

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this section, the introduction of the general explanation of the subjects research have been noted down. As stated from the title, two different television series namely *Wednesday (2022)* and *The Chilling Adventure of Sabrina (2018)* are the subjects. The line that relates those works to be compared in the later chapter is called the gothic elements. The study that will be conducted by the writer is a comparative literature study. That being said, this section is divided into several points consisting of background of study, statements of problem, research purpose, research significance, conceptual framework, previous studies, and definition of key terms.

1.1 Background of Study

In discussion of literature, it is imperative to mention the genre of literature or known as the four literary genres. There are four major genres prominently in the extensive world of literature: poetry, prose, drama and nonfiction. Poetry usually has a certain convention in its structure. Prose on the other hand has more freedom in form as it is plot-based type of literature such as short story, novella and novel. After that said and done, comes drama that was meant to be performed on stage to an audience. Next to that is nonfiction, work of literature that is not fabricated such as memoir, literary criticism, biography and autobiography. Aside from those four literary genres, there is one more component of it namely film. Film is also a part of literature. According to Oza (2020:4) cinema told tales about gods and goddesses, heroes and their fearless conquer and victory, romantic tragedies, historical epics, comical and legendary episodes just like the written literature does. She concluded, that cinema or film is a part of literature.

Film is a series of moving pictures recorded with sound that tells a story, watched at a cinema or on a television or other device. In between the shift of the 19th to 20th century, the attempt of the discovery of motion pictures was set in motion. It was high time a whole new form of art was presented. Just as its name

might suggest, motion pictures' whole idea of attraction was modestly the marvel of a set of moving pictures. According to Thompson and Bordwell (2003: 12) "films began as brief moving views presented as novelties, and by the mid-1910s, the lengthy narrative feature film became the basis for the cinema program". Compared to modern film that is widely known today, with a developed and well structured storyline and special effect, the first film that was ever made in film history was the swift appearance of a train at a railway station, plain and simple. Although, the narrative part of a film came not much later just as we come forth the early part in decades of the 20th century. It has become a staple, key aspect in the making of producing films as the emergence of montage techniques.

As the development of film studios shifted its attention to television, in which people were able to watch films from home, it has become a staple medium for propaganda, advertising, as well as entertainment. There are many television networks in the United States alone such as HBO, NBC, CBS etcetera. These networks release all kinds of television shows, with television series as one example. A television series mainly delivered a narrative story that was released in episodes, usually divided into seasons. These kinds of shows can be watched real time, recorded for a much later time viewing, or streamed from the internet. In the present times, one of the most prominent streaming services that based its viewing permit by subscription is none other than the American media company called Netflix.

From the numerous attempts of original series produced by Netflix, only a few of them have made it to the record of most popular shows in the said network. One of them is the juggernaut television series *Wednesday* (2022). Released in late november of 2022, *Wednesday* (2022) has become one of the successful and iconic shows especially in today's generation. It has become one of the pop culture phenomena among young adults that also has collected a staggering six billion hours worth of views. Its influence even has reached the competitive sports world with Kamila Valieva, an european figure skating champion's performance of paying homage to *Wednesday*'s viral dance sequence.

One thing that was plain to see from the television series *Wednesday* (2022) was its gothic aesthetic. The main character of this show itself, Wednesday Addams, as the main focus of this show has been a goth icon for many decades thanks to its long history back in the era of its original franchise from its first ever television adaption in 1964 up until 1998. Themes like death, macabre and eternal romance is what gothic is all about. Not to mention, the usage of dark and bold makeup and all-black wardrobe, as well as the application of conspicuous finery and decoration. The aforementioned aspects were plain to see in Netflix's *Wednesday* (2022) with its execution of dark and dreary elements throughout the series.

Additionally, another television series produced originally by Netflix that has the same gothic elements just like *Wednesday* (2022) was *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018). This show was a darker spin of its sitcom series in 1996. Centered around the character Sabrina Spellman, who was revealed as a half witch and half human teenager, the series heavily influenced with dark elements such as witchery, supranatural and puritan aesthetic which is a gothic generic footing. That being said, this particular show is also regulated around the tradition of American Gothic. Although both *Wednesday*(2022) and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018) are inherently and undeniably gothic, both also straying from the traditional way of gothic, particularly in the unassertive and exploited woman in some way as both main characters are quite active in their pursuit of goal.

There is some other information to be addressed in this section. First, the reason why it was decided to choose the form of film, as the media of the objects used in this research instead of other forms of literature such as novel, short story, or poem and etcetera. Second, the reason why those two television series was chosen, namely *Wednesday* (2022) and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018) as the objects in this study. Third, as in the last one, is the reason why the topic of gothic is to be analyzed in this research. First thing to do, is examine the first reason. According to Misha Kafka in Hogle (2002:209), the Gothic on screen display has its share of superiority compared to its narrative counterpart. The excellence of

cinema to portray the fantastic element of the gothic aspects and then arrange it into a form that was culturally identifiable is both its superiority and shortcomings. Superiority as in perfectly capable of displaying a sense of terror that is remarkably Gothic. That is precisely why the medium of film was chosen instead of other forms of literature. It simply just will not cut it to use other forms of literature instead of film.

Next, jumping into the second question, the reason why those television series was chosen namely *Wednesday* (2022) and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018) as the objects in this study is mainly because of its popularity, viewership records that both series held, and the response of the viewer towards those television series. As we all know the television series *Wednesday* that was released in late november in 2022 is reaching a popularity that erupted throughout the internet. It even became one of the hot topics and a trend in the pop culture department among the generation. In its first week of release, the series was admirably able to bring many viewers to it in a massive 341.2 million hours viewed according to Ryan Leston from IGN. This alone makes the series the most viewed English language series in Netflix.. In total, the series *Wednesday* has bagged nearly six billion minute viewership according to the Nielsen record. That is exactly why the writer decided to pick this series as it was the trending topic on the internet nowadays.

As for the reason *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018), another television series by Netflix that released in 2018 was picked for the same reason. This series was also quite popular on the time it was released in 2018, but its popularity, viewership record and the response of the viewer did not even ever hope to reach what *Wednesday* was able to achieve. The fact that the series has run for a four season is telling how well received it was by the audience. As the television network Netflix has been known to cancel a certain series that did not meet the standard in the rank and viewer department, so for the series to have a four season is notable until it was canceled and won't be continued in the fourth season.

Though, based on the statement that was published by Netflix officials, the real reason for the series to be canceled was because of other reason. For the record, according to news written by Stephanie Prange in Media Play News, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (2018)* was able to rank first in the Show on the Rise with a rise ration of 97% and first on the Top Binge Show by 4.86% in share of binges. But even that won't be on Wednesday level. The response of the audience generally didn't have the same energy when *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (2018)* was released despite, as the critics have said, that both series are two of the most popular modern gothic series in the 20s. That is why it was decided that would be beneficial to use those series as the objects in this research.

Last but not least, the reason why the gothic elements that manifested in those series is to be analyzed in this study instead of, for example, the horror formula, or the psychology of the characters, or the gender and feminism topics and many more. To put it simply, the character of Wednesday Addams and Sabrina Spellman, the main characters in those series, has been known for a long time as gothic icons. That reputation mainly they achieved from their history since those characters aren't original in a sense. To be clear, both of those characters are not made for their series, they were borrowed instead. This statements then brought us to trace the both series of origin which has been done from many years ago.

Both of them are a character from iconic comics 1938 and 1962. Though, it was not until the release of a movie that was released in 1991 and the comic published in 2014 that they were claimed by the gothic community. Not to mention the viral dance trends that was going around the internet was, as Jenna Ortega (the actress of Wednesday Addams) admitted in her tweet, was inspired by Siouxsie Sioux, Bob Fosse's *Rich Man's Frug*, Lisa Loring, Lene Lovich, Denis Lavant, and archival footage of goths dancing in clubs in the '80's. Since what came out from the series *Wednesday (2022)* was the topic circulating of the gothic, the writer decided it would be fascinating to pick the topic of gothic element as the thing that was badly needed to be analyzed in the research.

With that information now laid out, after a prolonged scrutiny, both series had several similarities and also differences that were palpable in terms of their gothic elements. The points that will be compared are the setting, plot, character, theme, tone and atmosphere. Based on the observation, both works were interesting to be used as an object of research. Further study is necessary to stimulate a more deeper understanding of the similarities and differences contained in the every crevices of both series. Accordingly, it is imperative to analyze them. Precisely why this attempt was made. To find the deeper meaning inside of literature, literary study is one of the many options to do it. And literary study that was fit to analyze two literature in terms of their similarities and differences is called a comparative study.

1.2 Statements of Problems

On the account from the background investigation above, come forth many problem problem raise to question. That being said, a limitation has to be put for the writer as not to stray from the actual research that was determined before. Consequently, the research is to be focused on the gothic elements contained in the television series *Wednesday* (2022) and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018). The study will give the way for comparative literary study in finding the comparison of gothic elements from two television series. According to the background of research, the statements that will be the questions of the research as stated below.

1. What are the gothic elements found in the television series *Wednesday* (2022) and *The Chilling Adventure of Sabrina* (2018)?
2. How are the similarities and differences materialized in the television series *Wednesday* (2022) and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018)?

1.3 Research Purposes

Every research has to have a purpose, a certain goal in determining whether a research is successful in its process to gain the means of an end or not. In completing a purpose of a research, the researcher will be able to find what information they were looking for in the beginning of a research. In this particular study of comparison of gothic elements in television series *Wednesday* (2022) and

The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (2018) have a specific purpose that the writer was determined to achieve as follows.

1. To identify the gothic elements *Wednesday (2022)* and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (2018)*.
2. To compare the gothic elements *Wednesday (2022)* and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina (2018)*.

1.4 Research Significances

Just like any other research that was made previously long before this study was made, a vision of the significance of this research has come up. As a research based study that this writing came to be, it needs a benefit to show the importance of this research, so as the future reader hopefully find what they were looking for. Said benefits are generally divided into two, theoretically and practically. Theoretically, the insight and the knowledge of gothic elements especially ones that was found inside these works that was used as an object in this particular research became significant to give a better understanding of the rise of the gothic genre in television series. Moreover, various perspectives of gothic aesthetic appear many times in these series. It became significant because it built and generated further notion of the formula of suspense and gothicism.

This study hopefully provides a fresh spin of contribution in this particular study, especially in the context of comparing two television series considering its rareness based on the writer's observation. Not to mention, the objectivity of comparing elements of gothic are quite scarce especially in UIN Bandung long history of English Literature. With this study, the writer expects the reader find this useful for their own research in the near future. With the rise of gothic aesthetic in popular culture that was influenced by both series, it was not too difficult to grasp that the public reader outside of academic research finds this study appealing, especially in appreciation of the beauty in something dreary and dark as gothic.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

Two different sources are implemented in the making of this research. Those sources have a general distinction from each other. Said distinction is the

very thing that induced the implementation of several theories in order to get a very clear picture of Gothic elements in fiction. The theories used to disentangle the formula of gothic inside the sources picked beforehand are the theory of gothic elements by Fred Botting (1996), theory of gothic by Mary Ellen Snodgrass (2005), theory of gothic fiction by Ann B. Tracy (1981). Moreover, this study will be using comparative literature to find the comparison between these subjects. Those theories are closely related to the topic of the research that will be conducted in this study by the writer.

In this opportunity, the writer established two fictional works to be the object in this study of comparative literature. Said fictional works are the television series *Wednesday* (2022) and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018). One of them, namely the series *Wednesday* (2022), just recently came out in fall last year that successfully took popular culture by storm on the internet. Both fictional works are not original as the main characters are loosely based on films that have existed from their long run of franchise. The main character of *Wednesday* (2022), Wednesday Addams, is one of the characters from an iconic fictional family created by Charles Addams in the form of single-panel cartoons that was published in *The New Yorker* with title *The Addams Family* in 1938. Later on in 1964 the cartoon was adapted to television adaptations, with film series (1992) and reboots (1999) alike.

Similarly, the main character from *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018) also originally comes from a comic book series that was published by Archie Comics George Gladie and Dan DeCarlo with title *Sabrina the Teenage Witch*. Later, in 1970 the comic was adapted to television series (1970), film (1996), and animated series (1999) with the same title. Although the Netflix series that was released in 2018 was adapted from its darker counterpart, complete with its gothic aesthetic comic book by Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa. That said, the writer was focusing on the aforementioned works to be made of use in this research. After quite long consideration, the topic selected to be the main attraction of this research is its gothic elements.

Wellek & Warren (1956: 212) argued that a work of fiction should be in the form of an engaging story, made up with coherent world building and structure, and it certainly also should have an aesthetic purpose. For a work of literature to fill those checklists, there are several things that can be applied for fellow writers alike according to the expert. Gothic literature, according to Snodgrass (2005, p. xvi) provide the sense of escapism to the reader, have the ability to provoke the reader's mind and emotion. Its presence is in a variation of themes and patterns. That said, Gothic literature is an engaging story if it have the ability to provoke the reader. Moreover, Sven Birkerts (1993: 30) stated, work of fiction has intrinsic and extrinsic elements that made up the building of the story in said fiction to make such a delightful story. Such elements like plot, theme, setting, character and point of view are what was called the intrinsic elements. The fundamental idea of the intrinsic element is that it is the elements inside the story that construct the core of the work of fiction itself. Such elements are the ones that present the story to the reader about the course of the story.

Intrinsic elements, it can be said, as something that directly influences the story, unlike the extrinsic elements that may or may not indirectly affect the work of fiction. This direct influence that built the story is the essence of the subject matter, aside from the narrative itself. These intrinsic elements cannot stand on their own, they need each other to exist and make sense of the story. The cohesiveness between various intrinsic aspects intermingled together and gave the birth of a story. As a reader who goes blind when reading or viewing a certain fictional literature, these elements are the ones that the reader picks up on. It is simply unthinkable for the reader to not notice these story building elements in fiction, even if said reader are not a scholar or simply oblivious with literature.

It was mentioned before that gothic has their own formula that makes a story to be advised as a part of dweller in the grand hallmarks of gothic. According to Botting (1996:1), the writing of gothic is centered around the usage of the matters and conventions that are established as negative, illogical, sacrilegious and bizarre or extraordinary. Based on that idea, the writing of gothic is not what we, as a

reader, will find in other genres of writing. Though, it can be argued that many genres of fiction usually overlap with each other. There are fictions, plentiful of them even, that consist of several different genres in one single work of fiction. Even so, The gothic writing is distinguishable. The writing of gothic will always has its own stock characteristic, which was stated by Pykett (2005:195) below.

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

Based on that statement that was pointed out by Lyn Pykett above, the formula of gothic writing was made tangible. So with the theory of intrinsic elements and combined with the elements of gothic, the researcher will be able to identify the gothic aspects in the objects of this research. Take for example, setting as one of intrinsic elements that was mentioned by Birkerts (1993:53-54), he explained that setting is not only the physical body of the location, but also the exact time period when an act or event happened. That being said, in gothic writing as mentioned by Pykett above, the setting is mostly in a mysterious and archaic, possibly haunted castles and dungeons. The time when something happened is also generally when it was dark or at dawn as to amplify the somber, bleak, and gloomy effect of gothic writing. With this as a pointer, the writer will pinpoint and identify the scene in which was relevant with the theories.

With that said, this comparative study in the gothic elements of television series *Wednesday* (2022) and *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2018) is aimed to find its similarities and differences. To compare these two fictions, the writer used the study of comparative literature theory. Comparative literature is a study of cultures that coincide with each other in terms of literary works and interdisciplinary boundaries, concentrated on the comparison of specific areas. In his book of

Pegangan Penelitian Sastra Bandingan, Damono (2009:1) explained that comparative literature is an approach in literature that cannot produce its own theory.

It might have to be mentioned that in research that focuses on comparative literature, any preexisting theory can be used to compare a literature in accordance with its objective and purpose of the said study. In its process, there are two types of methods that can be used by the researcher in comparing literature. In the first method they might do an analysis and then after that do a comparison, or use the second method where they can directly make a comparison to find the similarities and differences in the literature. The writer thinks the first method is more suited for her in this research.

1.6 Previous Studies

Several research that was conducted previously in relevance with the writer's topic and purpose of the research was used to be referenced in this study. The first previous study is titled *From Monstrous Girlhood to Empowered Adulthood: Melissa Hunter's Wednesday Addams Web Series (2022)* written by Lucy Baker. This article was a part of a book with the title *Monstrous Possibilities: The Female Monster in 21st Century Screen Horror (2022)* written by Amanda Howell and Lucy Baker. The object in this previous research is the same as one of the objects used by the researcher. We're talking about the one and only Wednesday Addams who first appears as a character in the one panel comic written by Charles Addams in 1938 and transformed into the newly recent adaptation of television series on Netflix with title *Wednesday (2022)*.

In this research, Baker used the theory of *The Monstrous-Feminine (1993)* by Barbara Creed. According to that theory, the feminine monster in horror fiction is not merely a genderbend of their male counterpart, such as Elizabeth the wife of Frankenstein or Marya Zaleska the daughter of Dracula, but their own incarnation of night terror. Baker maintains that Wednesday Addams and her brother Pugsley Addams, as a matter of fact, are different from each other despite sharing a monstrous nature and a fascination of violence. The character of Wednesday, Baker

concluded, was shaped by her parents' rejection of the standard girlhood's apparel and manner. She flourishes into a more straightforward person with a monstrous nature that continuously overthrows the notion that she might be someone who is pleasant to be around and accommodating.

Next in this previous studies section, the researcher presents an article that examines the other object that was picked by this researcher of this study. The article that was written by Megan Henessy with the title "*Leaving my girlhood behind*": *woke witches and feminist liminality in Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* (2020) was published in a feminist media studies. This study, as stated by Henessy focuses on the character Sabrina Spellman and her transformation from being a cheerful and energetic, pale haired witch into a feminist icon in the gothic representation that challenge the state of affairs in the realms that she was living in, both magical and the normal human life. In this study, Henessy used the theory of liminality by Victor Turner that argued the term of liminality is when a person is stuck in the obscure and enigmatic in-between state during the baptism or rites of passage. The example of this are the decease, birth and pubescence rites. She concludes that Sabrina's initial resistance to pass through the mortal realm and finishes the ritual made her to be in what Turner called the liminal state or the in between.

Third in the previous studies, is the research about gothic elements with title *Gothic Elements in Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes Stories* (2010) written by Murat Cagliyan from Middle East Technical University. The topic previously used in research by Cagliyan is relevant with the writer's topic which is the gothic elements. Cagliyan took several stories by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle namely *The Adventure of the Speckled Band* (1892), *The Adventure of the Copper Beeches* (1892), *The Adventure of the Yellow Face* (1893), and *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902). The theory used by Cagliyan was the theory of horror and terror by Devendra P. Varma (1996). Cagliyan stated that the illustration of the minor characters, the setting, the atmosphere and the imagery of the main character itself namely Sherlock Himself in these stories contributes to the gothic elements.

Next in terms of previous studies related to the topic that was picked prior by the writer is the *Gothicism in Toni Morrison's Beloved (1987) and Oscar Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray (1890)*. This research was written by Nisa Nadya Silmy from Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University. Just like the first previous research above, this study was also picked because of the similarity in the topic of gothic elements and the aspect of comparative literature studies. This study happened to compare two novels that were famous with their gothic elements among other things. In this study, Silmy used the theory of gothic by Ann B. Tracy (1981) about the fallen world of gothic. Silmy stated in her research that the result of the study is that the gothic elements that were presented in the novels were portrayed in the architecture of the buildings, the characterization of devil and evil, and the theme of doppelganger and poltergeist.

The fifth previous studies related to the topic of the writer's research comes from an article journal this time titled *Gothic Elements in Ridley Scott's "Blade Runner" (2019)* written by Monica Toma in Synergy. In this study, Toma used the theory of gothic from Botting (2005) about the insignificance of rationality in gothic. This study submitted a fresh and new gothic portrayal in the film that was viewed as a modern approach of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein (1818)* with a mix of several elements of gothic. In her study, Toma elaborated the characteristics of gothic, then classified the aforementioned gothic elements in the film *Blade Runner (2019)*. This study touched the gothic elements of the uncanny or unheimlich and the marvelous, menacing atmosphere, plot full of murder and violent executions, the theme of monstrosity or freak of nature, the ever growing need to transcend limits, estrangement and rebellion are embedded in its characters.

It cannot be denied that these studies have similarities and differences with each other. All of them partake in a research that touched the topic of gothic elements, specifically in the setting and atmosphere department. The first and second study has little to none similarities with each other and the rest studies, but the object used in those studies are similar with the study that will be conducted. The difference is located in the focus of research, theory, and general aim of the

research. The third and the fifth have similarities in focusing on the topic of the characterization of the characters, yet differ in the nature of the characterization itself while the first study focused on the byronic hero type of character, the third study was more focused on the uncanny. On the other hand, the fourth study differs with the other studies previously mentioned in the part of its nature of study as a comparative literature and the stock characteristic of the supernaturals such as doppelganger and poltergeist.

The study that was being conducted by the researcher is different from those previous studies. First of all, the subjects used are two television series that were produced from the same television company. Even though the objectives are mostly the same as in the context of gothic literature, the theory used to base the idea and identify the gothic elements are different. In this study, the combination of Fred Botting, Ann B. Tracy and Mary Ellen Snodgrass theories were used.

1.7 Definition of Key Terms

In the purpose of aligning the realm of understanding of the future reader with the knowledge of the writer regarding this study, the writer listed down several indispensable phrases and elaborated them in a reliable manner. Those key terms are as follows.

1.7.1 Film

Also called a movie or a motion picture, is a series of moving images shown on a screen, most of the time with sound and plot that build a story as the film progresses according to Thompson and Bordwell (2003:12). Nowadays, film not only be perceived on cinema but also on television or from any electronic device with the internet that provide a streaming access to a rather wide range of film or movie.

1.7.2 Television Series

According to Miriam Hansen (1999:60) television series is a part of vernacular modernism. Television series is a group of programs that was produced or adapted for the broadcast of a certain television channel or

network with an identical series title, generally related from one to the other in terms of its subject or more. Most often than not, these television series release a program once a week per episode to give a sense of cliffhanger with a scheduled time usually along with a total number of episodes that was determined beforehand.

1.7.3 Intrinsic Element

Birkerts (1993:30) maintains that intrinsic elements is something that made up the building of the story in a work of fiction to make such a delightful story. Such elements like plot, theme, setting, character and point of view are what was called the intrinsic elements. The fundamental idea of the intrinsic element is that it is the elements inside the story that construct the core of the work of fiction itself. Such elements are the ones that present the story to the reader about the course of the story.

1.7.4 Gothic

Botting (1996:1) stated that Gothic describes anything that is portrayed by mystery, horror and melancholy. It can be a kind of movement or genre in literature, fashion, architecture, music and or simply anything that deals with occult, fantastic, and dreadful events to capture and inflict the sense of terror.

1.7.5 Gothic Element

According to Botting (1996:1-2) cluster of elements accepted by major experts to describe the formula of gothic in the said movement or genre of gothic. It is something that made up the gothic in gothic works. With the existence of these gothic elements, a work then can be considered a gothic work. These gothic elements are usually used in gothic work to inflict the sense of foreboding feeling of dread and terror in anybody who perceived the work of gothic.