CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, I would like to draw some conclusions about the use of Gothic elements in Victor Hugo's <u>The Hunchback of Notre-Dame</u> and Gaston Leroux's <u>The Phantom of the Opera.</u> Firstly, I notice that the two authors have successfully combined both realistic and fictitious elements in their novels in order to convey the messages to the readers.

The realistic elements used in both novels are none other than the settings themselves, which are actually two remarkable buildings regarded as the landmarks of Paris. In <u>The Hunchback of Notre-Dame</u> the setting is Notre-Dame Cathedral, and in <u>The Phantom of the Opera</u> the setting is Paris Opera House. Apparently both buildings have unique historical backgrounds and interesting features which are used and developed so well by the authors that they become the perfect settings for the novels.

Notre-Dame Cathedral with its Gothic architecture style and long record of history becomes the perfect setting for <u>The Hunchback of Notre-Dame</u>, which is set in the medieval France. In fact, during the period of 15th century, the cathedral played significant roles as the centre of Paris for its religious activities. Meanwhile, Paris Opera House with its extravagance and interesting features

becomes the perfect setting for <u>The Phantom of the Opera</u>, which is set in the late 19th century France. In fact, during the same period the Opera House became the centre of Paris for its popular grand opera shows and other entertainment activities.

In these novels, I conclude that both settings actually represent the good or positive things such as something to be cherished and preserved well for its qualities in <u>The Hunchback of Notre-Dame</u> and the symbol of the grandeur and high reputation of Paris in <u>The Phantom of the Opera.</u>

Besides the realistic settings, I find that the characters of both novels also play equally significant roles in making the stories interesting and in conveying the authors' messages to the readers. Although the characters are indeed fictitious, they become the prominent figures that signify the Gothic characteristics of the novels. Moreover, they enliven the stories as well.

Apparently, I notice that both novels that I analyze in this thesis have unique characters which are told to haunt the settings. <u>The Hunchback of Notre-Dame</u> has a unique protagonist named Quasimodo, who is told to haunt the cathedral with his hideously ugly appearance and his deformed body. Quasimodo becomes the stock Gothic figure because of his horrifying look and deformities which scares anyone, including the readers of the novel. But I think it is interesting to know that Quasimodo is the one who gives the touch of life to the cathedral in this novel. He is indeed inseparable from the cathedral itself. His miserable condition seems to represent the Notre-Dame Cathedral's actual condition at Hugo's own period. Meanwhile, the real evil character which haunts the cathedral is none other than the antagonist of the novel, Claude Frollo. He is a

priest character blinded by his own obsession. His forbidden love for a poor Gypsy character named La Esmeralda drives him to the dark and evil side of his soul. Meanwhile, The Phantom of the Opera has a protagonist called the Opera Ghost alias Erik, who is not only ugly-looking but also violent. He is indeed the ultimate horrible-looking villain figure who commits such evil deeds as murders. Erik alias the Opera Ghost even threatens a character named Christine Daae to love and marry him. From the way he intimidates Christine Daae, it can be seen how evil and mean he is.

From the explanation above, I would like to conclude that the evil characters in the novels actually represent the bad or negative things such as the tyrannical and hypocritical power of aristocracy in the medieval era in The Hunchback of Notre-Dame and the social and political unrest in the Paris society in The Phantom of the Opera. Besides, I would also like to conclude that other characters are chosen to support the whole Gothic atmospheres in both novels, by providing better appreciation and understanding of the historical setting—in the case of Quasimodo, as well as by emphasizing the important roles of the evil characters—in the cases of La Esmeralda and Christine Daae.

To sum up, I would like to say that the choice of Gothic settings and characters in both novels have been used by the two authors to convey their ideas of ambivalence. In The Hunchback of Notre-Dame, the ambivalence towards the Gothic cathedral as the legacy of the impressive architecture style and the symbol of the tyrannical aristocracy power is seen from the depiction of the cathedral itself and especially the antagonist, Claude Frollo. It seems that by communicating such ambivalence in The Hunchback of Notre-Dame, Hugo wants

to express his desire to preserve only the good qualities of life in the medieval era, such as the cathedral itself and to eradicate the bad qualities of life in the medieval era, such as the overpowering aristocracy.

Meanwhile, in <u>The Phantom of the Opera,</u> the ambivalence towards the city of Paris as the centre of arts, literature and entertainment and the city troubled by the complexities of social and political unrest is seen from the depiction of Paris Opera House and its protagonist, Erik alias the opera Ghost. It seems that by communicating such ambivalence in <u>The Phantom of the Opera</u>, Leroux wants to question the unstable social structure that haunts the seemingly beautiful city of Paris.

Lastly, I do hope that by knowing the use of all Gothic elements in both novels, as well as the authors' messages behind them, the readers would have better understanding and appreciation towards the two Gothic novels analyzed in this thesis in particular, and other Gothic novels in general.