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The Haunting Depths: The Gothic Return in Julia Armfield's

“ Our Wives Under the Sea “

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الغيايب المسكونة: الانبعاث القوطي في رواية جوليا ارمفيلد "زوجاتنا تحت البحر"

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Abstract

This research delves into the intricacies of Gothic elements within the novel "Our Wives Under the Sea" by the English writer Julia Armfield, by analyzing key themes, characters, and settings that contribute to its Gothic atmosphere. Through a comprehensive examination, this study identifies and scrutinizes the major Gothic elements present in the narrative, including themes of the supernatural, eerie settings, enigmatic characters, and psychological depth. By contextualizing these elements within the broader framework of the Gothic genre, this research sheds light on how "Our Wives Under the Sea" embraces and subverts traditional Gothic tropes to create a compelling and haunting narrative. Through close textual analysis and critical interpretation, this research offers valuable insights into the ways in which the novel employs Gothic elements to evoke fear, suspense, and intrigue, ultimately enriching our understanding of its thematic complexities and literary significance. Key words: Gothic Literature, gothic legacy in modern fiction, haunting atmosphere, psychological horror, uncertainty

الخلاص

يتناول البحث تحليل العناصر القوطية الموجودة في رواية الكاتبة الانكليزية جوليا ارمفيلد زوجاتنا تحت البحر من خلال تحليل الموضوعات الرئيسية والشخصيات والاماكن التي تسهم في جعل الرواية ادبا قوطيا في العصر الحديث. يحدد البحث من خلال التفحص الدقيق لنص الرواية اهم العناصر القوطية الموجودة في القصة والتي تشمل القوى الخارقة للطبيعة والاماكن الغريبة الموحشة والشخصيات الغامضة والعمق النفسي المخيف للإنسان يسلط البحث الضوء على كيفية استخدام الكاتبة المميز لهذه العناصر القوطية في سردها لقصتها وكيفية استخدامها بشكل حديث ليلائم العصر لاثارة الشعور بالخوف والرعب والاثارة والفضول والغموض من اجل لفت انتباه القارئ الى قيمة الموروث القوطي في الادب المعاصر ودوره في كشف خفايا النفس البشرية ومخاوفها عن طريق الغور في اسرارها لعرضها بأسلوب مختلف ومتقن وكذلك تسليط الضوء على اهمية الموضوع المطروح ادبيا. الكلمات المفتاحية: الادب القوطي, الموروث القوطي في ادب المعاصر, الاجواء الموحشة, الرعب النفسي, الغموض واللايقين

1. Introduction to Gothic Literature

1.1 Definition and Context

“Scary stories are indigenous to human artistry. Out of curiosity about the secrets of nature, human behavior, and unexplained bumps in the night “ (Snodgrass, 2005, p.14). Gothic literature is a genre that surrounds various elements like plot, tropes, settings, character conventions, and themes. It often features haunted ruins, sensitive heroines, and tyrannical villains with castles, keys, and locks. The Gothic narrative, characterized by anachronism and deception, serves as a reflection, deflecting attention from traumatic themes. It brews an unsettling mix of anxiety and desire, offering a familiar yet eerie experience. Understanding Gothic literature involves navigating its diverse meanings and interpretations gathered from various sources (Mulvey-Roberts, 1998). Gothic literature emerged in the late 18th century as a literary genre. It started and gained popularity with

Horace Walpole's "The Castle of Otranto" (1764) and later flourished with works like Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" (1818) and Bram Stoker's "Dracula" (1897). Gothic literature influenced and still till nowadays has impact on literature and popular culture, shaping the horror genre and inspiring various adaptations in literature, film, and other artistic forms.

١,٢ Historical Background

Gothic literature flourished in the late 18th to early 19th centuries, during the Romantic era. This period witnessed cultural shifts, including a fascination with the mysterious, supernatural, and sublime. This genre often reflected societal anxieties, the Industrial Revolution, and a growing interest in the supernatural, offering an escape from the rationalism of the Enlightenment that emphasized on reason and science. Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein" and Bram Stoker's "Dracula" emerged during this time, exploring themes of fear, the unknown, and the consequences of scientific advancements (Hogle, 2016). Horace Walpole, with "The Castle of Otranto" (1764), laid the foundation for Gothic fiction, introducing supernatural elements, mysterious castles, and gloomy settings. The Romantic movement embraced a fascination with the unknown, the mystical, and emotions. Gothic literature flourished alongside Romanticism, reflecting the era's interest in the sublime and the macabre. "Frankenstein" (1818) by Mary Shelley unveiled the consequences of scientific experimentation and the hubris of playing with nature. Many societal changes happened alongside with The Industrial Revolution leading to urbanization and a shift from agrarian to industrial economies; Gothic literature often depicted the anxieties arising from these changes, to portray industrial landscapes as oppressive and dehumanizing. The French Revolution, as a period of political unrest, influenced Gothic themes of upheaval, uncertainty, and fear of the unknown. Gothic literature heydays is often associated with the Romantic era, but its impact continued into the Victorian era. Bram Stoker's "Dracula" (1897), explored the fears, repressed desires, and the clash between traditions and modernity. In summary, Gothic literature emerged as a response to the rationalism of the Enlightenment, flourishing during the Romantic era and persisting into the Victorian period. It served as a mean to explore societal anxieties, cultural shifts, and the darker aspects of the human psyche during times of significant change (Punter, 2009).

٢ Essential Elements in Gothic Literature Gothic literature is characterized by several essential elements that contribute to its distinctive style. Here are some main elements to focus on: Gloomy Setting : In the eerie setting of an old mansion or isolated environment, darkness and shadows induce a feeling of claustrophobia and entrapment. Whether abandoned or seemingly occupied, the location features secret passages, trap doors, and hidden rooms, adding to its mysterious allure. As night falls or during dramatic moments like a storm, the darkness intensifies, heightening the sense of unease and foreboding. This atmospheric backdrop sets the stage for sudden, chilling encounters with people, animals, ghosts, or monsters, amplifying the elements of fear and dread (Botting, 1996) High, even overwrought emotions : The narration often leans heavily towards sentimentality, with characters frequently experiencing intense emotions such as anger, sorrow, surprise, fear, and above all, terror. Raw nerves and a pervasive sense of impending doom haunt the characters, leading to frequent bouts of crying and emotional speeches (Hoeverler, 2009). The air crackles with breathlessness and panic, amplifying the atmosphere of suspense. In cinematic adaptations of Gothic tales, screaming becomes a common refrain, punctuating the heightened tension and accentuating the characters' visceral reactions to the unfolding horrors. Supernatural or paranormal elements : Gothic narratives often weave supernatural or paranormal elements into their intricate tapestries, introducing ghostly apparitions, vampires, or otherworldly entities that lurk in the shadows. These spectral occurrences serve to intensify the narrative tension, casting an enigmatic veil over the story and leaving characters and readers alike grappling with the mysteries of the unknown (Punter, 1994) . The inclusion of such supernatural phenomena adds layers of intrigue, infusing the tale with an eerie atmosphere that lingers long after the final page is turned. Damsel in distress: A recurring motif in Gothic literature is the archetype of the "damsel in distress," portrayed as a vulnerable and often persecuted female protagonist. This archetypal heroine finds herself in precarious situations, surrounded by sinister forces and in desperate need of rescue. Her plight adds a layer of suspense to the narrative, as readers are compelled to follow her journey through perilous trials and tribulations, hoping for her eventual salvation from the clutches of darkness (Hoeverler, 2009). Duality and doubling : Characters grapple with dual personalities or concealed facets of their identity. Mirrors and doppelganger serve as potent symbols, reflecting the inner conflicts and complexities of the characters' psyches. Through these literary devices, the Gothic genre delves into the blurred lines between reality and illusion, inviting readers to unravel the mysteries of the human psyche alongside the characters (Botting, 1996). Decay and death : The theme of decay serves as a potent symbol

of the inevitable passage of time and the transient nature of existence. These haunting depictions of deterioration and demise evoke a sense of melancholy and unease, reflecting the darker aspects of human existence and the inexorable march towards mortality. Through the exploration of decay and death, Gothic literature confronts readers with the fragility of life and the eerie beauty found within the shadows of mortality (Botting, 1996).

٣. Gothic Literature's Relevance Today

Gothic literature endures because it taps into timeless aspects of human psychology and societal fears. Its continued relevance can be attributed to several factors:

-١ Universal Themes: Gothic literature often explores universal themes such as fear, the unknown, and the supernatural. These themes resonate across cultures and time periods, maintaining their appeal to diverse audiences.

-٢ Human Psychology: The genre delves into the darker aspects of human nature, addressing primal fears and desires. This psychological depth allows Gothic works to connect with readers on an emotional and visceral level.

-٣ Social Commentary: Gothic literature has historically served as a vehicle for social commentary. Issues such as societal inequalities, the consequences of unchecked scientific advancements, and the clash between tradition and modernity remain pertinent, ensuring the continued relevance of the genre.

-٤ Cultural Reflection: As society evolves, new forms of Gothic literature emerge to reflect contemporary anxieties. Whether it's exploring the impact of technology, environmental concerns, or societal upheavals, Gothic themes can adapt to address current cultural preoccupations.

-٥ Artistic Exploration: The atmospheric and stylistic elements of Gothic literature provide a rich tapestry for artistic exploration. Filmmakers, artists, and writers continue to draw inspiration from Gothic aesthetics to create evocative and visually compelling works.

In essence, Gothic literature's ability to tap into fundamental aspects of the human experience, coupled with its adaptability to address evolving societal concerns, ensures its continued relevance and enduring popularity across different generations.

٤. "Our Wives Under the Sea " Epitomizes the Gothic Genre

" As the tides of fate pull us closer to the unknown, we cling to the hope that love will guide us through the darkest depths." Julia Armfield

٤.١ Author Biography

Julia Armfield was born in London in 1990. She is a fiction writer and occasional playwright who has a Master's degree in Victorian art and literature from Royal Holloway University . She gained her fame as a writer with the publication of her short story compilation, "Salt Slow", in 2019. Proficiently navigating the realms of magical realism, Armfield's writing delves into the intricacies of identity, relationships, and the supernatural. She was shortlisted for the Sunday Times Young Writer of the Year award in 2019, commended in the Moth Short Story Prize 2017, longlisted for the Deborah Rogers Awards 2018, and secured victory in the White Review Short Story Prize 2018 (The Guardian, 2023). She lives and works in London. Armfield's style is distinctive. She blends the mundane with the fantastical, that garnered critical acclaim. Maintaining a relatively private profile, she allows her work to articulate its own resonance. As an emerging voice in contemporary literature, Armfield consistently leaves an indelible imprint on readers through her imaginative storytelling and insightful exploration of the human experience. In an interview with Sam Manzella of Them, Armfield shared that her debut novel drew inspiration from an exploration of the "intersection between women's fiction and the sea." She elaborated on the ocean's symbolic significance, representing both the "forbidden" and a complex entity embodying multiple facets. In a conversation with Sam Franzini of Our Culture Mag, she expounded on the novel's theme, describing it as a narrative that anticipates grief and loss. Part of the horror, she noted, stemmed from the "clanging bureaucracy" of grappling with unanswered questions (Manzella, 2022).

٤.٢ Book Summary Julia Armfield, the acclaimed author of " Salt Slow ", presents her debut novel, " Our Wives Under The Sea ", a poignant exploration of loss, grief, and the intricacies of the human psyche within the abyssal depths. The narrative unfolds through dual perspectives, following the intertwined stories of Leah and Miri, offering profound insights into the profound implications of their respective experiences. The primary setting of this narrative is the ocean floor, where Leah, accompanied by two colleagues, embarks on a research mission that unexpectedly extends into a harrowing six-month ordeal in the deep sea. Upon Leah's eventual return, a transformative shift becomes palpable. It becomes evident that the profound mysteries encountered beneath the waves have left an indelible mark on her. This enigmatic influence infiltrates the domestic sphere, challenging

the semblance of normalcy. Miri, navigating through the semblance of ordinary existence, grapples with the realization that the life they once knew may have irreversibly dissipated. Despite Leah's physical presence, an intangible disconnect emerges, evoking a poignant struggle for the preservation of their shared love. The novel emerges as a sublime yet disquieting portrayal of the human psyche and its intricate psychic behaviors, skillfully weaving together themes of existential dread and the enduring consequences of profound underwater exploration .

٤,٣ Unveiling Gothic Elements in The Book

Setting In the absence of castles, windows, and familiar foliage, the narrative unfolds within the profound depths of the ocean—a realm devoid of tangible landmarks, cloaked in darkness, inhabited by enigmatic beings, and shrouded in silence. From the outset, the haunting ambiance of the deep sea is evoked: "the deep sea is a haunted house: a realm in which entities that defy existence maneuver in obscurity" (Armfield, 2022, p.9). Leah and her expedition team embark on an underwater research mission, only to find themselves ensnared in the depths, their submarine gradually descending to the ocean's unfathomable nadir: "It was difficult to imagine anywhere deeper than the place we had ended up" (Armfield, 2022, p.68). Significantly, the chapters are delineated by the oceanic layers they traverse. Beginning with the benign "Sunlight" zone, where safety still lingers, the narrative progressively descends into terror as the submarine ventures into the "Midnight Zone" and the "Abyssal Zone," where chilling appellations like "vampire squid," "zombie worms," and "cosmic jellyfish" populate the murky depths. As Leah observes, the presence of life in these lightless depths is unsettling, characterized by ghastly nomenclature and an eerie ambiance of perpetual darkness and uncertainty. The ultimate layer, the "Hadal Zone," plunges the narrative into complete darkness and silence, with Leah acknowledging its uncharted depths and potentially enigmatic inhabitants. Stranded and enveloped in darkness, the crew grapples with hallucinations and eerie phenomena, culminating in the emergence of a monstrous entity—whether figment or reality—whose colossal presence and beckoning calls induce terror. This atmospheric description of the claustrophobic underwater setting enhances the Gothic ambiance of the novel, as Leah recounts the unsettling experience of being submerged in darkness, isolated from the world above, and haunted by spectral manifestations: "I did my best to avert my gaze from the windows, where peculiar oceanic entities gazed in, smiling with all their teeth" (Armfield, 2022, p.38). In transcending traditional Gothic settings, the narrative demonstrates a creative utilization of eerie and enigmatic locales to evoke a sense of dread and suspense. The ocean's vast expanse is daunting; its depths remain unfathomable to humanity, hence instilling fear, as mankind is often apprehensive of the unknown. The horrifying prospect of being stranded or lost in the abyss amplifies the sense of dread. Regarding the interaction between the setting and the characters, and its impact on them, it is fair to assert that the complete darkness and silence profoundly affected their psyches. This is evidenced by their discussions about God, descent into madness, and Leah near-fatal departure from the submarine, never to return. Upon reintegration into normal life, she exhibited signs of profound alteration, harboring an unrelenting desire to remain immersed in water, constantly fixating on the ocean and exclusively consuming saltwater. It appears she is unwilling to sever ties with the place that wrought such devastation upon her. The environment and its surroundings exerted multifaceted effects on Leah, manifesting in her actions, thoughts, and physical demeanor. Intense Emotions At the heart of the novel lies an exploration of the profound emotional landscapes inhabited by Leah and Miri, with particular emphasis on Miri, who serves as the primary lens through which their innermost sentiments are elucidated. Stress, anxiety, depression, and exhaustion emerge as prevailing motifs, enveloping both protagonists. Primarily, Miri assumes the role of the narrative focal point. Through her perspective, readers are afforded insight into the dynamic interplay between herself and Leah in the aftermath of the submarine tragedy that is the canvas on which the emotional struggles were painted on "What I'm saying is, the pain is in the aftermath, more than it is the break." (Armfield, 2022, p.47) .Leah emerges as a complex character, exhibiting traits of self-absorption and a pronounced inability to navigate the nuances of trauma and suffering in others " She was consumed by a whirlwind of conflicting emotions, each one fighting for dominance within her." (Armfield, 2022, p.103). Consequently, Miri finds herself grappling with the formidable task of tending to Leah's needs upon her return from the submarine, navigating a terrain rife with emotional turbulence and uncertainty. Miri's emotional landscape is delineated by themes of grief, loss, and fear, each exerting a profound influence on her psyche. In contrast, Leah's emotional trajectory is characterized by a multifaceted complexity. Through the narrative lens of Miri, Leah's preeminent jovial demeanor and ordinary existence are juxtaposed against the transformative aftermath of the accident, which precipitates a radical metamorphosis in her persona . The deleterious impact of the trauma endured at the abyssal depths of the ocean manifests in

profound psychological scarring, epitomized by her chronic state of distraction and cognitive fragmentation. Such manifestations find explication within the framework of post-return syndrome, engendering a state of cognitive disarray and emotional shallowness, which permeates both Leah's physical "she is at first surf-white, uncertain, and then changing as I look at her, white to blue to green - her skin a drifting texture, somehow unmoored, as though it only floats upon the surface of her flesh." (Armfield, 2022, p.117) and Miri's emotional "I feel exhausted, a feeling of catching up, a feeling of something finding me. My heart is a thin thing, these days—shred of paper blown between the spaces in my ribs" (Armfield, 2022, p.122) realms. The novel emerges as a poignant exploration of the human condition, offering a nuanced portrayal of grief, loss, and the attendant emotional upheaval. Through a meticulously crafted narrative, readers are afforded insight into the dual perspectives of absence and bereavement, each imbued with a poetic resonance that underscores the profound gravity of the human experience. Moreover, the narrative's thematic undercurrents serve to augment its narrative depth, infusing the overarching tale with a palpable sense of horror and existential dread. Supernatural and Paranormal phenomena In the climactic chapters of the book, a thematic convergence of ghosts and paranormal entities pervades the narrative. This thematic evolution initiates with unexplained auditory phenomena, initially experienced by Jelka, a character noted for her devout religiosity. Jelka discerns these occurrences as manifestations of demonic entities masquerading as specters .She articulates, "Ghosts don't speak... People misunderstand this. They think that when you're haunted you hear someone speaking, but you don't. Or not usually. Most of the time, if you hear something speaking, it's not a ghost - it's something worse." (Armfield, 2022, p.136). Subsequently, protagonist Leah also becomes privy to these mysterious phenomena, characterized as "unexplained noises". This auditory intrusion is poignantly described as: "The noise first started at night - or really what we referred to as night, since it came long enough after an equally arbitrary stretch of daytime. A sudden creak around the southmost side of the craft, a long, wide, billowing motion. It was a noise that seemed to pulse and then retract, like a beating, like the back and forth of wings, or of swimming - a noise I can't really explain." (Armfield, 2022, p.112). Analysis of this excerpt elucidates that the auditory apparitions are not merely figments of Jelka's or the crew's imagination; rather, they possess an ontological veracity that evokes a sense of eerie authenticity. This authenticity is accentuated by the vivid portrayal of ghostly forms hovering outside the submarine, described as: "Ghost forms in the water, six eyes peering in from without ". The narrative apex of supernatural occurrences manifests with the emergence of a cryptic entity, perceptible solely to Leah. She recounts, "I remember I saw it - the eye, and then the face beyond the eye, the way it rose up from the chasm below us and kept rising, the way it filled the windows, filled my field of vision, seemed to fill the whole ocean by itself." (Armfield, 2022, p.184). The spectral entity's indeterminate form, reminiscent of creatures from Leah's past experiences and studies, imbues the narrative with a disquieting aura. This amalgamation of dread is further intensified by the crew's deteriorating mental health, compounded by their prolonged isolation. Conclusively, the interplay of supernatural elements within the narrative serves to amplify the overarching theme of horror, intricately interwoven with the psychological fabric of the characters. These narrative elements, encapsulated within the evocative portrayal of spectral apparitions and ominous entities, contribute substantively to the narrative's atmospheric richness and thematic depth. Duality and Doubling The diagnostic possibilities of Leah's post-submarine journey psychological condition span a spectrum from schizophrenia, PTSD, to borderline personality disorder. However, the narrative omits precise diagnostic elucidation regarding Leah's mental state upon her return from the submarine voyage at sea's center. on Miri's perspective, readers are afforded insight into the dichotomous personas embodied by Leah. Miri explains the profound transformation undergone by Leah prior to and following her subaquatic expedition, clarifying a stark departure from her former animated and engaging behavior. Initial observations following Leah's reintegration into society suggest a subtle manifestation of psychological distress, manifested through increased silence and deteriorating eating habits. However, the peak of Leah's psychological deterioration heralds a profound metamorphosis, as delineated by Miri. Miri's account details perceptible alterations in Leah's physiological constitution, including changes in complexion, ocular integrity, and somatic diminution, rendering Leah an enigmatic figure reminiscent of her subaqueous confinement—a realm characterized by incomprehensible obscurity and inaccessibility. The split in Leah's personality precipitated by her ordeal within the abyssal depths is attributed to the concept of the 'Empty.' This abyss, situated between Leah's antecedent existence and her emergent post-journey reality, is posited as the catalyst for her psychological fragmentation. The prolonged period of desolation and disorientation endured by Leah within the subaquatic realm engenders a profound sense of estrangement, precluding meaningful interpersonal connections and engendering a division between Leah's intrinsic identity and external psyche The

theme of duality can also be seen through the character portrayal of Jelka. While her antecedent life remains concealed in obscurity, the crucible of the submarine experience unveils a narrative of psychological turbulence and internal conflict. Initially characterized by a veneer of composure and strategic contemplation amidst adversity, Jelka's demeanor undergoes a profound metamorphosis following prolonged immersion in the oceanic abyss. The appearance of pronounced religiosity serves as a salient manifestation of this transformation. Jelka's initial calmness gradually surrenders to an intense religio-spiritual fervor, eclipsing rationality and culminating in the deification of mundane objects. Paradoxically, this fervent devotion precipitates a rapid erosion of her cognitive faculties, exacerbating her mental decline rather than fostering resilience. Central to Jelka's narrative arc is the portrayal of an internal schism—the perennial struggle between salvation and self-annihilation. This dichotomy underscores the profound complexities of the human psyche, wherein the quest for transcendence intersects with the inexorable forces of decay and dissolution. Decay and Death “Something I learned very quickly was that grieving was complicated by lack of certainty, that the hope inherent in a missing loved one was also a species of curse.” (Armfield, 2022, p.89) . Indeed, the thematic exploration of mortality and the profound grief accompanying loss stand as the central pillars within this narrative, imbuing it with an unmistakable Gothic aura. Leah serves as a poignant embodiment of decay, both corporeally and psychologically. Mentally adrift, her physical presence languishes on the family's living room sofa while her consciousness roams in an enigmatic void, hinting at the ephemeral nature of existence .The narrative vividly depicts the gradual deterioration of Leah's physical form, each stage more unsettling than the last. From the pallor of her skin to the loss of an eye and the absence of her lips, the transformation is grotesque yet compelling. The ultimate convergence of her being with the vastness of the ocean on the final page symbolizes a transcendence into elemental dissolution, a consummate decay .Beyond the physical realm, the narrative also explores decay in the abstract sense, particularly in the demise of relationships and the erosion of emotional bonds. Leah's spiritual dissolution parallels the disintegration of her connection with Miri and the gradual extinguishing of her vitality “It's hard when you look up and realise that everyone's moved off and left you in that place by yourself. Like they've all gone on and you're there still, holding on to this person you're supposed to let go of. Let go of them in the water, is something I read once. Seems a bit of a joke in the circumstances, but still. Something about how living means relinquishing the dead and letting them drop down or fall or sink. Letting go of them in the water” (Armfield, 2022, p.190) .In parallel, the cyclical nature of life and death is evoked, with Leah's journey mirroring the autumnal phase—a symbolic resonance with her narrative trajectory. Her initial reintegration into society is marked by a semblance of normalcy, only to unravel gradually, signifying a profound metamorphosis culminating in her eventual disappearance. This deliberate narrative construction, characterized by the gradual decay of various elements—be it individuals, emotions, or domiciles—masterfully infuses the thematic exploration with Gothic sensibilities, rendering the work a compelling study in existential decay. Damsel in Distress Leah's odyssey into the oceanic depths, portraying her as a quintessential young female protagonist ensnared within the archetype of the 'damsel in distress'. Trapped amidst the profound abyss of her ruminations, Leah symbolizes the plight of vulnerability, both physically and emotionally, as she awaits rescue from her submerged predicament. This motif extends beyond her confinement within the submarine, permeating into her reintegration into society, where her deteriorating health and emotional decay underscore the ongoing need for salvation .Through Leah's trajectory from being adrift at sea to her eventual dissolution into its aqueous embrace, the narrative encapsulates a poignant portrayal of feminine psyche amidst adversarial environs. The nuanced exploration of female psychology and its inherent fragility emerges as a thematic cornerstone, deftly capturing the fervent yearning for deliverance and the poignant plea for assistance voiced by the youthful female protagonist “She refused almost every aspect of my help, the way women will when they've been bred to accept little more than the basest civility.” (Armfield, 2022 , p.37) .

Conclusion In conclusion, "Our Wives Under the Sea" emerges as a compelling example of Gothic literature, rich in its exploration of dark themes and evocative imagery. Through our analysis of key Gothic elements within the novel, including the presence of the supernatural, ominous settings, mysterious characters, and psychological depth, we have uncovered the intricate web of Gothic motifs woven throughout the narrative. By contextualizing these elements within the broader tradition of the Gothic genre, we have gained a deeper understanding of how the novel both adheres to and subverts traditional Gothic conventions, contributing to its unique and captivating allure .Furthermore, our examination has revealed the novel's skillful manipulation of Gothic elements to evoke fear, suspense, and fascination in readers, highlighting its thematic complexity and

literary significance. "Our Wives Under the Sea" invites readers to journey into the depths of the human psyche, confronting the darkness that lurks within and without. As such, the novel not only entertains but also challenges readers to grapple with profound questions about identity, mortality, and the nature of reality .In the end, "Our Wives Under the Sea" stands as a testament to the enduring power of the Gothic genre to captivate and enthrall, reminding us of the timeless appeal of tales shrouded in mystery and imbued with a sense of the uncanny. Through its masterful use of Gothic elements, the novel invites us to confront our deepest fears and desires, ultimately leaving an indelible mark on the literary landscape.

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