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**Gothic aspects in Jenni Fagan's "The
Panopticon" and Michel Faber's "Under The
Skin"**

Bakalářská práce

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Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně pod odborným vedením Mgr. Emy Jelínkové, Ph.D. a uvedla v ní veškerou literaturu a ostatní použité zdroje.

V Olomouci dne

Podpis

Poděkování

Ráda bych tímto poděkovala Mgr. Emě Jelínkové, PhD., jež mě s trpělivostí a cennými radami provedla nejen touto prací, ale také studiem; velice si vážím její vřelosti.

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Introduction

This thesis is covering two novels from contemporary Scottish authors. The selected novels are Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon* (2012) and Michel Faber's debut novel *Under The Skin* (2000). The aim of this thesis is to identify and further analyze the Gothic aspects of the novels and find, whether there are any parallels and if, to what extent. The thesis is divided into five chapters and some of these are further broken down into several sections.

In order to classify the Gothic genre, which is a key element of the thesis, the first chapter delves into the development of Gothic genre itself. It considers the historical background and origin of the Gothic, its early structure and how it further developed with the historical and cultural background taken into account. Obviously, it would be very hard to include all of the Gothic fiction authors from the beginning to the modern age, so only the most significant and their works are mentioned, and with them the means with which they contributed to formation of Gothic literature. The reason for this chapter is for the readers to fully understand the notion and structure of the genre and the features that form it.

In the second chapter, instead of the broad scope of Gothic genre, only the Scottish Gothic is investigated. Similarly, this second chapter sets the historical and cultural background for the development, and a number of most significant authors and their production is mentioned. Because contemporary Scottish Gothic literature is the preoccupation of this thesis, some contemporary writers and their contribution is mentioned as well. The point of this chapter is to introduce readers what conditions presumed the expansion of Scottish Gothic and therefore what might have the two selected authors draw from.

The third and fourth chapter both deliver context for the analysis. In the third chapter, the aim is to summarize the Gothic features in order to conclude its interpretation. Fourth chapter's objective is to introduce Jenni Fagan and Michel Faber, include some facts about their life and work until now and then foreshadow the two selected novels, the plot, main characters and some interesting aspects of their creation.

The fifth and most important chapter is the analysis of the two novels, *Under The Skin* and *The Panopticon*. The goal of this thesis is examining and selecting some gothic features of the novels, locating them and further explaining their role in the story. Finding in what aspects are the novels similar and in what aspects they differ is a preoccupation of this thesis as well. Following the assumption some of the aspects are going to be traceable in both novels, whether they can be delivered differently, or project distinct realities is going to be examined. Both of the novels became very popular and so the questions why and how the identified features are resonating in the readership are to be considered too.

1 Gothic Tradition

1.1 Origins of Gothic

The Gothic genre is known to be fairly difficult to define¹ and there have been many assumptions of what author is a contribution to the rise of Gothic phenomenon and who not so much were made by the critics. For better understanding of the state of contemporary Gothic literature, it is important to know the development through which it progressed.

The blossom of Gothic literature dates back to 18th century and during this time, the word Gothic in literary sense went through a number of different shifts, similarly to the notion of Gothic itself. The phenomenon is associated with the Goths, which was a Germanic tribe existing during the fall of Roman Empire. These Goths were generally perceived as barbaric and uncivilized. In his book, Punter explains, that “Goths left no literature or art of their own, they came to be remembered only as the invaders and destroyers of the great Roman civilization“.²

By the beginning of 18th century, the society, not only British but worldwide, was generally oriented towards reason, rationality, modernity. The old Catholic values in community were questioned and the movement, known as the ‘Enlightenment’, brought new political and social perspective. People tended to incline to scientific research, intellectuality, classical tradition and through the ‘Age of Reason’, they defined the modern age superior to its medieval times. Within these shifts in society, the widely read literature was dominated by Greek and Roman authors as they incorporated the maturity and values sought after by the continuously reforming society. Such literature was not meant to entertain people, it was written for the sole purpose of education and instruction.³ The past, everything considering the ‘Dark Ages’, was treated as uncultivated, or, in other words, barbarous. Therefore, the term Gothic carried unflattering connotation, implying ignorance and savageness of the past age.

¹ David Punter and Glennis Byron, *The Gothic* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), xvii.

² Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 3.

³ Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London: Routledge, 2005), 15.

That changed with the release of Richard Hurd's twelve letters named *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, in which he challenged the neoclassicists' bias in moral literature and ultimately sided with Gothicists who acquire inspiration from medieval romances, advocating for less unpleasant view of the past age. His work brought more neutral implication, simply meaning 'medieval'.⁴ Moreover, it initiated the reevaluation of cultural principles, and the Goths, formerly seen as barbaric and uncivilized, began to be celebrated as "those who reinstated the liberty once held but lost by a decadent Rome".⁵

Perhaps the biggest contribution to Gothic of that time, and to the meaning of Gothic as medieval, was Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, first published in 1764. The following year, Walpole released second edition with the subtitle "A Gothic Story" and it became one of the most influential works in Gothic fiction.

The medieval settings of early Gothic stories were often uniform – castles, lonely passages, monasteries, cathedrals, and it had to do with the sudden British obsession with gothic architecture. Walpole went as far as to transform his home, Strawberry Hill, into a small gothic castle. Such environment only naturally delivered sense of supernaturality, a certain chill which soon set base for the final form of the word Gothic. Until then, the two different connotations of Gothic – barbaric and medieval – coexisted and were interpreted depending on individual's values. The newly formed literary term was synonymous to ghastly or melancholic and even though there is no concrete evidence of when exactly this new connotation appeared to be, the establishment roughly dates to 1800s⁶.

⁴ Longueil, Alfred E., "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism." *Modern Language Notes* 38, no. 8 (1923): 453–460.

⁵ Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 5.

⁶ Alfred E. Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism.", 459.

1.2 Development of Gothic literature

1.2.1 Graveyard poetry

As was already mentioned in previous section, possibly the biggest contribution to the Gothic literature was Horace Walpole. It is, however, essential to say, that there was not only one influence in setting the base for the Gothic literature. Graveyard poetry, in an instance, became a revolt against the classicists' view that the perfect literature was already found and there was no further need to try and develop new or better. Graveyard school of poetry objected to it with its proposal to turn to feelings, it "privileged inventiveness and imagination over imitation and morality".⁷

At this point, it is worth going into graveyard poetry in some detail for several reasons: because its involvement with death and suffering prefigures the Gothic novel; because it marks an early stage of the renewed desire for literary 'novelty' which characterised the later part of the century; because it challenges rationalism and vaunts extremity of feeling; and because its actual influence on Gothic fiction was considerable, although in a rather curious way: it exerted an enormous influence on German writers of terror-fiction, and through them retained an influence in Britain well into the 1790s and beyond.⁸

Graveyard poetry was famous in the first half of 18th century and its source of inspiration were nights, ruins, ghosts and mainly, death, all that which the rational literature rejected. Together with death and the path to the complete understanding of human being through it, nature too became a source of inspiration for graveyard poets. These insights into the feelings linked with the grandeur of nature brought one major phenomenon – the sublime.

Sublime is a course of interest for Edmund Burke, whose *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* illustrates the sensation sublime is and what is the source and core of it. In it he simply puts that "whatever is in

⁷ Botting, Gothic, 23.

⁸ David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* (New York: Longman, 1996), 29-30.

any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the sublime".⁹

Burke also proposes clear difference between sublime and beautiful. He states that beautiful things are often smooth, small, precious and their beauty is comprehensible by human's mind, bringing feelings like love, passion or tranquility. On the other hand, sublime is too enormous for human to grasp, it is dark, hollow and evokes terror and fear with its twisted magnificence. The author further explains that such emotions are even stronger than the former ones.¹⁰

Both sublime and terror became essential preoccupation in Gothic literature, already visible in early Gothic novels by Horace Walpole or Ann Radcliffe. In some sense, Gothic architecture with its greatness and obscurity, became a source of sublime in literature too.

1.2.2 Early Gothic novel and Romanticism

Like romances before them, Gothic novels were irrational, improper and immoral wastes of time.¹¹

But they were popular. The gloom, decaying abbeys, dark places and obvious presence of unknown danger were making novels popular because it served as a source of terror, the very reason of anxiety and expectation shifting reader in place. The consistent appearance of sublime and terror soon became a crucial part of Gothic literature. Previously natural sublime of graveyard poetry reformed into the sublime of Gothic and the novels became a tool for freedom of not only the writer, but also the reader, liberating one from the neo-classical rationality and anxiety of revolution and industrialization.

The fact, that Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* had an enormous impact on forming what we know is Gothic literature today has been already settled. When he

⁹ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, ed. James T. Boulton (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 39.

¹⁰ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*, 39.

¹¹ Botting, *Gothic*, 29.

released the second version of *Otranto*, claiming his authorship, he not only revealed the motives but also inspiration for the short novel.

The Castle of Otranto's plot is set in Italy in the Middle Age, narrating the story of Prince Manfred and his family. Primarily focused on problematic family relations and property heritage, there is undoubtedly a set of supernatural features that prevailed in the future Gothic literature.

As many other Gothic novels, *Otranto*'s settings are castle and its near vicinity, with confusing labyrinth of corridors, secret passages and vast hallways. This alone settles the gothic atmosphere, one which brings anxiety, uneasiness and terror to the characters and to the readers as well. Such settings often isolate the character and make them experience the supernatural occurrences. It is no different with Walpole's piece of fiction as his character, not surprisingly, encounter several inexplicable bone chilling events. The first and perhaps the scariest of them is the mysterious "accident" that causes the death of Manfred's son, the fall of the helmet that crushes him to death. The blood running from the statue's nose or the walking picture, all of these and many more introduce the ghastly, which bring the tension and therefore add to the reader's experience of Gothic.

The Castle of Otranto is considered to claim its primacy in Gothic novel because Walpole's vision was to create something unique. It was described in the second preface, that his objective was to blend two types of romance – the historical romance of feudal past and the new, more imaginary inclined literature of newly forming Romantic movement.

It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been, copied with success.¹²

Apart from this blending situation, Walpole also lets himself be heard that the inspiration came from his model Shakespeare, who, before anyone else, blended two

¹² Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, ed. Michael Gamer (London: Penguin Books, 2001), 67.

types of genres – tragedy and comedy – in his works too.¹³ Despite the immense success that Walpole's novel was in the public eye, it was not met with the same amount of praise from the contemporary authors of his age. Not only both generations of Romantic poets criticized the superstition of the story but also his fellow novelists.

First to publicly oppose the success of the story was undoubtedly Clara Reeve whose response to the novel was her adaptation of Walpole's Gothic story called *The English Baron*. This story was first published in 1777 under different name and anonymously. In this story, she brings back the neo-classical features in form of rationality. Her argument as to why was Walpole's novel imperfect was due to the amount of irrationality. As a result, she created her own novel in which she kept the feudal past and minimized the supernatural occurrences, completing with story that mirrored the 18th century life in history.¹⁴

The Recess, Gothic novel by Sophia Lee, brought another concept into the linkage of historical and Gothic romance. Similarly to Reeve's *The English Baron*, her story contains only a little to no mysterious features and she adds the female narrative, however, it was not praised but instead criticized for the lacking accuracy of history. It portrays a story of two sisters, the fictional daughters of Mary Queen of Scots that needed to navigate their life through series of unfortunate events. Even though the historical events are not accurately portrayed, Lee's message is nonetheless important for its suggestion of uncomfortable position of women in the patriarchal world.¹⁵

Vathek, first wrote in French by William Beckford in 1782, later translated by Samuel Henley without Beckford's knowledge¹⁶, brought another perspective into Gothic novel of that time. Just like Walpole, Beckford with his enormous financial heritage built himself a gothic estate too, one that later served as an inspiration for the Halls of Eblis

¹³ Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, 69.

¹⁴ Botting, *Gothic*, 35-36.

¹⁵ Deborah Russell, "Gothic Romance" in *Romantic Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Angela Wright and Dale Townshend (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 67.

¹⁶ Peter J. Kitson, "Oriental Gothic" in *Romantic Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Angela Wright and Dale Townshend (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), 171.

in *Vathek*. Even though there is no exact spawn of this type of terror story, there is no doubt there were bits and inspiration taken from it. *Vathek* is highly imaginative Eastern story, succeeding the Arabian Tales and further influencing major works like Lewis' *The Monk*. The story narrates Caliph Vathek's life; life of a man who sought forbidden knowledge to control life and death at any cost. The novel also opens the door for Romanticism with its immense imagination and depiction of "extravagant desires and grotesque cruelty"¹⁷. *Vathek* uses the East Arabo-Persian settings as a fantasy world that reflects modern, rational British society in not exactly flattering light.¹⁸ What Gothic mainly owes Orientalism for is the installation of typical aspect of later Gothicism – the vampire.

The 90s of 18th century was a decade in which Gothic fiction flourished, not only because it was produced in a great number, but because it was eagerly consumed as well. Two major writers of this time are Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis. Although they were both writers of the same genre, they both transformed Gothic in different ways.

Ann Radcliffe is partly indebted to Sophia Lee as she, similarly to Lee, brings the female narrative into her fiction. She uses modern British female viewpoint and sets it back in the Middle Age or Renaissance. Additionally, her settings are like Walpole's, in Eastern countries and the stories are often taking place in isolated castles, dark forests, secret passages – typically Gothic settings. Russell further explains that what made Radcliffe famous was also a phenomenon called "explained supernatural".

Radcliffe's response to this dilemma – which was especially problematic for a woman writer – was to pioneer the phenomenon of the 'explained supernatural'. This became characteristic of her version of Gothic and the source of some of her fiction's iconic moments. It offered the tempting pleasures of imagination and terror, but then tempered them with rationalisation and moralising.¹⁹

¹⁷ E. J. Clery, "The genesis of "Gothic" fiction" in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 36.

¹⁸ Kitson, "Oriental Gothic", 172.

¹⁹ Russell, "Gothic Romance", 68.

In this sense, she often raised an unsettling possibility and left it hang for number of pages before she gave it the rational conclusion and through such manipulation, it was easy for her to keep the readers invested, even though the stories were often long and plots unamusing.²⁰

Her *Mysteries of Udolpho*, written in 1794, was especially praised for the correctness and moral of the story. It is no surprise as it is known that Radcliffe was widely deriving from the novel of sensibility.²¹ While *The Mysteries of Udolpho* used the feminine point of view of orphaned and threatened maiden, undoubtedly contributing to the developing ‘female Gothic’, she used different approach in her later novel *The Italian* (1797). In the latter, she diverted from the maiden to the male villain. This was supposed to be a reaction to Lewis’ scandalous novel *The Monk*. *The Italian*’s plot revolves around a villainous monk whose crimes were never connected to anything supernatural, instead, Radcliffe gives, as she always does, rational and realistic explanation.

Matthew Lewis’ *The Monk*, on the other hand, was not concerned with rationality nor realistic reasoning. Lewis decided to go the opposite way and brings supernatural circumstances without any explanation throughout the story. His piece of fiction too describes a monk but unlike Radcliffe’s, Ambrosio – the main figure of Lewis’ novel – gives in to diabolic pact that allows him to follow his obscene passions.

Although there is a number of similarities between *The Italian* and *The Monk*, similarities in a form of presence of the evil monk, questionable family relations or a couple wanting to be together despite their families’ wishes, the biggest difference between these two prevails in the perception of terror and horror. Miles explains that terror is an affair of the mind, of the imagination and when the threat takes a concrete shape, it induces horror, or disgust.²²

²⁰ Robert D. Hume, “Gothic versus Romantic: A Reevaluation of the Gothic Novel.” *PMLA* 84, no. 2 (1969): 285.

²¹ Robert Miles, “Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis” in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 93.

²² Miles, “Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis”, 93.

On this note, we can distinguish the difference between Radcliffe's Gothic and Lewis' Gothic. Radcliffe uses threats of death in her story, but it is Lewis who essentially presents it into the text; the rape and death of Antonia in *The Monk* precisely brings the materialization of horror. In publication of these two on one hand similar, on the other completely distinct texts, we can trace the formation of two different legs of Gothic tradition.

It is known that Gothic novels became quite popular along the rise of Romanticism. Romanticism as a literary movement developed in a span of late 18th century to early 19th century. Romantic authors denied the strict rules of "Age of Reason" and formed a movement that focused mainly on imagination, individuality, freedom and mysticism. Some, but not all, of these traits reflected in Gothic literature and formed its future form. Although not all Romantic writers instantly approved of Gothicism in fiction, it was eventually generally appraised for its recognition of subjectivism, emotions and imagination.²³

Most of the Romantic poets also participated in evolution of Gothic literature. Coleridge, even though he rejected Gothic and even understood it as a cultural decline, often leaned to Gothic features. His poems like *Kubla Khan*, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* or *Christabel* are all melancholic, contain ghosts, hallucination and supernatural events occur. On the other hand, Byron's relationship with Gothicism is slightly more complex than Coleridge's for he used Gothic primarily to point out the social and religious injustice, yet somehow appeared not so didactic.²⁴

Gothic novel grew famous during the time of industrialization while the society was transforming. Hand in hand with the deterioration of traditional social system came science and its discoveries, resulting in discomfort within the community. Gothic writers became immensely interested in such conditions and one of the most popular Gothic novels emerged as a reaction to this.

²³ Mary Ellen Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature* (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 300.

²⁴ Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 14-18.

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* became famous not only for its author being female and its primacy in science fiction. *Frankenstein* is a mixture of Gothic novel, science fiction and it also contains didacticism. The inspiration for this novel, apart from the gnawing uncertainty of the age it was written in, comes from the myth of Prometheus and Ann Radcliffe's terror story *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.²⁵

The story revolves around a scientist Victor Frankenstein who seeks to understand nature and breaks the natural code by creating a monster out of human remnants, breathing life into it. The novel is full of Gothic features such as death, gloom, fear but also feelings like empathy, guilt or symbols of isolation. The element that brings horror is the monster itself – it is ugly, dangerous and murders a number of people, including his creator.

1.2.3 First half of 19th century Gothic

During the reign of Queen Victoria, starting from 1837, Britain became the biggest imperial power, colonizing many territories. Naturally, not only the technologies of 19th century Britain but also the new shape of society brought new perspectives into the literature.

It is suspected that the 'classic' Gothic novel ended in the 19th century but continued to return throughout in different forms. It mainly domesticated – it moved from the historical settings to the familiar surroundings of Victorian era, from the labyrinths of castles to labyrinths which dark and narrow London streets reminded of. The new horror settings were opium dens, slums, filthy establishments, dirty corners of the city. In other words, Victorian novels were concerned with the reality of contemporary readers. Moreover, reading of novels became normal part of private life, partly encouraged by the growing affordability due to lower cost of printing paper.²⁶

The Gothic form returned mainly in two waves – first was in the sensation novel of 60s and the other with the psychological romance of 80s and 90s. All of these were mostly a mixture of romance, realism and fantasy and throughout the whole century,

²⁵ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 126.

²⁶ Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 26.

novels became a dominant form in literature as it defined what it meant to be ‘Victorian’ regarding day-to-day experience.²⁷

One of the greatest authors of Victorian age is undoubtedly Charles Dickens. He is known to blend Gothic novel together with social novel and in this synthesis, he challenges the England’s social construction. Dickens, having unhappy childhood himself, often calls upon the social injustice and informs readers of the state in which the less fortunate people live in. Bowen further points that “state violence and radical economic inequality are figured in the ubiquity and importance of children, prisoners, working people and the dispossessed in his work; Gothic is often a way to bring the reality of their lives uncannily or shockingly home to his readers.”²⁸

This is projected in one of his most famous works, *Oliver Twist*, published in 1838. Oliver, an orphan who was rescued by a child pickpockets’ business, leads a very turbulent, criminal life and even though it eventually ends well, the story is full of violence and unfortunate situations leading to deaths of some characters. Moreover, the Gothic in *Oliver Twist* is further elevated by some supernatural, unexplainable encounters that some of the characters undergo. For example, Bill – the antagonist of the story – cannot seem to get rid of his lover’s eyes after he murders her.

At last, finding a shed in a field, he lay down inside it. But then a new horror came upon him. Her eyes, so empty of light, were staring at him. He tried to look away—but Nancy’s eyes seemed to be everywhere!²⁹

Dickens’ novels vary with the gothic elements but all of them use a lot of action, violence and produce terrifying atmosphere. To list a few of Gothic motifs he uses, the stalking in *Bleak House* (1853) or the doppelgänger in *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859) are

²⁷ James Eli Adams, *A History of Victorian Literature* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 24-25.

²⁸ John Bowen, “Charles Dickens and the Gothic” in *The Cambridge History of the Gothic: Volume 2, Gothic in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Angela Wright and Dale Townshend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 250.

²⁹ Charles Dickens, *Oliver Twist* (Irvine, CA: Saddleback Educational Publishing, 2001), 66-67.

both necessary to mention. Supernatural tales like *A Christmas Carol* (1843) also make him one of the chief novelists using gothic aspects in new settings of Victorian fiction.³⁰

Consequently, it is essential to know that even though Dickens' *Christmas Carol* is a novella, it popularized ghost stories, often released in literary magazines and periodicals. Unlike the novels, ghost stories were limited in its content and this limitation often involved the encounters between the real and the supernatural. Stories like this displayed precise reality only to evoke more uncanny effect by the appearance of unreal, leaving it unexplained. In *Christmas Carol*, this presentation of reality is the opening line, stating "MARLEY was dead: to begin with. There is no doubt whatever about that."³¹ However, this reality is soon shattered as Marley's ghost appears and the story further present more and more supernatural. Even though these stories were not taken as seriously as the novels, they were quite popular none the less.³²

Similarly, George W. Reynolds' later work was concerned with so-called urban Gothic of the city. His *Mysteries of London* (1845-8) use both the tyranny and horror, combine the nightmarish and real and points out the corruption of aristocracy that leads to the immoral behavior of the working classes. His horrors of the city were supposed to raise questions about the social order in the contemporary world and the narratives evoking emotions were set in present rather than past. Before the preoccupation with urban Gothic, Reynolds was famous for employing standard gothic themes, like pacting with Satan in *The Necromancer* (1851-2) or turning into a werewolf every now and then in exchange for youth in *Wagner the Wehr-Wolf* (1847).³³

Besides the domestication of the Gothic novel, another few aspects resurfaced in the change. The so-called "female Gothic" first wrote primarily by female authors like Radcliffe, was attempted to be written by some male novelists in Victorian Britain. Moreover, the typically feminine roles of women in literature changed as they were

³⁰ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 77-78.

³¹ Charles Dickens, *A Christmas Carol* (Auckland: The Floating Press, 2009), 5.

³² Botting, *Gothic*, 82.

³³ Botting, *Gothic*, 82.

often portrayed as mad or criminally prone villains, all which was triggered by the questioning of female identity and instability of gender roles.³⁴

One of these authors is Wilkie Collins who uses terror, mystery and superstition resembling the Radcliffean Gothic, further adapted to fit the 19th century preoccupations with social troubles and oppressive elite. One of such books is *The Woman in White*, published in 1861, in which the gothic terrors are, as in its sensational predecessor, dissolved by rational investigative powers. The spectral appearance of Anne, the main character, is explained by a motif of doppelgänger, her half-sister.³⁵ The female Gothic is visible in Laura's, the heroine related by blood to the villain's deceased wife, imprisonment within a family.³⁶

1.2.4 Mid and late 19th century Gothic

During the later Victorian era, the only certain thing was family. Following two authors working within the female Gothic were, unlike Collins, both female. The Brontë sisters, Emily and Charlotte, both navigate their heroines through patriarchal and family-oriented world in their most famous books, *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and *Jane Eyre* (1847) respectively. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catharine does not exactly fit the typical feminine role in Gothic literature and even though she is the epitome of Victorian woman, she constantly battles with the passion she feels for her childhood love, Heathcliff. Although this carnal passion is the natural part of the heroine, the restraining social norms prohibit this love to further develop.³⁷ In this book, the author displays that the social pressure does not necessarily only comes from the outside but forms on the inside as well.

In *Jane Eyre*, the protagonist, Jane, differs from the prototypical Victorian woman as she, by herself, tramples the path along the life full of figures trying to dominate and steal her individuality. She is a fierce figure and eventually, by the end of the story,

³⁴ Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 26.

³⁵ Botting, *Gothic*, 86.

³⁶ Alison Milbank, *Daughters of the House: Modes of the Gothic in Victorian fiction* (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1992), 64.

³⁷ Botting, *Gothic*, 84.

becomes an equal part of the household she lives in, a matching counterpart of her husband Rochester. Even though the critics claimed that *Jane Eyre* was the “anti-Gothic” as it was Gothic only in atmosphere and tone, by many, it is considered a milestone of Gothic literature, being the kickoff for women’s emancipation and a new trope for female Gothic.³⁸

By the end of the century, the fear of society decomposing was so prominent that it led to developing a social novel. Such novels were to warn people that not only the aristocracy but the recently established middle-class were alike bad. Moreover, the deterioration involved not only people as a group but individuals too. One of the most famous social novels, using the gothic aspects to prove this point, was undoubtedly Oscar Wilde’s only novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1891). In this novel, Wilde uses the corruption of Dorian’s soul as a mirror for the society that turns a blind eye to the people with so-called ‘pretty privilege’. In such age, being attractive meant to be accepted regardless the actions.³⁹ Dorian Gray, central figure of the novel, first young and innocent, eventually turns immoral and corrupted. Instead of him, who stays beautiful and young, his portrait decays and shows all the sins and impurities he has committed through his life. This, again, points to the fact that the upper-class in Victorian age was hypocritical, ignoring his narcissist atrocities because he was simply too beautiful.

Perhaps the most well-known Gothic piece of literature is Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897). By majority of the Victorians, it was perceived as a horror story. It is written unusually in a form of diary entries, newspaper clippings and letters. It was later traced, that the inspiration came from folk and historical stories of eastern Europe.⁴⁰ *Dracula* comes forth for its re-introduction of vampire and similarly for reproducing the old gothic aspects: the dark, mysterious castle, graveyards, gloomy passages, the man as the main villain and the young naïve women as victims. Although the first person to get

³⁸ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 197-198.

³⁹ Elizabeth MacAndrew, *The Gothic Tradition in Fiction* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979), 222.

⁴⁰ Jerrold E. Hogle and Jessica Bomarito: *Gothic Literature: A Gale Critical Companion Vol. 3* (Farmington Hills: Gale Research Inc, 2006), 386.

assaulted is a man, Count Dracula is known to surround himself with women, as his preference in young virgins foreshadow. What separates the novel from Gothic romances of 18th century is the relatively modern late 19th century occupations of the characters who decide to bring Dracula down – doctors, lawyers, scientists.⁴¹

However, what makes Dracula the object of many analyses is its preoccupation with sexuality. Vampires and their bloodlust became a form of sexual freedom and crossed the boundaries acceptable for the censoring and rigid Victorian readership.⁴²

“He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all.” I lay quiet, looking out under my eyelashes in an agony of delightful anticipation. The fair girl advanced and bent over me till I could feel the movement of her breath upon me. Sweet it was in one sense, honey-sweet, and sent the same tingling through the nerves as her voice, but with a bitter underlying the sweet, a bitter offensiveness, as one smells in blood.⁴³

In the extract, there is a visible display of women as sexual beings. However, considering the century the book was written in, there is a visible link between being sexual and being evil. Lucy, one of the heroines of the book is first pictured as an innocent traditional woman before she gets turned into a vampire, which inherently initiates her sexual aggressivity.

This boundary that is crossed within the book – the acceptability of woman’s sexuality – is only one of several boundaries, that are passed over. To list a few, there is a clear border between alive and dead, Dracula’s crossing between the East and West or courtesy and savageness.

During the 20th century when Modern literature replaced the old forms, Gothic became very popular, integrated into pieces that would not be considered Gothic some 200 years ago. Such literature often does not necessarily contain horror or supernatural element, simply the atmosphere or mode. Science fiction or detective story are to be

⁴¹ Botting, *Gothic*, 96.

⁴² William Hughes, “Fictional Vampires in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries” in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 199.

⁴³ Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap Publishers, 1897; Project Gutenberg, 1995), III, <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/345/pg345-images.html - chap03>

mentioned as they are in debt with Gothic literature for creating perfect conditions in the literature field for their establishment. Just like the human progress, even Gothic fiction moves within its possibilities. Anxieties of past and present are pictured in future, extreme detachment from past identity results in alien invaders in fiction, scientific advance in humanoid technology domination and a need to escape from the reality lead to fantasy.⁴⁴

Authors like Stephen King, J. R. R. Tolkien, Franz Kafka or Alfred Hitchcock are only just a few allowing Gothic to form into present-day's variety of uncanny literature.

⁴⁴ Botting, *Gothic*, 102.

2 Scottish Gothic literature

2.1 Rise of Scottish Gothic

It is undeniable, that Scottish Gothic developed in different terms than the British one. The contrast starts with the different view on history that greatly projected into the separation. Until the rise of Gothic novel, the fiction often elaborated on Scotland's loss of independence and the division that resulted from it. The division regarded mainly the urban Lowlands and the rural Highlands and their different attitude towards British modernization. British people considered Highlands to be peasants and primitives which, in the eyes of Highlanders, was a dismissal of Scottish identity.⁴⁵

During the 18th century, two different, yet basically parallel, versions of literature appeared, that ignited the Gothic tradition in Scotland. First are the Ossian poems, melancholic elegies, gloomy by content and form alike. Ossian is, according to the legend, a Gaelic bard and Ossian poetry therefore originates in translation of his original epic form. It was James MacPherson, a Scottish Highlander, who first introduced them to the people. These poems often challenged the British classicism on their own as they were symbolized by lamenting about lost and dead identity, the buried culture and ghosts of history.⁴⁶

The second version found its ground in national tradition, and it became a part of urban culture which the Enlightened Lowlanders turned a blind eye on. This poetic revival comes from famous pre-romantic writer Robert Burns, who became popular mainly for writing in Scots. He used the “barbarous and rude”⁴⁷ form, while still holding a neutral ground considering the different sides of culture, tradition and social class. His probably most influential poem is *Tam O'Shanter: A Tale* (1791) which set the pattern for modern supernatural narrative in Scots.

⁴⁵ Nick Groom, “‘The Celtic Century’ and the Genesis of Scottish Gothic” in *Scottish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 16

⁴⁶ Ian Duncan, “Walter Scott, James Hogg, and Scottish Gothic” in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. David Punter (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 125.

⁴⁷ Duncan, “Walter Scott, James Hogg, and Scottish Gothic”, 125.

In contrast to the elegiac mood of the Ossian poems, this narrative insists on the rough vitality of a popular otherworld, which exerts its power to rebuke – rearrange or merely disarrange – an official decorum.⁴⁸

This passage from Duncan (2012) clearly sets the difference between these two traditions and it is mentioned for a reason as we now progress to the proper Scottish Gothic kickoff. It comes from Walter Scott, who started collecting and imitating the traditional ballads of Scottish borders and formed his own versions with inspiration from German horror.

His famous poem *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* from 1805 is a tale combining the gothic aspects – uncanny resurging from dead powers – of German horror and the Ossianic elegiac frame. His first novel, *Waverley* (1814) is a historicized sequel to *The Lay* and is considered as an inventing piece of modern historical novel for which he was popularized for.⁴⁹ *Waverley* is set during Jacobite rebellion and follows a personal story of a British soldier who gradually recognizes the beauties of both Highlands and Lowlands.

Scott's first novel was only the start of his stellar career as an author. The novelty of his first novel was not repeated, however, he kept further experimenting with national, historical and gothic aspects that he used and mixed. *Ivanhoe* (1820) becomes one of many of his successful novels, however, this one differs completely as the settings are typically of the medieval English Gothic stories. He opts for castles and monasteries, forests and evil barons. This took inspiration in 18th century “loyalist Gothic” of Reeve and Radcliffe. Several novels from that point drew on these topics and he strongly adhered to rationalizing his Gothic.

James Hogg, Scott's contemporary, was first his apprentice before he established himself as a prominent figure in Scottish Gothic with his own fiction alone. He first derived from Scott's Gothic, starting with folklore, tales, ballads, widely receiving inspiration from oral tradition. Later, he stepped into the genre of short novel,

⁴⁸ Duncan, “Walter Scott, James Hogg, and Scottish Gothic”, 126.

⁴⁹ Duncan, “Walter Scott, James Hogg, and Scottish Gothic”, 126-127.

pioneering in supernatural short story that he initially published in magazines and to which he drew from Burns' model.

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (1824) is special primarily for “yoking together two, ostensibly antithetical traditions of Romantic fiction, the Scottish historical novel and the “Jacobin” novel of persecution, alienation, and paranoia developed by William Godwin.”⁵⁰ Furthermore, the text develops Gothic motifs like doppelgängers, hallucinations, the uncanny and murder, while the narrative goes in two parallel lines – one of the modern editor and one of the Robert Wringhim, the sinner himself.

Hogg's biggest and most famous piece, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) was published the same month as Scott's *Redgauntlet* (1824) and both fictions became the starting line for continued Scottish Gothic tradition.

2.2 Scottish Gothic tradition after Scott and Hogg

Into the group of famous writers of 19th century Scotland undoubtedly belongs Robert Louis Stevenson. Throughout his whole career of writing, he differently engaged with the genre, creating many spectacular pieces. One of the reasons he so inclined to the Gothic writing was due to his quite early contact with supernatural, moreover, the upbringing in Calvinist belief shaped his later preoccupations in fiction. Calvinism was somehow often present in Scottish Gothic; therefore, it was no surprise his works throughout his whole career were packed with religious themes.

In fairly young age, he was preparing to publish a collection of short stories called *The Black Man and Other Tales*, all of which were indulging in supernatural topics. They were eventually never released as a collection but a lot of them made it to *Cornhill Magazine*, one of them being the famous tale called *Thrawn Janet* (1881). According to Watson, it is his “first and most straightforward engagement with orality, hard-core Calvinism and the Scottish Gothic”.⁵¹ It is a haunting story where a young man meets

⁵⁰ Duncan, “Walter Scott, James Hogg, and Scottish Gothic”, 131.

⁵¹ Roderick Watson, “Gothic Stevenson” in in *Scottish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 144.

with death, the narration starts with unknown narrator and later gets taken over by a “folk” narrator, making the longest and best part of the tale delivered in Scots.

Similarly successful and important was *The House of Eld* (1895), released posthumously, a fable considering a mixture of topics – the old times, religious doctrine, standards. It is also discussed that Stevenson reveals his psyche through this writing as he, most probably, wrote it during the time he still lived with his parents and their beliefs and opinions often clashed. The fable is about tradition, inheritance and relationship between fathers and sons.⁵²

The greatest Stevenson’s fiction and contribution to the Gothic, is unquestionably *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). This fiction incorporates the doppelgänger motif in a split personality and it gained its place as it “delves philosophically into the complexity of split and doubled consciousness that was long prevalent in Scottish culture”.⁵³

As was mentioned in previous chapters, Victorian society was anxious about the stability of social order, economic and scientific discoveries. The 19th century worries about degeneration were often portrayed in literature. Stevenson’s *Strange Case* shows the equivocation of human nature, especially during the Victorian era full of taboos and strict rules and concerns about one’s social status. This is portrayed in the two personalities stuck in one body. Jekyll is respected man, aware of his position in society and therefore creates another persona Hyde, who has violent tendencies and commits all sorts of crimes, murder being one of them. Hyde is a manifestation of human regression not only metaphorically but literally as he differs in looks, appearing smaller, shrunk, his appearance marked by the evil he has committed.

⁵² R. L. Abrahamson, “‘I never read such an impious book’: Re-examining Stevenson’s Fables” in *Journal of Stevenson Studies*, 4, ed. Linda Dryden and Roderick Watson (Chippenham: Antony Rowe Ltd., 2007), 210.

⁵³ Suzan Gilbert, “The Gothic in Nineteenth-century Scotland” in *The Cambridge History of the Gothic: Volume 2, Gothic in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. Angela Wright and Dale Townshend (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 357.

Mr Hyde was pale and dwarfish, he gave an impression of deformity without any nameable malformation, he had a displeasing smile, he had borne himself to the lawyer with a sort of murderous mixture of timidity and boldness, and he spoke with a husky, whispering and somewhat broken voice;...⁵⁴

In this excerpt, Hyde is described as an ugly, small man which is symbolism for the regression to primitive, barbarous state and combined with his animosity and evil actions, he forms the biggest fear of Victorian society. The degeneration into beast form comes from internalization of desires and the line between good/progressed and evil/regressed is easily crossed or erased altogether.

The gothic aspects of the novel are not only the division between good and evil or the split personality but also the setting – city, mansion, laboratory. Moreover, the narrative is, similarly to Stoker's *Dracula*, composed in fragments, some are of legal documents, letters, journals in first-person narrative and some are of common third-person perspective.

Another prominent author of this age in Scotland was Margaret Oliphant. Her life being a series of unfortunate situations and painful deaths of her closest, she leaned towards dark gothic topics. Her fame came primarily for her stories in *Blackwood Magazine*, to which such names like Coleridge, Scott or Hogg added as well. Throughout her career, she created over hundreds of writings, some novels, some nonfiction and some were ghost stories. During the 19th century she wrote about castle haunting, revenants and occultism.⁵⁵

To finish this chapter, I will mention one more author. His name is Arthur Conan Doyle whose Sherlock Holmes became an icon of the world of detective stories. Doyle's inspiration for Sherlock Holmes' stories were in Poe, the father of detective story, and Gaboriau, French inventor of police novel. The model for Sherlock himself was a historical figure, Dr. Joseph Bell, to whom Doyle eventually dedicated his whole collection *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* (1894). First of his stories, *The Study in*

⁵⁴ Robert Louis Stevenson, "Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde" in *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde and Other Tales of Terror*, ed. Robert Mighall (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 16.

⁵⁵ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 262.

Scarlet was based on a true story and it was a kickoff for Doyle's fiction. He published them in magazines before he created the already mentioned collection *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*. Sherlock was – and still is – immensely popular, most importantly for his wit, deductive abilities and the contrastive friendship with less bright, yet still remarkable Dr. Watson.

Doyle's stories combine horror, violence and thrill with logical skills and elements like sudden death, family curses, supernatural occurrences. On top of that, Sherlock Holmes' enemy, Moriarty, poses as a typical villain of the fiction.⁵⁶

2.3 Contemporary Scottish Gothic

The 20th century was fruitful for Scottish Gothic literary field. It is widely recognized in two periods, writing post-war until 1980 and after the turn of the decade. While the first episode contained writings on rather pessimistic scale, irony and bitterness towards earlier romanticization of Scotland's history and culture, the latter era, despite still encompassing skepticism, aims for more positive vision of Scottish identity. During this time, Scottish literature grew immensely on diversity, this diversity alone represents the experience Scotland gained throughout the years.⁵⁷ Moreover, Scottish and Gothic became to be inextricably connected as the landscape of Scotland often serves as a traditional setting for Gothic stories.⁵⁸

Gothic in contemporary framework is considered too broad to be easily categorized. Elements from all periods of time remain in the genre, whether it is terror, history, gender inequality, religion or the uncanny. Giving this perspective, Gothic is

⁵⁶ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 178.

⁵⁷ Douglas Gifford, "Breaking Boundaries: From Modern to Contemporary in Scottish Fiction" in *The Edinburgh History of Scottish Literature, Vol. 3 – Modern Transformations, New Identities (from 1918)*, ed. Ian Brown (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007),

⁵⁸ Timothy C. Baker, *Contemporary Scottish Gothic: Mourning, Authenticity, and Tradition* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 2.

not limited to any trope, serves as a set of features and operates outside of the borders of “realistic”.⁵⁹

There is no other way to end this chapter than to pinpoint a few contemporary Scottish writers who left a mark on Gothic writing. As was said earlier, contemporary Gothic is only hardly traceable to one category.

First of the writers is unquestionably representative of female Gothic authors, Muriel Spark. In her fictions, there is a vivid sign of Gothicism. She uses supernatural, uncanny elements mainly to satirically display the condition of modern 20th century world. As a Christian, she provides alternative reality and combines it with Scottishness she examines in older texts. In her stories, human life is treated as a triviality. She often makes people feel too comfortable in their mundane existence and by the end of their way, they are often put in a metaphorical shadow zone where they are made to search and attend to their consciousness. This is evident in *Memento Mori* (1959) where anonymous caller tells people they “should die” and as they are acknowledged of their near end, they are welcomed to contemplate their sins.⁶⁰

Her most famous novel is *The Driver’s Seat* (1970) that talks all about loss of values, isolation of a woman who gets eventually murdered but not exactly by chance – she assists her own murder. The novel is an explanation of events that led to her decision.

Alasdair Gray, Janice Galloway or James Robertson all influence Gothic as they challenge the boundaries of narration. *Lanark* (1981), *The Trick Is to Keep Breathing* (1989) and *The Testament of Gideon Mack* (2006) respectively are all revolutionary in bringing multiple voices, sometimes even multiple texts, developing the idea of numerous narrations of one truth.

⁵⁹ Baker, *Contemporary Scottish Gothic: Mourning, Authenticity, and Tradition*, 9.

⁶⁰ Gerard Carruthers, “The ‘nouveau frisson’: Muriel Spark’s Gothic Fiction” in *Scottish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 167-170.

Contemporary Scottish literature never forgot about the past either. Some of the authors point on the dark side of the history and the England's impact on Scotland. The attempts to erase the national identity, repression of culture in the eyes of modern society, are sometimes the themes of authors, particularly Alasdair Gray's in his *Poor Things* (2002) or Iain Banks' in *The Wasp Factory* (1984).⁶¹

In order to conclude this chapter, it is again necessary to say that Scottish Gothic had its own, distinct bloom. The aim of this chapter was not to name all the authors possible but rather to demonstrate the different social and political inclinations and pieces of literature that schemed the formation of Scottish Gothic. We know it operates within its own attempts to understand the national borders of identity, whether in history or present-day. It uses various features of Gothic and further develops or remakes them into new forms. Because Scottish literary study is still relatively new, there is much yet to be discovered and understood.

⁶¹ Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà, "Borderlands of Identity and the Aesthetics of Disjuncture: An Introduction to Scottish Gothic" in *Scottish Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. Carol Margaret Davison and Monica Germanà (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), 5.

3 Gothic features

Before we can move to the last two parts of the thesis, it is essential to properly explain some terms – some might have been already used and some might be later. Either way, these notions are part of Gothic literature throughout the whole history and therefore make crucial part of the genre.

The uncanny is probably the most eminent part of Gothic literature. In 1919, Sigmund Freud published an essay *The Uncanny*, in which he describes a feeling later named as uncanny. It is developed and becomes a notion of Gothic genre as anxiety or uncertainty are oftentimes present in the literature. The reason it evokes such feelings is, according to Botting, because “the uncanny disturbs the familiar, homely and secure sense of reality and normality”.⁶² The source of the uncanny can be for example silence, déjà vu, coincidence or fate.

Sublime has already been explained earlier in the first chapter, stating that sublime is “an apprehension of danger in nature or art without the immediate risk of destruction”.⁶³ Anything from mountains and natural phenomena, gothic buildings, graveyards to dark alleys of the city can evoke sublime.

Terror and horror are closely related to sublime. Ann Radcliff, the authoress of *The Italian or The Mysteries of Udolpho*, is known to be the first to differentiate between the two concepts. Meanwhile terror activates the imagination and enables escape from its source, horror does the opposite. It freezes and disconnects human from its mind.⁶⁴ Miles then further explains: “An explicit representation of threat induces horror, whereas terror depends on obscurity. The difference turns on materiality.”⁶⁵

Gothic literature employs a vast number of motifs. These motifs change, develop, are used in stories as a source for evoking horror or terror. Fear, the uncanny, sublime, grotesque, anxiety are only a few of those.

⁶² Botting, *Gothic*, 7.

⁶³ E. J. Clery, “The genesis of “Gothic” fiction”, 28.

⁶⁴ Botting, *Gothic*, 48.

⁶⁵ Miles, “Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis”, 93.

We have already mentioned elements like doppelgänger, split consciousness, or portraits that all present duality and are frequent motif in Gothic literature. In the text were mentions of imprisonment, isolated places or getting lost in labyrinth as well. Dark places, castles, alleys, cathedrals, or vast empty places are nothing new in Gothic fiction. Other phenomenon depicted, often in contemporary literature, are dreams, nightmares, visions, supernatural presence of ghosts or different forms of undead/higher entities. Some of them are oftentimes related to death, unconsciousness or a sign of necromancy or connection to occultism or Satanism. Demons, different types of their manifestation can be a part of Gothic novels too. In addition to it, vampires, zombies, werewolves or any other forms of beasts or deformed humanoid creatures are a phenomenon of modern and contemporary Gothic as well, together with robots or aliens. As for the settings, basically anything can be a source of sublime once the author sets the right atmosphere. From cars, supermarkets during night or motels to forests, valleys and so many more.

Gothic fiction became a genre comfortable with any type of phantasmal presence, and considering the development it went through, any piece of fiction employing elements that evoke any sort of uncanny feeling, can be considered a part of the genre. Some other elements will be further mentioned in the analysis.

4 Context

4.1 Jenni Fagan and The Panopticon

4.1.1 Life and career

“Mostly I am just creating a body of work and if I am not at least a little terrified, or continually growing, or taking risks as a writer, then what would be the point?”⁶⁶

Jenni Fagan was born in Edinburgh in 1977. Her early life was not easy as she grew up in the care system and then lived in homeless accommodation until she was 18. She started developing love for books quite early in her life and not so late after, she began writing her own poetry. At the age of 18, she signed up for a film and television course and wrote a script about her childhood. Only later, she decided to rather become a novelist.

Enrolling for evening classes, she tried to grab her confidence and at the age of 30, she managed to finish a degree in London, then MA as well. While she was in London, before she moved back to Edinburgh, she published two poetry collections and performed it in small venues in Soho. After she pursued a PhD in Edinburgh and won a couple of competitions, her hard work started paying off.⁶⁷

She gained fame for her first novel *The Panopticon* (2012), which also won her Granta Best Young British Novelist title and got a play adaption she scripted herself. *The Panopticon* and her second novel, *The Sunlight Pilgrims* (2016), were both the front cover of *The New York Times Book Review*. For her second novel, she also won the title of Author of the Year.

Her newest books are poetry collection *The Bone Library* (2022), historical novel *Hex* (2022) and her autobiographical piece *Ootlin: A Memoir* (2023). She is currently

⁶⁶ Sarah Hackett, “Author Q&A: Jenni Fagan”, *Big Issue North*, April 11, 2016,

<https://www.bigissuenorth.com/reading-room/2016/04/author-qa-jenni-fagan/>

⁶⁷ Claire Armitstead, “Jenni Fagan: ‘I understand crisis. I grew up in a very, very extreme way’”, *The Guardian*, January 9, 2021, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/jan/09/jenni-fagan-i-understand-crisis-i-grew-up-in-a-very-very-extreme-way>

working on her fifth novel and several screen adaptations including *The Panopticon* and *Luckenbooth* (2021), while she also opened her own art exhibition in 2023.

4.1.2 *The Panopticon*

*“I, the young Miss Anais, understand wholly that I am just a human being that no one is interested in. No experiment. No outside fate. I am not that important, and that is just fine by me.”*⁶⁸

The author grew up in a care system and she has no good memories of it. Before the age of 16, she was put into over 30 placements, had different fosters, had her name legally changed couple times. She said, she had “strangers telling her who she was for as long as she could remember”⁶⁹. Such life is nothing easy for anyone, let alone a child.

The Panopticon is a story, undoubtedly based on her own experiences, portraying people who are generally being talked about a lot but only hardly get understood. It starts with young Anais Hendricks finding herself in handcuffs, being accused of attacking a police officer who falls into coma. As a young, only 15-years-old offender, instead of being sent to jail, she is transported into a unit called, the said panopticon.

Anais is an orphan, born to a woman who died after a childbirth; thus, she ends up in a foster care multiple times, eventually turns to drugs and violence and moves from one unit to another, collecting charges for crimes and the panopticon is her last stop. The panopticon is a prison designed by Jeremy Bentham, with watchtower in the center and cells, or rooms, arranged in a shape of C. With such disposition, the prisoners can be seen at all times. So are the young delinquents of the story.

Throughout the story, Anais develops surprisingly strong bond with another residents, similarly troubled teenagers. She is imaginative, smart, witty and she is very loyal. Her life, however, is a spiral she seems unable to get out of. She witnessed murder, and as the story progresses, she gets to see suicide. Her adult boyfriend deals

⁶⁸ Jenni Fagan, *The Panopticon* (London: Random House, 2012), chap. 17, Kindle.

⁶⁹ Jenni Fagan, “‘We are all observed now’: Jenni Fagan on *The Panopticon*”, *The Guardian*, October 9, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2019/oct/09/jenni-fagan-the-panopticon-national-theatre-scotland>

drugs and everybody else, even those who are supposed to help Anais, constantly degrade her in some way. She gets assaulted, drugged, she is in constant battle with the system, herself and other people.

Anais' character vividly develops and she becomes more hopeful, mature and ready to find her place in society. The story is concluded by her, on her way to Paris where she always wanted to live, picking up a new name and taking her life into her own hands.

The Panopticon is not an easy book to read. Not only for the author's choice for Anais' story to be told in first person and in Scottish accent. The book displays some terrifying pictures of abuse, violence and exploitation of children and also points out the unseriousness with which the care system works. They want children to be good, find home and do well but they repeatedly fail to understand their situation and mental processes. The novel's heroine is given voice to deliver this message and raise awareness about the ongoing struggle.

4.2 Michel Faber and Under The Skin

4.2.1 Life and career

“My own sense of being doomed not to make it. Wanting to move away from the alien that I had been as a younger person, but feeling that I didn't have what it took to become fully human.”⁷⁰

Michel Faber was born in the Netherlands in 1960 but majority of his childhood, he spent in Australia. He graduated from University of Melbourne where he majored in Old, Medieval and Modern English Literature. After graduation, he changed jobs, trained as a nurse and for some time worked as one. In 1992, Michel and his second wife decided to move to Scotland. Partly to run away from their broken immigrant families and partly for Michel's health.

⁷⁰ Justine Jordan, “Michel Faber: ‘I would have been a different writer without my wife’”, *The Guardian*, July 8, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/jul/08/books-interview-michel-faber-undying-a-love-story-under-the-skin>.

His wife Eva, who died in 2014 due to incurable cancer, was his support throughout his whole career and also the first person to prompt him to publish his books. The farm they moved to in Scotland was an inspiration for a location of his first novel *Under The Skin* (2000). His wife served also as a critic and helped him develop most of the plots, herself being artist.⁷¹

Before *Under The Skin*, he also published short story collection called *Some Rain Must Fall* (1998). This collection won him Saltire Society Scottish First Book of The Year Award. *Under The Skin* was then short-listed for the Whitbread First Novel Award and won Neil Gunn Prize and an Ian St James Award, although it was not a bestseller.

His other two novels were not as impactful as the first one, nor the following ones. The success came with *The Crimson Petal and the White* (2002) as it became a bestseller in couple of countries and a steady seller in couple more. Set in Victorian London, it is a story about a young prostitute and Hughes says that it is a “novel that Dickens might have written had he been allowed to speak freely”.⁷² Although Faber never wanted to write a sequel to his most successful story, he wrote a set of short stories featuring the novel’s characters, some scenarios were happening pre and some post the events of the novel. This collection was named *The Apple* (2006).

The Book of Strange New Things (2014) was his last adult fiction. It was released a few months after Faber’s wife passed away and was heavily impacted by this sorrowful event in his life. It is about a human pastor being sent on a mission to an alien planet, where he is supposed to preach about Christianity.

His last novel is called *D: A Tale of Two Worlds* (2020) and it is a children story about the letter D disappearing from the alphabet. Faber also said he was working on his deceased wife’s own short story collection and a photography exhibition.⁷³

⁷¹ Jordan, “Michel Faber”.

⁷² Kathryn Hughes, “Whores, porn and lunatics”, review of *The Crimson Petal and the White*, by Michel Faber, *The Guardian*, September 28, 2002, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2002/sep/28/fiction>.

⁷³ Jordan, “Michel Faber”.

4.2.2 *Under The Skin*

*“I sometimes think that the only things really worth talking about are the things people absolutely refuse to discuss.”*⁷⁴

In 1993, when Michel Faber immigrated from lively Australian city into a remote farm in Scottish Highlands, he felt very alienated. *Under The Skin* was his first published novel and the original idea for its content was unlike the one that eventually came out. Faber’s first idea was about a childless couple who pays for a modification of a baby monkey to look like a human and represent it as their child. However, he abandoned this idea for better one to emerge.

Faber came up with Isserley, an alien mutilated to look like a human while she resides on Earth. He explains for *The Guardian*: “Her story would ask troubling questions about how we treat those we label as Other. It would, implicitly, be about war and racism. It would look at the horror of factory farming. It would look at the vulnerability of the lost and unloved people pushed to the peripheries of our herd, where predators can pick them off without anyone noticing or caring.”⁷⁵

Under The Skin tells a story of Isserley, a woman who drives along the roads of Scotland and takes unaware hitchhikers. At first, the reader is led to think there are some sexual impulses in her but as the story progresses, it is uncovered that Isserley injects drug into their body through needles in the passenger’s seat and knocks them out.

She then takes them to the remote farm where she also resides and hands them to a man called Esswis, together with her the only mutilated individual and her superior at the same time. She brings only those who fit though, muscly, good looking and mainly, those who would not be missed by anyone. The humans of planet Earth are animals and

⁷⁴ Michel Faber, *Under The Skin* (Edinburgh: Canongate Books Ltd, 2008), chap. 11, Kindle.

⁷⁵ Michel Faber, “Michel Faber: ‘Under The Skin changed my life for good’”, *The Guardian*, December 5, 2020, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/dec/05/michel-faber-under-the-skin-changed-my-life-for-good>.

Isserley's species refers to them as 'vodrels'. Later in the novel, the reader can find out they are taken for meat, which is considered to be a delicacy on Isserley's home planet.

Amlis Vess, the son of the corporate owner for which Isserley works, pays a visit to the planet Earth. A number of events take place during his visit, including him setting four of the vodrels free, murder, rape, Isserley's breakdown and eventual bonding with Amlis Vess who, as the reader finds out, is, in a way, a vegetarian. During the happenings, the audience also finds out the actual visage of Isserley's kind – for some they might resemble foxes, for others wolves; either way, it would be a canine on Earth.

At this point of the story, the reader might also gain sympathy for Isserley – she is forced to walk on two legs, in constant pain because of that, she has to shave from neck down, she carries two big breast implants and glasses to pass as a vodrel. Moreover, she learns that she might become useless as the Vess Incorporated plans to expand and improve the production, leaving Isserley disfigured and jobless. This leads to another course of events, mainly Isserley deciding to free herself from the corporate's claws, however, it ends quickly with her crashing the car and severely hurting herself. The story is concluded by her, activating the explosive that destroys all evidence of her ever being on Earth.

More than anything else, the novel is a tragical story full of unfortunate happenings leading to unfortunate closures. Exact classification of this novel is nearly impossible. Faber mixes science fiction with horror elements, dystopia and psychological inquiry with a touch of romance. *Under The Skin* brings a great deal of disturbing scenarios and leaves reader unsettled. An addition to the unsettling emotions is the invented words that enhance the sense of alienation. In the next chapter, analysis of possible gothic aspects will be delivered.

5 Analysis

5.1 Settings

Gothic sublimity often arises from the settings. From the early 18th century Gothic, the preoccupation with dark castles, abbeys, monasteries and other medieval buildings severely changed, however, the isolation and gloominess often prevail. Scottish landscape served as the perfect setting for Gothic literature, Scotland was presented as a place where the natural and supernatural walked hand in hand in everyday life. This connection continues to present day.⁷⁶ What makes these two novels Scottish are not only their Scottish or Scotland based authors but also the settings.

The fact that both stories take place in contemporary Scotland is undeniable. *The Panopticon*'s story takes place mostly in the unit, the so-called panopticon, which is a C shaped building with a watchtower in the middle. The facility is isolated from the civilization with forests all around. The bedrooms in which the young delinquents reside used to be cells. The highest floor has some locked doors which is one among many things that make the unit seem gloomy and scary.

Right in the middle of the C shape, as high as the top floor, is the watchtower. There is a surveillance window going all the way around the top and you cannae see through the glass, but whoever, or whatever, is in there can see out. From the watchtower it could see into every bedroom, every landing, every bathroom. Everywhere.⁷⁷

Fagan puts special care into detailing the surroundings, especially the haunting presence of the watchtower. Such precise description gives reader perfect opportunity to imagine and later orientate in the story better. Some parts of the story move to different settings, like police stations, cells, different kinds of offices, even outside, and the author always points the arrangement of the place.

The story starts sometimes around the fall and continues into the winter – the weather is often a block that is building haunted atmosphere similarly to the settings.

⁷⁶ Baker, *Contemporary Scottish Gothic: Mourning, Authenticity, and Tradition*

⁷⁷ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 1.

The fourth quarter of the year with cold, early dark and sleeping nature evokes melancholy and sometimes even depression.

Under The Skin takes place in the same part of the year, in the winter. Isserley's two main locations are the roads and the remote farm she and the rest of her kin lives on. The farm is isolated with large plots of lands, but it is, assumably, somewhere around a Scottish city Inverness.

The farm has a couple of buildings, one in which Isserley resides, other that is Eswiss' place and some farm buildings for keeping the cattle. From the outside, it looks like a normal farm but under it, there is a number of other floors where the production happens, vodsels are kept and killed and where the workers reside as well. This part of the farm is what brings true horror and oftentimes, as the plot moves there, it leaves readers disgusted and unsettled.

Although it is not specifically said in the story, Isserley's home planet seems to be in a bad shape and that is why she spends a lot of time outside. Unlike the other individuals of her species, she is the only one who can afford going out – she is a fan of a shore near the farm and a few scenes in the book happen there. This connection with science fiction brings a lot of thrill to reading *Under The Skin*.

Both novels take place in isolated places with some hidden secrets, whether it is a whole farm production system to locked rooms and mysterious objects. Settings like these evoke suspense and inevitably lock the novels within the Gothic genre.

5.2 Female Gothic

Female Gothic contradict with the male one in many ways. One of them is the fact, that in female Gothic, the focus is broadly moved to the heroine, expresses their fears and fantasies and their protest against patriarchy. In male Gothic, women tend to be objectified and violated victims, often sexually violated which is described in detail.⁷⁸ Female Gothic writers' motifs usually contemplate female sexuality, imprisonment, devaluation and denial of their autonomy but also the heroine's understanding of the

⁷⁸ Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 278-280.

society in which she functions, assertion of her independence and sexual freedom. Neither female nor male Gothic are limited to whether man or woman can write it, although female Gothic was commenced mostly by female authors like Ann Radcliffe, Merry Shelley or Charlotte Brontë.⁷⁹ In the discussed novels, both Anais and Isserley do not necessarily correspond with all of the typical female Gothic heroine traits but in some, they undoubtedly do.

As for the imprisonment, we can discuss both *The Panopticon* and *Under The Skin* as novels containing this motif. While Isserley is imprisoned on the planet Earth and Ablach Farm, Anais is quite literally imprisoned in the unit. Although there is no male authority keeping them imprisoned, it is the fact that they try to break free at some point in the story.

We're just in training for the proper jail. Nobody talks about it, but it's a statistical fact. That or on the game. Most of us are anyway – but not everybody. Some go to the nuthouse. Some just disappear.⁸⁰

Anais says it herself – the units feel like prison, it is just a training for the time she is put in actual jail. She tries to get rid of the tag on her ankle which is what kept the imprisonment going even though she was allowed outside. Eventually she does break free from the imprisonment of care system and leaves the country to live in Paris.

Isserley decides to break free from the Vess Incorporated's influence by eventually running away from the farm. It is only after meeting with Amlis Vess and learning not only about the horrors of vodsels meat production but also the fact they are trying to grow it artificially on her home planet which would, eventually, make her useless. She runs away from the farm and the influence that kept her there, living in a car for a few days before she tragically meets the end of her life.

Women's sexuality is undoubtedly one of the most prominent motifs of female Gothic. In *The Panopticon*, readers are quite early in the novel given the idea of how

⁷⁹ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 115-117.

⁸⁰ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 1.

much is Anais sexually active. She is not very secretive about it and even confesses she regularly masturbates.

I always do it just before my period. Well, most days really; actually – it’s every day. If I think about it, it’s everyday. My name is Anais Hendricks, and I’m a wanker.⁸¹

Not often but a couple times, the readers are given insight into her mind as to what leads her to indulge in the act or what are her fantasies. Ultimately, she becomes a victim of sexual abuse.

Isserley’s sexuality is also mentioned in the novel *Under The Skin*. Although she does not go as far as Anais, she allows herself to think of her victims as attractive and later in the story “Isserley woke from dreams of sexual release, clutching fur in her fists.”⁸² Unlike Anais’, her sexual fantasies are rather caused by the deprivation and probably even impossibility for intercourse as she says multiple times her genitals are mutilated and scarred.

Isserley is often sexualized by the male gaze in the novel too. It is mostly for her breast implants that are supposed to serve to thrill the hitchhikers and ease them to be more open for conversations. Through this conversation Isserley investigates her subjects to later decide whether they are a target or not. Not surprisingly, this causes some hitchhikers to act indecently and results in her developing even more complicated relationship with her modified body that it already is.

Both heroines portray quite strong and confident female characters. Even though they both become victims of rape, they both quite instantly work they’re wait out and continue to live. Even though they get threatened by men, they do their best to preserve their bodily autonomy and individuality.

Female Gothic has a few things in common with classic Gothic and that is the heroines are often powerless, orphaned, can be low-born and broke.⁸³ While Isserley

⁸¹ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 5.

⁸² Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 13.

⁸³ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 116.

keeps fairly quiet about her family and does not want to talk about them, Anais is eager to learn about her history.

One of her past social workers finds a clue to resolving her birth mystery and allows her to follow it as she believes it could help Anais resolve a piece of her identity as well.

‘It was the prettiest snow I have ever seen – it began tae fall just as you were born. It was the biggest snowstorm for fifty years that winter. The snow was so thick, it covered everything and it sparkled and the moon was full, Miss Anais – a great big one. I remember, cos hardly anyone was asleep. We all heard your first cry, you sounded so fierce!’⁸⁴

Anais gets to meet with an old monk who claims he was there when Anais was born. Assumingly, she was born in a psychiatric ward where the man was located by that time. Knowing he is a patient makes him not entirely reliable, he claims Anais’ mother flew out on a black winged cat and was an Outcast Queen. When he mentions he is aware of ‘the experiment’, although not specifically, Anais seems to understand him more, even claims he “dinnae seem mental”.⁸⁵ This bit in the novel displays, that even though Anais is an orphan, she does have, or had, biological parents and was not a part of any experiment.

To close this section, both heroines are undeniably a part of female Gothic literature. As was said, it is not eliminated on woman authors, therefore even Faber’s novel fit the genre. Moreover, Punter and Byron define female Gothic as a fiction that “emphasizes suspense rather than outright terror”⁸⁶ and it is achieved by limiting the point of view to the protagonist only. Both the novels are structured on this feature.

5.3 Authority

Authority and power are no new features of Gothic literature. Although the models can differ, they are always present, nonetheless. In Gothic fiction, readers are often met with a certain figure representing authority, and their authority is kept by different means –

⁸⁴ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 24.

⁸⁵ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 24.

⁸⁶ Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 279.

money, status or supernatural powers. In Stoker's *Dracula*, it is the Count who presents the authoritative figure. He is wealthy, a nobleman and a supernatural creature with immense power over living. Figures like him often evoke fear, submission, sometimes even admiration. Another type of exercising power are the class and gender conflicts. The upper class held authority over the working class, the men held authority over women and children and in contemporary literature, state holds authority over citizens.

In *The Panopticon*, readers are very quickly acknowledged about the care system's authority over Anais' life. Not only because of her delinquency which led to her being moved from place to place but also because of the fact she is a minor and therefore has no say in her present life.

'It is my opinion, Miss Hendricks, that you are going to reoffend. Once you have done so, you will go into a secure unit. And when you get released from there, you will offend again and you will go on – to spend your adult life in prison, which is exactly where you belong, because you, Miss Hendricks, present a considerable danger both to yourself and to all of society.'⁸⁷

The officials, like the Chairwoman in this passage, show the upper hand. In this part of the book, Anais is given chances to speak for herself, however, she stays silent because she feels like no matter how much she defends herself, there is no power in her hands to change the outcome. This actually deepens her doubts and powerlessness and eventually, she even admits that she grew suspicious of social workers over time. She believes that "authority figures are broken, and they're always bullies as well."⁸⁸

Indeed, only a few have ever actually tried to help instead of dragging her down and that results in Anais simply not feeling safe in the society. At some point, it almost feels like the authority dictates her behavior in order to get rid of her, instead of helping which undoubtedly is in the state care system's power.

As for Isserley in *Under The Skin*, the sense of authority rather comes from within her. She is employed in probably the biggest corporation on her planet and her job gets

⁸⁷ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 16.

⁸⁸ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 8.

very important as it is only the very upper class that can afford vodsels meat. There is no direct threat for her, at least not if she does her job right but it is a pressure.

She is terrified of being sent to the Estates – underground parts of her planet in which they create oxygen for the upper class to breathe on the surface. To some extent, it is her own mind that exercises power over her. She only hardly allows herself a day off although there is no boss to keep a track on her working days. “What had been done to her once-beautiful body in order for her to be sent here”⁸⁹ is also her push. The sacrifice can form a metaphorical figure of authority – to make it worth, she has to put it to work.

The fear gets more tangible when she learns that Amlis Vess – the troublemaker son of Vess Incorporated’s owner – is coming to Earth. He materializes the threat of authority. She does not like him and she does not want to see him not only for the fear what would he had to say about her visage but also what would he had to say about how she does her job.

She was on terra firma now, in control, blending in perfectly, and doing a job only she could do. Nothing Amlis Vess thought or said could change that: nothing. She was indispensable.⁹⁰

In the extract above, Isserley acknowledges that Amlis Vess is indeed a threat to her mainly because he could easily get her fired. He eventually does but not exactly in a standard exercise of power way. He does not agree with meat industry and wants it to close on his planet, which would indirectly cause Isserley’s dismissal.

In conclusion, it is safe to say that authority is undoubtedly a part of both novels and it is a Gothic terror inflicting tool. The powerful authority inducing fear is the system for Anais, and for Isserley it is her employer and her own mind. Moreover, it brings unsettling feelings for the reader as well as they are left to experience the discomfort with them.

⁸⁹ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 3.

⁹⁰ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 4.

5.4 Alienation

The concept of alienation can have a variety of forms. There are many studies basing the concepts on different terms, however, it is safe to say, that it is a state in which human can feel frustrated, untrue to themselves, deprived, unfulfilled or anyhow unworthy. Some of the notions of alienation include powerlessness, cultural estrangement, social isolation, or self-estrangement.⁹¹

Isserley from the novel *Under The Skin* undoubtedly feels alienated – metaphorically and literally as well. She is an alien, she comes from different planet, her original form differs from humans of Earth. But despite this, she feels more distant to her own kin than people.

No wonder she tended to keep to her cottage – and why Esswis did too, she guessed. Being a freak was so wearying. Amlis Vess, never having seen her before, would recoil. He'd be expecting to see a human being, and he would see a hideous animal instead. It was that moment of ... of the sickening opposite of recognition that she just couldn't cope with.⁹²

This passage of the novel clearly demonstrates Isserley's own disgust with herself. Although she admitted a couple of times she does not regret her change, it is still visible in parts like this that she hardly feels like a human from Earth and even less like the human from her world.

She pulled a face of disapproval, as if to say, Have it your way. He read this at once, despite the alienness of her features.⁹³

Isserley is, in a sense, adopting a lot of human traits living on the Earth. First being its language and driving skills, then learning about the sports, entertainment, even accents. That is another reason she feels so alienated from her home.

As for *The Panopticon's* Anais, the concept of alienation is different. More than anything else, she is alienated from the society. She was raised not knowing about her

⁹¹ Melvin Seeman, "Alienation Studies." *Annual Review of Sociology* 1 (1975), 93.

⁹² Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 4.

⁹³ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 11.

biological parents and that naturally makes her wonder where she belongs, why is nobody able to tell her. She only hardly trusts anyone, her mind is occupied by ‘the experiment’, she does not put faith in the system. She is “a bit unconvinced by reality”⁹⁴ because “it’s fundamentally lacking in something, and nobody seems bothered.”⁹⁵

It bothers me. It really fucking does. Nobody talks about it, though, that’s the thing. We live, we die, we do shit in between, the world is fucked up with murder, and hate, and stupidity; and all the time this infinite universe surrounds us, and everyone pretends it’s not there.⁹⁶

Anais is a young offender on one hand but she is extraordinarily honest and valiant on the other. She claims multiple times she would “lay down and die for someone she loved”, “fuck up anyone who abused a kid, or messed with an old person”⁹⁷ which fundamentally makes her different from a lot of adults and mostly, she thinks, from the officials who decide on her future.

The motif of alienation brings the feeling of uncanny, however, it is the alienated characters themselves who are the uncanny. Their own feelings of disconnection to the familiar is a source of their disturbance from safe and homely. In both of these novels, we can trace the uncanny to the heroines, for Isserley it is the way she looks for vodseles and the community of her planet and for Anais, it is the cynicism and wariness of society.

5.5 Rape

Gothic fiction deals with many kinds of violence. Not only the physical that can manifest in forms like torture, murder or war but it has taken more domesticated versions like domination, psychological blackmailing or a threat of rape. Rape has been a topic of Gothic literature since its beginning – even though Walpole never specifically used the term in his *The Castle of Otranto*, there is undoubtedly a hint of sexual violence threat. Lewis on the other hand, laboriously describes the act of rape in his

⁹⁴ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 8.

⁹⁵ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 8.

⁹⁶ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 8

⁹⁷ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 16.

Gothic novel *The Monk*. And not only male authors use rape to arise the horror. Ann Radcliffe, although indirectly, describes a past sins of the evil monk in *The Italian* and rape is one of them.⁹⁸

In both novels, the heroines become victims of sexual assault. It adds to the already terrifying stories of their life, raising horror not only in the heroines themselves but also the readers. While in *Under The Skin*, Faber chose to indulge in specific details of the surroundings and characters' visage of diverse parts of their bodies, Fagan instead let readers look inside her heroine's head, these resulted in different emotional disposition.

Anais gets into the situation by chance, naïvely falls into the trap of Jay's lenders. As he continuously chases her with messages, she eventually gives in and comes to see him after he is supposedly released out of the jail. By the time the truth unfolds, the readers can learn that Jay might have not been present in the story whatsoever. Anais is, unsurprisingly, under the influence of drugs and the aggressors do not hesitate to add more to amplify her state of powerlessness. This leads to Anais being unable to walk, let alone give consent to any practices.

I'm lying back against the wall, but I'm still dropping back, back, back. I can hear them, but I cannae lift my arms now, not even an inch. Fuck, fuck, fuck!⁹⁹

The horror that arises is brought primarily by the reader's knowledge of her situation and the author's smart portrayal of the act alone. The powerlessness is enhanced primarily by Anais being able to only listen and her own thoughts, metaphorically tying the reader to Anais' position as an observer during the molestation.

On the other hand, Faber's Isserley gets into the trouble by doing her regular routine. As the reader gets to this point, it is only natural to think it was only a question of time which hitchhiker is going to take advantage of her feminine vulnerability. She

⁹⁸ "Glossary of the Gothic: Rape", Gothic Archive, e-Publications@Marquette, accessed December 8, 2023, https://epublications.marquette.edu/gothic_rape/.

⁹⁹ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 32.

takes a potential subject and it does not take long for him to pull out a knife and order her to get off the main road.

‘Get on your knees,’ he said. While Isserley was hastening to obey, he ran his free hand down the central slit of his overalls, snapping the fasteners softly to reveal a surprisingly white singlet inside the filthy black and yellow wrapping. The overalls unfastened all the way to his crotch, yawning open. He pulled out his genitals, furry scrotal bulb and all.¹⁰⁰

Faber’s detailed depiction of the aggressor’s bodily parts and his acts evoke feelings like disgust rather than anything else. The hitcher does not get as far as the rape itself, having Isserley to use her mouth before anything else and she is smart enough to get herself out of the situation. The reader is left unsure whether she killed her molester or not.

The question that arises with Faber’s motif of rape is purely moral though. Unlike in *The Panopticon*, where it is put as simply wrong and immoral to sexually assault a minor, with *Under The Skin* the problem of sympathy develops. The man was Isserley’s prey, was it not for his threats, she would most probably inject him with icpathua and handed him over to the butchers. This fact blurs the boundaries of what is morally wrong and right and the reader is left to conclude by themselves whether they choose sympathy for Isserley or not.

Another matter creating a distinction between these two events is the fact, that in *The Panopticon*, the reader does not know until the very end what was Anais about to experience. Meanwhile in *Under The Skin*, there is a continuous build up, with the hitchhiker uttering comments on Isserley’s breast, then him drawing the knife, Isserley’s lingering option to jab him. The readers are able to embrace and emotionally detach from the upcoming horror.

5.6 Death

Death is without any doubt the most persistent and diverse theme in Gothic novel. Death in literature serves as a constant reminder of our mortality and a feature

¹⁰⁰ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 8.

delivering horror in more ways than just one. It is mostly because Gothic fiction likes to play with death – creatures like vampires, zombies or ghosts are manifestations of crossed boundary between alive and dead and that inevitably evokes horrifying uncertainty in characters and readers.¹⁰¹ Moreover, death can be pictured in multiple ways, whether it is murder, suicide, starvation, accident or simply age.

Faber's novel *Under The Skin* contains a continuous awareness to death. From the sole beginning until the very end of the novel, death is constantly present. The reader undeniably knows where all Isserley's subjects are headed and even though it is not specifically said in the first part of the novel, the sense is there. Only later, when four vodsels are set free, the actual detailed depiction of death appears. Eswiss and Isserley are forced to set off and search for the runaway men – or at least what is left of them – and some of them are met with instant, although to some extent, merciful death. "Eswiss shot the creature in the forehead. It flew backwards and bounced off a tree trunk."¹⁰² Their murders are presented as an ordinary killing of a cattle.

The mentions of death of the entrapped men in *Under The Skin* are so frequent that the readers almost stop regarding it as important. However, Isserley's own death is what does the novel justice.

She would live forever. All it took was the courage to press one button, and the faith that the connection had not been broken.
She reached forward a trembling hand.
'Here I come,' she said.¹⁰³

By the end of the story, Isserley crashes the car in attempt to help a human get into the hospital for his wife was in labor. The hitchhiker flies through the windscreen and she, on the contrary, gets stuck in the car, severely injured. Her death is practically a suicide mission as she has to, for the sake of her kin, destroy every evidence of her ever being on Earth. Faber does not go into detail with this one and it is not specifically said she

¹⁰¹ Elisabeth Bronfen, "Death" in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, ed. Marie Mulvey-Roberts (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), 39-43.

¹⁰² Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 5.

¹⁰³ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 13.

dies, however, he gives a detailed description of a tool that is supposed to blow the car and everything around, including her, thus leaves reader with no doubt.

Isserley's end is bittersweet. After all the events of the book, Isserley's rollercoaster of a life, just in the moment she decides to be free from Vess Incorporated and her past life, she meets the grim reaper. Argumentatively, in death, Isserley truly finds freedom. If she lived, her pain would constantly remind her of who she was and what had to be done to achieve the form that allowed her to live on the Earth.

In *The Panopticon*, death is present as well. Anais witnesses two deaths in her fairly short life, one of her adoptive mother Teresa and the other of her friend, Isla. Teresa was a prostitute and even though it is never explicitly said in the story, she was probably murdered by one of her clients.

I'm rotten. There's something wrong with me.
It's why nobody kept me. Except Teresa and she got murdered, and whose fault was that?¹⁰⁴

Anais blames herself, not specifically for Teresa's death but because she thinks she could have prevented it. Throughout the novel, a number of mentions about Teresa occur and her impact on Anais' life, which consequently turns Teresa into a metaphorical ghost, presents as Anais' own reminder of mortality.

Second death near Fagan's heroine is her friend Isla's suicide. The readers learn that Isla is mentally unstable and cuts herself. This behavior eventually leads to her early end of life. Knowing, that Isla's girlfriend, Tash, probably lost her life too, shatters the whole group.

I'm roaring now, really fucking open-mouthed gut sobs, and Joan is feeling for Isla's pulse – placing her down on the floor. I'm doubled over and I cannae breathe. Her eyes are open.¹⁰⁵

As analyzed, in both novels is a present motif of death. While Faber's death scenes are quite often very detailed, so the horror and disgust emerge in readers, Fagan pays

¹⁰⁴ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 5,

¹⁰⁵ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 26.

attention to induce more than that. Melancholy, sadness or even tears. Fagan possibly aimed at the lacking conditions of the system and fail to protect children from the world.

5.7 Torture

Gothic has always had open door for images of violence. It started from the distant castles where such atrocity could be committed without anyone watching, or monasteries under a false faith something good is being done. The torture may endorse in many forms, one thing remained throughout the history in Gothic literature – it is often women and children, powerless in their position in society, vulnerable to the white male superiority.¹⁰⁶ Violence is more than often, for enhancing the effect on reader, described in detail.¹⁰⁷

In Faber's novel, the motif of torture is more than evident. Readers are met with the horrors of farm production, the vodsels being what cows or pigs would be to us. Witnessing the dread of how are the vodsels treated in the kill pen, serves as a breaking point for Isserley.

Isserley strained to see, but Unser's big wrists and the twisting motion of his fingers obscured the view as he carved out the vodsels' tongue. Blood began to gurgle out onto the vodsels' cheeks as Unser turned to drop his tools on the tray with a clatter. Unhesitatingly he snatched up an electrical appliance resembling a large star-point screwdriver and, squinting with concentration, guided it into the vodsels' mouth. Flashes of light glowed through the gaps in Unser's nimble fingers as he searched out the incontinent blood vessels and fried them shut with a crackling buzz.¹⁰⁸

The men she captures, some of them she even recognizes later, are castrated, disposed of tongue and overfed to grow the muscle and fat for the quality of their meat to be the best for the diners. Although there is definitely an attempt to make it painless and quick, the methods are still violent, notwithstanding the continuous month-long process of fattening before they get mercilessly killed.

¹⁰⁶ Punter and Byron, *The Gothic*, 288-289.

¹⁰⁷ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 353.

¹⁰⁸ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 10.

For a portion of the novel, these detailed descriptions of torture are hidden for the reader as Isserley never goes to the lower floors of the farm where the production takes place. It is revealed though she is aware of the torture. A bit of a sympathy would be spared was it not for her to know what was going on with her subjects after she dropped them off.

These pictures are undoubtedly evoking horror in a reader, and that is the precise goal of it. Faber mentioned in an interview, that the novel is, apart from other things, an appeal for people to think of meat production. He also mentioned several fans turned vegetarian after reading his novel.¹⁰⁹

On the contrary, in *The Panopticon*, the motif of torture is looked at from a slightly different perspective. It is not exactly to be called torture but rather self-torture. Isla, Anais' friend in the unit, is a teenage mother of twins, depressed, and moreover, HIV positive. Even though she has a lot of love and support all around, she still turns to self-harm.

They won't let me in the office yet, cos Isla cut herself again last night. There's a doctor in there cleaning her up – it must have been a bad one.¹¹⁰

The reason she feels the need to hurt herself is a form of self-punishment. She is haunted by the fact her daughters were infected by AIDS, although she rationally knows there was no way to prevent it.

Even though mental health has been a persistent theme in Gothic literature throughout centuries, the contemporary literature does well portraying it the proper way. In early Gothic novel, mental asylums were regular settings for the plot to unfold, torture undoubtedly a part of the practices. It was because of the expanding medicine; the diagnosis and treatment of the mad, locking people in the rooms sometimes unreasonably until they got actually mad. Moreover, even madness went as far as to get gendered. Mentally unstable women were taken as pathetic creatures losing their sense of reality while men were usually turning mad because of higher purpose, like ambition

¹⁰⁹ Faber, "Michel Faber: 'Under The Skin changed my life for good'".

¹¹⁰ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 9.

or lust.¹¹¹ Thanks to the modern progress in the psychiatry and psychology, the perception of madness turned.

Considering the settings of Gothic novel, for Isla, her own Gothic castle is her mind and her own torturers are her thoughts. The metaphorical darkness that surrounds her head space serves as the imprisonment, her own source of terror that reappears every now and then. More than often, the conclusion of insane characters is one – inevitable death. It is no difference for Isla as she is, later in the novel, found lifeless by no one else but Anais.

This section shows that in contemporary literature, torture can be diverse. In *Under The Skin*, physical torture is present, bringing attention to inhumane practices in the meat industry while in *The Panopticon*, torture is smartly altered to self-harm and can undeniably serve as a call for better quality of the psychological awareness across the multitude of institutions.

5.8 Addiction

One of the motifs in Gothic literature is addiction. Addiction can be understood quite broadly, formerly, addictive obsessions like lust or power were embed into the Gothic genre, however, drug or alcohol addiction can be also traced back to pieces like Lewis' *The Monk* or Dacre's *Zofloya*. The popularity of this motif even rose during Victorian era as the consumption of drugs, especially opium, and alcohol increased in both writers and ordinary population's realms. In 20th century, addiction and alcoholism became a recurrent and powerful gothic figure.¹¹²

Although it is not specifically said anywhere in *The Panopticon* that Anais would be a drug addict, we get to know quite early in the story, that she is a regular drug user. Anais' turn to drugs has probably a lot to do with her adult boyfriend who elaborates different kinds of knowledge about drug use, teaching the teenage girl tricks.

¹¹¹ Helen Small, "Madness" in *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*, ed. Marie Mulvey-Roberts (Hampshire: The Macmillan Press Ltd, 1998), 152-153.

¹¹² Carol Margaret Davidson, "The Gothic and addiction: A Mad Tango." *Gothic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2009).

Mental note – quit tripping on schooldays. Keep it for special occasions: bar mitzvahs, pancake Tuesday, fucking Easter. Jay told me gangsters used tae dip their pinkies in liquid LSD so they were permanently tripping, but the clever bit was, if they got done, they only went to the nuthouse.¹¹³

In this extract early in the novel, we can track Anais already under the influence. Jay, Anais' partner can be classified as a villain of her story. Even though she is not a damsel in distress, it can be easily deducted, that his influence serves as a corruptive factor in her exploitation. Moreover, Anais' drug use is the primary reason she got in trouble as she, being drugged, does not remember what happened that led to PC Craig's coma. Evidence in the case is her skirt covered in blood stains and she claims: "It was a squirrel – it wasn't PC Craig's blood, I know it in my bones, and so do they, but they don't care. They dinnae."¹¹⁴ But because of the drugs she used, there is no concrete say besides her determination and "feeling in her bones".

The reader is reminded of drugs multiple times in the text. Anais and her friends often smoke weed, drug misuse leads to the rape she is a victim of, she goes to the hearing for "illegal possession of prescription drugs"¹¹⁵. In other words, drugs are a persistent motif in the whole story. This tight connection with drugs can make Anais quite an unreliable narrator. It is only by the end of the novel we get to see the most sober version of Anais, her new persona when she is about to build a new life in Paris.

5.9 Dreams and visions

Small children are often told folklore stories and fairy tales and are met with a series of terrifying creatures. As a result, the dream realm is a place where they battle such phantasms. This is where they create a connection between Gothic horrors and darkness. In 19th century, dreams became a significant part of gothic plots, often representing repressed urges, sexual desires, impulses. During that time, Charlotte Brontë turned dreams into a prophetic tool, where her heroine was informed about possible future events through dream. Modern dreamscape became a setting for battling

¹¹³ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 1.

¹¹⁴ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 24.

¹¹⁵ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 16.

hauntings and psychological horrors and symbolic dreams are considered to reflected real life phantasms.¹¹⁶

Anais' nightmare that readers can witness in *The Panopticon*, is closely related to 'the experiment' she keeps mentioning. The experiment is constantly watching her, judging her, laughing at her. Even in the unit, she is convinced the watchtower is occupied by the experiment, though she and the readers are acknowledged that there are no people and only the nurses can enter for safety reasons.

A masked man steps onto the pier. I cannae go around him. Behind me another guy lunges up out of the water, grabs onto the pier and hauls himself up. He's a keeper of the waters of the dead. This is all the water of the dead. The stagnant ocean. The masked men are corpses and their gills flap. They detest the living.¹¹⁷

Anais tells the readers she often dreams the same or similar dream. Water, melancholy, masked men, jars containing various objects – teeth, hair, the panopticon itself and more. This is associated with her constant paranoia about her unknown origin. No one being able to tell her anything, she resorts to create her own reality and that is being created by 'the experiment', from a cell and growing in a laboratory.

Water. Cold. Sinking, sinking, sinking. Keep my eyes open and gaze up towards a murky light as I fall. It's time tae let go.¹¹⁸

Her dreams often end with detailed portrayal of death. As was said earlier, dreams often represent anxieties, fears and uncertainties of real life and it is no different for Anais. She is unsure about her past and future as well as there is constantly hanging question what will happen to her in case PC Craig does not wake up from the coma.

Moreover, Anais suffers with visions of faces in her wake state and these often appear when she panics or feels unwell. At first, she associated them with the drug use but the reader can learn throughout the story that she sees them in emotionally tense situations.

¹¹⁶ Snodgrass, *Encyclopedia of Gothic literature*, 91-93.

¹¹⁷ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 17.

¹¹⁸ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 17

My heart is gonnae come out my chest; I cannae fucking breathe in here and they know it. I sense them before I see them. In the concrete, across the floor, and the ceiling – wee faces materialise. One appears in the bottom of the toilet, another looks up from the pipe; they swivel tae peer out at me, squint noses, thin lips.¹¹⁹

Consequently, this displays the state of her mental health and evokes sympathy as, despite being a troublemaker, it makes her a human and moreover, just a teenager. Mentally unstable and mad people, particularly women, are common motif in Gothic literature as well, similarly to visions and ghosts that are only a creation of terrorized mind.

Isserley's mental health is not in a good shape either. She suffers from claustrophobia and underground and roofed spaces often cause her to panic. This is a result of a trauma she brought from her home planet.

She dreamed, at first, of the abbey's roofless ruins as if she were sleeping inside them, with the ocean of sky above, azure and cirrus-striped. But then, as so often happened, she slipped down into a deeper level of dream, as if through a treacherous crust of pulverulent earth, and landed in the subterranean hell of the Estates.¹²⁰

In her dreams, she often finds herself back on her home planet in environs she is scared of, possibly ran away from by accepting the job on Earth. Her dreams reflect her own anxiety, particularly the one that she would be send back to the place in case she did not do her job well.

By the beginning of this section, it was mentioned dreams and visions oftentimes find their place in Gothic fiction for their horrifying capability to shake not only characters of the stories but also their readers. They bring whatever we are afraid of.

5.10 Deformity

Deformity, monster, or the "Other" is a consequence of the Enlightenment. The Gothic as a genre of supernatural and fantastical is comfortable with all sorts of weird, unnatural and supernatural forms. The Enlightenment's need to put everything in

¹¹⁹ Fagan, *The Panopticon*, chap. 9.

¹²⁰ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 6.

rational and strictly bounded categories was what made these forms assumed as wrong. Because the medical field of the ‘Age of Reason’ set a healthy human body as the norm, anything deviating from that particular norm thus represents the inhuman, unknowable and potentially dangerous. That is why the deformed, mentally unstable or monstrous fit so well into the shadow land of supernatural and dangerous Gothic. After all, Gothic itself was created as a revolt against the need to put everything in rational lines.¹²¹

Considering this portion, it is fair to say that Isserley does not entirely correspond with either – the body norm of her species, nor of human. Throughout the story, she mentions several times the surgeries that were performed on her, enabling her to “pass as human”.¹²² The fact, that she passes as a human however does not mean, she entirely looks like one. She needs to wear thick glasses to hide her inhumanly large eyes, her arms are too skinny but hands too big for a regular woman and her body is irreversibly scarred. Such severe medical intervention leaves her in constant pain. Her spine hurts where her tail once was, her feet are painful to fit into shoes, she suffers headaches and eyes sores because of the thick glasses she must wear.

The rest of her was a funny shape, though. Long skinny arms with big knobbly elbows – no wonder her top was long sleeved. Knobbly wrists too, and big hands. Still, with tits like that...¹²³

Quite often in the novel, we, as readers, are given the narrative position of the hitchhikers in Isserley’s car and we can witness them noticing her irregularities and, moreover, often sexualizing her. There is no wonder, later in the story, we learn from Isserley that “the surgeons had used pictures from a magazine sent by Esswis as a guide.”¹²⁴ It is an unnegotiable fact, that pictures from magazines are edited, therefore sometimes unrealistic – knowing that Isserley was inspired by the socially constructed beauty standards on Earth, people only naturally found her cleavage alluring.

¹²¹ Ruth Bienstock Anolik, “Introduction: Diagnosing Demons: Creating and Disabling the Discourse of Difference in the Gothic Text” in *Demons of the Body and Mind: Essays on Disability in Gothic Literature*, ed. Ruth Bienstock Anolik (Jefferson: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2010), 1-4.

¹²² Faber, “Michel Faber: ‘Under The Skin changed my life for good’”.

¹²³ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 1.

¹²⁴ Faber, *Under The Skin*, chap. 8.

It probably would not be as much of a problem for a reader of Gothic fiction was it not for Isserley herself loathing her human body. The insight into her own self-perception allows reader to indulge in the uncanny, identifying the deviation from normal by being constantly reminded of it.

The most ambitious and important mission Isserley's deformity has, though, is to point out the way population looks at the 'Other'. It is supposed to reflect society and its tendency to cut off what is anyhow different.

Conclusion

The goal of this thesis was to find and identify gothic aspects of the two selected novels. These are Jenni Fagan's *The Panopticon* and Michel Faber's *Under The Skin*. Both novels are a part of contemporary Scottish literature, coming from hands of Scottish or Scotland-based authors. The objective of this thesis was to find whether the novels resemble and if, in what features and to what extent.

In the first chapter, "Gothic Tradition" concluded the history of Gothic literature in a bigger scope. It pointed out several authors who contributed to the development of Gothic literature and their social and historical background, and in addition to it, what aspects they brought to the field. The chapter was then sectioned into a number of smaller units. The first one discussed the notion and a history of Gothic as a connotation. Another four units then further explored Gothic literature history, starting from the Graveyard poetry and its ambition. Then it forwarded to the 18th century when the original Gothic arose and was being published. Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe and Mary Shelley became a prominent part of this subchapter as the reader learnt they stood in the very creation of the Gothic tradition. Their parts discussed the growth of some of the gothic aspects that prevailed until the present-day literature. Last two sections of the chapter dealt with the Victorian age and the reforms in Gothic novel regarding the social and cultural tradition. Names like Dickens, Brontë sisters, Wilde and Stoker were mentioned as the biggest contributors to the Gothic fiction with their innovations and new perspectives. As was said in the beginning, it was not possible to include majority of the authors, instead, those considered to be the greatest input to the Gothic literature were mentioned. By the end of the last section, modern Gothic literature was remarked as well.

Second chapter was all about Scottish Gothic literature. It is again separated into three sections and each of them described a different period in history. As in the first chapter, the first part took into consideration the absolute birth of Scottish Gothic – particularly in Ossian poetry and Burns' national tradition poetry. The research continued and delved into Scottish Gothic tradition developing in 19th century, mentioning a couple of famous Scottish Gothic authors like Stevenson or Doyle, who both became a significant contributors to the creation of Gothic tradition in Scotland.

Finally, the last part then incorporated the authors or 20th and 21st century and explained their part in the Scottish Gothic field. Names like Muriel Spark, Alasdair Gray or Iain Banks appeared together with their most prominent novels.

Despite being short, the third chapter is as important for the thesis as the two previous ones. In this chapter, some of the terminology of Gothic literature was listed and explained. This chapter's goal was mainly to settle the terms we have learned so far, to put them in one place and remind them before the analytical part of the thesis. A few paragraphs put all the mentions all together and created an easy guide for the rest of the thesis. We remembered what the sublime is, mentioned the uncanny and resolutely established the difference between horror and terror, adding some motifs that build the gothic atmosphere of the novels.

The next chapter brought context for the analysis. It, yet again, consisted of four subchapters and each detailed some part of the two selected authors and novels. It started with Jenni Fagan and her quick career overview and moved to what influenced her to write *The Panopticon* and what it is about. We learnt about the main character Anais and her turbulent life, her moral lessons and conclusion. Similarly, the other part talks about Michel Faber's life, his preoccupations for writing novels and who was his biggest fan and critic at the same time. Set of interviews were used to draw information for both authors. The plot and some characters of the novel *Under The Skin* were discussed last. We learned about the authors' inspirations for the novels and also what they tried to achieve with them.

The last and undoubtedly most significant part of this thesis was the analysis. In this part, several gothic features were identified in the two selected novels. The analysis was separated into ten sections and each represented one gothic aspect. As a result the readers were presented some elements they might have not yet encountered in prototypical Gothic literature. The analysis included subchapters representing following features: settings, female Gothic, authority, alienation, rape, death, torture, addiction, dreams and visions and deformity. As was said, some of these were not included in both novels. For example, addiction was a motif found in *The Panopticon* but not in *Under The Skin*. On the other hand, deformity did not concern *The Panopticon* but only the second novel. There were also features in which were the novels parallel; death is a

preoccupation in both, however, it is delivered differently. In conclusion, this analysis did locate the gothic aspects of the novels, analyzed them and found parallels and differences alike. It broadened the reader's knowledge about the Gothic literature and found how can original gothic features be transformed in contemporary Gothic novels.

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Annotations

Annotation

Name and surname: Alexandra Padevětová

Faculty and department: Faculty of Arts, Department of English and American Studies

Title of the thesis: Gothic aspects in Jenni Fagan's "The Panopticon" and Michel Faber's "Under The Skin"

Supervisor of the thesis: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D.

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The goal of the thesis is to locate and further analyze gothic aspects in books from two contemporary authors. One of them is *The Panopticon* (2012) by Jenni Fagan and the other *Under The Skin* (2000) from Michel Faber. In its theoretical part, the origins of Gothic literature, its development and forms throughout the history were examined, as well as Scottish Gothic tradition and its creation. Some of the authors who are a significant part of the Gothic literature both in Britain and Scotland are mentioned. Jenni Fagan and Michel Faber's careers are examined and the plot and some characters of the selected novels as well. Finally, the last part investigates the aspects, which are similar, different and which are exclusive for either of them.

Anotace

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Název práce: Gotické aspekty v knihách "The Panopticon" od Jenni Fagan a "Under The Skin" od Michel Fabera

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Cílem této bakalářské práce je najít a analyzovat gotické aspekty v knihách The Panopticon (2012) od Jenni Fagan a Under The Skin (2000) od Michel Fabera. Jedná se o dva současné autory gotické novely. V teoretické části bakalářské práce jsou zmíněny počátky gotiky, její zrození a další vývoj, společně s několika autory, kteří významně podíleli na tvorbě gotické literatury do její nynější formy. Jedná se o autory jak Britské, tak Skotské. V další části práce je pak krátce sepsána kariéra a život obou autorů a dále pak jejich díla, tedy dvě zkoumané novely. Jejich děj a některé postavy jsou představeny. V poslední části práce, té analytické, jsou najity a zkoumány gotické aspekty, jejich podobnost, různost a které byly vyhledány jen v jedné z knih.