T.C. KOCAELİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
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BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATLARI ANABİLİM DALI
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI BİLİM DALI

REVISITING THE GOTHIC TRADITION IN STEPHAN KING'S *PET SEMATARY*

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ÖZET

Bu tez, Stephen King'in *Pet Sematary* adlı modern korku romanında Gotik unsurları incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Gotik kurgu on sekizinci yüzyılda ortaya çıkmış olup günümüzde de varlığını sürdürmektedir. *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), bu türün temellerini atan ilk Gotik eseri olarak kabul edilir. Aynı dönemdeki ve sonrasındaki yazarlar, Horace Walpole'un izinden giderek yazara özgü yazım tarzını benimsemiştir. Gotik kurgunun ortaya çıkmasında birçok sosyal, siyasi, ekonomik ve edebi faktör bulunmaktadır. Bu türün erken dönem eserleri, Gotik kurgunun geleneksel özellikleri olarak tanınan stok unsurları kullanmış ve her yazarın kendine özgü Gotik dünyasını yansıtmıştır. Bu unsurlar, yazarlar tarafından okuyucuların değişen Gotik kurgu anlayışı ve zevkine hitap etmesi için uyarlandıkça dönemlere göre farklılık göstermiştir. Bu tez, Gotik kurgunun kökenine ilişkin genel bir bakış sunmakta, kelimenin çeşitli perspektiflerden anlamını keşfetmekle başlamaktadır. Farklı dönemlerden önemli edebi eserleri vurgulamakta ve hedeflenen duygusal tepkileri ortaya çıkarmada önemli roller oynayan 'yücelik' ve 'tekinsizlik' gibi bu türün gelişimine katkıda bulunan teorileri araştırmaktadır. Son olarak, tez, Stephen King'in modern bir korku eseri olan *Pet Sematary*'deki yaygın Gotik unsurları incelemektedir. King, masal anlatıları, realizm ve romantizm gibi diğer türlerin ve edebi akımların öğelerini birleştirerek korku edebiyatı yazma konusundaki benzersiz formülüyle tanınır. Roman yazarı, geleneksel Gotik unsurları kullanmanın yanı sıra, Gotik mekanı, atmosferi, doğaüstü varlıkları ve ölüm temalarını yeniden hayal ederek modern okuyucuların zevkine hitap etmek için yeni unsurlar da oluşturmaktadır ki bu da ona kendi kalıcı mirasını yaratan 'modern' bir korku yazarı olarak değer kazandırmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Stephen King, *Pet Sematary*, Gotik kurgu, Gotik unsurlar.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to examine the Gothic elements in Stephen King's *Pet Sematary*, a modern horror novel. Gothic fiction emerged in the eighteenth century and still exists today. *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is regarded as the first Gothic work, laying the foundation for this genre. Other contemporary writers and writers of subsequent periods followed Horace Walpole's footsteps and adopted his unique writing style. There are many social, political, economic and literary factors in the emergence of Gothic fiction. Early works in this genre utilized stock elements that came to be recognized as the conventional features of Gothic fiction reflecting each author's distinct Gothic world. These elements differed across eras, as authors tailored their works to appeal to readers' evolving tastes and understanding of Gothic fiction. This thesis provides an overview of the origin of Gothic fiction, starting with an exploration of the word's meaning from various perspectives. It highlights significant literary works from different periods and explores theories that contributed to the development of this genre, such as the sublime and the uncanny, which played pivotal roles in eliciting the desired emotional responses. Finally, the thesis investigates the prevailing Gothic elements in *Pet Sematary*, a relatively modern horror fiction by Stephen King. King has always been known for his unique formula of writing horror fiction by blending other types of genres and literary movements such as fairy tales, Realism and Romanticism. He is making use of the traditional Gothic elements as well as creating new ones for the modern readers' taste by reimagining the Gothic setting, atmosphere, supernatural beings and themes of death, which gives credit to him as the 'modern' horror writer who has created his own enduring legacy.

Keywords: Stephen King, *Pet Sematary*, Gothic fiction, Gothic elements

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INTRODUCTION

Gothic fiction is a genre of literature that has gained popularity since its emergence at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Roger Luckhurst describes this genre as "disordered, dark and labyrinthine" (2005: xi). Gothic fiction characterized itself by handling themes such as madness, death, forbidden knowledge, powers, decay and other themes that were not familiar in the world of literature. In addition, it depends on certain features such as mysterious atmospheres, supernatural and inexplicable events that are full of terror, horror and suspense. Haunted castles, abandoned homes or places, dreadful settings and atmospheres constitute inseparable elements of Gothic fiction. The Gothic genre frequently incorporates emotions like an overwhelming feeling contrasted with intense anguish, uncertainty, horror, dread and feeling helpless. The emergence of Gothic fiction was affected by several factors. It was considered a reaction against the Enlightenment movement which advocated reason, logic and rationality. However, Gothic fiction expressed and focused on the irrational, the emotional and the supernatural which was a central component of this genre. As Luckhurst argues that "Gothic fiction was everything that offended neoclassical taste" (2005: x). Furthermore, it "mixed up categories of life and death, past and present, reason and fancy, wakefulness and dream" (xi). On the other hand, the changing social and political climate in England and Europe was another important factor that led to the emergence of Gothic fiction.

Regarding the history of Gothic as a term and its development, Luckhurst declares that the term 'Gothic' "came into common use in the eighteenth century to denote the opposite of Western Europe, of civilization, of reason and order" (2005: x). This term or word was used to describe a variety of meanings and definitions throughout history. First, it referred to a Germanic tribe that settled in parts of Europe and battled the Roman Empire. Then it referred to a style of medieval architecture that was characterized by high-pointed arches and vaults. Moreover, it referred to some linguistic meanings associated with barbarism, medieval times and the supernatural. The association between Gothic fiction and Gothic architecture from the early years of the genre was considerable because Gothic architecture started to be used as a dark, obscure, evil and bizarre style seen in Gothic fiction. The original objective of the

Gothic style of architecture, which differed from its usage in fiction, was to produce open and bright interiors. For a very long period, several critics dismissed Gothic literature as insignificant. Therefore, many had trouble defining Gothic fiction which has, nonetheless, endured and changed over the years in both content and form. The term Gothic did not start to be used to describe a specific literary genre until the 1790s to 1820s.

Producing a Gothic work follows certain conventions and elements. These elements of Gothic fiction are considered universal because many authors followed the first style set by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764). A traditional work of the early Gothic works included specters, monsters, demons and evil aristocrats. Since Gothic fiction aims to provoke feelings of terror and horror. It is critical to comprehend the distinction between these two kinds of Gothic works. Early Gothic novels often took place in locations such as medieval castles or ruins because of their associations with barbarism, superstition and horror. The landscapes were desolate, alienating and full of danger and set in wild and mountainous locations. The atmosphere, a crucial component of Gothic fiction, is characterized as a world of evil and oppressive fear that authors utilize to illustrate the events in their works. Readers experience feelings of the sublime and the uncanny because of the Gothic atmosphere which is inseparably connected to the setting as well.

The use of supernatural elements is a crucial aspect of Gothic fiction. It has been utilized in various forms throughout the centuries. The supernatural is often used to create feelings of terror and horror in readers by evoking the imagination and depicting unknown and frightening events. Some Gothic authors utilize the supernatural as unexplained incidents, whereas others use it to describe supernatural phenomena that are afterwards clarified through reason. Gothic fiction regularly employs death as a source of horror because it stimulates an atmosphere of dread and despair. Many different types of death are portrayed in Gothic fiction including murder, suicide, illness, injuries and terrifying events. Moreover, dreams and nightmares are also frequently included in stories to amplify the emotions of the characters and foreshadow what could take place next. The distinctive language utilized in Gothic fiction helps accomplish the goal of inciting fear, terror and horror. The gloomy and intriguing atmosphere that characterizes the genre is maintained by the deliberate choice of

certain words. In Gothic fiction, Gothic characters are important. From the earliest Gothic fiction to the present day, archetypal characters including tyrants, villains, bandits, maniacs, Byronic heroes and tortured maidens have undergone significant changes. In Gothic fiction, the villain's role is always the most complicated and remarkable. The social and political circumstances of each period contributed to the continual evolution of the characters in Gothic literature.

The American author Stephen King is well known for his works in science fiction, fantasy, suspense, horror and the supernatural. With the release of the first of his novels, *Carrie*, in 1974, King gained a reputation as an author. Since then, he has produced over sixty books and sold over 350 million copies. King's horror novels which combine aspects of Gothic fiction with other genres to produce distinct and convincing horror stories are what initially earned him popularity. As Harold Bloom points out that King is a very competent horror writer who relied on works written by other writers to create his own works with connections to those works. King employed the qualities of different types of horror works and mixed them to produce his writing style. Therefore, the qualities that he inherited from his predecessors could be seen in his fiction. (2007: 1). Even though King had inspiration from other authors and works, his success as a writer could be attributed to his unique writing style (10).

King’s novel *Pet Sematary* is a work of horror fiction that was published in 1983 and adapted into several movie versions. The novel explores several themes such as death, resurrection and forbidden emotions. King got the inspiration for the novel from his own family's experiences when his daughter's cat run over on a road near a pet cemetery. The novel was compared to Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* because both works examine the consequences of transcending the boundaries between life and death in addition to the use of zombie and resurrection concepts. However, King presents the novel from another perspective. He modernizes traditional Gothic features to create a unique formula of modern Gothic fiction that reflects cultural problems and social flaws in modern American life. King harshly criticizes society and gives a voice to those not visible in modern life.

The usage of Gothic elements in *Pet Sematary* is one of its most remarkable characteristics which this thesis tries to investigate. These elements provide the

novel with a sense of dread and gloom, and they are noticeable in various aspects. *Pet Sematary* could be a good example of a modern horror novel that utilizes heavily the traditions of Gothic fiction. The first chapter provides a historical background of Gothic origin and its development over time. The second chapter examines the elements of Gothic fiction from different periods since its emergence into modern times, dwelling on significant concepts regarding Gothic fiction. Gothic works are typically classified into two subgenres: terror Gothic and horror Gothic. While terror Gothic focuses on suspense and dread, horror Gothic relies on shocking and disturbing events with an emphasis on psychological aspects. Moreover, the sublime and the uncanny have an important and close relationship to Gothic fiction because they are used to create emotional responses in readers. Then, the chapter dwells on the elements of Gothic fiction: setting, atmosphere, supernatural, death, characters, dreams and nightmares. The third chapter analyzes *Pet Sematary* and traces the traditional Gothic elements used and reshaped by King in the novel.

CHAPTER ONE

1. GOTHIC AND LITERATURE

1.1. THE TERM GOTHIC

The word Gothic is commonly used to identify a variety of popular works from the period spanning the 1790s and the 1820s. However, before examining the works of that period, it is better to explore the meaning of the word Goth since it went through different evaluations according to its position in history before its application to a kind of literature. In their book *The Gothic*, David Punter and Glennis Byron state that for a long time, Gothic fiction has been a "notoriously difficult field to define" (2004: xviii). Therefore, Gothic fiction was a worthless study of interest for both critics and readers. However, despite this lack of interest, this fiction survived and evolved in both content and form. The term Gothic embodied many meanings and definitions. David Punter states in his book *The Literature of Terror* that

> The word 'Gothic' itself. It is a word which has, even now, a wide variety of meanings, and which has had many different meanings, and that had, even more, in the past. It is used in a number of different areas: as a literary term, as a historical term, as an artistic term, architectural term, and as a literary term in the contemporary usage; it has a range of different applications (1996: 1).

The first use of the term was historically associated with an approach referring to one of the Germanic tribes who battled the Roman Empire and spread chaos and devastation in the rest of Europe. According to Punter and Byron, some studies suggest that they were involved in a potential role in the decline of the Roman Empire. Unfortunately, due to a lack of early enough written records concerning the Goth tribes, there is not much certain information that could be known about them. However, archaeologists have found evidence of their earlier presence in the Baltic, and then the Goths migrated gradually to the Black Sea areas. Furthermore, it is claimed that the Goths attacked the Roman lands during the third century and overthrew the Roman Empire in AD 410. As a result, they constructed their kingdoms in France and Italy (2004: 3). Fred Botting argues that the origin of the Gothic word was "associated with the history of the northern Germanic nations whose fierce avowal of the values of freedom and democracy was claimed as an ancient heritage" (1996:

3). With a similar opinion, the fall of the Roman empire, according to Botting, was caused by these northern European Gothic tribes. Moreover, the Catholic Church came to be associated with Roman oppression. Therefore, Protestant countries in the northern part of Europe frequently included anti-Catholic themes in their Gothic fiction production (3).

The second belief is that the term Gothic started to be associated with Gothic architecture, a medieval style characterized by high-pointed arches and vaults, flying buttresses and complex recesses. These dominant features of architecture spread through Western Europe between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries (Abrams, 1999: 110). Gothic architecture was a structure developed during medieval times due to many problems when constructing and distributing heavy loads in big buildings. Therefore, this construction style was adopted throughout Europe to build churches, cathedrals, palaces and huge buildings. The primary purpose of the Gothic style was to provide airy light interiors with huge windows, high and vaulted ceilings, tall towers and other characteristics, all of that formed the perfect and comfortable places for dwelling (Joseph et al., 2017: 1231–1233).

Gothic literature adopted a different image of Gothic architecture, depicting the gloomy, mysterious, evil and strange style (Joseph et al., 2017: 1231–1233). There was a solid and evident relationship between Gothic novels and Gothic architecture at the beginning of Gothic works. However, the eighteenth century's political, social and cultural effects shadowed their weight on that relationship. It could be said that Gothic novels took their power from the buildings and edifices of that period which were mainly linked to architecture. As a result, Gothic novels became famous and popular. Fred Botting states that the "ruins and other forms of Gothic architecture assumed a different and positive significance in the course of the eighteenth century" (1996: 21). This is significantly reflected in chosen titles of some of the first Gothic novels that were associated with names of castles or other kinds of buildings. The most important thing to be known is that there has something to do with architecture. Considering the relationship between space and literature, Gothic fiction is related to the architectural spaces where the narratives and stories take place. Some examples that show the impact of architecture on Gothic works are: *The Castle of Otranto*, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho.* Botting describes the state of

Gothic architecture in the eighteenth century because of the response of some critics who preferred the classical structure of architecture to Gothic architecture due to several reasons. They preferred a structure that maintained uniformity and proportion, and they criticized the extravagant structure of Gothic architecture which according to them was deformed (1996: 20). From here, Botting declares that the "comparison between Gothic and classical architecture served only to display the superiority of the latter" (20). That might be the reason why Gothic architecture started to gain much interest and was used in literature.

Some studies examined the linguistic meaning of the word Gothic which expressed three connected meanings: barbarous, medieval and supernatural. In his article entitled "The Word "Gothic" in Eighteenth-Century Criticism", Alfred E. Longueil describes the linguistic development of the word Gothic undergoing several stages. Even though the word Gothic became popular in the eighteenth century, it existed long before that (1923: 453). In their works, very well-known English authors like Geoffrey Chaucer or William Shakespeare also used the word as a noun. For example, Chaucer mentioned it in Boethius I, Pr. iv."Theodoric, the king of Gothes.". Shakespeare mentioned it in *As You Like It*. For instance, in Act III, iii: "As the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths. …O knowledge ill-inhabited..". Edmund Spenser used it as an adjective in *Ruins of Rome*, xi, 8." Gothique cold "-i. e., the cold blood of the Gothic race" (qtd. in Longueil, 1923: 453). According to Longueil, during the early phase of the Renaissance, all things that had barbarous features were called Gothic, the Medieval architecture was an example of that. That is, the word barbarous meant Gothic. In the Renaissance with a romantic and democratic tendency, there was an acceptance of Gothic with a different meaning, medieval. Here, the word Gothic was used as an adjective meaning "if not of praise, at least of respectability" (453–55). Therefore, the first meaning was barbarous which modern English used the word as an adjective to refer to the sense of barbarity, implicating the meanings of ignorance, cruelty, or savageness (453-56). Dr. Samuel Johnson defined the word Gothic in his dictionary of 1775 as "one not civilized, one deficient in general knowledge, a barbarian" (455), and the use of the word with the meaning of barbarous continued to carry the same meaning to the next century.

In the eighteenth century, the second meaning of the word Gothic was medieval.

The meaning was different from the previous one, barbarous, due to the change from classical and pseudo-classical thinking to medieval one (Longueil, 1923: 458). Therefore, Gothic itself directly contradicted the classical that prevailed before the eighteenth century. The classical was known for being coherently ordered, pure and with simple features, and other cultural models that had to be abode by in order to produce classics. However, Gothic was "ornate and convoluted showing excess and exaggeration and it was the product of the uncivilized and wild" (Punter, 1996: 5). The association of the word Gothic with the Middle Ages has nothing to do with the first meaning of barbarous. Instead, the semantic meaning of the word remained the same, but the word started being used with a new sense; in other words, it was attached to a new point of view that bore the meaning of praise (1923: 458). The most important meaning was the last one, the word Gothic was associated with the supernatural. For example, the works of Horace Walpole and other writers who used the supernatural element associated the word Gothic with that meaning. With all the transformations of the linguistic development of the Gothic word as barbarous, medieval, and supernatural, it has become, at last, a literary term implicating the features of Gothic novels which are grotesque, ghastly, and violently supernatural in fiction (459).

1.2. GOTHIC IN FICTION

Gothic novels and stories appeared in the eighteenth century which witnessed the highest production period to the extent that the "1790 can be called the decade of Gothic fiction" (Botting, 1996: 40). Longueil, likewise, mentions that "the real history of Gothic" began with the eighteenth century when it signified a 'barbarous,' 'medieval' and 'supernatural' past" (1923: 4). One of the reasons that led to the appearance of Gothic fiction was the Enlightenment movement which played an important role in the emergence of Gothic literature as a new genre as a reaction to this movement: "The Enlightenment, which produced the maxims and models of modern culture, also invented the Gothic" (Punter, 2012: 13). Punter presents some of the other essential reasons that led to the appearance of Gothic literature in the late seventeenth century. In particular, the change that affected the English social structure, the change in the reading public interests and the political situation. The mid-seventeenth-century works were directed towards readers belonging to the aristocratic class. Also, the trade

and the expansion of the urban centers helped appear middle-class readers. In addition, the increase in the number of printing houses was significant in producing and spreading more fiction works as well as the huge change in reading habits and the number of circulating libraries that started to lend out books for a membership fee. The low and affordable prices enabled other literate classes to purchase books because the process of getting a book before that time was difficult due to its high price, especially for domestic servants (1996: 21).

Some writers suggest that the emergence of Gothic literature was a mere coincidence when the first work of Gothic was written. This work was not intended to be Gothic but a new approach in terms of literary writing. Hogle J. E. supports this idea: "The attachment of the term Gothic to the literature of terror is quite a recent development –and almost entirely accidental" (2002: 21). Thus, Horace Walpole was regarded as the founder of Gothic literature and his work *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is generally considered to be the first Gothic novel even though it was labeled as a story upon publication. The preface of the first edition of the novel, published in 1764, was presented as the translation of an ancient Italian manuscript written between 1095 and 1243 during the Crusades when the setting of the story took place. Yet, after the success of the novel, Horace Walpole mentioned in the second edition of the novel (1765) that the novel was his work and added the word Gothic to the title: *The Castle of Otranto: a Gothic Story* (21).

The Castle of Otranto (1764) was the earliest example of a Gothic novel that established many of the conventions that defined the writing style of the Gothic novel in the eighteenth century. As Botting also denotes that "many of the main ingredients of the genre that was known as the Gothic novel can be found in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*" (1996: 31). Therefore, the novel set an example to inspire and influence other authors of the early phase of Gothic novels who followed similar features in their works. *The Castle of Otranto* asserted the eighteenth-century notions of virtue and honor since the eighteenth century was the age of values, virtue and reason. Yet, the aristocratic order did not disappear totally. The novel itself favored imagination and authentic genius, focusing on individual values. Botting states that *The Castle of Otranto* represents the contradictions and tensions in eighteenth-century society and explores "the limitations of reason, virtue and honor in the regulation of

passions, ambitions and violence underlying patriarchal and family orders" (1996: 34). Among the most well-known early Gothic novels are Clara Reeve's The *Old English Baron* (1778), Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), *The Italian* (1797), Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) and Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Those authors intended to resort to the dark and mysterious past as a significant element in the novels, in addition to places such as old, far and abandoned castles. The surrounding nature was wild and untamed with hidden rooms, underground dungeons, heroines were pursued by evil figures, revenge and tormented villains. The early Gothic novels evoked the emotions of awe, terror and excitement by utilizing a monster or a villain.

As for *The Castle of Otranto*, Horace Walpole could gather the features of old poetry, drama and romance to produce a new literary genre. In his preface to the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole mentioned that he intended to make this work between the romance and the novel. His main aim was to avoid the neoclassical aesthetic values that prevailed in that period (Botting, 1996: 31). That is why it could be seen as a revolution in literature. Walpole declares that "the novel was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern" (qtd. in Botting, 1996: 31). Additionally, the novel was the outcome of mixing a medieval romance with a realistic novel, eliminating the constraints of both genres. Botting also adds that the realistic novel represented nature realistically and life limited the imagination, but the medieval romance was seen as "too unnatural and improbable" (31). Botting also states that Walpole desired to let fancy exist freely in the unlimited worlds of his work and wanted to produce more captivating scenarios as well as he wanted to keep a degree of probability and to depict his characters' behavior, thoughts and speech. Thus, he focused on showing extraordinary events rather than human characteristics and realistic actions (31). Similarly, Maggie Kilgour notes that Horace Walpole wrote *The Castle of Otranto* because he wanted to express his longing for the past, the idealized past which was like an escape. Walpole's own castle, Strawberry Hill, was a source of inspiration to embody the castle in his work. For Walpole, the past was safer and more secure than the present which was not fixed and kept changing. As a result, he showed that the old castles, pictures, stories and old chats between people make one live in each century without getting disappointed (1995: 17).

The *Castle of Otranto* was considered a work from "the first phase of Gothic fiction" that prevailed between the 1760s and the 1820s (Pykett, 2005: 195). However, as Roger Luckhurst notes that *Melmoth the Wanderer* by Charles Maturin marked the end of the first wave of Gothic fiction in 1820. Yet, Gothic fiction did not vanish entirely from the literature, but it retained its presence in some parts of Victorian works (2005: ix). In this regard, many critics disputed whether the Gothic novel ended, died, or even evolved into something different. Franz J. Potter argues that "we might be more likely to find that Gothic fiction disappeared between *Waverley* in 1814 and *Melmoth the Wanderer* in 1820" (4). David Richter supports the same opinion on the end of Gothic fiction in the 1820s and declares that

> [a]s an episode in literary history, the vogue of the Gothic from its beginnings in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* to its demise in the early 1820s is indeed a story with closure, since, as a genre, the Gothic is to all intents and purposes dead by 1822 (qtd. in Potter, 2005: 4).

The question of whether Gothic fiction is or has been dead was questionable. Therefore, it could be stated that Gothic fiction had a short life span from around 1764 until the peak of Gothic literature production in 1800 (Spooner and McEvoy, 2007: 29). However, Gothic did not die in the Victorian era, but several factors turned the attention to some new requirements, interests, problems and changes which brought a decline or low interest in classical Gothic fiction. The Victorian period can be seen in two aspects. For Spooner and McEvoy, the mid or high Victorian period between 1850 and 1870 coincided with economic prosperity and liberal form prevailed and spread. On the other hand, the late Victorian period in 1880 onwards coincided with escalating social unrest and a variety of crises that had an impact on the economy of Britain and its position as an empire (29). Similarly, literary studies went through a period of change as well. The *fin-de-siècle* was detached from the rest part of the century and developed into a field in itself focusing on social and political crises. Gothic fiction was not dead in the Victorian era but evolved into something different. The early Gothic works of the century tackled topics that interested that era. At the same time, the eighteenth-century Gothic managed to survive much longer but with significant change which led to the Victorian Gothic revival that started in the 1840s. The change in Gothic fiction in the Victorian period could be seen in new locations; for example, the setting was bourgeois and domestic in addition to the urban environment (2007:

29). Consequently, the influence of the Gothic could be seen in the works of famous Victorian writers such as Charles Dickens, Emily Brontë and Charlotte Brontë. Dickens's novels *Oliver Twist* (1838), *A Christmas Carol* (1843), Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), *Bleak House* (1853), *Great Expectations* (1861) and *The Woman in White* by Wilkie Collins (1859) include such Gothic elements.

The remarkable traits of the Gothic genre were distinctly seen in the eighteenth-century Gothic works. Botting describes Gothic fiction of the eighteenth century by saying that it was distinguished by the use of a certain structure and wild landscapes of Romantic individualism which later turned into other types of terror and horror closer to everyday life. It explored the uncanny boundaries between the real and unreal, issues of propriety and corruption and the clash between materialism and spirituality. (1996: 74). Traces of Gothic influence were evident in literary and popular fiction in the mid-nineteenth century. Despite the change in style, the influence of writers from that period still existed somehow. The mid-nineteenth century Gothic works impressed and adopted new ideas and techniques. Ghosts, doubles and mirrors reflected an essential part of Gothic. The bourgeois family was a source of anxiety as it often involved ghosts returning to disclose the family's guilty secrets and unknown class origins. Moreover, horror was shown through the modern city which was portrayed as industrial, gloomy, labyrinthine, violent and corrupt. As the nineteenth century was the century of inventions and discoveries, writers of this period depicted these in their works as a source of terror. Thus, scientific discoveries were a means of terror. Crime and the criminal mentality demonstrated a new threat by figures disintegrating society and individuals (74). Gothic fiction became more tremendous than before towards the end of the nineteenth century: "At the end of the nineteenth century, familiar Gothic figures—the double and the vampire—re-emerged in new shapes, with a different intensity and anxious investment as objects of terror and horror" (88). In the 1880s, Gothic returned with famous works including Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891), Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stocker, Arthur Machen's *The Great God Pan* (1894) and H.G.Well's *The Island of Dr. Moreau* (1896) (88).

Many events led to the appearance of these works such as concerns and worries that commenced to spread and affect society in late-Victorian Britain. As a result, the Gothic works of that period reflected the fears and anxieties that accompanied the decline of the nation, society and the human self (Punter, 2012: 187). There was no doubt that the crisis in Western civilization had an enormous impact on late-Victorian Britain whose imperial power started to decline with the appearance of other rivals such as: Germany and the United States of America. Britain lost its markets worldwide and had growing unrest in the colonies under its control. In addition, there was suspicion about the morality of the imperial mission that Britain presented to other nations (186). Also, the outcomes of the industrial revolution began to appear in British society which experienced social and psychological changes. Crime and disease spread in the poor streets of cities, and there was a flux of farm workers to cities due to the agricultural depression. Traditional values and family structures faced challenges in a nation previously regarded as morally superior. Late Victorian Britain began to sense the dark side of progress (186). In particular, the scientific theories that tackled human nature resulted in a conflict between science and religion. Botting observes that the contradiction over scientific issues resulted in a peculiar change concerning the relationship between religion and science where spiritualism and the popularity of ghost stories determined the type of that relationship. Darwinism and its known works, *On the Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin and *The Descent of Man* (1871), created scientific issues that impacted late-Victorian society. Darwin's theories make humans closely related to the animal kingdom and challenge the belief in human superiority and privilege that had been previously held. In addition, some works focused on the criminal mind of human nature such as those by Cesare Lombroso and Max Nordau who were criminologists who attempted to discriminate between the natures of human beings using anatomical and psychological theories to identify criminal types. Therefore, the nineteenth-century Gothic blended supernaturalism with science aiming to handle the anxieties and pressures caused by social norms and to contain the excessive desires of human nature. In terms of literature, the nineteenth century was full of the production and consumption of supernatural works (1996: 89).

In addition, the late nineteenth-century Gothic works explored themes related to

the changing, developing, decaying and corrupting human mind and body. In other words, the Gothic works of that period responded to the evolutionary, medical and social theories that emerged. Two good examples of this era are *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) and *Dracula* (1897). The former is about a man who takes advantage of science in a way that makes him an addict and leads to his degeneration. The latter is the story of a dangerous man who became a source of threat to London. These two works represent the anxieties of the late nineteenth century because they tackle the themes of science, crime and desire. In *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* Botting argues that "scientific theories disclose the instability of the dualities that frame cultural identity" (1996: 91). From this point, science indicated a source of anxiety for that era. The novel addresses the issues that concern human nature and sexuality in respect of law and science (93). Dr. Jekyll, the crazy scientist, conducts experiments that are weird for the current society and results in evil outcomes. The novel depicts the life of Victorian society in London. At that time, the fast changes, scientific theories and technological progress confused the lives of people who tried to maintain their religious and moral values as a reaction to what was happening. Dr. Jekyll had the intention to cure his patients through modern medical methods. The title of the novel 'Strange Case' implicates a challenge against law, order and reason (91). Dr. Jekyll invented a drug that separated normal individuals from deviant ones resulting in having two personalities: "Although I had now two characters as well as two appearances, one was wholly evil, and the other was the same old Henry Jekyll" (Stevenson, 1886: 85). The two personalities of Dr. Jekyll could be called the double as an element of Gothic fiction. The purpose of the double in the novel serves to reveal the ambiguity of identity and the fragility of the social, moral, and scientific norms that create divisions between people, instead of setting definite limits for what is considered good or bad or the differences between oneself and others (92).

Similarly, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* "feeds off prevailing cultural anxieties concerning corruption, sexuality and spirit" (Botting, 1996: 100). The setting of the novel represents the anxieties of Victorian society such as the fears of colonization or immigration, homosexuality, female sexuality and the appearance of psychological issues and disorders. At that time, the British Empire as an imperial force was dominating the world and reached the highest level of industrial technologies which

had a great impact on people's lives. Stoker displayed the tension that occurred in society due to the old and new transformations. Nevertheless, the old doctrines and traditions still controlled Victorian society and culture, and the new lifestyle turned out to be a danger to society's norms. Stoker tried to show the contradiction between science and the "alchemical powers that surround contemporary science" (1996: 94). Superstition, folklore stories, the fear of the stranger and sexuality were all common themes reflected in Victorian Gothic works as well. Botting states that the sexual images in the novel had significance in the context of the late nineteenth century, despite their potentially controversial nature (94). In addition, he adds that the vampire theme in the novel represents the brutalities that can arise from people's arrogance and misguided beliefs in science. (93). Consequently, the character of Dracula represented and embodied the transgression of codes and laws that society imposed.

According to Botting, Gothic fiction in the twentieth century is "everywhere and nowhere" (1996: 101). Such a claim is due to the fact that twentieth-century Gothic fiction did not maintain the same features as the nineteenth century. He argues that

> Much of the writing linked to Gothic in the early part of the twentieth century is carried over from later nineteenth-century styles. Objects of anxiety take their familiar forms from earlier manifestations: cities, houses, archaic and occult pasts, primitive energies, deranged individuals and scientific experimentation are the places from which awesome and inhuman terrors and horrors are loosed on an unsuspecting world (1996: 103).

The development and change that took place in the nineteenth century were significant factors because they contributed to the emergence of many different genres in the twentieth century such as detective fiction, fantasy and science fiction which could be seen as a prolongation of the work of *Frankenstein* (1818) by Mary Shelley (1996: 101). Furthermore, the relationship between Gothic fiction and science fiction in the twentieth century introduces new topics and devices of terror and horror that reflect the anxieties of the new century. In other words, science fiction started to develop strategies different from the previous Gothic fiction. The focus is no longer on the present cultural anxieties reflected in the past, but terror and horror are now reflected in the future which is the new source of terror and horror. The advent of cinema in the twentieth century led to the adaptation of many Gothic works into films, helping to maintain the popularity of Gothic fiction. Cinema has had a significant impact on keeping Gothic fiction alive in the twentieth century by continuously adapting classic

Gothic novels into movies (1996: 101).

Clive Bloom argues that the nature of Gothic fiction showed a great deal of variety because it comprised works of fiction that do not necessarily contain supernatural or horror elements even though these elements share similarities in their use of setting, atmosphere and style. Horror stories have evolved from the features and effects of traditional Gothic fiction. Therefore, the settings, atmosphere and style were affected by modern events, psychology and social realism (1998: 2). Additionally, the twentieth century was the age of modernism which did not accept Gothic fiction in its previous characteristics. In the early years of the twentieth century, modernism and Gothic fiction were "at odds" (Spooner and McEvoy, 2007: 38). Modernism was the new trend in the twentieth century and focused on the interior self of the human consciousness. Therefore, it was regarded to be inconsistent with the characteristics of Gothic fiction. Many influential writers and their works were famous in the twentieth century: Algernon Blackwood's *Ancient Sorceries* (1908), H. P. Lovecraft's *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928), Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960), Stephen King's *The Shining* (1977), Susan Hill's *The Woman in Black* (1983), William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984) and others. Consequently, Gothic fiction has become one of the most essential and utilized techniques in contemporary fiction in the twenty-first century (49).

1.3. AMERICAN GOTHIC

American Gothic fiction originated from Gothic fiction that started, flourished and developed in England. Therefore, American Gothic is considered "a refraction of English" (Punter, 1996: 165). However, what distinguishes British Gothic from American Gothic is the relation to time. "English Gothic has a direct past to deal with" while "American has a level interposed between present and past" (165). Punter elaborates on this level by suggesting that "this level is represented by a vague historical 'Europe' an often already mythologized 'Old World" (165). Furthermore, he points out that the British writers had a rich source to resort to and they had enormous inspiration around them, unlike American writers who did not have such opportunities. In addition, the sensibility in the traditional works from Walpole to Ainsworth enabled

the British authors not to trouble themselves searching for a starting point. British authors "did not have far to go to seek sites for their mediations" (1996: 165). While American Gothic writers needed to search for their own mediation and sources because the American authors' issue was imagining a distant past that was not possible and could not be reached in the New World (165). This new American world had problems similar to those of British society. The early American Gothic characterizes itself as dark, tends to be concerned with obsession and absorbed with evil and powerful Europeans. The early representatives and most significant writers of American Gothic fiction were Charles Brockden Brown, Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe who emotionally kept their legacy to the British writers (166).

Eric Savoy also declares that the early writers of American Gothic were highly influenced by the British Gothic which gained popularity on both sides of the Atlantic because of the critical features that the British Gothic used. American Gothic tried to produce and imitate the most significant elements of the genre which include a sense of confinement or claustrophobia, a feeling of dark and ominous atmosphere and the looming threat of violence. In addition, the usual characteristics existed such as a haunted house, a prison, a tomb and other standard architectural locations. Moreover, the plot would tackle the same topics such as parental curses and ghosts seeking revenge (Hogle, 2002: 167-168). Furthermore, what makes the American Gothic distinctive and different from the British Gothic is not the democracy that the new world had, but rather the American Gothic distinguishes itself as formally adaptable and its energy is innovative. It is also essential that certain features are found in the American Gothic narratives such as strange tropes, figures and rhetorical techniques. Furthermore, their usage reflects an important purpose which is to convey the deep anxiety about historical crimes and corrupted human desires in the new American world (168).

Fred Botting suggests that the content of American Gothic differed from European Gothic since the American writers were in another geographical location with a different history. This difference was reflected in their works. They had to set their romantic adventures in the wilds of the unknown continent of the new world and try to evoke horrors by depicting the trials of Puritan witches. Moreover, Gothic psychology and narratives discussed the reality of strange incidents by relating these

incidents to other issues such as rationalism, democracy and religious organization and their impact on individual freedom and social control (1996: 75). Botting states that the elements and tropes such as ruined castles, chivalric laws, evil aristocrats and abbeys were used in the gloomy European Gothic, but they were "highly inappropriate" to be used in the new world of North America because they could not form and evoke the same terrors (75). The American writer Nathaniel Hawthorne asserted the difficulty and difference of producing American Gothic by saying:

> No author without a trial, can conceive of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there is no shadow, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but commonplace prosperity, in broad and simple daylight, as is happily the case with my dear native land (qtd. in Botting, 1996: 75).

Thus, the gloomy atmosphere of the European Gothic indeed proved to be incompatible with the American Gothic. Yet, the American culture had unknown and shameful secrets that were rooted in both the collective history of the community and the personal histories of families. (Botting, 1996: 75). Moreover, Botting argues that the use of superstition maintained its existence in the new world of America; for instance, superstition was employed to explore the concerns of society in the European Gothic, the individual, mental, political, social and religious concerns. Similarly, superstition was used to dig into the shadows that haunted American social life and discover and criticize the new dark sides of America (75). Although both British and American Gothic fiction is interested in the darker side of human experience, they approach the genre differently. British Gothic fiction often focuses on the supernatural and traditional Gothic characterizations, in contrast, American Gothic fiction focuses on the horrors of the daily world with a larger focus on regions and the disgusting.

CHAPTER TWO

2. THE GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN LITERATURE

2.1. TERROR AND HORROR

David Punter suggests that the elements of Gothic fiction are "universal" (2013: 2). The first Gothic work, *The Castle of Otranto* by Walpole, set the stereotype of Gothic works in his period and the periods that followed. Therefore, many authors attempted to follow Walpole's style in writing Gothic fiction. Robert Harris points out that "Horace Walpole whose *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) contains essentially all the elements that constitute the genre" (2019). Since the ultimate aim of Gothic works is to provoke feelings of terror and horror, it could not be fulfilled without following certain elements and techniques. The early Gothic works of the eighteenth century contained "stock features" (Botting, 1996: 1). These common features were: "specters, monsters, demons, corpses, skeletons, evil aristocrats, monks and nuns, fainting heroines and bandits populate Gothic landscapes as suggestive figures of imagined and realistic threats" (2). Before discussing the elements of Gothic fiction, it is vital to consider two things that Gothic fiction is based on: terror and horror which are two different concepts when it comes to Gothic works. In this regard, the reader's response to a terror work is not the same as to a horror work. As a significant writer from the eighteenth century, Ann Radcliffe touches on terror and horror, saying:

> Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them. Neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime, though they all agree that terror is a very high one (qtd. in Hume, 1969: 284-285).

Horror is like "the touching of a cold corpse, the sight of a decaying body, it freezes human faculties, rendering the mind passive and immobilizing the body" (Botting, 1996: 48). However, terror activates both the mind and imagination as the readers could overcome their fears and doubts. Moreover, terror provides an escape that readers need when they try to overcome the menace that terror presents. Most of the Gothic works of 1790 depict the element of threat that characters experience by trying to escape from these threatening objects (48). Similarly, Robert D. Hume explains that

terror and horror are the main features of Gothic works and Gothic fiction works are classified into two types: terror Gothic and horror Gothic. On the one hand, the terror Gothic work depends on how the reader responds to the suspense and dread that the terror creates. In the early work of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, he tries to catch the reader's attention through the dread of a series of terrible events. Radcliffe also presents suspense in a more sophisticated way. On the other hand, a horror Gothic work is manifested through events that disturb and shock the reader with a sequence of horrors such as rape, murder and torture. Horror could be seen in the works of *Vathek* (1786), *The Monk* (1796), *Frankenstein* (1818) and *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) (1964: 285).

Hume elaborates on the reader's reaction resulting from a terror Gothic work. He supposes that the reader's mind reaches a state of sublime feelings stimulated by fear as the outcome of pleasure and pain. However, horror influences the reader's mind through psychological and loathsome events that can make the reader experience situations that the reader has never felt before (1964: 285). Consequently, the most evident thing that distinguishes terror Gothic from horror Gothic is the amount of emphasis on psychology rather than suspense. The psychological emphasis in horror Gothic is greater than the one in terror Gothic which is concerned with "moral ambiguity" (285). Hogle compares terror Gothic to horror Gothic by stating that "The first of these holds characters and readers mostly in anxious suspense about threats to life, safety, and sanity kept largely out of sight or in shadows or suggestions from a hidden past" (2002: 02). On the other hand, Hogle continues explaining that horror Gothic confronts the main characters with the horrible violence of physical or psychological degeneration, breaking the supposed norms which may include repressions from the daily lives of the characters, presenting highly appalling and even disgusting consequences (2).

2.2. SUBLIME AND UNCANNY

Gothic fiction tries to evoke emotions in readers. The beginning of this fiction coincides with the Romantic movement which paid attention to scenery and feelings. The sublime concept concentrates mainly on elevating people's emotions. Thus, the

relationship between the sublime and Gothic fiction carried Gothic novels into a new phase of development. It is fundamental to dwell on the concepts of 'the sublime and uncanny' where these notions expand the understanding of Gothic at an aesthetic level. In the eighteenth century, Edmund Burke developed the idea of the sublime in his work *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). The sublime was not a new idea but was taken from the work of the philosopher Longinus. Burke explored the distinction between the concepts of sublimity and beauty. He made a comparison between the sublime and the beautiful explaining that certain characteristics were given to objects to be described as beautiful such as smallness, smoothness, delicacy and gradual variation. Thus, these characteristics trigger the emotions of love and tenderness which were contrary to the sublime emotions that bring about awe and terror. This terror is the source of the sublime,

> Whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling. I say the strongest emotion because I am satisfied the ideas of pain are much more powerful than those which enter on the part of pleasure (1998: 86).

According to Burke, pleasure is the outcome that can be obtained from the beautiful, but the sublime is the outcome that can be obtained from terror. Therefore, the things that move the emotions of the sublime are vast, magnificent and obscure. Burke also noted that the emotion caused by pleasure relaxes the human body, whereas the effect caused by the sublime is much stronger on the body and mind. Maria Beville comments on Burke's words by saying that having negative experiences remains much more powerful than the positive ones that one might go through (2009: 26). Besides, Burke asserted that obscurity was as crucial as terror. This obscurity works as a trigger to reach the sublime: "It is our ignorance of things that causes all our admiration, and chiefly excites our passions, knowledge and acquaintance make the most striking causes affect but little" (1998: 57). Beville underlines that experiences of terror can be more intensified when they take place at night or in dark environments. Thus, the sense of cognitive reason and objectivity disappears in order to allow fantasy and desire to dominate the imagination which is stimulated by obscurity (26). As a result, the beautiful is regarded as a pleasant thing, while the sublime evokes fear and terror which are the essential elements to get the sublime along with other factors that contribute to producing the emotions of the sublime.

Sigmund Freud's concept of the 'uncanny' contributed highly to the fields of literature and psychology, mainly in studying Gothic fiction. Freud wrote his essay "The Uncanny" (1919) to respond to Ernst Jentsch's essay "On the Psychology of the Uncanny" (1906). Freud disagreed with Jentsch's essay regarding the reasons that cause the feelings of the uncanny. For Jentsch, intellectual uncertainty produced the uncanny. Therefore, Freud's essay has been an essential pole in the studies of the uncanny. He wrote his essay in three parts, touching on the semantic definition of the word uncanny from the German words 'heimlich and unheimlich'. Then he examined the work of E.T.A. Hoffmann's *The Sandman* which presented a psychoanalytic background to the understanding of the uncanny experience. In the last part, he discussed the effects of the uncanny in literature and fiction. Freud defined the uncanny as "that class of terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar" (1919: 220). According to Freud, the uncanny was something familiar and was forgotten long before or repressed when growing up. Thus, the uncanny experience comes back against the person's will to constitute uncanny moments.

Freud studied the etymology of the concept of the uncanny linguistically to get a better understanding of the word. He resorted to many dictionaries in different languages in search of the word 'uncanny' and whether the word had the same effects in those languages. He noticed that the word uncanny referred to diverse meanings. Still, none of those languages contained the specific meaning that Freud searched for: "Indeed, we get the impression that many languages are without a word for this particular variety of what is fearful" (1919: 221). However, he finally studied the word in the German language and realized that the German equivalent of the uncanny 'unheimlich' had the same meaning as its opposite 'heimlich'. He argued that

> The German word unheimlich was obviously the opposite of heimlich, heimlich, meaning "familiar," "native," and "belonging to the home"; and we are tempted to conclude that what is "uncanny" is frightening precisely because it is not known and familiar (1919: 220).

According to Spooner and McEvoy, Freud saw a relationship between the meaning of the uncanny and the concept of fear and dread. Uncanny can be the feeling resulting from the experience of what is known or unknown. Therefore, the sense of uncanny happens when an event in the present time evokes something from the past. Yet, this event can not be completely recalled; it might be an event, situation, feeling, or

sentiment that was forgotten or buried. It returned to cause suffering or anxiety in the current scene or situation. (2007: 130). Freud's theory of the 'uncanny' is the ground upon which other works depended to extend their study of the uncanny concept. Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle define the uncanny:

> The uncanny has to do with a sense of strangeness, mystery or eeriness. More particularly, it concerns a sense of unfamiliarity which appears at the very heart of the familiar, or else a sense of familiarity which appears at the very heart of the unfamiliar (2005: 34).

This definition is somehow close to what Freud put forward in his theory of the uncanny. Thus, it involves creating uncertainty. It involves the impression that things differ from how they appear due to habit and familiarity and that they might contradict all logic and reason (2005: 35). In his detailed essay on the uncanny, Freud gave an account of people, events, incidents, situations and objects that may conjure the feeling of the uncanny. Similarly, Bennett and Royle mention a list of forms that the uncanny could take: "repetition that might include experiences of déjà vu, the double which is also known as the Doppelgänger, coincidence, fate, animism, anthropomorphism, automatism, uncertainty about sexual identity, fear of being buried alive, silence, telepathy and death" (35–40). Therefore, the elements of the uncanny can exist everywhere: in literature, movies, stories, novels, real life and so on. These elements can conjure the feeling of dread and fear that writers of Gothic fiction seek to achieve in their works.

Gothic fiction seeks the depths of the readers' emotions and provokes a mixture of fear, fascination and a sense of the extraordinary. As a result, the language used in any Gothic work is considered distinct because authors choose their words in a way that contributes to achieving a certain purpose which is the uncanny and sublime or other Gothic elements that try to create through devices such as vivid imagery, heightened descriptions and emotive language to immerse readers in a world of dark mystery, heightened emotions and the unknown. Robert Harris points out that one of the Gothic features is the use of the metonymy of gloom and horror. That is, some words are used to stand for another meaning and to denote a theme or motif, or even to add emphasis on the aspects of mystery, danger, or the supernatural. For instance, the word 'rain' might signify a sorrowful atmosphere at a funeral. Also, other things could be employed like wind, moans, strange sounds, thunder and lighting in Gothic fiction

(2019). Furthermore, the vocabulary of a Gothic work "creates and sustains the atmosphere of the Gothic" and the words that are chosen appropriately "maintain the dark-and-stimulated feel that defines the Gothic" (2019). Therefore, it is clear that such words in Gothic fiction are associated with descriptions of mystery, rage, haste, vastness and darkness.

2.3. SETTING AND ATMOSPHERE

When it comes to the setting of early Gothic fiction works, authors of that era chose locations like castles or old mansions that might evoke feelings of dread in readers:

> [t]he major locus of Gothic plots, the castle, was gloomily predominant in early Gothic fiction. Decaying, bleak, and full of hidden passageways, the castle was linked to other medieval edifices—abbeys, churches and graveyards especially— that, in their generally ruinous states, harked back to a feudal past associated with barbarity, superstition and fear (1996: 2-3).

That is, the focus on Gothic architecture was essential in constituting the setting of any Gothic work in the early writings. In addition, this architecture was a source of inspiration for writers. One of the defining features of early Gothic literature was the medieval castle. According to Botting, different forms of Gothic architecture and ruins were of positive importance during the eighteenth century because of the tendency towards medieval styles and growing social taste for the past (1996: 21). The critic argues that the "historical accuracy" of that past was not what mattered at that time. However, the values of the past were more important than the present even though the present concerns were evident in Gothic novels (2). Castles and ruined castles were perfect environments to represent fear and awe in readers, especially when they were set in gloomy and dark settings. In Gothic fiction, the landscapes were usually depicted as bleak, lonesome, threatening and set in savage and mountainous areas. Nevertheless, the contemporary Gothic landscapes have changed into a city containing features that are great and wild in nature as well as in architecture. These streets of cities were dark and labyrinthine representing violence and danger that were represented by Gothic castles and forests in the early times of Gothic fiction (2). These landscapes were the ideal description of the feeling of the sublime which "stimulated powerful emotions of terror and wonder in the viewer" due to the "grandeur and magnificence" (2).

In *Gothic Vision: Three Centuries of Horror, Terror and Fear*, Dani Cavallaro states that middle-class readers who constituted the most significant part of those interested in Gothic novels saw castles as settings where sins were associated with aristocracy. Additionally, these castles reflected their inhabitants' dark yearnings and longings, particularly the terrible desire for power that conveyed sexual implications in addition to other taboos between socially incompatible people (2002: 29). Cavallaro adds that the castle itself could incorporate such desires and reflect them in a way that made the castle come to life and be more animated than any being in the castle. As in *The Castle of Otranto,* the degree of the high liveliness of the castle with its architectural design, battlements, closets, trapdoors and vaults made the castle the actual protagonist of Walpole and the force that controlled everything (29). In addition, Robert Harris notes that the setting of a Gothic novel was typically a castle, an old house, or even a destroyed castle. There were often secret underground corridors and rooms, dark or hidden stairs, and damaged areas in these buildings, some of which were occupied by individuals or other unknown beings or entities (2019). Moreover, Hume argues that the authors of that era set most of their stories and novels in distant and far places such as in Southern France, Spain, Italy, or Germany. The time was usually in the sixteenth century or earlier. Furthermore, time and place were not related to the real and current history of the period that the authors wrote in (1969: 286). Hogle, J. E. declares that the Gothic features or the settings of a Gothic tale such as in *The Castle of Otranto* or *Dracula* usually happened "in an antiquated or seemingly antiquated space" (2002: 2). However, Hogle notes that the settings that were typical of early Gothic fiction, such as a castle, a foreign palace, an abbey, a huge prison, an underground crypt, a cemetery, a remote border, or an island, have changed in modern times:

> a large old house, theatre, an aging city, urban underworld, a decaying storehouse, factory, laboratory, public building, or some new recreation of an older venue. He adds what creates the Gothic settings "are hidden some secrets from the past" that "haunt the characters, psychologically, physically (2002: 02).

As a result of the development of Gothic narratives, the castle as a setting "gradually gave away to the old house: as both building and family line, it became the site where fears and anxieties returned in the present" (Botting, 1996: 02). Thus, old or even new houses or mansions have featured modern Gothic settings where the atmosphere

of the new environment contribute to evoking fears and anxieties. Since dark and gloomy settings were sources of fear, dread, and horror in early Gothic works, the same effect can be observed in contemporary Gothic settings. The gloomy house, abandoned places, even shadows, or when lights come on and off have all developed into modern sources of those emotions. Consequently, darkness and the mysterious setting aim to fulfill the purpose of a Gothic work by evoking a "sense of unease and foreboding" (Harris, 2019).

Another key element of Gothic fiction is the 'atmosphere' which is "one of evil and brooding terror" (Hume, 1969: 286). The atmosphere is the "imaginary world" that represents an "imaginative sense" that writers use to depict the actions of their works (286). The atmosphere is "for ends which are fundamentally psychological" (286). The atmosphere and setting are inseparable in any Gothic work because these two elements are responsible for inciting feelings of the sublime and uncanny in readers. According to Harris, the atmosphere of a Gothic work is "fear enhanced by the unknown" (2019). This fear comes from the mystery and suspense that the atmosphere creates such as a cracking sound, voice, glimpse, squeaky floor, unexplainable disappearances and appearances which contribute mainly to the plot of the Gothic work (1-2).

However, by the end of the eighteenth century, the Gothic elements that were used in the first wave of Gothic fiction no longer had the same effect on readers. According to Botting, Gothic castles, villains and ghosts, etc. became old-fashioned. As a result, the old elements stopped evoking terror or horror (1996: 07). He continues by saying that "their repeated use turned them into rather hackneyed conventions" (29). Thus, modern Gothic writers chose to use the present urban settings in order to convey the required atmospheres instead of the interest in history and the distant past which were features that stimulated terror and horror. Therefore, the elements and figures that existed in the eighteenth century became cliché, and there was a need to create features that evoke again terror and horror in Gothic works. Furthermore, the transformations during that era due to political situations, urbanization, industry development, scientific discoveries and changes in sexual and domestic organizations led to a change in present fears and anxieties. Fred Botting dictates that " this list grew, in the nineteenth century, with the addition of scientists, fathers, husbands, madmen,

criminals and the monstrous double signifying duplicity and evil nature" (2). In addition, he mentions that well-known Gothic figures like the double and the vampire reappeared in different forms towards the end of the nineteenth century, generating a higher level of terror and horror (135).

2.4. CHARACTERS

What also constitutes a Gothic work is the stock characters. These characters play an essential role in forming the literary Gothic effect. The Gothic characters demonstrate the struggle between good and evil. Such characters have witnessed significant changes from the early works of Gothic literature until modern times. The characters of Gothic fiction usually include tyrants, villains, bandits, maniacs, Byronic heroes, persecuted maidens, madwomen, magicians, vampires, werewolves, monsters, demons, angels, revenants, ghosts, skeletons and the devil. Most of the time, the antagonists in Gothic works are men who are spoiled and corrupted by social influences. The male antagonists are greedy, jealous and ambitious to achieve their evil goals. Their ultimate aim is to destroy the protagonists and the female characters in any possible way physically and psychologically. The protagonists who are a representation of morality and goodness try to protect themselves from the antagonistic characters who aim to ruin that morality and goodness in them. The protagonist usually experiences an external and internal struggle against evil forces. The struggle between the protagonist and the antagonist is over a female character. This female character depicts both evil and good forces that want either to destroy her by the antagonist or to be protected and saved by the protagonist. Characters in Gothic fiction expect something to occur, or they are destined to experience something that affects their lives and the course of events in novels. Even the main characters may have visions or sense horrible things that may happen. Maggie Kilgour describes the role of Gothic characters and summarises a Gothic work where the heroine is saved and marries her love whereas the villain meets a hideous and horrible end (1995: 9).

In the early Gothic works, the main characters, especially the female heroines were "always central" (Punter, 1996: 9). This heroine was also abandoned by her parents and left alone facing the savage world. Moreover, in light of the events, heroines met characters who were sometimes unrespectable, evil, abusive clergymen,

monks and confessors. The names of evil characters were also of Italian or German origin because choosing such names was a rule in the world of Gothic (9). Although Putner does not offer any more information about the choice of the names of another language, it can be claimed that the uncanny effect of the atmosphere can be reinforced with unknown words or names. The critic goes on to mark that it was common for Gothic heroines to suffer cruel treatment from their fathers following the death of their mothers (9). The heroines of the eighteenth century are described as "shy, nervous, retiring" and they were able to survive fearful grave situations as well as deal with their violent, tyrannical fathers (9). Some examples from early Gothic fiction can be the character of Matilda in *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole and the character of Emily in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe. When it comes to characters as well, the villain's character stands out as an important one in Gothic works because this character was "always the most complex and interesting in Gothic fiction" with his "often opaquely evil ends" (10). In any Gothic work, the villain is a recurring character who appears across different novels with one goal which is "manipulating the doom of others" (10). Thus, the Gothic hero-villains are also considered central characters and the source of actions (Hume, 1969: 287). Villains like Mr. Hyde from *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll* and *Dracula* are villainous and complex characters. Additionally, it could be said that women were always depicted as being in peril and subject to the threat of dominating, impetuous and oppressive males. The female characters and other characters in Gothic works evolved and consistently changed due to the social and political situations of each era.

2.5. THE USE OF SUPERNATURAL

Using supernatural elements is one of the essential fundamentals that any Gothic work needs. Hogle argues that "Gothic fictions generally play with and oscillate between the earthly laws of conventional reality and the possibilities of the supernatural" (2002: 02). However, the supernatural was a literary element used in literature before the emergence of Gothic fiction and ever since the supernatural has become a popular feature used by Gothic authors. Punter argues that

> In some works, there are any number of genuinely supernatural occurrences, in others only events which prove after all to have a reasonable and natural explanation. It is important, however, to point out that in one sense this makes very little difference: even

> if the ghosts are eventually explained away, this does not mean that their actual presence within the text can be forgotten. (2013: 10)

The supernatural element is used in two forms: the first as explained incidents and the second as unexplained ones. Hume justifies the use of the supernatural as it "seems a valid enough device for removing the narrative from the realm of the everyday" and "to contribute to this imaginative stimulus" (1969: 286). Thus, the supernatural tool was used even before its use in Gothic fiction and was attached mainly to Gothic stories and novels. The use of the supernatural took various forms in Gothic works, whether in the first early works, the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century, or even the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Punter mentions how the first supernatural was linked to Gothic fiction:

> through the earlier part of the eighteenth century, the ghosts and phantoms which had played so important a part in earlier literature seemed to disappear, because there was no room for them in the supremely rational world of the Augustans. But they started to reappear with the Gothic revival, occuring often in the old ballads, and from there they moved into Gothic fiction (2012: 10).

Gothic fiction depends highly on the element of the supernatural to convey feelings of terror and horror by evoking the imagination in readers. The use of the supernatural is usually associated with supernatural powers and occurrences such as ghosts, vampires, giants, monsters, zombies, demons, etc. In Gothic novels and works, it is noticeable how these supernatural incidents occur throughout the novels. Ghosts and monsters are after or haunting the protagonists, and the dead also come to life and resurrect to frighten or kill people. Inanimate objects and things can move or come to life such as armor that starts to walk like a human or paintings and pictures of people that begin to speak. Some writers of Gothic fiction use the supernatural element by depicting it as a natural phenomenon, but other writers show it as a paranormal thing (Harris, 2022). Thus, the supernatural elements aim to show fear and dread of the unknown by stimulating the imagination. The supernatural is utilized in several ways by some Gothic writers. Some used the supernatural element as accepted or unexplained supernatural which is simply regarded as part of reality without further explanation of the supernatural. For instance, the supernatural incidents in *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole remained unexplained in work. On the other hand, other Gothic writers used the explained supernatural; in this kind of supernatural the usage of scary supernatural effects is later explained by providing logical and scientific

explanations. Such a kind of supernatural was evident in the works of Ann Radcliffe who gave rational explanations of these supernatural occurrences at the end of her novels (Glossary of the Gothic: Supernatural, n.d.). Robert Harris underlines the same idea stating that while some Gothic works offer a logical explanation for the events depicted, other Gothic works represent the events as genuinely supernatural and beyond natural explanation (2019).

The use of supernatural elements has witnessed great change since the appearance of Gothic fiction until modern times. It could be noticed that the supernatural which was stimulated by external factors, or, in other words, external supernatural terrors in the early works of Gothic fiction started to go toward the internal supernatural terrors that the human mind creates. The writings in the eighteenth century presented supernatural terrors with cultural norms and attitudes of reason and common sense. Then, in the following century, with the development of science and the interest in knowledge writers tried to use the fears that resulted from scientific discoveries to illustrate supernatural elements in their works. As a result, nineteenth-century Gothic fiction started moving toward the mind's terrors. The human mind produces supernatural elements. As a result, the ghost story became popular in nineteenth-century Gothic fiction as a source of the supernatural element (Mehl, 1978). Moreover, the supernatural in modern times is depicted through legends, possession, reincarnation, occultism and psychic disorders as well as the focus is on individualism. Furthermore, other features that can be added to the supernatural element include an ancient prophecy, omens, portents, visions, and dreams. Omens, visions and curses occur in many Gothic stories and novels. In addition, superstitions and the belief in superstitions also exist.

2.6. DREAMS, NIGHTMARES AND DEATH

Dreams or nightmares are elements of Gothic fiction. These dreams and nightmares were sometimes related to some prophecies and were always disturbing to the characters. Moreover, these dreams and nightmares aim to cause a sense of fear, uneasiness and insecurity (OConnor-Fenton, 2022). Nightmares usually coincide with omens throughout Gothic fiction. The use of nightmares and dreams serves as a device for foretelling the events of the story and novel plot in a way that authors use these

elements to intensify the emotions of their characters.

Death is an essential element that prevails almost in all Gothic fiction which creates an atmosphere of horror and terror. Horace Walpole identifies death in his preface to the first Gothic work, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), as “the engine of terror” (Bronfen and Davison, 2017: 1). Gothic fiction presents death in various forms such as murder, suicide, homicide, disease, accidents, bloody and horrific occurrences that result in death. Moreover, the concepts of death and mortality are intertwined through death and the way of transcending it; for instance, the characters of vampires and zombies represent fear because they represent both death and life at the same time. They were dead and resurrected again to life. Therefore, every Gothic story or novel has a dead person or a murdered person.

CHAPTER THREE

3. GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN *PET SEMATARY*

3.1. STEPHEN KING

Stephen Edwin King is an American writer born in Portland, Maine, in 1947. He was the second son of Donald and Nellie Ruth Pillsbury King. His childhood was not easy, and his father left him and his siblings on their own, with their mother having financial troubles and moving from one place to another. King states in his biography that "I lived an odd, herky-jerky childhood, raised by a single parent who moved around a lot in my earliest years" (2000: 7). King spent most of his childhood in Indiana and Connecticut. His family settled in Durham, and he went to Grammar school in Durham and Lisbon Falls High School. He graduated in 1966. During his high school years, King was interested in reading and writing, with a passion for mystery stories and horror books, and he wrote some stories and articles for the school newspaper. H.P. Lovecraft, Shirley Jackson and Ray Bradbury's works influenced him greatly and were a literary base to start from and inspire. In 1970, he finished his studies at the University of Maine at Orono with a Bachelor of Arts in the English Language and took part in student political life. He was against the War of Vietnam when he was a member of an anti-military movement during his university years. Moreover, he started to pursue his literary passion and published some stories in the university magazine, *The Maine Campus.* He also went through a negative phase in his life because he used drugs and drank too much, but he could overcome his addiction. He also met his wife at the university when they were both students.

King became a recognized author in 1974 when horror was experiencing a revival in literature, film and television (Brown, 2018: 26). Many call him the master of horror because he is famous for writing contemporary horror, supernatural, suspense, fantasy and science fiction (Strengell, 2005: 40). He wrote more than sixty novels and sold more than 350 million copies of them which have been adapted into movies, television shows, series and comic books. King's popularity came with his first novels *Carrie* (1974), S*alem's Lot* (1975) and *The Shining* (1977) which received worldwide fame. Some of his famous works are: *Pet Sematary* (1983), *It* (1986),

Misery (1987), *Needful Things* (1991), *Dolores Claiborne* (1992), *Insomnia* (1994), *Bag of Bones* (1998) and *Dreamcatcher* (2001). King also wrote books about his career such as *Danse Macabre* (1981) and *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft* (2000).

In *Danse Macabre*, interested in horror, King discusses his understanding of horror, what it takes to be considered horror as well as how to evoke this emotion in both readers and people:

> But because I am a horror novelist and also a child of my times, and because I believe that horror does not horrify unless the reader or viewer has been personally touched, you will find the autobiographical element constantly creeping in. Horror in real life is an emotion that one grapples with—as I grappled with the realization that the Russians had beaten us into space—all alone. It is a combat waged in the secret recesses of the heart (1981: 15).

It could be similarly noticed that King's opinion on the nature of horror and terror is somehow identical to the theories proposed by the writers of the previous centuries, the theories of the sublime, the uncanny and Mary Shelley's views on the same point. King adds that:

> Horror, terror, fear, panic: these are the emotions which drive wedges between us, split us off from the crowd, and make us alone. It is paradoxical that feelings and emotions we associate with the "mob instinct" should do this, but crowds are lonely places to be [...] (1981: 16).

King points out that these sentiments affect humans. He underlines the idea that terror comes from the suspense and dread reflected in Gothic works, while horror is a much deeper emotion that requires the reader to demonstrate stronger responses. In her article "The Ghost: The Gothic Melodrama in Stephen King's Fiction", Heidi Strengell describes King's fiction as 'generic hybrids' because he mixes the elements of Gothic fiction with elements of other genres such as Realism, Romanticism, literary Naturalism, myths, fairy tales and the fantastic elements to enhance his fiction (2005: 221). King's fiction has a distinctive style, making it unique. His novels involve and show violent and bloody scenes, and they are set in familiar locations that readers can imagine easily such as they might be in small towns in the US (Punter and Baryon, 2004: 134). According to Tony Magistrale, what makes King's horror real is the use of everyday life sides and popular culture which make his horror convincing to his readers:

> King's landscapes are littered with the well-known brand names of corporate America for several reasons. First, he seeks to reproduce a detailed and highly visual sense of the real world – in order to subvert it. If the reader can be convinced that King's characters are actually functioning in our world, that they ingest the same foods, drive upon the same interstate highways, listen to the same rock lyrics, then the horror they experience becomes ours; and certainly that horror must become all the more plausible and frightening as a result of this personal identification (1988: 54).

Even though King is considered a modern horror writer, his works still contain elements of traditional Gothic works. King himself admits that his works have Gothic roots:

> A lot of the fiction I write follows the Gothic tradition wherein the past has unbreakable hold on the present. This obsession with the past throughout Gothic literature, up to and including my own work, is an unpleasant thing. It is a twisted influence that restricts and even changes the present (Magistrale, 1988: 10).

King keeps the usage of some of the traditional Gothic elements in his works such as terrifying settings, archaic places, unknown or distant past, supernatural occurrences and stereotyped characters as well as the use of suspense to achieve the literary purpose of Gothic novels. Moreover, King "has repeatedly acknowledged that his literary roots are deeply embedded in the Gothic" (Strengell, 2005: 29). He, as a horror genre writer, shows a good comprehension of the elements that constitute a good work. A work leaves a mark and attracts the reader's mind. King suggests that to have an effective horror story, it "must be a well-balanced blending of reality and surreality and possess a pleasing allegorical feeling" (1981: 29). Magistrale further describes the works of King as "high Gothic" because they have "inherited the moral perspective" and they are "didactic or philosophical Gothic" (qtd. in Strengell, 2005: 30). The reason for describing King's works like that is because they contain elements of the supernatural which is a common element in traditional Gothic works. Besides, the purpose of the supernatural in Gothic works is, as Frederick S. Frank states "to symbolize various political or religious concepts" and "to revolutionize or radicalize the thinking of the reader" (qtd. in Strengell, 2005: 30). In his book *Danse Macabre*, King clarifies that the Gothic of his works is not similar to the original Gothic because it tackles the political, economic and psychological fears a bit differently (1981: 5).

It is argued that the early works of King relied on the early works of Gothic fiction. In other words, his thoughts are inspired by those works. The fiction that King produced is "derivative of work that precedes his own" (Thomson et al., 2002: 216).

Some of the works were considered iconic at the time when they were written in the nineteenth century such as *Frankenstein* in *Pet Sematary*, *Dracula* in *'Salem's Lot* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in *The Dark Half* (2002: 216). Similarly, the Gothic tropes and traces are evident in most of King's works through haunted houses, monsters, supernatural occurrences and other traditional Gothic fiction elements. However, such tropes deal closely with contemporary social problems. Thus, when King uses them in his novels, he desires to reflect the "persistent problems within the American social fabric itself" (216). King asserts this idea:

> The work underlines again and again that I am not merely dealing with the surreal and the fantastic but, more important, using the surreal and the fantastic to examine the motivations of people and the society and institutions they create (qtd. in Magistrale 2002: 216).

Furthermore, King resembles the Victorian writers who tried to take advantage of the advances in that era and employed them in their works because the developments in technology and science became a source of anxiety for people (Strengell, 2005: 30). Therefore, they served as horror topics and terror in fiction. King reflected the technology and the modern world in his works to reach new horrors that can attract modern readers who search for something different in fiction. However, King then started to change the themes of his first novels that depended on Gothic tales and choose themes that investigate people, society and institutions in the next stage of his career after becoming a famous writer (30).

3.2. *PET SEMATARY*

The novel *Pet Sematary* "is one of King's powerful works and is unquestionably one of his finest literary achievements" (Spignesi, 2001: 45). The novel is typically classified as horror fiction, with themes such as forbidden emotions, resurrection and death that are repeated from other literary works of Gothic fiction. The novel reflects horrifying experiences, fears and desires that result in destructive consequences. As a writer, King depends on the realistic incidents surrounding him to turn them into terrifying and horrible horror fiction. One notable example is his novel *Pet Sematary*, which was inspired by agonizing and terrifying events that occurred within King's own family. King lived near a road that resembled the one in the novel. His daughter lost

her cat on the road and buried him in a real pet cemetery where children used to bury their dead pets, and the cemetery was near King's house. King finished the first draft of *Pet Sematary* in 1979, but it was not published for several reasons. King describes his novel as a "nasty book" and he adds that "*Pet Sematary* is the one book that I haven't reread – I never want to go back there again – because it is a real cemetery" (qtd. in Winter, 1986: 131-132). The novel was published in 1984, sold millions of copies, and was adapted into many film versions.

Many critics have several views on *Pet Sematary*. Some of them relate the novel to the traditional novel *Frankenstein* (1818) written by Mary Shelley. In his article "Postmodern Gothic: Stephen King's Pet Sematary", Jesse W. Nash draws a connection to how King's *Pet Sematary* resembles Shelley's work and how it should be examined: "*Pet Sematary's* connection to Shelley's *Frankenstein*, in particular, must be seen within the dynamics of a contemporary popular culture matrix" (1997: 151). King resorted to traditional work and took advantage of some Gothic features in order to write *Pet Sematary* to suit the modern concept of American life. For example, Shelley discussed the theme of creating a monster and violating the rules of nature by Dr.Victor and presented the fears of science and technology of her period. Similarly, King shed light on the same theme when the protagonist, Louis Creed, uses the evil burial ground to resurrect his family. King might have used the same idea, but according to the fears and anxieties of modern readers. Nash adds that what was important to Shelley was not the scientific development and what was realistic, but rather the moral issues of the modern people. However, it is argued that King's *Pet Sematary* is a rewriting of *Frankenstein* because King rewrites it "from a vastly different personal, cultural and historical perspective" and "*Frankenstein* and *Pet Sematary* no longer share the same genre" (1997: 152).

Marta Miquel-Baldellou points out that *Pet Sematary* and *Frankenstein* are similar to each other in many points, starting from the original ideas of their novels which came from their own life experiences. Thus, King changes the novel and its characters to be convenient for contemporary audiences. In King's novel, the fear of scientific discoveries and the decline in the traditional life of families still exist, as in Shelley's novel; of course, the absence of moral principles still has an effective role in modern times. Moreover, the usage of the myth in King's novel has maintained its

effect on popular culture with the aid of films. In addition, the novel modernizes and enhances the traditional doctrines of Gothic which lead to the development of traditional Gothic fiction into contemporary Gothic fiction which has become a popular fiction even though some works are based on classical works. Both novels discuss the consequences of transcending the boundaries between life and death and both main characters are doctors who dare to challenge the powers of the unknown and to be or play the role of God in a society turning to be more atheist and depends highly on science rather than religion (2013: 117).

Pet Sematary is considered modern horror fiction, or, as Nash describes it, a new version of traditional Gothic novels (1997: 152). King uses some traditional Gothic features and adds modern features from the twentieth to produce his unique formula of fiction. Nash suggests that King's novels have been much more successful than the traditional Gothic ones due to their popularity among the public and gained the favor of many people. Furthermore, King discusses the cultural problems and issues distinctly in his works in a way that the traditional Gothic works did not touch on his works focus on personality and characters. King demonstrates and reflects on the flaws of modern American life and experience. He harshly criticizes society and is the voice of those not visible in the modern life of America, and he chooses them to be the characters in his works (152).

The novel starts with the main characters, Louis Creed, his wife Rachel, and their two children, Ellie and Gage, arriving at their new house in Maine. They moved to this new city from Chicago after Louis Creed, a doctor, accepted a position at the university in Maine. First, King presents the family as tired because of the long journey. Then he introduces us to the other central characters, Jud Crandall and his wife Norma who reside on the opposite side of the street from the Creeds family. In the following scenes of the novel, Jud takes the family on a tour around their house, and they take a path leading to the Pet Sematary where many of the local children used to bury their dead pets for generations. Jud also tells them about his pet dog that was buried in the cemetery. After this visit to the pet cemetery, Louis's daughter begins to ask about death, and she fears the death of her cat one day. Louis' wife Rachel quarrels with him over death, saying that this topic should not be in front of children because it is early for them to go into such topics that affect their lives. Louis and Rachel discuss the cat's

death, and Louis mentions that the cat may die for any reason, a disease or the road near the house. They finally finish their tension by deciding to take the cat to a vet to be fixed (castrated) in order not to go out of the house and come near the road.

The Creeds settled in the house, and Louis Creed started his first work day with a tragic accident. A student was run over by a car and died at the infirmary. But before he dies, he whispers strange and creepy words to Louis about the Pet Sematary. On the same day, Victor Pascow's dead body appears to Louis and leads him to the Pet Sematary. Victor warns Louis not to pass a barrier beyond the Pet Sematary. Louis remained uncertain about the events that took place, questioning whether it was a dream or a reality. Louis woke up the following day, his feet covered with mud because he went to the Pet Sematary at night. Louis did not tell his wife about the dream or the incident.

On Halloween Eve, Louis and his daughter visit Jud and his wife. Jud tells Louis that his wife refuses to see a doctor when Ellie is in the kitchen. She screams because Norma is not well and she has a heart attack. Louis helps her and saves her life. Another tragic accident occurs with the death of the cat that Jud finds near the road dead on the day of Thanksgiving. The cat is probably run over by a passing truck. The novel takes a turning point. Jud tells Louis to take the cat to bury him in the ancient ground that lies beyond the Pet Sematary. Few people and some locals know about the magic of the ground and its ability to resurrect the dead. Jud does not tell Louis about that magic, and they bury the cat in the ground.

When they finish burying the cat, Jud tells Louis about what happens when a dead thing is buried in this cursed land. The dead thing comes to life again. Jud did that to return the favor to Louis who saves Norma from the heart attack. Jud knows about Ellie's worries about death, and maybe she learns that death sometimes is good. The next day after the cat's burial, he resurrects and returns home. But he is different, not the same cat. He looks vicious and evil, stinks and moves awkwardly. Although the Creeds try to accept the new condition of the cat. As Jud plans, Ellie's thoughts about death change because she does not accept the cat as it is now and tells her father that she will not be sad if the cat dies. The novel continues without new incidents until the death of Jud's wife, Norma.

Rachel confesses to Louis the reason behind her fears of death. She tells him about her sister's death, Zelda who had spinal meningitis. Rachel thinks that she is the cause of her sister's death because when she was eight years old, she could not prevent that. Rachel did not give her the painkiller despite her sister's screams. Therefore, Zelda choked to death, and from that time Rachel thinks that she is a murderer. The novel reaches its climax when Gage was struck by a passing truck on the road. Louis lives in a state of denial and decides to take his son to the burial ground to bury him there. However, Gage resurrects again in the same condition as the cat. The boy is evil and kills his mother by stabbing her with a scalpel he stells from Louis's medical kit. Then Louis kills him with two hypodermic syringes full of morphine. Louis, again, does the same and he never learns from his previous mistakes. He takes his wife's corpse to the Indian burial ground, and the novel ends when Rachel returns home and puts her cold hand on Louis's shoulder.

3.3. THE ANALYSIS OF *PET SEMATARY*

3.3.1. Setting and Atmosphere

The setting is crucial for any Gothic work. *Pet Sematary* is a modern horror novel that blends traditional Gothic with modern Gothic settings. As noted by Magistrale, one prominent characteristic that King shares with authors from the nineteenth century is his dependence on Gothic settings and the use of atmospheric techniques (1988: 16-17). The traditional Gothic setting mostly revolves around features of castles, haunted places, ruins and graveyards. Some writers contributed to changing the setting to fit modern times. King sets his novels within modern times, frequently in broad daylight, and effectively manipulates ordinary events to get something extraordinary. As a result, the majority of King's novels take place in middle-class American suburbs and portray families' daily routines that are unpredictably turned upside down (Miquel, 2013: 116). Thus, *Pet Sematary* is set in a house. King describes the setting of the novel from the first pages and gives a glimpse of it and how some traces of the traditional Gothic setting still exist to be imagined:

> Beyond the house was a large field for the children to play in, and beyond the field were woods that went on damn near forever. The property abutted state lands, the realtor had explained, and there would be no development in the foreseeable future. The remains of

> the Micmac Indian tribe had laid claim to nearly 8,000 acres in Ludlow, and in the towns east of Ludlow, and the complicated litigation, involving the Federal government as well as that of the state, might stretch into next century (2011: 4).

King also utilizes the Gothic setting in his novel in specific ways. For example, his description of the setting in *Pet Sematary* demonstrates how he manages to create a scary atmosphere:

> It should have been a fine evening, but Louis was aware of the empty house waiting for him. Crossing the lawn and feeling the frost crunching under his shoes, he heard the telephone begin to ring in the house (2011: 126).

King illustrates the empty house in Louis's mind. This image arouses tension in the character's mind and the reader's. Such description was used in the early Gothic works that King applies in his description of the house at that moment. Therefore, King tries to create a feeling of terror. The time of 'evening' highly contributes to achieving its purpose of evoking a sense of terror. The dark places or the things that happen at night have a greater effect on the characters and readers who can put themselves in the character's situation. Botting claims that using dark places and nights in Gothic fiction "gave free reign to imagination's unnatural and marvelous creatures" (1996: 21). The sound of the frost crunching under Louis's feet is significant because it depicts the state of the quietness of the surrounding environment. The phone which starts to ring makes the picture of the setting and atmosphere so creepy. It could be said that is how traditional Gothic setting was depending on rising tension to get the desired aim of a typical Gothic setting.

One of the most traditional Gothic settings is evident in *Pet Sematary,* and from the title of the novel, one of the scariest places for people is the 'cemetery'. The usage of graveyards was quite effective in traditional Gothic fiction, the place is always depicted as gloomy, scary and full of horror and terror. It was a perfect setting for Gothic fiction. It is worth mentioning that graveyard poetry influenced Gothic fiction in terms of choosing settings. Gothic fiction and graveyard poetry shared a fascination with death, the macabre and themes of mortality. Both genres emerged in the 18th century. Botting states that the popularity of the Graveyard school of poetry and the intense fascination with the sublime were prominent characteristics of the cultural milieu that fostered the development of Gothic fiction (1996: 21). Therefore, based on a real pet cemetery from King's experience, this cemetery had a sign on which the

word Sematary was written phonetically wrong because it was written by children. King intentionally writes the novel with a misspelled title to convey a sense of the innocence of children (Gorshin, 2020). The cemetery plays a significant role in King's novel because of the horrible things that take place near it. King describes the graveyard saying:

> Some of the graves were marked with flowers, some fresh, most old, not a few almost totally decomposed. Over half of the painted and penciled inscriptions that Louis tried to read had faded away to partial illegibility. Others bore no discernible mark at all, and Louis guessed that the writing on these might have been done with chalk or crayon (2011: 37).

On their first visit to the pet cemetery, the Creeds observe the cemetery and go around it without knowing about those terrific incidents waiting for them. The cemetery is a source of fear and death. This setting of the novel could be seen in many places. In each place, the setting contributed significantly to the Gothic scenery. When Jud and Louis were going to bury Louis's daughter's cat, Church, in the burial ground beyond the cemetery, the setting and the atmosphere were perfectly depicted to be Gothic. The setting was the dark woods and the atmosphere was so intense that both Jud and Louis were afraid:

> Louis opened his mouth again, and the words *What was that*? already on his tongue. Then a shrill, maniacal laugh came out of the darkness, rising and falling in hysterical cycles, loud, piercing, chilling. to Louis, it seemed that every joint in his body had frozen solid and that he had somehow gained weight, so much weight that if he turned to run he would plunge down and out of sight in the swampy ground. The laughter rose, split into dry cackles like some rottenly friable chunk of rock along many fault-lines; it reached the pitch of a scream, then sank into a guttural chuckling noise that might have become sobs before it faded out altogether (2011: 142).

The atmosphere of this incident was mysterious to Jud and Louis. The mystery was a feature of Gothic fiction that King employs here in this part of the novel. An eerie atmosphere accompanies the feeling of terror. Botting believes that the importance of the atmosphere comes from "gloom and mystery populated by threatening figures was designed to quicken readers' pulses in terrified expectation" (1996: 29). All the words used imply the atmosphere 'laugh came out of darkness'. The unknown was always scary in Gothic fiction, and Louis felt as if he was paralyzed because of fear. King creates many Gothic settings and atmospheres for his characters in the novel as could be seen in the line: "while he lay awake, too conscious of the empty house and wind that whined around the eaves outside it" (2011: 154). Again, the empty house and the

sound of the wind carry the Gothic element of the setting.

The atmosphere of grief and gloom overwhelms the day of the funeral after the death of Louis's son. King presents an excellent Gothic atmosphere image: "Gage was buried at two o'clock that afternoon. By then the rain had stopped. Tattered clouds still moved overhead, and most of the mourners arrived carrying black umbrellas provided by the undertaker" (2011: 314). As Mary Snodgrass argues that "darkness and foul weather" contributes to the "Gothic atmosphere" (2005: 159). Here, King chooses specific words to describe the situation. For example, the rain implies a gloomy atmosphere because of the clouds and the black color which all represent other examples of the use of a Gothic setting and atmosphere. This reinforces the importance of using a specific language style. Harries mentions that the Gothic literary genre is known for its gloomy atmosphere, which is created and maintained in large part by the language utilized in the works. To maintain the Gothic-style works' strong and ominous atmosphere, precise word choice is essential (2019).

3.3.2. The Use of Supernatural

One of the features that show the use of the supernatural is the 'Ghost'. Ghosts were evident and essential in the early Gothic traditional works. Jeffrey Weinstock argues that "ghosts in literary works are powerful, they inspire fear and awe and can bring about change in the material world. These ghosts can therefore express alienation, desire, and wish-fulfillment in transgressive ways" (2008: 17). Consequently, in *Pet Sematary*, ghosts appear in several incidents for certain purposes that serve their presence in the novel. As Strengell points out that King has his opinions on the use of ghosts: "What is the ghost, after all, that it should frighten us so, ….?" (1981: 157). King sees ghosts as a reflection of his characters' inner souls, the conflict and their supposed conflicting mental and special status. King says:

> We fear the Ghost for much the same reason we fear the Werewolf: it is the deep part of us that need not be bound by piffling Apollonian restrictions" It can walk through walls, disappear, speak in the voices of strangers. It is the Dionysian part of us ... but it is still us (2011: 90).

As King declares his views on ghosts, he says that in his works ghosts adopt the motives and souls of people who observe the ghosts around them. For instance, if the

ghost is evil, that means the person who sees and observes the ghost is evil. On the other hand, if the ghost is good, that means the ghost takes a good form and function (1981: 90). In King's fiction, Victor Pascow could be considered an example of a good ghost even though King argues in his book *Danse Macabre* that "for the purposes of the horror novel the ghosts must be evil" (157). Still, in some situations, "fiction is stalked by good, evil, and neutral ghosts" (157). In the case of Victor Pascow, he is regarded as a good ghost because his function in the novel is to warn Louis of his future deeds and not to cross the red line. King asserts his point by saying that "I have even had some truckle with "good ghosts" in my own work" (157).

In the novel, Pascow represents a helpful ghost at the beginning of the novel to tell Louis that the pet cemetery is a dangerous place and contains an evil thing that destroys the person's fate and life. Gothic ghosts may act as moral guides, advising characters against immoral or forbidden actions. They serve as reminders of the consequences that await those who transgress societal or moral boundaries. As Cavallaro asserts "The figure of the ghost reinforces in exemplary fashion the notion that fear is a pervasive aspect of human life" and the function of ghosts is to "return to haunt the living out of a desire for revenge" (2002: 63). However, in the case of Pascow, he is considered a helping ghost in order to deliver a message and protect the characters. The novel's first use of the ghost trope appears when Louis Creed begins his first day at work at the university infirmary. Victor Pascow, a young man, was struck by a car. He died in front of Louis's eyes but before his death, he warned Louis of the pet cemetery, he uttered these words: "It's not the real cemetery" (2011: 74). Then Pascow dies. On the same night, his ghost visits Louis and takes him to the Pet Sematary:

> Something woke him much later, a crash loud enough to cause him to sit up in bed, wondering if Ellie had fallen on the floor or if maybe Gage's crib had collapsed. Then the moon sailed out from behind the clouds floating the room with cold white light, and he saw Victor Pascow standing in the doorway. The crash had been Victor Pascow throwing open the door (2011: 84).

Here, the first appearance of the ghost in the novel is presented in a traditional Gothic fiction way which in its turn is elevated by the perfectly set atmosphere of the scene. The existence of a ghost in fiction usually "disturbs the boundaries between life and death" (Chaplin, 2011: 242). King describes the dark night and the light of the moon

as Pascow reveals himself to open the door of the house. King describes the condition of Louis who cannot believe what he sees. He feels as if he is in a dream. Pascow, the ghost, talks to him: "Come on, doctor,' Pascow said. We got places to go" (2011: 84). This perplexes Louis's mind which refuses what is before his eyes: "*It's a dream*, he thought" (84). Louis was certain of Pascow's death because he is a doctor and the situation in which Pascow came gives strong evidence of his death and the impossibility of being alive. Louis tries to justify that by convincing his mind that it is not Pascow: "Pascow was in a refrigerated locker with a tag around his toe. *And he is most certainly not wearing those red jogging shorts in there*" (85). Louis is astonished by what is going on. Chaplin indicates the supernatural power of ghosts, which defies rational explanations, including the ability to move objects without making direct touch with them, to instantly turn invisible and to pass through solid objects (2011, 247). King depicts the ghost as a typical ghost of any Gothic work that may be in: "but Pascow did no such thing. Instead of opening the door, he simply passed through it" (85). Louis could not resist but followed Pascow to the pet cemetery. Louis saw on their way to the pet cemetery many strange things that cannot be explained. The function of Pascow is to present a piece of advice to Louis about what will come. Pascow says:

> Don't go beyond, no matter how much you feel you need to, Doctor. The barrier was not made to be broken. Remember this: there is more power here than you know. *It* is old, and always restless. Remember (2011: 88).

However, Pascow tells Louis repeatedly not to go far unless the result will not be good. Finally, Pascow says: "Your destruction and the destruction of all you love is very near, Doctor" (88). And before the ghost disappears again, he says: "Doctor – remember" (89). However, as the narrative continues, Louis ignores what Pascow told him and chooses to go beyond that, and he has to be responsible for all the consequences. Pascow, the ghost, appears several times later in the novel, and every time he tries to warn Louis of his wrongdoings and decisions. The ghost constituted an essential part of Gothic fiction for many centuries. Chaplin points out that the ghost story is intricately linked to the genre of Gothic fiction (2011: 241).

Another supernatural Gothic feature in *Pet Sematary* is the evil power in the burial ground. The Micmacs' land is the source of the supernatural throughout the whole novel. It is the main thing that weaves the novel's events and leads the novel's

characters to their sad fate. The burial ground has the ability to bring the dead back to life but in a form different from their previous life. They come back mean and evil. Magistrale argues that the miracle of resurrection that the evil power that tried to grant Louis in order to "manipulate Louis's human frailty only to deliver a grotesque version of the miracle" (1988: 61). This power of resurrection is later used by Louis himself to bring back his daughter's cat, his son and his wife. The supernatural power eventually destroys Louis's family, and it succeeds. As Jesse Nash describes this supernatural phenomenon by saying: "ancient supernatural forces toy with the Creeds" and "with an older more mature family, their neighbors, the Crandalls" (1997: 151). Botting points out that "Gothic narratives never escaped the concerns of their own times" (1996: 2). Therefore, King frequently critiques the American family and society as a whole. Hence, Nash puts forward the notion that relates the use of the supernatural to a modern Gothic work, and its aim is maybe not directed towards just the family, but what the supernatural wants is the children. Nash argues: "The American family is not the source of the evil that threatens people" but it is "the child, the adolescent, and the "adolescing" adult" (151). The children attract evil, as Nash affirms "because they are in rebellion against the adult world" (151). Parents do not understand their children well, but the monsters and supernatural powers do understand them in King's novel. They lead these families to destruction by making their children monsters who want to kill them as Gage, Louis's son (151).

In *Pet Sematary*, the supernatural power works mysteriously from the beginning of the novel, or probably, this power has a plan from the beginning to destroy the family. The supernatural power seems to be manipulating the characters, in particular Louis. As Strengell claims that "Although supernatural creatures threaten the lives of King's characters, it is succumbing to evil that ultimately results in their destruction (2005: 200). The tragic accident of Pascow could be seen as a real accident since nothing has caused it, or the supernatural power was the cause of this accident to achieve its goals. When Pascow was about to die, he told Louis about the pet cemetery: "In the Pet Sematary.' […] 'It is not real Sematary…" (2011: 72-73). This is the first warning by Pascow to Louis in order not to go beyond the Sematary.

The interference of supernatural power continues throughout the events of the novel. The characters always feel a strange thing around them, it tries to push them to do something against their will. This thing prevents them from being an obstacle in accomplishing its evil plan. The evil supernatural power always wants more after using its Micmacs land once. It is always hungry to do bad things to the characters who sense the power of the place surrounding them. Jud tells Louis about the power of the place after the death of his son: "The place had a power, Louis…. It's been full of power before, and I'm ascared it's coming round to full again" (2011: 307). The evil power works as an engine for the whole event, the evil that Jud finally acknowledges its bad intentions:

> it's an evil, curdled place, and I had no business taking you up there to bury that cat. I know that now. It has a power you'll beware of it you know what's good for your family and what's good for you. I wasn't strong enough to fight it. You saved Norma's life, and I wanted to do something for you and that place turned my good wish to its own evil purpose. It has a power… and I think that power goes through phases, same as the moon (2011: 307).

From the above quotation, the evil supernatural power arranges everything for its own advantage, and how it fulfills that step by step to guarantee the final destruction of the characters. Another incident that is related to the supernatural is when the truck driver who hits Gage, reports: "he just felt like putting the pedal to the metal" and "he was not drunk. He was not on drugs" (2011: 328-329). At some point in the novel, Jud feels that he is the cause of all the horrible events because he is the one who told Louis about the power of the Indian Micmacs ground. In the novel, the engine of evil is the Wendigo that controls the fate of the Creeds family and forces Louis to make such decisions that destroy his family and lose his beloved ones. Louis Creed's destruction is because he "does not believe in the Christian revelation but in the furious Wendigo" (Strengell, 2005: 62). In one of the novel's scenes, Jud blames himself for letting Louis bury his cat first, or maybe the evil force of the burial ground manipulated him to do that. Finally, Jud admits by saying: "I wasn't exaggerating when I said I might have killed your boy, Louis, or had a hand in it" (2011: 307).

After Louis's son dies, Jud tries to convince him not to make any reckless decision to bring his son back to life by using the supernatural power of the burial ground because the consequences will be terrible for a human being. Louis himself saw that result on his cat which came back abnormal. Therefore, Jud relates the story

of Timmy Baterman and his dad. Timmy was killed in the war and was brought back to Ludlow to be buried there, but his dad did not accept his son's death and used the Indian burial land. After Timmy's burial in the ground, he came back different not the normal Timmy. He was like a zombie and was evil and mean. He told people horrible things about them as if he knew their dark past. However, he was not his true self and was touched by 'it' the evil. He was the evil incarnated in the body of Timmy. At last, Timmy's dad had to put a stop to him, so he killed him again and set their house on fire:

> It was only the bad *it* wanted to talk about, though. It was only the bad *it* wanted us to remember, because *it* was bad … and because *it* knew we meant danger for it. […] The thing we saw that night, lookin' up into that red sun … that was a monster. Maybe it was a zombie, or a *dybbuk*, or a demon. Maybe there's no name for such a thing as that, but the Micmacs would have known what it was, name or no.' 'What?' Louis said numbly. 'Something that had been touched by the Wendigo,' Jud said evenly (2011: 306).

Evil is regarded as a supernatural element in the novel which was highly employed in traditional Gothic works. Therefore, King utilizes that perfectly in the *Pet Sematary*.

Legends and myths have been essential features in traditional Gothic fiction. Myths and legends are used to arouse terror in the readers, and these myths and legends have always been a source of interest for humans over centuries. Botting states that Gothic fiction utilized the myths, legends and folklore of medieval romances to imagine enchanting realms teeming with knights, monsters, ghosts and thrilling exploits filled with wonder and dread (1996: 2). In King's novel, Wendigo represents the use of legends and myths. This creature lives in the forest near the burial ground. According to Robert Alain Brightman, the legend of Wendigo is kind of a cannibal monster and a supernatural creature. This creature has both abnormal physical and behavioral features as well as Wendigo's spiritual and physical powers are enormous. However, Wendigos were normal human beings. It is thought that the first Wendigo lost his way in the woods, and starvation forced him to eat human flesh until he became in this evil monstrous shape (1988: 337). King presents what was going on in Louis's mind when he was introduced to the name of Wendigo. Louis "who knew only that the Wendigo was supposed to be a spirit of the north country" (2011: 133-147). Louis remains unaware of this creature until the death of his daughter's cat and its burial in the magical ground. On their way to the forbidden lands, Jud tells him not to pay attention to the sounds they may hear and the light they may see. Jud has not told him

yet about this creature and its relation to this land, and King has not yet introduced his readers to the creature's name. At that moment, Louis saw something strange in the woods, and he felt it. He observed something but could not figure that creature out. He saw its shadow: "Something was moving out there– something big" (141). King goes on:

> Now the thing out there seemed so close that Louis expected to see its shape at any moment, rising up on two legs, perhaps, blotting out the stars with some unthought-of, immense and shaggy body. *Bear* was no longer what he was thinking of. Now he didn't know just what he was thinking of. Then it moved away and disappeared. Louis opened his mouth again, the words What was that? already on his tongue. Then a shrill, maniacal laugh came out of the darkness, rising and falling in hysterical cycles, loud, piercing, chilling (2011: 141).

Despite the tremendous amount of terror that Louis experiences in this incident, Jud does not tell him about the real identity of that creature. Instead, he tells Louis it is "just a loon" (142). The supernatural power of the Wendigo had no impact on Louis until the resurrection of Church. Strengell argues that the nature of Louis's character and its flaws might make Wendigo go after him. Louis was a rational person who believed only in science. Strengell adds that the evil in King's *Pet Sematary* through the power of Wendigo is essential and it cannot be activated unless a human being helps this power. After that, it arises, becomes stronger and has a controlling nature (2005: 63). Jud and Louis aided the Wendigo in activating its power with the resurrection of the cat. However, its influence is still weak, but the Wendigo gains much more power when a human body is resurrected. That is why the resurrected pets are different and possessed by hidden and mysterious powers.

The supernatural evil power begins little by little to take over Louis's mind and decisions and push him to do the second burial in the Indian land of his dead son. Even though Louis knows in advance what happens to a dead body buried in the Micmacs' lands because of the story of Timmy Bartemn who came back as a zombie. Louis proceeds with his decision to bury his son. When Louis digs out his son's body from the grave and takes it to the burial land. He meets the Wendigo for the second time on his way. But this time, the Wendigo reveals itself completely. Louis hears the same voices during his visit to the place: "a high, gobbling laugh that became a sob" (2011: 370). Then the Wendigo appears:

> Suddenly the mist lost its light and Louis realized that a face was hanging in the air ahead of him, leering and gibbering. Its eyes, tilted up like the eyes in a classical Chinese painting, were a rich yellowish-gray, sunken, gleaming. The mouth was drawn down in a rictus; the lower lip was turned out, revealing teeth stained blackish-brown and worn down almost to nubs. But what struck Louis were the ears, which were not ears at all but curving horns . . . they were not like devil's horns; they were ram's horns (2011: 410).

This quotation describes the meeting between Louis and the supernatural power of the land beyond the pet cemetery. Louis sees with his own eyes the Wendigo: "The tongue's tip skittered lazily on the air somewhere below where its Adam's apple should have been . . . it was laughing" (2011: 410). Finally, the Wendigo appears in its huge shape: "It was no shade, no insubstantial ghost; he could feel the displaced air of its passage, could hear the mammoth thud of its feet coming down, the suck of mud as it moved on" (410). The physical presence of the Wendigo is no less than its ability to manipulate the other's mental ability or even to interfere in their business to achieve its plan. This power is enormous reaching even the other characters for one reason not to stop Louis from his decision to bury his son. Nash indicates that "the magic circle of Little God Swamp if it is not the powers of that other, more primordial magic circle guiding and pulling him" (156). In several pages of the novel, these words are used to describe the power inhabited in the Indian burial land as 'the little God' for his power to bring the dead to life. The supernatural power prevents any person from hindering its plans. First, this power tries hard to persuade Louis to take his dead son to the Indian burial land, and it succeeds. It seems that this power helps Louis by removing all the obstacles from his way. Louis talks his wife into going with her parents to Chicago with his daughter to leave the house. Louis tells his wife that she needs to have some rest and be away from the house to forget her grief for her son, and Ellie also needs that. Suddenly, everything is arranged easily as if it is magic. Rachel finds reservations on a plane because of cancellations of previously booked seats. That gives Louis a good chance to go to the town cemetery where Gage was buried and dig his body out

Another incident may prove the intervention of supernatural power. When Louis goes to the town cemetery, he is so lucky that no one notices him. He goes in and out unseen. Moreover, the power stops Jud from messing up with its plan. In particular, when Jud knows Louis's intention to bury his dead son. He awaits him at the window of his house to stop him from going further with his decision. Jud says: "*It's puttin' me to sleep . . . hypnotizin' me . . . something'. It doesn't want me awake. Because*

he'll be comin' back pretty soon. Yeah, I feel that. And it wants me out of the way (2011: 401). However, Jud falls asleep without noticing that Louis comes back home and brings his son's corpse. Besides, another occasion is when supernatural power hinders Rachel from reaching Louis before he goes to the burial land. She feels that something wrong is going on with her husband: "Something is trying to keep me away from him" (417). Nevertheless, she fails to be on time, and her car breaks down without any reason even though it is a new car, a man helping her says: "One of your battery cables come right of. Wasn't nobody frigging with it, was there?" "No, Rachel said, and she thought again of that feeling she'd had" (434). Or rather, the evil power coincides with her arrival at Jud's house with the resurrection of her son and being in Jud's house to be killed by Gage. Neither Rachel nor Jude could cease Louis from achieving his goal of resurrecting his son. Obviously, Wendigo is behind all these interventions.

The supernatural element in King's *Pet Sematary* is very important as could be seen with the Wendigo, the mythical creature. However, this creature does not share the same features as the traditional Wendigo:

> The Wendigo story, now, that was something you could hear in those days all over the north country [...] if the winter was long and hard and the food was short, there were north country Indians who would finally get down to the bad place where it was starve or . . . or do something else." "Cannibalism?" [...] And the story they worked out would be that the Wendigo had walked through their village or encampment while they were sleepin and touched them. And the Wendigo was supposed to give those it touched a taste for the flesh of their own kind (2011: 169).

As the legend tells, the Wendigo feeds on human flesh. If it also touches a human, that human becomes a Wendigo. As in the novel, after the Wendigo touched the Indians, they began eating human flesh and burying the corpses in their lands which became sour earth. These lands were afflicted with terrible supernatural abilities. In contrast, the Wendigo that King uses in the *Pet Sematary* is to some extent different or rather has other supernatural power and abilities. It does not feed on human flesh anymore. As Tony Masigitrale claims by saying that King modernizes the legend of Wendigo and the fear about its story. King's Wendigo does not resemble that creature turned by starvation into a cannibal but King's Wendigo feeds on modern tragedy and overwhelming grief (2010: 32). King uses the myth of Wendigo to fit the American audience and modern society. A Wendigo is in search of people wishing to have their

beloved ones back and wants to turn the other's grief into his own benefit. Moreover, King describes the Wendigo's physical and spiritual abilities. It could be noticed in the novel that spiritual abilities are probably added to the modern Wendigo.

King gives Wendigo speaking and thinking characteristics. As can be seen in some incidents where the Wendigo is able to laugh and grin. Jud and Louis experience such things on their way to the Indian burial land for the first time. Then Louis faces this creature, and he sees and hears his grins and laughter again on his way to bury his dead son: "This grisly, floating head seemed to be speaking-laughing" (2011: 410). Throughout the novel, the Wendigo appears as if it knows the secrets and sins of people around it. Jud tells Louis the story of Timmy who was brought back to life by his dad. Timmy was not normal, something used his body and tongue to tell the others bad things. He exposed their secrets which caused trouble, and those stories seemed to be true. The supernatural evil power seemed to know the past and the future: "He was dead, Louis. But he was alive, too. And he…. he … he knew things.' 'Knew things?" (2011: 303). Moreover, Wendigo seems witty and intelligent. It seeks revenge and never forgives. For example, in the encounter between Jud and Gage who comes back to kill Jud, he says to him: "I've come to send your rotten, stinking old soul straight to hell. You fucked with me once. Did you think I wouldn't come back sooner or later" (2011: 431). Also, the Wendigo can take shapes, it appears as a ghost-like figure or takes a physical form. Not to mention that it could take the appearance of the other characters, as in the final encounter between Jud, Rachel and Louis. The Wendigo appears to them to represent their fears and finally to kill them.

When it comes to Gothic and horror fiction, it is essential to trace one of the elements that existed in Gothic novels. King keeps its usage in his *Pet Sematary*. King, again, employs the element of 'monster' which is usually presented by using demons, vampires, zombies, abnormal creatures, or unknown beings. King justifies that in his *Danse Macabre* where he mentions that "We love and need the concept of monstrosity because it is a reaffirmation of the order we crave as human beings" (1981: 39). King uses the standard images of the Gothic monsters in his novel. He also introduces the readers to a variety of monsters including human and animal ones. The human ones include Timmy Baterman, Gage and Rachel as well as animals like the Wendigo, the resurrected Church and Lester's bull. The image of Gage the monster, when he comes

back to kill Jud, is described as "a hideous mewling sound now arose, and for a moment all of Jud's bones turned to white ice. It was not Louis's son returned from the grave but some hideous monster" (2011: 430). In his novel, King managed to create monsters from humans, normal humans whose appearance changed into monstrous creatures. In Gothic fiction, a monster is defined as "an entity that humans regard as something abnormal, a disturbance of the natural order" (Carroll, 1987: 52). Gage, the innocent child, becomes a monster that is forced by an evil power to haunt and kill. The burial ground has changed Gage into a zombie monster. King describes the appearance of Gage:

> Gage Creed came in, dressed in his burial suit. Moss was growing on the suit's shoulders and lapels. Moss had fouled his white shirt. His fine blonde hair was caked with dirt. One eye had gone to the wall; it started off into space with terrible concentration. The other was fixed on Jud with glittery, blank intensity (2011: 431).

In the above quotation, King shows the damage that the accident caused to Gage, but his damaged body came to life making him a horrible monster in his tiny body possessed by evil. In fact, the other monsters that appear in *Pet Sematary* have the same monstrous features because of the effect of the evil burial ground in which they were buried. Gage was not the only human buried in the burial ground as Louis wanted to bury his son after his death. Louis comes to know the story of Timmy Baterman who was buried up there in the ground and came back as a zombie monster. His human features disappeared, and he looked like a zombie. As Jud describes him: "Timmy Baterman was like that, Louis, like a zombie in a movie, but he wasn't. There was somethin' more" (2011: 298). Another description is given about Timmy by Jud who remembers the event again when he and his friends went to see Timmy's father to ask about his son and how he came back to life even though everyone was certain about his death. Jud tells Louis that Timmy looked terrible:

> Timmy was at the back of the yard, just staring up at the red, bloody sun as it went down. His whole face was orange with it, like he'd been flayed alive. And Bill.. he looked like the devil had gotten him after his seven years of highfalutin'. He was floatin' in his clothes, and I judged he'd lost forty pounds. His eyes had gone back in their sockets until they were like little animals in a pair of caves….. and his mouth kep' goin' tick-tick-tick on the left side. He looked like someone who has a cancer that doing right well someplace inside him (2011: 300-301).

The first monster that got resurrected is Church, Louis's cat. His return is not something natural, and once he returns, the whole family is frightened. Louis does notice that his cat is changed:

> Church was swaying slowly back and forth as if drunk. Louis watched it, his body crawling with revulsion, scream barely held back in his mouth by his clamped teeth. Church had never looked like this – had never swayed, like a snake trying to hypnotize its prey […] for the first and the last time he played with the idea that this was a different cat, […] Church started at him a moment longer – God, his eyes were different, somehow they were different (2011: 165).

In the following scenes of the novel, Church remains in his weird condition, nothing like a normal cat. The Creeds, Ellie especially does not accept her cat despite the love she demonstrated towards him earlier in the novel. Ellie also notices that her cat is dirty, stinks and smells like grave dirt. Church was bathed many times but all in vain, the cat smells death. The condition of Louis's cat is the same as Jud tells him about his dog which came back as different as Church. However, Jud knows the consequences in advance. Jud says: "I'm telling you, Louis, because you've got a different kind of pet now. Not necessarily a dangerous one, but…. Different. Do you find that's true?" (2011: 176). Unfortunately, Jud does not tell Louis the whole truth about what happened to his dog which went wild and aggressive. Later, he decided to kill him again. The zombie cat starts to show its aggressive side by killing other animals and deforming them. Church cuts the animals' heads and takes out their guts in a disgusting way. Then the cat little by little starts to stalk Louis as if he knows that Louis is the cause of bringing him back to life. In several sections of the novel, the cat frightens Louis and appears suddenly before him. The cat is part of the great evil, and maybe its death may have been planned previously by the supernatural power to cause all these tragic scenes. King introduces the cat as an accomplice in the murders that will take place in the final scenes by Gage. The cat helps him kill Jud, Rachel and Louis.

Church was not the only animal that became a monster in the novel. Jud mentions other animals' stories. Those animals had the same conditions which were disastrous to their owners. Jud recalls in the scenes of novels: "I've seen it happen over the years" (2011: 181). He remembers what happens to Lester Morgan's bull. Lester buried his bull in the burial ground, and the bull came back alive but: "Lester shot him dead two weeks later. That bull turned mean" (181). When Louis knows about Jud's dog and what happens to him after coming back to life, Jud answers: "I did it for the same

reason Stanny B. did it, and for the same reason Lester Morgan did it" (182). Louis realizes that what happened to the other animals happened to his cat, and he will have to kill his cat soon.

3.3.3. Dreams, Nightmares and Death

Dreams and nightmares are also considered significant characteristics of the Gothic elements. Pykett asserts that Gothic works "make frequent use of dreams" (2005: 195). In Gothic novels, the characters might have many dreams and nightmares that tell about what may happen. This element can also be seen in King's *Pet Sematary* since dreams and nightmares constitute an essential part of the novel's events. Strengell claims that "in King, dreams have a wide range of functions: they warn, predict, carry the narrative forward, and even form their own sub-plots" (2005: 226). In *Pet Sematary*, Louis's daughter, Ellie, is the character who has most of the dreams and nightmares. Most of her dreams and nightmares are under the influence of the supernatural ghost. Pascow whose existence in the novel is as Strengell describes "Although Victor Pascow plays only an introductory role, repetitive allusions-even in dreams strengthen the force of Pascow's imperative" (2005: 61).

The first character that has dreams is Louis. He started having dreams after the death of Pascow. These dreams are warning dreams. Pascow warns Louis not to use the Pet Sematary even though Louis knows nothing yet about the secret of the Indian Burial land. In Louis's dreams, Pascow tells him:

> The door must not be opened […] "Don't go beyond, no matter how much you feel you need to, Doctor. The barrier was not made to be broken. Remember this: there is more power here than you know. It is old and always restless. Remember." Louis tried again to scream. He could not (2011: 88).

From the above quotation, dreams fulfill the warning function. This function resembles a call that King employs to warn his characters of their coming deeds which may be destructive as in Louis's case. His future decisions lead to his family's terrible fate. Strengell notes that "In Gothic literature, fate often implies evil destiny or even death" (2005: 16). Similarly, dreams and nightmares tell the characters about secrets from the recent past or the far past, sometimes with the help of supernatural power. For example, Louis's daughter learns about her cat's death through a nightmare from

Pascow, the ghost. When her cat dies, Ellie and Rachel are not at home, they are away in Chicago. When they come back, Rachel tells Louis that Ellie had a dreadful nightmare: "She woke up screaming over the weekend Rachel said quietly. She had a nightmare. I dreamed that Church got run over, Ellie said" (2011: 188).

Ellie's nightmare comes true, but she does not know the truth. Then, after the death of her brother, Gage, Ellie has other dreams. Dreams predict the coming scenes of the novel and dreams could tell the readers the intentions of other characters. Such dreams and nightmares are used as a literary device known as foreshadowing which is used by King in several incidents in the novel. These incidents of foreshadowing contribute to the ominous atmosphere of *Pet Sematary* and prepare the reader for the tragic events that unfold throughout the novel. Foreshadowing is defined as "the use of details, description, and mood that will take on more meaning later in a written work" (Cambridge, 2023). After the death of Gage, the dreams come in frequent ways because the events are faster and because of the intense grief of the characters. Louis tries to convince his wife and daughter that dreams are normal in such a situation, but deep inside him, he knows that dreams are true. After Louis decides to resurrect his son, he convinces his wife and daughter to go to Chicago. When they decide to travel, Ellie dreams of terrible things to come. They warn her of her father's intention and what will happen. She dreams of the death of her father:

> Ellie dreamed you were dead," she said. "Last night. She woke up crying, and I went in to her. [..]She said that in her dream you were sitting at the kitchen table and your eyes were open, but she knew you were dead. She said she could hear Steve Masterton screaming (2011: 335).

The dream foreshadows the end of the novel or rather predicts what may happen to Louis because King does not mention it directly whether Louis dies or not. However, Louis's wife puts her hand on his shoulder, and it can be inferred that Louis will be killed by his wife as she certainly is like all the resurrected dead bodies in the burial land. Ellie's dreams continue in the following scenes of the novel. Again, she fears leaving her father alone because she feels he is up to something terrible before her flight with her mother and grandparents. She tells her father:

> She looked up at him with that fey expression. "I'm scared." He put his hand on her head. "Scared? Honey, what for? You're not scared of the plane, are you?" "No," she said. "I don't know what I'm scared of. Daddy, I dreamed we were at Gage's funeral and the

> funeral man opened his coffin and it was empty. Then I dreamed I was home and I looked in Gage's crib and that was empty too. But there was dirt in it (2011: 342).

From these words, Louis certainly will dig out his son's body and bury him again. For some time, Louis hesitates, and his mind is in a constant war against his will. He wants to resurrect his son but he fears that his son would turn out to be like Church and those buried in the land. The people who got resurrected were killed again due to their evil condition. Rachel and Ellie are still anxious about what will happen in the next hours after they leave Louis. Ellie has a terrible nightmare on the plane, and she wakes up screaming: "*It's Gage! Mommy! It's Gage! It's Gage! Gage is alive! Gage has got the knife from Daddy's bag! Don't let him get me! Don't let him get Daddy!*" (2011: 350. Italics belong to the author). Gage will be back alive and evil, and he will commit murders. Ellie's dream is again a prediction, as the Gothic dreams were. They tell the readers about future incidents. Ellie tells her mother about a dream she had again. Pascow reappears and talks to her: "I dreamed I was in the Pet Sematary" Ellie said. "Paxcow took me to the Pet Sematary and said Daddy was going to go there and something terrible was going to happen" (353).

Rachel has heard the name 'Paxcow' before, but Ellie pronounces the name wrong. Ellie says: "He said that he was sent to warn but that he couldn't interfere. He said that he was . . . that he was near Daddy because they were together when his soul was dis—dis—I can't remember!" (2011: 353). As for Ellie's dream with Pascow who comes to warn her about her dad who is in danger, and then her mother will be in danger as well. Ellie's dreams carry on until she has a dream about her mother's death, and at that moment her mother is killed by her brother Gage. Louis's father-in-law tells him about his daughter's last dreams: "She said Oz the Great and Terrible had killed her mother" (444). Oz the Great was Rachel's sister's favorite picture which was in her room. Zelda used to pronounce his name in the wrong way because she could not make the 'r' sound. Strengell says that "Oz the Gweat and Tewwible is symbolic of an unpredictable, indifferent, and evil death" (2005: 65). Then he tells him the last words Pascow told Ellie in her dream: "Paxcow says it's too late" (446). Louis understands these dreams and knows that something terrible happened to his wife. He decides to do something because he realizes he has to kill the cat and his son again. Dreams and nightmares impact the feelings of the characters and readers because negative feelings generally accompany these dreams and nightmares. As in the traditional Gothic works,

King makes use of dreams and nightmares to evoke anxiety, terror and horror in addition to their inseparable role in every Gothic work.

The element of death or the theme of death stands out as one of the fundamental elements in Gothic fiction which depend highly on this element. One cannot imagine a Gothic work without the theme of death which may be caused by several factors such as murders, crimes, accidents, suicides, etc. In *Pet Sematary*, death is clearly evident from the title of the novel until the last pages. The novel "is concerned with death, decay, and disorder" (Strengell, 2005: 68). This can be observed in how King starts his novel saying: "Death is a mystery, and burial is a secret" (2011: ix). In the novel, many events lead to deaths caused by some characters, external evil power, or natural death. In this regard, King presents the theme of death in two ways: the first one shows the point of view that the characters hold towards death and the other presents death as a central element used in Gothic fiction which evokes a state of terror and horror. All the characters in *Pet Sematary* view death differently. The main character, Louis a rational person, sees death from his scientific perspective. While his wife, Rachel fears death because of her terrible past experience. She also believes that children do not have to know about death at an early age.

The topic of death indeed was a sensitive one for the Creeds family. *Pet Sematary* also "displays King's interest in funerals and modern customs of death and burial (Winter, 1986: 146). Shortly after the family settled in their new house, they got to know Jud. One day, Jud took them to the pet cemetery behind their house. The children bury their dead pets in that cemetery. Jud, himself, buried his dog and showed the Creeds its grave. On that day, for the first time, Ellie heard of the topic of death and saw a graveyard. This visit to the cemetery made Ellie ask about death which annoyed Rachel a lot because she thinks that Ellie is still too young to comprehend the concept of death. Rachel's fear of death starts to remind her of her dead sister Zelda who died when Rachel was eight years old. Therefore, she tells Louis not to bring up the topic of death in front of Ellie. Ellie has to be kept away from death and graveyards to have a normal life not like her mother and in order to have her innocent childhood. However, Rachel and Louis could not keep her from death, and the events to come were terrible and death surrounded the Creeds family. Ellie's visit to the cemetery occupied her mind and she started asking her father questions about death. She was

worried about her cat, Church. Ellie had a long conversation with her dad about animals and why they die and then she asked him about her cat and how long he might live. Louis tried to ease her that her cat would live long, but she was quite upset. Ellie says:

> I don't want Church to be like all those dead pets! She burst out, suddenly tearful and furious. ' I don't want Church to ever be dead! He's my cat! He's not God's cat! Let God have his own cat! Let God have all the damn old cats. He wants, and kill them all! Church is *mine*! (2011: 46).

However, that does not last for a long time till a truck hits Church and he dies without her knowledge. Louis cares deeply for his daughter and tries to keep her from grieving if she learns that her cat was killed by a truck on the highway. Strengell argues that "Louis's initial act of love turns into that of death" (2005: 61). Jud who knows the secret and power of the burial land feels that he has to help Louis have his daughter's cat back as he did when his dog died and was buried in the Indian burial ground. Jud aimed to make Ellie believe that "sometimes dead is better" (2011: 180). Louis and Jud bury Church, and it comes back. Ellie's love for him starts to lessen after his resurrection because he smells as terrible as dirt, and Ellie no longer wants him even if he dies. Jud's plan seemed successful: "If he died now, I could take it,' she said" (2011: 222). Ellie reaches a point to accept the concept of death, even if it takes away her own cat. Maybe the abnormality of the cat helps her realize such things. Hence, what was brought to keep her happy and away from death, returns to be a mean evil that destroys her entire family.

Louis Creed, the novel's main character, had a different view of death at the beginning of the novel. He is rational and believes in science but he is not religious. Moreover, being a doctor means he often witnesses death and sees dead people. For him, death was the final stage in life, and no dead person or thing could go back from death. When he dreams about Pascow and how he appears in front of him. Louis does not believe his eyes because he knows it is not likely that Pascow would return: "*The dead do not return; it is physiologically impossible. This man is in an autopsy drawer in Bangor*" (2011: 84. Italics belong to the author). Strengell claims that Louis's arrogance is the cause of all deaths in the novel (2005: 60). The death of the cat and its later resurrection from the dead as well as the death of his son had the greatest influence on Louis who before these incidents had firm beliefs about death (60).

Death in the *Pet Sematary*, as was mentioned earlier, was represented in two aspects. The first aspect could be seen in how the main characters perceive death as psychological torture which evokes fear and leads them to avoid mentioning the word 'death' and its concept. The second aspect is evident in how natural death represents the end of the process of worldly life such as the death of Jud's wife, Norma. Moreover, the death that was caused by painful means, the murders in *Pet Sematary*. The first death incident that occurs in the novel is the accident of Pascow. Pascow gets run over by a car on the very first day of Louis's work at the university. King describes the dying student when he arrives at the infirmary:

> He was a young man, age approximately twenty, and it took Louis less than three seconds to make the only diagnosis that mattered. The young man was going to die. Half of his head was crushed. His neck had been broken. One collarbone jutted from his swelled and twisted right shoulder. From his head, blood and a yellow, pussy fluid seeped sluggishly into the carpet. Luis could see the man's brain, whitish-gray and pulsing through a shattered section of skull. It was like looking through a broken window (2011: 70)

This painful incident starts the events of the novel. The dead Pascow prepares the readers for the upcoming more painful and terrible scenes. The condition that Pascow comes in is horrific. It represents both the theme of death in the novel and an image that can be said to be Gothic imagery showing a grotesque scene. The image of blood, the crushed head, the hole in the head and other images that the readers could imagine. Besides, it was not known whether this accident happened as an act of fate or was caused by the evil power in the Pet Sematary. Nevertheless, what matters is that Pascow's death commences the evil consequences in the novel. After this accident, Louis has a dream in which Pascow appears and warns him again not to go too far whatever happens. He warns him of what lies beyond the Pet Sematary. Warning of forbidden things and transcending boundaries existed as a common theme in Gothic fiction. Gothic novels often employ a cautionary approach, using their darkest and most ominous imagery to alert readers about the dangers of social and moral transgressions (Botting, 1996: 5).

The road which is in front of the Creeds family stands out to be a source of threat: "That's one mean road all right" (2011: 19) to the family members. A road that "uses up a lot of animals, that road does" (19) as Jud describes it. A threat that they should fear, and it terrifies them on several occasions. Therefore, the second death occurs when the cat is struck by a truck. Its death presents a greater threat to the family as it

might be the inciter of evil that lies near the Sematary. Jud finds the cat on the side of the road on Thanksgiving evening. When both Rachel and Ellie are not home, they are in Chicago. That evening, Jud calls Louis and tells him that there is a dead cat on the side of the road, Louis does not believe it, or rather he is afraid of finding out the truth. On that evening, Jud says:

> Well, there's a dead cat over here on our lawn, Jud said. "I think it might be your daughter's." "Church?" Louis asked. There was a sudden sinking in his belly. "Are you sure, Jud?" "No, I ain't one hundred percent sure," Jud said, "but it sure looks like him." "Oh. Oh shit. I'll be right over, Jud (2011: 127).

The cat's death represents the starting point of the destruction of the family. Louis does not want to believe this. He thinks of what he would say to his wife and most importantly, his daughter, especially after the prolonged conversation on death after they visited the Pet Sematary. As Winter claims " In the death of Church, King signals that at the heart of *Pet Sematary* is the rational being's struggle with modern death: death without God, death without hope of salvation" (1986: 149-150). This event occupies his mind as well as how Rachel and his daughter would react to the cat's death. Louis tries to imagine the opposite: "Well, maybe it isn't Church" (2011: 128). Louis considers what he will say to his wife as well: "*I know that anything, literally anything, can happen to physical beings. As a doctor, I know that . . . do you want to be the one to explain to her what happened if he gets run over in the road?*" (128. Italics belong to the author). The evil power that had been asleep near the cemetery awakens with the death of the cat, and in order to grow stronger, it requires a body to be buried there. Jud takes Louis to the magical place because it was Jud who had previously used this area when he was a boy. As a result, gradually evil takes control of Louis's thoughts and life.

King gives an image of the dead cat which serves both the theme of death as a Gothic element and Gothic imagery:

> Louis knelt down to look at the cat. *Don't let it be Church*, he wished fervently, as he turned its head gently on its neck with gloved fingers. *Let it be someone else's cat, let Jud be wrong.* But of course it was Church. He was in no way mangled or disfigured; he had not been run over by one of the big tankers or semis that cruised Route 15 (*just what was that Orinco truck doing out on Thanksgiving? he wondered randomly*). Church's eyes were half-open, as glazed as green marbles. A small flow of blood had come from his mouth, which was also open. Not a great deal of blood; just enough to stain the white bib on his chest. "Yours, Louis?" "Mine," he agreed and sighed (2011: 130-131).

The quotation gives strong evidence of the use of the elements of Gothic fiction by King because the usage of cats in Gothic fiction has its roots in several works over its history. Cats have been associated for a long time with magic, wickedness, mystery and other features. As a result, several writers included cats in their works. A good example from American Gothic fiction which used cats as a Gothic feature was *The Black Cat* by Edgar Allan Poe (1843). Cats typically die in Gothic fiction and return as Louis's cat to take their revenge. Even though King utilizes the cat once he returns from the grave alive to frighten Louis and serve as a means of vengeance by the evil power. The death of the cat actually plays a vital role at the beginning of the tragic events in the novel.

The death of Gage casts a shadow over the Creeds family because it accelerates the pace of action in the novel. It intensifies the suspense and dread and most importantly causes the characters' grief which will cause the Creeds family's devastation. As Spignesi notes that "the death of a child to a parent is the ultimate horror" (2001: 44). The same road that caused the death of Church again causes the death of Gage, the two-year-old boy. In the novel, the death of Gage takes place between two sections. King's words before Gage's death make the readers anticipate that something horrible is about to happen: "Louis Creed came to believe that the last really happy day of his life was March 24, 1984. The things that were to come, poised above them like a killing sashweight" (2011: 244). His death greatly impacts the family's fate, and the family begins to fall apart. Louis talks about the day on which he died. A lady talks to him and tries to console Louis:

> It was quick, no doubt about that, that's why the coffin's closed, nothing could have been done about Gage even if Rachel and I approved of dressing up dead relatives in their best like department store mannequins and rouging and powdering and painting their faces. It was quick, Missy-my-dear, one minute he was there on the road and the next minute he was lying in it, but way down by the Ringers' house. It hit him and killed him and then it dragged him and you better believe it was quick (2011: 265).

The road causes the death of both Gage and Church. Their deaths were a piece of the following scenes of the novel, or rather, it is thought to have been arranged by the evil power of the burial ground. Church proves to Louis that the dead can come back to life despite the undesired consequences, as in the case of Church which returned as a murderer and different. Louis knows that if he buries his dead son in the Indian burial ground, he will return and look like the evil cat. However, what matters to him is

having his son back despite all the terrible results they may face. Hence, the resurrected Gage's condition is worse than the cat's. Gage is responsible for the deaths in the novel's events. First, he murders Jud in his house and then he kills his mother.

The traditional Gothic works contain many murders. The *Pet Sematary* contains that as well. The most significant murder that happens in the novel is when Gage murders Jud Crandell. After he comes back, Gage goes to their house while his father is sleeping. He takes a scalpel from his medical bag and goes to Jud Crandell's house. He violently kills him. The little boy sneaks into the house and waits for Jud to appear and kill him. Gage talks to Jud and tells him things about him and his wife's past. As it was previously mentioned, the resurrected person from that ground possesses the ability to know the future and past. Gage says: "Norma's dead and there'll be no one to mourn you. […] She's burning down in hell, arthritis and all. I saw her there, Jud. I saw her there" (2011: 432). Then, Gage goes after Jud in the house. King presents a bloody scene by Gage who murders Jud:

> 'I'm gonna fuck with you, old man!' The Gage-thing chortled, blowing its poisoned breath in his face. 'I'm gonna fuck with you! I'm gonna fuck with you all … I … want!' Jud flailed and got hold of Gage's wrist. Skin peeled off like parchment in his hand. The scalpel was yanked out of his hand, leaving a vertical mouth. 'All … I … WANT!' The scalpel came down again. And again. And again (2011: 433).

In the same house, when Rachel arrives to ask Jud what her husband intends to do, another murder takes place. Rachel is murdered by her own child, Gage. Rachel enters the house looking for Jud and notices small feet tracks on the floor. The first thing that comes to her mind is her son. She hears a groan from upstairs, she goes up to face her dead sister, Zelda. That is not Zelda, it is Gage the evil inside him can shapeshift and make others imagine things that are the most terrible and terrifying for a person. Gage takes the shape of Zelda to frighten his mother: "I finally came back for you, Rachel, I'm going to twist your back like mine and you'll never get out of bed again" (2011: 439). Terror is an essential part of the novel, the terror for Rachel is the far past of her sister because she considered herself responsible for her death. As Freud points out in his theory of the uncanny, the repressed past comes to be a source of horror and terror for a person. Namely, Rachel fears her sister's death and keeps it deep in her mind over the years. However, the evil supernatural power knows all her secrets and tries to get the advantage of them to kill her. However, Rachel realizes that is not her sister

but her son who kills her:

> Rachel saw with spiraling, sickening horror that it really wasn't Zelda at all, how could she have made such a stupid mistake? It was Gage. His face was not black but dirty, smeared with blood. And it was swollen as if he had been terribly hurt and then put back together. She cried his name and held her arms out. he ran to her and climbed into them, and all the time one time hand remained behind his back, as if with a bunch of posies picked in someone's back meadow. *'I brought you something, Mommy!' he screamed. 'I brought you something. Mommy! I brought you something, I brought you something!'* (2011: 439).

The above quotation demonstrates the final moments of Rachel's life before and after she is murdered by the evil in her son's body. Rachel's death deepens Louis's grief and comes to a degree where he loses his mind and becomes a mad person. The death in the novel does not end with the death of Rachel. This time Louis murders his son and cat after he finds out that everything went wrong. When he follows the footsteps from the door up to his medical bag and a scalpel is missing. He has to end that and decides to kill the cat first. He fills a syringe with a high morphine dose and heads to kill the cat:

> Louis smiled at the cat and said, "Go on, eat up, Church. Hey-ho, let's go, right?" He stroked the cat, felt its back arch, and when Church went back to his meal again, Louis seized it around its stinking guts and sank the needle deep into its haunch. Church went electric in his grip, struggling against him, spitting and clawing, but Louis held on and depressed the plunger all the way[...] When he turned around again to walk to the porch, Church's side had ceased its rapid, fluttery movement. Church was dead. Again (449-450).

The cat is dead again, and Louis's first mission is complete. And now Louis does not know what awaits him at Jud's house. He goes into the house to be shocked by Jud's body in the kitchen: "The old man was lying sprawled in a wide pool of drying blood" (2011: 451). Louis blames himself for: "he saw eyes, Jud's eyes, open, accusing him, perhaps even accusing himself for setting this in motion" (451). Louis searches for Gage in the house and then he sees the most terrible thing in his life. His wife is murdered as well: "Louis turned and was greeted by the sight of his wife [...] lying halfway down the hall, dead" (452). Louis breaks down and starts to lose his mind, and he screams with the utmost grief in his soul remembering all the events that happened and led to this situation. Finally, his son appears before him:

> He looked up numbly, the scream still shivering in his throat and here was Gage at last, his mouth smeared with blood, his chin dripping, his lips pulled back in a hellish grin. In one hand he held Louis's scalpel (453).

From this quotation, King presents the strongest image of horror, the baby murderer, in his carnation of evil. The use of children in King's works is evident, these children could be depicted as monsters or murderers or in other forms. Sara Martín Alegre states that King's use of children in novels could be seen in the light of how he wants to depict the collapse of the American family. The issue of children usually is regarded as troublesome in adult horror novels. Consequently, King usually takes use of such children's existence to highlight adult flaws that lead children to become monsters or murderers because of irresponsible or wrong decisions and children would pay for the adults' failure. (2001: 105-106). Thus, in the final encounter, Louis is shocked by his son's appearance which is covered with blood.

It is crucial to mention that the image of blood is considerably associated with death scenes in traditional Gothic fiction until modern times. The blood gives a sense of horror and disgust that make the readers imagine the scene which is the purpose of Gothic fiction. The blood on Gage's mouth and dripping refer to the condition he reached as a cannibal. He likely ate some of Jud's flesh, the Wendigo's effect turns any human body into a cannibal with his touch or if it is buried in its burial ground. The image of blood is mentioned several times in the novel with appalling descriptions. An example of that is how Pascow was covered in blood in his death scene: "Louis burst into the waiting room and was first only conscious of the blood – there was a lot of blood" (2011: 69). Some of the other bloody scenes in the novel: the death of Church, the death of Gage on the road, the blood pool after Jud's death and finally Rachel whose "blood had splashed the wallpaper in idiot shapes" (453). All of this blood strengthens King's point of view on blood. In his book *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, he mentions that many horror stories contain a lot of blood and bloody scenes because it is essential for horror and Gothic authors. King states that "of course— it is our stock-in-trade" (2000: 199).

The novel's final death incident is when Louis kills his monster son. The encounter between him and his son was full of tension, and Louis ended it by killing his son again:

> It screamed beneath him, body straining and sunfishing, nearly throwing him off. Grunting, Louis got the third syringe and jammed this one home in Gage's arm, depressing the plunger all the way. He got off then and began to back slowly down the

> hallway. Gage got slowly to his feet and began to stagger toward him. Five steps and the scalpel fell from its hand. It struck the floor blade first and stuck itself in the wood, quivering. Ten steps and that strange yellow light in its eyes began to fade. A dozen and it fell to its knees (2011: 454).

With this scene, Louis fulfills his daughter's dream and Pascow's warning not to cross the borders of the Pet Sematary because he destroyed his family. Louis lost everyone he valued his son, wife, cat and life. The death of Gage again ends the series of deaths in the novel or the explicit ones. Louis is alive and is not dead yet. Still, King mentions in his epilogue that Rachel's return from the magical burial ground, and her sound is unpleasant and annoying: "Rachel's voice was grating, full of dirt" (2011: 465). Louis believed that when he buried his wife, she would return to normal, not like the others. He thought the faster the dead body was buried, the less abnormal it would be, but the reality is different. Whatever is buried in the ground and whenever that is buried, the thing will be a zombie-like monster. Therefore, King does not tell the readers if Louis is killed or not. Instead, the readers will imagine his death at the hands of his wife who will be absolutely like the resurrected ones. As a result, the novel ends with the death of all the main characters except Ellie who is away in Chicago.

3.3.4. Characters

The protagonist, Louis, can be regarded as a Gothic anti-hero. Louis's actions and deeds in the novel follow a Gothic convention. It is usually known that Gothic characters seek forbidden knowledge and power that transform them into evil characters or even monsters. As a result, they end up destructing themselves and others. Strengell argues that Louis depicts the "seeker of forbidden knowledge" (2005: 55). Thus, Louis fits this description of Gothic villains, he knows about the magical power in the burial ground that resurrects the dead and he uses that power several times. Louis undertakes a significant transformation from the beginning of the novel as King presents him as a rational person of science. However, he gradually descends into a state of madness and loses control, a typical trait of a Gothic villain. Thus, Strengell adds that "Louis Creed of *Pet Sematary* embodies this disputable Gothic ideal" (55). The Gothic villains, moreover, make conscious decisions resulting in their destruction because "the heroes' imaginative transgressions of conventional values encounter the limits, laws, rules and forces that are not their own" (Botting, 1996: 8). That also applies to Louis who makes decisions that lead to the destruction of his

family and himself. From the first tragic accident of Pascow who warns Louis not to cross the forbidden borders, Louis never listens to these warnings. Instead, he does the opposite and never regrets doing that. Louis buries the cat, and the cat comes alive. Here, Louis learns about the power of the burial ground. Despite Pascow's repeated warnings, he buries his son, Gage, and then Louis makes the same mistake when he buries his wife. King usually chooses his characters who are affected by outside powers that make use of a weakness in their characters; of course, Louis is one of them (55).

3.3.5. Uncanny

One aspect that distinguishes Gothic fiction is the past that haunts some characters. This past works as an element of terror for them, Rachel represents such a character in the novel as King says: "Rachel's sister had died very young, and it had left a scar which Louis had learned early in their marriage not to touch" (2011: 37). As Freud's uncanny theory suggests about those repressed memories from the past terrify characters, these memories are "undoubtedly related to what is frightening – to what arouses dread and horror" (1919: 219). In *Pet Sematary*, Rachel is an excellent example of the haunting past, she tries to hide her fear from her husband because she blames herself for her sister's death. However, since then, she does not mention death. When the topic of death is brought up, she remembers her sister and the awful picture of her sick sister shows before her eyes. It causes her a moment of terror. Therefore, it could be seen that King uses one of the uncanny attributes that evoke terror and fear in the novel. The way King portrays Zelda in the novel makes her a source of terror. Rachel's sister was a terror for Rachel in her childhood. She tried to forget the horrible events that she experienced when she was taking care of Zelda. Rachel remembers her suffering: "But when I was a kid, I thought of it a lot. Lost a lot of sleep. Dreamed of monsters coming to eat me up in my bed, and all of the monsters looked like my sister Zelda" (223). Zelda's terrible impact on Rachel's inner mind remained until her present days: "Some nights I wake up . . . even now I wake up and I think I can smell Wild Cherry cough drops . . . and I think . . . if I'm not really awake . . . I think 'Is Zelda dead yet? Is she?" (2011: 226).

According to Freud's theory of the uncanny, Zelda's existence in the novel triggers a

past terror to come back and evoke the same fear of the old times as Botting claims that "a disruptive return of archaic desires and fears the uncanny disturbs the familiar, homely and secure sense of reality and normality" (1996: 7). The death events in the novel help Rachel have back all her bad memories and constitute scenes of terror for her as argued by Freud "apparent death and reanimation of the dead have been represented as most uncanny themes" (1919: 246). Furthermore, in the final chapters when Gage murders Rachel, the evil power takes the shape of her sister because this power knows what causes fear and tries to use it. When Rachel goes to Jud's house and does not find him and looks for him upstairs, she confronts Zelda's favorite picture flying and moving until she is shocked to see her sister: "Zelda stood there" (439). Zelda appears in her terrible supposed shape:

> She was hunched and twisted, her body so cruelly deformed that she had actually become a dwarf, little more than two feet high; and for some reason Zelda was wearing the suit they had buried Gage in. But it was Zelda, all right, her eyes alight with an insane glee, her face a raddled purple; it was Zelda screaming, "I finally came back for you, Rachel, I'm going to twist your back like mine and you'll never get out of bed again never get out of bed again NEVER GET OUT OF BED AGAIN— (2011: 439).

Rachel always feared the revenge of her sister, and she always dreamed that Zelda would come back and kill her or transform her into her condition and even befall her with the same disease. The evil power in her son's body kills her with the aid of Zelda's images as a kind of revenge on her.

CONCLUSION

This thesis aimed to analyze the use of traditional Gothic elements in Stephen King's *Pet Sematary*. King resorted to these elements and concepts but developed, changed and mixed them into new aspects that highly contributed to the novel with unique usages that are the question of this thesis. *Pet Sematary* combines traditional Gothic and modern Gothic setting to create a horror novel. The house or nearby houses are modern setting used instead of castles or ruins. However, the cemetery which is misspelled by children also plays a significant role as a source of fear and death. The use of cemeteries is considered a traditional use of Gothic elements. King describes the setting and atmosphere vividly, and this description contributes to the required Gothic scenery in each place. For example, the dark woods that are near the Creeds' house and the creepy atmosphere evoke mystery and terror. King demonstrates how he employs the setting of the novel by using traditional Gothic elements.

Pet Sematary makes use of supernatural components like ghosts and the dead in order to heighten the novel's gloomy atmosphere and portray its key themes. Louis Creed is the protagonist in the novel, and King explores the harmful effects of his obsession and the consequences of playing God with the dead. The novel's horrific events, in which Louis tries to bring his son back to life, serve as an alarming warning regarding the costs that occur when giving in to one's deepest instincts. King's competency in mixing complicated characters, ideas and supernatural elements produces a really terrifying experience for readers. In *Pet Sematary*, the cemetery's supernatural power serves as an instrument of evil that manipulates and devastates the Creed family. King writes a disturbing and eerie novel that tackles the dangers of surrendering to the supernatural's influence by utilizing traditional Gothic elements like legend and myths. *Pet Sematary* emphasizes the significance of recognizing the natural order of life and death as well as the devastating power of the supernatural. The mythical Wendigo creature in *Pet Sematary* represents a traditional supernatural element. The creature has the ability to influence the other characters' thoughts and meddle in their affairs in order to carry out its plans. It removes every barrier in Louis' path and convinces him to carry his deceased kid to the Indian burial ground. Rachel is unable to contact Louis before he enters the burial ground due to the magical force. The Wendigo in the novel is different from the classic Wendigo in that it no longer

consumes human flesh, instead drawing strength from current tragedies and intense pain. King's depiction of the Wendigo has been modernized for American audiences and contemporary society. Wendigo also appears in the novel as possessing speaking and thinking abilities, and its physical and psychic abilities are massive.

The success of the novel in producing an atmosphere of fright that keeps the reader interested is largely due to King's utilization of elements such as the burial ground, the supernatural and the monster. The burial ground serves as a symbol of death and what is unknowable, and the supernatural elements give the story a disturbing and paranormal atmosphere. Whether it takes the appearance of a human or an animal, the monster symbolizes a distortion of the natural order and represents a warning about the dangers of intrusion in life and death. Additionally, King's depiction of the monsters, particularly Gage and Church, demonstrates his capacity to demonstrate dread and horror through the use of vivid imagery and emotional manipulation of the reader. The unpleasant details of the novel, like the moss on Gage's burial suit or Church's unusual conduct, are made more disturbing by the horrific characteristics of the resurrected people which create a sense of dread and terror.

Dreams and nightmares play a crucial role in the Gothic tradition and are frequently employed as elements of the plot to foretell future events and develop the plot. In *Pet Sematary*, dreams and nightmares are successfully used to foreshadow upcoming events and to arouse fear and horror. King employs a number of powerful techniques to heighten the reader's sensation of anxiety. For example, Ellie's dreams and nightmares stand out. Ellie's dreams and nightmares frequently feature Pascow and the supernatural which add an aspect of unease to the already terrifying elements of the novel.

The novel examines the issue of mortality and how it affects people individually and as a family. King depicts many responses to death, from denial to acceptance, using a variety of characters. The main character, Louis, can be viewed as a Gothic anti-hero who seeks knowledge and power that are prohibited and will ultimately destroy him. Another characteristic of Gothic fiction that contributes to the novel's terrifying element is Rachel's mysterious past. Her sister, Zelda, represents a source of fear and a representation of Rachel's haunting past according to the way King portrays

her in the novel. Generally speaking, *Pet Sematary* is an outstanding representation of the Gothic genre because it effectively combines suspense, psychological fear, and horror to produce a unique and intense work.

The novel could be said to have traditional Gothic elements including supernatural events, dark settings, suspenseful and mysterious events, a sense of anxiety and a dark and ominous atmosphere, horrific imagery and themes of death and resurrection. Even though King employs traditional Gothic elements, *Pet Sematary* is regarded as a modern work with re-evaluated Gothic features in a way that suits our modern time. King successfully creates a world that is both attractive and terrifying through the use of traditional Gothic elements. With such a creation, it can be said that King has also paved the way to re-evaluate the genre of Gothic for contemporary authors.

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