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The Purpose Behind Using Symbolism in
Robert Louis Stevenson's
“Markheim”

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Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this modest work to those who gave their spirits and devoted their lives to make me reach this position.

To my dearest parents who gave me the inspiration to fulfill this dream with their support, patience, and encouragement.

This work is also dedicated to my two brothers Bouhaous and Didine and my sister Halima. Besides, I dedicate this work to my dear niece Nihel.

In addition, I dedicate this work to all my lovely classmates without exception. A special dedication to my best friend Karim who encouraged me to the way it should be. It is such a great pleasure to dedicate this humble work to all my teachers from primary school till university.

This work is also dedicated to my special someone.

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I would like to dedicate this modest work to my dear parents, my father and my mother for their unlimited love, faith, and support; I would not achieve all of this without you.

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In addition, it is an honor to me to dedicate this humble work to all my teachers from primary school till university.

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Abstract

This study is an attempt to discuss symbols in Robert Louis Stevenson's "Markheim". It intends to explain these symbols to help readers fully understand the story. To achieve this, there was a need to start from general terms by devoting a part of this research to defining symbolism and providing a brief background about some major theories related to symbolism such as Sigmund Freud and Whitehead theories on symbolism. In addition to this, it was necessary to provide our research with an overview about the Victorian literature and Gothic fiction together with some historical and social backgrounds about the author. One more necessary thing to be done was an attempt to analyse some passages from the short story with the aim of offering the readers clues of interpretation to symbols in the story selected. All in all, this study aims at showing Robert Louis Stevenson's motive behind the use of symbols in his work "Markheim".

Key Words: symbols, symbolism, interpretation, Victorian literature, Gothic fiction, Robert Louis Stevenson, Markheim.

Résumé

Cette étude est une tentative pour discuter les symboles dans la nouvelle "Markheim" de Robert Louis Stevenson. Elle a l'intention d'expliquer ces symboles pour aider les lecteurs à bien comprendre l'histoire. Pour y parvenir, il était nécessaire de partir des termes généraux en consacrant une partie de cette recherche à la définition du symbolisme et en fournissant un bref aperçu des principales théories liées au symbolisme telles que les théories de Sigmund Freud et Whitehead sur le symbolisme. En outre, il était nécessaire de fournir à notre recherche un aperçu de la littérature Victorienne et de la fiction Gothique, ainsi que des informations historiques et sociales sur l'auteur. Il fallait encore analyser certains passages de la nouvelle, dans le but d'offrir aux lecteurs des indices d'interprétation des symboles de l'histoire choisie. Dans l'ensemble, cette étude vise à montrer le motif de Robert Louis Stevenson derrière l'utilisation de symboles dans sa nouvelle "Markheim".

Mots clés: symboles, symbolisme, interprétation, littérature Victorienne, fiction Gothique, Robert Louis Stevenson, Markheim.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة لاستخراج الرموز من رواية روبرت لويس ستيفنسن "مركهايم" وشرحها من أجل مساعدة القارئ على فهمها بصورة أوضح. ولتحقيق ذلك، كان من الضروري البدء من المصطلحات العامة بتكريس جزء من هذا البحث لتعريف مفهوم الرمزية ومختلف النظريات والمنظرين الذين تطرقوا إلى تعريف هذا المفهوم ووضع أسسه، مثل سيغموند فرويد ووايتهد. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، كان من الضروري تزويد بحثنا بنظرة حول الأدب الفيكتوري والخيال القوطي، كذلك تم التطرق في هذا الفصل إلى نبذة عن حياة الروائي. وكان من الضروري تحليل بعض مقاطع النص من أجل تقديم أدلة للقراء لتفسير رموز القصة المختارة. بشكل عام، تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إظهار دافع روبرت لويس ستيفنسون وراء استخدام الرموز في روايته "مركهايم".

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرموز، الرمزية، التفسير، الأدب الفيكتوري، الخيال القوطي، روبرت لويس ستيفنسون، مركهايم.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

Literature is the essence and production of human cultures, beliefs, traditions, and art. It existed in the earliest human civilizations. The existing English literature we know today has gone through many stages, including that of the Victorian era, which is viewed as one of the most significant periods in the history of English literature. It is the period where literature deals with all the issues the British society has gone through namely political and social. The present research work is not going to revolve any political or social issue. It is rather more related to the end of the nineteenth century when English literature witnesses a powerful revival of the Gothic genre. Among the major themes the Gothic novels tend to deal with are those related to the existence of powerful secrets, horror, the supernatural, death, and at times romance.

Many authors mark the era such as Charles Dickens, Oscar Wilde, Robert Louis Stevenson, etc. Their objective is to shed light on social problems, and the conflict between the individual and the society. Despite the fact that authors deal with common issues, they do not communicate them in the same way. Each writer employs his way to reach his readers. Some authors use different literary devices to deliver their own messages such as metaphor, simile, irony, hyperbole, imagery, allegory, symbolism and so on. Every single writer has purposes behind the use of these elements in the literary works.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) a British novelist, poet, essayist, musician and travel writer, is among the most notable writers of the late Victorian period. He mainly includes horrifying events in his writings, besides he overuses symbolism in most of his works such as *Treasure Island* (1883), "Markheim" (1885), *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), etc. In order to enhance the sense of horror and the supernatural. Since Robert Louis Stevenson tends to use symbols in his writings, this study is an attempt to clear up the motives

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behind using such a specific device. It is used to express the writer's message in a simple manner to the readers.

This research attempts to identify the use of symbolism in "Markheim". The latter is one of Stevenson's most celebrated short stories; it is among Stevenson's tales of horror and the supernatural. In this work, Stevenson attempts to make the short story having an atmosphere of horror by using Markheim, the main character, as a symbol of the good and the evil. Robert Louis Stevenson has his unique way of writing via using different types of symbols to give the reader an unexpected surprise and make a strong impression on his mind. This work, then, is an attempt to take Robert Louis Stevenson's short story "Markheim" as a case study to examine the use of symbols. The main objective is to make the reader recognize the importance, the purpose and the effect of using symbolism in the short story selected.

What motivated us to do this work is the interest in learning more about symbolism. It sparked our enthusiasm for this extended essay, and we found the short story "Markheim" a perfect example for the purpose of this notion.

To realize this research, the short story will be analyzed to examine the symbols in order to identify the impression behind using such literary device. The reader of "Markheim" would be aware that this short story interprets the conflict between the good and the evil in Markheim's mind via using symbols; so, the research in hand tries to provide answers to the following questions:

- Why did Robert Louis Stevenson use symbolism in his short story "Markheim"?
- How can the interpretation of symbols in "Markheim" help readers to fully understand the story?

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To answer these questions, the following hypotheses will be investigated

- Robert Louis Stevenson uses symbolism to further his message about good and evil.
- Characters, objects, and some actions in the short story are used symbolically; this means that to understand what they are meant for, one needs to go beyond the meaning of the words. In addition, symbolism is used in “Markheim” to demonstrate the importance of self-awareness and repentance.

In order to make this research conventional and organized, it is divided into three chapters. The first chapter tackles the notions of symbolism (definition, theories, types, and symbolism in novels); it presents different theories related to symbolism, which are attributed to Whitehead and Freud's theory with regards to “Markheim”. The second chapter provides a general review about the Victorian literature and the gothic fiction together with some historical and social backgrounds of the author. The third chapter focuses on the analysis of some passages from the short story *Markheim*.

Chapter One:

**The Notion of Symbolism and its Major
Theories with Regard to “Markheim”**

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Chapter One: The Notion of Symbolism and its Major Theories with Regard to *Markheim*

Introduction

Symbolism is vital to our humankind existence. Men have always used symbols in all areas of expression and communication such as words, drawings, colors, and forms (Dichter 118). In literature, the use of an action, person, place, word or an object can have a symbolic meaning. Writers insert symbols to reinforce their work and give it a different interpretation. Symbolism is used in literature to give the literary work a more profound meaning that goes beyond the literal meaning. This chapter deals with a notion of symbolism as a figure of speech and tries to introduce some theories of symbolism, which are, attributed to Whitehead and Freud's theory.

1.1. Definition of Symbolism:

The notion of symbolism is so vast that it cannot even be sketched within the limits of this research. The word is just as ancient as the Pharaohs and the ancient Greeks. It came from the Greek word *synballein* (*ballein* 'to throw' and *syn* 'together') which means, "To throw together" (Terrence 393). Symbolism is defined in the online 'Encyclopedia Britannica' as "a communication element intended to simply represent or stand for a complex of person, object, group, or idea." The German writer Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe figured out that a real symbolism is that in which the more specific represents the general (Nordquist).

Symbolism derived from the word symbol that has different forms. Generally, the symbol is a thing that depicts something else giving it totally another signification, a deeper and profound meaning. However, an action or a word told by someone can have a symbolic significance; for instance, a smile can be a symbol of friendship. When someone smiles at you may be a symbol of the feeling of fondness or love that this person has for you (Yasir 486).

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Arp and Perrine define the term as such: “A symbol may be roughly defined as something that means more than what it is” (37) In other words, a symbol is a thing that represents something else, something physical that represents something more abstract. The symbol can be written in words, too. Anything in a book can be a symbol: an image, a character, a setting, or an event. According to Perrine “A literary symbol is something that means more than what it is. It is an object, a person, a situation, an action, or some other item that has a literal meaning in the story, but suggests or represents other meanings as well” (211).

The use of the symbol enhances the meaning and helps us better understand the story or the poem. The signification of a real symbol must be different from what it literally means. It offers the chance of changing the word to something of significant importance by giving a variety of meaning (YourDictionary). Many writers insert symbols to give some color to their writings, and to make clear the meaning to the readers. Robert Louis Stevenson overuses symbols in most of his works. For instance, he inserts many symbols in his short story “Markheim”. One of those symbols are the candles that represent the mysterious atmosphere “The candle stood on the counter, its flame solemnly wagging in a draught” (4).

Symbols change their interpretations according to the context they are used in; conventional symbols have significances that are amply agreed on by society so that writers use them. The contextual symbol can be something, a character, an action or a setting, a title or anything in a work that keeps its literal meaning while offering other significances (Abrams 311). For example, a “chain” has two different meanings, and it may stand for a "union" as well as "imprisonment" (Yasir 486).

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1.2. Examples of Symbolism:

1.2.1. Metaphors as Symbolism

A metaphor is a figure of speech that depicts something or action in a sort that is not literally true but facilitates compare and clarify an idea (YourDictionary). The word metaphor derives from the Greek "metapherein" that signifies to carry one meaning to another. Metaphors are found in poetry, music, writing, literature, and in speech for example, whenever someone says "metaphorically or figuratively speaking" it probably means that it is not the truth but only an exaggerated idea. It is used when somebody intends to add some color to his or her language. The figurative word metaphor denotes something other than what it is; the writer uses metaphors in his writing to make complex ideas easier to understand (Underwood). Robert Louis Stevenson uses this device in "Markheim" to demonstrate the obscurity of Markheim's mind. His soul was not at peace and was filled with disturbance "The whole room was filled with noiseless bustle and kept heaving like a sea" (4) Stevenson uses this metaphor to demonstrate the psychological tension in Markheim's soul.

In literature, a word can mean more than what it is. It can have a deeper or hidden meaning. The use of symbolism and metaphor can be an effective means to invoke the imagination of the reader. To perfectly comprehend what symbols and metaphors are, the reader is assumed to distinguish between them, so he should have knowledge in order to understand what they actually mean (Underwood).

A metaphor is an example of symbolism, for instance, "life is a roller-coaster" is symbolic since it points out that in life there will be difficulties that one have to face.

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1.2.2. Allegory as Symbolism

The definition of allegory is coming from the ancient Greek for “to speak to imply something other”, it has always some hidden meaning beneath the surface ("Difference between Allegory and Symbolism"). The major difference between allegory and symbolism is that symbolism is a figure of speech whereas allegory is a whole story or poem ("Difference between Allegory and Symbolism").

Despite the fact that they are dissimilar, allegory and symbolism are connected because both of them are used to convey a different meaning than what is said. However, allegory is a story or a poem that can be presented to give out more serious and deeper meaning whereas symbolism is the use of symbols to express ideas ("Difference between Allegory and Symbolism"). In Stevenson’s “Markheim” for instance, the entrance of the mysterious visitor is an allegory of the conflict of the good versus evil in Markheim’s mind. It is conceivable that due to the psychological anxiety in Markheim, his soul is strangely divided into two, so the mysterious visitor reflects one side of him.

In addition, an allegory is an expanded metaphor: a thing, event, or situation is compared to a different thing, event, or situation so that the traits of both points are compared. George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* is known for being one of the best examples of allegory. The novel represents the Russian revolution and Communism, someone who does not know the political context of Russia will find this novel as a simple story. However, the political ideas are shown when he looks at the novel from a political angle ("Difference between Allegory and Symbolism").

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1.2.3. Symbolism in Everyday Life

Our everyday life contains a high number of symbols that pointed out the certain significance and it is well agreed by most of the critics (YourDictionary) for example colors have symbolic significances; the use of red color can symbolize blood, danger or passion. A purple is a royal color that may represent nobility, spirituality, and honor. The black and white are seen as opposites; the black is used to representing death or evil, mystery, sadness, remorse while the white is associated with innocence, birth, purity, good, peace and simplicity.

Moreover, a mirror, a clock, a candle and everything in our daily life may signify something. Robert Louis Stevenson for instance mentioned a mirror in “Markheim” “this hand glass - fifteenth century,” (2) the mirror comes to symbolize the passing of time and pride “this damned reminder of years, and sins and follies - this hand-conscience!” (2) We face symbols in our everyday life and in our dreams; they reflect our deep feelings and intellect (Bischoff).

1.3. Categories of Symbolism:

Symbolism is almost the best tool for interpreting art and literature. Symbols are classified into two categories, conventional and personal symbols. These two categories are encountered in the analysis of literature, dreams or even our life experiences.

1.3.1. Conventional Symbols

Conventional symbols or cultural symbols serve almost the same way and, since they have a previously agreed meaning for instance in the Western culture the cross is considered as a symbol of Christianity. They can be used to offer more universal ideas than the physical

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thing itself, writers use conventional symbols to strengthen meanings (Abrams 311). Stevenson's "Markheim" for instance, uses a Christmas season "You come to me on Christmas Day," (1) to symbolize the beginning of new life and the changing for the better.

1.3.2. Personal Symbols

The personal or contextual symbol can be a setting, character, action, object, name, or anything else in a work that preserves its literal meaning while suggesting other signification. Such symbols go beyond conventional symbols; the author creates an unusual symbol within the context of his individual work that is not derived from common culture, history or religion (Abrams 311). Those symbols change from author to author, and from dreamer to dreamer, a dog in a dream, for example, may differ from person to person mainly if the interpretation of a dog represents the bad attitude and for another person, it may be seen as a symbol of safety. Symbols can be agreed universally but can also be interpreted differently by each individual.

1.4. Theories of Symbolism:

Many scholars and theoreticians have devoted themselves to understand nature and provide ideas and views about symbolism among them Alfred North Whitehead and Sigmund Freud.

1.4.1. Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), an Austrian neurologist known for his psychoanalysis theories and methods. He suggests two essential theories of symbolism, the "Freudian Narrow" (FN) and the "Freudian Broad" (FB).

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In the Freudian Narrow Position, the symbol is described as a superordinate category, it has similar significations that may be agreed or interpreted by people with a common cultural background; consequently, this universal code may be transferred from generation to another (Petocz). For instance, the darkness and brightness are seen as opposites; the brightness is seen as the symbol of peace, innocence... etc whereas the darkness represents fear, evil, remorse, death...etc. it is inherited from generation to another. In “Markheim”, the contrast used between darkness and brightness is a way to review the conflict between good and evil. “The tall shadows nodding, the gross blots of darkness swelling and dwindling as with respiration” (3) “the light that filtered down to the ground story was exceedingly faint” (5).

Furthermore, in Freudian Broad Position, the term symbol is restricted to contextual use, or it can be limited to given literary works. It can be different in each context (Petocz). For example, the use of “an open door” in a context, can have many significations, these significations differ from one work to another. It may represent a new beginning and symbol of opportunity and maybe a sign of imprisonment and the feeling that there is no way out. In Stevenson's “Markheim” the open door frightened the murderer for fear of being discovered “He would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes” (5).

1.4.2. Alfred North Whitehead

Alfred North Whitehead (1861-1947), an English mathematician and philosopher who is likely the most obscure of twentieth-century philosophers. According to Whitehead, symbolism controls men's thoughts and emotions; he argues that symbolism has relations with life's experiences (Whitehead 6). The meanings of the symbol are formed depending on the ideas, visions, and emotions that get in the listener's mind (Whitehead 2).

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Whitehead mentions that symbolism is different from the direct knowledge that will be called “symbolic reference”. What symbolism means and how it is interpreted may not be the same thing. For example, while interpreting the shadow in Stevenson’s “Markheim” one may see it as the evil, but the shadow is actually another Markheim “it was a faceless thing, and yet had eyes to see with, and again it was a shadow of himself” (5). While interpreting symbols many may make errors, for instance, peace is usually symbolized by using the white color. Therefore, the color is the symbol and peace is the symbolic reference. “Symbolism is very fallible, in the sense that it may induce actions, feelings, emotions, and beliefs about things which are mere notions without that exemplification in the world which the symbolism leads us to presuppose” (Whitehead 6).

Whitehead talked about the spoken word, the written word and the meaning, symbol and the dictionary meaning of the word, he completed that “the spoken word may elicit a visual perception of the written word” (Whitehead 11).

Symbolism makes language and art more enchanting, without it, something very important is missing. Symbols allow authors to transmit ideas beyond the literal level of the text. A symbol represents always something else. Even the letters and the words themselves are symbols because our brain converts them into thoughts and ideas (Nair). This theory will constitute our analytical part.

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Conclusion

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the concept of symbolism is considered by many theorists as it is considered as the most used literary device to communicate certain messages indirectly to avoid the difficulties that may come across the author. It is defined as a style in which characters, things, and events represent thoughts and feelings.

Chapter Two:

**Historical, Social and Biographical
Background**

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Chapter Two: Historical, Social and Biographical Background

Introduction

To really understand the short story “Markheim”, it is not enough to stop at what symbolism means and what symbols in literature are used for. We need some background on Victorian Literature, the novel, and the short story together with some background on Stevenson and the literary genre he is familiar with. This chapter covers the elements listed above. In addition to this, the present chapter will draw the link between Robert Louis Stevenson and Gothic Literature.

2.1. Victorian Literature:

This period is considered the best time of English literature; it is the link between romanticism and the modern literature of the 20th century (Cuddon 760). The Victorian literature tells off of an era in which important changes happened. It reviews the intellectual patterns of the Victorian era, dealing with the social position matter by examining society, the law and industrialism. Its essential objective was to demonstrate the social issues to awaken people consciousness (Fletcher 190).

This period witnessed a powerful activity in literature. Important Victorian writers include: Disraeli, Charles Darwin, Robert Browning, Charles Dickens, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, Lewis Carroll, William Morris, Lord Acton, Willkie Collins and Robert Louis Stevenson produced works that become a worldwide huge interest (Cuddon 761).

2.1.1. The Novel and the Short Story in the 19th Century:

In Victorian times, the novel was the most common type of writing in the whole world. The novel emerged by the end of the eighteenth century, it was the best possible way to depict

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recent days and the starting point for greatly of earlier Victorian novels and the kind of literature that mainly considers the individual within its society. This kind of written work succeeded because of the situation of the middle class and the rise of literacy. Therefore, the novel of that time was recognized for its interests for the issues of society, and the main style in the Victorian era. (Williams and Veldman) The Industrial Revolution that Britain experienced and its impact reflected in the novel, this became the way of representing society. Writers aimed to realize their task by demonstrating the beliefs of Victorian society with everything, fantasy, emotions, and ideas. They look to point out the trouble beyond the marvelous picture of their society. Besides, the nineteenth century considered the most powerful era of literature and novel ("THE ENGLISH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION").

By the late of the century, people were possessed by the ideas exposed in Charles Darwin's theories and the influence of the Italian Criminologist Cesar Lombroso. All these permitted Gothic fiction to get at different levels of imagination and terror. The Victorian Gothic fiction evolves to review the 19th century period, and the Victorian fin de siècle that discuss the matter of the human body and spirit, the criminality, changing, and deterioration (Buzwell).

The progress of short narrative stories in the 19th century England was hindered by the popularity of the sprawling Victorian novel. In many cases, the supporters of the British short story were themselves devoted novelists, like Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Thomas Hardy. The formation of compressed stories created a quick emotional reaction in readers. Sir Walter Scott presented an important precursor of the modern short story in Britain with "The Two Drovers" (1827). Cited for having gone beyond the level of simple anecdote to produce an easy but totalizing thematic effect, the story tried to obtain what critics would later consider the determining quality of the short story.

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In the 1830s, condensate stories of Gothic horror written by writers such as Edward Bulwer-Lytton and the Anglo-Irish Sheridan Le Fanu started to emerge in British literary magazines and progressively held back readers' attention. Scholars wrote down that the culmination of the 19th century British short story would not reach until the end of the century and the publication of realistic skits in exotic locations by Robert Louis Stevenson and later by Rudyard Kipling (Whitaker).

2.1.2. The Gothic Fiction:

The Gothic literature is a genre originated in England and Germany by the half of the 18th century; it developed out of romanticism and appeared as the darkest form of Dark Romanticism based on the obscurity of human psyche and perversity. The Gothic literature has gone further in this direction, implying horror, terror, death, madness, man's trouble and the supernatural (Buzwell).

The term "Goth" refers at the beginning to the Germanic tribes who attacked the Roman Empire in the midst of the 3rd and 5th centuries. In fact, the terms "Goth" and "Gothic" came to mean Barbarism, as it stood against the Roman Empire. Then, it came to refer to the Medieval Gothic architecture (Wright 1).

By the eighteenth century, Gothic became a subgenre of literature for the impact of the obvious influence of the dark Gothic architecture of that time on the genre. Most of the novels seemed to take place in castles, mansions, and abbeys different from the usual setting. "Gothic literature was not as different from other genres in form as it was in content and its focus on the 'weird' aspects of life" (Borges 24). Therefore, this new subgenre "Gothic fiction" or "Gothic horror"

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gave the meaning of the supernatural and horrifying events that pass off in the novels (Wright 1-2).

Gothic fiction is a literature of nightmare. Among its conventions are found dream landscapes and figures of the subconscious imagination. Its fictional world gives form to amorphous fears and impulses common to all mankind, using an amalgam of materials, some torn from the author's own subconscious mind and some stuff of myth, folklore, fairy tale, and romance (MacAndrew 3).

The first English gothic novel appeared in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). Then slowly, this kind of literature spread widely, and most of the writers started to use it in their works (Borges 24). The Gothic novel, therefore, began to unfold in a mysterious environment, mainly dark forests. In addition, writers mixed their sentimental writings with terror to develop an atmosphere out of control (Buzwell).

Despite the fact that this kind of fiction had been more and more common from the mid-18th century, the Victorian time witnessed a rise in a different genre of Gothic. This era saw the rebirth of the gothic fiction as an influential literary kind associated with *fin de siècle*. Many writers contributed in the renewal of this style of writing among them Oscar Wilde, Henry James, George Du Maurier, and Robert Louis Stevenson that we can spot the elements of gothic fiction in many of his conventional works like "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1886) and "Markheim" (1885) (Buzwell).

Almost all Gothic novels are stories of mystery and horror (Cuddon 308). "Mystery is a work of fiction in which the evidence related to mysterious events or crime so that the reader has the opportunity to solve the problem. The elements of mystery are horror and terror, crime

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or any situation involving enigma" (Merriam Webster 793). Robert Louis Stevenson's short story "The Stange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1886) is a vivid example of mystery.

In addition, the main objective of the horror story according to Merriam Webster Encyclopedia of Literature, is to create a sense of terror and fear by employing supernatural elements like ghosts, witches, vampires or may respond to more realistic psychological issues (Merriam-Webster 559). As it is mentioned in the dictionary of literary terms and literary theory, the term "horror" has its origins in the Latin word *horrere* "to make the hair stand on end, tremble, and shudder" (Cuddon 339). Robert Louis Stevenson, as an expert of horror, embodies fears linked to death, darkness, evil, punishment, violence, and destruction.

Furthermore, Madness is one of the important elements of Gothic fiction. Thus, the character changes his behaviors that are affected by evil obsession and thoughts. In this particular genre, the male character generally becomes mad and the female in distress, she frequently meets situations that let them scared ("Gothic Tropes: Madness").

2.2. A Short Background about Robert Louis Stevenson:

Robert Louis Balfour Stevenson was born on November 13, 1850 in Edinburgh, Scotland. Stevenson was the only son of Thomas Stevenson, a civil engineer, and his wife, Margaret Isabella Balfour. When he was a teenager, his health was fragile which leads him to spend long periods bedridden and made his schooling hard. He attended Edinburgh Academy and other schools before, at age of 17, he entered Edinburgh University, where he was supposed to get ready for the family profession of lighthouse engineering. But Stevenson had no intention to become an engineer, and he after made a deal with his father, as an agreement, to prepare instead for the Scottish bar (Daiches).

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He was inspired to write in his early life, and when he became teen, he had intentionally determined to learn the writer's styles by following some writer's models such as William Hazlitt and Daniel Defoe. His youthful passion for the Covenanters pushed him to write *The Pentland Rising*, his first work. When he was at the university, he rose up against his parents' religion and became a liberal bohemian (Daiches).

By July 1875, he was requested to the Scottish bar, but he did not apply. Stevenson traveled a lot, he passed most of his time in France. He wrote, "*An Inland Voyage*" (1878) and "*Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*" (1879) as experience in his travels. His journey as writer progressed gradually, his essay "Roads" published in the *Portfolio* (1873), and "Ordered South" (1874) appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine*, a review of Lord Lytton's *Fables in Song* appeared in the *Fortnightly*, and his first contribution (on Victor Hugo) appeared in *The Cornhill Magazine*, then edited by Leslie Stephen, a critic, and biographer. These firsts' essays drew attention to Stevenson as a writer (Daiches).

He wrote many essays, novels, and short stories. Some of Stevenson's works: *Virginibus Puerisque, and Other Papers* (1881), *New Arabian Nights* (1882), *Treasure Island* (1883), *Markheim* (1885), *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), *Kidnapped* (1886), *The Merry Men and Other Tales and Fables* (1887), *The Black Arrow: A Tale of the Two Roses* (1888), *The Master of Ballantrae: A Winter's Tale* (1889). In addition, his last unfinished masterpiece *Weir of Hermiston* that was cut because of his sudden death in 1894 (Daiches).

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850- 1894) was a Scottish author, poet, essayist, author of fiction and travel books. He is known as a writer of adventure fiction as well as a Gothic and fantasy. He had a difficult life; he suffered a lot because of his weak health, which led him to

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stay at home most of his life. He is one of the notable writers of the late Victorian period who wrote horror and fantastic stories (Jackson).

Stevenson's short stories such as "The Body Snatcher" (1885) "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" (1886) and "Markheim" (1885) are frightful and containing horrifying themes, his short stories make the reader's heart beat faster. In addition, he employs symbols in most of his writings to make the reader appreciate and remember each detail of the story.

Moreover, his writings on adventure and travel fiction are built upon his experiences. Stevenson traveled regularly, he wrote many works and essays such as *Treasure Island*, *In the South Seas*, *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*. Stevenson had a great impact on literary work, he is considered as the father of modern travel writing. Today's travel writing is affected by Stevenson's style, interpretation, and observation. His travel works continue to exist even today (Glennen).

2.3. Robert Louis Stevenson and the Gothic Literature:

By the nineteenth century, every work that dealt with horror, fear, supernatural, nightmares, suspense, and terrifying events is considered as Gothic fiction. Besides, Stevenson is considered to be one of the skillful and best storytellers of the Gothic and fantasy. He also used the Gothic stories to make people pay attention to the topics of his era. His stories are surrounded in simple settings and in an atmosphere of horror and suspense, for example in his short story *Markheim* he built his plot around mystery and the supernatural (Jackson).

Stevenson tried to create an interesting story by incorporating elements of Gothic such as darkness, ghost, death, evil, madness, and mystery by bringing into the reader's heart suspense.

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In Stevenson's "*Markheim*", he associated the protagonist with death, madness, insanity, and internal conflict (Jackson).

Conclusion

With the background covered on Robert Louis Stevenson, it is possible to consider him as one of the prominent literary writers of the 19th century. Stevenson wrote many works on adventure, travel, gothic and children's classic. His works seem to remain popular and widely read for centuries to come. This chapter provides an overview on the Victorian literature and Gothic fiction in addition to some social and historical background of Robert Louis Stevenson.

Chapter Three:

Literary analysis

The use of symbolism in “Markheim”

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Chapter Three: Literary analysis- the use of symbolism in “Markheim”

Introduction

This chapter investigates the use of symbolism in Stevenson’s short story “Markheim” and clarifies the purpose and the interpretation of every single symbol. Since Stevenson’s writings are classified as part of the Gothic fiction, it is then clear that each sentence transmits a profound meaning in order to reach the effect of fear, panic, and horrifying events. Stevenson tends to use symbolism as an input to draw the picture of terrifying themes that develop different interpretations, as well this chapter focuses on the analysis of the short story in hand and the symbolic depiction of Stevenson’s masterpiece.

3.1. The General Literary Analysis of “Markheim”

Before moving to symbolism analysis in “Markheim”, it is worth equipping the reader with a number of important details about the story. “Markheim” (1885) is one of the most celebrated and greatest short stories of Robert Louis Stevenson. It was originally written for the London evening newspaper *The Pall Mall Gazette* in 1884, but it first appeared in print one year later in the *Broken Shaft: Tales of Mid-Ocean as part of Unwin’s Christmas Annual*. The story was later collected in Stevenson’s anthology *The Merry Men and Other Tales and Fables* (1887). Stevenson filled his story with every possible detail in order to make the reader enjoy reading it; appreciate it in addition to understand the purpose behind it.

3.1.1. The Analysis of the Short Story

3.1.1.1. Plot Summary

The story is set in London by the 19th century, the same time of its publication. The story is entitled after the main character’s name. It is a Christmas Day and Markheim has

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entered a shop under the pretext of buying a Christmas present for his fiancée while he has the intention to rob the owner. However, the store dealer has already dealt with him since he has already visited the store many times before to sell things that he claims to have inherited from his uncle. The dealer thinks that Markheim is there to sell things of suspicious origin but he tells him that this time he comes to buy a Christmas gift for a lady. The dealer offers him a mirror but Markheim becomes furious and sees that giving a mirror as a gift was not a good idea because it would remind people of their becoming older and uglier. The dealer, however, asks him either to buy something or to leave. Markheim requests to be shown another potential gift, as the dealer stoops to choose another object, he stabs him in the back and kills him.

Markheim is incredibly panicked especially when he notices that mirrors surround him. The ticking of the clocks rattles him even more. After some time, he starts to calm down, thinking back that the door is closed from the interior and that the seller's maid left for the holiday. However, his anxiety comes back when he hears footsteps upstairs, which makes his plan to steal the dealer's money more difficult. When he finds the keys on the dealer's body, he goes up the stairs where he meets a stranger who asks him, “Did you call me?”(9)

This stranger looks to be a supernatural being because he knows everything about Markheim and his dirty life that is full of stealing. Markheim insists that he is just going through a difficult period and that he is a good person, but the stranger denies everything he says to prove that he is a good person. Gradually as their conversation carries on, it seems more and more clear that the stranger is no doubt the devil himself.

Subsequently, after the long discussion, they had about life, intentions, and nature of good and evil, the maid comes back. The stranger advises Markheim to kill her after informing her that the dealer is injured and murders her as she enters the shop.

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In fact, the stranger tells him that if he kills her, he will show him the keys to open the dealer's safe. In addition, he adds that if he uses the money for business, he will fail, as always. After thinking, Markheim takes the decision that he will not follow the way of that evil stranger. He does not give up on being a good person and reveals his crime and tells the maid to call the police. At the time when Markheim makes his decision, the stranger's face changes, showing “a wonderful and lovely change” expressing “tender triumph” (13)

3.1.1.2. The Setting

Robert Louis Stevenson’s works usually express the theme of the story by creating sophisticated characters and inventing a complex plot but in this particular short story, Stevenson provides few details about his setting and has only one main character. The story focuses on the action and thoughts of the main character. The setting is very simple, the time and the place of “Markheim” in which the actions take place are symbolic. The story begins in the afternoon of a rainy Christmas Day, in the last month of the year “The dealer chuckled. ‘You come to me on Christmas Day,’” (1) and it takes place in the dealer’s antique shop in an atmosphere of terror and supernatural “The ticking of many clocks among the curious lumber of the shop, and the faint rushing of the cabs in a near thoroughfare, filled up the interval of silence” (1). The setting reflects Markheim’s guilty conscience

Time had some score of small voices in that shop, some stately and slow as was becoming to their great age; others garrulous and hurried. All these told out the seconds in an intricate, chorus of tickings. Then the passage of a lad's feet, heavily running on the pavement, broke in upon these smaller voices and startled Markheim into the consciousness of his surroundings. He looked about him awfully (3).

Thus, Stevenson attempted to build the plot around the mystery of the shop and the horrifying events.

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3.1.1.3. Characters

Markheim, the protagonist, is struggling with his inner conscience. He is in a conflict between the forces of good and evil “evil and good run strong in me, hailing me both ways” (12) he wants to cease doing evil actions and turn to the good forces; he refuses the help of the mysterious visitor, believing him to be the devil. He is controlled by his guilt and remorse and could not get rid of what he has done.

“It can, and” cried Markheim; “it does! Be helped by you? No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet; thank God, you do not know me!” (9) Markheim could not refrain from smiling with a kind of bitter triumph. “No,” said he, “I will take nothing at your hands; if I were dying of thirst, and it was your hand that put the pitcher to my lips” (10).

The dealer shop is introduced as a talkative man. Although he is dead but because of him, the protagonist describes his tough situation. He does not participate in many actions in the entire short story, but the speaker has suffered a lot after killing him “poignant regrets, weary, incessant toiling of the mind to change what was unchangeable, to plan what was now useless, to be the architect of the irrevocable past” (4). “He glanced over his shoulder at the open door, where the shadow was still lingering and shivering; and with no conscious repugnance of the mind, yet with a tremor of the belly, he drew near the body of his victim” (6).

Although it is a shadow, it plays a significant role in the short story. It stands to represent the memories of Markheim, in order to emphasize the devil image. He first appeared to be the devil offering his help “The visitor smiled. “You have long been a favourite of mine,” he said; “and I have long observed and often sought to help you.” “What are you?” cried Markheim: “

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"the devil?" "What I may be," returned the other, "cannot affect the service I propose to render you."” (9).

Nevertheless, he will save Markheim from the evil force bringing back the good side of him. “I should find the courage to refuse. It may be credulous, but I will do nothing to commit myself to evil” (10).

3.1.1.4. Themes

3.1.1.4.1. Good and Evil

The central theme of “Markheim” is good vs. evil. The protagonist depicts the two sides of human personality; each person has two opposite side in him, the good and the evil “It is true,” Markheim said huskily, "I have in some degree complied with evil. But it is so with all: the very saints, in the mere exercise of living, grow less dainty, and take on the tone of their surroundings” (12). However, Markheim did not give up by the end but he defeated the evil.

3.1.1.4.2. Madness

The protagonist finds himself talking to a shadow and it is obviously mentioned in the entire story, “The sense that he was not alone grew upon him to the verge of madness” (7). It appears that the narrator felt guilty and did not find someone to share his guilt with and the only one he could communicate with was the shadow.

"You know me?" cried the murderer.

Chapter Three: Literary analysis- the use of symbolism in “Markheim”

The visitor smiled. "You have long been a favourite of mine," he said; "and I have long observed and often sought to help you."

"What are you?" cried Markheim: "the devil?"

"What I may be," returned the other, "cannot affect the service I propose to render you."

"It can," cried Markheim; "it does! Be helped by you? No, never; not by you! You do not know me yet; thank God, you do not know me!" (9)

The author attempted to show that Markheim felt enough guilty so that he wants to be heard even if it is from a ghost.

3.1.1.4.3. Violence

The short story Markheim details a crime of violence against an innocent and helpless store dealer. Violence in the short story centers on Markheim and underlines the matter of whether or not violence is an inherent part of man's nature. The following scene from the story describes how violent Markheim was at the moment he kills the dealer "... Markheim bounded from behind upon his victim. The long, skewer like dagger flashed and fell. The dealer struggled like a hen, striking his temple on the shelf, and then tumbled on the floor in a heap" (3). The protagonist seemed indifferent to the dealer's efforts to free himself from death. Violence blinded Markheim and turned him into a merciless creature.

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3.2. The Psychological Side of Markheim in Relation to the Door

The short story deals with the psychological side of Markheim, specifically the subconscious and the conscious aspects of the mind. The author seems to put more emphasis on the protagonist mind rather than what is happening to him. Perhaps the shadow also described the deranged and depressed mind. The open door can be symbolic of the mind itself and the visitor could be the thoughts trying to be suppressed by the protagonist. The open door could be the door of his subconscious.

But when a face was thrust into the aperture, glanced round the room, looked at him, nodded and smiled as if in friendly recognition, and then withdrew again, and the door closed behind it, his fear broke loose from his control in a hoarse cry. At the sound of this the visitant returned.

"Did you call me?" he asked pleasantly, and with that he entered the room and closed the door behind him (9).

Furthermore, the front door of the shop is mentioned a few times in the story. After Markheim murdered the shopkeeper, the open door made him feel afraid of being found out "At times, with a strong effort, he would glance at the open door which still seemed to repel his eyes" (5). Markheim considered the open door as a door of freedom as he said to the mysterious visitor "If I be condemned to evil acts," he said, "There is still one door of freedom open - I can cease from action" (13). The open door symbolizes his freedom from evil. The good in him defeated the evil that is why we notice by the end that Markheim went over the open door and asked the maid to call the police instead of murdering her and carry on with robbery "You had better go

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for the police,” said he: “I have killed your master” (14). An open door shows that there is a way out and can also provide a view of what lies ahead.

3.3. The Moment of Recognition

After he killed the store dealer, the protagonist gets the mysterious visitor as a sign to find out a solution to his acts. He was first in a conflict with his subconscious, but he then gains consciousness and realizes what he did. He has taken the responsibility and solve his problems in order to get over his guilt “ "It is true," said Markheim; "and I see clearly what remains for me by way of duty. I thank you for these lessons from my soul; my eyes are opened, and I behold myself at last for what I am." ” (13).

3.4. Symbolism in the Shadow of the Mysterious Visitor:

The shadow manifests itself from time to time in the story, following Markheim everywhere in the store, enhancing an atmosphere of horror and panic. In the beginning, it seemed to be the devil, who came into help to Markheim “ "What are you?" cried Markheim: "the devil?" ” (9) but by the end things become clear, the shadow came to save Markheim from his evil force and bring back the good side of him “The features of the visitor began to undergo a wonderful and lovely change: they brightened and softened with a tender triumph, and, even as they brightened, faded and dislimned” (13).

3.5. Symbolism in Objects

The murder took place in an antique store where most of the objects have a symbolic meaning. Most objects, therefore, participate in the development of the story, since they all have a significant effect on the psychological state of the murderer.

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3.5.1. The Mirror

At the beginning of the story, when Markheim entered the store pretending to buy a gift for his girlfriend, the shopkeeper suggested him a hand mirror which shocked Markheim and made him cry out “I ask you for a Christmas present, and you give me this — this damned reminder of years, and sins and follies — this hand-conscience” (2).

In a psychological sense, mirrors symbolize the threshold between the conscious mind and the unconscious mind. By looking into a mirror, one may look towards the depths of their unconsciousness. The image the mirror produces is therefore symbolic and can be made sense of in both conscious and subconscious thought processes (Viva).

The way Markheim has reacted at seeing the mirror may reflect his inner unconsciousness; guilty of sins he committed and any further sin he is maybe willing to do, terrified that the mirror would reflect the demon in him. The mirror symbolizes beauty for the shopkeeper as he considered it as a good gift for a woman, while it is a reflection of sins for Markheim “this damned reminder of years, and sins and follies - this hand-conscience!” (2) After he killed the shopkeeper, the mirrors in the store made him conscious of what he did “his sins”. “In many rich mirrors, some of home designs, some from Venice or Amsterdam, he saw his face repeated and repeated, as it were an army of spies; his own eyes met and detected him; and the sound of his own steps, lightly as they fell, vexed the surrounding quiet” (4).

3.5.2. The Clocks

In addition, the clocks symbolize time. They reminded him of the necessity to hurry up and take what he came for, and created psychological stress due to his anxiety caused by the

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fear of being discovered “the clock can symbolize a feeling of time pressure; it may be also a sign that one feels overwhelmed by something in his/her life” (Reif). The tick-tock of the clock gives the impression that the clock is beating, and Markheim was so frightened that he tried to stop the clock. With a guilty conscience, he was so freaked by all the diverse sounds in his mind “If he were but deaf, he thought, how tranquility he would possess his soul” (7) He was disquiet and not feeling at peace.

3.5.3. The Light

The light is a symbol of good and brightness, the opposite of evil and darkness. When Markheim came into the shop, it was dark and the light of the candlelight perturbed him, he avoids any eyes contacts with the shopkeeper "he blinked painfully and looked aside" (1). This shows an intense feeling of discomfort due to the struggle between good and evil inside him even before the killing. The weak light of the candlelight in the store reflects, “mingled shine and darkness” (1) as the struggling of the two forces in him.

The candle appeared several times all over the story, reproducing an atmosphere of horror and fear to Markheim and transmits a symbolic meaning. When Markheim killed the shopkeeper, he was afraid that somebody would find out what he did. He saw the skylight filter over the doorstep, the light was extremely faint like if it was “in that strip of doubtful brightness” (5).

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Conclusion

This chapter is an attempt to analyze the use of symbolism in Stevenson's “Markheim” and the motives behind using such a literary device. Stevenson uses symbols to deliver his message in order to serve the elements of Gothic fiction: fear, horror, madness, panic...etc. The use of symbols such as the clocks, mirrors, light is a successful means to express the theme of the struggle between good and evil, the conflict between repentance and sins.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion

All in all, *Markheim* (1885), is one of Stevenson's masterpieces in which there are much madness and mind troubles, Stevenson expresses the struggle between good and evil. Thus, *Markheim* was in disturbance, he first came to kill and steal the merchant, his guilt-ridden and regret made him mad and panic before becoming repentant. In this present study, we have attempted to examine and give an overall view of symbolism.

The aim we have set for this work is to make learners aware of the meanings of symbolism, which lead to different interpretations of the symbols in any literary text. The short story "*Markheim*" owns a simple writing and an effective style; it seems easy to be understood but not easy to be interpreted.

However, many theorists have their own views to interpret symbols, such as Sigmund Freud and Alfred North Whitehead. In this study, we considered the view of Whitehead to interpret symbols of this short story.

Since Stevenson is deemed to be the master of the Gothic fiction, it is obvious to notice the use of Gothic and dark words such as: shadow, terror, horror, darkness, fear etc. In addition, the present study has focused not only on symbolism, but also provided a general survey of the short story such as plot summary, themes and characters. "*Markheim*" is full of symbols, however, the study focused mainly on the major ones by explaining their meanings that convey an extra-meaning beyond the literal meaning. Hence, symbolism is a very important device in literature and it is used more for the sake of aesthetic rather than something else. The interpretation of the symbol in the short story makes a new sense of the story, omits the ambiguity in it and enhances comprehension.

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