

Literariness Journal

A Peer-Reviewed Quarterly
Journal of Literature and Cultural
Studies

P-ISSN: 3108-1614
E-ISSN: 3108-172X

LiterarinessJournal.org

Vol. 1, Issue. 3 June 2026

© 2026 by the author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.



A Literariness.org Project

From Physical to Psychic Doubling: The Reimagining of Gothic Doubling

DRISHTI ANIL

Department of English
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham
Amritapuri, Kerala
drishtianil02@gmail.com

ASWATHY DAS K V

Department of English
Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham
Amritapuri, Kerala
aswathydaskv@am.amrita.edu

Abstract: Gothic literature, with the good and evil trope at its core, uses mirrors, haunted bodies, and doubles (the split of one's identity) to externalize the internally conflicting identities of the characters, thereby exhibiting their antagonistic energies.

Gothic doubling has historically been a narrative device used to externalize internal conflicts and identity fragmentation. This paper shall trace the development of Gothic doubling from Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* to its contemporary adaptations in Stephen King and Joe Hill's *In the Tall Grass*. Through the lens of Sigmund Freud's idea of the uncanny, Carl Jung's shadow theory, and Michel Foucault's heterotopia, this study investigates how doubling becomes increasingly less defined as a moral and physical dichotomy in Stevenson's novella; instead, it becomes more diffused and spatially mediated in King's text. While in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the double represents repressed desire and Victorian fears through the literal presence of a second self; in *In the Tall Grass*, doubling is represented through fractured subjectivity, haunted space, and perception. This paper will contend that the contemporary Gothic double subverts the traditional binary opposition of the double, making it an omnipresent state of being that is both existentially and psychologically disintegrating, thereby reflecting modern anxieties.

Keywords: *Gothic Double, Doppelgänger, Modern Gothic, Identity, Repression, Gothic Literature*

Introduction

The double is defined as evil precisely because of its difference and a possible disturbance to the familiar and the known. (Živković 124)

The double, or doppelgänger, is one of the most famous and chilling tropes in the Gothic tradition. It was originally rooted in the German superstition, which developed and evolved during the 18th and 19th centuries to reflect the growing fears of a society struggling with the onset of both the psychological (degeneration anxiety) and industrial revolutions. The double can be best defined as “the essential duality within a single character on the further presumption that the duality centers on the polarity of good and evil.” (Strengell) The shadow-self mentioned by Živković is a psychic mirror in terms of which the corruption, the suppressed longings, and the primal violence of a civilized man are reflected. And while, in certain stories, this “double” emerges as the negative shadow of the protagonist, like *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde and *William Wilson* by Edgar Allan Poe, in others, it symbolizes the suppressed manifestations of human nature in a civilized society, like *Dracula* by Bram Stoker and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelly.

The gothic double serves as a narrative device that allows the suppressed desires, fears, and moral contradictions to manifest in visible form. According to Fred Botting,

What seemed familiar and comfortable is threatened by the return of known but hidden fears, ideas, and wishes, disclosing how much a sense of self depends on early development as well as a secure anchorage in social structures. (Botting, 8)

It highlights the hidden tensions beneath a civilized identity. Gothic texts repeatedly depict the struggle between the respectable public identity and the darker impulses beneath it through devices such as shadows, mirrors, haunted bodies, and doubles. As a result, the double becomes the symbolic representation of the fractured self, thereby revealing the instability of the identity that gothic literature persistently explores.

Gothic fiction from the nineteenth century frequently depicts the double as a physical embodiment of the alter ego, symbolizing the moral and psychological divisions of the individual. Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) remains one of the most famous literary explorations of this phenomenon. The narrative depicts the transformation of the respectable Dr. Jekyll into the monstrous Mr. Hyde, a figure representing the repressed impulses Jekyll is forced to suppress by Victorian social norms. Kelly Hurley notes the following:

The fin-de-siècle Gothic might appear as purely reactive, emerging within late-Victorian culture as a symptom of a general malaise occasioned by the sciences... The province of the nineteenth-century human sciences was after all very like that of the earlier Gothic novel: the pre-Victorian Gothic provided a space wherein to explore phenomena at the borders of human identity and culture - insanity, criminality, barbarity, sexual perversion - precisely those phenomena that would come under the purview of social medicine in later decades. (Hurley, 5-6)

Fin-de-siècle gothic (late 19th-century gothic fiction) has reemerged at the end of the century as a very productive literary trend in which the “ruination of the human subject” (Hurley, 3) has been obsessively described. The anxieties depicted in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* are better understood in the light of *fin-de-siècle* gothic literature. The development of human sciences such as psychology, criminology, and social medicine, which aimed to classify and explain the abnormal aspects of human behavior, had a growing impact on late Victorian society at the time this text was published. The transformation of Jekyll into Hyde illustrates the Victorian concern that beneath the pretense of civilized identity lie the impulses associated with criminality and moral degeneration. Hyde represents these repressed aspects, suggesting that boundaries separating the normal selfhood from abnormal otherness are disturbingly fluid.

Horror stems not only from the monstrous but also from the space that gives rise to it. Contemporary horror narratives, compared to older narratives, constantly destabilize the conventional form of doubling. The double becomes fragmented and diffused across psychological and spatial terms, no longer appearing as a clearly defined alter ego. The horror in Stephen King’s and Joe Hill’s novella *In the Tall Grass* (2012) emerges from a spatial setting that disrupts perception and identity. When the characters get entrapped in the field, they experience a temporal loop, shifting landscapes and distorted versions of events that threaten their sense of reality and self. This is explained by Eric Cain as follows:

Space and its meaning within a novel can also take the form of psychological space. Here, a character can create his own space in which to think and interact. For readers, the easiest way to understand psychological space is the first-person narrator because we receive first-hand the thoughts and opinions of a character. However, psychological space is not limited to only a first-person perspective, as psychological space is interpreted through characters’s actions and perceptions about the environment of their existence. (Cain, 128-129)

Despite the numerous critical attentions, most scholars view gothic doubling largely as a psychological phenomenon that results from human subjectivity, especially in the context of nineteenth-century literature. In this area, the themes of suppression, degeneration anxiety, and the divided self that resulted from the Victorian social norms are often highlighted. However, the transformation of gothic fiction throughout history, especially in contemporary narratives, necessitates a reconsideration of how doubling functions beyond bodily splits. The conditions that triggered fear and identity fragmentation have evolved from industrial modernity to late modern and postmodern anxieties, incorporating spatial disorientation and fractured perception. A broader scope of interpretation of gothic doubling is required in light of this shifting cultural landscape.

The key to understanding the disturbing effect of the double is Sigmund Freud's concept of the uncanny. The uncanny, according to Freud, is a feeling of something very familiar yet alien, particularly through the return of the repressed psychological material. Therefore, doubling causes fear because it exposes the individual to the repressed parts of their own personality. The concept of the double is further deepened by Carl Jung's shadow theory, which suggests that the self is not entirely united but comprises the suppressed aspects. As Jung notes, the shadow is an integral part of the self that the conscious mind ignores. Lastly, Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia offers a spatial framework for understanding how settings can disrupt social and psychological structures. As Foucault observes, heterotopic spaces are places that do not follow the typical order of identity and order because they operate on principles that contradict them.

This study examines how gothic doubling evolves across historical periods by bringing together these theoretical perspectives. Unlike Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, which depicts doubling as an embodied, visible split in a single person's identity, King's *In the Tall Grass* disperses the double across a disorienting spatial framework that disintegrates the subject's own subjectivity. This paper argues that gothic doubling evolves from a bodily split identity in Victorian Gothic to a diffused spatial fragmentation in contemporary horror.

Embodied Doubling in *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*

Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* is a fine example of how the Gothic genre utilizes the idea of physical doubling. Through the visible physical split that separates Dr. Jekyll from Hyde, the text illustrates the individual's internal struggle. This externalization of the repressed instincts also portrays the relationship between his internal identity crises and the terror associated with that crisis. Hyde acts as the physical manifestation of Jekyll's suppressed instincts, revealing the instability beneath the dignified facade of the Victorian gentleman. Stevenson, through this text, exposes how gothic doubling in Victorian literature operates through the body, thereby establishing

psychological turmoil in the shape of a monstrous alter ego through the connection between Jekyll and Hyde.

Dr. Henry Jekyll is characterized as a respected figure within Victorian society. He is an accomplished doctor and a gentleman whose identity is strongly linked to his public image. He is introduced in the novel as “a large, well-made, smooth-faced man of fifty, with something of a slyish cast perhaps, but every mark of capacity and kindness.” (Stevenson, 22) Moral propriety was highly emphasized in Victorian culture; therefore, people were compelled to maintain control over their behaviour to maintain social respectability. As a result, Dr. Jekyll had no choice but to suppress the impulses that might lead to a loss of respect for him, since reputation is crucial to his identity. He acknowledges later in the narrative that he lived with great internal conflicts and led a very secretive and deceptive life when he confesses,

And indeed the worst of my faults was a certain impatient gaiety of disposition, such as has made the happiness of many, but such as I found it hard to reconcile with my imperious desire to carry my head high, and wear a more than commonly grave countenance before the public. Hence it came about that I concealed my pleasures; and that I reached years of reflection, and began to look round me and take stock of my progress and position in the world, I stood already committed to a profound duplicity of life. (Stevenson, 61)

Vinod Yadav has explained the social morality that was prevalent in Victorian society: “Self-control was the reigning term of Victorian morality, especially in relation to sexuality, poverty and work.” (Yadav, 63) and “The Victorian moral code was a double-edged sword, then: a device for the maintenance of social control, but also for the critique of social institutions.” (Yadav, 63) There exists within Jekyll’s character the distinction between private desire and public morality. Hence, a connection emerges between these conflicts of interest and the duality of Jekyll’s character (i.e., Jekyll and Hyde).

The extension between social respectability and hidden desires facilitates the rise of Hyde. As Singh and Chakrabarti observe, “Dr. Jekyll covertly provides utterance to the evil in his soul by various unspeakable acts but is afraid of doing so openly because of the fear of social criticism.” He is afraid of the consequences in society if he were to publicly reveal the darker side of his being. Therefore, Jekyll is under constant pressure to find a way to separate his darker side to maintain his reputable public persona. Through this, the author illustrates how people in Victorian society had to hide aspects of themselves to be socially respectable. As a result, we can understand that Dr. Jekyll’s experiment was an effort to balance these two competing desires.

Victorian concerns about identity and self-control are reflected in the tension between public respectability and private desire when he states, “the animal within me licking the chops of memory” (Stevenson, 73) and “lay caged in his flesh, where he heard it mutter and felt it struggle to be born” (Stevenson, 76). Jekyll’s identity does not just break apart from the inside, but it also finds life in Edward Hyde’s existence. As Manlove observes,

The irony of Jekyll’s situation is that his normal public self is seen as shut away—as the chapter ‘Incident at the Window’ conveys—while, for all his name, and fundamentally anti-social self, Hyde inhabits the streets and acts and speaks. (Manlove, 88-89)

The body serves as the primary site of Jekyll’s struggles with his split self as his awareness of the division increases: “The most racking pangs succeeded: a grinding in the bones, deadly nausea, and a horror of the spirit that cannot be exceeded at the hour of birth or death.” (Stevenson, 63) When he says that “Man is not truly one, but truly two” (Stevenson, 62), he acknowledges the inherent division of human identity. Rather than resolving these opposing impulses, he uses experimentation to try to eradicate them from his own existence. By doing so, he hopes to create a separation between the side of himself he considers morally good and the side he thinks is dangerous. He thinks it’s easy to break down an individual’s identity into separate parts, making them exist independently. By using a drug to express the tension between his two conflicting personalities physically, Jekyll transforms into Hyde, thereby expanding the ability of science to change a man’s moral character by combining the two selves chemically. In this way, he feels he has demonstrated a new technique for altering and dividing the self. In his paper, Saposnik notes,

Because of his self-delusion, Jekyll remains unaware of the true results of his experiment; until the end he believes that Hyde “concerns another than myself.” Never able to see beyond his initial deception, he learns little about himself or about the essential failure of his experiment, and remains convinced that the incompatible parts of his being can be separated. This, as much as anything else, is Henry Jekyll’s tragedy. (Saposnik, 4)

The transformation of Jekyll into Hyde is the point at which his internal conflicts fully manifest in his outward appearance. Upon drinking the potion, he undergoes a dramatic physical transformation to become Edward Hyde, a person who is both distinct from and, at the same time, intimately related to Jekyll’s former identity. Enfield describes Hyde as

There is something wrong with his appearance; something displeasing, something downright detestable. I never saw a man I so disliked, and yet I scarce know why. He

must be deformed somewhere; he gives a strong feeling of deformity, although I couldn't specify the point. He's an extraordinary-looking man, and yet I really can name nothing out of the way. No, sir; I can't describe him. (Stevenson, 12)

Hyde is said to be smaller, younger, and deformed than other people, thereby representing a small fraction of Jekyll's personality. Utterson, on seeing Hyde, commends, "The man seems hardly human!" (Stevenson, 19) This physical difference shows that Hyde embodies Jekyll's suppressed side, free of any moral constraints.

It is not the conscious subject but the unconscious which does the projecting. Hence one meets with projections, one does not make them. The effect of projection is to isolate the subject from his environment, since instead of a real relation to it there is now only an illusory one." (Jung, 9)

Carl Jung's above statement gives a crucial perspective on Henry Jekyll's statement, "Man is not truly one, but truly two." (Stevenson, 62) It should be noted that Jung's words suggest that a person meets his projection as though it were external and does not occur consciously. The "illusory" connection with reality leads the subject to grow alienated from both their inner life and others. Jekyll reflects the same misrecognition. When he declares that man is "truly two," he seems to express the basic truth of human duality, but from a Jungian perspective, it is a projection. The split that Jekyll feels between himself and Hyde is the externalization of his repressed subconscious tendencies.

When Jekyll says, "He, I say—I cannot say, I" (Stevenson, 74), the hesitation between "him" and "I" reveals how Jekyll is unable to consciously admit his projection. According to Jungian theory, this shows that it is a conscious process as Jekyll experiences Hyde as an external presence. When he says, "That child of hell had nothing human; nothing lived in him but fear and hatred" (Stevenson, 74), it heightens Jung's remark. This distorting nature of projection, whereby the suppressed aspects of the self are not only externalized but also magnified into something alien and horrific. In accordance with Jung, this creates an illusory relationship with reality as Jekyll no longer perceives Hyde as a part of his mind but rather as an external, inhuman being. Thus, his inability to say "I" indicates the culmination of this projection.

At first, Jekyll feels liberated while transforming into Hyde. He claims to feel "smaller, slighter and younger" (Stevenson, 64), as if the weight of respectability no longer burdened him. Therefore, this sense of liberation represents his ability to release those desires from all the social restrictions that normally define his public appearance. Soon after feeling liberated, he finds several adverse side effects that are related to his newfound freedom, the main notable incident being Hyde trampling a

little girl, which foreshadows his total disregard for social conventions. The emergence of Hyde gives rise to the physical manifestation of an abstract psychological conflict. The Double now exists as an exterior manifestation of Jekyll's desire, engaging with the environment.

As the narrative progresses, Hyde gradually gains agency over Jekyll's identity, underscoring the divided self's uncertainty. What begins as a carefully controlled experiment quickly gets out of hand as the double's actions develop into unpredictable violence. With the murder of Sir Danvers Carew, the violence escalates and shows how brutal Hyde becomes in the latter part of the story. Jekyll writes in the last chapter, "My devil had been long caged, he came out roaring." During this murder, Hyde embodies primitive and wild behavior, which echoes the Victorian anxieties regarding degeneration and how easily a civilized person might lose their civilized identity. The uncanny is produced by the rise of Hyde, Jekyll's hidden desires. As Freud observes, "We notice that Schelling says something which throws quite a new light on the concept of the *Unheimlich*, for which we had certainly not prepared. According to him, everything that ought to have remained secret and hidden has come to light. (Freud, 225) Hyde's increasing dominance serves as an example of how suppressing parts of ourselves can eventually lead to the expression of these repressed aspects in more destructive ways. This loss of control is later described by the spontaneous nature of Jekyll's transformation. Jekyll describes this transformation as follows:

And at the very moment of that vainglorious thought, a qualm came over me, a horrid nausea and the most deadly shuddering... I began to be aware of a change in the temper of my thoughts, a greater boldness, a contempt of danger, a solution of the bonds of obligation. I looked down; my clothes hung formlessly on my shrunken limbs; the hand that lay on my knee was corded and hairy. I was once more Edward Hyde. (Stevenson, 73)

The relationship between Jekyll and Hyde demonstrates how it is impossible to separate oneself into different moral categories. Manlove states that "Throughout the story, Jekyll and Hyde are shown to be increasingly involved with one another to the point where they merge" (Manlove, 87). By the end of his life, Jekyll realizes that he was both Jekyll and Hyde and that the two personalities were connected, which he initially tried to separate: "It was the curse of mankind that these incongruous faggots were thus bound together." (Stevenson, 62) This realization causes the distinction between the self and the double to disappear as Jekyll has no option but to let his double develop from himself; as a result, "Nowhere was there any trace of Henry Jekyll, dead or alive." (Stevenson, 49)

Therefore, Stevenson's novella demonstrates how gothic doubling operates through the body as a site where internal conflicts are physically manifested. Jekyll's physical transformation into Hyde highlights the tensions between the self and the double that 19th-century Victorians tried to suppress.

The emergence and gradual dominance of Hyde thus expose the Victorian moral decay. By showing this as an embodied doubling, Stevenson shows that identity is essentially fragmented, making the body itself the central site of perpetual conflict.

Spatial Doubling in *In the Tall Grass*

In contrast to the embodied alter ego that is found in Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the doubling found here appears as the spatial fragmentation of identity within a distorted setting rather than the physical splitting of a single body. The character of Calvin DeMuth (also known as Cal) is a fine illustration of how the idea of the gothic double has changed. Calvin gradually loses his sense of identity, direction, and temporal continuity as he searches deeper into the grassy field for the lost boy, Tobin. It is through Calvin's experience that we get to see the transformation of the Gothic double into a spatial phenomenon.

In *In the Tall Grass*, the grass field functions as both the story's main setting and its main source of horror. On the surface, the field appears to be an ordinary stretch of farmland, located beside an isolated country road and marked by an abandoned church. "On the other side of 400 there was nothing but high green grass. It stretched all the way to a horizon that was both illimitable and unremarkable" (King and Hill). As the characters enter the grassy field, they soon realize that it does not follow the normal physical laws that other farmlands do. Distance expands and contracts uncontrollably, voices travel in inconceivable directions, and people who are only a few feet apart become unable to see or communicate with one another. The grass continuously shifts and rearranges itself, trapping those within it in an environment that disrupts their sense of orientation and time. As a result, the area transforms from a natural environment into a disorienting, confining setting that clouds perception and separates people from one another. Thus, the tall grass not only serves as a mere backdrop for the narrative but also functions as an active, dynamic, and unsettling influence that generates fear, confusion, and psychological disintegration.

At the start of the novella, Calvin DeMuth is shown traveling with his pregnant sister, Becky DeMuth, through rural Kansas. He appears to be a responsible man. When he hears a kid calling out for help while on Route 400, "Help! *Help!* Somebody *help* me!" he decides to "haul him out." Here, the authors portray him as a character who thinks through and helps others. However, even before entering the grassy field, the narrative hints that something is not quite right about this place. "The grass was incredibly tall. (For such an expanse of grass to be over six feet high this early in the season was an anomaly that wouldn't occur to them until later.) The lost kid's voice sounded very distant and unclear. Initially, Cal thinks that this is just a simple rescue mission when he says, "Hang on. Captain Cal to the rescue. Have no fear. When kids see me, they want to *be* me." He is unaware that this field is a place

where things don't work as they should. At this point, Cal is just like any other normal person. He is about to enter a space that will slowly change him. He will find it difficult to identify himself and will begin to lose his sense of self. It marks the beginning of his journey into a very mysterious place.

Cal's sense of direction is messed up by the tall grass when he enters the field. He and the others find it difficult to be close, even though they are just a few feet away. The siblings also drift apart in the field. When Becky talks to Cal, he realizes her voice is coming from everywhere. He keeps calling out to her and the kid. Both their voices sound like they are right next to him and away at the same time, which makes it really strange. This weird feeling is what Sigmund Freud called the uncanny, which occurs when something familiar suddenly feels strange and creepy. He notes, "It is undoubtedly related to what is frightening—to what arouses dread and horror; equally certainly, too, the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with what excites fear in general." (Freud, 219) According to him, this happens when everyday life starts to behave strangely. At first, the grass field looks like a normal stretch of farmland, but when he steps into it, the field's abnormality is revealed. It doesn't match what you see and what you feel. This very mismatch between what you see and what you feel gives rise to the uncanny feeling. The field appears frightening as he moves deeper into it. The space appears to be acting against the people trapped within it.

From a spatial perspective, this place can be understood through Michel Foucault's concept of heterotopia. As he states,

There are also, probably in every culture, in every civilization, real places—places that do exist and that are formed in the very founding of society... Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality. Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias. (Foucault, 3-4)

The grass field is a heterotopic space, as it functions differently from ordinary farmlands. When Cal and Becky decide to jump up to find each other and the road, terror creeps in as they change location every time they jump. He screams out to his sister, "There's something wrong here," when he begins to believe that the field is different from other locations. Later, he talks to himself, "Everything will have moved, Cal, good buddy. The grass flows, and you flow too. Think of it as becoming one with nature, bro." before he tries to jump one last time. It indicates that the field is constantly changing, making it difficult for its inhabitants to escape. Here, the field is in charge, not the humans entrapped in it.

Cal's inability to locate Becky distresses him as he gradually realizes the grassy field is preventing him from finding her, and he begins to address the landscape directly.

“I’ll never find her,” Cal said. He stared at the darkening, waving grass. Because you won’t let me, will you? You keep the people who love each other apart, don’t you? That’s Job One, right? We’ll just circle around and around, calling to each other, until we go insane.” (King and Hill)

His meeting with the lost boy, Tobin, is where the story drives towards the concept of gothic doubling. It is the boy who finds Cal. When Cal asks him how he knows so much about the place and the people trapped in it, the boy replies, “‘The rock,’ he said simply. ‘The rock teaches you to hear the grass, and the tall grass knows everything.’” and proceeds to take Cal towards the rock. According to the boy, the field possesses a kind of knowledge capable of manipulating people entrapped in it. The grass field, being a heterotopic environment, has its own rules and disrupts our common understanding of space. The rock functions as the center of this place, around which everything is constantly changing. When they eventually reach there, Cal sees a big rock that looks enormous and menacing. Tobin goes to the rock and touches it. His body shivers with pleasure, not fear. “Boy, that feels good. Come on, Captain Cal. Try it.” After a lot of hesitation, Cal moves toward the rock and touches it.

He knew when he touched the stone, it would be like setting his palms on a heated frying pan, and he began to scream—then stopped, the sound catching in his suddenly constricted throat. The stone wasn’t hot at all. It was cool. It was blessedly cool and he laid his face upon it, a weary pilgrim who has finally arrived at his destination, and can rest at last. (King and Hill)

Calvin’s transformation begins here. On touching the rock in this heterotopic space, Cal gets access to the eerie knowledge of the tall grass. But this knowledge also shatters his identity. This transformation is similar to Freud’s discussion of the double in *The Uncanny*, where he writes, “From having been an assurance of immortality, it becomes the uncanny harbinger of death.” (Freud, 235) The ordinary brother who entered the field in hopes of rescuing the lost child turns into a menacing figure who now acts as the field’s weapon. Instead of restoring order, he becomes an agent of destruction within the heterotopic realm.

This transformation relocates the double from the physical “other self” to a spatially activated “other” shaped by modern anxieties about the loss of agency and the dissolution of identity. Cal’s behaviour towards Becky after she gives birth to her daughter in the grassy field heightens the gothic doubling in this narrative. In one of the most disturbing scenes, he feeds Becky her own newborn as an act for her

to survive. And later, when Becky finally gets back her consciousness, Cal and Tobin take her to the rock to touch it. He manipulates her by saying, “Touch it,” Cal whispered. “You’ll stop being sad. You’ll see the baby is all right. Little Justine. She’s better than all right. She’s elemental. Becky—she flows,” and she ends up hugging the rock.

The protective brother who initially wanted to help others is now replaced by a monster who perpetuates violence in the grass field. Freud’s discussion of the double thus becomes very clear here. Calvin DeMuth serves as an illustration of this, as he transforms from a protective brother to a figure associated with monstrosity. His transition displays how the grass field’s heterotopic space disintegrates identity and creates a corrupted self, turning the familiar subject into something very unfamiliar. As a result, he becomes an important illustration of how contemporary Gothic narratives shift the concept of the double from a physical body to a spatial environment, leading to the character’s psychological disintegration and the depiction of his modern anxieties.

Conclusion

In Steveson’s text, the double takes the form of a physically embodied alter ego that symbolizes repressed moral impulses. The double appears throughout the body in Stevenson’s text; Hyde, as the double, embodies the return of repressed impulses, showing the fragility of what seems to be a unified self through the uncanny, as represented by Freud, and the shadow theory, as represented by Jung. In contrast, King creates the double in a dispersed, heterotopic setting where the space fractures perception and disrupts identity. This change reflects the broader development of Gothic doubling—from Victorian concerns about moral restraint to modern anxieties about the dissolution of identity itself. The double is no longer just an ‘other’ but an omnipresent characteristic of disintegration. This shift is indicative of a broader transition in gothic doubling, from Victorian fears of moral decay and repression to modern concerns about identity, perception, and reality itself.

Work Cited

- Cain, Eric. “Shifting Identities through Various Places: Perceptual and Spatial Geographies of Horror Literature and Andreas Roman’s *Mörkrädd* and *Vigilante*.” University of Glasgow.
- Manlove, Colin. “‘Closer than an Eye’: The Interconnection of Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.” University of South Carolina Scholar Commons.
- Singh, Shubh M., and Subho Chakrabarti. “A Study in Dualism: *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.” *Indian Journal of Psychiatry*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2009, pp. 221–226.

- Foucault, Michel. "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias." Translated by Jay Miskowiec, *Diacritics*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1986, pp. 22–27.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." Translated by David McLintock, *The Uncanny*, Penguin Books, 2003, pp. 121–162.
- Hurley, Kelly. *The Gothic Body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin de Siècle*. Cambridge UP, 1996.
- King, Stephen, and Joe Hill. *In the Tall Grass*. Scribner, 2012.
- Jung, Carl. *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Translated by R. F. C. Hull, Princeton UP, 1959.
- Saposnik, Irving S. "The Anatomy of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*." *Studies in English Literature*, vol. 11, no. 4, 1971, pp. 715–731.
- Stevenson, Robert Louis. *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. Penguin Books, 2024.
- Živković, Milica. "The Double as the 'Unseen' of the Culture: Toward a Definition of Doppelgänger." *Facta Universitatis*, vol. 2, no. 7, 2000, pp. 121–128.
- Botting, Fred. *Gothic*. Routledge, 1996.
- Yadav, Vinod. "The Role of Morality and Social Reform in Victorian Literature." *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, vol. 7, no. 5, 2020, pp. 10–12.