One Is Two and Two Are One: An Analysis of the Gothic Double in Stephen King's The Dark Half and Lisey's Story

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ONE IS TWO AND TWO ARE ONE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE GOTHIC DOUBLE IN STEPHEN KING'S *THE DARK HALF* AND *LISEY'S STORY*

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INTRODUCTION

This MA thesis provides a detailed analysis of the concept of the Gothic double in Stephen King's *The Dark Half* (1989) and *Lisey's Story* (2006). Both novels feature a protagonist who is confronted with another side of their being, or in other words, a double of themselves. In *The Dark Half*, author Thad Beaumont is stalked by the embodiment of his former pseudonym, George Stark. In *Lisey's Story*, Lisa "Lisey" Landon has to accept and incorporate the dark side of her late husband Scott Landon in order to survive. This thesis explores how the Gothic double figure functions in contrast to its other human half in King's work. The contrasting functions of the Gothic double in the two novels mentioned above reveal how King both builds on but also moves the tradition of the Gothic double into a different direction: where classic Gothic doubles depict one person becoming two, King deviates strongly from this classic notion in *Lisey's Story*, where two people become one. This thesis will also analyse the double's divisions between morality versus immorality, constructive versus destructive personalities, and public versus private actions. Furthermore, this thesis will illustrate how the Gothic double symbolises the repression of the immoral side of the characters in the context of the time and place in which they live.

The "Gothic double" is a literary trope developed initially in classic Gothic stories such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus* (1818), Edgar Allan Poe's "William Wilson" (1839), Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890, rev. 1891). These texts will be discussed in Chapter 1.1, but the stylistic and thematic variations that these foundational "Gothic double" texts contain point out that there are many ways in which the trope can function and be defined.

The definition that will be adhered to in this thesis is based on the definition that Heidi Strengell develops in "'The Monster Never Dies': An Analysis of the Gothic Double in Stephen King's Oeuvre." She examines various doubles in King's novels, such as the werewolf in *Cycle of the Werewolf* (1983) and the serial killer in *The Dead Zone* (1979). Strengell generally characterises a Gothic double as a duality between good and evil in a person ("'The Monster Never Dies': An Analysis of the Gothic Double in Stephen King's Oeuvre"). What this thesis will add to Strengell's research on King's doubles is a focus on the morality of the characters. While she argues that King's Gothic doubles reveal how "evil can often be conquered in King's fiction," her conclusion contradicts her thesis, as she ends with King's claim, in support of her own, that "'the monster never dies'" (Strengell, "Gothic Double"). This thesis will show that these contradictory claims are understandable, as King developed a nuanced approach to this classic Gothic trope in which the human protagonist and their Gothic double cannot be understood in binary terms of good versus evil, or protagonist versus antagonist, but have to be understood through their intricate and inherent relations to each other. Thus, King has created a moral spectrum in relation to the Gothic double and he reveals how the human protagonist and their "monstrous" double simultaneously exist and move around on this spectrum. Most significantly, in *Lisey's Story*, King reveals how Gothic doubling can be used to express the idea that two persons can be considered as one, instead of one person being inherently two.

By means of an in-depth analysis of the Gothic double in Stephen King's *The Dark Half* and *Lisey's Story*, this thesis will show that the doubles embody the dark side of the main characters and are a way of exploring themes of personal psychological struggles. The doubles symbolise this dark side as they are the representations of the immoral actions that the characters may want to perform but cannot or will not due to their morals. The doubles commit hideous acts in private, however, these acts eventually become public. As mentioned

earlier, *The Dark Half* presents the doubles Thad Beaumont and his pseudonym George Stark. Having gained wide success under this pen name, Thad's pseudonym is found out by a fan, after which Thad holds a fake funeral for Stark. Despite his attempts to exclude Stark from his life, Thad is seemingly unaware that he cannot eliminate Stark completely. Stark is a part of Thad, his literal double. He represents Thad's immoral side as he murders the people that were involved in the business surrounding Thad's pseudonym, and Stark is immoral as he symbolises what Thad really wants to do but cannot within his culture. It can be argued that George represents Thad's inner desires as they are part of the same human being.

In *Lisey's Story*, the doubles are Scott Landon and Lisey Landon, a married couple. The reader meets Lisey as she is grieving for her late husband, cleaning out Scott's office two years after his death. They are not doubles in the sense that Thad and George are, but they can be seen as each other's halves due to their marriage and due to the fact that Lisey has to rely on and accept Scott's dark side in order to survive. As she is constantly occupied with him, Scott can visit her mind and speak to her. Eventually, Scott gives her a "Bool" (*Lisey* 115), a symbolic scavenger hunt, and sends her to the other world of Boo'ya Moon to find out the truth about him and his family. Both sets of doubles in these novels can mentally travel to other spaces: Thad and George can see through each other's eyes and Scott and Lisey can both travel to Boo'ya Moon. In these novels, the Gothic double is initially presented as the other, "evil" half of Thad and Lisey and it symbolises the repression of the immoral sides, and the doubles perform actions that their better halves do not or will not carry out. Thad and Lisey are the moral characters with constructive personalities whereas George and Scott are the immoral characters with destructive personalities. The doubles commit crimes or other hideous acts in private, but they are eventually found out and thus become public. King shows that neither Thad can live without Stark, nor Lisey without Scott. They overcome their dark doubles by accepting that they exist, rather than repressing them. The idea that Thad and

Lisey both survive their doubles is very different to the classic Gothic doubles, where both halves of the double die.

The following results were achieved by analysing the two aforementioned novels and focussing on the embodiments of the Gothic doubles, how they act and behave in contrast to their other halves, how they function in their specific settings, and how they function in terms of morality and repression. By analysing the doubles in this way, the contrasts between the two halves of one person will become clear, and this will help to build the comparison between the two Gothic doubles to be discussed in this thesis. Furthermore, a comparison was made between Stephen King's doubles and the classic doubles, in Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, among others. A comparison to these established Gothic doubles will clarify the function of King's doubles in context of the Gothic tradition and will help to explain how King developed the trope of the double in a different direction: from one being two into two being one.

The relevance of this thesis lies in the exploration of Stephen King's use of the Gothic double, as this is a topic that has not been widely researched beyond Strengell's essay. A focus on the Gothic double in King's oeuvre can bring to light how his form of the Gothic double has developed over time and reveal the extent to which King is a moral author, questioning ideas of what is normal and desirable in American culture, and by extrapolation in Western culture more generally. Also, it is important to explore *Lisey's Story* in more detail as "extensive criticism and analyses of King's 'recent' works have only been collected sporadically over the last twenty years" (Perry and McAleer 1); this is especially true in relation to the topic of the Gothic double, a persistent feature of King's work that scholars have not pursued beyond *The Dark Half*. Hence this novel's significance and its place in this thesis, as the analysis will show that King's notion of the double has evolved along with his understanding of the Gothic genre.

The first chapter of this thesis will explore the origins of the Gothic double and consider several important works of the nineteenth century in which the Gothic double features as a prominent figure. It will also serve as the historical context to which the Gothic doubles as found in the two novels will be compared, and discuss the setting of King's novels and how those circumstances lend itself for the emergence of a Gothic double. The second chapter will provide an analysis of *The Dark Half*, and explore how George Stark functions as a Gothic double compared to his other half, Thad Beaumont. The third chapter will analyse how the Gothic double comes to the fore in *Lisey's Story* and how Scott Landon functions as Lisey's other half. Because of its limited scope, this thesis will only focus on "human" Gothic doubles and not on other types of the double, such as the werewolf in *Cycle of the Werewolf* as mentioned earlier.

CHAPTER ONE: ORIGINS OF THE GOTHIC DOUBLE

> Under the strain of this continually impending doom and by the sleeplessness to which I now condemned myself, ay, even beyond what I had thought possible to man, I became, in my own person, a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind, and solely occupied by one thought: the horror of my other self. (Stevenson 72)

Thus confesses Dr Jekyll in a letter to the lawyer Mr Utterson in Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. In this passage, it becomes clear that Jekyll has to face the consequences of releasing a darker version of himself. In other words, he has pseudo-scientifically created his own double. Stevenson's text has become one of the best-known novels to incorporate the literary trope of the Gothic double. His characterisation of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is the iconic example of a double defined in moral terms: one representing the "good" side, and the other the "evil" side of the same character**.** Despite the iconic status of Stevenson's doubling technique, there is not one singular definition for what constitutes the Gothic double in literary works and how it functions: in fact, the concept, while generally used to define a projection of different sides of a single character, remains surrounded by theoretical and critical questions. Therefore, it is crucial to develop a clear idea of what the Gothic double entails from the outset of this research project.

This chapter will clarify the origins of the Gothic double to develop a critical understanding of what exactly this concept entails within the scope of this thesis. To illustrate this critical discussion, this chapter will engage with four "canonical" Gothic doubles: Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Edgar Allan Poe's "William Wilson," Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. Finally, this chapter will examine the settings of these nineteenth-century tales and how the setting of King's

novels, specifically of the two primary texts to be discussed in this thesis, shows how King appropriated the classic Gothic double to suit his contemporary, American settings, characters, and contexts.

1.1 The Development of the Gothic Double

In order to get a good understanding of the concept of the Gothic double, it is crucial to explore its origins and development throughout the nineteenth century. According to L. Andrew Cooper, Gothic fiction "primarily represents fear, the fearful, and the abject, even if the representation is comic" (6). In *Powers of Horror* (1982), Julia Kristeva defines the abject as "something rejected from which one does not part, from which one does not protect oneself as from an object" (4). The abject is key to the development of the Gothic double: the dark side, i.e., "something rejected," cannot easily be eliminated as it constitutes one side of the human being. The abject can be found in all classic examples to be discussed in this section, and they are all stories of fear: one half of the double is always haunted by the other, and only through a confrontation can the double be overcome.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* contains a Gothic double created by the hubristic undertakings of the scientist Victor Frankenstein – the double-pairing consists of Victor and his creature. Victor grows up in Geneva, where he develops a growing interest in ancient alchemists. Later, he attends the university of Ingolstadt, where he learns how to create life from dead body parts. In an attempt to become famous and successful, Victor endeavours to create a "living" creature, but he is shocked when he beholds the outcome of his undertakings:

> I had worked hard for nearly two years, for the sole purpose of infusing life into an inanimate body. For this I had deprived myself of rest and health. I had desired it with an ardour that far exceeded moderation; but now that I had

> finished, the beauty of the dream vanished, and breathless horror and disgust filled my heart. (Shelley 45)

Describing the creature as a "catastrophe" and filled with "horror and disgust" (45), it becomes evident that Victor abhors his creation. These feelings echo Kristeva's notion of the abject. The creature is depicted as deformed, with "yellow skin" and a "shrivelled complexion" (45). He abandons it, and the creature, feeling unwanted and seeking revenge for creating him, starts to stalk Victor. When his little brother William is killed, Victor returns to Geneva. Upon visiting the location of William's death, Victor becomes convinced of the monster haunting him and being guilty of William's murder:

> *He* was the murderer! I could not doubt it. The mere presence of the idea was an irresistible proof of the fact. I thought of pursuing the devil; but it would have been in vain, for another flash discovered him to me hanging among the rocks of the nearly perpendicular ascent of Mont Salève …. He soon reached the summit, and disappeared. (65, italics in original)

Victor cannot capture the creature and eliminate it: he has to suffer the consequences for his actions. When Justine Moritz, William's nurse, is charged with the murder of William, Victor fails to come forward at the trial, despite knowing who actually committed the murder. This failure signals his fear for the creature, his refusal to take responsibility for his own undertakings, and his denial that the monster really exists. Due to his hideous appearance, the monster is repeatedly rejected by various people, such as the DeLacey family and William, and he feels alone and angry at Victor for creating him. The creature admits the killing of William was an act of revenge (134), and due to his loneliness, he asks Victor to create another being of "the same species" and "the same defects" (135). Although he starts to create the second mate, Victor abandons this task and demands the creature to leave, which results in the monster threatening him and his future wife Elizabeth: "It is well. I go; but remember, I

shall be with you on your wedding-night" (163). After the deaths of Elizabeth, his father, and his friend Henry Clerval, Victor seeks revenge and starts to pursue the monster across Europe and towards the North Pole, but due to exhaustion, he is taken aboard the ship of Captain Walton. The roles are reversed: first, the creature stalked Victor, and now he haunts the creature. In his final moments, Victor asks Walton to kill the monster for him (210). The creature visits Victor's corpse on the ship, and he tells Walton that he will die and "ascend his funeral pile triumphantly" (216), suggesting that he is happy to leave his miserable existence behind. In the end, both halves of the Gothic double die in *Frankenstein*. This shows that one half cannot continue living if his other half is dead, as both halves are intrinsically part of the same person.

Poe's "William Wilson" revolves around an anonymous narrator, who adopts the pseudonym William Wilson in this tale. The premonition of death is evident from the start: "Death approaches; and the shadow which foreruns him has thrown a softening influence over my spirit" (Poe 110). It becomes clear that the narrator feels the pressure that his double is exerting over him. The narrator presents himself as a strong-willed character, who assumes superiority over his classmates at school. However, he finds himself challenged by one other person, "who, although no relation, bore the same Christian name and surname as [him]self" (114). He describes the two of them as a "set," solidifying the idea that the two are equals. In fact, the two of them are so similar, that the narrator exclaims that they are like twins:

> I have before said, or should have said, that Wilson was not, in the most remote degree, connected with my family. But assuredly if we *had* been brothers we must have been twins; for … I casually learned that my namesake was born on the nineteenth of January, 1813 – and this is a somewhat remarkable coincidence; for the day is precisely that of my own nativity. (116)

The fact that the narrator uses the word twins means that he renders them identical to each other, or, in other words, a mirror image. Not only their looks, but even the whisper of the double was "the very echo of [his] own" (118). The narrator and his double are the same in all aspects of their being, but it is significant to note that only the narrator notices these similarities (117).

When the narrator leaves to attend the university of Oxford, he admits to engaging in all sorts of vices (123). After deceiving a fellow student in a game of cards, where the other boy loses a considerable amount of money, the narrator is visited by his double. This visit does not occur once, but several times: every time the narrator is on the verge of engaging in immoral activities, his double intervenes and whispers the name "William Wilson," reminding the narrator of his true identity and of his immorality. Here, the double functions as his conscience and stresses the duality between good and evil. Driven by rage and paranoia at being stalked by his double, the narrator stabs him, only to realise that he has stabbed himself when he looks in the mirror. The ending of the story marks the death of the two doubles, which again emphasises the idea that one half cannot live without the other half of the double. As Fonseca argues, "throughout the tale, the doppelgänger is a source of stress for the narrator, the self, as it foreshadows his destruction; eventually the doppelgänger comes to replace the individual" (199). The narrator knows this fact as well: when he dies, he cannot distinguish between the voice of his double and his own, as they are one.

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) are two nineteenth-century novels with strong Gothic features that contain a Gothic double not in the classic mode of one person having two sides, but in the alternative mode of two persons becoming one, i.e., two protagonists that come to identify themselves as soulmates. In other words, these novels contain a complementary double in the sense that the two persons have become one through their shared spiritual connection, that in the case of Jane Eyre ends

in marriage. In *Wuthering Heights*, the complementary double pairing consists of Cathy and Heathcliff, and in *Jane Eyre* the double pairing consists of Jane and Mr Rochester. Although the doubles in *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* are not part of the selection of classic doubles to be analysed in this chapter, they are still worth mentioning here, as Chapter 3 will show that in his adaptation of the Gothic double motif, King, consciously or not, incorporated aspects of this complementary double into his own writing.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the idea of a duality in human nature gained more attention than ever in Gothic fiction (Dryden 19). In *The Modern Gothic and Literary Doubles: Stevenson, Wilde and Wells* (2003), Linda Dryden claims that the Gothic novels of the *fin de siècle* period constituted a change for the Gothic genre, and she distinguishes between the "traditional Gothic" and the "modern Gothic" (19). She argues that

> Gothic fiction is often a literature of transformations where identity is unstable and sanity a debatable state of being. … Located in the historically remote past or in isolated, wild locations amid the suggestive relics of an ancient past, the traditional Gothic was a fiction about history and about geography. Yet, at the end of the nineteenth century, a new Gothic mode emerged, a modern Gothic, whose narratives focused on the urban present, refracting contemporary concerns through the lens of a literature of terror. (19)

This transformation of the Gothic genre and the greater focus on the fragility of individual and communal identity and the instability of definitions of sanity and insanity emphasises the development of the literary trope. Gothic novels of this period incorporated themes of decadent urbanity and the fragile human psyche; human folly could emerge and claim a prominent position in Gothic literature. This change is extremely prominent in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*, which explore psychological dualities within a person, moral hypocrisy, and shallowness.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde depicts a literal duality between good and evil: the good being represented by Dr Jekyll, and the evil by Mr Hyde. Dr Jekyll has created this duality by himself, as he wanted to find a way to act out his repressed desires. These desires represent the mask that Jekyll is wearing: on the one hand, he wants to maintain his respectable reputation as a member of the upper class; on the other hand, he wants to act upon the desires he needs to repress and engage in low activities. He concludes that "man is not truly one, but truly two" (Stevenson 58), attempting to justify his experiments at dividing himself between these two parts of the self. Not only is Jekyll split into good and evil on the inside, the division is also visible on the outside. Jekyll is a respectable man, but Hyde is described as "pale and dwarfish" with an "expression of deformity without any nameable malformation" and a "displeasing smile" (13). Evil is represented in Hyde's exterior, and it is an "expression of bestiality that is part of the human condition" (Dryden 32). Instead of accepting his dark side and keeping it to himself, Jekyll wants to act upon his discovery and split his time between being either his good or his evil half. At first, the division between being both Jekyll and Hyde goes well. Jekyll even seems proud of his accomplishments:

> Men have before hired bravos to transact their crimes, while their own person and reputation sat under shelter. I was the first that ever did so for his pleasures. I was the first that could thus plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy, strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty. But for me, in my impenetrable mantle, the safety was complete. Think of it – I did not even exist! (62)

He prides himself with being the first to have the ability to give in to all of his desires, whether good or bad. However, Jekyll gradually starts to lose control over the transformations into Hyde. This increasing loss of control signals Hyde's growing power, emphasising the

destructive aspect of the classic Gothic double. Jekyll tries to repress his darker side, but the more Jekyll represses Hyde, the stronger Hyde becomes. Jekyll has changed into "a creature eaten up and emptied by fever, languidly weak both in body and mind" and acknowledges that "the powers of Hyde seemed to have grown with the sickness of Jekyll" (Stevenson 72). The idea that repression only makes the other half stronger is also present in *The Dark Half* and *Lisey's Story*, which will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively.

Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde is ultimately a novel of hypocrisy: where Jekyll first took pride in his ability to split his good and his bad side, he now "hate[s] and fear[s] the thought of the brute that slept within [him]" (72). There is a sense of regret of having conducted this experiment in the first place: Jekyll has been confronted with the embodiment of his dark side. Jekyll does not realise that he and Hyde are the same person, as he believes that a human being is actually divided into two separate persons. He disregards the fact that he could never have controlled his dark side if he let it continue to exist, which proves to be fatal to him. Jekyll realises that the only way to get rid of Hyde is to kill him, which he ultimately does: "God knows; I am careless; this is my true hour of death, and what is to follow concerns another than myself. Here then, as I lay down the pen and proceed to seal up my confession, I bring the life of that unhappy Henry Jekyll to an end" (74). Once again, the double proved to be a premonition of death.

In *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, the doubling exists between a person and an object. The duality between Dorian Gray and his portrait is one of the corruption of the self. At the beginning of the novel, Dorian essentially makes a deal with the devil:

> How sad it is! I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. It will never be older than this particular day of June. … If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For

> that – for that – I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that! (26)

Unbeknownst to Dorian, from that point onwards, his image on the portrait will absorb, as it were, all of his immoral acts and display the evil side of his being. The eventually hideous portrait represents the duality between Dorian's beautiful looks and his "ugly," i.e., corrupted, personality, echoing Kristeva's concept of the abject. As the story progresses, Dorian becomes tainted by shallowness and frequently engages in immoral acts, such as his addiction to opium and hedonistic lifestyle. The consequences of his actions eventually become visible on his portrait. Dorian is not aware of his immorality as he does not have to face the consequences regarding his image. His never-changing exterior reflects his lack of conscience: due to his ignorance regarding moral and immoral acts, he is unaware of his deteriorating personality. According to Punter and Byron, the strength of the novel lies in the

> intensity of Wilde's concentration on the single – or rather, more precisely, double – image of Gray and his portrait, the one remaining apparently youthful while the other spectacularly disintegrates, until the denouement when it is demonstrated that it is impossible, however hard one tries, to escape the vengeance implicit in the idea of the *Doppelgänger*. (173, italics in original)

As in the previous two examples of the double, Dorian is confronted with his other, withered half, which he either has to accept or reject.

Dorian's shallowness is represented through his obsession with his own image. When he first sees it, he is enchanted by its beauty, but as time progresses, he starts to see the impact of his immorality on the portrait. In fact, he tries to repress this darker side of him: nobody is allowed to see the portrait and it is locked away in his attic at all times. This can be perceived as Dorian holding up a mask for the outer world: he pretends to be the respectable, young man

that he once was, and as his countenance does not change, or age, the people around him cannot do much else besides accepting this fact. At the climax of the novel, Dorian is unable to cope with the obsession and paranoia that is caused by his portrait, his mirror image, and ultimately stabs it in order to destroy the depiction of his corruption. However, as with the previous three examples, this also results in his suicide: "Lying on the floor was a dead man, in evening dress, with a knife in the heart. He was withered, wrinkled, and loathsome of visage. It was not till they had examined the rings that they recognized who it was" (231). It becomes evident that the good and evil half of Dorian have merged together, and the reader learns that the countenance of the painting was so horrific that the men entering the attic did not realise who the dead man was, even though Dorian was a well-known man in his milieu.

Although the doubles in *Frankenstein*, "William Wilson," *Jekyll and Hyde,* and *Dorian Gray* are all depicted in a different manner, they have the same effects on their other halves. In the end, every protagonist can only eliminate their darker half by killing it, resulting in their own death, as both halves are part of the same human whole. In the end, all of them become consumed by their darker counterparts and manage to destroy them by tapping into their last reserves of moral integrity, with the exception of Victor Frankenstein: although he attempts to kill the monster out of revenge, he dies trying. It is also noteworthy that all four stories of the doubles are situated in a city, be it London, or Oxford for example, and that all four characters belong to the upper class of their societies. The contrast between the two halves of the characters thus only becomes greater when they, on the one hand, belong to the upper class, while, on the other hand, they engage in activities that are considered to be low and not of their class.

As the traditional Gothic Romances of the eighteenth century and onwards changed into the modern Gothic novels of the *fin de siècle* era, with a shift in focus from the sins of the fathers and the return of the ancient past to questions concerning individual and communal

identity and the fragility of the human psyche, the Gothic double as it is known today had the possibility to emerge and develop. With some of the classic doubles now analysed, it is key to develop a definition of the Gothic double.

1.2 Defining the Gothic Double

Although the concept of the Gothic double does not have one set definition, it is crucial to get an understanding of the meaning of this concept in order to properly analyse the Gothic doubles employed by Stephen King and how they resemble or differ from the "canonical" doubles as discussed in the previous section. As argued by Punter and Byron, "'mental physiology' or early psychiatry began to emerge during the later nineteenth century, and the growing interest in this field played a pivotal role in identifying the threat to social and psychic order as internal" (23-24). Two major scholars in the field of psychoanalysis were Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. They did not define the literary trope of the Gothic double per se; however, they tried to give an explanation for the other, darker side of a human being in general, albeit later than the nineteenth-century Gothic novelists.

Freud essentially systematized what the Gothic novelists were exploring through their fictions. In his essay "The Uncanny" (1919), Freud argues that the "idea of the 'double'" is a "special agency …, which is able to stand over the rest of the ego, which has the function of observing and criticizing the self and exercising a censorship within the mind, and which we become aware of as our 'conscience'" (Freud 630). This form of a double can be regarded as "uncanny," which means, simply put, that which "arouses dread and horror" (619).

Much later, Jung argued that a human being has another side to him, but he defines it as an archetype named the Shadow (Jung 8). Like Freud, Jung claimed that this other half is dark: "The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one

can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real" (8). In other words, a human being needs to accept this darker side in order to develop self-knowledge. Jung goes a step further and states that "on this lower level … one behaves more or less like a primitive, who is not only the passive victim of his affects but also singularly incapable of moral judgment" (9). The immoral behaviour of the double, or shadow archetype, as described here, is a recurring theme in the King novels to be discussed.

Many scholars in the Gothic field have attempted to define the literary trope of the Gothic double, with some building on the psychoanalytical views of Freud and Jung. One of these scholars is Tony Fonseca, who argues that

> when certain aspects of the self are disavowed, often so violently that they must be projected onto another, often a scapegoat, in order to be purged from the consciousness, they are sometimes concretized by being amalgamated into one identifiable, often physical being. This Other can become monstrous, something that is utterly reviled. Therefore, the doppelgänger, as an icon of horror, is the most recognizable, the most 'uncanny' manifestation of this Other, as it is a mirror version of the self whose behaviour reveals all that the original would prefer remain hidden. (190)

Fonseca uses the term *doppelgänger* as a synonym for the double. This argument comprises all that a double is: a mirror image of the self that reflects the darker side of the human being. He continues by stating that "self-annihilation is the only method of destroying the double" (192). The only way for a human being to be free of his darker half is to kill it, as exemplified by the stories of the classic doubles discussed in the previous section. While this argument is true for the nineteenth-century doubles, it will become clear in the following chapters that self-annihilation is not the only way of eliminating the Gothic double in King's novels.

Dryden takes a more socio-psychological approach to the double when she argues that "the double is a threat to the integrity of the self, and frequently evidence of a Gothic, supernatural force at large that brings with it death and destruction. Tales of doubling are, more often than not, tales about paradigms of good and evil" (38). By focussing on paradigms of good and evil, she foregrounds how the individual is situated within larger moral frameworks created by shared customs, traditions and ideologies within a specific culture at a specific time. Fonseca's monstrous Other can be a creation both of individual repression and subsequent projection, but also of socially shared codes of moral conduct and dominant conceptions of sane and insane behaviour (190).

Dryden agrees with Fonseca that a double is a "fragmentation of the self," and that "identities merge or are masked; individuals hide dark secrets that speak of another" (40). Within fictional representations of such fragmentations of the self, the personality is often literally split in two; for example, Victor Frankenstein is stalked by his creation; William Wilson is haunted by the embodiment of his conscience; and Dorian Gray is divided between his body and his portrait.

Like Fonseca, Dryden claims that the doubles are a premonition of death, which is evident in the nineteenth-century tales of the double. When Victor Frankenstein dies, his creation vows to kill himself; William Wilson stabs himself to death; when Jekyll kills himself, he also kills Hyde; and as Dorian stabs his portrait, he unknowingly commits suicide. In these stories, the only way for the protagonists to overcome their darker half is to destroy them, but in the process, they also destroy themselves as the two halves are part of the same whole. If one half lives, the other half cannot die. As aforementioned, this is an idea that King abandons in his adaptations of the Gothic double.

In his critical study of the horror genre, *Danse Macabre* (1981), Stephen King constructs several arguments about *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. King describes the duality

between Jekyll and Hyde as a "conflict between id and superego," echoing Freud's ideas, and "the free will to do evil or to deny it," and argues that Jekyll comes "close to splitting the body and mind altogether … which is exactly the impression Jekyll wants to give his friends: that he is the creature of pure mind, with no human tastes or needs at all" (*Danse* 94-95). Here, King touches upon the mask that Jekyll wears: he wants to have a respectable reputation, but at the same time, he desires to engage in immoral activities, which he wants to hide from the public. As he cannot do both in one body, he actually splits the body and mind, as King alludes to here.

Summarizing the various definitions of the Gothic double as set out in the introduction and in this section, the double arguably can be defined as a duality between good and evil within a person, that is the mirror image of his darker half, which foreshadows an approaching death. This is the working definition that will be adhered to in this thesis.

1.3 The Settings of the Classic Doubles

In order to get a better understanding of the concept of the Gothic double as defined in the previous section, it is crucial to look at the settings in which these nineteenth-century doubles operate. In all settings of the classic doubles, the doubling is echoed in the setting: one place symbolises good and the other represents evil.

All nineteenth-century tales of the Gothic double are set in a city. Shelley creates a clear divide between the natural environment of the Alps and Northern ice caps and the cities of Ingolstadt and Geneva. Victor grows up in Geneva, where he becomes acquainted with the ancient alchemists, and in the city of Ingolstadt he learns how to create life from dead body parts. The events that take place in the cities that shape Victor's life and inspire his eventual undertakings make that the city is portrayed as an evil place. Nature, by contrast, represents

the good counterpart of the city, which symbolises the Romanticism that is present in the novel: it equates nature with "good," and institutions constructed to govern human society as corrupting natural good human beings. It is in the forests, for example, that the creature attempts to become a genuinely good "person," and where he tries to learn how to read and speak, and essentially become a part of society. On the glacier, the creature tries to explain to Victor what sufferings he has endured while he was abandoned by Victor, and he expresses a wish for a female creature. The creature is effectively trying to express human feelings, but as his wishes are denied by Victor, he loses all his acquired sense of "humanity" and becomes violent. There is thus a division between the nature as a "good" place, and the city as its evil counterpart.

"William Wilson" is also set in both a rural village and a city. The school that the narrator attends in his childhood is set in a rural town in England. It is in this location that the narrator still has a sense of morality. The narrator describes it as "dream-like" and "spirit-soothing" (111), suggesting that he thinks of his time at school as nostalgic. It is here that the narrator is still innocent, but that changes when he meets his "twin" (116). When he attends Oxford University, he begins indulging in lowly activities, such as gambling and deceiving his friends. In this story, the city is again depicted as a place of corruption.

Jekyll and Hyde and *Dorian Gray* show a shift from the distinction between a rural and an urban setting to a predominantly urban setting that, in turn, is divided. Both these stories are set in London, with an emphasis on the duality between West and East London. In *Jekyll and Hyde*, the doubling of Jekyll and Hyde is emphasised by the two locations in London where the two live. Jekyll lives in "a square of ancient, handsome houses" in a respectable neighbourhood in West London (14). His residence thus represents him being the "good" side of the Gothic double. However, there are two sides to his building. In *Danse Macabre*, King actually describes the duality of Jekyll's home:

> On Jekyll's side, the side presented to the public eye, it seems a lovely, graceful building, inhabited by one of London's most respected physicians. On the other side – but still a part of the same building – we find rubbish and squalor, people abroad on questionable errands at three in the morning … Enter Jekyll here, exit Hyde there. (90)

The building's two sides illustrate the duality that exists in Jekyll himself: he is both Jekyll and Hyde. Hyde lives in East London, in a "dingy street" (23). This location poses a great contrast between West and East London, and thus between the two sides of Jekyll and Hyde. The duality between West and East London is also represented in *Dorian Gray*. Unlike Jekyll and Hyde, Dorian and his portrait do not "live" in different places. The portrait is stored in Dorian's attic in his home in West London. However, when Dorian wants to indulge in his hedonistic lifestyle, this often happens in East London. In the late-Victorian period, East London was generally regarded as "ramshackle," "a slum," and as a place of "real heathenism," "foreign exoticism," and "otherness" (Betts 258). So, that is the place where Dorian can satisfy his opium addiction. Dorian wants to hide these lowly activities from the public, so as to maintain his reputation. In both *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*, East London is depicted in a similar way to the city in *Frankenstein* and "William Wilson." It is a place that symbolises corruption and evil, while West London represents the "good" side.

From these settings, it can be concluded that there is a shift from a more rural setting in the early nineteenth-century tales of the double to a predominantly urban setting in *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*. Both the rural versus urban divide and the East versus West divide are a key symbol of the classic Gothic doubles.

1.4 Stephen King's Maine

Following the previous section, it is important to illustrate the setting in Stephen King's novels as opposed to the ones discussed earlier. King's novels take place in a different time and place in comparison to the nineteenth-century stories, and in order to fully understand King's use of the Gothic double, his characters need to be placed in their proper context.

Even though King sets his novels in various places throughout the United States, he is most famous for using small towns as the setting of his novels, often in Maine (Davis 31). It is significant that these towns are "ordinary," with "ordinary" people, rendering the setting familiar to the reader. In *Stephen King's America* (1994), Jonathan P. Davis argues that "by using these settings, King creates an effective foundation for social commentary" (25). The reason for this is due to the fact that these ordinary characters do not lead extraordinary lives, but relatable lives that are impacted by, for example, governmental decisions. Davis further explains his point by stating that the use of such small towns symbolises the idea that these "could be any small town in America," and that the "true heart of America lies in the small towns that … in their own eccentric way form microcosms separate from the hustle and bustle of the country's industrial centers" (35). Taking this argument into consideration, and given the fact that both *The Dark Half* and *Lisey's Story* are predominantly set in small towns in Maine, it can be argued that King tries to show the reader that these seemingly idyllic towns are actually corrupted. The contrast between the settings employed by King and the settings used by the authors discussed in the previous section are clear: where the metropolitan city and upper-class society were the dominant environment for the nineteenth-century stories, so the small towns and "ordinary" people play a crucial role in King's novels. It can be concluded that Stephen King takes a different approach to the surroundings of the Gothic double than authors such as Poe, Stevenson, and Wilde did, in order to show that evil can invade any town, not only cities, and that it can happen to anyone with no regards to class.

King's goal is to let the evil come close to the reader in recognizable surroundings, whereas the nineteenth-century novels can seem somewhat more foreign in terms of its dealings with upper-class surroundings.

This chapter has provided a short overview of how the concept of the Gothic double could emerge, and has attempted to define the Gothic double. Furthermore, it has given a brief analysis of the dominant setting in the nineteenth-century tales and Stephen King's novels, providing insight into the environment in which the Gothic doubles operate.

CHAPTER TWO: THE GOTHIC DOUBLE IN *THE DARK HALF*

> They looked nothing whatever alike – even subtracting Stark's accelerating decay from the picture. Thad was slim and darkish, Stark broad-shouldered and fair in spite of his tan (what little remained of it). Yet they were mirror images, just the same. The similarity was eerie precisely because there was no one thing the protesting, horrified eye could pin it on. It was *sub rosa*, deeply buried between the lines, but so real it shrieked: that trick of crossing the feet during the stretch, of splaying the fingers stiffly beside either thigh, the tight little crinkle of the eyes. (*Dark* 420, italics in original)

Thus runs the description given by Elizabeth "Liz" Beaumont when she witnesses the physical confrontation between her husband Thad Beaumont and his double George Stark. She finds that "watching them was like watching a man do stretching exercises in a mirror" (*Dark* 420), which is an observation that emphasises the idea that Thad and George are mirror-images: they are exactly the same, yet they are opposites. It is noteworthy that Liz has difficulties pinpointing the difference between the two men in front of her, which represents the duality of her inner conflict with respect towards the two men. This passage suggests that the idea of doubling is uncanny to her: the double is simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar. For Thad, however, Stark is abject.

This chapter will provide an analysis of the Gothic double in *The Dark Half*, a novel that contains one of the most prominent instances of the concept of the Gothic double in Stephen King's oeuvre. The double figures of Thad Beaumont and George Stark are inspired by classic doubles like Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Victor Frankenstein and his Creation; therefore, it is an essential King text to analyse in any discussion of his use of the double motif. This chapter will begin with a section that provides a description of the Gothic double

in *The Dark Half*, explaining to what extent it fits the definitions of the trope discussed in Chapter 1, and revealing also how the double motif has been adapted by Stephen King. It will show that Thad does not have to die with Stark, as do the doubles in the nineteenth-century tales. This section is followed by an analysis of the setting in *The Dark Half*, showing how this setting is significant in King's Gothic oeuvre, and how it compares and contrasts to the nineteenth-century settings discussed in section 1.3. Finally, this chapter will end with a section that shows how the Gothic double functions as a symbol of immorality and repression in *The Dark Half*.

2.1 A Description of the Gothic Double in *The Dark Half*

This section will show that King has largely followed the classic doubles that were discussed in Chapter 1, but that he deviates from these classic examples by giving this novel a hopeful ending: Thad is able to overcome his double Stark without destroying himself in the process. What makes this novel so important to analyse is its reference to King's past: the author's relationship with his former pseudonym, Richard Bachman. Thad Beaumont created his pseudonym George Stark for the same reasons King created Bachman. Sharon Russell explains that King created his pseudonym as "his publisher wanted to limit the number of books that came out each year", due to him being such a productive writer, and as he did not want to "overuse his name" (9). She further reasons that King created "simpler and more violent worlds than in … the rest of his fiction" (9), illustrating one clear similarity between the King-Bachman "double" and the Beaumont-Stark double: the pseudonyms provide both King and Beaumont the opportunity to write different, more violent, and darker stories than under their real names. Heidi Strengell argues that "both pseudonyms function as a dark alter ego for the artist, a chance to realize his most violent and pessimistic visions" ("Gothic Double"). For example, Bachman's *Rage*, *The Long Walk*, and *Roadwork* do not contain any

supernatural elements, but rather expose the normalised violence endemic to contemporary American culture, which can also be seen in the novels written under Stark's name. Eventually, Beaumont has to reveal himself as George Stark when his pseudonym is found out, similar to how King had to admit to being Bachman after a fan had discovered the connection (King Introduction vii).

King complicates the doubling between Beaumont and Stark by revealing that Thad suffered from extreme headaches as a child. When he undergoes surgery for his pain as a child, the doctors are horrified to find "an eye, … part of a nostril, three fingernails, and two teeth" in Thad's brain (King 9). This gruesome discovery indicates that there are remains of another person left in Thad's brain. In other words, there is a hint at a physical duality within Thad that could potentially be the cause of his creative duality: his literary and his vicious side as a writer. The surgeon, Dr Pritchard, elaborates that "in a great many deliveries where the mother gives birth to a single child, that child actually started existence as a twin … What happens to the other fetus? The stronger absorbs the weaker" (10). Years later this duality is realised, as Thad has created his pseudonym George Stark. It can thus be argued that Stark is the expression of Thad's twin, and that Thad has given him an identity by creating the pseudonym.

About creating Stark, Thad says in an interview: "The hardest part was actually coming up with the name … But it was important. I *knew* it could work. I knew it could break the writer's block I was struggling with … if I had an identity. The *right* identity, one that was separate from mine" (25-26, italics in original). Here, it is emphasised that Thad's intention was always to create a separate persona next to his own identity. However, when Thad is forced to admit to being Stark when his pseudonym is discovered, he holds a fake burial for Stark. Stark's burial stone reads: "GEORGE STARK, 1975-1988, Not a Very Nice Guy" (18). In *Stephen King's Gothic*, John Sears argues that "the stone is a marker of his death and

consequent absence, but also of his persistent significance, his post-humous relevance and influence" (61). Thad thinks he can eliminate his double by burying it, but instead Stark comes to life and resurrects from the grave, showing himself to be of such an enormous force that he cannot be easily get rid of. The burial is a physical expression of a mental form of repression, as Stark ultimately originates from Thad's mind. The gravestone ensures that Stark will not be forgotten. It can be seen as a foreshadowing of the evil deeds that Stark will later commit.

Once Stark has been resurrected from the "dead," he starts a killing spree of people that were involved in Thad's writing career, and thus people he holds responsible for his own "death." The first person that Stark murders is Homer Gamache, a local from Castle Rock. Next is Frederick Clawson, a law student and book clerk who discovered Thad's secret. He believed he would become famous and rich for finding out that George Stark was in fact Thad Beaumont. Therefore, Stark renders him an accomplice to his death. After his murder is discovered, the following words are seen written on the wall: "THE SPARROWS ARE FLYING AGAIN" (77). As Peter Schwenger argues, "that 'again' encourages us at first to read this handwriting on the wall as a reference to the return of George Stark – but because the sparrows are plural, we must see this rather as a return of writing itself" (12). Ultimately, Stark can only live if Thad uses him to write novels with – that is where his power derives from.

When Sheriff Alan Pangborn questions Thad in relation to the murder of Homer Gamache, the bodily similarities between Thad and George become evident. Sheriff Pangborn mentions that the fingerprints found at the crime scene are an exact match with Thad's. He is suspected of the murder, but Thad knows that he is innocent. After he has tried to convince Sheriff Pangborn not to take him to the police station, Thad anticipates a severe headache and it becomes evident that Stark is trying to take control over his mind:

> He had drawn a long, gasping breath. There had been no ensuing headache. Not then, not now. He felt fine. Except… Except when he looked down at the sheaf of manuscript again, he saw that he had written something there. It was slashed across the lines of neat type in large capital letters. THE SPARROWS ARE FLYING AGAIN, he had written. He had discarded the Scripto pen and used one of the Berol Black Beauties to write it, although he had no memory of trading one for the other. He didn't even use the pencils anymore. The Berols belonged to a dead age… a dark age. (98)

Thad is experiencing the mental connection between him and Stark. As Stark is supposed to be dead, he feels this connection when the sparrows fly because they pose a link to the realm of the dead. They can tap into each other's minds, and it is evident that Thad is unaware of his surroundings when that happens. He does not know what he has written until he sees it, and the sentence "The sparrows are flying again" echoes what Stark had written on the wall when he murdered Frederick Clawson. Thad does not know about this murder yet, but he does know that "[t]he sparrows were flying and Stark had returned. He was dead, dead and publicly buried, he had never really existed in the first place, but that didn't matter; real or not, he was back just the same" (99). It is also noteworthy that Thad wrote this sentence with a Berol Black Beauty pencil, a brand he only wrote with when he used his Stark alter ego.

Next, Stark kills Miriam Cowley, the wife of Thad's literary agent. Stark forces Miriam to call Thad, and Thad immediately knows that Stark is the one behind the murders. In one of his frenzies earlier on, he wrote the name Miriam on a piece of paper, written when Stark invaded his mind. The fact that Miriam now calls Thad in absolute panic confirms that Stark shows Thad his plans through their mental connection:

> "It *is* him," Thad said. "I knew it was. I think I knew it almost from the first, and then today … this afternoon … I had another one.

> "Another *what*?" Her fingers pressed against the side of her neck, rubbing hard. "Another blackout? Another trance?"
>
> "Both," he said. "The sparrows again first. I wrote a lot of crazy shit on a piece of paper while I was knocked out. I threw it away, but *her* name was on the sheet, Liz, *Miriam's* name was part of what I wrote this time when I was out …" (149, italics in original)

From this passage it becomes clear that Thad has tried to reject the idea that Stark has returned. He has to accept the fact that he has freed such an evil force: "Thad thought of George Stark and shuddered a little. He was a very bad man, alright. Thad knew the truth of that better than anyone. He had, after all, built George Stark from the ground up … hadn't he?" (152). Out of all people involved, Thad knows Stark best. He has created his whole "life." This echoes *Jekyll and Hyde*: the good side has lost control of the evil side.

For the majority of the novel, Thad does not actively try to eliminate Stark. One possible explanation for this is that Stark is like an addiction to Thad, as confirmed by his wife: "If Frederick Clawson hadn't come along and forced my husband's hand, I think Thad would still be talking about getting rid of him in the same way. The way an alcoholic or drug addict tells his family and his friends that he'll quit tomorrow … or the next day … or the day after that" (197). This "addiction" also resembles *Jekyll and Hyde*: Jekyll also mentions that, at first, he likes being Hyde (Stevenson 62). Thad changed into a different person when he was writing as Stark, and this is what keeps him going: with Stark, he made lots of money. As Strengell argues, "since George constitutes an integral part of Thad's psyche, he does not seriously attempt to get rid of his brother" (80). He does not want to kill his own creation. Towards the end of the novel, Thad even admits that a part of him always liked Stark:

> Hadn't there always been a part of him in love with George Stark's simple, violent nature? Hadn't part of him always admired George, a man who didn't stumble over things or bump into things, a man who never looked weak or silly, a man who would never have to fear the demons locked away in the liquor cabinet? A man with no wife or children to consider, with no loves to bind him or slow him down? (*Dark* 352)

From the last sentence, it can be argued that Thad sees his family life as a burden that stands in the way of the things he likes to create most, and what ultimately earns him the most money: writing as Stark. This argument again suggests that Stark is like an addiction to Thad.

Liz describes the physical changes that Thad undergoes when he writes as Stark:

> But when he was writing as George Stark … Thad wasn't the same. When he – opened the door is maybe the best way to put it – when he did that and invited Stark in, he'd become distant. Not cold, not even cool, just distant. He was less interested in going out, in seeing people. He'd sometimes blow off faculty meetings, even student appointments … although that was fairly rare. He'd go to bed later at night, and sometimes he'd still be tossing and turning an hour after he did come to bed. When he fell asleep he'd twitch and mutter a lot, as if he were having bad dreams. I asked him on a few occasions if that was the case and he'd say he felt headachy and unrest, but if he'd been having bad dreams, he couldn't remember what they were. (202)

The last sentence poses a difference to *Jekyll and Hyde*, as Hyde is a beastly and irresponsible version of the elegant and responsible Dr Jekyll, but Thad seems to be unwell or troubled when he is Stark, symbolizing Stark as an addiction, or even illness. This passage again highlights the importance of the dream-like states in which Thad finds himself when he is

writing as Stark. He literally becomes a different person with different habits to his own personality – he becomes his darker half. Later, Thad realises that "the two of them were tied together by the same invisible but undeniable bond that connected twins. They *were* twins, halves of the same whole" (214, italics in original). Thad sees George as a part of him – as his abject brother, whose eye was in his brain. He renders George equal to him.

The first real contact between Thad and George is when George repeatedly calls Thad at his home address. Stark tries to blackmail Thad into writing another thriller, as this is the only way in which Stark can live on, but Thad reminds him that Stark is always under his control:

> "And do you know what, George? I think maybe the reason you don't know about that is because *I* wrote it. I think part of me was there. Somehow part of me was there, watching you. I think I'm the only one of us who knows about the sparrows, George. I think maybe *I* wrote it. You want to think about that … think about it *hard* … before you start pushing me." (243, italics in original)

As Thad considers himself and George to be equals, he does not feel afraid to speak to him in this way. Thad remains his creator, so it seems likely that he has the ultimate say in the outcome of this story. King seems to fuse the double motif from *Frankenstein* and *Jekyll and Hyde* here.

The recurring of the image of the sparrows leads Thad to ask Rawlie DeLesseps, a university co-worker, about the folkloric and mythical importance of sparrows. He mentions that sparrows are psychopomps, "meaning those who conduct. In this case, those who conduct human souls back and forth between the land of the living and the land of the dead" (*Dark* 310). This suggests that Stark is actually dead, so, arguably, Stark represents Thad without a soul, as the writer only writing for profit and not for art's sake. DeLesseps continues by

saying that "gatherings of sparrows are rather more ominous … Sparrows are said to be the outriders of the deceased … which means their job is to guide lost souls back into the land of the living" (310). This explanation refers directly to Stark: he has died and literally been buried, yet he still tries to fight his way back to the land of the living and wants to continue existing.

Stark wants to continue living, so he takes Thad's family hostage in their home, with no regards to their fear and pain. When looking at Stark, Liz notices that "*Thad does that, he does it just that way, oh my God he does it JUST THE SAME WAY* -" (*Dark* 344, italics in original). Liz knows Stark is not her husband, yet she cannot deny that there is still some sort of connection between them due to their eerie similarity. As Sheriff Pangborn aptly says, "*He is two men – he has ALWAYS been two men*" (371, italics in original). As the title of this thesis suggests, one person becomes two.

The large gathering of sparrows that Thad sees when he arrives at their home indicates that Stark is close to finding his way back to the living world. When they finally confront each other in front of the Beaumont's summer house, Liz "looked from Thad to Stark and then back at her husband again and the blood fell from her cheeks because she could not tell the difference" (427). After Thad and Stark have spent the evening in Thad's office to work on the next Alexis Machine novel, Thad uses a bird-call to summon all the sparrows outside of the house. This act symbolises Thad's control of his own future, as he controls Stark's destiny by summoning the sparrows. These birds then drag Stark to the afterlife. Ironically, Thad stabs Stark in the throat with a Berol pencil, which he also used to create Stark. This emphasises the idea that Stark was only a creation of Thad: in the end, Thad owns Stark. Ultimately, the sparrows break through the walls and doors and eat Stark alive, lifting him up and dragging him back to the land of the dead.

Looking back at the first chapter, it is evident that the doubling in *The Dark Half* fits the definitions that were discussed in section 1.2. King clearly draws on the tradition that divides the self into two halves and focusses on the mirror image of a darker half. When comparing Thad and Stark to Jung's idea of the shadow archetype, it becomes clear that Thad needs to acknowledge his dark side, Stark, in order to become conscious of it. Jung's argument that his other half is "incapable of moral judgment" (9) is also true for Stark: he has no sense of morality, which becomes clear when he begins his killing spree and feels no remorse. *The Dark Half*'s double also fits the description of the Other as provided by Fonseca, as discussed in Chapter 1. He argues that "the Other … is a mirror version of the self whose behaviour reveals all that the original would prefer remain hidden" (190), which is true for Thad and George: Stark represents all the things that Thad does not want to be. As Fonseca and Dryden argue, the Gothic double is a premonition of death (Fonseca 192; Dryden 38), which is partially true in *The Dark Half*: only one half of the double has to die. Thad survives his double, and this is where King strongly deviates from the nineteenth-century doubles.

In comparison to the classic doubles mentioned in Chapter 1, the double in *The Dark Half* was clearly inspired by a combination of them. The double of Thad and Stark most closely resembles the doubles in *Frankenstein,* "William Wilson," and *Jekyll and Hyde,* and there are also some similarities to *Dorian Gray*. In comparison to *Frankenstein*, Thad strongly resembles Victor Frankenstein as they have both created a "monster." It can be argued that as a literary creator Thad portrays a "god-like" figure in trying to create another persona, but it is not a creature in the sense that the monster in *Frankenstein* is. He has not built Stark from dead limbs, but Stark does rise from the grave. However, like Frankenstein, Thad has created Stark in an attempt to become successful and famous, and he is also haunted by his creation. A notable similarity is the threats that both creatures give to their creators. As both the monster and Stark demand their creators to fulfil their desires but are denied their wishes, they

both threaten to capture their families. When Frankenstein denies his monster the creation of a mate for him, the monster says "I shall be with you on your wedding-night" (Shelley 163). And the monster does as he says: he kills Victor's wife, Elizabeth, in their bedroom. The bedroom is a private space, and as in *Frankenstein*, Stark also invades the Beaumont's private space when Thad denies him his wish to write another Stark novel.

As for Stark's resemblances with Poe's William Wilson, Thad actually refers to Stark as his "William Wilson complex" (*Dark* 132). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the narrator of "William Wilson" describes himself and William as twins, which means that he renders them identical and equal to each other. This can also be said of Thad and George, with Thad realising that "they *were* twins, halves of the same whole" (214, italics in original). However, the double in "William Wilson" can be said to function as the narrator's conscience, and this is not the case with Thad and Stark. In fact, Stark represents Thad's immoral side, so King reverses the relationship.

The double that exists between Thad and Beaumont closely resembles the Gothic double that exists in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde represent a divide between the good and the evil side of a human being. Jekyll created his darker half Hyde as a way to act out his repressed desires, which poses a parallel with Thad and George: Thad creates George to write novels that he would normally not be associated with. Sheriff Pangborn's comment that "*He is two men – he has ALWAYS been two men*" (371, italics in original) can be directly linked to Jekyll's statement that "man is not truly one, but truly two" (Stevenson 58). These two arguments emphasise the idea that the duality resides within one person. It is also noteworthy that there is a visual difference between both Jekyll and Hyde and Thad and Stark. Jekyll and Thad are both respectable men in their fields, while Hyde is described by Mr Utterson as "pale and dwarfish" and having a "deformity without any nameable malformation" (13) and Stark is

depicted as "losing cohesion" as he grows weaker (*Dark* 285). Another parallel that can be drawn between Jekyll and Hyde and Thad and Stark deals with repression. As established previously, the more Jekyll represses Hyde, the stronger Hyde becomes. Ultimately, this is the same for Thad and Stark. Thad literally buries Stark, which is an act of repression, yet Stark's persona is strong enough to resurrect and stalk Thad.

The final classic Gothic double to which *The Dark Half*'s double will be compared is Dorian Gray and his portrait. As established earlier, the double in *Dorian Gray* is not so much present within one person, but divided between a person and an object. The most striking similarity between the double in *Dorian Gray* and *The Dark Half* is the decomposition of the darker halves, which again echoes Kristeva's notion of the abject. Dorian's portrait eventually reflects Dorian's immoral acts and shallowness. Dorian stays forever young, but the portrait grows hideous. To a certain degree, this is repeated in *The Dark Half*. However, it is not necessarily Thad that becomes ugly, it is rather Stark himself that decomposes as he grows weaker. When Stark looked at himself for the first time, he "had seen a conventionally handsome man" and he "had thought it the perfect face, one no one would be able to describe afterward" (285). Within a matter of two weeks, however, he changes for the worse: marks of old age start to appear on his face, his "teeth had grown loose in his gums," and he has developed sores that "[gave] way with sickening ease" when scratched (286-287). Similar to Dorian's portrait, Stark changes in appearance over time, and it is noteworthy that during this time, Stark has done little else besides committing immoral acts.

Like his Gothic forebears, King focuses on the double being comprised of a good and an evil side. However, he deviates from the classic double in terms of a duality within one person. In *The Dark Half*, the double exists between two separate entities that can exist as flesh and blood beings simultaneously, even though they do belong to one personality – they are two embodiments of the same person. They can actually meet each other and confront

each other, whereas the classical doubles cannot: when the one half is killed, the other must die, too. King deviates most of all from Fonseca's and Dryden's argument that the appearances of doubles in Gothic fiction always function as a premonition of death. King's modern adaptation of the double shows that the character in question can overcome his or her dark side by facing it and accepting that it exists, which echoes Jung's shadow archetype. In *The Dark Half*, Stark eventually dies, and Thad survives his double. It is a hopeful ending to a dark novel, stressing the new possibilities for Beaumont's future life: Thad is now "cleansed" of his dark half and can rebuild his writing career and his family relations without the burden of Stark.

Now that the nature of the Gothic double in *The Dark Half* has been established, it is important to explain in what setting this double operates and how this compares to the settings in the nineteenth century novels.

2.2 The Setting of *The Dark Half*

This section will show how King follows the tradition of the town versus the city for his setting. He poses a contrast between Ludlow, Castle Rock, and New York City to emphasise the Gothic double in *The Dark Half*.

The Dark Half takes place in three locations: the rural Maine towns Ludlow and Castle Rock, and the metropolis New York City. Ludlow is the town where Thad and his family reside in the winter; Castle Rock is the town where they own a summer house, and New York City is the place where Stark eventually lives and commits most of his murders. The division between town and city immediately underscores the duality that has been discussed in the previous chapter: the rural town is presented as ostensibly an idyllic place, and the urban, inner-city setting is the place of corruption and evil deeds. King's use of Ludlow and Castle

Rock as part of the setting follows his tradition of using small towns in Maine as the dominant setting in his novels. These towns are exemplary of his understanding of the nature of such towns: they seem idyllic on the outside, but are corrupted at their core. These towns are described as places where one can come for calm and peace – hence the Beaumont's decision for a holiday home in Castle Rock. New York City, by contrast, is portrayed as a place where evil resides and prospers.

Looking back at Chapter 1, all classic Gothic stories take place in either a rural town and a city, or in a city that is divided into two sides, i.e., East and West London. In *Frankenstein*, a distinction is made between nature and the cities of Ingolstadt and Geneva; in "William Wilson" this duality is distinguished between the rural village and Oxford; and in both *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dorian Gray* a duality between East and West London is set out. All of the nineteenth-century examples of the Gothic double portray the city as a place of evil and corruption.

When the descriptions of both King's setting and the "classic" settings are taken into consideration, it is evident that King has shifted towards a more rural setting instead of an urban one. As mentioned above, the majority of the novel takes place in the two towns of Ludlow and Castle Rock. The novel's setting only shifts to the city, i.e., New York City, when the focus shifts to Stark. The fact that Stark later visits Castle Rock only underscores the idea that evil can invade anywhere, no matter how idyllic a place seems. The effect that this change of an urban setting to a rural setting has on the reader, and its impact on the Gothic double, is that the double becomes a much more tangible concept. Alexandra Reuber argues that King

> exchanges the historically and geographically remote setting for a more contemporary one on national soil, bringing the traumas and dangers of the gothic figuratively closer to the reader. He also integrates the gothic villain –

> once far removed in time and space – into our modern society, neighborhood, or even family. (101-102)

The fact that King places the double in a small, rural town emphasises that evil can prosper anywhere, so also in the places that feel safe and familiar. King highlights the possible horrors of everyday life.

In short, *The Dark Half* shows that, in terms of the Gothic double, King has shifted towards a more rural setting instead of an urban setting, which is more frequently used in the nineteenth-century novels. King does adhere to the idea that the city is a place of corruption, and uses the city as the place where Stark resides. He follows the nineteenth-century tradition of contrasting two locations, i.e., a town and a city, to each other, to further emphasise the Gothic double. The town seemingly represents the moral side of the double, and the city the immoral side.

2.3 The Function of the Gothic Double in *The Dark Half*

With the description of the Gothic double described and the function of the setting established, it is necessary to analyse the function of the double in *The Dark Half* in terms of morality. This section will also touch upon the ideas of a constructive and deconstructive personality and the double as a symbol of repression.

Morality is one of the key themes of *The Dark Half*. At first glance, it seems as if Thad is the morally good side of the double, and George is the evil, immoral side of the double. However, as Thad has created Stark, Thad's morals and values are questionable. Thad initially just wants to earn money to provide for his family. If that means that he has to transform into an alter ego, write more violent novels, and drink heavily, then that is how it has to happen. He knows that he and his family cannot continue living comfortably if he only

writes under his own name. This drive for money also indicates that the Gothic double here functions as a symbol for the publishing industry. The Stark novels were extremely successful, and the people involved in the business surrounding Thad's pseudonym only wanted him to continue writing under that name to earn more money. Stark is a metaphor for the publishing industry, as his ultimate wish was for Thad to write more Stark novels. This is where King differs from the Gothic writers, apart from Shelley. In "William Wilson," *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*, the corruption comes from within. In *The Dark Half*, socioeconomic forces pressure Thad into creating Stark.

Thad, while clearly struggling with flaws in his personality, remains morally superior to Stark. Stark is the embodiment of evil – in practice, he is solely occupied with killing the people he holds responsible for his death. The fact that Stark is indifferent about his crimes being found out emphasises his lack of morals. His only goal is to survive, and he will do anything in order to achieve that, even if his actions become public. Thad, by contrast, creates Stark in private: it was never his intention that the alter ego would be exposed to the world. Thad is not morally perfect, but in contrast to Stark, he is the better half of the double. Anthony Magistrale argues that

> [t]he writer in King's fiction occupies a role similar to the position the poet once held in ancient Greece and Rome: he is the keeper of moral tradition, the high elder who reasserts order in the midst of worldly chaos and destruction. While he may not possess supernatural abilities per se, he does possess powers to create and control. (107)

This argument links back to Thad creating Stark as a pseudonym. As Stark is his own creation, he should technically be able to stop him. Taking the ending of the novel into consideration, the point where Thad starts writing another Stark novel is his act of re-

establishing order amidst the chaos. With his powers "to create and control," he eliminates the immoral side of him.

The relation between Thad and George can also be seen as a divide between a constructive and a destructive personality. Bohart and Stipek define constructive as trying to be helpful and showing positive emotions, and destructive as displaying "psychological … and physical aggression" (4). George obviously has a destructive personality, considering his killings and his lack of empathy. Thad wants to have a constructive personality, and he does, but he has created Stark in the end, which nearly cost him his family and his own life. Thad's eventual elimination of Stark is what gives him a constructive personality: in the end, his only wish is to save his family. However, before Thad can destroy Stark, he has to stop repressing him. The biggest symbol of repression in *The Dark Half* is the burial of Stark. Thad, and to some extent his wife, decide that Stark has died and literally bury the pseudonym. Despite this funeral, Thad must have known that Stark would always be a part of him. Throughout the novel, it becomes clear that Thad knows Stark has returned, but he believes it to be impossible and tries to repress the ideas that it might be true. For example, after he has unconsciously written "the sparrows are flying again" on a piece of paper, he tells himself to

> *[q]uit it. … You're not a jumpy man, and there's no need to let this bizarre situation make you into one. The sound you heard – the sound of birds – is a simple psychological phenomenon called "persistence of memory." It's brought on by stress and pressure. So just get yourself under control*. (99, italics in original)

Thad is unwilling to believe that Stark has come alive, and it seems as if he is trying to convince himself that Stark is not real. He avoids actively attempting to get rid of Stark at the cost of several lives, echoing Victor Frankenstein, who did not want to take responsibility for the acts of his Creation. In the end, Thad has to accept that Stark is part of him, and only when

he accepts the idea of having a darker half, he can overcome Stark. In short, the function of the Gothic double in *The Dark Half* is to emphasise the idea that an evil force only becomes stronger if it is repressed, and it proposes a hopeful image that if this dark side is accepted and confronted, the character in question, in this case Thad, is given another chance of living a peaceful life.

CHAPTER THREE: THE GOTHIC DOUBLE IN *LISEY'S STORY*

> She thought of his arms around her, … and she thought she would sell her soul, yes, her immortal smucking soul, for no more than the sound of him down the hall slamming the door and then yelling *Hey Lisey, I'm home – everything the same? Hush and close your eyes.* That was her voice, but it was *almost* his, a very good imitation, so Lisey closed her eyes and felt the first warm tears, almost comforting, slip out through the screen of lashes. There was a lot they didn't tell you about death, she had discovered, and one of the biggies was how long it took the ones you loved most to die in your heart. (*Lisey* 438, italics in original)

Thus grieves Lisa "Lisey" Landon about her late husband, Scott Landon. From this passage, it becomes clear that there is a deep love between Lisey and Scott, which emphasises their extremely close connection – they experience their relationship as being two halves of a whole. The Gothic double in this novel is produced by this deep connection: they are soulmates. In "Soul Mates: Found or Chosen?" Ashley Brooksby explains that "the notion of humans finding their 'other half' hearkens back to Greek mythology with Zeus splitting humans in two, destining them to search for their divided halves to find wholeness" (1). As they are thus two halves of a whole, Lisey's voice sounds like her husband's to her, yet she knows this is not true. As she says, "it was *almost* his" (438). It can be argued that she might feel as if they are interchangeable. In other words, they are doubles, not in the sense that one person consists of two halves, but rather that two persons become part of one whole.

This chapter will present an analysis of the concept of the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story*. It is important that this novel is a primary text to be discussed in this thesis, despite the fact that it does not present an obvious Gothic double in the shape of a Hyde to the

protagonist's Jekyll, or a corrupted, hidden self-portrait, or a physically identical nemesis. In fact, this novel contains as many generic features of romance novels as a horror novel. In this context, it is important to note that, during its long existence, the Gothic genre has developed various "subgenres" over time: Gothic-Horror, Gothic-SF, and Gothic Romance. In fact, when the Gothic genre originated in the late eighteenth century, the novels were labelled "romances." Ann Radcliffe was the pioneer of Gothic Romance, but the American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne – a notable influence of Stephen King – also adopted the label "romance" for his Gothic fictions. These Gothic Romances are not filled with shock-horror, supernatural monstrosities and scenes of lewd decadence, but follow valiant heroes and especially brave and strong-willed heroines on mysterious quests towards enlightenment (Tracy 169-173). The idea of quests, for example, is repeated in *Lisey's Story* with the Bool.

Later in the nineteenth century, the Gothic genre shifted towards more visceral horror, exemplified by novels such as *Varney the Vampire* (1847) and *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Similarly, King's Gothic works also experienced a shift in "subgenres." King began his career writing Gothic horror novels, such as *Carrie, 'Salem's Lot*, and *The Shining*. More recently, he has incorporated elements of psychological realism as well as romance into his works, as in *Lisey's Story*, which features traumatic events and gruesome violence, but also more uplifting spiritual themes of the development and growth of the bonds of love that transcend mortal existence. As in most of Radcliffe's and Hawthorne's Romances, in King's recent works a spiritual ideal shines through the Gothic terrors. As such, a certain genre-related cycle is occurring in King's oeuvre, in which he returns to the romance origins of the Gothic genre.

This first section of this chapter describes the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story*, and explains how it fits the definition provided in Chapter 1; it will also reveal how the double differs from the classic Gothic doubles discussed in that same chapter. The second section

will analyse the setting of *Lisey's Story*, and will explain how this setting compares to the settings discussed in sections 1.3 and 1.4. Finally, this chapter will end with a detailed analysis of the function of the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* and show how the double functions as a symbol of repression.

3.1 A Description of the Gothic Double in *Lisey's Story*

In this novel, King was still inspired by the nineteenth-century doubles, but he further adapted this classic Gothic motif to make it suitable as a literary vehicle through which to explore his own ideas about identity and interpersonal relationships; consequently, he developed the double in a new direction. Instead of creating a protagonist and its double that present two halves of the same person, King created a form of the double that consists of two separate persons who share an extremely close connection, like "soulmates."

At first glance, *Lisey's Story* contains various possible doubles. The most obvious one is Scott. On the one hand, he is a successful author and a loving husband; on the other hand, he is troubled by his family's history and the traumatic experiences he had to endure as a child. However, Scott is not the Gothic double as he deals with mental illness and not with a repression of inner desires, like Thad Beaumont and the classic examples of Chapter 1.

There is another potential Gothic double, who is also not the focus of this chapter but still worth mentioning: Dooley, a fan of Scott Landon's work who has become obsessed with the now dead author and his posthumous manuscripts. The reader learns that Dooley is also mentally troubled: Dooley was suspected of having set his house on fire, causing his parents and sister to die in the blaze (*Lisey* 609). When Dooley mutilates Lisey in the hope of obtaining Scott's manuscripts, it can be argued that he is acting out the repressed frustration and anger that have lingered in his unconscious since the death of his family; as such these

actions can be related to his unbalanced mental state and bear little relation to his reading of Scott's work. Therefore, he is also not the Gothic double in this chapter. In fact, Dooley functions more like a foil to Scott: in contrast to Scott, Dooley is a man with a troubled past who has repressed his troubles to such an extent that they eventually turn him into a monster. While Scott also suffers traumatic experiences in his youth, Lisey's story – the romance aspect of the plot – reveals that he overcomes them.

Rather, *Lisey's Story* contains a set of complementary doubles: Lisey and Scott. During Scott's final moments, Lisey realises that "every long marriage has two hearts: one light and one dark" (564), with Lisey being the light half and Scott the dark half. Not a dark half in the sense that Scott would be the Hyde to Lisey's Jekyll, but rather that he carries a dark past with him. Like *The Dark Half*, where Thad needs to accept his dark side to defeat Stark, Lisey has to accept Scott's dark side in order to overcome her stalker and her grieving process, and to find out the truth about her late husband.

According to Bruhm, "the protagonist of the contemporary Gothic often experiences history as mixed up, reversed, and caught in a simultaneity of past-present-future" as "the ravages of the unconscious continually [interrupt] one's perception of the world" (267). In *Lisey's Story*, Lisey constantly switches between reality and memories of Scott. At some points in the story, she is so engulfed in a memory that she feels it to be reality. However, she needs these memories in order to survive. At the beginning of the novel, it becomes clear that Lisey does not know all of Scott's dark secrets, and she seems to accept not knowing everything about him as she is not ready to sort out his office (*Lisey* 12). That night, she thinks "that being single after being double so long was strange" (16), underscoring their connection as doubles.

When she remembers the time Scott was shot by a fan during a reading in Nashville, Lisey recalls the "long boy" Scott often talked about; the long boy is a dangerous creature in

Scott's imaginary world, Boo'ya Moon. She imagines him dying there, and then says: "The death certificate will say something sane, but she'll know: his dark thing finally saw him and came for him and ate him alive" (64). In Lisey's head, Scott is not able to die in the real world – he has to die in his other world. However, as Lisey has repressed all of these memories, she is unsure as to what exactly this world is.

Amanda, Lisey's sister, also deals with mental illness like Scott. The subplot about Amanda complements the main plot about Scott; it shows that Lisey also has a past with mental illnesses in her family, and not only Scott. When she mutilates herself severely, she does nothing but whisper one word to Lisey: "Bool" (115). A Bool is a symbolic scavenger hunt consisting of several "stations" that the person on the Bool has to find before he or she finds the prize of the hunt. This is the first hint at the quest that Scott has left Lisey, as this word is inherent to Scott's family history. Lisey initially denies the possibility that Bools exist in the real world: "*It doesn't exist, Lisey, it never did outside of his imagination … which was sometimes powerful enough to cast itself over people who were close to him … And the long boy was like that, too. You know that right?*" (116, italics in original). Lisey tries to convince herself that the Bool is not real. Slowly, more memories that she has so long repressed come back to her. For example, she recalls the time when Scott smashed his hand into a hot house to let the "bad-gunky" out after he had forgotten they were supposed to meet one evening; he shows the injured hand to Lisey as a form of reconciliation. This memory emphasises the dark side of Scott, and essentially of their marriage.

Before Amanda is admitted to the hospital, she speaks to Lisey in Scott's voice. Indirectly, Scott tells Lisey that he has left her a Bool. Now, Lisey cannot deny the fact that the Bool is real, and that this is the final challenge she has to face in order to find out the truth about Scott. Soon enough, Lisey realises that in order to complete the hunt, she has to relive certain memories again. She tries to understand Scott's Bool:

> ‘You’re leading me into the past,’ she said in a low voice. ‘But why would you do that? *Why*, when that’s where the bad-gunky is?’
>
> *The one you’re on is a* good *bool. It goes behind the purple.*
>
> ‘Scott, I don’t want to go behind the purple. … I’ll be *smucked* if I want to go behind the purple.’
>
> *But I don’t think I have any choice*. (216, italics in original)

The “purple” refers to the “purple curtain” that shields Lisey’s mind from certain memories. She knows she has to lift that curtain in order to progress in this Bool, but she is reluctant.

Lisey continues cleaning out Scott’s office, and plagued by her emotions, she wonders what is happening to her:

> She had seemed so alright! Had mourned him and gone on …. For over two years now the old song seemed to be true: I get along without you very well. Then she had begun the work of cleaning out his study, and that had awakened his ghost, not in some ethery out-there spirit-world, but in *her*. (277, italics in original)

This passage again underscores the idea that Scott and Lisey are one in the sense of soulmates. Now that Scott has died, his spirit lives on within Lisey. In principle, this indicates that there are now two people living in one body, and so Scott and Lisey are doubles. At one point she describes herself as “two-minded, two-hearted” (308), emphasising the duality that exists within her.

Lisey repeatedly receives calls from people, including professor Woodbury and Dooley, asking her to give them the Scott’s posthumous manuscripts, but she always refuses. As aforementioned, Dooley starts stalking her and eventually mutilates her in Scott’s office.

This event leads Lisey to realise that she cannot repress her memories anymore and that she has to continue the Bool to overcome this problem. After Dooley leaves, she attempts to repress a memory of Scott in a catatonic state, but she knows that it is of no use: "There really is a place where food turned bad, sometimes outright poisonous, after dark and where that piebald thing, Scott's long boy … might be real" (353). She recalls Scott telling her about his father torturing his brother Paul, and how he has a world "where he can go when Daddy has hurt him, and he has taken Paul there when Daddy has hurt *Paul*" (376, italics in original). The healing element of the Bool comes to the fore when Scott relates to Lisey how he once had a sore tailbone when his father pushed him: "Only after I went and had a bool … you know, a prize … my tailbone was okay again'" (387). This foreshadows Lisey's overcoming her grief at the end of the novel when she has completed her Bool.

When Lisey relives certain memories of her and Scott, she is in a dream-like state. She literally wakes up in Scott's study after the abovementioned, and she knows she has not been asleep "because you *couldn't* sleep with pain like this. … So what had she been? *Mesmerized*" (404, italics in original). Lisey is neither awake nor asleep when she relives the memories of her and Scott, but she seems to be in a sort of dreaming mental state. It is in this state that she is eventually able to travel to Boo'ya Moon. She admits to having repressed any thoughts and memories about Boo'ya Moon, and although she continues to do so, she also realises that she has to return there to complete the Bool. The only thing she is unsure of is if she is able to do it on her own.

The reader learns she has been there twice already, but always with the help of Scott. There has to be a very strong connection between Lisey and Scott if she wants to travel there, as is exemplified when she again remembers the time Scott became catatonic, and she had to go there to retrieve him. When she is unable to go, she screams: "'*Pull me, goddam you! Pull me to where you are so I can bring you home! Do it! IF YOU WANT TO COME HOME,*

TAKE ME TO WHERE YOU ARE!"" (413, italics in original). It is clear that Lisey has difficulties reaching Boo'ya Moon on her own, but the spirit of Scott manages to pull her in. Lisey is accepted in Boo'ya Moon as she is a part of Scott, which again suggests their sameness as soulmates. As Alberico argues, "the fact that Scott and Lisey were so close and had a shared language allowed Lisey access to Scott's imagination. This can only happen in the closest of relationships" (190). Their extremely close connection is what ultimately enables Lisey to travel to Boo'ya Moon.

When Scott took Lisey to Boo'ya Moon earlier, she learned that "he hasn't been able to share this place with anyone since Paul's death. The few times he's come here, he's had to come alone. To mourn alone" (426). Scott has never had anyone close enough that he felt he could share this place and memories with, until he found Lisey. She succeeds in travelling to Boo'ya Moon, where she finds Scott sitting at the pool. He tells her to go on without him, and tries to make her realise that he is really dead and that she cannot live her life without moving on from him. Lisey returns to reality and takes Amanda home from the hospital for when Dooley returns. When Dooley arrives, a fight ensues, and Lisey and Amanda take Dooley to Boo'ya Moon, where he is eaten by the long boy. Dooley's death suggests that the creatures in Boo'ya Moon function as a sort of security force in that world: Lisey is accepted as she is part of Scott, and Dooley is "foreign," meaning that he is not accepted there. With Dooley's death, Lisey has overcome one of the problems in her life, i.e., her stalker, and this has only been possible because she has eventually accepted Scott's dark side.

Now, Lisey needs to finish her grieving process in order to move on. She feels as if "he hadn't finished his say" and "had one more story to tell" (626), which means that she has to return to Boo'ya Moon for one final time. In Boo'ya Moon, she finds a letter that Scott had addressed to her, in which he reveals that he killed his maniacal father in order to save his own life. Although the secret is very dark, Lisey now knows all of Scott's secrets. All that

was left unsaid has been revealed, and thus she overcomes her final struggle. After this revelation, Lisey becomes willing to give the manuscripts to the University of Maine. The novel comes full circle with Lisey's ability to move on:

> 'I guess I'm done up here,' she said, feeling suddenly hesitant. 'I'll be going. Bye.'
>
> She waited. For what, she didn't know. There was nothing. There was a sense of *something*.
>
> She lifted a hand as if to wave, then dropped it again, as if embarrassed. She smiled a little and one tear fell down her cheek, unnoticed. 'I love you, honey. Everything the same.'
>
> Lisey went down the stairs. For a moment her shadow stayed, and then it was gone, too.
>
> The room sighed. Then it was silent. (664)

This final passage once more underscores the fact that Scott and Lisey are complementary doubles. They have lived together for so long, that Scott has become her shadow – he is always following her. As Strengell has argued, the double in King's oeuvre never dies ("Gothic Double"), but it works differently in *Lisey's Story*: Scott will continue living within Lisey. Only when Lisey is able to accept Scott's dark side can she move on. She would never let go of Scott as long as he had the Bool planned for her. Now that she has completed the hunt, she has overcome her double.

With the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* established, it is important to see how this double fits the definitions as provided in Chapter 1. Again, King is inspired by the classic doubles and uses these as a basis for the Gothic double in this novel. Scott's functioning as

Lisey's shadow poses a link to the shadow archetype of Jung as discussed in Chapter 1. This double does not fit the definition given by Fonseca, who claims that the double is a monstrous Other, with "self-annihilation [being] the only method of destroying the double" (192). Lisey does not have to kill herself in order to overcome her double, rather it is an act of acceptance that this dark side in her marriage exists for her to be able to move on from her double. This is in line with Dryden's argument that "tales of doubling are … tales about paradigms of good and evil" (38), which can be linked to Lisey's realisation that "every long marriage has two hearts: one light and one dark" (*Lisey* 564).

King strongly deviates from the nineteenth-century Gothic doubles with this complementary version of the Gothic double. When comparing Lisey and Scott to the doubles of the first chapter, there are more differences than similarities, unlike *The Dark Half*. The biggest similarity that exists between this Gothic double and the classic doubles is that they are all based on a division between a good and an evil side of a human being, with the evil side haunting the good one. When comparing this double to *Frankenstein*, it differs greatly because Lisey has not created Scott. Frankenstein's wife Elizabeth also dies, like Scott, but she has no further impact on the story in the way Scott has. Furthermore, unlike Poe's "William Wilson," Scott and Lisey are not twins. However, there is some resemblance to "William Wilson." In that story, the double can be said to function as the narrator's conscience, and in *Lisey's Story* this role is reversed. At times when Scott is unable to keep himself grounded, for example when Lisey finds him in a catatonic state, she saves him by travelling to Boo'ya Moon and reminding him of why he should come back to real life instead of wasting away in the other world. Finally, *Lisey's Story* does not bear as strong a resemblance to *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *Dorian Gray* as *The Dark Half* does; it only follows these classic Gothic texts on the level of the moral division of good and evil within a

person. As the dark side of the double, Scott is not depicted as malformed like Hyde, or decaying like the portrait.

As Scott and Lisey form a complementary double, it can be argued that this Gothic double more closely resembles the complementary doubles that can be found in the Brontë sisters' Gothic romance novels *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. In these two novels, the doubles do not exist within one single person, but it exists between two persons. In *Wuthering Heights*, the complementary double is Cathy and Heathcliff. Cathy often expresses their similarity to each other, and she famously exclaims: "Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff – he's always, always in my mind – not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself – but, as my own being" (Brontë 73, italics in original). This passage describes exactly what is happening in *Lisey's Story*: Scott is always on Lisey's mind, but she does not always enjoy it. Similarly, Lisey feels as if Scott's ghost has awakened in her own body (*Lisey* 277). They share the same soul, just as Cathy and Heathcliff. This idea again reinforces Lisey and Scott being "soulmates"; they experience life as being part of one another. In this case, two persons become one person.

In *Jane Eyre*, the complementary double exists of Jane and Mr Rochester. As Mr Rochester is already married to Bertha Mason, he cannot legally marry Jane. When Bertha burns Thornfield, killing herself and blinding Mr Rochester in the process, he can remarry. Although Bertha has appeared to Jane wearing the wedding gown, symbolising Jane's fears about marrying Rochester, she eventually marries him. Diederich argues that, due to his blindness, "instead of chaining a wife to him to satisfy his interests and needs, … he now depends on Jane, which chains him *to her* and results in a more equal relationship than did his empty avowal of equality during his proposal" ("Gothic Doppelgangers," italics in original). They are now two halves of a whole.

In short, King has significantly deviated from the classic doubles in *Lisey's Story*. This novel's Gothic double is not as clearly defined as in *The Dark Half*. While it would be the most obvious choice to regard Scott as the Gothic double in this story, with his good and evil side, this is not what King intends as the double. Instead, he shifts to another form: a complementary double. Unlike the classic Gothic doubles, the complementary double exists in two separate human beings instead of one, and the double is not necessarily a premonition of death. In fact, Lisey overcomes her double by accepting all of Scott's secrets and her ability to move on from his death, which provides a hopeful ending to this novel.

With the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* established, it is essential to look at the setting in which this double operates and how this setting compares to the settings of the nineteenth-century stories.

3.2 The Setting of *Lisey's Story*

This section will illustrate that King follows the tradition of creating a duality between two places to emphasise the Gothic double, but he deviates from the traditional notion by placing the story in a rural town and an imaginary world. The novel primarily takes place in two locations: Castle Rock, Maine and Boo'ya Moon. Castle Rock, also a part of *The Dark Half*'s setting, is seemingly a small, idyllic village where Lisey resides. The choice for Castle Rock as part of the setting of *Lisey's Story* follows King's trend of using small villages, most often in Maine, as the settings in his novels, as established in Chapter 1. Boo'ya Moon is the world that exists in Scott and Lisey's imaginations. Although the world is not inherently bad, it is a place where evil resides with monstrous creatures like "laughers" in the Fairy Forest and the long boy.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, all nineteenth-century stories of the Gothic double take place in, or around, a city. *Lisey's Story* is not set in a city, although a few cities are mentioned in the novel, such as Nashville and Pittsburgh. Lisey associates these cities with bad memories, as they are the places where the people who desperately want Scott's remaining manuscripts live, and where Scott almost died. However, it can be argued that Boo'ya Moon functions as the "evil" counterpart of Castle Rock, despite the fact that that world is not inherently bad: it is an ambiguous place of Scott's imagination. In Boo'ya Moon, the binaries of good and evil seem to collide; the duality of the setting is not as black and white as the divide between the town and the city in *The Dark Half*. Boo'ya Moon functions as a world where Scott comes in his youth, and also later in his life to gain inspiration for his novels.

In theory, Boo'ya Moon is a place where creative people, such as writers and painters, can go in order to do whatever they want without anyone seeing them, or losing their reputation. In that respect, it might be compared to the depictions of East London in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*, where Hyde and Dorian go to indulge in lowly activities, although Boo'ya Moon is a place in the imagination and London is the real world. In London, there are dominant moral standards and social constrictions, but these disappear in Boo'ya Moon.

Based on the setting of Castle Rock and Boo'ya Moon, it becomes clear that King has also shifted from the classic Gothic double in this respect. Where the bifurcated doubles from the nineteenth-century stories all operate in and around cities, the city is not is the main setting for *Lisey's Story*. Instead, the story takes place in a small village and an imaginary world, emphasising King's great deviation from the nineteenth-century examples of the Gothic double. King does maintain the idea that the two halves of the double are split between two locations. The idea of a city as a main location for the story is abandoned, and the fact

that King uses an imaginary world instead of a city underscores the notion that there does not necessarily have to be a division between village and city, but rather between reality and imagination.

Now that the setting of *Lisey's Story* has been analysed and compared to the nineteenth-century settings of the Gothic double, it is important to take the function of the Gothic double of the novel into consideration.

3.3 The Function of the Gothic Double in *Lisey's Story*

This section will provide an analysis of the function of the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* in terms of morality and repression. It will also touch upon Lisey and Scott as complementary personalities. This section will show that *Lisey's Story* is primarily a novel of overcoming the repression of painful memories, and how acceptance paves the way for Lisey to overcome her struggles.

As in *The Dark Half*, one of the themes of *Lisey's Story* is morality. Here, questions of morality not only occur on the level of the double, but the morality of supporting characters, such as Dooley, can also be questioned. Between Lisey and Scott, Lisey is the more moral side of the double. Although Scott is not immoral per se, he has killed his abusive father and suffers from a strong sense of guilt over this action. While taking someone's life is arguably immoral, Scott's act is not necessarily immoral as he kills his father out of self-defence. However, in contrast to Lisey, Scott remains the more immoral side of the couple. The reader knows that Scott's sense of his own immorality is largely due to the lingering influence of his traumatic past; he tries to regulate this immorality by going to Boo'ya Moon.

As argued by Davis,

> King's power in his fiction is an adamant belief in a personal moral code; those who behave morally and make correct moral choices when faced with adversities are those who are likely to win the fight against evil. Those characters in King's fiction who do not behave morally and rather surrender the well-being of others for evil or selfish motives are those who are ultimately destroyed. (37)

Although Scott does not "surrender the well-being of others for evil or selfish motives," he is ultimately destroyed by his immorality, or guilt. Scott feels guilty about failing to prevent Paul from being killed by their father. Scott's father, by contrast, is deeply troubled by homicidal frenzies: he kills his son Paul and attempts to kill Scott with an axe. Although the father is mentally ill and can arguably not be held responsible for his actions, these acts are still wrong and indicate that he has lost the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. By killing his father, Scott feels that he has practically done the same to his father as his father did to Paul. Despite the circumstances of Paul's and his father's deaths being very different, Scott always has to live with this traumatic past and remains convinced that he has committed patricide.

Lisey, however, behaves morally by saving both Amanda and Scott from becoming lost to reality in Boo'ya Moon, and accepting Scott's dark side. Although she has indirectly caused Dooley's death by bringing him to Boo'ya Moon, she has not committed the crime herself, and thus she is ultimately the one who "wins the fight against evil." It can be argued that Scott and Lisey's personalities complement each other – they form the perfect balance for their marriage.

Professor Woodbury and Dooley are more obviously immoral and act as foils to the protagonists. Professor Woodbury repeatedly asks Lisey for the remaining manuscripts of Scott, as he knows these writings will be of great value and acts only out of selfish motives to

acquire them. When Lisey refuses, Woodbury informs Dooley, and he does not hesitate to stalk Lisey. Dooley has a clear motive for taunting Lisey: he wants Scott's manuscripts as well. Dooley then proceeds to put a dead cat in her mailbox, repeatedly breaks into her house, and eventually mutilates her. Both Woodbury, as a career-minded academic, and Dooley, as an obsessed fan, embody the negative aspects of the contemporary publishing industry; they will not rest before they obtain more work from Scott to serve their own desires.

Repression of painful memories, for both Lisey and Scott, is a crucial theme in *Lisey's Story*. They can never achieve acceptance as long as they repress these memories, as they have to be explored. It particularly affects Lisey, as she constantly represses certain memories out of self-defence. She is not yet willing to surrender herself to reliving these memories as she is not ready to overcome her grief. The first act of repression occurs in Scott's study, when Lisey starts thinking about how Scott got shot at a reading in Nashville. When she becomes aware of this process, she tells herself "'just stop it now. Lisa Debusher Landon, you open your hand and let that go'" (21). She does not allow herself to relive those events in her head, as she is afraid to surrender to her grief, or feelings of guilt. When Lisey does relive the memory, she feels guilty about not having done enough to stop the shooter: "'I was in time, I *was*, so let it go. The lung-shot was all that crazy baby ever got'" (79, italics in original). It becomes evident that Lisey is trying to convince herself that she has done enough, as if she is blaming herself for the fact that Scott got shot. When she recalls the time Scott visited her house with his hand cut badly, she abruptly breaks off her train of thought and abandons the memory, and she does the same when thinking about Scott's father: "*hush Lisey no Lisey*" (179, italics in original). The recollections of Scott telling her these stories of his life seem to be traumatic to her.

Lisey is also afraid of these memories. She wonders whether Scott is sending her messages, and she says that

> [i]t would have been nice to leave that voice trapped inside, but now it always seemed to be there. For a long time it had been quiet, either sleeping or agreeing with Lisey's conscious mind that there were some things one simply did not speak about, not even among the various versions of one's self. What the nurse had said on the day after Scott had been shot, for instance. Or *(hush do hush)* what had happened in *(Hush!)* the winter of 1996. *(YOU HUSH NOW!)* And for a blue-eyed wonder that voice did … but she sensed it watching and listening, and she was afraid. (190-191, italics in original)

From this passage, it becomes clear that Lisey knows that she eventually has to surrender and relive these memories in order for the voice to go away. Despite her attempts to make the voice inside her head stop speaking, it is a strong force that she ultimately cannot fight. She is "*afraid that all [she] can reach will lead [her] to all [she] dare[s] not see*" (204, italics in original). However, if she does not face these memories, she will never be able to move on from Scott. After Lisey realises she has to visit Boo'ya Moon in order for the Bool to progress, she tries to uncover the memories attached to it:

> She closed her eyes, saw only brilliant purple, and could have cried for frustration. … And the purple parted before it, snapping back like skin after a slash, and what it let out wasn't blood but light: amazing orange light that filled her heart and mind with a terrible mixture of joy, terror, and sorrow. No wonder she had repressed this memory all these years. It was too much. Far too much. (423)

She was afraid of the feelings she would experience when she would surrender to the memories, but in the end this is the only option Lisey truly has. If she is unwilling to remember all of Scott, she leaves herself no room for acceptance. If she does not accept his dark side that partly resides in Boo'ya Moon, she will never be able to finish the Bool. After

reading the final letter by Scott, in which he tells the story of his patricide, Lisey is able to find acceptance for Scott's death. She realises she has completed the Bool. As the Bool becomes part of the quest structure of the novel, the story resembles a classic romance novel. This finding again shows how King shifts to a Gothic-Romance genre instead of a more Gothic-Horror oriented direction. Now that Scott has no more stories to tell her, she is able to donate Scott's old manuscripts to his old university. Because of her ability to face her repressed memories, Lisey paves the way for herself to find acceptance and a chance for her to live a peaceful life, in loving memory of her late husband.

This chapter has provided a detailed analysis of the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* and has compared it to the classic Gothic doubles of Chapter 1. In this novel, King strongly deviates from the classic double: instead of depicting a duality within one person, King uses a complementary double in *Lisey's Story*. He follows the idea that characters do not have to die alongside their doubles in order to overcome their struggles. This chapter has also shown that King abandons the idea of the village versus the city in terms of setting, and that he has opted for an imaginary world as a symbol for the "evil" counterpart of the village. Finally, this chapter has illustrated how the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* functions as a symbol of repression. Only through complete acceptance can Lisey overcome her darker half.

CONCLUSION

This thesis focused on the literary trope of the Gothic double in Stephen King's *The Dark Half* and *Lisey's Story*, how they resembled and differed from the classic nineteenth-century examples of the Gothic double, and how King has adopted and changed his version of the Gothic double over the course of his literary works.

The first chapter of this thesis analysed the development of the Gothic double throughout the nineteenth century. The first section discussed four classic Gothic doubles, as found in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Poe's "William Wilson," Stevenson's *Jekyll and Hyde*, and Wilde's *Dorian Gray*. It became evident that the early nineteenth-century Gothic doubles belonged to a more "traditional Gothic" trend, with a greater focus on history and ancient past, and that this focus shifted to a more identity and human psyche-oriented "modern Gothic" towards the end of the nineteenth century. From these examples and a discussion of relevant literature on the Gothic double, it can be concluded that a nineteenth-century double encompasses a duality between good and evil within a person that foreshadows an approaching death. Furthermore, it was established that in all of these stories, the setting is divided between a "good" and an "evil" location. In the early nineteenth-century tales, this division is most clearly established between a village and a city, or between nature and the city. In the late nineteenth century novels, being *Jekyll and Hyde* and *Dorian Gray*, the idea of a town versus a city was abandoned, and the duality was placed within the confines of one city: London. Both Stevenson and Wilde used West and East London as two contrasting places that emphasised their doubles of Jekyll and Hyde and Dorian and his portrait. This change of setting shows a shift from a more rural setting to a predominantly urban setting in the late nineteenth century. Finally, the first chapter showed that King frequently sets his novels in small towns in Maine. In choosing this setting, King aims to show that evil can invade any town, despite its seemingly idyllic exterior.

The second chapter analysed the Gothic double in *The Dark Half*, how it resembled the nineteenth-century Gothic doubles and how it functioned as a symbol of immorality and repression. The Gothic double in this novel consists of Thad Beaumont and his pseudonym George Stark. The double originates when doctors find a remaining eye in Thad's brain as a child, suggesting that George is the expression of the unborn twin. Later, in his writing career, the burial of Stark becomes a physical form of mental repression. The more Thad represses Stark, the stronger Stark becomes. *The Dark Half* most closely resembles *Jekyll and Hyde* in its depiction of a duality between good and evil within a person. It also strongly resembles *Frankenstein*, as Thad has also created a "monster." Although King was heavily inspired by the classic double of the nineteenth century, he also deviates from the classic examples by giving Thad the chance to overcome his double. Although the Gothic double still is a premonition of death, only one of the doubles has to die. By killing Stark, Thad is freed from his double. As for the setting of the novel, King follows the tradition of the duality between a town and a city, and deviates from the late nineteenth-century notion of duality within a single city. Finally, the second chapter has shown that the Gothic double in *The Dark Half* functions as a symbol of immorality and repression, and that it is only through acceptance that Thad can overcome his darker half.

The third chapter analysed the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* and has shown how strongly King deviates from the classic Gothic doubles in this novel. Instead of one person being divided into two halves, the double now consists of two persons making one whole. Again, King makes the double motif his own by letting Lisey live: she does not have to die alongside Scott in order to overcome her struggles. The Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* is not as black and white as the nineteenth-century examples of the double. However, the double does resemble the complementary double that can also be found in *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*. In terms of setting, King has also deviated from the traditional idea of the town

versus the city, and instead opts for contrasting a town to an imaginary world. As Boo'ya Moon is an ambiguous place, King lets the binaries of "good" and "evil" collide. Furthermore, the chapter shows that the Gothic double functions as a symbol of repression: only through complete acceptance of Scott can Lisey overcome her darker half.

In both *The Dark Half* and *Lisey's Story*, King uses the nineteenth-century classic doubles as the foundation. He deviates from the classic form of the double motif by suggesting that only one half of the Gothic double has to die, and that the other half survives. In *The Dark Half*, Scott lives on as he has killed Stark; in *Lisey's Story*, Lisey lives as she has accepted the dark side of her late husband Scott. The characters do not have to die alongside their darker halves in order to overcome their doubles, as was customary in the nineteenth-century tales of the double. Where King follows the idea of the town versus the city in *The Dark Half*, he abandons this idea in *Lisey's Story* and instead sets part of the novel in an imaginary world. In both novels, the Gothic double functions as a symbol of repression: only through complete acceptance of their darker halves can Thad and Lisey survive their doubles. King shows a clear progression of his adaptation of the classic Gothic double. Where the double of *The Dark Half* very closely resembles the nineteenth-century doubles, the Gothic double in *Lisey's Story* deviates strongly from these classic examples and resembles more the complementary doubles of *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*.

A suggestion for future research might be to further analyse the concept of the Gothic double in Stephen King's oeuvre. As mentioned in the Introduction, there are other types of Gothic doubles to be found in King's works, such as the werewolf and the serial killer. As not much research has yet been done on the Gothic double in King's oeuvre with the exception of *The Dark Half*, it would be interesting to analyse the Gothic double in his other works. Due to the limited scope of this thesis, other types of the Gothic double in King's oeuvre were not discussed here.

As hypothesised at the beginning of this thesis, the Gothic doubles in *The Dark Half* and *Lisey's Story* embody the dark side of the main characters. The doubles symbolise this dark side as they are the representations of immorality. Their hideous actions in private eventually become public. Furthermore, these darker halves are symbols of repression, and it becomes clear that the stronger Thad and Lisey try to repress their doubles, the stronger the doubles become. From creating a classic double between an author and his pseudonym in *The Dark Half* and a complementary double in *Lisey's Story*, King has shown his ability to make a classic trope entirely his own: the Gothic double does not solely represent that one is two, but that two can also become one.

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