

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Research Background

The gothic has had a significant impact on various literary styles and forms, as well as broad cultural significance, including in film and other media. Criticism and cultural theory have explored the gothic with a focus on language structure, identity, power, and imperialism in literary contexts. Gothic literature has influenced numerous cultural domains, such as art, architecture, fashion, and music. Gothic styles are commonly utilized in American painting, sculpture, and architecture, as well as clothing and accessories in the fashion industry. Since the 1980s, Gothic music has been a popular music genre that frequently conveys the same themes as Gothic literature.

The term "Gothic" is first defined in the subtitle of Horace Walpole's 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*. This text is considered the first example of Gothic prose in the history of literature. In the preface to his first published work, prudently published under a nickname, Walpole allows himself an ironic remark that could, when looking back, be addressed to Giorgio Vasari:

"The principal incidents are such as were believed in the darkest ages of Christianity; but the language and conduct have nothing that savours of barbarism. The style is the purest Italian." (Valijonovna, 2022).

Gothic fiction is influenced by various sources, including Renaissance tragedies, medieval romances, fairy tales, and early novels. Gothic fiction is traditionally believed to have originated with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and continued until *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). However, some critics argue that Gothic fiction has persisted and evolved to suit different historical and cultural contexts, giving rise to new genres and sub-genres, including horror, science fiction, fantasy, detective fiction, dystopian fiction, and others (Rata, 2014).

Gothic fiction utilizes atmosphere, setting, and characters to create emotions of fear, horror, and wonder in the reader. Common features and tropes of Gothic fiction include the hero-villain dichotomy, damsels in distress, evil forces or beings, revenge and legacy motifs, forbidden knowledge and demonic themes, ghosts, paradoxes of life and death, boundary violations, taboo challenges, the use of omens, prophecies, visions, and dreams, and the presence of romance and pain/pleasure paradoxes.

Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe, are now recognized as Gothic tradition pioneers who received both critical and popular acclaim, they represent only a minority. From 1790 to 1810, critics were almost unanimous in their condemnation of what they considered to be an endless flood of low-quality popular novels. Intensified by concerns about radicalism and revolution, the challenge to aesthetic values was viewed as breaking social norms: the virtues of propriety and domestic order were deemed to be at risk.

However, Gothic novels were rejected much earlier in the century on the basis of objectivity. The Enlightenment was shaped by values that privileged classical forms of artistic or cultural production, influenced by Greek and Roman writings. Conformity to precepts of uniformity, proportion, and order was required in buildings, works of art, gardens, landscapes, and written texts. Aesthetic objects received acclaim for their harmony, while texts aimed to cultivate appreciation based on these terms and educate readers on the discrimination of virtue and vice through instruction rather than entertainment.

Taste, judgment, and value hinged on ideas of cultivation and civilized behaviour, promoting a sense of morality and rational understanding.

The groundwork for the rejection of the Gothic novel, however, had been laid much earlier in the century. The values that gave shape and direction to the Enlightenment, dominated as they were by the writings of Greek and Roman culture, privileged forms of cultural or artistic production that adhered to classical rules. Buildings, works of art, gardens, landscapes, and written texts had to conform to rules of uniformity, proportion, and order. Aesthetic objects were praised for their

harmony, and texts were designed to promote appreciation on these terms, to instruct rather than entertain, to instill a sense of morality and rational understanding, and thus to educate readers in the discernment of virtue and vice.

Taste, judgment, and value were based on notions of cultivation and civilized behaviour, intertwined with social mores of public and domestic duty, harmony, and decorum. The dominance of classical values produced a national past that was distinct from the cultivation, rationality, and maturity of an enlightened age. This past was called "Gothic," a general and pejorative term for the middle-ages that created ideas of barbaric customs and practices, superstition, ignorance, extravagant fantasies, and natural wildness. Manifestations of the Gothic past-buildings, ruins, songs, and romances-were treated as products of uncultivated, if not childish, minds. But qualities such as extravagance, superstition, fantasy, and wildness, initially viewed in negative terms, came to be associated in the course of the eighteenth century with a more expansive and imaginative potential for aesthetic production.

Upon initial examination, the Gothic novel appears to be an anachronistic and paradoxical cultural production of its era. It is an anachronism because it emerged during the Enlightenment, a period when novels generally focused their lens on contemporary reality. It is paradoxical because the designation "Gothic Novel" is an oxymoron, signifying "Old New." This designation registers a collision between the past and the present, the "ancient" and the "modern," the conventional and the original (Davison, 1824). The gothic genre reflects the anxieties and uncertainties of the times that produced these literary works. For instance, gothic novels in the 18th and 19th centuries illustrate the clash between rationality and irrationality, tradition and modernity, and religion and science, which were significant concerns of that time.

The term "Gothic fiction" describes literature that blends elements of both ancient and modern romance with horror, terror, and grandeur. Such a genre was coined to refer to this type of literature (Hogle, 2002). The genre of Gothic literature is defined by its gloomy atmosphere, haunted settings such as castles or old houses,

dramatic use of light and shadow, conflicts involving good versus evil, and intense emotions. In addition, Gothic novels typically include elements such as characters with mysterious origins, supernatural events, dark and foreboding atmospheres, and occasionally complicated relationships between the main characters.

Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is one of the novels that belongs to the gothic genre. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, written by Oscar Wilde, recounts the tale of a youthful man, Dorian Gray, who poses for a painting created by artist Basil Hallward. Dorian becomes infatuated with his own attractiveness and desires that the painting will deteriorate instead of himself. As Dorian succumbs to a life of immorality and gratification, the painting transforms into a more unsightly representation, reflecting the deterioration of his psyche. Oscar Wilde combined his love of beauty and aesthetics with an exploration of the dark side of humanity and the consequences of living without morals. As such, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* is a work of aestheticism that worships beauty, and also a gothic work that explores the darkness in the human soul. However, this novel exhibits elements that distinguish it from other classic gothic novels. Therefore, the researcher will examine the gothic elements present in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that led to its classification as one of the classic gothic novel.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Based on the elaboration of Gothic novel in the background research before, it can be observed that Oscar Wilde's novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* possesses a strong Gothic Classic element. Therefore, the researcher concludes that two main questions will be the focus of this research.

1. What gothic elements are there in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?
2. How does the use of gothic elements influence the development of narrative in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*?

### 1.3 Research Purposes

Based on formulation of the research above, the research is aimed at:

1. Identifying and examine key Gothic elements present in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, such as Gothic Excesses, fascination with transgression, duality and internal conflict, ambivalent emotions and meanings, tales of darkness, desire, and power
2. Exploring how the use of gothic elements is presented in the narrative of *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and how they shape the overall atmosphere, including their influence on the story's development, narrative structure, and atmosphere creation.

### 1.4 Research Significances

This research analyzes the Gothic elements in Oscar Wilde's novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and aims to provide insight into the role of genre in shaping the narrative, theme, and structure of English literary works. The study is expected to contribute to the development of literature. This study describes the gothic elements and their impact on the development of narrative and atmosphere in the novel.

The results can be used by novel writers, literature enthusiasts, and researchers to evaluate and analyze genre elements in a novel. By understanding the characteristics of each genre, this research can contribute to a better understanding of how authors use genres to convey cultural, social, and psychological messages in their works. Additionally, this research is valuable not only for developing theoretical and practical policies but also for enhancing our understanding of gothic elements in novels.

## **1.5 Definition of Key Terms**

To ensure that the reader's understanding is aligned with the author's knowledge, this study includes the following Reliable definitions and explanations for key terms.

### **1. Novel**

Novel is a work of fiction that typically consists of prose and is of a certain length. While the theory of the novel does not rigidly limit it to prose, this is the most common form. Novels can be written from either a subjective or objective point of view. They are valued for their ability to cover a wide range of genres and tell stories in many forms, reflecting the diversity of life and subjective imagination. (McKeon, 2023)

### **2. Intrinsic Element**

The intrinsic elements of literary works include theme, plot, characterization, setting, point of view, language style, and moral message. These elements are important parts that shape the structure and meaning of a literary work from within. They interact with each other to give the story a unique identity and depth. For example, plot is the sequence of events in the story, while characterization is the individual who performs those events. The setting provides the temporal and spatial context within which the narrative unfolds, while the point of view determines the perspective from which the story is told. The language style and moral messages employed by the author can significantly influence the tone and style of the narrative. An understanding of these intrinsic elements is essential for the analysis and appreciation of the complexity of literary works. (Abrams, 1957)

### **3. Gothic**

Gothic is identified as an exaggerated style of writing, emerging from the darkness that haunted 18th century rationality and morality. It is characterized by exaggerated writing that often blurs the line between fantasy and reality, and

challenges social and aesthetic norms. Through narratives that explore themes of darkness, desire, and power, the Gothic genre pushes cultural and emotional boundaries. (Botting, 1996)

#### **4. Gothic literature**

Gothic literature is a literary mode that draws from medieval aesthetics and is influenced by Romanticism. It explores emotions and imagination, in contrast to the dominance of rationalism. In gothic literature, darkness and mystery create a landscape in stories filled with deep emotional strokes, leaving the reader trapped in a maze of unexpected feelings and fantasies. (Smith, 2013)

#### **5. Gothic element**

Gothic elements are features that frequently appear in literature or visual art belonging to the Gothic genre. Gothic elements involve excessive writing that challenges 18th-century rationality and morality. This is achieved through a somber atmosphere that brings the past into the present. Additionally, Gothic literature often features transgressive behavior that goes beyond social and aesthetic boundaries, creating ambivalent emotions and meanings. Finally, Gothic literature reflects threats to enlightenment and humanist values through the representation of ghosts, monsters, vampires, and other frightening figures. (Botting, 1996)

#### **1.6 Previous Studies**

In conducting this research, the researcher is inspired by previous studies that have been done in order to perform this research. Despite their variations, previous studies have comparable discussions and relate to this research. Those that have previously been conducted are listed below.

The first relevant previous studies that the researcher can conduct this research is a Publication article entitled '*Imperialism, Aesthetics, and Gothic Confrontation in The Picture of Dorian Gray*' (2014) written by Ellen Scheible. The author argues that Wilde uses gothic tropes, such as doubling, confrontation, and the supernatural, to expose the dangers and excesses of British imperialism and aestheticism. The author suggests that Wilde's Irishness and his awareness of the



colonial oppression of Ireland inform his subversive and ironic portrayal of British culture and identity. The author shows how Wilde's novel depicts various gothic creations or projections of Otherness, such as the painting, the Vane siblings, and the Irish references, that challenge and resist the dominant discourses of art and empire. The author claims that these others force the British characters to recognize their own gothic tendencies and their fragile autonomy that depends on the exploitation and marginalization of the other. This research is used as a reference because of the discussion that surrounds it, which is about gothic genre analysis.

The second relevant previous studies that the researcher can conducting this research is a publication article entitled '*Representation of the gothic element in American short fiction*' (2017) written by Parminder Singh. The article analyzes two famous gothic stories written by American authors: *A Rose for Emily* by William Faulkner and *The Tell-Tale Heart* by Edgar Allan Poe. It compares and contrasts their narrative techniques, time order, images and themes. The article describes how the authors use various images to convey the gothic atmosphere and the characters' personalities. Faulkner uses the portrait of Emily's father, the smell from Emily's house, and Emily's statue-like quality to show her isolation, domination, and stubbornness. Poe uses the old man's eye and the beating heart to show the narrator's obsession, madness, and guilt. Both stories deal with the themes of murder, insanity, and decay.

The Third relevant previous studies that the researcher can conduct this research is a thesis entitled '*Gothic Elements in The Setting of Joan Lindsay's novel Picnic at Hanging Rock*' (2021) written by Hafid Dwi Muhammad. The research analyzes gothic elements in Australian gothic novels to demonstrate the significance of gothic settings in Australia. The researcher employs genre theory, namely Robert Harris's theory of gothic elements in settings, to analyze the work. The analysis reveals that the setting in *Picnic at Hanging Rock* strongly embodies gothic elements, dominating the creation of the gothic atmosphere in the story. The two settings in the story, Appleyard College and the courtyard of Hanging Rock, embrace gothic elements such as horror, mystery, supernatural phenomena,



emotions, omens, portents, visions, suffering women, gothic vocabulary, and hyperbolic language. These elements illustrate the importance of gothic literature in Australia, with a focus on the setting, particularly the Australian bushland. This research is used as a reference because of the discussion that surrounds it, which is about gothic element analysis.

The fourth relevant previous studies that the researcher can conduct this research is an article entitled “*Edgar Allan Poe in Transylvania: Poe’s short stories and gothic elements in nineteenth century Romanian literature*” written by Lucian-Vasile Szabo & Marius-Mircea Crişan. This article examines the origins and impacts of gothic literature, spanning from medieval romances and supernatural tales to poetry, drama, 18th-century novels and aesthetics. It analyzes essential characteristics and environments of gothic fiction; for instance, castles, ruins, landscapes, and ghosts. Additionally, it evaluates the correlation between the French Revolution's political and cultural upheaval in the 1790s and gothic fiction. The article examines the various types and impacts of gothic writing, including terror, horror, rational, and historical. It illustrates how gothic writing emerged as a component of the Romantic Movement, revealing the obscure and magnificent dimensions of individualism, imagination, and creativity. Additionally, the study focuses on themes such as persecution, wandering, and doubling in Romantic gothic literature.