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Gothic Elements in Young Adult Novels: The Keeper as an Example

A B S T R A C T

Since its inception in the 18th century, the Gothic genre has been distinguished by its examination of gloomy, enigmatic, and paranormal subjects. Young adult fiction has recently been infused with Gothic aspects, resulting in a distinct subgenre that appeals to contemporary readers. With a focus on how themes like haunting environments, psychological terror, and the macabre are reinterpreted to address current teenage difficulties.

The use of Gothic features in modern young adult (YA) literature is examined in this paper, with an emphasis on how these characteristics improve the literary depth and emotional resonance for readers in their adolescence. Young adult literature and Gothic elements are combined in The Keeper to produce a chilling story. The setting of this novel, a ruined mansion surrounded by a haunting, nearly alive forest, establishes the mood. The protagonist explores themes of insanity, and loneliness as he discovers family secrets and runs into spectral visions. It is a terrifying fiction because of its suffocating atmosphere, gruesome images, and endless sense of approaching disaster. The Gothic overtones of the narrative provide a setting for the protagonist's quest for self-awareness and conflict with evil, otherworldly powers.

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العناصر القوطية في روايات الشباب البالغين: الحارس كمثال

الباحثة: منار منصور علي أ.د. امل ناصر فراك
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المستخلص :

منذ ظهوره في القرن الثامن عشر، اشتهر الأدب القوطي بتناوله للموضوعات الكئيبة والغموض وما وراء الطبيعة. في الآونة الأخيرة، تسللت العناصر القوطية إلى أدب الشباب، مما أدى إلى نشوء نوع فرعي فريد يجذب القراء المعاصرين، خاصة من المراهقين. يركز هذا المزج الأدبي على كيفية إعادة تقديم مواضيع مثل الأماكن المسكونة، والرعب النفسي، والعناصر المروعة للتعبير عن التحديات التي يواجهها الشباب اليوم.

يتناول هذا البحث توظيف العناصر القوطية في الأدب الحديث الموجه للمراهقين، مع تسليط الضوء على تأثيرها في إضفاء عمق أدبي وتعزيز الصلة العاطفية مع القراء في هذه المرحلة العمرية. تمثل رواية الحارس نموذجًا لدمج أدب الشباب بالعناصر القوطية، حيث يقدم حكاية مشوقة ومليئة بالرعب. تدور أحداث الرواية في قصر مهجور محاط بغابة مسكونة كأنها تنبض بالحياة، مما يخلق أجواءً مشحونة بالتوتر والغموض. يستكشف البطل قضايا مثل الجنون والعزلة أثناء كشفه أسرارًا عائلية وصراعه مع رؤى شبحيّة. تُبرز الرواية من خلال أجوائها الخانقة وصورها المروعة وإحساسها المستمر بالخطر القادم، تجربة أدبية مرعبة ومؤثرة. تضيف العناصر القوطية بعدًا نفسيًا يعكس رحلة البطل نحو اكتشاف الذات ومواجهة قوى غامضة شريرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب القوطي، أدب الشباب، ماكّول، الحارس

Introduction

1.1 The Origin and Meaning of the Gothic

The word Gothic refers to gloomy , mystery, fear ,darkness, suspense, in addition to horror. Depending on the context, the word "Gothic" can signify many things. A Germanic people known as the "Goths" arrived in most of Europe between the 3rd and the 5th centuries AD. In architecture alludes to a resurgence of a medieval style that was popular in Britain from the early 18th to the late 19th century—more precisely, a cultural reconstruction. Such historical reconstructions that blend a feeling of "barbaric" Germanic tribes with a somewhat fantasticalized past provide rise to the Gothic literary genre (smith,2007) .

Gothic literature is a difficult genre to describe, mostly because its shape and key characteristics are still up for debate and no universally accepted definition exists. In the 18th century, the term "Gothic" was used disparagingly to describe art, architecture, and literature that did not meet the standards of neoclassical taste. It also signified "barbarous" and "mediaeval." "Gothic signified the absence of morality, reason, and beauty in feudal customs, beliefs, and works." The Gothic was a highly revolutionary literary genre in terms of both aesthetics and politics, challenging not just the aesthetics of the 18th century but also the social order, authority structures, and pressing social issues of the day. It first appeared amid times of political and religious turmoil, and as a result, it prospered. It's quite challenging to

pinpoint Gothic's exact beginnings. As a genre, Gothic art is generally regarded as belonging to the 2nd half of the 18th and 1st half of the 19th centuries. It is thought to have begun with the publication of Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* in 1764 and continued until Charles Maturin's *Melmoth The Wanderer* in 1820. However, critics are left in a position where they must create new categories for the works that carry on the Gothic legacy when they give the Gothic a specific ending. As a result, several critics, including Montague Summers, Edith Birkhead, Robert Mayo, and Devendra Varma, believe that the Gothic subgenre died in 1820 (Potter,2005)..or, as David Richter put his words: "the Gothic is to all intents and purposes dead by 1822" .(Byron and Townshed 2014).

However, some critics, such as David Punter, Franz J. Potter, and Catherine Spooner, believe that Gothic never truly died but rather changed and evolved to represent various realities. They consider the years 1764 to 1820 to be part of the classic Gothic era. Furthermore, works such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Sheridan Le Fanu's *Uncle Silas* (1864), Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* or the Modern *Prometheus* (1823) are not a relic of the classic Gothic, but rather its inevitable development. Consequently, the 2nd wave of Gothic fiction ,might be explained as a time of resurgence. (Rata,2014)

Beginning in the middle of the 18th century, the Gothic tradition emerged at the same time that society split with the neo-classicists and ventured into new areas. Gothic fiction, which is frequently described as a literary genre that blends horror with fiction, combined with Romanticism and the paranormal to produce works that dealt with unusual subjects including disbelieved, black magic, and incest as well as gruesome (horrific) settings. Generally speaking, it included aspects of death, the sublime, solitude, cruelty, and terror "Gothic Fiction tells us the truth about our divided nature." (Milbank,2011). The Gothic Novel evolved from its origins a tribute to Middle Ages stories to become a literary tradition that represents nothing more than an open and sincere confession. As promised, it examined every aspect of the human psyche that was taboo or had not yet been spoken in public or in words that were convenient. In contemporary parlance, a taboo act is any action that is forbidden or restricted by social convention; however, the Gothic tradition, as defined by the literary school's then-popular novelists, was more of a psychological exploration, a self-challenge to recreate and accentuate everything that was at odds with society at the intersection of one's own personal beliefs and every dark fantasy that might have been conjured up in almost every individual's mind. (Johri,2021)

When examining Gothic fiction in the 1790s, it's critical to remember that it was a form into which an extensive range of cultural influences, from medievalism to Celtic nationalism, Shakespeare to Ossian, flowed rather than an odd offshoot of one specific literary genre. One consequence of this is that Gothic literature had a significant influence on the majority of the great authors of the 1770s through 1820s, or more specifically, the majority of the major poets of that era. Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats all contributed to the Gothic movement by defining a series of terrifying imagery that would have a significant impact on later literary history, so this was not just a passive receiver of influence. (Punter ,2013)

1.2 Young Adult Literature

Children's literature and young adult literature are 2 different genres. It 1st appeared in the 20th century as youths gained financial influence in the 1930s and became well-known in the 1960s. Because its main concepts, "young adult" and "literature," are dynamic and change as culture and society, which give their background, do, the term "young adult literature" is intrinsically ambiguous. When the phrase initially became widely used in the late 1960s, it was used to describe realistic fiction that was situated in the real (as opposed to imagined), modern world and that dealt with concerns, conflicts, and situations that young readers, around 12 to 18, would find interesting. Since the mid-1990s, young adult fiction has matured as a literary genre that embraces artistic creativity, experimentation, and risk-taking, despite previously being written off as a genre that consisted primarily of romances and problem novels. (Cart,2008)

In the last couple decades, young adult literature has really taken off. After being written off as a "genre" that was unreal, unintelligent, and of poor quality, young adult fiction is today frequently praised for being current, varied, creative, and bold. Young adult literature has actually increased in quantity and quality to the point where its appeal extends beyond its target readership. An estimated 55% of today's young adult readers are thought to be adults. The fact that YA literature so effectively responds to the interests and requirements of its readers is one of its greatest features. Teens and young adults are "in transition," always changing and trying to figure out who they are. They have emotional, intellectual, and social demands in addition to bodily ones. In the present-day YA, there are no boundaries when it comes to relationships, sexual identity, self-image, activism, or politics. Indeed, some contend that YA literature's broad appeal can be largely attributed to its greater responsiveness to these concerns than the publishing business as a whole. A varied range of writers and characters can also be found in YA literature. Fortunately, what started out as a selection of works written by and about white, straight women has expanded to include a diverse range of writers and characters. Many teenagers who are indigenous, of colour, poor, or disabled 1st encountered a character similar to themselves in a young adult novel. In addition, the writers themselves have taken on the role of role models, reflecting these teenagers in terms of gender, colour, and sexual orientation. Perhaps more significantly, YA fiction today gives teenagers the chance to read about characters who are different from themselves, which helps them develop their empathy, compassion, and understanding of others. (Deuell,2020)

Fiction that profoundly connects with the distinct experiences and difficulties that teenagers endure is known as YA literature. These books give readers sympathetic stories that reflect their own experiences by frequently examining themes of identity, self-discovery, and the transition to maturity. Readers and characters are strongly connected as a result of the protagonists' repeated struggles with friendship, 1st love, and social expectations.(Harrison& Ehlers, 2024)

According to Howarth, "Gothicism has always been an integral part of children's literature," and children "seem to have a greater connection to gothic elements due to their attraction for frequent emotional displays."(Howarth,2015) Howarth continues by explaining how gothic motifs can be used as a useful tool with a specific objective. He claims that

writers of early gothic children's books, such as the Grimm brothers, employed gothic themes to instruct young readers in manners and standards of society. However, he also notes that Gothicism was employed in previous gothic children's literature to frighten kids into conformity (Howarth, 2015). One of the gothic motifs that appears most frequently in children's books is the uncanny. According to Buckley, "one of the most useful theoretical tools for understanding children's fiction" is the uncanny. She also cites other academics who argue that childhood is inherently eerie, such as Lucy Rollin and Mark West (Buckley, 2015). In other words, this is a significant component of children's gothic literature. A frequent theme in several children's stories is the feeling that something is somewhat strange but familiar. The psychological phenomenon of the uncanny was explored in the 1900s, most notably by Sigmund Freud in his 1919 essay *"Das Unheimliche*," or "*The Uncanny*" in English. The uncanny feeling, according to Freud, is something familiar that has "gone through repression and then come out of it." It is, more precisely, the feeling that something is wrong. The uncanny is "that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar," according to Freud.(Freud,1919) The Oxford Dictionary merely characterizes the uncanny as "strange and difficult to explain" (Klakegg, 2022).

Unlike adult literature, children's literature primarily uses gothic for instructional objectives. Children are therefore expected to learn about the evil and perils of the world; frequently, a protagonist is entirely virtuous while his antagonist is exclusively bad. Gothic in children's literature is therefore not regarded as a subgenre of Gothic in adult literature for that reason. However, there were nursery rhymes that featured a variety of gruesome and horrifying incidents, particularly between 1764 and 1830; these rhymes are often known as "*The Haunted Nurseries"* (Townshend, 2008). These nurseries' themes were typically monsters or witches harming the safety of kids in close proximity to familiar locations such as homes, schools, and shops. As previously said, the goal of Gothic figures is to make kids more aware of the dangers of strangers rather than to frighten them (Koppensteiner, 2011). Gothic children's literature flourished around the end of the 20th century, and this period served as the foundation for the genre's rebirth. Authors of the era, like Enid Blyton's renowned 20th century series *The Famous Five* 3 (1941), employ many Gothic aspects in novel ways to depict children's experiences and childhood from a distinct angle. Their primary similarity is that the kids go on adventures and fight for what is rightfully theirs, but this is really a short-term fix to reclaim what is truly theirs.(Louadane,2021)

1.3 Gothic Elements

Gothic literature usually refers to books written during the years of the 1760s and 1820s by authors such as Mary Shelley, Ann Radcliffe, and Horace Walpole. These books have a lot in common: they highlight dread, frequently take place in historical locations, incorporate supernatural elements, have cliched characters, and have flawless literary suspense. Haunted castles, troubled heroines, evil characters, and otherworldly creatures like vampires and ghosts are all common themes in classic Gothic literature. The term's widespread use in both scholarly and mainstream literary discourse points to its persistent and wide-ranging influence. (Punter,2013)

The origin of the movement is around 1764.Gothic literature emerged in response to the political, social, psychological, and historical circumstances of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It was a movement that prioritized irrationality and passion over reason and logic and concentrated on ruin, decay, death, dread, and chaos. Horace Walpole is recognized for having written the 1st Gothic novel*, The Castle of Otranto*, in 1764, but his composition was based on a number of sources. Initially, Walpole capitalized on the burgeoning interest in anything medieval, and the medieval romance genre offered a universal structure for his writing. A philosophical foundation was also provided by Edmund Burke's 1757 work, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful*. *The Graveyard School of Poetry,* which flourished in the mid-1800s and offered the Gothic a literary and thematic framework, was named for the writers' focus on ruins, graveyards, death, and human mortality. In addition to being immensely popular, Walpole's book established the majority of the genre's standard tropes, including a complex plot, recurring characters, underground labyrinths, abandoned castles, and paranormal activity. The works of William Beckford, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Charles Brockden Brown, *Wieland* (1797), Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (1818), William Beckford*, Vathek* (1786), and Charles Robert Maturin, *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820), all came out shortly after *The Castle of Otranto* .The Gothic movement may have had a very simple beginning, but it is far more difficult to pinpoint the movement's end. Some authors who track the changes and evolution of Gothic literature during the 20th century are David Punter in *The Literature of Terror*: *A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* and Fred Botting in *Gothic.* Undoubtedly, a detailed analysis of the writings of Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, or Robert Louis *Stevenson's The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* during the 1800s reveals the Gothic movement's evolution and impact. The Gothic genre's continued influence can be seen in the 20th and 21st centuries' enduring obsession with horror, dread, the paranormal, vampires, werewolves, and other things that go bump in the night. Readers today can gain some understanding of the social and intellectual atmosphere of the Gothic period through its focus on the dark side of human nature and the jumble of irrationality.

Dreams and nightmares alike may be found throughout the 1750s and 1850s, a period marked by revolution and reason, insanity and rationality. (Galens,2002)

Horace Walpole was the 3rd and youngest child of the distinguished minister Sir Robert Walpole, the Whig hero and the person who preserved the throne of these countries for the current Royal Family. Under his nurturing leadership and direction, the nation prospered in peace for over 2 decades.(Walpole,2015)

Horace Walpole, the Earl of Orford, was born in London on September 24, 1717. After attending Eaton and Cambridge for his education, Walpole made connections with early members of the so-called Graveyard School of Poetry, including Thomas Ashton, Richard West, and Thomas Gray. In particular, Gray had an impact on Walpole's formation of a Gothic imagination. Another significant factor in Walpole's evolution as a Gothic writer came from his visit to the Continent with Gray in 1739, which included climbing the Alps. Strawberry Hill was a house on the Thames River near Twickenham that Walpole bought in 1747. For over 30 years. Walpole constructed and remodeled the home, transforming it into a

"little Gothic castle," as he put it. At Strawberry Hill, Walpole also started a private press. Additionally, Walpole set up a private press at Strawberry Hill, from which he published *The Castle of Otranto*, his most well-known book, in December 1774. At 1st, Walpole concealed his identity as the work's author by claiming that William Marshall had translated an Italian medieval work. But the work was well received, and Walpole acknowledged his own writing in the 2nd edition. In a letter to a friend, he said that the novel's idea had struck him in a dream. Because *The Castle of Otranto* was the 1st Gothic novel ever written, it is especially important. In fact, the tale laid the groundwork for almost all of the conventions that would later be found in Gothic literature. Following a lengthy career involving letters, politics, and innovative architecture, Walpole passed away on March 2, 1797, in Berkeley Square, London. (Galens,2002)

The most well-known author of early Gothic fiction was Ann Radcliffe. In the 1790s, as the Gothic fiction genre was peaking in popularity in both England and America, she created a number of Gothic fiction works. In July of 1764, Ann Ward was born in London. She was William Ward and Ann Oates' only child. She had a good education. Ann enrolled in a school in 1772 that was taught by Sophia and Harriet Lee, 2 of the 1st women to write Gothic theater and fiction. Ann Ward, a journalist, wed William Radcliffe in 1787 and went on to run the English Chronicle. Her spouse has been a huge source of support in her life, and despite not having children, their marriage appears to be joyful and marked the start of her writing career. She was urged to pursue writing seriously by him, who acknowledged her aptitude. He is referred to be her "nearest relative and friend" in the Preface of *A Journey Made in the Summer of 1794* through Holland and the Western Frontiers of Germany (1795). Professor Diane Long Hoeveler speculates that Radcliffe began writing for fun because she had plenty of free time—her husband was a busy guy who frequently stayed late at work. She adds that her "little tales of corpses, poison, and adultery" entertain her spouse. (Mahmood,2016)

Radcliffe authored a number of Gothic romances that influenced the genre's development for many years. In fact, the name Radcliffe is almost a byword for a specific Gothic subgenre that employs the paranormal but usually concludes with reason. In contrast to other more well-known Gothic authors, Radcliffe was relatively unknown despite her enormous literary achievement. *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* the book that Radcliffe would go on to become her most well-known work, was released in 1794.The setting of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is a rough mountains, just like in other Gothic books. But most people agree that Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), written in response to Lewis's *The Monk*, is the better book. Radcliffe, who is regarded as the most important Gothic writer of all time, stopped writing at the height of her success because she was not happy with how her works were being used. In London, Ann Radcliffe passed away unexpectedly on February 7, 1823.(Galens,2002)

Eminently, genre-defining works like these also redefine their forebears in retrospect, revealing that Gothic elements can also be seen even in the earlier works that established the English novel tradition: Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722), and Samuel Richardson's epistolary tales of seduction and betrayal *Pamela* (1740), *Clarissa (*1747-1748), and even much earlier in the romance tradition, such as in Thomas Nashe's picaresque *The Unfortunate Traveller*

(1594), as well as portions of Shakespeare's plays and a great deal of Jacobean tragedy. Rather than a simple matter of imitation and adaptation, substituting the wilderness and the city for the subterranean rooms and corridors of the monastery, or the remote house for the castle, or the dark and dangerous woods for the bandit-infested mountains of Italy, certain unique cultural pressures led Americans to the Gothic as an expression of their very different country. This direction was taken from the earliest period of American Gothicism—some critics have seen almost all American writing as a Gothic literature into other directions. Less toward Walpole and Radcliffe, perhaps, more toward Godwin and James *Hogg's Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824*); or, in Poe's case, the extravagant sensationalism of Blackwood's *Edinburgh Monthly Magazine*.(Lloyd-Smith,2004)

Gothic work is the result of the combination of its elements. Putting gothic elements into two lists—concrete and abstract—is easier. Concrete elements are the actual gothic items that are available to the senses, such as the scene and the character. An ancient castle or palace, which may be empty; inhabited, or ambiguously inhabited, is usually the focal point of the scene. To increase the mystery and tension, these buildings frequently have trap doors, hidden chambers, secret passageways, dim stairwells, and rotting areas. The eerie ambiance is enhanced by the nearby caves, which occasionally house terrible creatures like vampires, zombies, or monsters. Gothic settings have been updated to include either new or old homes, with lighting used to create a sense of claustrophobia and entrapment. The feeling of dread is heightened by darkness, whether it comes from sudden power outages during a storm or from desertion. Close-ups in movies further influence the viewer's emotional reaction by coordinating with the visual and narrative components to evoke a sense of dread and terror through the use of odd camera angles and music. (Harris,2014)

Abstract elements are ideas or concepts like the motifs: themes, symbols, or literary devices. Gothic literature has been greatly influenced by the vengeful heroes of Elizabethan and Jacobean theater. Making up for harm done is one concept of revenge. Whether revenge can ever be suffered without returning to the same dehumanization that resulted in Cane's 1st crime is the key question. As a result, the attacker finally becomes the shape of the person he is trying to seek vengeance on. (Mahmood,2016)

There was still the horror of death haunting the imagination. In terms of literary innovation and artistic brilliance, fear had always kept the gothic alive; eventually, the genre rose from its early grave. It is still with us now that it has. The fact that death is still the most basic human feeling is demonstrated by the pervasive consumption of death in these made-up worlds and in literature, from Bram Stoker's vampires and the 19th century necromancers to J. K. Rowling's Death Eaters. In order to explore terror in their portrayals of death, the gothic genre used dramatic, theatrical settings and action, eliciting feelings like panic, horror, disgust, or mourning. The gothic literary imagination aimed to depict death as a continuous spectacle. It examines the death-related imagery seen in several Gothic novels and draws attention to the rich legacy that Gothic literature is based on.(Hakola and Kivistö,2017)

The most enduring character in science fiction is the ghost. He can be found in Gothic romance, Christian hagiography, classical mythology, medieval legends, and 20th century literature with equal abandon. He adapts to the literary fads, yet he never goes out of style. He is the only truly permanent resident of this planet because, at most, mortals are merely

passing through .He fits well in shape as well. Despite appearing ethereal and vaporous, the ghostly material of materialization has an incredible resilience .Like death, the ghost has no set seasons and there is never a closed season for spooks. The length of the ghost stories in the past and the present is one area where they diverge.(Scarborough,1917) But, it's also crucial to take into account how class-bound themes are expressed in ghost stories, as these tales of haunted middle-class homes also articulate class worries that subtly address the dangers of home ownership. (Smith,2007)

1.4 Guadalupe Garcia McCall

At the age of 6, Guadalupe Garcia McCall and her family left their hometown of Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico, and came to the United States, . Her home town of Eagle Pass, Texas, a village on the Rio Grande border. In a home full of cultural history, literature, and storytelling, McCall's parents encouraged her to follow her passions "I've been writing since my Papi-put a pencil in my hand and I heard it whisper with its magical voice across the page "Her talents were also fostered by her professors.

After reading a narrative I wrote in Spanish, Mr. Hernández, my 3rd grade teacher, asked me if I planned to pursue writing as a career. It was that that sowed the seed. Then, Ms. Garcia and Ms. Urbina in high school thought I had the ability to get published. My math instructor and mentor, Ms. Moses, hoped the same for me. She gave me a copy of Writer's Digest as a high school graduation present, and I will never forget it. Peers offered support as well, according to McCall, who adds, "I wrote love poems and love stories for my friends in middle school." "I suppose you can say I was writing to the market back then, writing what my readers were demanding" McCall started writing as a young adult to help herself grow and to record her own maturation: "Once I started high school, I learned to write for myself, to purge, to cleanse, to reflect, to make sense of the world around me, and to find my place. "The experiences and cultures she encountered as a child growing up in Northern Mexico and the Texas-Mexico borderlands enhanced her voice. (McCall,2013)

Daniel Chacón, the chair of UTEP's creative writing program, has called Guadalupe "... one of the most important writers in Texas and Latinx literature as well as mainstream fiction and poetry." Her books have received high praise from critics and numerous honors. At George Fox University, Guadalupe is a tenure-track professor at the moment. After earning her MFA, she was able to seek for jobs at universities and end her 20-year tenure as a San Antonio high school teacher. (McCall,2017)

"I have been in love with writing ever since. It is an art form, a gift from my father, his legacy to me." During our time in Mexico, my father introduced me to writing, though not in the conventional sense. Every weekend, he placed me on his lap and drew pictures with letters and numbers. As he drew the letters, each curl and swirl combined to create a tiny animalito or caricatura that leapt off the paper. He left me a journal so I could write during the week while he was gone for work in the United States. Since then, I have been deeply in love with writing. It is an artistic medium, bestowed upon me by my father as a legacy. (Ellington,2018)

1.5 *The Keeper*

The familial connection between Mexican American narrator James McNichols, 12, and his sister Ava, 10, is strained when they relocate from Texas to a suburban Oregon area. The recent passing of the brothers' cherished abuelita and the acrimony that has seeped into their continuing prank war make the transition even more difficult. The family is greeted with warmth and encouragement from their new neighbors, James from *The Keeper*, but shortly after, sinister letters warning that James needs to prove himself in order to keep his family safe and referring to an impending lunar event arrive. The preteen, who is already experiencing self-doubt due to his new environment, questions whether the family is intentionally being made to feel alienated or whether there is anything supernatural going on. After calling a brief truce, James and Ava set out to solve the terrifying riddle of their new community. A heartwarming story of sibling bravery, García McCall skillfully blends poignant moments of familial affection with moments of actual fear to propel this mystery from a meandering beginning to a neat and gratifying conclusion.(Cascardi,2021)

Gothic novelists carefully chose the real location of a scene to set the tone since the atmosphere and surroundings of a work directly contributed to the reader's feeling of horror and unease. Some of the environments that authors commonly use are dark forests, frightening mountainous areas, menacing storms, and foreboding weather patterns. Early Gothic literature romanticized medieval castles and made them a major theme. For instance, Gothic author Mary Shelley invented the character of a monstrous monster and arranged her scenes in eerie locations like graveyards and dark castles to accentuate the unsettling plot of her novel *Frankenstein*, which was released in 1818. Exoticism and uncharted territory fascinated a lot of the early writers. This was covered in William Beckford's 1786 book *Vathek*, an omniscient tale about an unstable and turbulent reigning Arabian caliph. It helped spark interest in Arab and Asian culture and is situated in the Middle East. (Invaluable,2019)

Guadalupe Garcia McCall creates a story in *The Keeper* that is firmly anchored in Gothic literary traditions and uses settings that evoke the uncanny and the unknown. In addition to providing a backdrop for the events taking place, the contemporary novel's locales actively contribute to the Gothic mood, heightening the themes of terror, loneliness, and the paranormal.

> The darkness comes upon us so quickly, I just know it’s a sign. This move across the country to Brentville, Oregon, is all wrong for us. I can feel it, deep down in the pit of my stomach—leaving Texas was a big mistake. Selling our little house in Somerset was a mistake too, because now we don’t have a place to go back to. But the biggest mistake was moving all the way up here, to a state known for having the largest fungus in America. Honestly, who brags about that? Not that I could’ve stopped any of it. I’m only twelve years old. Wherever my parents go, I have to go with them, fungus or no fungus. “It’s going to rain,” I say, peering up at the darkening sky. “It always rains out here, you know. We’ll be wet and miserable for the rest of our lives” (McCall,2022,p8).

The Gothic ambiance of *The Keeper* is largely shaped by the family's new residence on Pine Circle. A feeling of mystery and discomfort is immediately evoked by McCall's depiction of this scene. Pine Circle embodies the Gothic concept of the uncanny—familiar yet unnerving—with its well-planned homes and picture-perfect neighborhood. An atmosphere that smacks of mystery and tension. This is frequently accomplished by utilizing empty ruined estates, ominous settings, and isolated locales. These environments serve as a background for the other traditional Gothic tale components, such madness, monsters, and ghosts.

Anything that transcends logic and nature, or that cannot be explained by natural causes, is considered supernaturalism in general. Supernatural beliefs have long been a part of human history and are found in many societies. Supernaturalism is a belief in an afterlife or extraterrestrial existence that is sometimes connected to religion. (Ali and Efriza,2020)

> " I wake up the next morning with a new goal in mind. I'm going to be a good son. Even if I'm not happy about leaving my two best friends, Beto and Mike, back in Texas, I decide to pretend that I'm okay for a while. Because the sooner I can convince my parents that everything's all right, the sooner I can get my phone back. Then I can text with Beto and Mike and listen to my Ita's "Kooky Cuentos" or "Consejos From the Other Side"— the two collections of videos I recorded on my phone, before she passed away. It's the only thing I have left of her. "(McCall ,2022 ,p18).

Videos and Tales from Ita Given that Ita's stories feature monsters and ghouls from the Rio Grande and that James and Ava are meant to remain connected to her even after her death, the recordings of her "Kooky Cuentos" and "Consejos From the Other Side" allude to a paranormal relationship. This connects to the Gothic idea that the past continues to haunt the present .The main character talks about his Ita's "Kooky Cuentos" or "Consejos From the Other Side," which are videos that were shot immediately before her death. This allusion to "the other side" suggests communication or direction from beyond the graveyard, suggesting a supernatural link. Gothic literature frequently deals with the idea of the dead having an impact on the living, which gives the story an element of the paranormal. The reference to "Consejos From the Other Side" creates a paranormal element by indicating that the grandmother's wisdom might still be useful or reachable in some otherworldly capacity. This is consistent with the Gothic tradition of including ghosts or spirits that have an impact on the choices and actions of the living spirits.

Gothic authors frequently employ melodrama or "high emotion" to make their points. The chaotic, passionate language aids in expressing the fear and worry that permeate many characters. Many of the Gothic books from the 20th century that portrayed psychosis have themes of madness and mental trauma. *The Yellow Wallpaper*, a short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, is narrated from the viewpoint of an after giving birth depressed lady. (Invaluable,2019).

> But I never strike out! I want to scream. I never miss. I don't always catch the fly balls, and I won't steal a base, but I always hit the ball over the fence. It's my only gift. It's my only talent. Ava has science and math and formulas and numbers, but I have this. I have baseball.(McCall,2022,p49)

The saying goes, "But I never strike out! I want to scream. I never miss. I don't always catch the fly balls, and I won't steal a base, but I always hit the ball over the fence. It's my only gift. It's my only talent. Ava has science and math and formulas and numbers, but I have this. I have baseball," conveys a deep emotional and psychological conflict. The speaker's strong bond with their baseball skill is not only a source of pride but also an essential component of who they are and how valuable they feel. This deep emotional commitment is associated with the Gothic tradition, which frequently examines the inner turmoil and psychological difficulties of people. Characters that struggle with strong emotions and psychological states—such as terror, obsession, or feelings of inadequacy—are common in Gothic literature. The speaker's desperate attempt to cling to their talent as their "only gift" is reminiscent of the Gothic concept of rejecting one's anxieties and perceived shortcomings in order to cling to a single source of identity. Gothic stories frequently feature coping mechanisms as a way for characters to deal with inner fears, which motivate their external behaviours through psychological fights within. This is the case with the preoccupation at hand. Furthermore, a comparison to demonstrate to Ava, who is exceptional in "science and math and formulas and numbers,"(McCall,2022,p49) draws attention to a recurring topic in young adult fiction the struggle with adolescent self-identification and validation. Young adult fiction frequently has hero attempting to make sense of the complexities of self-discovery, emotional highs and lows, and the pursuit of approval and recognition. The speaker's use of baseball as a defining characteristic highlights the complex emotional landscape that characterizes young adult characters, who often struggle to stand out in a society that celebrates a wide range of abilities and accomplishments.

In Gothic fiction, as in other literary styles, villains are essential characters. Traditional Gothic literature used male characters who were authoritarian and in positions of authority, such as priests or kings, as their villains. Their deceitful nature is concealed from the reader by their complexity and initial sympathy. Complex, evil characters include Dracula and Mr. Hyde from Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.(Invaluable,2019) Typically, male characters in positions of authority serve as the embodiment of villains. To conceal their dishonest nature, authors sometimes portray these characters as empathetic. (Bal,2024)

> Only by taking the life force of a courageous youngblood can we begin to control the elements and ensure our safety and security for another twenty-five years. Thank you, James. Thank you for safeguarding our future! (McCall,2022,p158)

By expressing gratitude to James for something that is intrinsically wicked it could be interpreted as a deceptive strategy to justify or glorify their behaviour. Gothic villains are known for their deceit. Gothic villains frequently act in ethically suspicious ways, making the reader question what is good and evil. This ambiguity is reflected in the quotation, where the antagonist argues the taking of a life as a necessary measure to maintain safety and security,

the antagonists in this passage are deceiving him. This demonstrates their capacity to distort reality and make their evil deeds seem advantageous. A deep-seated yearning for power and control is evident in the desire to maintain control over the weather and guarantee safety and security for a further twenty five years. This is a characteristic shared by villains who frequently try to control both their surroundings and other people. Their deficiency in morals and empathy is proved by their readiness to take the life energy of a "courageous youngblood". They demonstrate their ruthlessness by being willing to sacrifice innocent lives for their own benefit. Given that the villains think that taking a life is essential to their survival, the concept of sacrifice is clear. The persecution of a "courageous youngblood" highlights the Gothic and young adult literary recurrent topic of the corrupting of innocence. It highlights how helpless kids are in the face of wickedness. The study shows how the quotation best captures the core of villainy in *The Keeper*, fusing Gothic motifs with ideas of control, selflessness, and mind control.

Conclusion

The study focused on the importance of Gothic elements in writings meant for young readers and how they contribute to stories that are rich and expressive. The reader's enjoyment of Gothic literature's aesthetic value and its psychological effects on teenagers can both be icreased by improving comprehension of these components. Ultimately, the purpose of the novel and others is to raise young people' awareness of strange and enigmatic phenomena rather than scaring them.

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