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The Monsters Within: Gothic
Monstrosity in *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*,
and *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr.*
Hyde and its Role in the Nineteenth-
Century English Society



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Abstract:

Since ancient times, monsters have populated the human mind and, along with us, they have evolved throughout the centuries. This evolution was finally delineated in the nineteenth-century, when monsters were finally given psychological depth in order to better fulfill their function as bearers of human fears and preoccupations. In this process monsters finally acquired further complex features that differentiated them from their primitive predecessors, establishing these supernatural creatures as proper, developed characters participant in the stories in which they take part. This paper thus explores the importance of such development and its consequences for the literature of the period in three of the most important English Gothic works from the nineteenth-century: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (1818), Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) by interpreting the inherent meaning of their monstrous creatures situated within their socio-cultural frames. Hence, through the rejection of such monstrous features, fear towards difference arises and transforms said difference into immoral traits, which ultimately determine the condition of the creatures at hand. In addition, the study of several of the numerous themes conveyed in these stories highlights the underlying nature of Gothic monstrosity when related to nineteenth-century English preoccupations such as human corruption, scientific excess or reverse colonization. Thereby, by crossing socially accepted limits determined by the period in which they occur, monsters become the embodiment of the Other, the element which stands different from us. This reflection on the figure of the Gothic monster hence poses it as a human construct conceived to hypothetically represent socially rejected humane concepts such as irrationality, anger, or savagism; embracing difference so as to epitomize the considered inappropriate behaviors of human being regardless of their controversy or connotations as part of a fictional world.

Keywords: Monster, Gothic, nineteenth-century England.

“We make up horrors to help us cope with the real ones.”

Stephen King

Introduction

Monsters have always inhabited the human mind. They represent the other, the external, the alien; that element which stands apart from the natural order; the creatures that we ourselves produce to embody our terrors. Since ancient times humanity has thus created monsters to symbolize these concepts inherent to us by inserting them into non-existent creatures, turning them at the same time into part of our own nature and psyche as *physical* representations of our fears and preoccupations. As such, it must be concluded that these creatures are product of our own humanity which, limited by the impossibility of their existence, serve as literary symbols to be feared.

Thereby, when considering their unsavory nature as the lowest that mankind has to offer, one would logically conclude that they would merely be capable of arousing repulsion and repugnance. However, the undeniable presence of these beings in literature points at the opposite. We cannot deny that we are certainly attracted by monsters, their inhumanity and the deviation that they represent, yet we cannot accept them as part of our daily life either, pointing out the duality of the human mind. We are at the same time pleased and disgusted by that which is out of the ordinary, and thus we use it as an instrument intended to unleash our imagination.

To delve deeper into this matter, we must first define what a monster is. Hence, the definition provided for *monster*¹ in the *Oxford English Dictionary* is as follows: “A large, ugly, and frightening imaginary creature”, but applied to human beings “An inhumanly cruel or wicked person.” This second connotation gives rise to the application of this term to real human beings, demonstrating our eagerness to bring corporeal life to the term by means of its representation in our reality. Unfortunately, the term *monster* is also frequently applied to members of other cultures, societies and races outside our own that share next to none monstrous features. According to Nuzum “[e]ssentially, any individual or group that can be marginalized or viewed as standing outside the norm may be monstrosized” (208). Said marginalization highlights the

¹ The word *monster* was introduced into English from the Old French Word *monstre*, borrowed from Latin *monstrum*: "divine omen, portent, sign; abnormal shape; monster, monstrosity," figuratively "repulsive character, object of dread, awful deed, abomination." Data extracted from *Online Etymology Dictionary*.

second point that I want to address: monsters as the representation of the Other². Ashley Craig Lancaster provided in her article *From Frankenstein's Monster to Lester Ballard: The Evolving Gothic Monster* a precise interpretation for the Other: “Those people who fail where other people flourish typically become stigmatized as the Other in a society, an outsider who does not conform to that society’s ideal image” (132). Again, difference is always a decisive factor when it comes to define monsters.

In simple words, the Other stands always as something completely different from the Self (Hegel 99), notion that can be logically applied to the monsters created in the Ancient Greek literature, where they were portrayed as what humanity was not. Thereby, monsters such as Scylla, the Minotaur or the Sphinx were described as bearers of inhuman features, cut off from the rational world considering their closeness to the animal kingdom. This trend shifted progressively towards a rationalization of these characters in which they started to adopt further humane characteristics and finally, in the nineteenth-century, a period marked by outrageous contradictions and rivalries between opposites, humans and monsters ceased being utterly incompatible, with the latter becoming then a twofold product of humanity; first due to their origin in the imagination of their authors, being conceived of as the Other that stands in opposition to the rational society; and secondly because of their own fictional birth, not by the hands of gods or supernatural elements, but by the action of human beings.

Within this frame, monsters inevitably became easier to relate to, discontinuing their existence as mere shallow opponents for the hero of the story to defeat as in, for example, *The Odyssey*. This particular reconciliation provided the opportunity of creating more profound personalities designed for these peculiar characters, as demonstrated in, for instance, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, in which the very creature becomes at certain occasions the narrator of the story. Such humanization of the supernatural provided monsters with their own personal traits and motivations — qualities that had been reserved for human characters— along with the opportunity for monsters to better adapt to the role they were originally created to fulfill as the embodiment of our fears in a —in this case— modernized world marked by science and colonialism in which England had become the center of the civilized world.

² Term first introduced in the eighteenth-century by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. For further information refer to Hegel’s *Force and the Understanding: Appearance and the Supersensible World: Phenomenology of Spirit*.

Bearing that in mind, in order to exemplify this idea I will devote the following pages to chronologically address three of the most popular fictional monsters of the period, all of them encased within Gothic literature: Frankenstein's creature, Count Dracula and Mr. Hyde. These creatures, although not the only characters that followed said trend of humanization —as demonstrated in works such as Le Fanu's *Carmilla* or Wilde's *The Picture of Doran Gray*—, provide excellent examples of English nineteenth-century Gothic monstrosity in that they portray characteristics from both the rational, civilized world and the irrational, chaotic human fantasy. Also, their importance in our present society, where they preserve certain degree of status after more than two centuries, denote the influence that these creatures exerted on human culture as fathers and forerunners of horror fiction. From this point of departure, I will explore each of these characters, analyze their functions as the representation of human concerns, and discuss their role and position in the world they inhabit along with the traits that connect them with mankind.

1. The Gothic Monstrosity in the Nineteenth-Century England

In order to address the three selected creatures, it is necessary to refer to the sociocultural framework in which they were conceived. As any other society, nineteenth-century England had its own preoccupations, and logically these were translated into literature as literary fiction became more widespread thanks to, among other factors, the thriving of the middle classes and the reduction in printing costs. This, combined with the outcome of the industrial revolution, provided England with the most advanced, influential and powerful position in the world. With that into consideration, it is not strange that the uncontrollable development of technology became one of the main concerns for the English population, giving rise to the fear of an unknown future that is captured in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*. On the other hand, posterior scientific discoveries had put religion into question, destabilizing its role among the traditional Victorian values and questioning the influence of this institution in society. In words of Christina Schneider:

The monster in the English Gothic novel can be seen as a representation of social fears and problems... These fears can be seen as a result of uncertainty due to the decline of religious certitude, which grew with every new scientific discovery. (2)

Thus, the uncertainty of the resulting world, consequence of the increasing authority of science and the repercussions of new arising theories such as Darwin's theory of evolution, caused the erosion of the rooted beliefs that characterized the first part of the Victorian era, and eventually ended up being translated into the period's literature in the form of creatures such as Count Dracula or Mr. Hyde, who challenged the prevalent relationship between God, men and beasts causing the ancient fear of primitive manners to resurface. In these cases, the decline of the English political and economic power at the end of the century only reinforced this anxiety. For Botting "The ghostly returns of the past in the 1890s [around which the latter works to be commented in this paper were published] are both fearful and exciting incursions of barbarity and, more significantly, the irruptions of primitive and archaic forces deeply rooted in the human mind" (89). Accordingly, the Gothic monstrosity can be considered as a direct reflection of the period's worries; a symbol of the possible danger that looms over the unconscious citizens of England.

In that sense, the Gothic monster represented our past, our possible future, or the road not taken. In simple terms, "[t]he monster is difference made flesh, come to dwell among us" (Cohen 7). However, the difference portrayed by this ominous figure ultimately depended —within this particular context— on its relationship with the human nature in that one cannot exist without the other. In this regard, the fear that these creatures inspire in us is therefore a decisive aspect not only for understanding their essence, but also to identify and explore the human psyche.

2. Frankenstein and his Creature: Creation, Destruction and the Man-Made Man

Part of the Gothic fiction, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* also stands as the first science fiction novel in history. Its author, Mary Shelley, wrote it between 1816 and 1818 inspired by ghost stories. Hence, her novel questions the very absolute of death via the progress of science and, in a similar manner to those traditional ghost stories, a creature comes back from the afterlife to torment the living and re-inspire the fear to death. As previously commented, *Frankenstein* recurs to the elements that afterwards would be considered part of the science fiction genre to express a possible outcome of the unstoppable science, which on this occasion crosses a limit that should not be crossed. In this context, Davis states:

Science fiction extrapolates the potential of factual science and knowledge with imagination, intuition, and belief — all very unempirical powers—to ultimately produce truths, or possible truths, which transcend the fictional text. These truths, though packaged in fiction, help readers understand the human experience. (29)

Consequently, to embody this possible truth, the first monster to be commented on in this paper, assembled from dead body parts as a puzzle, is given life by hands of another human being, his creator and *father* Victor Frankenstein. As a newborn, this creature is ignorant, scared and confused, yet with the passing of time he is capable of acquiring complex knowledge through observation and imitation. After learning about his condition in the human world, he eventually becomes obsessed with his creator and decides to consume his revenge on him, unleashing the series of events that will in time result in Victor's punishment for transgressing death. It becomes then easy to consider this relation between creator and creation equal to the one given between the Christian God and mankind, and this becomes more evident in knowledge of the circumstances of religious and spiritual decline in the period in which the novel was written. Also, this analogy is further supported by the very title of the novel. As Marcus precisely points out, “[t]he Prometheus referred to here is not the titan who stole fire from the gods and was punished for his presumption by Zeus, but *Prometheus faber* ... the mythical figure who created mankind, and who cannot control his own handiwork” (192).

Victor then becomes the human representation of this mythical titan and, following his steps, falls victim of his own doing, condemning both himself and the creature to which he himself gave life. With this, mankind's attempt to create life outside the natural rules fails miserably, and with the death of both creator and creation the order is restored and society can go back to its normal self.

2.1. The Science Behind the Creature and Humanity's Fate

As we may know, science in the nineteenth-century had begun to be considered the representation of exactness, always supported by additional clarifying data. In opposition, *Frankenstein* portrays science as a mysterious concept, escaping our control and knowledge. Victor himself makes a rather scarce statement on how he manages to attain the ability of returning life to dead matter. Mary Shelley did not provide the reader with exact knowledge on how the creature was created either, and each detail

regarding the matter is vaguely narrated. This is counterposed to the overall positive perspective towards science predominant in the early nineteenth-century, as “[t]he Enlightenment era had promised that economic and scientific progress would produce ever-increasing benefits for humanity” (Davis 1). As a result, *Frankenstein* conveys a rather cynical view of science and progress, warning us from aspiring to usurp God’s place. Unfortunately for the defenders of this stance, the technological innovations and the decline of religion had empowered humanity beyond its physical limitations, becoming closer to God than ever before. It was therefore evident that mankind’s destiny was to reach such divine qualities through science, and eventually to conquer the throne reserved for God and become creators of life ourselves. From that point, one could conclude that the acquisition of knowledge and the ensuing scientific progress would equal the forces of destiny and evolution which, in Victor’s hands, are transfigured into the creature’s birth.

This figure, on the other hand, is not a homunculus result of pseudoscience as was Prometheus’s creation, but a conglomerate of dead body parts joined to form a different, single entity, recalling the ghostly elements of the story. The creature is not *new* per se, but in some way recycled from different components. He is a newborn with an adult, aberrant body; a monster in anyone else’s eyes that stands against the natural order of things by defying the very notion of death. Science then becomes the enemy of nature by definition, assisting in the production of mankind’s offspring, which instead of bringing life and joy causes death and desolation. With this, Shelley’s position towards science is made obvious. The absolutism brought by this movement had overcome the British society, with both positive and negative outcomes:

The Enlightenment derailed in revolution and cultural destruction, not merely by the fact that it introduced new, scientific and rationalistic ways of posing and understanding human problems. It wrought this destruction by insisting that these obviously fruitful ways of understanding the natural and physical world should reign supreme and replace all other modes of cultural and religious thought. (Jager 274)

Thereby, it became Mary Shelley’s moral duty to denounce this overlooked problem, standing against the tide and the enduring ambition of progress, evoking questions that still arise nowadays: What are the limits of science? Where should we stop?

2.2 Ignorance, Humanization and Corruption

Considering the character evolution of the creature, *Frankenstein* poses a rather particular view concerning the acquisition of knowledge. Interestingly, he was born innocent, pure in a certain way. However, as a consequence of his own fate, he finds the manner to educate himself in language and culture in a rather implausible way. This, in my opinion, could either be the result of the remnants of knowledge that his brain may retain —being part of a former human being— or a mere device for Shelley to further develop her story. Either way, the creature is humanized to the extent that he even becomes the narrator of his own story, denoting the corruption of his original purity:

I had begun life with benevolent intentions, and thirsted for the moment when I should put them in practice, and make myself useful to my fellow-beings. Now all was blasted: instead of that serenity of conscience, which allowed me to look back upon the past with self-satisfaction, and from thence to gather promise of new hopes, I was seized by remorse and the sense of guilt, which hurried me away to a hell of intense tortures, such as no language can describe. (Shelley 69)

Thus, the creature is humane up until the point that the reader can identify with him. However, this humanization is then stained when we learn that he kills after realizing his status in the human world. Ortiz-Robles states in this regard: “Indeed, the monster in *Frankenstein* is depicted, after Rousseau, as a naturally good man who is corrupted by society” (15), implying that the creature was dehumanized through human contact and education. His creator, on the other hand, was raised in an academic environment, and this was the factor that ultimately led to the creation of the creature. He was not obliged to live in total isolation; rather he was forced to that life due to his own sins. Concerning this, Victor himself warns Walton against acquisition of knowledge: “Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example; how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow” (Shelley 35).

The possibility of knowledge symbolizing corruption becomes then reasonably evident, possibly as a reinforcement of Shelley’s criticism against Enlightenment. Thus, the element that rationalized humanity is ironically the most dehumanizing element in the novel. This is more evident in the case of the creature in that, as Kroeber explains:

Corruption results from the development of the monster's reasoning intellect.... He realizes with agony that poor, outcast and ugly as he is he cannot expect to be esteemed by mankind. Miserable, he wishes he had never left his uncultivated condition and that he could forget his learning. And the more he advances in knowledge, the more he is afflicted.

Afflicted then by the pain of solitude, the creature seeks company. However, because of his external appearance, society ends up rejecting and *monstrosizing* him. In this, the innocent mind of the creature is molded into the perfect antagonist for all rational beings and, unable to reverse his situation or find consolation, Victor's creation finally became what society expected him to be when he decided to torture his creator. Hence, no matter the books he read, the languages he spoke, the antagonized role of monster became inherent to his character and played its part in the consequent spiral of disaster.

2.3 A New Approach to the Eternal Question: Who is the Monster of the Story?

Many discussions have arisen dealing with who the real monster of the story is in *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus*, yet I, as a reader, intend to offer a different approach to this question. As Schneider points out, both main characters bear monstrous traits:

Both the creature and Victor himself can be seen as monsters. Both cross socially established boundaries, albeit mostly different ones. The creature crosses the border between life and death, and humanity and bestiality, while Victor crosses the border between the human and the divine Victor violates the sanctity of human life and death, thereby delineating said sanctity as a norm. The monster's behavior represents disregard for human life and callousness, thereby underscoring the respecting values. (4)

Although I recognize said features in both Victor and his creature, my focus will be centered on neither of them, but on a completely different element. Much has been said about these two characters, yet very few commentators have dealt with the role of fate in their choices. In the previous section I discussed the role of fate in the creature's creation, and now I will expose new ideas on how it is responsible for the majority of disgraces inflicted on both Victor and his spawn.

As many authors have pointed out³, Mary Shelley criticizes the possible dangers of scientific progress, bestowing Victor with a godlike power: the creation of life out of death, to illustrate her point. This power is, however, a product of science and our fate as rational human beings, and eventually becomes the trigger of horror and death. Then again, this ability was hitherto reserved for God, and by acquiring it, Victor aspires to such a divine condition and transgresses his own limits as a son takes his father's place through time. Thus, from the moment he figures out the procedure to follow in the re-creation of life, Victor shows his enthusiasm and resolution when challenging the natural order:

After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.... What had been the study and desire of the wisest men since the creation of the world, was now within my grasp.... A new species would bless me as its creator and source. (Shelley 34)

In this, he progressively becomes obsessed with his new discovery, as invaded by a mysterious force guiding him:

The summer months passed while I was thus engaged, heart and soul, in one pursuit. It was a most beautiful season; never did the fields bestow a more plentiful harvest, or the vines yield a more luxuriant vintage: But my eyes were insensible to the charms of nature. And the same feeling which made me neglect the scenes around me caused me also to forget those friends who were so many miles absent.... but I could not tear my thoughts from my employment, loathsome in itself, but which had taken an irresistible hold of my imagination. I wished, as it were, to procrastinate all that related to my feelings of affection until the great object, which swallowed up every habit of my nature, should be completed. (Shelley 37)

³ E.g. "The author of *Frankenstein* made it clear that it was not natural science and technology as such that led Victor and the poor monster to their doom, but only their uncritical and fanatical pursuit" (Jager 274); "*Frankenstein* gives voice to the fear of the irresponsible use of science and the difficulties of controlling the outcome" (Schneider 4), or "Shelley anticipates the moral and ethical implications of scientific 'progress' and expresses hostility towards science" (Davis 2).

Conscious then of his own obsession, Victor is unable to halt his enterprise, as if he, as a scientist, were devoted to those moments of his life in which he would cease to be Victor Frankenstein to become the laboring hands of fate. This idea is further reinforced after the event that bestowed life on the creature, when Victor finally recovers and realizes what he has done. Describing at that point the event as a “catastrophe” and his creation as a “wretch” (Shelley 39) (a word that will be reiteratively used throughout the rest of the novel), Victor will then repudiate the creature, intending to ignore his own actions. From that moment he feels free again from that impulse that guided him to create life. However, the damage was already done, and the events that followed were already predetermined. He had fulfilled his role of creator, as Prometheus or God before him, and the creature was free to roam on Earth. Hereafter, and similar to a cyclic pattern of creation and destruction, the creature would learn and adapt to a hostile world, as guided by the same force that impulsed humanity to evolve, and finally rebel against his creator.

Like Victor, the creature is driven by a similar impulse when he forces himself to commit murder. Particularly, he describes no pleasure but agony in the murder of Henry Clerval, as if the action itself was not decided, but imposed upon him:

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.... After the murder of Clerval, I returned to Switzerland, heart-broken and overcome. I pitied Frankenstein; my pity amounted to horror: I abhorred myself.... I knew that I was preparing for myself a deadly torture; but I was the slave, not the master of an impulse, which I detested, yet could not disobey. (Shelley 188)

These actions convey a loss of identity for these two characters, as they are forced to act instead of following their own convictions. Little is dedicated to the horrible acts that Victor had to commit in order to confer life to his creation; actions that would question the sanity of any regular Englishman. Instead, the novel denotes his obsession in fulfilling his task, neglecting everything else until the fatal night of November, when he finally realizes his questionable behavior. Nonetheless, it is Victor who eventually decides to struggle against fate when he chooses humanity over his own creation by refusing to create a female creature, much as if God, conscious of his own death in

hands of science, had decided not to create Eve. Unfortunately, nothing can escape fate, and that choice leads to Victor's punishment and final defeat with the murder of his dearest ones, as he himself expresses: "I—I have lost every thing, and cannot begin life anew" (Shelley 16). The creature, on the other hand, is born innocent, but shortly after is corrupted by social rejection, and although he seeks peace and tranquility, his character is reiteratively altered by strange mood shifts and murderous instincts. Thus, at the verge of the end of the novel we find two defeated individuals fighting each other to death who, as Jager points out, "experience it [loneliness] as a curse imposed on them and their sad enterprise by some power that is beyond their control" (276). In this situation, neither of them is able to struggle against their common enemy, and as a result each victim decides to condemn the other as the responsible for their disgrace.

Who is to blame then for all the crimes committed in *Frankenstein*? Victor's negligent nature and ambition, the creature's questionable retaliation, or something entirely different? Actions such as the previously mentioned motivate me to affirm the influence of an external factor in these two characters. This, I argue, is fate. However, I intend to go beyond this invasive element to find another, more elusive, monstrosity. Indeed, this is not the typical monster, with an upsetting semblance or a disturbed mentality. This monster is instead closer to the ghosts that inspired Shelley to write her story, closer to a looming presence that threatens any notion of rationality yet which, at the same time, stands as the abstract representation of the most rational element in existence for the English society in the early nineteenth-century: science. Again, Jager provides an accurate depiction of this phenomenon for Victor's actions:

Victor has become obsessed and bewitched; he has become a mere instrument in the hands of a moribund techno-science that seeks dominion over a universe and that is willing to destroy both heaven and earth to gain it. Victor's science has metamorphosed into a demonic practice and a perverse belief called scientism. (277)

Hence, if scientific progress is part of our fate as human beings, is humanity in *Frankenstein* enslaved by these two entities? Can we change our future or are our lives predetermined? Indeed, the existence of external forces exerting their effect on our own choices and behavior is a frightening idea which brings the timeless topic of free will to the forefront in *Frankenstein*.

3 Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: A Game of Masks

Moving on now to the fin de siècle⁴ literature, the English society of the period was experiencing the decay of the British imperialism, and new fears arose among the population facing an uncertain future. In that context, Robert Louis Stevenson wrote *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, published in 1886. In this novella, the established notion of an intrinsically rational human soul is put into question, exposing the existence of a different side within us, more distanced from the civilized manners, which are taught, not inherent to us.

Thereby, the duality of the human soul arises as the central topic in Stevenson's story, represented by means of two differentiated physiques —Jekyll and Hyde— driven by the same entity, an impossibility that serves as the conduit for the representation of the second monster in this paper. As Danahy comments, "Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde* is a tale about two bodies and not just two identities" (37), two bodies that allow the monster in this story to live two different lives at the same time, one determined by civilized rules and patterns, and other liberated from those constraints and therefore morally free from any responsibility. In this second life Jekyll finds himself enjoying the freedom denied by the strict Victorian guidelines and, becoming an addict to this sensation, his former self starts fading away in favor of his primitive side, which, attracted by the liberation provided from anonymity, rises from Jekyll's subconscious and dominates his daily life.

Consequently, the semblance of Mr. Hyde becomes a mask and a refuge for Dr. Jekyll, both in identity and freedom. As such, "Jekyll's desires are created by what cannot be accounted for in this society, leading him to consume more, desire more. His desires are ineffable ones, which Hyde fulfills" (Comitini 126). It is, however, a consequence of the changes that the respectable mind of Dr. Jekyll endured through the fulfillment of his most hidden desires that his good side was eclipsed by Mr. Hyde's impulsive savagism, demonstrating the prevalence of this aspect of mankind in comparison with its civilized, mannered opposite. It is therefore implied that once your nature is revealed it cannot be buried again, as a side effect of the addictive degeneration of a civilized mentality.

⁴ A French term which usually refers to literature belonging to the end of the nineteenth-century as a period of both decadence and renovation.

3.1 Temptation and Humanity's Fall into Darkness

Overall, the physical fluctuations of the main character in Stevenson's novella are a mere instrument to exhibit the instability of a human civilization as important as the Victorian England. The way in which he exhibits the duality of the human soul is thus unbalanced, with a scale tilted towards atavism due to the temptation of freedom offered by the mask that Hyde symbolizes. In this, it is suggested that man is prone to relinquish to his dark side when given the chance.

Dr. Jekyll himself describes the pleasures of giving in to his darker self in the very first transformation: "I felt younger, lighter, happier in body; within I was conscious of a heady recklessness, a current of disordered sensual images running like a mill race in my fancy, a solution of the bonds of obligation, and unknown but not an innocent freedom of the soul" (Stevenson 54). Consequently, Jekyll suffers a change not only in shape, but also in mind. The moral liberation that his drug provides becomes a temptation that eventually develops into an addiction. Henceforth, the doctor is drawn into a whirlwind of chaotic sensations, struggling between pleasure and self-loathing in that he enjoys his activities as Hyde, but is also conscious of the consequences of such actions when he returns to his civilized self: "I am the chief of sinners, I am the chief of sufferers also" (Stevenson 29). The fact that he does not refer to Hyde as a different entity elucidates that said personality is a derivate of himself, and not a completely separate personality. In regard to this detail, Wright states: "Dr. Jekyll is not so much a man of conflicted personality as a man suffering from the ravages of addiction" (254).

Unfortunately, it is only at the brink of his own destruction that Jekyll recognizes his condition, yet even when he finally decides to halt his destructive habit and resume his normal life he is incapable of forgetting the virtues of Hyde's freedom: "Yes, I preferred the elderly and discontented doctor, surrounded by friends and cherishing honest hopes; and bade a resolute farewell to the liberty, the comparative youth, the light step, leaping pulses and secret pleasures, that I had enjoyed in the disguise of Hyde" (Stevenson 60). By this, "Robert Louis Stevenson, with his great insight into human behavior, also proves by means of his story that whenever a man pursues the path of irresponsibility, he never meets the desired satisfaction, but only disaster" (Plottke 17).

On the other hand, the doctor's notes describe the drug as a means to trigger the duality inherent to human beings, leading me to suggest the possibility of Mr. Hyde being an invention of the unbalanced mental state of Jekyll and his obsession with his research, rather than a direct effect of the drug which, on the other hand, could be the component responsible for triggering the manifestation of certain behavioral traits embodied by Hyde in the general equation. This claim is supported by Jekyll recognizing his own person in both of his sides:

It was on the moral side, and in my own person, that I learned to recognize the thorough and primitive duality of man; I saw that, of the two natures that contended in the field of my consciousness, even if I could rightly be said to be either, it was only because I was radically both. (Stevenson 53)

Consequently, Mr. Hyde, comparable to Victor Frankenstein's creature, would be a creation of scientific obsession, a monstrosity emerging from human curiosity interfering with the natural order and resulting in a complete mayhem and chaos in contrast with the ordered, civilized world based on exactness that science attempted to achieve. In this regard, the consequences of Jekyll's past actions finally reach the logical conclusion once he begins experiencing the ever-increasing involuntary transformations into Hyde, indicating the permanent mark left by the drug on the doctor's body and his eagerness to resume the activities that only his other self could provide.

3.2 The Troglodyte in my Mind

Jekyll's transformation then occurs in both the internal and the external sides of his person. However, the change is more evident for us on the latter, which, altered by the drug, dramatically changes its shape into a more precise representation of the primitive side of human beings. Hence, while Jekyll's body was tall, elderly and refined, Hyde is short, young and bad-mannered. This binary opposition is eventually unbalanced by the effect of Hyde's appearance on Jekyll's behavior, which eventually triggers the mental change of the latter and brings out his most primitive side.

As we know, Jekyll and Hyde compose a single entity. Although the physical appearance changes in between, the mind behind Hyde's doing is ultimately that of Jekyll. That means that Jekyll himself enjoys the freedom that the body of Mr. Hyde

provides. However, in the novella, these two natures are represented as the embodiments of both the good and evil sides of humanity, disregarding the crucial fact that both Jekyll and Hyde compose, ultimately, a single entity. Concerning this, Wright asserts:

[T]o assume that Jekyll represents human 'good' while Hyde embodies that which is 'evil' is to forget that Hyde is but the consequence of Jekyll's experiments in forbidden science; he exists only by the will of Jekyll; he has no independent being. Hyde is no *other* than Jekyll, he is Jekyll. (255)

This is further supported by the doctor's very words in "And yet when I looked upon that ugly idol in the glass, I was conscious of no repugnance, rather a leap of welcome. This, too, was myself" (Stevenson 55). As a direct consequence of this, the role of the monster in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is not, as commonly believed, exclusively reserved for Hyde, but also resides in Dr. Jekyll's mind, corrupted by the freedom that his other side offers. Stevenson then translates the possibility of this transformation into "the fear of no longer being distinct from the animal level and the possibility to slowly fall into atavism" (Schneider 6), implying that the temptation of returning to primitive manners is always present. Hence, Jekyll falls into this temptation and, as time passes and his addiction grows, his soul also changes, and it ends up being reflected on his physical self when the transformation becomes permanent. From this point, Hyde's body establishes itself as the predominant one, forcing him to use the drug in order to restore his former, civilized shape. With time, and unable to recover his original body, the man trapped inside himself reaches a fatal conclusion as an indirect punishment for the deviated behavior that turned a respectable doctor into a full-blown monster.

As a result, Hyde becomes a conundrum difficult to solve. He does not belong to that civilized society; he is closer to the beasts that inhabit the distant nature, and thus he is rejected as a virus intruding in a larger organism. Goss justifies this rejection in her article by stating that "[o]ther characters, particularly gentleman [*sic*] such as Utterson, Enfield, and Lanyon, feel an instinctive loathing and fear when confronted with Hyde not because he is a monster, but because he represents their own potential monstrosity" (210). Thus, the monstrosity shared by Jekyll and Hyde lies not only in the shallowness of his unrestrained behavior and addiction, but also on a different,

deeper level. The possibility of a hidden, repressed otherness within us is the ultimate fear in *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. In this story, a mysterious drug is the responsible for the good doctor's physical change, but his mind was always his own. Mr. Hyde had always been part of him, but only when Jekyll felt the freedom provided by that new body did he unleash that part of himself. Consequently, the true, horrifying fear that this novella causes in the reader dwells in all of us bearing the possibility of following Jekyll's footsteps and unleashing the primitive side within us, that troglodyte that we believed extinct yet that still inhabits our minds.

4 Count Dracula and the Foreign Corruption

Eleven years after the publication of Stevenson's novella, the deterioration of the British Empire was even more evident. Consequently, the fear of withdrawing to a more primitive state of society became horrifyingly present for the English population at the same time that colonialism began to be regarded as a feasible threat to the purity of the English culture. Originated in this context, the last monster to be commented on this paper, Count Dracula, shares his name with the novel about him. Published in 1897 and in a similar manner to *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* depicts the irruption of a primitive, inhuman element and the consequences of its presence in the Victorian society. However, in this case the intruder is not an aberrant creature created from the excessive aspirations of science—distinguishing him from the previous characters—, but a monstrous trespasser born in a distant past and land who had hitherto remained dormant in isolation from the civilized world.

The popularity of Bram Stoker's novel positioned it as the second most sold book after the Bible, which shows its importance and influence in literature. Hence, the new perspective applied by Stoker concerning the figure of the vampire as a monster that inhabits and corrupts the human body and soul after its death determined the subsequent rise in popularity of these creatures. Thus, Count Dracula's vampiric nature was converted into the inhuman materialization of difference, which along with his condition as an immigrant eager to establish contact with civilization instigated twofold the most deep-rooted fear of mankind: fear of the unknown.

Arata argues in his article *The Occidental Tourist: Dracula and the Anxiety of Reverse Colonization* that *Dracula* is part of the reverse colonization narratives in that "these narratives provide an opportunity to atone for imperial sins, since reverse

colonization is often represented as deserved punishment” (623). Also, the reverse colonization narrative, he claims, is “obsessed with the spectacle of the primitive and the atavistic” (624). The second genre addressed by Arata is the travel narrative, arguing that the novel deals with “boundaries” (626), and, more particularly, with the maintenance and transgression of these. The combination of these two genres conveys then an unusual cynical view of the world outside England, but also highlights the fact that England was to be held accountable for the events depicted in the novel. Therefore, it seems appropriate that England should receive punishment for its past immoralities. In that sense, by recurring to the exact same practice that this nation had previously used to spread its influence around the globe, Count Dracula symbolizes a monstrous, foreign illness that seeks natural retribution via the corruption of Victorian England.

4.1 A Remnant of an Ancient World

The clash between Dracula and England is one of the thematic foundations in Bram Stoker’s novel. From the beginning, Schneider positions Dracula as a trespasser of physical and symbolic borders: “In addition to the crossing of physical borders, Dracula also crosses the border between the past and the present, and death and living” (7). We learn via the very first chapters of the story that the Count intends to establish contact with the modern world represented by England: “I long to go through the crowded streets of your mighty London, to be in the midst of the whirl and rush of humanity, to share its life, its change, its death, and all that makes it what it is” (Stoker 27). Thereby, as a hermit aiming to reintroduce himself into the civilized world, Dracula attempts to adapt so as to survive in such foreign environment not only by the use of raw economic power, but also with the acquisition of its language and cultural background.

Unfortunately, and in a similar manner to Mr. Hyde, the rooted and violent monstrous traits based on instincts and lust that Dracula’s vampiric nature instills in his soul render him unable to become a member of the modern society. This gives rise to the subsequent rejection on behalf of the English people, who assaulted by this supernatural visitor, pose him as the possible downfall of the Western civilization due to his contagious inhuman condition. Such rejection of the outsider is further reinforced by his vampiric powers and rules: The fact that he is only active when the sun sets turns the vampire into an outsider wherever he goes, and the control that he exerts over lower creatures such as rats and wolves connects him directly to the animal realm. Likewise,

Dracula's history reproduces several of the ancient and primitive human features from the past that apparently had been forgotten by the Victorian world. As Botting points out, "Dracula's heritage extends deeper into the Gothic past: the account of his family history is full of tribal migrations and conquests, a militaristic, warrior past characterised by values of blood and honour" (95). The combination of these features transforms Dracula into the complete opposite of the Victorian human being, a transgressive creature that does not answer to human ethics and whose irrationality threatens the stability of England, but also renders him as the last of his kind, suggesting with his death the utter elimination of this ancient, supernatural culture.

4.2 England in Peril: The Infectious Disease and the Opposing Immune System

From the basis of its contagious manner of spreading, the use of garlic —known for its antibiotic properties— to contain the infection, or the presence of Doctor Van Helsing, vampirism in *Dracula* is repeatedly referred to as an infectious disease of the human soul that threatens to change England from within. Schneider further elaborates this approach by relating vampirism with diseases such as syphilis in the Victorian context in which the story takes place: "Fear of epidemics, both sexually and non-sexually transmitted diseases is reflected in Dracula's contagious nature" (8), denoting the prominence of this simile. Furthermore, this supernatural infection degrades humans to a more primitive state, guided by lust and hunger, and thus dehumanizes them. Accordingly, vampirism stands as the antithesis of humanity, and henceforth it becomes a human duty to eradicate said danger in order to restore order and balance to the world and reinstate the civilized values.

Doctor Abraham Van Helsing, previously addressed in this section, is perhaps the best character to deliver an accurate depiction of vampires. A native of the Netherlands, a country situated between England and Dracula's homeland, the doctor is familiar with both worlds, accustomed to both the rational and the supernatural spheres. As a consequence, he becomes the source of the essential knowledge required to defeat such a powerful opponent, yet he does not take direct part in the vampire's murder. Said responsibility lies on four Englishmen and the American Quincey, all of them male characters inheritors of the Victorian English values, who act as England's immune system against vampirism: "We men are determined — nay, are we not pledged — to destroy this monster" (Stoker 229).

On the other hand, the fact that Dracula only targets female objectives is not a coincidence either. Women in the Victorian era embodied the corruptible purity of England. They represented domesticity and the future as life-bringers, and as such defending them equaled defending England itself. They are, in addition, the first ones to sense Dracula's arrival along with the aged Mr. Swales, who shortly dies, much as long-preserved traditions were about to change. Nights then become a source of nightmares and fear for Lucy Westenra and Mina Murray: "Suddenly I became broad awake, and sat up, with a horrible sense of fear upon me, and of some feeling of emptiness around me" (Stoker 100) as if they were conscious of the danger surrounding them. In the process "Dracula does not only break the rule of courtship, but subverts them [*sic*] into his own ideas of 'romance,' which by modern legal definition would be equal to rape" (Schaffrath 108). Thus, the first victim to eventually fall prey to this disease is Lucy, who progressively loses her identity as her life fades and vampirism consumes her soul. After the culmination of her transformation, the Un-Dead Lucy targets the next embodiment of the English future, children, as the next step of this reverse colonization. Such modus operandi could solely belong to a systematic, intelligent disease that avoids any contact with the most resilient representation of Victorian values —young and capable men—, in order to exploit the most vulnerable sectors of its host.

Another remarkable element in *Dracula* is the presence and role of blood throughout the novel. Donovan states in this regard: "Stoker clearly understood the 'magic of blood' and the impact of blood imagery upon his Victorian audience. He understood that the presence and flow of blood would inevitably promote fear, terror, anxiety, as well as wonder, thrill and excitement" (10). Traditionally, blood has always been connected with life, but also with death. The perfection of such a dichotomy unified under the unique figure that is the vampire is one of the main appeals that gives rise to such fascination with this creature. Dracula is both dead and alive, and thus he lives on the border between these two realms. The fact that he feeds on the blood of common human beings denotes his need of nourishing the living side of vampirism. However, in *Dracula*, the biological function of blood is superseded by its connection with the human identity. As such, the extraction of blood equals the extraction of the soul, which Dracula lacks and needs to survive. In that, it could be stated that the Count deprives his victims of their souls to subsist, and therefore that the disease that vampirism signifies survives through the consumption of said souls.

Furthermore, our human ability to rebel is called into question once our body is infected by this disease. In this action, the vampiric blood taints the human body until its eventual death, and as Van Helsing comments in the case of Lucy: “Young miss is bad, very bad. She wants blood, and blood she must have or die” (Stoker 132), only through the transmission of more human blood can this process be decelerated, suggesting the human struggle against Dracula’s influence. Nonetheless, vampirism seems to be incurable, and when Lucy eventually succumbs, her body becomes one of Dracula’s possessions: “Your girls that you all love are mine already; and through them you and others shall yet be mine” (Stoker 326). Her soul, on the other hand, can only attain proper liberation through her second corporeal death: “When this now Un-Dead be made to rest as true dead, then the soul of the poor lady whom we love shall again be free” (Stoker 229). Thereby, in the transfiguration of humans into vampires Dracula alters the race of his victims, dehumanizing and forcing them into a submissive state, installing vampirism as a racial threat in addition to its contagious nature, and bringing forth the fear towards immigration and cultural degradation. In order to address these preoccupations and connect them with the Victorian context, Donovan recurs again to the symbol of blood as the crucial link:

Traditionally, blood has signified both unity and division, has knit and separated families and tribes created political dynasties and military alliances and even nations. In this context, Victorians not only spoke of *good* or *bad* blood, pure and tainted blood but of *black*, *white* and blue blood; they spoke of mongrelization and its consequences, of miscegenation and the threat of racial pollution. (22)

Contrary to what occurs in *Frankenstein* or *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the monstrous condition in *Dracula* is contagious, and the novel dwells upon the fear of its dissemination. The Count becomes then an individual from an ulterior culture that used to thrive in the past and intends to recuperate his former position to the detriment of modern England. In this regard, Cohen concludes that “[r]epresenting an anterior culture as monstrous justifies its displacement or extermination by rendering the act heroic” (7-8). Thus, Dracula’s ultimate destruction signifies the triumph of civilization over atavism, the extinction of that ancient, dangerous culture, and the eradication of the vampiric disease required to restore balance and order to the Victorian era.

5 Concluding Remarks

Overall, Gothic monsters are nothing but intruders in the safe, civilized world; individuals that by invading the apparent safety of the nineteenth-century English society create a conflict between two sides: the considered rational and civilized world against the sphere of the irrational and the supernatural. They symbolize what could happen, a possibility of what progress and evolution could lead to. As our creations, they embody the questions that otherwise we would never ask ourselves by means of their physical representation in a fictional world, challenging conventionalities that we take for granted through their implausible existence. In that sense they dig into the deepest roots of our own fears and materialize them in a plausible reality, creating an antagonist, an intruder in our society.

The three of the monsters explored in this paper acquired such condition via the crossing of delimited natural boundaries that differentiated them from the rest of humanity. First, Frankenstein violated the very notion of death when he bestowed life upon a creature that tormented him for his audacity, then Jekyll toyed with the primitive side of human beings that was believed extinct, and finally Dracula, a monster both dead and alive, attempted to perturb the ordered English society in order to change it into his own image and likeness. Hence, the violation of such limits and rules demarcates the point to which these monsters differentiate themselves from what the world in which they are born considers *normal*. Through this prism, these characters can be seen as transgressors, pioneers in exploring what should not be explored in the eyes of society. They serve as moral instructors, delimiting the boundaries that separate humans from monsters; they establish difference by means of difference.

When we provided a proper personality and background to these fictional creatures, we blamed them for what they symbolized. We abhorred the mental or physical deformities that we created, rejecting at the same time that part of us that conceived such abnormalities. In the end, monsters help us to distinguish ourselves, and to extrapolate their extreme traits to the point of prohibition and rejection. Monsters are, decisively, part of our literature, part of our history and, as such, part of ourselves. We cannot deny the existence of the Other, but we can accept it, not as a negative aspect of our lives, but as a reinterpretation of the world that we inhabit.

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