

Trabajo Fin de Grado

The Gothic villain and his role As hero or anti-hero in Gothic Fiction

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2015

Después de situar la novela Gótica en su periodo histórico y artístico correspondiente, este ensayo pretende estudiar los conceptos del bien y el mal con el objetivo de tener un mayor entendimiento de la psique de los protagonistas de cuatro de las novelas góticas más populares a nivel universal. Dichos personajes son: Heathcliff (*Wuthering Heights*), Edward Rochester (*Jane Eyre*), Victor Frankenstein y su Monstruo (*Frankenstein*), y Dr Henry Jekyll/Mr Edward Hyde (*The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*). A través del psicoanálisis de los personajes desde el punto de vista Freudiano, el estudio de arquetipos, y la teoría evolucionista o Darwiniana en la literatura – y más concretamente en el género Gótico – procederé a determinar si estos personajes son realmente villanos en sus propias historias. Como resultado, se podría decir que estos personajes, en casos concretos, se pueden considerar en ciertos modo víctimas de las tensiones de la represiva sociedad Victoriana, cuyos férreos valores están obligados a adoptar y ejercer, convirtiéndolos en rebeldes, e incluso monstruos.

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The gothic villain, the antihero par excellence of some of the most celebrated Romantic works in history, has always been a controversial figure, as not everyone perceives these characters in the same way. On the one hand, the villain might be viewed as a tyrannic person whose evil and mischievousness has no limits, a machiavelic figure in the tradition of literature, as for instance Richard III or Lady Macbeth in Shakespeare's plays, or the Archdeacon Claude Frollo in Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame*. On the other hand, he is sometimes perceived as a misunderstood character whose circumstances obliged him to become a villain, as could be the case of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, Erik in *The Phantom of the Opera*, or the monster in *Frankenstein*. These characters have always drawn the attention of not only scholars, but also readers among the last centuries; in their own way they have been the favorites among the audience. It is the mystery in their nature which makes them attractive, their evil and yet their capacity to feel passionately that makes them more human and less of a monster, and therefore creates some kind of empathy on the reader. However, there are also villains whose simple mention would cause terror, villains whose nature is dark and rotten, as Count Dracula in Bram Stoker's homonymous novel. Therefore, it could be said that this kind of character never leaves anyone indifferent. This may be so because of the influence of the narrative voice, of other characters' thoughts on the villain, or the style in which the novel itself is written, directly affects the way in which the readers perceive this figure, hence feeling empathy or rejection towards the villain. The main focus of this essay will be on the nature of the gothic villain and the byronic hero, along with the analysis of the personal circumstances of each character from an evolutionary and archetypal point of view in order to determine the evil or corrupted nature of this figure, with the purpose to classify each of the following characters as proper villains or troubled heroes. Therefore, it will include the analysis of the anti-heroes in the following novels: *Wuthering Heights*

(1847), *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), and *Frankenstein* (1818). Moreover, this analysis will allow us to see the relativity of the concepts of good and evil, and the importance of archetypes, which are capable of making the reader certain ideas that would contribute to the perception of the antagonist as a villain, and the important role of Victorian society in the development of the evil in these characters.

In order to have a better understanding of the psychoanalysis of the characters, it would be necessary to have a clear notion about the origins of morality, and what might be considered evil. Most of the earliest references about good and evil are present in Eastern religions, as in Zoroastrianism. This is a monotheistic religion in which the prophet Zarathustra distinguishes between two main forces, the Asha, which represents the truth and goodness, and Duj, which stands for the Lies, and evil itself (Boyce, 1996). Moreover, almost every religion has its own concept for Good and Evil, for what is right and what is wrong, and usually there are some tenets or dogmas by which the principles of Good try to overcome the powers of evil. Jared Diamond deals with the main purpose of religions, posing an explanatory purpose as an early function for people in the past who could only recur to myth and stories in order to explain the world surrounding them. Religions gather several social ideals in order to promote the cohesion of human groups. Moreover, he also considers an obedience doctrinal function; the one who is not faithful, or does not follow the social ideals of that religion shall be punished (Diamond, 2011). Those who do not live according to these social ideals or tenets live in so called sin. It could be said that sin is bad for humanity, but it is also part of being human; even humanity in its purest origins – with Adam and Eve – was tempted by sin, so it is a part of our very nature. Therefore, it could be said that human nature is, in a certain way, ambivalent. "We are all genetic chimeras, at once saints and sinners, champions of truth and hypocrites"—because of our evolutionary history" (Wilson, 2014). According to E.

O Wilson, who also deals with evolutionist literature, humanity follows two kind of tendencies; altruistic and selfish, linked, respectively, to group selection and to individual selection, the two interacting dynamics of Darwinian evolution which have given rise to mankind. The former are the tendencies that make humans worry about their neighbours, and act consequently with their needs and feelings; this is the kind of tendency that religions highlight in order to be good. The latter represents the tendencies which make us worry more about ourselves. This could be either called selfishness or instinct of survival. It could be suggested that Gothic villains might represent the “selfish” tendencies of the self, however, as humans, both heroes and villains have these two tendencies

As an instance, in Christianity we have God, which represents goodness, life, and light, and Satan or Lucifer as the depiction of evil. It could be suggested that one of the most relevant literary works for the study of the Gothic villain is *Paradise Lost*, written by John Milton in 1667. This epic poem narrates the downfall of Lucifer as a fallen angel from heaven to hell, along with the entrance and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise. Therefore, it is explained how Lucifer was in his origins an angel, but he was corrupted and then expelled from heaven, thus becoming Satan.

*“Confounded though immortal: But his doom
Reserv'd him to more wrath; for now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay
Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate”*

- *Paradise Lost*, Book I.

Feeling miserable, he wants to take revenge on the inhabitants of Paradise, Adam and Eve, so he takes the form of a snake and successfully tempts Eve. Some Romantic authors, such as Percy Shelley or Blake, contemplate Milton's Satan as the true hero of the poem (Greenblatt, 2012). Moreover, the figure of Prometheus, from Greek mythology is also utilized in Gothic fiction, as the one who rebels against the established order with the aim to achieve forbidden knowledge, as in Lord Byron's *Prometheus*, which would later have an important impact in the literature of later authors as Mary Shelley or the Brontës.

Therefore, the evolutionary view of good and evil, previously mentioned in E.O Wilson's work, provides a new point of view in which evil is rather relative and might be sometimes mistaken with an aim for survival, or just with a dark side of the human mind that can be found not only in villains, but in every person. Moreover, Wilson's theory could be associated to Gilbert Durand, who also follows the ideological line of evolutionism in literature, deepening in the imagery and the conception of archetypes, which is also related to Frye's "Theory of Symbols".

In his book *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, Durand reflects about symbols, ideas, and anthropology. He tries to analyse the constant elements in human imagination and go beyond the mere impression we have about something (a character in this case). According to him, psychic characteristics are not immutable, and they change in the intercourse of the ontogenetic evolution under the pressure of crisis or traumas (Durand, 2005). The symbol, or character, is always influenced by external factors. Therefore, it could be said that Durand's perception of the archetypes between good and evil, or a hero or a villain are not fixed for good, but there can be alterations that might make a villain of a hero, which is what happens in many works of Gothic fiction. Durand's theory could also be related to that of Northrop Frye's work. Frye deals

with the theory of symbols, and the way in which they are interpreted. Moreover, he explains that “the symbol is a communicable unit, which is named archetype: a recurring image” (Frye, 1957). He asserts that archetypal criticism is “concerned with literature as a social fact and as a mode of communication” (Frye, 1957). Furthermore, he explains that we give an unconscious approach to conventions, meaning that we unconsciously relate some ideas that we have already preconceived. Moreover, Frye defines archetypes as associative clusters, which differ from signs in that archetypes are complex variables; one symbol might involve different interpretations. This is what happens when we try to classify the Gothic villains as heroes or anti-heroes. Furthermore, this line of thought could be also associated to Joseph Carroll, who follows the tendency of Darwinian studies, which focuses on criticism in literature from an evolutionist point of view. From a classical Darwinist perspective, villainy could be associated to the struggle for survival: only the fittest survive, and this can be portrayed in the survival of the Gothic villains throughout the novel (Carroll, 1995: 37) . They witness several deaths around them, however, they will survive the other characters, until they eventually due to certain reasons, have to die. This could be related to the myth of Prometheus, previously mentioned, who had to face an exemplary punishment for his chage of forbidden knowledge, just like Victor Frankenstein, who will have to stand the chasing of the monster, and the death of his loved ones as a punishment for dealing with dangerous knowledge. Therefore, Gothic villains follow the archetype of being passionate, ambiguous, along with a blurred perception of the concepts of good and evil. (Norman, 1969) Nevertheless, it could be said that Evil as we understand it is only present within the human community, and it concerns the apostasy of what makes the human community possible.

In the mid 18th century, Germany saw the birth of a new movement that emerged as a reaction against the preponderant tendency towards rationalization in the Enlightenment. This new movement was present not only in literature, but also in other crafts as music or painting, and it extended to other fields as philosophy and the sciences. Although its origins are rooted in Germany with the creation of the Sturm und Drang – late 18th c. movement characterized by the narration of vivid actions and the emphasis on emotionalism along with the rebellion of the individual versus society – it could be said that the French Revolution had a definite impact on this movement, along with the independence of the present United States from the British Empire, as it symbolized the defiance against the established order, concretely to the aristocracy, who represented much of the values of the Age of Reason. Moreover, it could be suggested that it is the society of each age or era which changes, or adjust literature to their own needs and circumstances.

Therefore, it could be said that the social conflicts and tensions of the age were portrayed in literature, most of the time embodied in the figure of the villain. Raymond Williams, for example, deals in his book *Culture and Society* (1958) with the culture developed after the Industrial Revolution through the analysis of the works of some of the most relevant figures in Romanticism, such as Edmund Burke, William Blake and William Wordsworth among many others. Therefore, Romanticism was an intellectual movement rather than an aesthetic tendency. Romanticism developed differently in Europe, but they followed several dogmas that remained the same. As mentioned previously, the importance of feelings and emotions over reason, along with the presence of the supernatural and the episodic structure, traced some of the principles that would later be transferred to Gothic fiction. Moreover, Romantic artists have been accused of

escapists, but actually they were men and women very concerned with and aware of their own time. (MacAndrew 1980: 3)

The origins of Gothic fiction go back to the publication of *The Castle of Otranto*, written in 1764 by Horace Walpole. According to MacAndrew, author of *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction*, many Gothic writers consider evil as a distortion of the self, something which is not natural, but rather psychological (p. 4) This genre gives form to unstable fears and impulses, which sometimes are provided by the author's subconscious, or taken from myth or popular romances. It could be said that one of the main purposes of Gothic fiction is to lead the reader's impressions through his identification with the characters and their feelings, therefore establishing some kind of empathy toward them. Hence, this genre's aim was the reader to establish an emotional connection to the characters, arousing feelings as fear, sympathy, or even hatred. Furthermore, among the many objectives of Gothic fiction, it is also visible that this genre also deepens in the presence and the causes of evil in the human mind. However, there is a distinction between the earliest Gothic and the later Gothic. In early Gothic fiction, the ideas of good and evil were extremely different, but as the genre became more and more successful and prolific, evil was started to be seen as relative, that is, as a psychological state of mind. (MacAndrew, 1980: 4) Therefore, by the time this genre was reaching the zenith of its success, several writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Emily Brontë or Henry James used madness and evil as very similar deformations of the human being. Thus, in the development of Gothic fiction throughout the late 18th century and the 19th that we are able to perceive the writer's particular perception of human evil. Moreover, it is said that evil is a "monstrosity" because the good is represented by beauty, so evil is a deformation of beauty, that is the reason why many of the villains look monstrous, or the landscapes in which the action takes place. (MacAndrew, 1980: 3). As an instance, we could say that

the desolated and frozen region in which Weston and Frankenstein are stucked in *Frankenstein* is one of these horrid landscapes. Furthermore, the lake and the castle in *The Fall of the House of Usher*, by Edgar Allan Poe could also be seen as an example of this kind of landscapes. Usually, these grotesque landscapes are related to the unconscious and the state of mind.

It is commonly believed that this genre follows an escapist tendency which intends to create terror for terror's sake. The conception of Gothic literature as a tendency whose only purpose is to escape its own time might be kind of misleading. There are some sociological views on this genre taking it to be as violent as the time in which it arose, a tendency that tried to get away of the previous contradictory age. It could be seen as an extension of Romanticism, but with some characteristic features that made it really popular among the Georgian society, and afterwards, the Victorian public (MacAndrew, 1980: 4). However, the success of the Gothic throughout the next couple of centuries indicates that this genre does not belong to an historical period only. It is a genre which does not belong to a specific historical period, but it is rather connected to some principles that catch the attention of people throughout the centuries, this would explain the reason why nowadays there are several novels that might be considered Gothic, such as *The Angel's Game*, a recent novel written by the Spanish author Carlos Ruiz Zafón, which makes use of the supernatural and terrific elements, among others. Nevertheless, novels of other genres also make use of Gothic elements as an archetypal creation of the mind, which could be related to Frye and Durand's perception of the symbols that people unconsciously relate to the Gothic genre. As previously mentioned, Gothic fiction deals with bizarre places, usually surrounded by an horrific or supernatural atmosphere, the feeling of the sublime – which will be explained further on –, passion and eroticism, and far in space and time, being the Medieval period a very common setting in time, and

exotic cities such as Rome or Madrid, portrayed in novels as *The Vampyr* (1819), or *The Monk* (1796).

In the early Victorian period, there was what could be named “a domestication of medievalism”. Romances were a very notorious precedent of Romanticism, which could also be considered a hybrid genre, and the plots within this genre usually take place in medieval times. There was always a hero, or the figure knight-errant which would eventually develop in the so-called Victorian “muscleman” (Wiesenfarth, 1988: 64). This new figure symbolized the domestication of the primitiveness which was predominant in the medieval times, and therefore the domestication of this new hero. In a time when faith was continuously questioned, the figure of the muscleman, or muscular man split off from the Christian, which was defined by Thomas Hughes as “a man of no belief whatsoever as to the purpose for which his body was given him, except some hazy idea that it [was] to go up and down the world with him, belabouring men and captivating women for his benefit or pleasure” (Girouard, 1981: 142). This could be related to the selfish part of the self which Wilson commented on in his evolutive theory. Heathcliff is the most selfish character in the novel, and that way he will survive almost every other character of his own generation, but his selfishness will rot his character, transforming him into a monstrous human being.

Somehow, Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* could be somehow taken into consideration as a muscleman, as his rejection by Hindley, Catherine, and the Lintons, might have contributed to his conversion into an evil man, who would eventually seduce Isabella for his own benefit, which would be considered as a revenge against the Lintons and Catherine herself. Furthermore, the domestication takes place the very moment Emily Brontë decides to get away from the conventionalisms of the Gothic in dark castles and lugubre places and take it to a country house, to the threshold of the home; even to the

bedrooms themselves, in Catherine's moment of madness in the Thushcross Grange or her apparition to Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (Wiesenfarth, 1988: 67). In this novel, the reader can appreciate the evolution – or regression – of Heathcliff's character throughout the story. Since the very moment of his arrival, he is treated as an intruder, as someone who is different not only physically, but also an outsider, someone whose origins are unknown who appears all of a sudden in the Earnshaws' home. Furthermore, the constant vexation he suffers from Hindley and Joseph, along with Catherine's bitter comments when she gets to adolescence make the reader empathize with Heathcliff, who is only trying his best to fit in the family. It could be said that, at the beginning of the first part of the novel, Heathcliff is the character whom the reader feels more connected to, as we get to feel Nelly's preoccupation towards him, and his close connection to her, due to the narration technique, as she is an intradiegetic and homodiegetic narrator, as well as focalizer, so it is Nelly's perceptions for what we guide our impressions towards Heathcliff.

However, this changes when Heathcliff leaves *Wuthering Heights* and returns after being away for several years. He is no longer a servant, but a wealthy man whose capital has a kind of mysterious origin. Heathcliff can be identified with the working class, or those under the rule of superiors, which have been oppressed by the aristocracy. From the arrival of feudalism to the late 18th century, the most powerful classes took advantage of the peasants, or workers. However, with the arrival of the bourgeoisie, those belonging to the lower class could afford to gain money, and become wealthy, therefore taking from the aristocracy the properties they had inherited (Veblen, 1955: 192). Hence, this is what Heathcliff does, he becomes a member of the middle classes in order to prosper and take over Hindley Earnshaw's property, and eventually, to take revenge on the Lintons. From this point onwards, we can see a transformation in his personality. He

has come to be a bitter, bad tempered, and vindictive man whose only purpose is to take revenge against whoever treated him harshly in his childhood and adolescence. Some scholars regard Heathcliff as “not only as hateful, cruel and destructive; she [Emily] shows us also how he became so” (David Wilson, 1947: 144). Therefore, the harassment of those who thought themselves “better” than him, turned Heathcliff into a cruel, distrustful man; as if he was in a process of destruction of his own self through the enjoyment of the suffering of those who did him harm. The point in which this process is complete is Catherine’s death, a process of transformation from the hero to the villain of the story. Hence, at this point Heathcliff completes his transformation into a Byronic hero, who can be described as ‘a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance in his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection.’ (Brown, 1939: 379). Lord Byron has an important impact on Emily’s narratives, as I will explain afterwards.

The reader gets to know the story through Nelly’s point of view, who is not a very reliable narrator, as she did not know fully the thoughts of the other characters. Nevertheless, along with Heathcliff’s transformation into a villain, the perception of the reader towards him changes as well. It is made clear that Heathcliff’s inability to feel happiness and his need to make everyone else feel as miserable as himself makes him a sadistic, and diabolical – adjective which is used at several points of the novel to refer to Heathcliff– character.

It could be suggested that Heathcliff is the most connected character to the supernatural theme and to mystery in the whole novel, which definitely contributes to his perception as a villain. He is not only haunted by his past – by Catherine’s rejection, the Lintons’ disdain and the constant mistreatment towards him – but also by Catherine’s ghost and her omniscient presence. The reader never gets to know his past, or what he did

to gain his wealth, although it gives the impression that it was not gained by honourable ways. Thus, his mysterious origins along with his dark and unknown past, helps the reader to create a perception of Heathcliff as a tortured hero that eventually becomes a villain. This novel follows the Gothic tradition of the beginning of an important event with the death of a character. For instance, Heathcliff's harsh life begins with the death of Mr Earnshaw, Catherine's death represents the beginning of the second part of the book, and eventually Heathcliff's death closes the novel with the "liberation" of Cathy Linton and Hareton from all the suffering, and from *Wuthering Heights* itself. Catherine's end is the beginning of Cathy's life, who has a resemblance to her, and this causes an extreme pain in Heathcliff. Therefore, life without Catherine is Heathcliff's personal hell, which is one more element that establishes a certain resemblance to a demon, or an evil creature.

Heathcliff keeps a certain resemblance with a coetaneous character, created by the hand of Emily's sister, Charlotte Brontë; Mr Edward Rochester. He is the main male character of Charlotte Brontë's most celebrated novel, *Jane Eyre*, published the same year than *Wuthering Heights*. The Brontë sisters received a very similar education, and an early interest in literature. Both of them were deeply influenced by Lord Byron's poetry, and especially by his Romantic way of life, which involved exile and turbulent love affairs that would be later portrayed in some characters in the Brontë's novels. Furthermore, one of his main influences on their novels lies on the creation of the two main male figures, Heathcliff and Mr Rochester. Both incarnate perfectly the figure of the Byronic hero, explained earlier in this essay.

Mr Rochester is described by Jane, the female protagonist that gives the name to the novel, as a proud, and somehow dark man, with constant changes in his mood and a rather mysterious background. The reader cannot fully get to know Mr Rochester's past until the novel is pretty advanced, so it could be suggested that most of the time he is

surrounded by a enigmatic halo which makes him more of a Byronic hero. Moreover, his manners towards people, and women in particular are rather abrupt and sharp, but there are several moments in which he shows his personal charm, so that could lead us to think that this is the reason why he has various mistresses throughout the novel. This charm is accentuated when he falls in love with Jane, when he shows how passionate he can be. “After a youth and manhood passed half in unutterable misery and half in dreary solitude, I have for the first time found what I can truly love - I have found you” (Brontë, 1992). This quotation remarks his role as a Byronic hero, as he is capable of feeling such things as hatred, thirst for revenge and cruelty, and yet capable of deep and true feelings.

The figure of the Byronic hero implies the lack of certain qualities or virtues present in the traditional Victorian heroes, such as honesty or respectability. It could be suggested that Mr Rochester somehow pretends to be a respectable and honourable man, which is what it is expected from a wealthy gentleman, but he knows that he is far from being the example of the Victorian gentleman. One of the main factors that contribute to our perception of Mr Rochester as a villain is his link to supernatural elements. He is associated with darkness at several points in the novel, firstly in his physical description, and later on in his mood as well. At his first meeting with Jane, she highlights the way in which he frowns, and the roughness of his character “He had a dark face, with stern features, and a heavy brow; his eyes and gathered eyebrows looked ireful and thwarted just now” (p.174). However, despite his gloomy, dark, and mysterious presence, he is also shown to have deep and passionate feelings, as mentioned before ““He rose and came towards me, and I saw his face all kindled, and his full falcon-eye flashing, and tenderness and passion in every lineaments” (p. 256).

Counting on the many aspects that make of Edward Rochester a Gothic villain, it shall be noticed that he somehow treats Jane as if she was of his own property. Somehow, it could be suggested that he is kind of a misogynist, as his treatment to women is usually of a owner over an object or a slave. Nevertheless, the most remarkable fact which would prove his role as a villain is the imprisonment of his wife, Bertha Mason. According to his own side of the story, he had to keep her locked because she became mad, and aggressive. It could be said that the imprisonment of Bertha in the tower metaphorically represents the confinement of women in the Victorian society, which was a male society. The imprisonment of women could was a very recurrent topic in the Gothic genre, such as the immurement of the murderer's wife in Poe's *The Black Cat*. Therefore, Mr Rochester represents this male supremacy, furthermore, the white male supremacy, as she is a Caribbean woman. This could lead to think that her locking also represent the repression of the British Empire over the colonies. A century later, Jean Rhys, a Caribbean creole woman rewrote Charlotte Brontë's story from the point of view of Bertha Mason, who had to leave her home and even change her name in order to please Mr Rochester, who is portrayed as a despot and a tyrannical figure.

One of the novels which has been most discussed about the theme of villainy is Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. On the one hand, we have the Creature or Monster, a creation of Dr Victor Frankenstein in his attempt to create life. As the novel advances, the reader can easily feel some kind of sympathy towards the Creature, as his murderous and criminal acts are committed due to resentment and rejection rather than for the sake of mischief. He is a lonesome character, rejected by everyone from the very moment he is created due to the monstrosity of his nature. It could be suggested that this makes him more of an outcast than a villain. Furthermore, it should be noticed that the first rejection he experiences is from Victor himself, his "father", which would leave a permanent scar

in the Creature's feelings and would directly affect his following acts. Firstly, he does not understand why he has been left alone, and he starts – just as his father – a quest for knowledge lead by his curiosity about the world. At one point he arrives to a cottage, where he finds two men having a conversation about worldly matters, and it is in that moment that he becomes self-aware of his own monstrosity. From this point onwards, he feels hatred towards Victor, not only because he abandoned him, but also because of envy of his family and friends; he is aware he has no equal, and that kills him inside.

At several points in the novel, the Creature is shown to have human feelings, as any other character in the novel; it could be said that the Creature even has more human feelings than humans themselves. The most prominent example would be the moment in which Victor, realizing that he has created something outrageous and preposterous, escapes from the Creature's presence, leaving him alone and scared (Shelley, 1999). Moreover, when the Creature is on his way to Geneva, he rescues a girl from drowning in a pond, but a young man shoots him thinking he attacked her. Another instance is when the Creature begs for a companion, an equal with whom he can be friends with, which Victor agrees to, however, at the last moment he regrets his deed, and throws the new creature to the river, causing the Creature's pain and rage (Shelley, 1999).

He, the Creature, has to deal not only with the rejection of the people around him, but also with the mistreatment and an absolute indifference towards his feelings, as when Victor throws the female Creature to the river; he does not contemplate how this would affect the Creature. Moreover, it should be pointed out that he is referred as "Monster" most of the time, this makes him even less of a human, so maybe this is one of the reasons why he behaves like a monster, because society's rejection made him that way. Therefore, he is proven not to be wholly evil, as he shows his good feelings at many points in the novel, being the last chapter the most important one, when he moans Victor's death

(Shelley, 1999). He feels sorry for the pain and agony that he has caused in Victor, thinking himself the murderer of his Creator:

“This is also my victim! [...] in his murder my crimes are consummated; the miserable series of my being is wound to its close! Oh, Frankenstein! Generous and self-devoted being! What does it avail that I now ask thee to pardon me? I, who irretrievably destroyed thee by destroying all thou lovedst. Alas! He is cold, he cannot answer me.”

(Final chapter, p. 167)

On the other hand, the character of Dr Victor Frankenstein has some tints that might put him in the role of the main antagonist, and villain of this novel. One of the most popular themes in Gothic fiction is the defiance of the law of the father. According to Freud's *The Family Romance*, in Gothic fiction, the children – the ones under the law – are unhappy because of the prohibitions of the father, so breaking of these rules would suppose the breaking with the law of the father (Freud, 1959: 76). It shall be noticed that from this point onwards, I shall refer to the father as a figure of authority, not as Victor Frankenstein's biological father, unless I specifically say it. We can appreciate this defiance towards his father's rules – Alphone Frankenstein – when Victor keeps reading Cornelius Agrippa and other philosophical texts when his father especifically tells him not to do so, as such books are a waste of his own time. It could be said that the figure of Cornelius Agrippa at the time that *Frankenstein* was written, was considered rather a figure of low credibility, as he was a philosopher somehow related with occult sciences, so the position of the father towards the book that Victor is reading would be the one that any learned gentlemen of the age would have taken. Therefore, from this point onwards Victor begins to challenge and break the law of his father by spending most of his time dedicated to the study of this subjects, to the point when it becomes his own obsession. From the Freudian point of view, One of the most important restrictions directed by the

father is the incest with the mother, or the sister. Caroline Frankenstein is shown to have many good qualities, as she “possessed a mind of an uncommon mould [...] asoft and benevolent mind”, and also “she was full of tender caresses [...] and fortitude and benignity” (Shelley, 1999). It could be suggested that Victor had some kind of Oedipus Complex, which is closely related to the figure of the Gothic villain. As his mother dies when he is still a child, he substitutes Elizabeth, a “cousin”, or friend of the family that has been raised as his sister in order to make up for his desire for a mother.

However, Victor Frankenstein’s worst crime against the law of the father is his challenge to God himself by giving life to an unnatural creature, made at his will. In the moment Dr Frankenstein breaks the law of nature, he becomes aware of his own boldness, and how far he has gone. Moreover, it could be suggested that the creation of the Creature though unnatural methods could be related to Coleridge’s perception of the fancy, recorded in his *Bibliographia Literaria*, published in 1817. According to this text, with imagination you are able to create something through the combination of elements in an organic way, nevertheless, fancy involves a mechanical process, in which the product is not organic, therefore not beautiful. Dr Frankenstein’s Creature is created through fancy, and as a consequence, the result is monstrous. (Manson and Stewart, 1993; 229)

Diana Reese, in “A Troubled Legacy: Mary Shelley’s “Frankenstein” and the Inheritance of Human Rights” discusses the role of Victor as a villain, due to his constant lack of care about the creature he has just brought to life (Reese, 148). She reflects about how the abandonment of the Creature, along with Victor’s arrogance towards God and nature itself, and the fact that he allows the continuous murderers, puts him in the role of the antagonistic figure in Shelley’s novel. The fact that he is an antagonist and one of the main characters as well, might lead to think that Victor, as focalizer, has somehow repented of his deeds at the time he meets Walton, therefore assuming his role as a villain

in the past. Furthermore, Victor is also seen as the main core for every catastrophe that takes place in the book. According to Paul Sherwin, writer of “Frankenstein as Catastrophe”, Victor has the opportunity to avoid several of the devastating events described in the novel; however, he chooses to play a passive role, and do nothing; he does have not to be the one who commits the crimes to be evil, though if he stays passive and o does nothing about them, he becomes equally villanous.

What it is clear, is that Victor belongs to a society that sees him as an equal, a society with certain prejudices which lead towards the rejection of the different, the “monstrous”. It could be suggested that society is the real villain of this novel, the ones who do not accept the Creature, forcing him into a world of loneliness, bitterness, and mischief. Moreover, it could be equally suggested that Mary Shelley makes a reference to Benevolism in this novel; no creature is born evil, but it is society, and their own circumstances which make an individual evil. (Richards, 1996). According to Carroll’s conception of good and evil, it could be said that the Creature is not born evil, but his evolution throughout the novel, the constant mistreatment, and the fact that he is not wholly human make him become a real monster, committing crimes as a justification for his pain and loneliness. (Carroll, 1995)

There are some readings of the text that regards the Creature as a parody, or a double of Victor himself, as they both have problems in communicating their own feelings, so the Creature might be a Doppelgänger or an extension of Victor himself (Hume, 1969: 284). This would explain Victor’s reaction when he first contemplates his creation, he is horrified with such a monstrous representation of himself; he has acted like God, and he has created a creature in the image and likeness of himself. Therefore, unconsciously, he has converted his inner monstrosity into something material, so the Creature is a grotesque representation of himself. Moreover, the Creature’s continuous chase of Victor

could symbolize the quest for the discovering of our true inner self; the Creature might represent not only Victor's monstrosity, but also his guilt and awareness of being different to the rest awareness of being different to the rest. The Doppelgänger could also be interpreted as a projection or personification of those asocial tendencies which are inherent to the human being from an evolutionist viewpoint according to E. O. Wilson.

The theme of the Doppelgänger is also present in Stevenson's novella *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, published in 1886. Nevertheless, in Stevenson's story the doppelgänger, or dark side of the unconscious, takes over Jekyll's body, therefore resulting into a whole new personality which is extremely different from Henry Jekyll's public image. Dr Jekyll represents the Victorian gentleman, an archetype moulded by the strict society of the time, in which among the virtues of a gentleman there were decency, good manners and the restriction of sexual impulses. It could be said that Mr Hyde is the opposite to the Victorian gentleman, he is rather a Gothic villain who comes to light whenever Dr Jekyll feels altered; Edward Hyde is the product of Henry Jekyll's repression of impulses from the ferrous society he lives in, plus the tension between public benevolent ideals of the bourgeoisie and the element of social oppression (Punter, 1980).

Henry Jekyll is in a constant struggle to hide from the world one of his sides, the aggressive and dark one, which is as much part of himself as the "good" one; however, there is only one which is socially and morally acceptable, and he would do anything to eliminate the other side of him. In the end, in his attempt to destroy Mr Hyde for good, he commits suicide, as he knows that only killing himself could put an end to the life of the monstrous and villanous Mr Hyde, whose evil deed rested on Jekyll's conscience, as the several murderers committed by Hyde. Therefore, the destruction of one of the parts kills the other part, are both of them are necessary for life. This can be related to Wilson's theory that there is no good without evil, as if any of these parts were missing, we would

not be human; we would be not able to live. (Wilson, 2014). From the Freudian point of view, Hyde could be seen as the “otherness” of the unconscious “id”, which basically takes over the conscious “ego”, which is represented by Dr Jekyll.

To sum up, it could be said that the nature of Good and Evil is rather relative, as there is no possible way to establish with absolute certainty what is considered good or evil, although we can rely in archetypes that might help our comprehension of this dichotomy. After the study and analysis of the evolutionism theory in literature, and specifically in Gothic fiction, it could be suggested that these Gothic villains represent the selfish side of the self, or survival tendencies of the human nature, due to their own personal circumstances. Furthermore, they are surrounded by archetypes and symbols in order to induce the reader the perception of these antagonists are the real villains of the studied novels. In addition, Freud saw the Gothic as a family, and the defiance of the law of the father – figure of authority in the family – as the most distinctive characteristic of the rebellious character of the villain, which is present most of the novels, as Heathcliff’s defiance of the upper classes by becoming a gentleman and taking over Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Range and Victor Frankenstein by creating life by artificial means. Moreover, the use of desolated and terrific landscapes as the representation of the unconscious, and the chaotic mind and ambiguous personality of the villain, is another of the most recurrent means to portray the image of the villain. Firstly, Heathcliff is mistreated from his childhood to his early youth, and this damage moulds his personality to the point of becoming a bitter man with thirst for vengeance towards everybody who has been unkind to him, which would eventually turn him into a “devil” – word used several times in the novel to refer to Heathcliff – whose purpose is to destroy every vestige of happiness in his surroundings. He would only find peace at the time when all his hatred consumes him, and can rest next to Catherine’s grave. Secondly, Mr Rochester, whose

nature is equally mysterious but not as wild and uneducated as Heathcliff, finally gets is “domesticated” by Jane; although his rage makes him blind due to the fire – element which represents the power of the colonies against the Empire, and therefore Bertha Mason – he would eventually recover the view of one eye to contemplate his son with Jane, symbol of regeneration. Thirdly, it could be suggested that Victor’s Creature represents his splitted personality, the physical representation of his inner monstrosity; he has deformed his nature in his attempt to achieve dangerous knowledge. Therefore, his monstrous nature, the outrageous representation of his own conscience, shall chase him to his very death. Moreover, the murder of his loved ones by the Creature, could have a hidden meaning; Victor’s dark side, corrupted by his obsession with dark arts – the Creature – is the one who kills Henry and Elizabeth. It is a metaphore of how he has lost his loved ones by focusing on an unhealthy and sinful obsession. Finally, precisely the physical changes or alterations are the most literal way to express the deep repression of the Victorian era in terms of morals, therefore all the frustations and tensions take physical form; this is what happens to Dr Jekyll, his tensions alterate not only his personality but also his physical apparence. Therefore, it could be said that after the study and alalysis of these characters in all four of this novels, the real villain behind the antagonist is the Victorian society, as it is the one which bring the worst of each character.

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