



RESEARCH PAPER

Gothic Fiction in Twenty-First Century: A Psychoanalytic Study of Waters' *The Little Stranger*

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to explore the shift in modern Gothic fiction from supernatural elements to realism and the way it incorporates psychological issues to induce fear in the readers. Gothic literature has been widely studied, but little attention has been given to the psychological aspect which this article explores. The current research is purely qualitative and analyzes Sarah Waters' *The Little Stranger* (2009) using the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud to understand the psyche of various characters. The concept of repression and drives from Freudian psychoanalysis give useful insights about the way various characters react to trauma. The analysis revealed that various characters seem to be working on the death drive, harming others, and in some cases, succumbing to self-harm and suicide owing to their repressed fears and desires, giving rise to a psychologically disturbing narrative. Future researchers can analyze other modern Gothic fictions to explore psychological dimensions of the work, using various other theories.

KEYWORDS Death Drive, Gothic Romance, Ghost Fiction, Life Drive, Psychoanalysis, Repression

Introduction

Yi Liu (2010) explained Gothic Fiction as a significant genre that aims to induce fear in its readers by using supernatural elements or portraying disturbing psychological elements having dark themes of death, madness, and mystery. The current study is concerned with analyzing Gothic fiction in the twenty-first century, its inclination towards presenting psychologically disturbing narratives in the horror genre to evoke a sense of fear in the readers. The paper is focused on analyzing the renowned Gothic novel, *The Little Stranger* (2009) by Sarah W, employing Freud's theory of repression, and Thanatos and Eros to analyze repressed traumas and motivational drives behind the main characters' behaviors.

Literature Review

Various studies have been conducted on Waters' novels, especially *The Little Stranger* (2009). Bronte Schiltz (2021) published an article concerned with the comparative analysis of *The Little Stranger* (2009) and *The Accidental* (2005) on the presentation of haunting details while applying Jean Baudrillard's concept of simulacrum. Gina Wisker (2016) also published her research article on *The Little Stranger* (2009), examining new aspects like social realism, feminist perspective, the social injustice because of class difference and the destructive nature of change. Similarly, Barbara Braid (2013) published research on transgression and haunting details in *The Little Stranger* (2009). Although many researchers have worked on various aspects of Waters' *The Little Stranger* (2009) but

psychoanalytic analysis focusing on the psyche of the main characters has not been found by the researchers, which suggests the presence of a gap. So, this paper is a fresh investigation.

Dryden (2003) explains that traditional Gothic writers used supernatural entities like ghosts, unfathomable events like flying chairs, moving doors, and mystical creatures like vampires, werewolves, etc., to induce fear. But modern Gothic writers, including Waters, have shifted focus, employing the theme of madness, psychological disorders, hallucinations, and delusions to create psychologically disturbing narratives. Their writings imply that the wickedness of human nature is far scarier than the supernatural devil. In Waters' novel, the villain is not a ghost but rather an evil human whose evil manipulation created fear and mystery in the novel. Hence, the research article focuses on how Sarah Waters has shifted the focus from the portrayal of supernatural forces in Gothic fiction to psychologically disturbed characters and how their deteriorating psyche develops the plot. In this way, the article focuses on exploring the repressed desires of characters and the drives behind their action using the concept of Freudian Psychoanalysis.

Material and Methods

The current research is purely qualitative, aimed to analyze Sarah Waters' *The Little Stranger* (2009), using literary theories, of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). The main theories used here are Freudian theories of psychoanalysis: Repression and Instinctual Drives. Lipner et al. (2017) explained Freudian Psychoanalysis as a set of various theories or therapeutic techniques focusing on the study of the unconscious mind as the primary force in shaping one's personality and the driving force behind the actions and behaviors of humans. In this paper, the concept of repression, primarily explained in Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1913) and the concepts of Thanatos and Eros present in his essay, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) will be focused. C.G. Boeree (2017) explained Freudian life drive as the driving force that compels humans to seek pleasure or urges to be saved from harm. In addition to Eros ensuring the safety and continuation of life instincts, there is Thanatos or the death drive, that urges humans to go back to their previous state of nothingness. Where Eros motivates a person to fight for their survival during dangerous situations, Thanatos motivates them to seek refuge in death by giving up.

This article also addresses the reasons behind their drive, the repressed traumas or desires behind their actions or choices. As Sefa Bulut (2019) explained that the traumatic events that a person has faced in their past do not always turn into hysteria. Sometimes, the Ego as a defense mechanism tends to move the traumatic memories to the unconscious mind, and the person forgets them. Although these memories are forgotten, the fear associated with that trauma stays in the mind and when faced with similar situations, the forgotten memories are activated, resulting in various forms of disorders like anxiety, depression and self-harm.

Results and Discussion

In this section, the repressed desires and traumas of various characters have been discussed using Freudian psychoanalysis.

Repressed Desire for Luxurious Life in Dr. Faraday

In Waters' novel *The Little Stranger* (2009), Dr. Faraday is both the protagonist and the narrator. In the analysis, the researchers have focused on the drives behind the choices that Dr. Faraday made during the course of action, referring to his psyche. He seems to be

suffering from repressed desires and acting on both life and death drives simultaneously. He is a family doctor in Warwickshire, earning a low income. The character has been presented as having a strong desire to be rich, as he was born to poor parents. When he visited Hundreds Hall, he wanted to possess their house, status and respect. He decided to study medicine to change his status initially. He worked hard, but because of nepotism, he could not advance in his career. Whenever he drove near Hundreds he would always long to live there like a squire. As J.F Kihlstrom (2002) defined repression as:

Repression operates unconsciously on threatening mental contents, especially those related to primitive sexual and aggressive instincts so that the person can avoid conscious conflict and anxiety (Kihlstrom, 2002, p. 502).

In the light of this definition, the detailed analysis of Dr. Faraday's character reveals that Ego repressed his utmost desire to possess the house to avoid conflicts, as he could not illegally possess their house. After he met the Ayres Family, his repressed desire resurfaced, and he wanted to take all that resentment of the injustice done to him by upper class, out on them. He wanted to possess that house and the status that Roderick Ayres had and was being ungrateful by complaining. It is evident when he unconsciously stated his jealousy as he said:

Plenty men would envy you, you know ... look at that house you're living in (Waters, 2009, p. 169)

When he got the chance to visit the house freely on the pretext of Roderick Ayres' treatment, he felt utter joy. Although he disliked Caroline Ayres, he still decided to pursue her for marriage and live in that house. The writer did not explicitly state that Dr. Faraday was the culprit behind the downfall of the family, but out of the two possibilities, one suggests Dr. Faraday's direct involvement in the worsening mental condition of Roderick Ayres. To achieve his dream of living in the luxurious house, Dr. Faraday had two obstacles to overcome, one Roderick Ayres and second Mrs. Ayres. His obsession with the house is clearly stated in the scene where Caroline Ayres and Dr. Faraday talked about his act of scraping the acorn:

But you liked the house, even then?

Enough to want to vandalise it (Waters, 2009, p.74).

To fulfil his desire, he started harming others, that Freud (1920) termed as Thanatos or the death drive. Carel (2008) defined Freud's Thanatos as that humans display aggression which is usually directed towards oneself; to prevent this aggression inward, some people tend to direct it outward. Dr. Faraday seems to be acting on both Eros and Thanatos simultaneously. As Freud (1920) defined Eros to be the instinct that motivates a person to seek pleasure by fulfilling his/her desires. It is evident as Dr. Faraday acted in an unlawful manner, trying to get rid of Roderick Ayres and Mrs. Ayres while pursuing Caroline Ayres only to fulfill his deepest desire to possess that house. Dr. Faraday planned to get rid of Roderick by messing with his mental health. He used Roderick Ayres' trauma and somehow made his mental health worse, even to the point that he was admitted to the hospital. Faraday's evil intentions are evident, as when Roderick Ayres asked Dr. Faraday not to visit the house again, the same night, he went mad, setting fire to his room. The next day, Dr. Faraday admitted him to his friend's mental clinic, where his mental health even worsened. All these points prove Dr. Faraday has been working on both Eros and Thanatos. Even Caroline Ayres doubted him to be the culprit behind it all, saying:

You might as well say we've only had trouble since you've been in it! (Waters, 2009, p. 421).

After Roderick Ayres' removal from the house, he felt relieved. There was yet another obstacle, Mrs. Ayres, the reason Caroline Ayres did not want to get married early, while he was desperate to move into the house. Dr. Faraday somehow used the inexplicable incidents happening in the house to trigger the trauma of her daughter's death. She started to hurt herself, even to the point where she attempted suicide. Strangely, all the supernatural activities suddenly stopped after Mrs. Ayres' death. He suddenly seemed happier and even fixed their marriage date and told everyone in the town, totally unaffected by her death. His happiness alarmed Caroline Ayres, and she called off their marriage. He later tried to persuade her, but she declared her plans of selling Hundreds Hall and moving abroad. His evil intentions are clear from the dialogue between the two:

I want you! Doesn't that mean anything to you?

'Do you, really?' She asked me. 'Or is it the house you want?' (Waters, 2009, p. 521).

After this, Caroline Ayres mysteriously died by falling off the second floor. His involvement in the murder of Caroline Ayres is evident from the fact that she died on the night when they were supposed to get married. In addition, the events of those nights are the most blurred and ambiguous ones. Dr. Faraday even dreamt of going to Hundreds Hall at the night of her death. He was at the lake near Hundreds when everyone thought he had been in the hospital. At the lake he stated that he went into a type of lucid dream, as he says:

I gazed at it, and it seemed to absorb me, I began to feel out of time and out of place, an absolute stranger... I saw myself cross the silvered landscape and pass like smoke through the Hundreds gate. I saw myself start along the Hundreds drive (Waters, 2009, p. 549).

In the courtroom, although the jury declared the mysterious death as a suicide upon his statement, he imagined the night at Hundreds Hall, envisioning the scene of Caroline Ayres' death so accurately as if he witnessed it with his own eyes. He describes it as:

I saw Betty, gazing at me with her light, bewildered eyes ... Then across that image there came another: the Hundreds landing, lit bright by the moon. And once again I seemed to see Caroline, making her sure-footed way along it. I saw her doubtfully mounting the stairs, as if drawn upwards by a familiar voice; I saw her advance into the darkness, not quite certain of what was before her. Then I saw her face- saw it as vividly as the faces all around me. I saw recognition, and understanding, and horror in her expression. Just for a moment- as if it were there, in the silvered surface of her moonlit eye- I even seemed to catch the outline of some shadowy, dreadful thing (Waters, 2009, p. 572).

His imagined scenario appears to be the most plausible case scenario of the mysterious death and acts as a clear hint by the writer. In addition, Betty's statement that she heard Caroline Ayres shouting "You" before she fell, clearly depicts someone else's presence at the murder scene. At the end, Dr. Faraday is shown trying to search for the cause of Caroline Ayres' death as he stands at the spot where Caroline stood and looked at the dark corner where she pointed, there he sees his own reflection. As he says:

For I'll turn... realizing that what I am looking at is only a cracked window- pane, and that the face gazing distortedly from it, baffled and longing, is my own (Waters, 2009, p. 579).

Dr. Faraday, a seemingly pious and kind country doctor in Warwickshire, appears to be an evil person who, to fulfill his lustful desire to get the house and the status, destroyed a whole family. It shows how the writer aims to portray Gothic fiction in a psychologically disturbed manner, rather than introducing a ghost or a supernatural entity. She chose realism, portraying Dr. Faraday as the antagonist. The first-person narration makes it even clearer, as the prime suspect is the narrator of the story. It is evident that Dr. Faraday psychologically manipulated the characters and moved the story forward. He used the repressed traumas of both Roderick Ayres and Mrs. Ayres, exploiting their psychological state even to the point where Roderick Ayres went mad, and Mrs. Ayres attempted suicide. Dr. Faraday suffered humiliation, nepotism, and injustice, being a part of the lower class. He vented his aggression on the Ayres family. He seems to be acting on both drives, Eros, trying to fulfil his deepest desire, and Thanatos, releasing his aggression outward on Bourgeois.

Repressed Past Traumas of Roderick Ayres

Roderick Ayres, the eldest son and the successor of Hundreds Hall, seems to be suffering from repressed past trauma of the war. While serving in the RAF, he had an accident where his plane crashed, killing his navigator. Being the pilot, he felt guilty, thinking people would blame him for his friend's death. He suffered mental and physical trauma; he used to have panic attacks, but his mother, scared of people's judgment, did not take him to the hospital. He had to repress his traumas and physical pain for his estate and family. His repressed trauma resurfaced with Gyp's death, he always felt responsible and guilty for whatever happened in the house, as the man of the house his responsibility had been to keep everyone safe. As B. Garssen (2007) defined the term repression as:

The tendency to inhibit the experience and the expression of negative feelings or unpleasant cognitions in order to prevent one's positive self-image from being threatened (Garssen, 2007, p.472).

So, to exhibit his image as a good son, brother, and heir of the Ayres family, he hid his pain. He had a hard time coping with financial issues and deteriorating house, with Gyp's death burden, his repressed traumas resurfaced, in fact, backfired, resulting in panic attacks and hallucinations. Dr. Faraday explained his erratic behavior:

I watched the bitter shifting of his scarred, finely cut features, the restless dipping and rising of his hands... I'd been supposing his manner to be rather casual, all this time. Now I realized that the casualness was actually something else completely: perhaps an exhaustion, perhaps a studied warding off of anxiety (Waters, 2009, p. 67).

The above lines clearly depict his traumas reenacting, because of the burdens of responsibilities and guilt, Gyp's death seemed to be the last straw. He started to hallucinate. The hallucination was because of his trauma of being blamed for things he did not even do on purpose. It is evident as he asked Dr. Faraday if they considered him responsible for Gillian's accident, as he failed to keep the germ or ghost inside. On the night of the little girl's incident, he felt some evil energy in his room, he felt scared and asked the thing to leave him alone. He thought the evil thing in turn infuriated Gyp to bite the little girl, and he felt responsible, as he says:

I wish I'd been there with you all last night... I can't help but feel... somehow responsible (Waters, 2009, p. 132).

With the reemergence of his trauma, he started to behave erratically, harming himself and hallucinating things that were not even there; it seems to be the emergence of Thanatos- Death drive. Havi Carel (2008) described the Freudian notion of Thanatos that when some people cannot direct their aggression outward, it turns inward, resulting in self-harm, and even suicide as a way of fleeing reality. When Roderick Ayres felt the presence of an evil force, he tried to keep it inside his room, so that it would harm him instead of his family. This behavior is self-harming as he wanted to let the evil thing hurt him, as he says:

It can do what it wants to me... for as long as I can keep it... I can contain the infection. That's the vital thing now, don't you agree? To keep the source of the infection away, from my sister and my mother (Waters, 2009, p. 192).

In the turn of events, one night, a fire broke out in his room. As Caroline Ayres explained, it seemed like someone deliberately started the fire as it broke out from five different places. Roderick Ayres believed the evil germ caused it, while Dr. Faraday believed it was Roderick Ayres, as the fire mainly started at the desk, burning all his documents. In this sense, he seems to be suffering from depression and working on Thanatos, trying to lash his anger on the documents and the house. He did not remember the incidents from that night which proves him to be acting on Thanatos unconsciously. As Kihlstrom (2002) stated: Repressed material must continue to affect one's ongoing experience, thoughts and actions implicitly, outside of awareness (Kihlstrom, 2002, p. 502).

After realizing that his family blamed him for the fire, he went into a state of utter panic; he did not want society to think that he tried to kill his own family. So, when Dr. Faraday asked him to get treatment, rather than retaliating, he happily agreed as a way to run away from the house, its curses and miseries. His fear of judgement and trauma of guilt is clear as he said:

I'm practically a murderer! ... That's what they're saying, aren't they? (Waters, 2009, p. 259).

Roderick Ayres, initially shown to be a well-composed, pride-stricken lad, turned out to be a miserable person trying to cope with mental issues while trying to manage state affairs. His repressed war trauma got triggered by Gyp's death, and he started to work on the death drive, unconsciously hallucinating things. This return of repressed trauma or desire has been termed as "return of the repressed" by Sigmund Freud (1910). To escape from reality, he unconsciously set fire to his room. When confronted, he agreed to get treated in a mental clinic to escape from his duties, which proves him to be distinctly acting on Thanatos. So, this character of Waters' novel has also been found to be psychologically disturbed, although he didn't attempt suicide, but giving up on his house, family, and life is also a form of self-harm. His disturbed mental health, setting fire to the room, the hysterical actions, hallucinations, and insisting on the presence of a ghost, all added tension in the plot.

Repressed Past Trauma of Mrs. Ayres

Mrs. Ayres was the wife of Colonel Ayres and mother of Susan, Roderick and Caroline Ayres. She always cared about her public image, even after losing her status. Because of war and husband's death, their financial condition worsened but she dressed

like her earlier self to deny reality. Her character's detailed analysis revealed her to be suffering from repressed past trauma of her daughter's death. Susan, the first child of the Ayres family, suffered from diphtheria and died early. Mrs. Ayres could not bear the pain and wanted to end her life, and suffered severe psychological trauma, but her responsibilities towards her husband and kids brought her back. But she, rather than facing her trauma, tried to escape from reality.

People may repress or dissociate traumatic experiences as they are too painful to remember, resulting in anxiety and PTSD (Smeets et al, 2010, p. 212).

She banned everything related to Susan in the house, her pictures and other belongings were put aside in the storage, as Caroline Ayres explained, she did not even know that she had an elder sister for so many years, as even saying her name was. As Freud (1900) explained repression as a kind of coping mechanism, when the painful experience or trauma becomes too severe to handle, Ego moves it to the unconscious part of the brain, completely forgetting it or turning it into less threatening form. Her trauma of losing daughter is evident from her words:

When she died, I felt for a long time that I might as well have died with her. Perhaps I did ... (Waters, 2009, p. 252).

During the war, Colonel Ayres died, their financial situation worsened, and Roderick Ayres also went to serve in the RAF. They had to sell most of their assets to bring the ends meet. She became so stressed at this situation that she again chose to deny the reality. She started throwing parties, living in her fake, delusional reality. As Bert Garssen (2007) described that repression of traumatic events or negative experiences sometimes becomes habitual, where the brain, as a defense mechanism, represses all negative or threatening feelings and it becomes a part of personality.

Her mental condition deteriorated even further when mysterious events led her son to lose his senses. She felt guilty for hindering his treatment. After his admission to the hospital, no man was there to protect them, while the mysterious activities started to accelerate. After finding out about her daughter's plan to marry, she realized she would be left alone in the house; all these consecutive events impacted her mind negatively. Her confinement in the nursery proved to be the last straw. She started imagining that the source of the mysterious activities had been her daughter, who returned from her death to be reunited with her. As she said:

My darling died ... but now she has come back...She says, why won't you come? She says, I'm waiting (Waters, 2009, p.454).

Her repressed trauma and desire to die with her daughter returned, as she started to punish herself, unconsciously, thinking that it was her daughter doing these tricks, she started to pinch, bruise and put cuts on her body. As Havi Carel (2008) said:

Directing aggression outwards is essential to the survival of the organism, otherwise this same aggression would be directed against the organism itself as self-destruction (Carel, 2008, p.242).

She seems to be acting on Thanatos it is evident when Dr. Faraday found her cuts and bruises, she tries to justify these by saying:

Her gaze is so strong, her eyes are like fingers; they can touch. They can press and pinch (Waters, 2009, p. 456)

When Dr. Faraday wanted to take her to the hospital, Caroline Ayres retaliated as her mother cared a lot about her public image. Her fear came true as the day when they were supposed to admit her to the hospital, she hanged herself to death. To save herself from the shame of being perceived as the mad woman, she ended her life. Dr. Faraday, after examining her body during the postmortem, found that there were no cuts or bruise marks on her back. As he explained:

I had supposed them to cover almost Mrs. Ayres' entire body; now I saw that most were located at areas that had been well within her own reach (Waters, 2009, p. 486).

The character of Mrs. Ayres has been portrayed as a disturbed old lady from the very start. But her horrible death, the mysterious occurrences, her confinement in the cellar, and the mysterious pinching marks, bruises on her skin, as well as her hysterical exclamations of seeing her deceased daughter, all of these added to the creepy nature of the novel, a key element of Gothic fiction. A thorough analysis of the character revealed her to be working on Thanatos, in an attempt to reunite with her daughter and to escape the harsh reality. First, she seems to be trying to escape their family's financial crisis by living in her delusional world as a defense mechanism, as she used when her daughter died by repressing the overwhelming desire to die with her. Realizing her son's mental state and her daughter's plan to marry, the repressed trauma of her daughter's death returned along with her repressed desire to reunite with her. Sigmund Freud (1910) termed it as "return of the repressed". She started to harm herself physically. Her death instincts worsened to the point where she attempted suicide as a final escape.

Repressed Complexes in Caroline Ayres

Caroline Ayres, the eldest daughter of the Ayres family, is originally shown to be the liveliest girl, always busy with her duties, but she enjoyed her work. She would play music while cleaning and make others happy. In contrast to her mother, she never cared for her appearance. From her very childhood, Caroline Ayres was a carefree, messy-looking child. In contrast to her mother and brother, she never cared about her public image. She would always dress up ruggedly, and an in-depth analysis of her character revealed that her careless attitude stemmed from her complexes.

Caroline Ayre, second-born daughter of Colonel Ayres and Mrs. Ayres, was born after the unexpected death of their sophisticated and well-mannered child, Susan, who died of diphtheria. Mrs. Ayres, suffering from depression, tried to find Susan's image in her daughter. But her appearance and personality turned out to be in sharp contrast with her sister's. Being disliked by her own mother and people's comments on her made her nonchalant. She became immune to her appearance, believing herself to be ugly and never caring about her appearance. But deep down, it was her unconscious repressed complexes that made her this way. Her mother always taunted her careless attitude. When Dr. Faraday visited their house for the first time, seeing her daughter's unshaven legs and old dress, she made a heart-wrenching remark:

Really, darling, I do wish you would put some stockings on. Dr. Faraday will suppose us savage (Waters, 2009, p.28).

Caroline Ayres was a little overweight and had thick legs and arms. To cope with the judgements of society as a defense mechanism, she repressed the concept of her

ugliness with her careless attitude. But rather than allowing those repressed complexes to overwhelm and take over her charming and lively personality, she acted content, and it proves her to be acting on Eros. Similarly, when the eerie activities started to happen in the house, rather than giving up, she started to investigate. This proves her as acting on life drive. As Connor (2016) explained life drive:

The circumstances of any given life do not always allow the organism to avoid the suffering that is produced by external force (Connor, 2016, p. 5).

She neither gave up on her life nor her family in the wake of inexplicable activities, nor used escapism. Even when the fire broke out, she went to extinguish the fire without any fear. She was shattered at her mother's death. She could have blamed herself for leaving her alone when Dr. Faraday strictly asked her to keep an eye on her mother. But she stayed strong and at the slightest doubt on Dr. Faraday's involvement in her family's ruined state, she refused to marry.

Although she had repressed complexes because of her mother and relatives' comparison of the two sisters, when Dr. Faraday targeted those and forced her to marry him, rather than succumbing to these threats, she fought the fear of abandonment and stood her ground. Dumping Faraday with all his threats. She is shown to be an empowered woman by the writer. This proves that she had been working on life drive, from the very start till the end. Although she has been portrayed as the strongest girl mentally, even after the death of her mother and her brothers' madness, but she had her traumas as well. Her mental condition didn't add much to the disturbing nature of Waters' Gothic fiction, but her sudden death was declared a suicide solely based on her mental turmoil, which changed the whole perspective of the novel. The focus shifted from a vague ghostly villain to a human antagonist. Her death clearly points to Faraday's direct involvement in all the unfortunate things that happened to the Ayres family.

The analysis not only fulfils the main objective of the study, but it also gives useful insights into how writers in the twenty-first century are keenly shifting their focus from blindly portraying supernatural entities, or creating mythological creatures, or relying on superstitions, to exploring darker, evil aspects of the human mind. This shift proves that humans and their greed are far scarier and destructive than any supernatural entity. While prior research has focused on exploring haunting details, themes of feminism, social class, and Marxist analysis of Gothic fiction, but psychoanalysis has not been given much importance. Therefore, this research provides a new perspective to explore other dimensions of the text that have been overlooked.

Conclusion

The main aim of the article had been to focus on the psychoanalytic aspect of the novel, *The Little Stranger*, as presented by the writer to evoke a sense of fear following the theme of madness, a key feature of modern Gothic fiction. The research revealed that the portrayal of a blend of supernatural elements and logic created psychologically disturbing narratives. By portraying the disturbed psychological condition of all the characters, the writer shifted the main theme of her Gothic Fiction, replacing supernatural elements with reality and logic. The villain was not a supernatural entity but rather a human, who in the wake of his greed, destroyed a whole family. Freudian concepts of instinctual drives, i.e., life and death drives, have been used to analyze the novel. The analysis proved that almost all main characters, except for Caroline Ayres, have been acting on the death drive because of their repressed desires and fears. Dr. Faraday has been acting on both life and death

drives, as he vented his pent-up aggression on the Ayres family while pursuing his earnest desire to be rich.

Recommendations

Future researchers may utilize this study by using the same theory to analyze various other works of the same writer to identify recurring patterns. Researchers can also look for the way other modern Gothic writers have shifted the focus or still follow traditional Gothic tropes; a comparative study can be beneficial as well. This research recommends that the psychological aspect in modern Gothic fiction should be given more attention, as it not only gives insights into the characters' psyche but also the writer's intention. Many other psychological theories like Jung's archetypes and collective unconscious, trauma theory and much more can be used to analyze modern Gothic fiction.

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