentence of the story: “*He (the monster) was soon borne away by the waves and lost in darkness and distance.*” (p.131)

The passage is highly symbolic, full of meaning. It is one of the best passages of the novel.

### Conclusion

The object of the present article was to try to demonstrate that *Frankenstein* and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* belonged to the gothic tradition of the novel. The elements of the diegesis such as the setting (the atmosphere of gloom), the attitudes and behaviours of characters (fear, anguish, nervousness, remorse and sadness), the creation of monsters, mystery and suspense, helped to show the gothic peculiarity of the two works of fiction.

The scientific interest of this study lies in its contribution to the studies on the gothic novel and gothic romance. As for *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, it is not considered a gothic novel as such. It belongs to the detective and mystery novel. One of the interests of this study has been to view that novel from the angle of the gothic; opening, may be, a new prospect in the study of Louis Stevenson’s piece of fiction.

### Notes:

- 1- “Semiotic” is an adjective which comes from Semiotics, a branch of linguistics that studies signs and symbols. Literary semiotics endeavours to study how (and not why) the text says what it says. Literary semiotics refuses to take into account any external considerations to study the text.
- 2- A.J. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. 1979, p.422.
- 3- Lee T. Lemon, *A Glossary of the Study of English*. New York: Oxford University Press. 1971, p.100.
- 4- Ian Ousby, *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 1988, p.405.
- 5- <http://www.wikipedia>. The Free Encyclopedia.com
- 6- A. J. Cuddon, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979, p.289
- 7- Martin Gray, *A Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Beirut: Librairie du Liban. 1992, p.129
- 8- <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/ent/A08213>
- 9- ‘Dramatic intensity’ refers to the tension created by a scene, a dialogue or a situation.

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