CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The introduction chapter contains an explanation and a general description that introduces the topics and subject matter of the research. It has six parts: research background, research question, research objective, research significance, conceptual framework, and previous study.

1.1 Research Background

Children's literature can be broadly considered as writings aimed at amusing and engaging children. The product offers narratives that are both entertaining and educational to them emotionally, cognitively, and intellectually. Despite being delivered in an enjoyable and animated concept, children's literature implicitly introduces children to social, ethical, and emotional concerns in an approachable and developmentally appropriate manner. This is because good literature, whether children's or adult literature, is supposed to teach us about ourselves and social connections, introduce us to our own culture, and expose us to many different worlds, periods, and significant historical events (Goldstone, 1986). In other words, it can be said that children's literature inevitably becomes a 'medium' to convey an ideology, feeling, or knowledge that may not be immediately relevant to children but that is expected to be recognized and grasped by them. As Peter Hunt (1994) suggests children's literature is an influential form of literature that cannot possibly contain neutral, innocent, and trivial content because despite it being designed for children who are naturally less familiar with and knowledgeable about culture and social concerns, it does not suggest that what is written is simplistic or lacking in depth. It indicates that children's literature can be nuanced, rich, and sophisticated even when the target audience is children. It is in accordance with Jacquelin Rose's (1984) claim that there is a form of investment performed by the author in children's fiction and expects a response from children

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to the investment. The investment may occur in the form of anything advantageous, such as an understanding of ethical principles, the identification and management of emotion, and the capacity for problem-solving.

Children's literature encompasses many different types of genres, each of which positively impacts readers' intellectual and emotional development. These various kinds of writing, encompassing fantasy, fairy tales, folklore, school stories, and mysteries, have been employed not only for amusement and to stimulate children's imaginations but also for communicating moral values, ideologies, emotional exploration, and even more. The wide variety of genres in children's literature exposes children to unfamiliar worlds and experiences, increasing critical thinking, logical reasoning, and emotional intelligence.

Among these various genres, the horror genre stands out as one of the most challenging and significant in children's literature. Horror, although considered the most straightforward and predictable genre on a very fundamental level (Saricks, 2009), is characterized by features such as graphic violence, gory details, violent language, and explicit content. Additionally, the horror genre's fundamental form is to provoke an emotional response, such as fear, imminent danger, or a sense of supernatural terror. Creatures within the horror genre are typically terrifying, such as ghouls, werewolves, vampires, and ghosts, sometimes even bloodthirsty spirits.

The horror genre has long been present in children's literature, from Grimm's Fairy Tales to the Goosebumps book. A while back the sense of fear created by the horror genre functioned as a didactic tool, encouraging children's awareness. However, since the time of the Grimm brothers, the relationship between horror and children's literature has become more complicated (Morin, 2017). Indeed, horror and children's literature are a strange pairing that seems paradoxical. The notion of exposing young readers to terror and darkness seems

counterintuitive in a genre that is associated with compassionate and moral education. Nevertheless, this paradox represents what makes horror in children's literature fascinating and unique. As Huck (1964) noted, children's literature does not constantly contain sweetness and pleasant subject matter. This is why implementing terror into children's literature will be extremely challenging. Horror allows children to deal with challenging emotions securely and imaginatively by presenting fright in a controllable and frequently metaphorical manner. It encourages children to deal with something unfamiliar, inspiring both curiosity and courage.

In children's literature, as McCort argues horror texts can serve to help young readers deal with scary things in the real world, by translating that fear into a fantasy world where fear is presented in a more controllable and manageable way. Horror fiction can serve as a safe space where children can explore their fears and find ways to cope with them. Thus, horror stories can offer a 'playground' that allows children to play with fear without dangerous consequences. In the end, through this experience, children can feel safer and, ideally, also entertained (McCort, 2016). Compared to the suppression or repression of emotions, this approach is more beneficial because it allows children to process their fears in a healthy way. In addition, interaction with horror elements also plays an important role in educating children on how to cope with anxiety.

Implementing horror into children's literature can be challenging not only in terms of how to represent horror elements in a more accessible language to children while still expressing its essence but also in terms of dealing with public perceptions of the existence of horror in children's books. As stated, Michael Wilson, in Reading in the Dark edited by McCort, argues that books with horror themes specifically marketed to children are sometimes considered disadvantageous. Some adults consider that such books can have a negative impact on the imagination of young readers (McCort, 2016). Rukavishnikova, et al.

(2020) also argue that children are known for their great sensitivity to beauty and goodness. Purity, innocence, and romance are considered to be the hallmarks of children's literature. These are the things that are expected to inspire writers of children's literature. In writing stories for children, writers should not deviate from moral standards and should align the narrative of the story with the nature and mindset of children (Rukavishnikova et al., 2020). Evil themes in literature can influence the moral landscape of society. Therefore, literary works should be composed with careful consideration, following generally accepted moral principles and considering their impact on young readers. Locke (1880) suggested that children's innocence should be preserved as long as possible by keeping them away from all forms of fear. To preserve such innocence, children need to be protected from stories that create impressions of spirits and goblins, or other frightening things in the dark (Locke, 1880). Locke also argued that things, such as frightening talk and terrifying objects that can startle children, can damage or disrupt their inner peace, as such experiences can leave a deep impression and create fear. The resulting fear will make children fearful, especially when they are alone (Locke, 1880). Therefore, the position of horror in children's culture continues to remain contentious due to the potential physically violent reactions it can provoke (particularly in this genre), a sensitivity that is certainly avoided, particularly by parents, when it comes to showing it to children (Kérchy, 2019).

As a result, horror has established itself as a challenging and significant genre in children's literature due to the challenging process of implementing it into children's literature. The writers of children's literature, particularly those who implement horror into their works, are responsible for finding a balance between making the story fascinating while preserving the fundamental characteristics and essentials of the horror genre and avoiding elements that could be considered excessively violent, dangerous, or disturbing for young readers.

One effective technique that can be used to implement horror in children's literature is figurative language, which can be employed as an efficient tool to strengthen the narrative by establishing depth, nuances, and various levels of meaning. Technically, figurative language is generally considered to serve an ornamental function, strengthening the beauty and depth of a text by increasing its aesthetic appeal (Yu, 2020). Figurative language refers to terms that are represented in distinct ways what they mean literally and are frequently expressed through figurative forms. Figurative language is used for expressing emotions, producing visual imagery, and, in certain cases, modifying reality. Simply put, figurative language enables authors to effectively convey complex ideas, such as the sense of fear and dark atmosphere in the horror genre, in a manner that remains influential and impactful, while permitting authors to present them by employing more relatable and readily understandable terms to young readers. Figures of speech, such as metaphor, simile, personification, and imagery, can be implemented to smooth out and intensify certain elements of fear by using relevant comparisons or analogies from their everyday experiences. Analogies, which may include metaphors and similes, are helpful in helping readers emotionally understand the concept of fear in horror. Analogies can make the abstract concept of fear more concrete and comprehensible by juxtaposing it with a familiar sensation or image. Therefore, with analogies, young readers may be familiar with the situation that is portrayed because it is juxtaposed with an ordinary thing that they clearly understand. Comprehensive descriptions of atmosphere, emotion, or scenery that employ all senses, such as sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch, have the potential to heighten the tension or fear of horror. Not only does it stimulate young readers' imaginations, but it may additionally improve their emotional engagement with visual imagery to create the sensation of being in a terrifying atmosphere, resulting in a more vivid and real sense of fear. Furthermore, presenting fear as an alive being helps stimulate children's imaginations while making the concept of fear in horror more tangible. If fear is presented in a form

or characteristic that resembles a living creature, children will be able to express and deal with the feeling more readily since they are accustomed to engaging with entities that have personalities or will, such as humans or animals.

In addition to facilitating the development of their imagination and providing an understanding of concepts related to fear, courage, and morality, figurative language can also allow children to feel emotionally engaged. Figurative language is more fascinating in its application because of the ability it offers to convey an idea that is distinct from its conventional perception while simultaneously expressing the author's comprehension of distant events or complex ideas (Gibbs Jr, 2023). In furtherance of helping in the implementation of horror in children's literature, figurative language may also demonstrate the proficiency of the writer's skills, capabilities, and uniqueness in performing the horror in a manner that is suitable for young readers.

The object of the research focuses on two novellas written by Neil Gaiman and Charles Dickens, namely *Coraline* (2002) and *A Christmas Carol* (1843). Both works explore the horror genre, although implemented with different approaches and presentations. The different presentation of horror in these two works can show the flexibility of the horror genre in depicting fear and exploring various themes. Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* depicts a tense atmosphere with more contemporary and fantastic horror elements, while Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* uses more moral and religious horror nuances.

Horror in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* and Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* is delivered through different approaches to represent fear and thrills. In *Coraline*, horror is delivered in a deep and compelling way, creating a tense and suspenseful atmosphere. This is expressed through an alternate world that resembles normal life but is full of creepy creatures that resemble people or creatures familiar to Coraline, such as The Other Mother. The alternate world

slowly reveals its true threatening nature, which creates a feeling of psychological terror in the main character, Coraline Jones. In contrast, in *A Christmas Carol* horror is delivered in a more subtle and moralistic way, where ghosts and supernatural creatures serve as a warning against Ebenezer Scrooge's life of greed and indifference. The horror in this story tends to show the emotional consequences of moral error as shown through creepy visions and forewarnings of the future, which creates a more philosophical sense of horror.

The differences in approach and presentation in implementing horror in both *Coraline* and *A Christmas* provide an opportunity for researchers to examine how these two works represented horror elements through the use of figurative language to create a sense of fear and suspense, especially how to convey these feelings in a more child-friendly manner. Thus, through comparative studies, a cross-cultural text study that is interdisciplinary in nature and is concerned with patterns of connection in literature across time and space (Bassnett, 1993), the researcher will explore and examine the use of figurative language, specifically in the form of metaphors, similes, and personification, as a tool to represent horror in children's literature. This approach allows for comparisons between texts from different cultural contexts and times, providing richer insights into how literary elements develop and change according to the surrounding social, cultural, and historical contexts.

In addition to exploring how figurative language, such as metaphor, simile, and personification, are used to produce an immersive sense of horror in children's literature, the researcher will also explore the differences and similarities in the techniques used by Neil Gaiman and Charles Dickens in using figurative language to create a unique and significant horror experience for their readers.

As foundational references, several previous studies were identified, including one of which is the bachelor thesis entitled "Something Called

Protective Coloration": The Uncanny in Children's Literature" by Joni Scher (2016), which suggests that reading uncanny stories encourages children to realize that their fears are common to all people and can be resolved. Just as Coraline made her bravery her own through "Protective Coloration", children can also learn to face their fears in a healthy and safe environment. Schers, in his thesis also states that the uncanny story that is appropriate for children blends comedy and suspense, allowing them to overcome their fears (Schers, 2016).

Another researcher, Jonáš Kučera (2024) in the master's thesis entitled Fear of the Forbidden: The Role of Horror in Children's Literature of the 21st Century, reveals that analyzing children's literature through the perspective of horror can expose themes and motifs that go far beyond mere entertainment and education. The deliberate use of horror elements serves to challenge social norms and explore taboo subjects in a way that appeals to and connects with young readers (Kučera, 2024). The research, through selected works by Clive Barker, Daniel Handler, Holly Balck, Neil Gaiman, and Patrick Ness, shows there is an evolution from horror's historical tendency to uphold societal taboos by portraying them as hideous and abnormal creatures. The strange and peculiar are often portrayed with a positive spin and understanding, yet wicked elements are closely related to ordinary and all-too-human horrors of the everyday.

Another researcher, Agi Agryanti Iwanda (2024) in her undergraduate thesis entitled Exploring of Figurative Language in Najwa Zebian's The Book of Healing: An Analysis of Emotional Experience and Personal Growth, viewed through Qualitative and Descriptive Approach, using the Theory of figurative language by Perrine, Culler, and Frey, suggests that the functions of figurative language are to enhance emotion, imagination, create a more compelling and vivid text, indirectly connect an idea, clarifying an intention, and creating a unique language.

Another researcher, Putri Nurul Aulia Putri and Leni Marliana (2023) in the research entitled Figurative language on Digital Children's Literature in Website Poems of Poets.org with Nature and Environment Theme, suggested that the use of figurative language is very essential in children's poetry, particularly hyperbole. The researchers also revealed that figurative language can be used to reveal hidden meanings in poetry, in addition, figurative language also makes poetry more interesting and allows children to visualize the expressions in the stanzas of poetry.

Based on the previous studies, it can be concluded that this research continues and enriches previous studies, both those discussing the use of figurative language in general or specifically in children's literature, as well as the use of horror in children's literature and the role of horror in children's literature. This research offers a new contribution by specifically exploring how figurative language is used to represent horror in children's literature. The novelty of this research lies in its approach, which not only focuses on one work but also conducts a comparative analysis between two literary works from different periods, namely the classical and modern eras. Thus, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of how Neil Gaiman and Charles Dickens utilize figurative language to create a sense of horror through their respective work, Coraline and A Christmas Carol.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Horror in children's literature is an interesting genre because it has distinctive characteristics, such as a dark atmosphere, elements of surprise, often gripping settings, and the presence of supernatural creatures or frightening monsters. However, these elements can feel overwhelming and inappropriate for children, since their emotional development is still in its infancy. Therefore, in the

context of children's literature, the representation of horror needs to be adjusted so that it still presents tension without having an overly frightening impact.

One of the strategies that can be used to adapt horror elements in children's literature is figurative language. The use of figures of speech, such as simile, personification, and metaphor, allows writers to present the element of fear in a way that is more imaginative and familiar to young readers. Thus, following the statement of problem and research background presented previously, the researcher concludes the following two questions will be the primary focus of this research:

1. How is horror represented through figurative language in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* and Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*?
2. How do Neil Gaiman and Charles Dickens similarly and differently use figurative language to represent horror in their works?

1.3   Research Objective

Based on the formulation of the research question above, the purposes of this research are as follows:

1. To identify how horror is represented through figurative language in Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* and Charles Dickens's *A Christmas Carol*.
2. To identify the differences and similarities between Neil Gaiman and Charles Dickens in using figurative language to represent horror in their works.

1.4 Research Significance

This research is anticipated to provide a further understanding of figurative language in children's literature, specifically how figurative language such as metaphor, simile, and personification are used to represent horror in children's literature. This research can also provide further understanding of the relationship between figurative language and children's emotional experiences so that this

research can contribute to children's literature and literary cognition theory. In addition, by comparing works from different periods this research can help in understanding the development of language styles in the representation of horror in children's literature throughout the ages.

This research also can serve as a reference for future research on relevant topics. The results of this research can be helpful for researchers or individuals who are interested in learning about how figurative language can be used to convey horror themes that are tailored to the experiences of young readers. In addition, this research can also be a reference for parents or teachers in choosing children's literature that introduces children to extreme themes, such as horror, in a safe and educational way.

1.5   Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework encompasses the overall ideas and concepts that form the basis of the research, and it also includes how the research is arranged. It demonstrates how the researcher arranges each idea and outlines the steps required to complete the research successfully (Salawu et al., 2023). The conceptual framework is an essential element of the problem-solving process in research. As a result, it is crucial to thoroughly comprehend the roles and functions of the fundamental concepts in this research. These concepts serve as a foundation for researchers to formulate research questions, identify key variables, and determine the most appropriate methods for conducting the research. Furthermore, a solid comprehension of concepts enables researchers to analyze connections between variables, formulate hypotheses, and draw meaningful and relevant conclusions. Thus, the conceptual framework functions not only as a guideline but also as a tool for helping the researcher comprehend and interpret the data collected during the research process. Accordingly, the researcher provides a framework of concepts and ideas that will function as the foundation for this research, leading us to gain a better understanding of how this research will ultimately be completed. This

research focuses on how horror is represented with figurative language in children's literature, namely *Coraline* and *A Christmas Carol.*
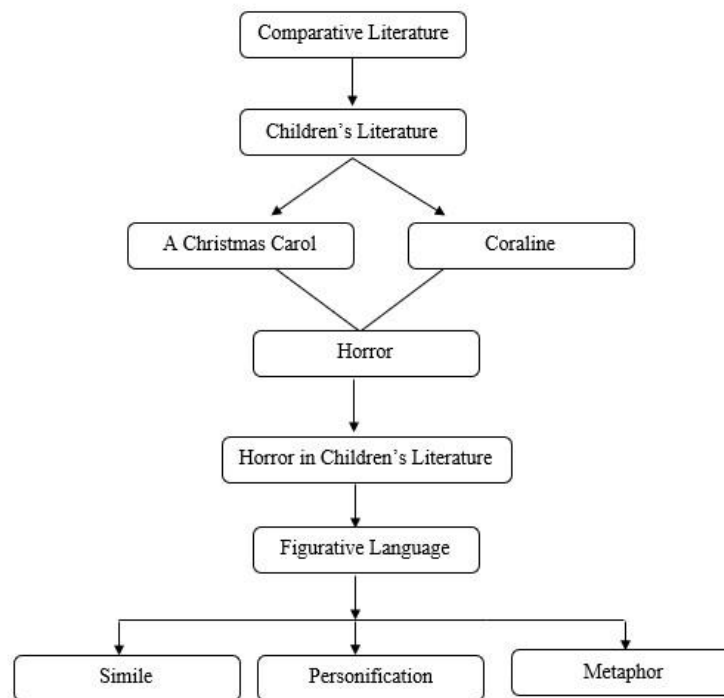
Definition of key terms

1. Comparative Literature

    Comparative Literature is an academic study that explores world literature and cultural expression surpassing geographical, national, linguistic, and disciplinary boundaries. The study of comparative literature compares works from similar languages, cultures, genres, and styles, whether the works originate from unique countries or cultures (Brown, 2020). Comparative literature studies comprise intercultural and transnational disciplines that deal with literature, widely defined in different spheres of human activity, such as philosophy, art, politics, science, and history (Mehrpouyan & Zakeri, 2021).

In this research, comparative literature is used to analyze two works of children's literature that come from different periods and cultural backgrounds, namely Coraline (2002) by Neil Gaiman and A Christmas Carol (1987) by Charles Dickens. Specifically, comparative literature is used to analyze how the authors of both works, Neil Gaiman and Charles Dickens, represent horror with figurative language in children's literature, which is identical to the young audiences. It aims to identify the differences and similarities in writing style and horror representation between the two authors, Neil Gaiman and Charles Dickens, especially in the context of children's literature.

2. Children's Literature

Children's literature, while typically associated with children, is also enjoyed enthusiastically by adults. Beyond the entertainment value of its works, children's literature has a significant impact on their emotional and intellectual development. According to Peter Hunt, children's books are usually educational and influential in some way. Additionally, Hunt argues that children's literature reflects ideology and, by extension, didacticism (Hunt, 1991).

In this research, children's literature serves as the object as well as the topic of research, as the literary texts analyzed, Coraline and A Christmas Carol, can be categorized as works of children's literature. Through both works, this research will examine how horror is represented through figurative language that is adapted for young audiences.

3. Horror

According to Saricks (2009), the primary goal of horror fiction is to evoke intense fear in its readers. The fear can be generated through a variety of strategies, both through psychological exploration and through the depiction of terrifying and horrifying details. Horror serves to engage readers on a very emotional level, causing strong and intense responses.

4. Horror in Children's Literature

According to McCort, confronting fear, such as unavoidable threats, death, or danger, is comparable to riding a haunted train or a high-speed rollercoaster. There is pleasure and excitement in confronting it, as this experience triggers adrenaline without having to face any actual danger. In this context, McCort argues that children, at least implicitly, can recognize that facing the darker aspects of life, such as grief, fear, or even monsters under the bed, is possible. Not only can they identify these emotions, but they can also play with them, which allows them to overcome their fear (McCort, 2016).

This research will also discuss the principles and approaches that can be used to implement horror in children's literature since horror, as explained by Saricks, has a tendency to evoke a sense of dread through gruesome details, both through the depiction of settings and characters, which seems to be unsuitable for children reader who are usually associated with enjoyable and educational readings.

5. Figurative Language

Figurative language is a type of expression that uses words or phrases that differ from their literal meanings to convey complicated concepts, produce vivid imagery, or elicit emotional responses. It includes many figures of speech, such as metaphors, similes, personification, and hyperbole, which add to the complexity and depth of language. According to Perrine in (Johnson & Arp, 2018), a person speaks figuratively when they say something less or more than what they really mean, the opposite of what is meant, or express something else that is different from the literal meaning.

In this context, the application of figures of speech allows for more effective and imaginative expression of ideas, concepts, or messages compared to direct and literal statements. The use of figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, and personification allow writers to evoke emotions and imagination to depict a concept or feeling, thereby adding depth of meaning to literary

works. In this research, figurative language serves as the primary variable to be examined for its utilization in creating horror in children's literature.

1) Simile and Metaphor

        According to Johnson & Arp, (2018), both metaphor and simile are used as techniques to make comparisons between two fundamentally diverse or dissimilar things.

2) Personification

        According to Johnson & Arp (2018), personification is a form of figure of speech that involves attributing human characteristics or attributes to animals, objects, or concepts.