

GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S
SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES

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ABSTRACT

GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE'S SHERLOCK HOLMES STORIES

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The aim of this thesis is to analyse the use of Gothic elements in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. It begins with an overview of Gothic and detective fiction, pointing out the Gothic novels published in the late Victorian period, and referring to the Gothic influence on Poe, Dickens, and Collins who are important writers in the development of detective fiction. In this way, it is revealed that the presence of Gothic elements in the Sherlock Holmes stories is part of the writing fashion of the era. The thesis then analyses the Holmes stories which present significant Gothic elements in terms of terror, horror and the supernatural. In addition, it examines the whole Holmes canon in an endeavour to find out the Sherlock Holmes character's similarity to the Byronic hero who often appears in Gothic fiction. As a result, this study shows that Gothic elements contribute to the Sherlock Holmes stories in two ways. Firstly, they add to the depiction of minor characters, the setting, and the atmosphere of these stories.

Secondly, they manifest themselves in the portrayal of the character of Holmes himself. Thus, the use of Gothic elements enables Doyle to create suspenseful and surprising stories with a strikingly memorable detective figure.

Keywords: Sherlock Holmes, Gothic, Supernatural, Byronic Hero, Doyle

ÖZ

CONAN DOYLE'UN SHERLOCK HOLMES HİKAYELERİNDE GOTİK ÖĞELER

Çağlıyan, Murat

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Bu tezin amacı, Conan Doyle'un Sherlock Holmes hikayelerindeki Gotik öğelerin kullanımını incelemektir. Tez, Gotik ve dedektif kurgularının genel bir değerlendirmesiyle başlar; Victoria döneminin sonlarına doğru yayınlanan Gothic romanlara ve dedektif hikayelerinin gelişmesinde önemli rol oynayan Poe, Dickens ve Collins gibi yazarların eserlerine değinir. Böylece Sherlock Holmes hikayelerindeki Gotik öğelerin varlığının, dönemin yazın modasının bir parçası, hatta bir sonucu olduğu ortaya çıkar. Tez bundan sonra Gotik öğelerin kullanımı açısından öne çıkan Holmes hikayelerini dehşet, korku ve doğüstü yönleriyle analiz eder. Ayrıca, Sherlock Holmes karakterinin Gotik eserlerde çok sık yer alan Byronik kahramana benzerlikleri de incelenir. Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, Gotik öğelerin Sherlock Holmes hikayelerine iki şekilde katkıda bulunduğunu gösterir. İlk olarak Gotik öğeler, yan karakterlerin, mekanların ve atmosferin tasvirine etki

eder ve böylece Doyle'un hem gerilimli hem de şaşırtıcı hikayeler yazmasına olanak sağlar. İkinci olarak ise, Holmes karakterinin kendisine katkıda bulunarak Doyle'un dikkat çekici biçimde akılda kalan bir dedektif karakteri yaratmasını mümkün kılar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Sherlock Holmes, Gotik, Doğaüstü, Byronik Kahraman, Doyle

To My Sister

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The term “Gothic” historically refers to the Goths, one of several Germanic tribes that had a significant role in the fall of the Roman Empire in the fourth century. As a literary term, “Gothic” is applied to a certain type of fiction which is considered to have begun in 1764 with the publication of the novel, *The Castle of Otranto*. Written by Horace Walpole, this novel was interestingly subtitled “A Gothic Story”, although the word “Gothic” implied its medieval setting because “Gothic” signified “the medieval” in the eighteenth century (Stevens 9).

“Gothic” as a literary term is in fact “mostly a twentieth-century coinage” (Clery 21). In the Renaissance period, this term started to be used for the medieval-style architecture built from the twelfth to the sixteenth centuries. In the mid-eighteenth century, Gothic Revival emerged in architecture in England, which was related to a similar taste in this writing tradition, since originally these works presented medieval settings and superstitions (Clery 21).

After its publication, *The Castle of Otranto* became a popular work, inspiring and influencing many writers of its period. Thus many novels presenting similar features were published, and these works are now regarded as early Gothic novels. “[T]he first phase of gothic fiction” took place between the 1760s and the 1820s (Pykett 195). Among the most well-known early Gothic novels are Clara

Reeve's *The Old English Baron* (1778), Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), also *The Italian* (1797), Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820).

Common elements of these Gothic works established the stock characteristics of Gothic fiction. Pykett describes these characteristics in this way:

Although very different in style and emphasis these novels share a penchant for mysterious, archaic settings, which include isolated and possibly haunted castles, dungeons, or sublime landscapes. They also share a preoccupation with the monstrous and supernatural, and make frequent use of dreams, visions, hallucinations, metamorphoses of various kinds, and, in some cases [...] the psychological splitting or doubling of characters. Their plots turn variously on dynastic ambition and intrigue, and Faustian overreaching, and they frequently involve violence, tyranny, imprisonment, and persecution (especially of women). (Pykett 195)

Botting argues that “[t]ortuous, fragmented narratives relating mysterious incidents, horrible images and life-threatening pursuits predominate in the eighteenth century” (Botting 2). He also lists some stock characters of early Gothic fiction although they do not necessarily appear in every Gothic story. He claims: “Spectres, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats, monks

and nuns, fainting heroines and bandits populate Gothic landscapes as suggestive figures of imagined and realistic threats” (Botting 2).

Gothic hero-villains are also one of the stock characters of Gothic fiction. Fiedler discusses the hero-villain and argues that he “is indeed an invention of the gothic form, while his temptation and suffering, the beauty and terror of his bondage to evil are amongst its major themes” (qtd. in Stoddart 176). The Byronic hero who is one of the “subclasses of villains [which] illustrate the complexities of Gothic characterization” (Snodgrass 351), also appears in Gothic fiction. “The most enigmatic of villains, the Byronic hero, is an ambiguous, quasi-demonic male figure whose aloofness and secretive, cynical behavior project sexual allure and a mystic renown” (Snodgrass 351).

Concerning settings of early Gothic fiction, the castle stands out. Botting maintains that

[t]he major locus of Gothic plots, the castle, was gloomily predominant in early Gothic fiction. Decaying, bleak and full of hidden passageways, the castle was linked to other medieval edifices—abbeys, churches and graveyards especially— that, in their generally ruinous states, harked back to a feudal past associated with barbarity, superstition and fear. (Botting 2-3)

Around the 1790s, a “Gothic craze” can be observed in England (Miles 42). “From 1788 until 1807 the Gothic maintains a market share of around 30 percent

of novel production, reaching a high point of 38 percent in 1795” (Miles 42). David Stevens argues that the reason for the popularity of Gothic fiction in eighteenth-century England is the Gothic’s dependence on feelings and emotions rather than rationality. He suggests that

[t]he 18th century was in many ways the high point of the Enlightenment, especially in Britain. In historical terms the medieval period pre-dated the Enlightenment, just as in terms of the growth of each individual person the emotions come before and can therefore be seen as more profoundly human than the insistence on rationality. At the same time, social progress, relying largely on more and more rationally based political and social organisation and on various scientific and technological inventions, had made it comparatively ‘safe’ to indulge in irrational fantasies. Middle class readers, safely tucked into their stable and unthreatened social positions, could feel secure enough to cultivate imaginary fears and fantasies, in the same way that a child may do, reading horror stories and experiencing the delicious thrill while apparently immune from real danger. (Stevens 10)

Gothic works provides the eighteenth-century reader with a kind of escape from the rational world to the superstitious past, and they give them the pleasure of experiencing “[t]he play between rational and irrational” (Spooner 254) in their

reason-dominated life. Snodgrass further suggests: “The passage of a series of suspenseful events toward the rescue of a heroine and/or the redemption of a hero proved more satisfying than did an ordinary uneventful life” (Snodgrass 156).

The first-wave of Gothic fiction came to an end in 1820 (Luckhurst ix). Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) is regarded as the last Gothic novel of the first wave. However, the Gothic did not completely disappear from the literary scene. Rather, it scattered its elements into Victorian fiction, as Roger Luckhurst argues while discussing the period after the end of the first-wave: “[T]he furniture of the Gothic was then dispersed, placed here and there in the nooks and crannies of the Victorian house of fiction” (Luckhurst ix). As a result of this, Gothic influence can be traced in the works of famous Victorian writers such as Dickens and the Brontës. Some of their works which stand out in this respect are Dickens's novels *Oliver Twist* (1838), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), *Bleak House* (1853), and *Great Expectations* (1861); Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848).

In the late nineteenth century, the Gothic returned in an intensified way, as Luckhurst says: “[T]he Gothic rematerialized in the late-Victorian period as a distinct form again, producing enduring Gothic icons in a few short years” (Luckhurst ix). Botting also argues: “At the end of the nineteenth century familiar Gothic figures—the double and the vampire—re-emerged in new shapes, with a different intensity and anxious investment as objects of terror and horror” (Botting 135). Among the most significant Gothic works belonging to the second-wave in

the late Victorian period are Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890), H.G. Wells's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).

Botting argues that the "list [of characters in Gothic fiction] grew, in the nineteenth century, with the addition of scientists, fathers, husbands, madmen, criminals and the monstrous double signifying duplicity and evil nature" (Botting 2). The setting also changes in this wave, as Botting puts it: "In later fiction, the castle gradually gave way to the old house: as both building and family line, it became the site where fears and anxieties returned in the present" (Botting 3).

The Gothic also has a noteworthy influence in American fiction. Smith even advocates that "American fiction began in the Gothic mode, because the first substantial American efforts in fiction coincided with the great period of British [...] gothic" (Smith 267). "Charles Brockden Brown, the first native-born American professional writer, occupies an important position in regard to transformations in Gothic writing" (Botting 115). Brown's four novels, published between 1798 and 1800, contain Gothic traces. Furthermore, in the works of Washington Irving, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville and Henry James, the Gothic influence can be observed. One of the most significant writers in terms of the Gothic in America is Edgar Allan Poe. He "is justly famous for Gothic tales that focus on the dark side of human nature" (Lee 369), and his short stories "The Fall of the House of Usher" (1839), "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843), "The Raven" (1845) and "The Cask of Amontillado" (1846) can be given as examples of his works containing Gothic elements. In addition, Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The

Yellow Wallpaper” (1892), and the works of William Faulkner and Ambrose Bierce are also regarded as significant in American Gothic fiction.

Concerning England, the second Gothic wave which took place in the late-nineteenth century, could also be observed in the twentieth century, as Luckhurst suggests: “This wave of the Gothic extended some way into the twentieth century before dispersing again” (Luckhurst ix). Botting claims:

Much of the writing linked to Gothic in the early part of the twentieth century is carried over from later nineteenth-century styles. Objects of anxiety take their familiar forms from earlier manifestations: cities, houses, archaic and occult pasts, primitive energies, deranged individuals and scientific experimentation are the places from which awesome and inhuman terrors and horrors are loosed on an unsuspecting world. (Botting 158)

Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1902) and Daphne Du Maurier’s *Rebecca* (1938) are some of the works that reflect Gothic conventions. Gothic influence also continued in American fiction with works like H. P. Lovecraft’s “The Call of Cthulhu” (1928). In the twentieth century, with the emergence of cinema, many Gothic works were also made into films. James Whale’s *Frankenstein* (1931), Tod Browning’s *Dracula* (1931), and Alfred Hitchcock’s *Rebecca* (1940) are based on Gothic texts. Luckhurst further maintains that “many date a third wave from the

'horror' boom of the 1970s, with Stephen King, James Herbert, and a rash of Hollywood B-movies reinventing the genre once more" (Luckhurst ix).

Thus, it can be said that Gothic fiction "for about 250 years [...] has not just survived but insisted on coming back repeatedly" (Luckhurst ix). At the end of the twentieth century, works which present Gothic elements, such as Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* (1983) and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), were still appearing. Botting argues that the Gothic is still observable in fiction, as he writes:

... Gothic writing remains fascinated by objects and practices that are constructed as negative, irrational, immoral and fantastic. In a world which, since the eighteenth century, has become increasingly secular, the absence of a fixed religious framework as well as changing social and political conditions has meant that Gothic writing, and its reception, has undergone significant transformations. Gothic excesses, none the less, the fascination with transgression and the anxiety over cultural limits and boundaries, continue to produce ambivalent emotions and meanings in their tales of darkness, desire and power. (Botting 2)

In the twenty-first century, the Gothic preserves its popularity. Works containing Gothic elements, like J. K. Rowling's massively popular *Harry Potter* series (1997-2007) and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight* saga (2005-2008), are still published and widely read. It is also possible to observe Gothic influence in films of the late

twentieth and twenty-first centuries. With late-twentieth-century films such as Cameron's *The Terminator* (1986), Branagh's *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein* (1994), and Reiner's *Misery* (1990) which is based on Stephen King's novel of the same title; and with twenty-first-century films such as Gore Verbinski's *The Ring* (2002), Craig Rosenberg's *Half Light* (2006), Christopher Nolan's *Batman: The Dark Night Returns* (2008), the continuing *Harry Potter* films (2001-2010), and the first three films of the *Twilight* saga (2008-2010), the Gothic continues to appear in both literary works and films today. It should also be noted that many Sherlock Holmes films including Guy Ritchie's *Sherlock Holmes* (2009) contain noteworthy Gothic elements, which show a continuing recognition of the presence of the Gothic in Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories.

As for detective fiction, it is a genre that is usually considered to have developed in the Victorian Period (Thomas 170). Detective fiction is a little hard to define since it often overlaps with crime fiction. Rzepka notes: "If the term 'crime fiction' is a bit vague, 'detective fiction' is downright slippery. We are tempted, initially, to place the latter under the voluminous umbrella of the former. But crime fiction itself seems to straddle some gaping generic divides" (Rzepka 2). However, by referring to Behling's and Cawelti's arguments, it is possible to distinguish between these two genres: while "[c]rime narratives, the larger generic category into which detective fiction is a subset, detail the commission of a crime, which may range from physical assault to theft to psychological exploitation, its investigation, and then an eventual outcome or judgment" (Behling 32), "[a]s Poe defined it, the detective story formula centers upon the detective's investigation

and solution of the crime” (Cawelti 81), which is relevant to the Sherlock Holmes stories.

Edgar Allan Poe is generally considered to be “the father of the detective story” (Davies, *Study* vii), and his “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841) is usually regarded as the first modern detective story (Thomas 172). Lee suggests:

... [I]f anyone can be taken to be the inventor of detective fiction, it is Poe, whose crime-solving protagonist, C. Auguste Dupin, appears in three short stories – “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” (1841), “The Mystery of Marie Roget” (1842–3), “The Purloined Letter” (1844). Written before the word “detective” was coined in 1847, what Poe called his “tales of ratiocination” established a new form of crime fiction. (Lee 369-370)

These stories are centred on “a mystery based in the problem of distinguishing the suspect’s nationality, and that the mystery should be solved by the detective’s use of forensic evidence to identify the suspect as someone or something” (Thomas 172). Dupin as a detective “is adept not only at investigation but also at scholarship” (Snodgrass 97). He “merges brilliance and personal eccentricities to advantage, particularly his yen for solitude and for retracing the thought patterns of criminals” (Snodgrass 98). He “exemplifies the importance of emotional detachment and high levels of concentration in the solving of baffling crimes” (Snodgrass 98).

Martin A. Kayman argues:

Because the appearance of Poe's short stories coincides with the creation of the 'Detective Department' of the Metropolitan Police (1842), detective fiction is seen by many critics as a literary reflection of, if not propaganda for, a new form of social administration and control based on state surveillance. (Kayman 44)

The development of detective stories in England also corresponds "in time to the introduction of the modern police force in England and to the invention of the science of criminology" (Thomas 171).

"The originator of the detective story in Britain" is regarded as Charles Dickens (Thomas 172). Published in 1853, Dickens's *Bleak House* features a police inspector called Mr. Bucket who "is one of the first detectives in English fiction, ancestor of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes" (Tropp 73). In this novel, Bucket "solves one murder, uncovers another mystery, and leads his characters through the darkest corners of Victorian London" (Tropp 73).

Another important text which is regarded as significant in the development of the detection genre in England is Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868). With the character "Sergeant Cuff, *The Moonstone* offers one of the great literary detectives in the genre" (Thomas 183). Ronald R. Thomas points out that

[h]is [Sergeant Cuff's] keen powers of observation, his uncanny judgment of character, and his acute deductive reasoning impress everyone when he discovers a crucial, overlooked piece of evidence at the scene of the crime. Nevertheless, these talents are not adequate in bringing the case to a close. [...] The attorney Mr. Bruff plays an essential part in solving the mystery as well, but is also not adequate to the task. (Thomas 183)

In this novel, “the mystery is solved not by the legal expertise of an attorney nor even by the ingenious detective, but by the diagnostic brilliance of a physician” (Thomas 183). In this way, the image of the physician is also brought closer to the image of the detective, as Thomas advocates:

[T]he rise of the scientific expertise of the medical profession is shown to be both collaborative and competitive with that of the legal profession, a development that corresponded to the emergence of criminology and forensic science as important new disciplines in the treatment of crime and to the establishment of detective fiction as a distinct and popular literary genre. (Thomas 183)

Thus, *Bleak House* and *The Moonstone* play important roles in the development of detective fiction in England. Thomas claims: “There would be other contributions to Victorian detection before Sherlock Holmes appeared, though none would as

significantly influence the shape of Victorian writing or approach his level of popularity” (Thomas 184).

Detective fiction was truly established as a distinct genre with the publication of the Sherlock Holmes stories. In 1887, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s first Sherlock Holmes novel, *A Study in Scarlet* was published in the *Beeton’s Christmas Annual*. The second Holmes novel, *The Sign of Four* was published in 1890, after which the Holmes figure became popular. Then Doyle started to write a series of Holmes short stories for the *Strand Magazine*, starting from 1891.

Sherlock Holmes is a brilliant consulting detective, famous for his special intellectual abilities and powers of deductive reasoning. He shares rooms with Dr. John Watson who generally accompanies him on his investigations and publishes accounts of them. The Sherlock Holmes body of works contains fifty six short stories and four novels, published between 1887 and 1927. The novels are *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), *The Sign of Four* (1890), *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), and *The Valley of Fear* (1915). The Holmes short stories are compiled in books entitled *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1892), *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894), *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* (1905), *His Last Bow* (1917), and *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes* (1927).

When Conan Doyle wrote the very first Sherlock Holmes story, he was working as an eye-specialist. His aim and sources of influence while creating the character Sherlock Holmes and these stories are discussed by Davies, as given below:

In the *longueurs* between the infrequent patients, Doyle considered writing a detective story, one in which the sleuth would reach his conclusions by deductive reasoning and not by accident or the carelessness of the criminal. It was during these musings that he began to pull together various threads from past influences. From boyhood Poe's Dupin had been one of his heroes. He had also admired 'the neat dovetailing' of the plots in Gaboriau's crime novels. And then there was Joseph Bell, who had been one of Doyle's tutors when he was studying medicine at Edinburgh University, had the most remarkable powers of observation. (Davies, *Study* vii-viii)

Doyle talks about his aim in creating the Sherlock Holmes stories in his autobiographical work, *Memoirs and Adventures* (1924). Referring to his being influenced by his mentor Joseph Bell, he says that he wanted to "reduce this fascinating unorganised business to something nearer an exact science" (qtd. in Davies, *Study* viii), meaning detective work.

After some time, Doyle stopped pursuing his medical career owing to the fact that he decided to focus on writing. Later, he killed off Sherlock Holmes in "The Adventure of the Final Problem" (1893), as he wanted to concentrate on writing serious works. However, in 1901, he brought back Holmes in the novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles: Another Adventure of Sherlock Holmes*, due to popular demand. Martin Priestman argues:

With Doyle's creation of the Sherlock Holmes series, detective fiction became for the first time an indubitably popular and repeatable genre format. It now knows what it is and what it is trying to do, as does its public. (Priestman 4)

Kayman also notes that

[i]n contrast to the serial publication of long novels, here each tale is self-contained, the detective's solution providing full narrative satisfaction, but so managed as to stimulate an appetite for another, similar story – so much so that, notoriously, popular demand and apparently irresistible commercial pressures made it impossible for Doyle to kill Holmes off as he wished in 1893. (Kayman 43)

After Holmes stories, detective stories gained in popularity and for more than one hundred years following, very many writers turned to the sub-genre such as Agatha Christie, Dorothy L. Sayers, and P. D. James. Detective fiction as a literary genre “remains today the most popular form of writing in the English-speaking world” (Thomas 190).

There have been several critical approaches towards the Gothic throughout history. There was a psychoanalytic approach from the 1930s to the 1950s (Sage 154). It “gave way to more historical, linguistic and socio-cultural approaches” and “[f]rom the 1960s onwards, the growth of interest in popular culture and the

rise of feminism have changed and immensely broadened the literary and critical possibilities for the Gothic” (Sage 154). In addition, as Horner remarks:

The German word *unheimlich*, meaning ‘uncanny’, is one much used in criticism of Gothic writing. Its use in this manner derives from Sigmund Freud’s famous essay ‘The “Uncanny”’, published in 1919. In this essay, Freud distinguishes between *heimlich*, meaning ‘familiar’ or ‘belonging to the home’, and *unheimlich*, meaning all that is ‘unhomely’, or ‘uncanny’, and is frightening precisely because it is *not* known and *not* familiar. (Horner 250)

There have also been many critics who examined the connection between Gothic and detective fiction. Concerning the Gothic’s relation to detective fiction, Catherine Spooner suggests that the Gothic novel influenced many genres such as the Newgate novel, the sensation novel, “and crucially, the detective story” (Spooner 246). As Martin Rubin notes, critics like John G. Cawelti and William Patrick Day even go on to argue that detective fiction is an extension of Gothic fiction (Rubin 43). In Rubin’s words, these two writers claim: “The classical detective’s eccentricity and isolation mark him as a descendant of the Gothic villain/antihero, turned to more constructive purposes as he exercises a combination of reason and imagination to tame the chaotic ambiguity that had ruled the Gothic world” (Rubin 43). Similarly, Botting suggests that detective fiction of the Victorian Era is another form of Gothic fiction when he notes that

“[a] rational explanation of criminal mysteries by means of detection and law rather than the hand of Providence situates Gothic patterns in a thoroughly Victorian context” (Botting 133).

Gothic influences in the Sherlock Holmes stories have also been noted by many critics, although there are only a few studies which examine them in detail. Pykett argues that Gothic elements can be seen both in the works which led to the emergence of detective fiction in England and in the Holmes stories (Pykett 192-193). She says that Gothic elements can be traced “in the rise of the modern detective story, such as Charles Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853), Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868), and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories, beginning with *A Study in Scarlet* in 1887” (Pykett 193).

Catherine Spooner even claims that Doyle can be regarded as a writer of Gothic fiction. She asserts that

[i]n the nineteenth century, the two [Gothic and crime fiction] are not clearly distinguished. The earliest writers of detective fiction – Edgar Allan Poe, Wilkie Collins, Arthur Conan Doyle – could all also be said to be writers of Gothic fiction. There are traces of Gothic in most crime narratives, just as there are crimes in most Gothic novels. (Spooner 246)

Another writer who approaches to Holmes stories in terms of the Gothic is Mary Ellen Snodgrass. She often refers to the character Sherlock Holmes and the

Holmes stories in her *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature* (2005), and regards these stories as examples of Colonial Gothic which is “a vast wing of Gothic fiction”, providing “oriental settings” and “barbarism inflicted on primitive societies” (Snodgrass 61). She says that Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories “bear the menace of horrific nightmares, curses and vendettas, bizarre weapons, and exotic poisons imported from less civilized realms” (Snodgrass 61).

It is essential to note that in addition to Doyle’s being influenced by Poe – who is also famous for his Gothic stories –, the year 1887 is among the years when famous Gothic works were appearing consecutively in England. *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* and *Dracula* were published in 1886, 1887, 1890, 1896 and 1897 respectively. Thus, it can be said that since Gothic elements can be traced in the works which played an important role in the development of detective fiction and since there was a Gothic revival in England just at the time when the Holmes stories started to be published, the presence of Gothic elements in the Holmes stories is not surprising.

This thesis analyses the use of Gothic elements in Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes stories. In the first chapter, the concepts terror, horror, and the supernatural will be defined and discussed in relation to their roles in the Gothic, and then the use of Gothic elements as a device to create terror and horror in these detective stories will be examined. The focus will be on four Sherlock Holmes adventures which stand out in their use of Gothic elements: “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” (1892), “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches” (1892), “The

Adventure of the Yellow Face” (1893), and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1904). The way Doyle employs Gothic elements will also be discussed in detail, considering minor characters, settings and the atmosphere of these stories. The second chapter will begin by discussing the traits of the Byronic hero in detail, and will then focus on the character of Sherlock Holmes, examining his similarity to the Byronic hero which will be treated as an element of the Gothic. In this respect, significant points in the first two Holmes novels, *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four* will be examined as they are more centered on the Holmes character, and then the whole Holmes canon will be analysed in general in terms of Byronic traits of Holmes. In this way, the Byronic hero’s contributions to Holmes as the detective-hero and to Holmes stories as detective stories will be discussed, which will show the Gothic’s contribution to the Holmes stories as significant works of detective fiction.

CHAPTER 2

TERROR, HORROR AND THE SUPERNATURAL

Terror and horror can be considered to be particularly important for Gothic works, as they are “[t]he emotions most associated with Gothic fiction” (Botting 9). One of the first attempts to distinguish between the terms terror and horror was made by Ann Radcliffe, in her essay “On the Supernatural of Poetry” (1826). In this essay, she argues:

Terror and Horror are so far opposite that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates them. [...] And where lies the difference between horror and terror, but in the uncertainty and obscurity that accompany the first, respecting the dreading evil? (qtd. in Botting 74)

Radcliffe here argues that while terror is based on fear caused by uncertainty, which stirs the reader’s imagination, horror is caused by visible frightening factors, which “freezes and nearly annihilates” his imaginative powers. Radcliffe’s distinguishing between terror and horror influenced a number of critics, one of whom is Devendra P. Varma. In his book, *The Gothic Flame* (1966), he refers to Ann Radcliffe, and mostly setting aside the difference between the imaginative process associated with terror and horror, he states that “[t]he difference between

Terror and Horror is the difference between awful apprehension and sickening realization: between the smell of death and stumbling against a corpse” (Varma 130). Thus, he argues that while terror emanates from the feeling of impending danger, horror is created by visual atrocity. He advocates: “Terror creates an intangible atmosphere of spiritual psychic dread, a certain superstitious shudder at the other world. [On the other hand, h]orror resorts to a ruder presentation of the macabre: by an exact portrayal of the physically horrible” (Varma 130). He also suggests that horror is particularly created by visual supernatural elements (Varma 130). In this chapter, the terror and horror created by Gothic elements in the Sherlock Holmes stories will be examined in light of Varma’s definition.

Gothic fiction is full of characters who experience terror and horror. Moreover, the reader also shares these emotions with the characters. Pykett asserts: “[G]othic is concerned with feeling: from its inception it has been concerned to depict and explore feeling in character, but also (perhaps mainly) to create feeling or affect in the reader” (Pykett 196). Botting further argues that it is “readers’ identifications with heroes and heroines” (Botting 7) which create terror and horror, and he adds: “[O]bjects of terror and horror not only provoke repugnance, disgust and recoil, but also engage readers’ interest, fascinating and attracting them” (Botting 9). Thus, it can be said that one of the reasons why there is this tendency to create these feelings in the reader can be to increase the reader’s engagement in the work.

One of the elements which plays an important role in the creation of terror and horror is the supernatural, which is a term attributed to what is outside the

laws of nature. Elements of the supernatural often appear in Gothic fiction, as most Gothic writers use “the fear of the supernatural” (Punter 10). David Punter discusses how the supernatural came to be associated with the Gothic, in *The Literature of Terror* (1996). He argues:

It is a commonplace of literary history that, through the earlier part of the eighteenth century, the ghosts and phantoms which had played so important a part in earlier literature seemed to disappear, because there was no room for them in the supremely rational world of the Augustans. But they started to reappear with the Gothic revival, occurring often in the old ballads, and from there they moved into Gothic fiction. (Punter 10)

After supernatural elements appeared in the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, they started to be seen in many other Gothic works as well, after which the supernatural came to be regarded as an element of the Gothic. In this chapter as well, the supernatural will be approached as a Gothic device.

At this point, it should be pointed out that there can be works presenting Gothic elements without any significant supernatural element, as in some works with Gothic overtones “the supernatural had no significant role” (Geary 101), or a story containing supernatural features may not be necessarily Gothic (Quéma 83). For this reason, in this chapter, while analysing supernatural elements in Holmes

stories, other Gothic features of each story will also be examined, in order to ascertain the relevance of the use of the supernatural to the Gothic.

Supernatural elements in Gothic works also invoke suspense which is defined as a feeling created by the “reader[’s] anticipation of the outcome of threats and dangers and the resolution of ambiguity, mystery, enigmas, and uncertainty” (Snodgrass 331). Varma indicates that by writing *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole “evolved a new technique in fiction, based on the principle of suspense”, and Gothic works “were the first to establish ‘suspense’ as the major ingredient” (Varma 214). Van Luchene argues: “The suspense strain of Gothic romance is the source of later literature of crime and detection of Collins, Doyle and writers of murder mystery in our century” (Van 17).

In terms of the use of supernatural elements in Gothic works, it can be said that endings of these stories are particularly important, as they either provide the reader with a rational explanation, or leave the supernatural unexplained. For example, while the supernatural occurrences are not logically explained at the end of *The Castle of Otranto*, Ann Radcliffe is famous for providing rational explanations at the ends of her Gothic novels. It can be said that, whether explained or not, the supernatural does not lose its effect in the story, as David Punter puts it:

[I]n some [Gothic] works, there are any number of genuinely supernatural occurrences, in others only events which prove after all to have reasonable and natural explanation. It is important, however, to

point out that in one sense this makes very little difference: even if the ghosts are eventually explained away, this does not mean that their actual presence within the text can be forgotten. (Punter 10)

It is possible to see the use of Gothic elements, creating terror and horror in the Sherlock Holmes stories. When these Gothic features are examined, it will be seen that although Doyle hints at the presence of the supernatural, he tends to provide a rational explanation in the end, through Holmes. The reason why Doyle does this can be related to genre – that is, Holmes stories’ being detective stories. As Paul argues: “Just as any work of fiction may have a love interest without being a love story, so the detective story may contain gothic mystery, horror, adventure, romance, international intrigue [...] but always at the heart of it there must be a rational solution of a puzzle originating in a crime” (Paul 13). Other reasons for Doyle’s tendency to provide rational explanations will be discussed while analysing the stories in detail.

In this chapter, four stories which stand out in terms of the use of the Gothic will be analysed. The construction of terror and horror, along with the supernatural will also be examined. The stories which will be discussed are “The Adventure of the Speckled Band” and “The Adventure of the Copper Beeches” which are among the most famous Sherlock Holmes short stories containing Gothic features, “The Adventure of the Yellow Face” which presents noteworthy supernatural elements, and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* which stands out as being similar to the Gothic novel in many respects.

2.1 “The Adventure of the Speckled Band”

“The Adventure of the Speckled Band” is one of the twelve Sherlock Holmes short stories published individually from July 1891 to June 1892 in the *Strand Magazine*. In October 1892, a book containing these twelve short stories was published under the title *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, and “The Speckled Band” can be regarded as one of the stories which presents significant Gothic features in this book. To be able to analyse the use of terror, horror and the supernatural in terms of the Gothic in this story, it will be useful to refer to the plot and trace the main Gothic elements. In the story, a female client named Helen Stoner comes to Holmes’s apartment in Baker Street and says that her sister died in a mysterious way two years ago after hearing a kind of whistle late at night. Helen asks for Holmes’s advice as she also heard the same sound the previous night, and the story develops from this point.

The first aspect that can be discussed in terms of the Gothic in this story is the setting. The main story of “The Speckled Band” takes place in an “old ancestral house at Stoke Moran” (216), and only one wing of this mansion is inhabited, which creates a sense of loneliness in a big and frightening place, which is also associated with terror. It can be said that this ancestral mansion in the countryside functions in the same way as the castle in early Gothic works, as the setting of this story bears a strong resemblance to that of other Gothic tales, such as Radcliffe’s *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and Gaskell’s “Old Nurse’s Story” (1852), because:

In Elizabeth Gaskell's 'Old Nurse's Story' it is possible to see especially clearly how Gothic can be simultaneously brought home (to nineteenth-century England) and kept at the margins (in this case rural north-west England) [...] The Manor House in the story works very much as the Gothic castle or abbey had done in earlier, classic Gothic. Gloomy and labyrinthine, it has an east wing closed off and associated with dark events in the past, like the south wing of Castle Mazzini in Ann Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790). (Blair xvii)

Another aspect of the story that stands out in terms of the Gothic is the appearance of a tyrant, which is one of the sources of terror in Gothic fiction because of his threatening attitude. This story's tyrant appears in the character of Dr. Grimesby Roylott. "[A] man of immense strength, and absolutely uncontrollable in his anger" (216), he is Helen Stoner's step-father. She describes him as "the terror of the village" as "the folks would fly at his approach" (216). Dr. Roylott is not only a threat to the villagers, but also to his step-daughters. In addition to his "[v]iolence of temper approaching to mania" (216), Roylott owns "a cheetah and a baboon, which wander freely over his grounds, and are feared by the villagers almost as much as their master" (217), which adds grotesque and inexplicable dimensions to the character of Dr. Roylott. Helen tells Holmes:

You can imagine from what I say that my poor sister Julia and I had no great pleasure in our lives. No servant would stay with us, and for a

long time we did all the work of the house. She was but thirty at the time of her death, and yet her hair had already begun to whiten, even as mine has. (217)

Helen and Julia used to lock their bedroom doors every night as they “had no feeling of security” (217) due to the presence of the cheetah and the baboon. In this way, the wild animals also contribute to the frightening atmosphere because of their unfamiliarity and assumed fierceness, which creates terror in the characters. It is also essential to note that Helen and Julia Stoner are portrayed as innocent characters, which contributes to the Gothic image of the victimized woman. Andrea Cabus asserts that in this story: “The gothic reveals itself through exaggeratedly virtuous and demonic character types and through a decayed, half-empty house” (Cabus 3).

It can be said that the use of Gothic elements in this story mainly creates terror, as the fear is aroused by uncertainty. That terror will be the dominating feeling in the story is hinted from the very beginning as Helen Stoner is displayed as the terrorized female character who is often observed in Gothic works. “[D]ressed in black and heavily veiled” (214), she comes early in the morning to Sherlock Holmes’s apartment in Baker Street in order to ask for his advice. She is trembling and the reason she gives is: “It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror” (214). She is “in a pitiable state of agitation, her face all drawn and grey, with restless, frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal” (214). In this way, it is clearly shown that this woman is experiencing some deep dread, and since she does not

mention why she is experiencing this dread, it creates ambiguity, thus terror in the reader. The basis for the idea that her fears might be related to supernatural means is also created in the reader's mind.

The terror is strengthened when Helen starts to talk about the death of her sister Julia who died two years earlier when she was going to marry. Helen says that one night Julia asked her whether she had heard any whistle in the night. Helen answered in the negative and when she asked the reason for this question, Julia said: "Because during the last few nights I have always, about three in the morning, heard a low, clear whistle. I am a light sleeper and it has awakened me. [...] I cannot tell where it came from – perhaps from the next room, perhaps from the lawn" (217). Julia's mentioning the whistle can be regarded as the first supernatural implication in the story since it is heard at night time and where it comes from is uncertain. This implication is further strengthened when Helen says that there is no communication between the rooms, which makes it seem impossible that the whistle could come from other rooms. Thus, the implication of the supernatural here just creates a sense of insecurity for the characters and readers, which shows that the supernatural is used as a terror-inducing Gothic device.

In this story, according to Helen's account, the weather conditions on the night when Julia died also strengthens the effect of terror. These are similar to the setting of Charles Robert Maturin's Gothic novel *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), as in this novel as well "darkness and foul weather" contributes to the "Gothic atmosphere" (Snodgrass 159). Helen says: "It was a wild night. The wind was

howling outside, and the rain was beating and splashing against the windows.” (217). Then, she says: “Suddenly, amidst all the hubbub of the gale, there burst forth the wild scream of a terrified woman. I knew that it was my sister’s voice” (217). At this point, the mixture of the sound of the wind and the woman’s scream evoke terror both in the character and the reader, hinting at the possibility of the presence of the supernatural. After Helen hears the scream, she leaves her room. She realizes that the door of her sister’s room is unlocked and she looks at it in a frightened way, “not knowing what was about to issue from it” (218). Here Doyle clearly makes the reader feel this sense of insecurity. The reader as well as Helen experiences terror since neither of them knows what will emerge from the room. Later, Helen sees Julia coming out of her room, and the connection between the portrayal of the screaming woman and the implication of a supernatural being can be seen in her narration:

By the light of the corridor lamp I saw my sister appear at the opening, her face blanched with terror, her hands groping for help, her whole figure swaying to and fro like that of a drunkard. I ran to her and threw my arms round her, but at that moment her knees seemed to give way and she fell to the ground. She writhed as one who is in terrible pain, and her limbs were dreadfully convulsed. At first I thought that she had not recognised me, but as I bent over her she suddenly shrieked out in a voice which I shall never forget, ‘Oh, my God! Helen! It was the band! The speckled band!’ (218)

As can be seen, Julia here is the very example of the suffering and terrified female characters in Gothic fiction. It is very clear that she has experienced great fear and she is in shock. Her appearing with a white face and her limbs' being convulsed underline the dread she is experiencing and her naming a mysterious thing "[t]he speckled band!" (218) could be taken to imply a supernatural existence which caused her death. It is interesting to note that the title's being "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" also strengthens the mystery and directs the reader to focus on what "the speckled band" could be. The uncertainty related with the cause of her fear contributes to the Gothic atmosphere associated with terror. At this point, due to the implications that have been discussed so far, it is possible to think that "the speckled band" is the performer of a curse which caused Julia's death.

The supernatural implication is further strengthened in the story, after Julia dies. The coroner who examines Julia's body cannot find any trace of injury. No "satisfactory cause of death" (218) can be found, and after examining the rooms, the coroner cannot find any place from which anyone could have entered Julia's room, which means that she was alone before dying. Moreover, Helen says that like Julia just before her death, she is also about to marry and two days ago, because of repairs to the west side of the building, she moved into her late sister's room. From now on what she experiences is significant. She says:

Two days ago some repairs were started in the west wing of the building, and my bedroom wall has been pierced, so that I have had to

move into the chamber in which my sister died, and to sleep in the very bed in which she slept. Imagine, then, my thrill of terror when last night, as I lay awake thinking over her terrible fate, I suddenly heard in the silence of the night the low whistle which had been the herald of her own death. I sprang up and lit the lamp, but nothing was to be seen in the room. (219)

What Helen is experiencing here is definitely terror, as she also confirms with her use of the word herself. She has a feeling of impending danger. She assumes a connection between the mysterious whistle and Julia's death, and she believes that the same dreadful thing will happen to her, which also creates suspense. It is as if a supernatural being killed Julia's sister and it will kill Helen soon. Furthermore, she cannot see any visible change in the room when she turns on the lights, which reinforces the terror again. Helen says that the reason why she asks for Holmes's advice is because she heard the whistle, which she associates with her sister's death.

The first horror-inducing scene appears in the story when a seemingly supernatural happening takes place after Holmes and Watson go to Helen Stoner's house. After hearing Helen Stoner's narrative, Holmes decides to go to that place, and again the Gothic mood dominates the story. Watson depicts his impressions of the weather and his surroundings: "A moment later we were out on the dark road, a chill wind blowing in our faces, and one yellow light twinkling in front of

us through the gloom to guide us on our sombre errand” (226). Then, the first visual supernatural element appears:

Making our way among the trees, we reached the lawn, crossed it, and were about to enter through the window when out from a clump of laurel bushes there darted what seemed to be a hideous distorted child, who threw itself upon the grass with writhing limbs and then ran swiftly across the lawn into the darkness.

“My God!” I whispered; “did you see it?”

Holmes was for the moment as startled as I. His hand closed like a vice upon my wrist in his agitation. (226)

Since there is a visual frightening element here for the first time, it can be regarded as invoking horror. That this creature may be a supernatural being can be observed from Holmes and Watson’s reactions. Their becoming very surprised and Holmes’s “agitation” (226) is particularly important as the use of horror here arouses more suspense in the reader who trusts Holmes as an exceptionally rational man who is cold-blooded most of the time. Nevertheless, this supernatural implication does not last long, and Holmes shows his cognitive abilities very soon. He breaks “into a low laugh, and put[s] his lips to [...] [Watson’s] ear” (226). Watson says: “‘It is a nice household,’ he murmured. ‘That is the baboon’” (226).

In this way, Doyle destroys the supernatural implication and the suspense element thus momentarily created. In this respect, it is possible to say that Doyle not only tries to create suspense but he also wants to surprise the reader by using supernatural elements. If the baboon did not seem like a “distorted child” (226) to Watson and Holmes, and if Holmes did not become uncomfortable when he saw the creature, it would not create suspense, and if he had immediately revealed that it was a baboon, it would not surprise the reader that much, which shows the contribution of the horror-inducing supernatural element to the story.

Towards the end, the non-supernatural explanation will prevail. Holmes becomes aware of a ventilation hole in Julia’s room which connects it to that of Dr. Roylott’s, and in the end it is revealed that Dr. Roylott used a snake to kill Helen and Julia, in order not to let them marry and so that he could retain their inheritance. Holmes waits in Julia’s room at night and frightens the snake with a stick when Dr. Roylott puts it through the ventilation, after which it turns back and kills its owner. It is revealed that “[t]he speckled band” (218) is in fact the snake, and the whistle is used to recall the snake. The way Roylott dies is significant. Watson says:

It was a singular sight which met our eyes. On the table stood a dark-lantern with the shutter half open, throwing a brilliant beam of light upon the iron safe, the door of which was ajar. Beside this table, on the wooden chair, sat Dr. Grimesby Roylott clad in a long gray dressing-gown [...] His chin was cocked upward and his eyes were

fixed in a dreadful, rigid stare at the corner of the ceiling. Round his brow he had a peculiar yellow band, with brownish speckles, which seemed to be bound tightly round his head. (227-228)

This yellow band turns out to be the snake. It can be said that this scene is closer to horror as it shows a visually frightening object. Moreover, Watson says: “[T]hrowing the noose round the reptile's neck he [Holmes] drew it from its *horrid* perch, and, carrying it at arm's length threw it into the iron safe, which he closed upon it” (emphasis added, 228), highlighting the dreadfulness of the scene. But it can be said that it still does not change the fact that terror is dominant in this story.

It can be said that, by the use of implied supernatural elements throughout the story and by explaining them logically in the end, Doyle creates suspense, then surprises and relieves the reader, as Cabus also suggests that elements of the Gothic “emphasize the supernatural appearance of the story's events, making Holmes's rational solution to the crime more surprising in comparison” (Cabus 3). Another reason for Holmes's logical explanation can be Doyle's tendency to preserve Holmes as the centre of attention. Doyle does not want the supernatural to dominate the story as he wants Holmes to stand, as he does, as the ultimate example of western science and to draw the attention of the reader to him as the great detective figure. A hint about this can be the fact that although there are many supernatural implications in the story; the characters do not directly refer to the possibility of the supernatural while talking. For instance, although Helen is

very afraid of the mysterious danger, she says of her sister's death: "It is my belief that she died of pure fear and nervous shock, though what it was frightened her I cannot imagine" (219), which contributes to the terror that is created (Atkinson 37), but she never says that she might have been killed by a supernatural being. She thinks Julia's saying "the speckled band" at the point of her death may only be "the wild talk of delirium" (219) or it may be referring to a band of gypsies who are living near them. In the story neither Holmes nor Watson comment on a supernatural possibility either.

Consequently, Doyle's use of Gothic elements in this story mostly display terror. Moreover, Gothic elements enable Doyle to surprise the reader, and to preserve Holmes as the centre of attention.

2.2 "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches"

"The Copper Beeches" (1892) is another story presenting significant Gothic elements in *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* collection. In this story, a female client called Violet Hunter comes to Holmes's apartment to ask him whether she should accept a job as governess because the offer, which was made by a man called Mr. Rucastle, is very strange due to the unusually high salary and queer conditions that she is asked to fulfill, such as cutting her hair short. After consulting Holmes, Violet decides to take the job and Holmes tells her that he can help her if she needs his help. After a fortnight, Violet sends a message to Holmes, asking him to come to Winchester to meet her. She writes: "Do come! I am at my

wit's end" (277). Then Holmes and Watson set out to see her, after which the Gothic features of the story manifest themselves.

The Gothic element which stands out in this story is again the setting. The house in which Violet Hunter starts to stay in is again a mysterious house in the countryside. Redmond maintains: "If 'The Speckled Band' offered hints of the gothic [...] one likes to associate with a half-ruined old house deep in the countryside, 'The Copper Beeches' does it thoroughly" (Redmond, *Bed* 87). It is important to note that just before arriving at the house, Holmes says to Watson:

But look at these lonely houses, each in its own fields, filled for the most part with poor ignorant folk who know little of the law. Think of the deeds of hellish cruelty, the hidden wickedness which may go on, year in, year out, in such places, and none the wiser. Had this lady who appeals to us for help gone to live in Winchester, I should never have had a fear for her. It is the five miles of country which makes the danger. (278)

At this point, what Holmes says creates the image of the Gothic countryside with an endangered female protagonist. It can be regarded as a foreshadowing that Violet Hunter will also display the image of the threatened female heroine trying to survive in a Gothic setting. Moreover, it can be said that Doyle's creation of the feeling of insecurity related with remoteness here creates terror.

The house in the story presents clear Gothic features. Redmond argues that “[t]he Rucastle house, five miles from anywhere, takes on the atmosphere of [Dracula’s] Carfax [Abbey] or Castle Otranto by the time Holmes has warned of ‘the deeds of hellish cruelty, the hidden wickedness which may go on, year in, year out, in such places’” (Redmond, *Bed* 87). The house creates a negative impression on Violet Hunter from the very first time she sees it. She says that the house is “beautifully situated, but it is not beautiful in itself, for it is a large square block of a house, whitewashed, but all stained and streaked with damp and bad weather” (278). She adds: “A clump of copper beeches immediately in front of the hall door has given its name to the place” (279). It is essential to note that the Copper Beeches also has an uninhabited wing, just like Dracula’s Castle or Thornfield Hall in *Jane Eyre*. In this story, this wing is used to create terror, which will be discussed later.

In terms of the use of the Gothic in this story, it is essential to point out that Violet Hunter’s being a governess is particularly important because it is very suitable for the development of the Gothic plot. Some works with Gothic overtones, such as Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), also have main characters who are governesses. John D. Seelye, while discussing governesses in such stories, argues that “the gothic element is enhanced by the conventional situation of the governess as a stock figure, which approximates entrapment” (Seelye 12). Redmond also maintains that governesses in the Victorian Era “are the perfect independent-yet-

vulnerable women to whom dreadful things can happen” (Redmond, *Bed* 88), which makes them suitable for Gothic stories.

The characters Mr. Toller and his wife, who are the servants of the house, are also suitable for the Gothic atmosphere. Violet says:

The one unpleasant thing about the house, which struck me at once, was the appearance and conduct of the servants. There are only two, a man and his wife. Toller, for that is his name, is a rough, uncouth man, with grizzled hair and whiskers, and a perpetual smell of drink. Twice since I have been with them he has been quite drunk, and yet Mr. Rucastle seemed to take no notice of it. (279)

In addition, Mrs. Toller has “a sour face,” and is a “silent” and “unfriendly” character (279). Derek Longhurst suggests that “the taciturn or drunken servants” are among the Gothic qualities of this work (Longhurst 64). It is important to note that Mr. Toller also keeps a savage dog which is a horror-inducing Gothic device. Mr. Rucastle takes Violet to an outhouse, and Violet depicts the scene in which she encounters the dog there:

“‘Look in here!’ said Mr. Rucastle, showing me a slit between two planks. ‘Is he not a beauty?’

“I looked through and was conscious of two glowing eyes, and of a vague figure huddled up in the darkness.

“Don't be frightened,’ said my employer, laughing at the start which I had given. ‘It’s only Carlo, my mastiff. (281)

At this point, Violet only sees the eyes of the giant dog, which is the first visual fear-inducing object that appears in the story. Mr. Rucastle further says: “We feed him [the dog] once a day, and not too much then, so that he is always as keen as mustard. Toller lets him loose every night, and God help the trespasser whom he lays his fangs upon” (281). It is possible to say that through the use of this horror-inducing dog, the suspense is strengthened in the story as Mr. Rucastle emphasises the dog’s hunger and the possibility of its attacking someone. Mr. Rucastle also warns Violet: “For goodness’ sake don’t you ever on any pretext set your foot over the threshold at night, for it’s as much as your life is worth” (281). The feeling of danger and insecurity that is created here is similar to the suspense created by Dr. Roylott’s cheetah and baboon in “The Speckled Band”.

The first supernatural implication in the story is made when Violet Hunter talks about what she experienced at night. She says:

I happened to look out of my bedroom window about two o’clock in the morning. It was a beautiful moonlight night, and the lawn in front of the house was silvered over and almost as bright as day. I was standing, rapt in the peaceful beauty of the scene, when I was aware that something was moving under the shadow of the copper beeches. As it emerged into the moonshine I saw what it was. (281)

Since it is midnight with moonlight, here the reader may think that this can be a supernatural being moving “under the shadow of the copper beeches” (281). But the supernatural implication is destroyed, as the “something” (281) is revealed to be no more than the giant dog. Nevertheless Violet depicts the dog in horror-inducing detail:

It was a giant dog, as large as a calf, tawny tinted, with hanging jowl, black muzzle, and huge projecting bones. It walked slowly across the lawn and vanished into the shadow upon the other side. That dreadful sentinel sent a chill to my heart which I do not think that any burglar could have done. (281)

Violet here underlines an effect of horror on herself, and this horror along with the scenery and Violet’s depiction, functions to increase the suspense of the story.

From this point, stronger terror-inducing elements also start to appear in the story. For instance, Violet Hunter relates one of her experiences in the house:

There was one wing [...] which appeared not to be inhabited at all. A door which faced that which led into the quarters of the Tollers opened into this suite, but it was invariably locked. One day, however, as I ascended the stair, I met Mr. Rucastle coming out through this door, his keys in his hand, and a look on his face which made him a very different person to the round, jovial man to whom I was

accustomed. His cheeks were red, his brow was all crinkled with anger, and the veins stood out at his temples with passion. He locked the door and hurried past me without a word or a look. (282)

The uninhabited wing is unfamiliar to Violet, thus creating terror and also hinting at the uncanny. This mysterious scene adds to the Gothic plot. Moreover, Rucastle's being a villain is hinted at through his association, here, with the uninhabited wing.

The terror-inducing Gothic atmosphere is further strengthened, as Violet becomes curious about the uninhabited wing and tries to see what can be inside these rooms by looking through their windows from the outside. She says that there are three "dirty" (282) windows and one "shuttered up" window (282), and the rooms that she can see are "evidently all deserted" (282), in a Gothic way. Redmond even argues that "[t]he fear comes from the deserted rooms" in the story (Redmond, *Bed* 87), which can be understood better by looking at the next scene.

The strongest terror-inducing scene takes place when Violet manages to get into the uninhabited wing. One evening the drunk Mr. Toller, who uses this wing in a suspicious way from time to time, leaves the key on the door by accident. Using this key, Violet enters the wing in order to find out what is inside, and three doors standing side by side take her attention. Two of these doors are open, and they each lead "into an empty room, dusty and cheerless, with two windows in the one and one in the other, so thick with dirt that the evening light

[...] [glimmers] dimly through them” (282). She then describes the door in the centre:

The centre door was closed, and across the outside of it had been fastened one of the broad bars of an iron bed, padlocked at one end to a ring in the wall, and fastened at the other with stout cord. The door itself was locked as well, and the key was not there. (282)

The padlocked room excites the reader and increases the suspense as it adds to the mystery. Then Violet says:

As I stood in the passage gazing at the sinister door, and wondering what secret it might veil, I suddenly heard the sound of steps within the room and saw a shadow pass backward and forward against the little slit of dim light which shone out from under the door. A mad, unreasoning terror rose up in me at the sight, Mr. Holmes. My overstrung nerves failed me suddenly, and I turned and ran—ran as though some dreadful hand were behind me clutching at the skirt of my dress. (282-283)

It can be said that the sound of the steps and the mysterious padlocked room create the greatest terror in the story, largely because of the supernatural at this point. Furthermore, her thinking that “some dreadful hand” (282) is behind her,

“clutching at” (282) her skirt also shows how a supernatural implication can increase the suspense in the story.

When Violet goes out of the door of the uninhabited wing, she meets the villain, Mr. Rucastle. What she says to him clearly displays the terror that she is experiencing: “I was foolish enough to go into the empty wing [...] [b]ut it is so lonely and eerie in this dim light that I was frightened and ran out again. Oh, it is so dreadfully still in there!” (283). Here Violet plays the role of the terrified heroines who appear in Gothic fiction.

As the real personality of Mr. Rucastle is displayed, he invokes even more terror. After seeing Violet leaving the uninhabited wing, the way he talks to her can be regarded as very significant in this respect. He says:

“ ‘Why do you think that I lock this door?’

“ ‘I am sure that I do not know.’

“ ‘It is to keep people out who have no business there. Do you see?’

He was still smiling in the most amiable manner.

“ ‘I am sure if I had known – ’

“ ‘Well, then, you know now. And if you ever put your foot over that threshold again’ – here in an instant the smile hardened into a grin of rage, and he glared down at me with the face of a demon – ‘I’ll throw you to the mastiff.’ (283)

Here Mr. Rucastle's villainous character is revealed. His displaying "the face of a demon" (283), his threatening the female protagonist of the story, and his harsh manner make him similar to the tyrants that appear in Gothic works. The changes in Rucastle's manner also show an inexplicable dual nature in him, which is regarded as a kind of motif of the double that appeared in Gothic works, such as *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886). It should also be noted that while the villain, Mr. Rucastle, is not depicted as a totally negative figure in the beginning of this story, his displaying some sort of split character makes him more mysterious to the reader, adding to the terror that is created.

Later in the story, the characters learn that Mr. Rucastle is indeed the villain, and he has imprisoned his daughter Alice Rucastle to prevent her from marrying, as this will prompt him to lose his money. The reason why he has employed Violet is that she resembles his daughter and he wants to convince his daughter's fiancé that she is no longer interested in him. For this reason, he makes her cut her hair and do several otherwise meaningless things. There are two points that should be mentioned in this respect. The first point is the fact that Alice Rucastle is imprisoned in the uninhabited wing, in other words she is the confined woman that is found in so much of Gothic fiction. The second is that again there is a motif of the double, which is Violet's similarity to Alice. There is a scene that can be given as a significant example of the creepiness of this doubling: One evening, Violet had looked in some drawers and she realized that one of them is locked. She tried to unlock it with her keys and succeeded. She said to Holmes: "There was only one thing in it, but I am sure that you would never guess what it

was. It was my coil of hair” (281). She thought it was her own, as she had cut her hair and put a coil in her trunk. What she says about the coil in the drawer displays terror:

I took it up and examined it. It was of the same peculiar tint, and the same thickness. But then the impossibility of the thing obtruded itself upon me. How could my hair have been locked in the drawer? With trembling hands I undid my trunk, turned out the contents, and drew from the bottom my own hair. I laid the two tresses together, and I assure you that they were identical. Was it not extraordinary? Puzzle as I would, I could make nothing at all of what it meant. I returned the strange hair to the drawer, and I said nothing of the matter to the Rucastles as I felt that I had put myself in the wrong by opening a drawer which they had locked. (281-282)

Violet’s hands’ trembling clearly displays her terror. The extraordinariness and ambiguity of this scene, its inexplicableness, create terror and suspense in the reader’s mind.

In many respects this story is highly reminiscent of *Jane Eyre*. In this novel as well, there is an entrapped woman, Bertha Rochester, who is imprisoned by her husband as she is mad. There is also an uninhabited wing, as mentioned before in this chapter. Moreover, *Jane Eyre* also presents the doubling motif, as it

is often argued that Jane, the protagonist, and Bertha are in fact doubles (Snodgrass 84).

Another important point in the story is that Mr. Rucastle has a child who has a very bad disposition. Violet depicts him in this way:

I have never met so utterly spoiled and so ill-natured a little creature. He is small for his age, with a head which is quite disproportionately large. His whole life appears to be spent in an alternation between savage fits of passion and gloomy intervals of sulking. Giving pain to any creature weaker than himself seems to be his one idea of amusement, and he shows quite remarkable talent in planning the capture of mice, little birds, and insects. (279)

This apparently evil child does not show himself in this story. He is just mentioned by other characters, thus functioning as a Gothic element in the story, creating terror, and also strengthening the frightening impression of Rucastle on the reader. Holmes explains why the child effects the judgement on the father in a comment he makes to Watson:

My dear Watson, you as a medical man are continually gaining light as to the tendencies of a child by the study of the parents. Don't you see that the converse is equally valid. I have frequently gained my first real insight into the character of parents by studying their children.

This child's disposition is abnormally cruel, merely for cruelty's sake, and whether he derives this from his smiling father, as I should suspect, or from his mother, it bodes evil for the poor girl who is in their power. (284)

The child's cruelty is also emphasized when Mr. Rucastle talks earlier in the story about his child to Violet Hunter: "Oh, if you could see him killing cockroaches with a slipper! Smack! smack! smack! Three gone before you could wink!" (275). As a link between the child and Mr. Rucastle can be established, it can be said that this scene also contributes to the image of Mr. Rucastle as the threatening and torturing tyrant.

Mr. Rucastle's wife is also a "silent" (279) and "colourless" (279) character, which strengthens the ambiguity related with this household. After analysing the members of this household, it can be concluded that as Christopher Redmond argues, in the story "[t]he fear comes [...] from the vicious Rucastle and his nasty child, from the drunken groom [Mr. Toller] and his savage dog Carlo" (Redmond, *Bed* 87).

Near the end of the story, after learning that Mr. And Mrs. Rucastle will be away, Holmes and Watson enter the padlocked room but they realize that it is empty. The fact that Alice and her fiancé have escaped is revealed in this way. While Holmes is talking, Watson says:

The words were hardly out of his mouth before a man appeared at the door of the room, a very fat and burly man, with a heavy stick in his hand. Miss Hunter screamed and shrunk against the wall at the sight of him. (285)

Violet's response to Mr. Rucastle's sudden appearance creates terror, while again presenting her, strikingly, as the endangered woman of Gothic fiction.

At the very end of the story there is the use of a horror-inducing element. After learning that his daughter has escaped, Mr. Rucastle becomes angry and he goes out to release the savage dog, which adds immediate suspense. Later, "a scream of agony" (285) is heard, after which it is revealed that the giant dog is attacking Mr. Rucastle. Watson approaches him and says:

There was the huge famished brute, its black muzzle buried in Rucastle's throat, while he writhed and screamed upon the ground. Running up, I blew its brains out, and it fell over with its keen white teeth still meeting in the great creases of his neck. With much labour we separated them and carried him, living but horribly mangled, into the house. (286)

There is a visual and disturbing scene here, which can be regarded as displaying horror. After the suspense that has been created throughout the story, this horror-inducing scene creates surprise, and similar to the end of "The Speckled Band",

this horror-inducing scene surprises the reader, by making the victim of horror not the expected innocent girl, but the villainous tyrant.

It can be concluded that this “story is an admirable venture to the Gothic genre, with its isolated house, intimations of madness in the attic, feminine fear, and bloodshed” (Redmond, *Handbook* 19). It presents significant Gothic elements which contain supernatural hints, terror and horror. Terror is still the dominating feeling aroused by the use of Gothic elements in the story.

2.3 “The Adventure of the Yellow Face”

“The Adventure of the Yellow Face” (1893) is included in *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes*, another set of twelve short stories originally published in the *Strand Magazine* from 1892 to 1893. This story stands out in terms of its use of the supernatural. In this story, Mr Grant Munro who is worried about the suspicious behaviour of his wife, comes to Sherlock Holmes’s apartment to ask his help as he wants to find out the reason for a change in her behaviour.

The setting is again the countryside. Mr Grant Munro and his wife Effie, live in a country house close to town. The place is “very countrified” (323) and isolated. Munro says: “We had an inn and two houses a little above us, and a single cottage at the other side of the field which faces us, and except those there were no houses until you got halfway to the station” (323). Thus, this setting is suitable for the development of a Gothic atmosphere.

The supernatural is again implied at the very beginning of the story but more overtly this time. Close to Mr Munro's house, there is a cottage which has not been inhabited for a long time. One day, while Munro is walking past this cottage, he realizes that someone is living there. He says:

I walked past it, and then stopping, as an idle man might, I ran my eye over it, and wondered what sort of folk they were who had come to live so near us. And as I looked I suddenly became aware that a face was watching me out of one of the upper windows. (323)

This seems to be an ordinary scene. However, the atmosphere changes when Munro gives details about the face:

I don't know what there was about that face, Mr. Holmes, but it seemed to send a chill right down my back. I was some little way off, so that I could not make out the features, but there was something unnatural and inhuman about the face. (323)

Munro's using the word "unnatural" (323) can be regarded as an implication of the supernatural. It should be noted that the change in the use of the supernatural is apparent. There is a visual supernatural element this time, creating horror rather than terror, and as this face will appear again and again in the story, making it

different from the previous stories. Further, this face looks in some ways like that of a ghost. Munro says:

I could not tell if the face were that of a man or a woman. It had been too far from me for that. But its colour was what had impressed me most. It was of a livid, dead yellow, and with something set and rigid about it which was shockingly unnatural. (323)

The words “set” (308) and “rigid” (323) imply death as does the words “dead yellow” (323). The face here seems to belong to a supernatural being, and this visually frightening object is associated with horror.

A terror-inducing element also appears. After seeing the face in the window, Munro knocks on the door of this house and “a tall, gaunt woman, with a harsh, forbidding face” (323) opens it, gives brief and unfriendly answers to him and then shuts the door in his face. The woman’s cold behaviour here creates a mysterious atmosphere that can be associated with terror.

After this scene, Munro has a significant experience at night. He says:

[S]omehow on that particular night, whether it may have been the slight excitement produced by my little adventure or not, but I slept much more lightly than usual. Half in my dreams I was dimly conscious that something was going on in the room, and gradually

became aware that my wife had dressed herself and was slipping on her mantle and her bonnet. (324)

Gothic works “make frequent use of dreams” (Pykett 195), and although Munro is not dreaming, his referring to “dreams” (324) here is important as they appear as mysterious or suspenseful elements in Gothic fiction. A horror-inducing scene now appears, as Munro continues:

[S]uddenly my half-opened eyes fell upon her face, illuminated by the candlelight, and astonishment held me dumb. She wore an expression such as I had never seen before – such as I should have thought her incapable of assuming. (324)

The face of his wife “illuminated by the candlelight” and her “deadly pale face” which is mentioned later by Munro are visual fear-inducing elements, and this scene of horror creates great suspense as it makes his wife reminiscent of the suffering female heroines in Gothic works.

In the story, it is as if the arrival of these mysterious neighbours has changed everything. After putting on her mantle, Effie goes out, and when she returns to the room that night, she explains that she merely wanted to take some fresh air but her husband and the reader have become suspicious, and the next day he sees Effie coming out of the mysterious cottage. When Munro wants to find

out who is inside the cottage apart from the unfriendly woman, Effie becomes anxious and insists on him leaving. Munro says:

Still pulling at my sleeve she led me away from the cottage. As we went I glanced back, and there was that yellow livid face watching us out of the upper window. What link could there be between that creature and my wife? (326)

This scene creates terror, as there is an ambiguous atmosphere. It appears that a supernatural being is in control of his wife. Munro himself increases the terror when he says that there is a “secret influence which” draws “her away from her husband and her duty” (326).

Later in the story, Munro sees his wife once more emerging from the cottage after which he enters it. He does not find anybody inside, and on the second floor he sees a picture of his wife on the wall of the room from where the disturbing face had looked out from the window, which again adds to the suspense.

At the end of the story, after Munro says that the cottage is once more inhabited, Holmes, Watson and Munro go to find out who the inhabitants are. Weather conditions are again used in order to add to the Gothic atmosphere. Watson says: “It was a very dark night and a thin rain began to fall as we turned from the high road into a narrow lane, deeply rutted, with hedges on either side” (328). In this way, suspense is increased, and the reader is prepared for an ending

which presents many supernatural features. The characters enter the upper room and, immediately, the supernatural seems to present itself. Watson says:

In the corner, stooping over a desk, there sat what appeared to be a little girl. Her face was turned away as we entered, but we could see that she was dressed in a red frock, and that she had long white gloves on. As she whisked round to us, I gave a cry of surprise and horror. The face which she turned towards us was of the strangest livid tint, and the features were absolutely devoid of any expression. (317)

As with the appearance of the “distorted child” (226) in “The Speckled Band”, the fear Watson experiences is horror here, and it also adds to the suspense again, as the reader wonders what Holmes will do. Then, a logical explanation is presented to the reader:

An instant later the mystery was explained. Holmes, with a laugh, passed his hand behind the child’s ear, a mask peeled off from her countenance, and there was a little coal-black negress, with all her white teeth flashing in amusement at our amazed faces. (329)

Both in this story and in “The Speckled Band”, it is Holmes who reveals the truth behind what seems to be a supernatural being. In this respect, supernatural elements contribute to Holmes’s character as the main detective figure. Holmes’s

ability to make rational connections between the clues he has collected, and his talent of seeing through things is shown much more strikingly through the manipulation of the reader's and characters' fear of the supernatural.

As can be seen, this story stands out for having stronger Gothic elements than the other Holmes stories discussed so far, and for invoking horror. There is still, also, a significant use of terror-inducing elements, and it is important to note that although supernatural elements are used visually in this story, there is still no comment on the possibility of the supernatural by Holmes or other characters. They do not comment on whether there can be a genuine supernatural happening behind this case or not. Even though Munro said the face was unnatural, the fact that the face could belong to a supernatural being is not openly stated. Therefore, it can be pointed out that Doyle does not let the supernatural dominate the story. However, this changes in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, which presents elements acknowledged by some of the characters as supernatural, and the story presents significant horror-inducing Gothic elements.

2.4 The Hound of the Baskervilles

The novel *The Hound of the Baskervilles* was published in 1904 as a series in the *Strand Magazine*. As Lisa SurrIDGE suggests, this novel “introduces a more markedly Gothic mode than the stories that preceded it” (SurrIDGE 231). In this novel the Gothic shows itself in the apparent use of the supernatural. As Francis O’Gorman argues, “apparent confrontation between the logical and the

supernatural [...] forms the core of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*” (O’Gorman 17). The story also presents the strongest horror-inducing elements found in Holmes stories. Davies argues: “In this novel not only has Holmes to contend with a flesh-and-blood villain but also a spectral hound whose ghastly shape is ‘outlined in flickering flame’” (Davies, *Hound* v).

In the story, a client called Dr. James Mortimer visits Holmes. He says that he has been “suddenly confronted with a most serious and extraordinary problem” (452), and starts to read from a manuscript which he has brought with him. With this manuscript, as Snodgrass suggests, Doyle is using a “familiar Gothic machinery [...] [, which is] an old manuscript telling a story-within-a-story” (Snodgrass 181).

The manuscript itself presents clear Gothic features. It begins by presenting Hugo Baskerville, a tyrant who is “a most wild, profane, and godless man” (454). He loves a “young maiden” (454) who avoids him as she is afraid of “his evil name” (454). Therefore, he kidnaps her with his “wicked companions” (454), and they bring her to Baskerville Hall and put her in an upper chamber. While Hugo Baskerville is drinking with his friends, the maiden escapes to the moors using the ivy which covers the wall. After some time, Hugo realizes that the maiden is gone. The narrator of the manuscript says:

Then, as it would seem, he became as one that hath a devil, for, rushing down the stairs into the dining-hall, he sprang upon the great table, flagons and trenchers flying before him, and he cried aloud

before all the company that he would that very night render his body and soul to the Powers of Evil if he might but overtake the wench. (454)

After this scene, Hugo sets out to find the maiden. Then his companions also decide to follow him. When they cannot see Hugo in the moors, they ask a shepherd whether he has seen them or not. The shepherd says he has seen the maiden, and adds: “But I have seen more than that, [...] for Hugo Baskerville passed me upon his black mare, and there ran mute behind him such a hound of hell as God forbid should ever be at my heels” (454). The presence of a supernatural hound is implied here for the first time. Shortly after this scene, Hugo’s companions see his black mare but they cannot see him. Then, the narrator of the manuscript depicts a clearly Gothic scene, inducing horror:

The moon was shining bright upon the clearing, and there in the centre lay the unhappy maid where she had fallen, dead of fear and of fatigue. But it was not the sight of her body, nor yet was it that of the body of Hugo Baskerville lying near her, which raised the hair upon the heads of these three dare-devil roysterers, but it was that, standing over Hugo, and plucking at his throat, there stood a foul thing, a great, black beast, shaped like a hound, yet larger than any hound that ever mortal eye has rested upon. (454-455)

The Gothic atmosphere created by the portrayal of the shining moon, the victimized maiden, and the body of Hugo Baskerville, is further strengthened with the visual violence. What is special about this part of the story is that here, this violence is created by a seemingly supernatural being, which is one of the most obvious elements of horror in the stories that have been examined in this chapter. The horror is further strengthened when the narrator says:

... [E]ven as they looked the thing tore the throat out of Hugo Baskerville, on which, as it turned its blazing eyes and dripping jaws upon them, the three shrieked with fear and rode for dear life, still screaming, across the moor. One, it is said, died that very night of what he had seen, and the other twain were but broken men for the rest of their days. (455)

This passage demonstrates the emphasis on the visual fear-inducing object that is very apparent in this story. The features of the supposedly supernatural being who frightens the characters, are clearly described.

The rest of the manuscript reveals that the huge hound which killed Hugo Baskerville has haunted members of the Baskerville family ever since. In addition to the manuscript's presenting a visually frightening object, it also displays stock characters of Gothic fiction. Hugo's imprisoning the maiden is important because the maiden's being entrapped and trying to escape makes her similar to the confined and suffering women of Gothic fiction. Hugo's reactions are also

significant, as his being the terror-inducing tyrant is reinforced in this way. Further, his referring to “the Powers of Evil” (454) implies his evil side.

In the novel, after reading this manuscript, Mortimer shows Holmes a recent newspaper article. According to the article, one night Sir Charles Baskerville “went out as usual for his nocturnal walk, in the course of which he was in the habit of smoking a cigar. [And h]e never returned” (456). Then his dead body was discovered in the end of the “Yew Alley of Baskerville Hall” (456). The article says:

No signs of violence were to be discovered upon Sir Charles's person, and though the doctor's evidence pointed to an almost incredible facial distortion—so great that Dr. Mortimer refused at first to believe that it was indeed his friend and patient who lay before him—it was explained that that is a symptom which is not unusual in cases of dyspnoea and death from cardiac exhaustion. (457)

This corpse which has “an almost incredible facial distortion” (457) creates horror again. After showing Holmes the newspaper article, Mortimer talks about his impressions. He says:

There was certainly no physical injury of any kind. But one false statement was made by Barrymore at the inquest. He said that there

were no traces upon the ground round the body. He did not observe any. But I did—some little distance off, but fresh and clear.

“Footprints?”

“Footprints.”

“A man’s or a woman’s?”

Dr. Mortimer looked strangely at us for an instant, and his voice sank almost to a whisper as he answered.

“Mr. Holmes, they were the footprints of a gigantic hound!” (458)

This passage makes the story different from the previous ones. It is suggested here that the supernatural element, which has been implied from the very beginning of the story, really exists. So it is hinted that the supernatural being may not be just a product of imagination, and the footprints of this hound create horror. The chapter finishes at this point, which increases the horror of the supernatural through the use of delay and thus, suspense.

James Mortimer then consults Sherlock Holmes about Sir Henry Baskerville, the heir to Sir Charles’s estate, as Sir Henry will arrive in London that evening. Dr. Mortimer asks if he should take Sir Henry to Baskerville Hall. Holmes asks Watson to accompany Dr. Mortimer and Sir Henry to Devonshire, and says that he will remain in London.

The setting, like many aspects of this novel, presents very significant Gothic features. Baskerville Hall is again in the countryside but this time the Gothic features are more clearly described. Surridge suggests that as Watson and Henry Baskerville “drive to Baskerville Hall, they enter a gothicized section of the narrative” (Surridge 233). Watson says: [B]ehind the peaceful and sunlit countryside there rose ever, dark against the evening sky, the long, gloomy curve of the moor, broken by the jagged and sinister hills” (480). It is also autumn, and “[a] cold wind [...] set[s]” Watson and Henry Baskerville “shivering” (481). Furthermore, “the barren waste, the chilling wind, and the darkling sky” (481), all contribute to the gloomy atmosphere. Watson says:

The road in front of us grew bleaker and wilder over huge russet and olive slopes, sprinkled with giant boulders. Now and then we passed a moorland cottage, walled and roofed with stone, with no creeper to break its harsh outline. Suddenly we looked down into a cup-like depression, patched with stunted oaks and furs which had been twisted and bent by the fury of years of storm. Two high, narrow towers rose over the trees. The driver pointed with his whip.

“Baskerville Hall,” said he. (481)

After this scene, the gloom of Baskerville Hall is also emphasized. After passing through the gate, Watson and Henry Baskerville go through a dark and “sombre”

(481) tunnel of “old trees” (481). Watson also says: “[T]he house glimmered *like a ghost* (emphasis added) at the farther end” (482). The hall’s front is also covered with ivy, which may remind the reader of ivy covered old castles in Gothic works. The interior of the Hall is also frightening; the objects look “dim and sombre in the subdued light of the central lamp” (482). Watson describes the dining-room as “a place of shadow and gloom” (483). There are also portraits of the ancestors of the family, creating a Gothic atmosphere again, also laying stress on the family’s mysterious past. The way Watson portrays the portraits should also be referred to: “A dim line of ancestors, in every variety of dress, from the Elizabethan knight to the buck of the Regency, stared down upon us and daunted us by their silent company” (483). Moreover, after this scene, we have another creepy, moonlit scene. Watson depicts the view from his room’s window in this way:

It opened upon the grassy space which lay in front of the hall door. Beyond, two copses of trees moaned and swung in a rising wind. A half moon broke through the rifts of racing clouds. In its cold light I saw beyond the trees a broken fringe of rocks, and the long, low curve of the melancholy moor. (483)

The Gothic features of the setting are very clear. The moaning trees, the racing clouds and “the melancholy moor” (483) all contribute to the Gothic scenery. It is also important to note that Watson cannot sleep in his first night in the Hall, which creates terror. He says:

Far away a chiming clock struck out the quarters of the hours, but otherwise a deathly silence lay upon the old house. And then suddenly, in the very dead of the night, there came a sound to my ears, clear, resonant, and unmistakable. It was the sob of a woman, the muffled, strangling gasp of one who is torn by an uncontrollable sorrow. I sat up in bed and listened intently. The noise could not have been far away and was certainly in the house. For half an hour I waited with every nerve on the alert, but there came no other sound save the chiming clock and the rustle of the ivy on the wall. (483)

The “deathly silence” (483) of the night, the sound of the “chiming clock” (483) and “the sob of a woman” (483) late at night creates terror. At this point, it is essential to point out that Baskerville Hall is very similar to Wuthering Heights in Emily Brontë’s novel, a work full of significant Gothic features. In *Wuthering Heights* as well, there is a desolate moor. Furthermore, a similarity between the narrators Lockwood and Watson can also be observed as they are both inexperienced narrators who are new to their surroundings. Both Watson and Lockwood spend their first nights in Gothic houses and have difficulty in sleeping. Watson hears sounds that disturb him, and Lockwood mistakes the noise and shadow of branches against his window for the hand of a ghostly female.

The terror which is created by Baskerville Hall is further strengthened when Watson first arrives there, and learns that a brutal murderer has recently escaped from prison. The driver who brings Watson and Henry Baskerville to the

Hall says that the murderer is not an “ordinary convict” (481). He remarks: “This is a man that would stick at nothing” (481), which adds to the the threatening atmosphere of the novel, and thus to the suspense.

Another point which makes this novel different from the previous stories is that in addition to the spectral hound which is repeatedly mentioned in the story, Holmes, Watson and other characters comment on the possibility of the presence of the supernatural on a number of occasions. After talking about the country legend and Sir Charles’s death, Dr. Mortimer says to Holmes: “There is a realm in which the most acute and most experienced of detectives is helpless” (461), and Holmes asks him whether he thinks that the reason for Sir Charles Baskerville’s death is a supernatural being. It is revealed that even though Dr Mortimer is a scientific man, he thinks there is a curse on the family members which results in their being killed by a spectral hound. Holmes’s comments on the supernatural in this novel are also very significant. When he first hears the contents of the manuscript, he says that it can interest “a collector of fairy tales” (455). However, Mortimer talks more about Sir Charles’s death and after he leaves Holmes’s apartment, Holmes tells Watson:

There are two questions waiting for us at the outset. The one is whether any crime has been committed at all; the second is, what is the crime and how was it committed? Of course, if Dr. Mortimer's surmise should be correct, and we are dealing with forces outside the ordinary laws of Nature, there is an end of our investigation. But we

are bound to exhaust all other hypotheses before falling back upon this one. (465)

This passage presents one of Holmes's first comments on a supernatural possibility. It should be underlined that here Holmes does not completely reject the supernatural. He says that he will try to solve the case by focusing on the material world, and if he fails and understands that there is indeed a supernatural happening, then he will leave the case, apparently accepting the possibility of the supernatural. Holmes's comment is very important as, by not rejecting the supernatural completely, he strengthens the effect of the supernatural elements on the reader who, guided by Holmes, has to allow the possibility of their genuine existence. Furthermore, it is not only Holmes but also the other characters who do not reject supernatural explanation. Mortimer believes it although he is a medical man. Watson is frightened when he hears the sound of the hound in the story, although at one point he says to Henry Baskerville that he does not believe there can be a supernatural possibility. Henry is also afraid of the hound and he gives the impression that he has started to believe in the family legend about the curse on the Baskervilles. He says to Watson:

And yet it was one thing to laugh about it in London, and it is another to stand out here in the darkness of the moor and to hear such a cry as that. And my uncle! There was the footprint of the hound beside him

as he lay. It all fits together. I don't think that I am a coward, Watson, but that sound seemed to freeze my very blood. Feel my hand! (505)

Watson touches Sir Henry's hand, and describes it "as cold as a block of marble" (505). In this way, the effect of the supernatural elements is strengthened in the novel.

Another aspect of the novel which is important in terms of the use of the supernatural is that Holmes is absent from some parts of this story. In these parts, Watson's role becomes dominant, as Davies argues:

Although Holmes is absent from action for a section of the story, quite legitimately, we are linked to the character by Watson's narration and letters. Indeed it is as much Watson's case as Holmes's. Watson acts as our eyes and ears and it is through his observations that we learn all about the various characters – suspects, if you like – who people the area. Watson allows the reader to form his own theory as to who is behind the devilry on the moor before Sherlock Holmes arrives to bring the case to its very dramatic and chilling conclusion. (Davies, *Hound* viii)

It can be said that the absence of Sherlock Holmes enables Doyle to stress the supernatural. This is because when Watson is alone the reader cannot be given Holmes's view of clues concerning who might be behind the events, and they

cannot be sure whether the criminal is a human being or not. Furthermore, Watson, like the reader, does not hear any logical explanations from Holmes when he is experiencing mysteries in Baskerville Hall. As Terry Heller suggests: “The gothic mystery and ambiguity of the moor push men of common sense such as Sir Henry and Watson toward half belief in the supernatural, toward confusion and irrational fear” (Heller 213). It should be pointed out that the scientific mind of Holmes would, to some extent, prevent Doyle from elaborating the supernatural atmosphere, because Holmes needs to astound the reader with his rational abilities. Doyle therefore either had to make Holmes find strong evidence against a human explanation or he had to make Holmes constantly puzzled as he fails to understand who or what is behind the events. The latter would destroy Holmes’s image as an intallible and scientific detective.

Doyle’s making Watson narrate the story through letters and diaries in Holmes’s absence also adds to the Gothic as it is reminiscent of the fragmented narratives of Gothic fiction, such as *Dracula* (1897). Watson’s dairy form narration also reinforces the Gothic atmosphere. For instance, Watson writes in his diary:

October 17th.—All day to-day the rain poured down, rustling on the ivy and dripping from the eaves. I thought of the convict out upon the bleak, cold, shelterless moor. [...] In the evening I put on my waterproof and I walked far upon the sodden moor, full of dark

imaginings, the rain beating upon my face and the wind whistling about my ears. (511)

As can be seen, Watson's way of depiction clearly presents a Gothic atmosphere. The rain, its rustling on the ivy, the melancholy moor, all create the terror-inducing atmosphere of Gothic novels, and the dominance of the suspense in Holmes's absence can also be inferred at this point.

When the ending of the novel is examined, it will be seen that even though supernatural elements are dominant in this story and even though most of the characters in the novel seem to accept the possibility of the supernatural, at the end of the novel there is again a rational explanation. It is revealed that the hound is not supernatural, it is in fact a normal if large hound, used as a means of getting rid of the Baskervilles. Holmes learns that Stapleton is a relation of the Baskervilles, and his aim is to kill the Baskervilles and gain the inheritance. He had applied phosphorus and other chemicals to the hound to make it look like a glowing supernatural being. Thus, Doyle again astounds the reader in the end. The fear-inducing appearance of the hound was an element of horror, and it added to the suspense of the story, as the case became more complex for Holmes and made the reader wonder how Holmes would respond to these developments. By providing a rational explanation, Doyle surprised the reader, and underlined the talent of his hero.

As can be seen in this chapter, which examined four stories in chronological order, the elements which invoke horror increase gradually in

Doyle's stories. In the Sherlock Holmes stories written after *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, horror-inducing Gothic elements appear more frequently. This can be due to Doyle's growing interest in Spiritualism. As Luckhurst notes: "By the 1920s Doyle was the world's most famous defender of Spiritualism" (Luckhurst xxvi), and he wrote several books on this subject. He also wrote a number of non-Holmes short stories which stand out as supernatural tales. Concerning the Holmes canon, although supernatural elements gradually become stronger, Doyle still provides the reader with logical explanations in the end. "The Adventure of the Wisteria Lodge" (1908), "The Adventure of the Devil's Foot" (1910) and "The Sussex Vampire" (1924) contain Gothic elements, which present significant supernatural elements, creating horror. For instance, "The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire" implies the existence of a vampire, as the title itself suggests. In his choice of this subject, Doyle was probably influenced by the popularity of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). In "The Sussex Vampire", a client comes to Holmes and narrates the scene in which a woman was seen sucking the blood of her baby. The disturbing scene and the image of a vampire create horror. The story again makes the reader think that she really is a vampire until the end, in which it is revealed that she was in fact trying to save her baby by trying to suck out poison in the baby's blood. As can be seen, a rational explanation is always provided in contrast to a dominance of horror-inducing supernatural elements in the Holmes canon. This preserves the presentation of Holmes, who can solve many kinds of cases, as a hero of the rational over the irrational.

In conclusion, the Gothic elements which can be observed in minor characters, settings and the atmosphere of these Holmes stories, sometimes induce terror, and sometimes invoke horror in both the characters and the reader. While in the first two stories the terror elements created by a sense of uncertainty is dominant, in later ones visual supernatural elements start to appear more frequently, which creates horror. The use of terror contributes to suspense, and the use of horror pushes it to the extreme, and at the same time the cases seem more challenging for Holmes. Gothic elements enable Doyle to create suspense and surprise in the reader, preserving Holmes as the centre of attention.

CHAPTER 3

SHERLOCK HOLMES AS A BYRONIC HERO

The Byronic hero, “[a] grand, charismatic, yet ambiguous male” was introduced for the first time by the English Romantic poet Lord Byron in his semi-autobiographical poem, *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* which was published between 1812 and 1818 (Snodgrass 45). The same figure appeared with small changes in Byron’s other works, such as *The Bride of Abydos* (1814), *The Corsair* (1814), *Lara, A Tale* (1814) and *Manfred* (1816-1817). Byron’s hero has its roots in several other figures such as “the Greek Prometheus, a suffering god, and [...] the Wandering Jew” (Snodgrass 45). William Shakespeare’s heroes Richard III, Macbeth, Hamlet, Iago, and partly Othello are also said to have influenced the development of the Byronic hero (Wolfson vii). Other sources of influence seem to be Milton’s “Satan in *Paradise Lost* [...] and [...] the Satanic school of eighteenth-century rakes, among them, the Don Juans and Don Giovannis of novels, opera, theatre and popular culture” (Wolfson vii).

There is also a more general Gothic influence on Byron, who has works “contain[ing] many elements of the Gothic tradition, including ruined settings, tortured characters, and encounters with the supernatural” (Bomarito 241). Therefore, the Byronic hero is also “influenced by the Gothic hero-villains in novels by such authors as Horace Walpole, Matthew Gregory Lewis, William Beckford, and Mary Shelley” (Bomarito 241).

It is essential to note that although the Byronic hero and the Gothic villain are “essentially cognate types” (Lovecraft 37), and although they can both be observed in Gothic fiction, according to Thorslev, there is little difference between them. He advocates that the Byronic hero “is almost invariably sympathetic in spite of his ‘crimes,’ none of which involve unnecessary cruelty, as do the crimes of the Gothic villain” (Thorslev 8). Here it should be stated that the Sherlock Holmes character, as will be examined in this chapter, does not commit great “crimes” which make him totally unsympathetic. He does not display “unnecessary cruelty” either. Thus, in light of Thorslev’s argument, Holmes will be regarded as a Byronic hero in this chapter.

The Byronic hero has many noteworthy characteristics. He “is a melancholy man, often with a dark past, who eschews societal and religious strictures and seeks truth and happiness in an apparently meaningless universe” (Bomarito 241). He is “alienated, rebellious, sarcastic, theatrical, seductive and [...] poetic”, all of which are characteristics of Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost* (Wolfson vii). He is strong, he “often loves music or poetry” (Thorslev 8), and he may have “superhuman abilities [...] [such as] Manfred’s ability to summon the spirits” (Stein 1). He is a “flawed man” and “fatally attractive to women” (Sehgal 37). He also “epitomize[s] [...] a masculine ideal” (Wootton 122). Moreover, he is “antisocial” (Snodgrass 45), “arrogant, contemptuous of human beings, bad-tempered, overbearing, cold, ruthless and emotionless” (Stein 2). Although the Byronic hero has many negative qualities, he is very attractive. Susan J. Wolfson and Peter J. Manning argue: “The paradox was that this popular, seductive

creation was a perfection of titanic, herd-despising alienation – all the more alluring for his mystery, his exotic passions, his secret sins, his self-torturing pride” (Wolfson vii). These characteristics will later be examined in detail in relation to their presence in the character of Sherlock Holmes. At this point, it will also be useful to note that the Byronic hero may also be carrying the traits of Byron’s own personality because not only his protagonists, but also Byron himself was regarded as the very example of the Byronic hero, displaying a character that made Lady Caroline Lamb, with whom he had an affair, famously describe him as “mad – bad – and dangerous to know” when she first met him (Wolfson vii).

The Byronic hero became very popular in the nineteenth century (Stabler 19) and many heroes presenting Byronic hero traits appeared in the Gothic works of the period, as Byron’s “works became favorites for public declamation and literary citation and invested the style and tone of a number of Gothic writings” (Snodgrass 45). Some protagonists who are regarded as Byronic heroes in Victorian Gothic fiction are Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Edward Rochester in *Jane Eyre* (1847) (Snodgrass 45). Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* “is [also considered] a perfect mingling of the traits of the Byronic hero” (McGinley 74). Some studies of the Byronic hero treat him as one of the Gothic elements in English literature (Thorslev 5), which is the attitude that is adopted in this chapter as well. Thus, here Sherlock Holmes’s Byronic heroic features will be examined as a part of the Gothic elements in the Sherlock Holmes canon.

The Byronic hero can be regarded as another Gothic element that can be seen in the Sherlock Holmes stories, as the *Encyclopedia of Gothic Literature*

includes Holmes among its entries and regards him as “[a] citified, world-weary Byronic hero” (Snodgrass 178). While writing the Sherlock Holmes stories, Conan Doyle, in addition to being influenced by the character of his mentor Joseph Bell, “retained Poe’s invention of the single detective hero, and retained also many trappings of the Gothic novel” (Aisenberg 7). It should be noted that Poe’s Dupin also displays Byronic hero traits, which can be the reason why Doyle developed it further in the character of Holmes, just as he developed other elements of Poe’s detective stories in his Holmes stories. In order to have a better understanding of Holmes in this respect, it will be useful to refer to *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Sign of Four*, the first two stories from the canon, as they stand out in terms of presenting these traits.

A Study in Scarlet, the very first story in which Holmes is introduced, is particularly important while examining the character of Holmes in terms of the Byronic hero, as it presents “the essential Sherlock Holmes” (Davies, *Study* ix). In the first chapter of the novel, the focus is on introducing Holmes, which is also suggested by the chapter’s title itself: “Mr Sherlock Holmes” (11). It should be noted that in this chapter, no client comes to see Holmes, nor is the fact that he is a consulting detective revealed. Therefore, the reader’s primary concern is directed towards the character of Holmes, which increases the impact on the reader of his character as the Byronic hero.

At this point, it will be useful to give a brief information concerning how Watson and Holmes meet in this chapter. In the beginning of the chapter, Watson talks about his own background. He says that he is a medical doctor who worked

for the British army in Afghanistan, but he had to retire and come to London, as he was injured. As he does not have any relations in London, Watson stays in a hotel, and when he realizes that the expenses are very high, he makes up his mind that it would be better to find cheaper lodgings. Then one day he meets an old acquaintance called Stamford, and after they talk for some time on other topics, Watson informs him that he is in search for lodgings “at a reasonable price” (12), after which Stamford reveals that another man also mentioned the same thing. After Watson asks who he is, Stamford refers to Sherlock Holmes:

A fellow who is working at the chemical laboratory up at the hospital. He was bemoaning himself this morning because he could not get someone to go halves with him in some nice rooms which he had found, and which were too much for his purse. (12)

When Watson hears this, he says he is willing to share rooms with him. Stamford replies: “You don’t know Sherlock Holmes yet” (12), and what he then tells Watson about Holmes in response to Watson’s questions is reminiscent of the traits of the Byronic hero. “[P]erhaps you would not care for him as a constant companion” (12) says Stamford to Watson. When Watson asks the reason, he remarks that Holmes “is a little queer in his ideas—an enthusiast in some branches of science”, and adds: “His studies are very desultory and eccentric” (12), which makes Holmes a mysterious figure, just like the Byronic hero. Holmes’s character’s being complex is also hinted at very early in the novel. Stamford says

that Holmes “is not a man that it is easy to draw out” (12), and “[i]t is not easy to express the inexpressible” (12). When Watson asks Stamford where he can meet Holmes, Stamford says: “He is sure to be at the laboratory [...] He either avoids the place for weeks, or else he works there from morning to night” (12). He adds: “I know nothing more of him than I have learned from meeting him occasionally in the laboratory” (12). It is significant that Doyle does not make Stamford a friend of Holmes. Instead Stamford is just a man who sees Holmes from time to time in the laboratory and who thinks Holmes is strange, which creates the implication that Holmes is an alienated and antisocial figure.

It can be pointed out that the way Stamford has talked so far about Holmes does not create a positive image of him. Stamford adds to the negative image of Holmes when he warns Watson: “You mustn't blame me if you don't get on with him” (12). He also says: “You proposed this arrangement, so you must not hold me responsible” (12). Stamford's negative attitude towards Holmes attracts Watson's attention as he reacts, saying: “It seems to me, Stamford [...] that you have some reason for washing your hands of the matter. Is this fellow's temper so formidable, or what is it? Don't be mealy-mouthed about it” (12). Stamford refers to Holmes's “cold-bloodedness” (12), and says: “He [Holmes] appears to have a passion for definite and exact knowledge [...] [and] it may be pushed to excess. When it comes to beating the subjects in the dissecting-rooms with a stick, it is certainly taking rather a bizarre shape” (12). Then he states that Holmes beats the subjects “to verify how far bruises may be produced after death” (12). Watson asks in response: “And yet you say he is not a medical student?” (12). Stamford

answers: “No. Heaven knows what the objects of his studies are” (12). As can be seen, Holmes is depicted as a cold-blooded, strange man who beats subjects to examine the bruises that are produced after death, and whose aims in studies are not known. At this point, Holmes recalls the “mad scientist” figures in Gothic fiction, such as Dr. Jekyll and Victor Frankenstein.

“You must form your own impressions about him” (12) says Stamford to Watson, when they arrive at the hospital where Holmes is carrying out his studies. Of course, it is not only Watson who will form an opinion about Holmes, but also the reader. At this point, it will be useful to refer to Watson’s importance as the first-person narrator in the Sherlock Holmes stories in terms of the portrayal of the Byronic hero. In other Victorian Gothic works such as *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, the Byronic heroes are depicted by first-person narrators who come to meet these heroes. In *Wuthering Heights*, Lockwood, the first-person narrator, “represents the reader, his [...] curiosity and interest”, and “through his eyes we see Heathcliff first” (Bhattacharyya 105), which can increase the impact of Heathcliff as the Byronic hero on the reader. In *Jane Eyre*, the story “is narrated by Jane herself” and as Harold Bloom suggests, as a result, “the Byronic aura of Rochester is augmented” (Bloom xiii). Similarly, in the Sherlock Holmes stories, Watson is the first person narrator with whom the reader can identify and through Watson the reader feels a stronger impact of Holmes, who has the traits of the Byronic hero. Thus, it can be said that Doyle’s making Watson the first-person narrator from the very first story contributes to the portrayal of Holmes as the Byronic hero.

Now, it is essential to look at the scene in which Holmes appears for the first time, as it also presents important points. Watson depicts the laboratory in which Holmes is working:

This was a lofty chamber, lined and littered with countless bottles. Broad, low tables were scattered about, which bristled with retorts, test-tubes, and little Bunsen lamps, with their blue flickering flames. There was only one student in the room, who was bending over a distant table absorbed in his work. (13)

As can be seen, Holmes is the only student in the laboratory, and his being alone in this “lofty chamber” (13) and being involved in an experiment on “a distant table” (13) display him as an alienated and isolated figure. Watson depicts how he met Holmes in this way:

At the sound of our steps he glanced round and sprang to his feet with a cry of pleasure. “I’ve found it! I’ve found it,” he shouted to my companion, running towards us with a test-tube in his hand. “I have found a re-agent which is precipitated by haemoglobin, and by nothing else.” Had he discovered a gold mine, greater delight could not have shone upon his features. (13)

This passage shows Holmes's eccentricity as he is displayed as showing extreme reactions and undertaking experiments, which also makes him close to the mad scientist figure. After this scene, Stamford introduces Watson to him, and Holmes responds in this way:

“How are you?” he said cordially, gripping my hand with a strength for which I should hardly have given him credit.

“You have been in Afghanistan, I perceive.”

“How on earth did you know that?” I asked in astonishment.

“Never mind,” said he, chuckling to himself. “The question now is about haemoglobin. (13)

There are two important points in this part of the story. The first one is that Holmes's gripping Watson's “hand with a strength” (13) emphasizes his being very, perhaps unusually, strong. The second point is Holmes's knowing that Watson had been in Afghanistan because it demonstrates Holmes's extraordinary ability, and both of these points are relevant to the traits of the strong, masculine Byronic hero who may have extraordinary powers. There is also one other point which is worth mentioning, that is Holmes's acting “cordially” (13) towards Watson. The connotations of this will be further discussed later in this chapter.

When they first meet, Holmes and Watson talk for a short time. Holmes's ability to play the violin is revealed in their discussion, which is significant as it shows his interest in music and art, another point shared with Byronic heroes. Holmes and Watson decide to meet the next day at the rooms which Holmes has found and see whether they will agree to rent it or not. After that Watson and Stamford leave him in the laboratory and walk together, as Watson is returning to his hotel. When Watson asks Stamford how Holmes knew that he had been in Afghanistan, Stamford smiles "an enigmatical smile" (14), and says: "That's just his little peculiarity" (14). He further states: "A good many people have wanted to know how he finds things out" (14), which again adds to Holmes's ambiguity, and makes him similar to the Byronic hero who may have superhuman abilities. Watson says: "Oh! a mystery is it? [...] This is very piquant. I am much obliged to you for bringing us together. 'The proper study of mankind is man,' you know" (14). It clearly shows that Watson is impressed by Holmes, just like Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights* is impressed by Heathcliff. Another point that is important is that Stamford replies to Watson in this way: "You must study him, then, [...] you'll find him a knotty problem, though. I'll wager he learns more about you than you about him" (14). As can be seen, Doyle preserves the mystery of Holmes and his extraordinary ability in the first chapter of the novel as he does not make Holmes explain how he knew that Watson had been in Afghanistan and makes him change the topic instead. Stamford does not provide any explanation either. It can be said that Holmes's being introduced as a man who can be "a knotty problem" (14), also presents him as a complex character to the reader.

Doyle's way of ending the chapter is also significant. At the end of the chapter Watson says: "I [...] strolled on to my hotel, considerably interested in my new acquaintance" (14), which can also be the reader's opinion. Just as Emily Brontë arouses the reader's interest by presenting a character like Heathcliff from the very beginning of the story through the eyes of Lockwood, so Doyle, by making Holmes an eccentric and mysterious man like the Byronic hero, establishes interest in him from the very beginning of the story.

While the way Doyle begins his novel is significant enough in terms of introducing the Byronic hero, the second chapter also contains important points as Doyle, rather than bringing a mysterious case for his detective to solve and thereby to display his abilities, makes him explain his extraordinary abilities and reveal his profession, which reinforces the abilities of Sherlock Holmes rather than the mysteries that he is to solve. The chapter's title is "The Science of Deduction" (14), and it provides an explanation of Holmes's extraordinary abilities of deduction and of observation. Watson opens the chapter by saying that he started to share rooms with Holmes in Baker Street, and states:

As the weeks went by, my interest in him and my curiosity as to his aims in life, gradually deepened and increased. His very person and appearance were such as to strike the attention of the most casual observer. (14)

After saying this, Watson describes the physical appearance of Holmes, which is similar to that of the Byronic hero.

In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, [...] and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and squareness which mark the man of determination. (14-15)

Holmes's being tall, the focus on his "sharp" and "piercing" eyes, his features' giving him an air of decision is parallel to the physical traits of the Byronic hero, who is "tall", and who has "eyes that command attention" (qtd. in Davis 82). The Byronic hero also has "pale and ascetic complexion" (qtd. in Davis 82) which is also observed in Holmes. After giving this physical description, Watson returns to his primary aim which is to find out Holmes's "aims in life" (14). He says: "I eagerly hailed the little mystery which hung around my companion, and spent much of my time in endeavouring to unravel it" (15). Then he reveals that he created a list about Holmes's levels of knowledge in several fields in order to find out what Holmes's profession could be, as Holmes has said he would not fill his brain with useless information that is not related with his profession. As can be seen, instead of presenting a case and revealing Holmes's character while Holmes is trying to solve the case, Doyle makes Watson try to learn about him in the first two chapters. The way Doyle composes his story contributes to the impact of the

Holmes character on the readers, and makes them gain the impression of a mysterious and complex Byronic hero.

By the end of the chapter, Holmes reveals that he is a consulting detective and at the very end of it he has a visitor who brings a case for him. It can be said that up to the very end of the second chapter the story does not especially resemble a detective story. This is particularly true for the first chapter, where Holmes's being a detective is not revealed, and which seems to introduce a story presenting a Byronic hero rather than a detective. In the first chapter and the first half of the second chapter, Holmes's character seems to be totally mysterious. In the second chapter, the eccentricity of Holmes is further developed as he talks about his extraordinary skills of deduction and observation, which makes him a superior figure like the Byronic hero. However, at the very end of the chapter, when the fact that Holmes is a consulting detective is revealed and when there is finally a visitor, the novel starts to gain the form and feeling of a detective story, focusing on the case that the detective is to solve.

Having examined the first two chapters of the first Sherlock Holmes story in detail, now it will be useful to look at other aspects of Holmes which are revealed in other stories, and which can be regarded as important in terms of displaying aspects of Sherlock Holmes's character.

The second Holmes novel, *The Sign of Four* is particularly important since in this novel another aspect of Holmes is revealed: he uses cocaine and morphine. The novel opens in this way:

Sherlock Holmes took his bottle from the corner of the mantel-piece and his hypodermic syringe from its neat morocco case. With his long, white, nervous fingers he adjusted the delicate needle, and rolled back his left shirt-cuff. For some little time his eyes rested thoughtfully upon the sinewy forearm and wrist all dotted and scarred with innumerable puncture-marks. Finally he thrust the sharp point home, pressed down the tiny piston, and sank back into the velvet-lined arm-chair with a long sigh of satisfaction. (64)

This reveals Holmes's cocaine addiction. Holmes uses morphine as well, since Watson asks him: "Which is it today, [...] morphine or cocaine?" (64). The novel also ends with Holmes attempting to use cocaine again, which emphasises his addiction. Holmes's addiction can be regarded as a negative trait, which makes him more similar to the Byronic hero. It is essential to bear in mind that "[u]se of such drugs was legal in the England of the 1890s" (Redmond, *Handbook* 43). Nevertheless, it is clear that this addiction is displayed as a bad habit in the novel, as Watson becomes irritated when he sees it and reproaches Holmes, saying:

Why should you, for a mere passing pleasure, risk the loss of those great powers with which you have been endowed? Remember that I speak not only as one comrade to another, but as a medical man to one for whose constitution he is to some extent answerable. (64)

This presents Holmes as the Byronic hero who is flawed, and his use of drugs “emphasize[s] Holmes’s mercurial personality and his pose of sophisticated eccentricity” (Redmond, *Handbook* 43). In Holmes’s reply to Watson’s reproach, yet another Byronic hero quality is exposed:

“My mind,” he said, “rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram or the most intricate analysis, and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense then with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession,—or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world.” (64)

Holmes’s using cocaine is a kind of rebellion towards the “dull routine of existence” (64), which recalls the rebellious and contemplative attitude of the Byronic hero.

Other aspects of Sherlock Holmes that stand out in this respect is that Holmes is very intelligent and seems to consider himself as superior to most men. He has a “masterly manner” (64), and Watson depicts Holmes as “the *best* and the *wisest* man whom I have ever known” (emphasis added, 446) in “The Adventure of the Final Problem” (1893). Holmes is also contemplative and melancholic from time to time. In “The Adventure of the Retired Colourman” (1926), he says: “But is not all life pathetic and futile? [...] We reach. We grasp. What is left in our

hands in the end? A shadow. Or worse than a shadow—misery” (1095). Holmes here acts just like the Byronic hero who contemplates the meaninglessness of existence.

Simmons states that Holmes “found great interest in the vagaries and paradoxes of human existence” (Simmons 45), and refers to what Holmes says in the beginning of “A Case of Identity” (1891):

“My dear fellow,” said Sherlock Holmes as we sat on either side of the fire in his lodgings at Baker Street, “life is infinitely stranger than anything which the mind of man could invent. We would not dare to conceive the things which are really mere commonplaces of existence. If we could fly out of that window hand in hand, hover over this great city, gently remove the roofs, and peep in at the queer things which are going on, the strange coincidences, the plannings, the cross-purposes, the wonderful chains of events, working through generation, and leading to the most outré results, it would make all fiction with its conventionalities and foreseen conclusions most stale and unprofitable.” (147)

It can be said that such scenes, apart from displaying Holmes as contemplative, make him also a theatrical and poetic figure which brings him closer to the image of the Byronic hero.

When the whole Sherlock Holmes oeuvre is examined, it is clear that Holmes's past is also mysterious. Watson does not give much detail about the past of Sherlock Holmes, and Holmes himself does not talk much about it either. In addition, Holmes's age is not mentioned, just as Heathcliff's age is not revealed in *Wuthering Heights*. Holmes gives only a little information about his ancestors, in "The Adventure of the Greek Interpreter" (1893), in which he says: "My ancestors were country squires [...] [and] my grandmother [...] was the sister of Vernet, the French artist" (399). He also reveals the fact that he has a brother called Mycroft, who appears in three Holmes stories. Except this information, "the reader knows nothing of Holmes's family or background beyond vague hints about his university education" (Redmond, *Handbook* 39). At this point, it will be useful to refer to the information he gives to Watson about his university education, as it again depicts him as a Byronic hero:

"You never heard me talk of Victor Trevor?" he [Holmes] asked. "He was the only friend I made during the two years I was at college. I was never a very sociable fellow, Watson, always rather fond of moping in my rooms and working out my own little methods of thought, so that I never mixed much with the men of my year. Bar fencing and boxing I had few athletic tastes, and then my line of study was quite distinct from that of the other fellows, so that we had no points of contact at all. Trevor was the only man I knew, and that only through the

accident of his bull terrier freezing on to my ankle one morning as I went down to chapel. (342)

In this passage, Holmes's alienation, the fact that he was different from his friends is underlined. He was antisocial and he had just one friend whom he met through an unusual – in fact amusing – accident. He was interested in athletics, which is all again reminiscent of the alienated, antisocial and athletic Byronic hero.

Another aspect of Holmes which should be mentioned is that while solving the mysteries, he commits illegal acts from time to time, which is “contrary to the pure heroic image” (Truzzi 73) but closer to the image of the Byronic hero. Holmes “sometimes finds it necessary to go outside the law to assure justice. Thus, he occasionally commits trespass, burglary, and unlawful detention” (Truzzi 73). Truzzi also argues that Holmes has “little respect for the abilities of Scotland Yard's men [...] though he did display respect for the abilities of the Yard's Inspector Tobias Gregson” (Truzzi 73). Moreover, Holmes does not report all the criminals to the police when he identifies them. As Truzzi maintains: “Holmes [...] recognized that prison was not always an appropriate punishment for a crime, and that it might actually deter the process of reform” (Truzzi 73). He further mentions Leavitt's finding that throughout the canon, “on at least fourteen occasions, Holmes actually allowed known felons to go free” (Truzzi 73-74). Truzzi also refers to what Holmes says after letting a criminal go in “The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle” (1892): “Send him to gaol now, and you make him a gaolbird for life” (213). He also says: “I suppose that I am commuting a

felony, but it is just possible that I am saving a soul” (213). In this respect, Holmes’s behaviour is very similar to Atara Stein’s depiction of the Byronic hero: “He [the Byronic hero] creates his own moral code, and while he may break the law in pursuit of his goals, he takes responsibility for his actions” (Stein 1).

Rosenberger examines Holmes’s character in relation to religion and mentions his outstanding wrong doings. He says:

He [Holmes] smoked, drank, swore, gambled, took dope [...] He once took part in a ballroom brawl, once threw a man over a cliff, once threatened to horsewhip a man, gave another a black eye, five times burgled a house, and once, with the aid of Watson, shot a man dead in cold blood. [...] [H]e lied, cheated and blackmailed. (Rosenberger 48)

As can be seen, Holmes’s character presents many negative traits and acts, but it does not affect his image as the greatest detective. His having both positive and negative qualities contributes to his image as the Byronic hero, making him an interesting detective figure.

Having examined the traits of the Byronic hero in the character of Sherlock Holmes, it is essential to note that the Byronic hero is usually presented as seductive and he usually has a female companion, but Holmes lacks this trait. He does not marry, and he does not try to seduce any woman either. He admires only Irene Adler who appears in only one story, the title of which is “A Scandal in Bohemia” (1891). Holmes calls her “*the* woman” because “[i]n his eyes she

eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex” (117). However, what he admires in Irene Adler seems to be “her power to ‘beat’ him, he is appreciating her intelligence, her ability to think like a man” (Accardo 37); he does not feel love for her or any female, as he says: “[L]ove is an emotional thing, and whatever is emotional is opposed to that true, cold reason which I place above all things” (113). When the Holmes canon is examined in terms of tracing the female companion of Holmes as the Byronic hero, it is possible to say that there is a friend substitute rather than a female companion for Holmes, and the friend substitute is, of course, Watson. To elaborate on this idea we can refer to another Byronic trait which is that the Byronic hero is dangerous towards other people but tender towards his female companions (Thorslev 8). While Sherlock Holmes displays “resistance to other companions” such as his being cynical towards Scotland Yard detective, he “is fond of Watson” (Kromm 272), and while Doyle implies that Holmes is antisocial and eccentric, he makes him behave in a very friendly manner towards Watson. He makes Holmes shake Watson’s hand “cordially” (13) and behave friendly towards him from the very first story, even though Holmes is presented as a kind of antisocial man in the beginning of the first story.

In her article, Kromm states that Holmes is

... pleased by his [Watson’s] obvious admiration, his readiness to drop everything and dash off at Sherlock’s summons, his physical assistance, his readiness with revolver, his usefulness as witness to

events, and his willingness to serve as sounding-board for Sherlock's theories. (Kromm 272-273)

Then she questions whether Watson is there only as a narrator or not and wonders what Watson's main role could be (Kromm 272-273). It can be said that Watson's function is playing the friend substitute of the Byronic hero's female companion. Thus, instead of seeing love which develops between the Byronic hero and his female companion (like that between Jane and Rochester in *Jane Eyre*), the reader observes the development of a friendship between these two men throughout these stories.

It is essential to note that Holmes's complete refusal of women throughout the canon does not destroy his overall attractiveness as a Byronic hero. Even though he does not try to seduce women, as Redmond states, there are female characters who are attracted to him (Redmond, *Handbook* 43). For instance, "Violet Hunter ('The Copper Beeches') and Mary Morstan (who eventually marries Watson) show some attraction to Holmes" (Redmond, *Handbook* 43). So, although Holmes rejects and distrusts women, he is still portrayed as attractive to female characters, which means that Holmes is still close to the Byronic hero image in terms of women. Redmond further claims that Holmes is not only attractive to the female characters in the canon but also to the female readers: "[S]omething in Holmes's character has attracted the opposite sex since the days when the first stories were being published, and Doyle received proposals of marriage on his character's behalf" (Redmond, *Handbook* 43). Redmond also

notes: “One contemporary woman has observed that ‘I feel sorry for men Sherlockians, because they don’t have Sherlock Holmes to fall in love with.’” (Redmond, *Handbook* 43). Therefore, it can be said that Holmes’s lack of a female companion and his rejection of love do not negatively affect his image and he continues to be attractive.

It can be argued that Doyle’s making Holmes similar to the Byronic hero makes him a much more attractive figure for all readers, as the Byronic hero is “appealing” to the reader (Snodgrass 277). As Atara Stein asserts, the popularity of the Byronic hero is not limited to the Victorian Era. He “was alive and flourishing in the latter half of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty-first centuries”, and he still continues to appear in the works that are published today (Stein 1). Therefore, Holmes’s Byronic traits can be another reason why he has an “everlasting appeal” (Davies, *Hound* v).

In conclusion, it is possible to say that Doyle’s use of Gothic elements in Holmes stories extends to the character of Sherlock Holmes, as he shares many traits with the Byronic hero. The way Doyle makes Watson narrate the story, the way he introduces Holmes, and the way he underscores Holmes’s eccentricity all strengthen the impact of the detective on the reader’s mind. The Byronic traits make Holmes’s character attractively complex, and can be regarded as one of the reasons why he is still popular today.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to analyse the use of Gothic elements in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories. Having explained the elements of Gothic fiction and detective fiction, the relationship between the two writing traditions were discussed. Furthermore, the fact that the Gothic has an influence on Poe, Dickens and Collins, who are important figures in the development of the detective story, was underlined, and the Gothic works published in the late-Victorian era were also referred to, in an endeavour to show that the presence of Gothic elements in the Sherlock Holmes stories is part of, and perhaps a result of the writing fashion of the era.

In the first chapter, terror and horror induced by Gothic elements in the Sherlock Holmes stories were discussed. These two terms are approached in light of Devendra P. Varma's definition, which regards terror as creating a sense of impending danger, and horror as displaying visually frightening elements, such as the supernatural (Varma 130). It was also stated that these feelings are experienced by both the characters and the readers. This study revealed that, among Holmes stories, "The Adventure of the Speckled Band" and "The Adventure of the Copper Beeches", which are among the early stories of the canon, present Gothic features which mostly induce terror. The supernatural elements that are used in these stories are just implications, and the use of horror

is generally achieved through endings which present horrible death scenes. However, in “The Adventure of the Yellow Face” and especially *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, it was seen that there is a growing emphasis on visual fear-inducing objects. In this way, it was pointed out that in the Sherlock Holmes canon, there is a move from using Gothic elements to invoke terror towards using them to create horror. It was also argued that while terror creates suspense, horror pushes it to the extreme as they create more challenging cases for the scientific-minded detective Holmes. This study also revealed that although significant visual supernatural elements start to appear in later stories, Doyle always provides the reader with a rational explanation through Holmes in the end of each story, which preserves the Holmes figure as the centre of attention, and also surprises the reader. In this way, the Gothic’s function in the construction of suspense and surprise in these stories was highlighted.

The second chapter focused on the use of Gothic elements on the character of Sherlock Holmes as it displays Byronic hero traits. After referring to the features of the Byronic hero, the first Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet*, which introduces the detective Sherlock Holmes was examined in order to show how Holmes is portrayed for the first time. The study showed that the way Doyle introduces Holmes reinforces his Byronic hero traits. Moreover, Doyle’s depiction of Watson’s first meeting Holmes, and the fact that Holmes appears as an eccentric, isolated man, working hard in the laboratory among test tubes both mark him as a Byronic hero from the very first story. It was argued that readers identify with Watson who narrates the story, and they share his curiosity about

Holmes. In addition, the reader is also impressed by Holmes's extraordinary abilities, just like Watson. After the examination of the way Holmes is introduced in this novel, the study focused on the beginning of *The Sign of Four*, as revealing one of Holmes's negative qualities, which is his cocaine and morphine addiction. It is argued that the emphasis on Holmes's addiction brings him much closer to the Byronic hero who always has negative and even dangerous traits but is still attractive. Then, other Byronic hero traits of Holmes were examined, in relation to all of the Holmes stories, and Holmes's mysterious past, his acting against the law from time to time, and his contemptuous attitudes were observed. Furthermore, that the Holmes figure's popularity may emanate from his similarity to the Byronic hero was also discussed.

In conclusion, Gothic elements, which can be traced in the Sherlock Holmes canon, contribute to these stories in two ways. Firstly, they add to the depiction of minor characters, the setting and the atmosphere of these stories. Secondly, they show themselves in the portrayal of the character of Holmes himself. Thus, the use of Gothic elements enables Doyle to create suspenseful and surprising stories with a strikingly memorable detective figure.

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