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**Feminine Resilience and Gothic Decay: A Study of Feminism, social Concerns
and Moral Decline in Seth Graham Smith's *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies***

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for a
Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation**

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Dedications

To:

I dedicate this work to my family, whose unwavering encouragement, love, and continuous support have accompanied me throughout my life, especially during this challenging year.

Their belief in me has been a constant source of strength and inspiration.

To my second family, those whom I have been fortunate enough to meet throughout my journey, each of you has contributed to this achievement in your own unique way. Thank you for giving me a true sense of sisterhood that I had never experienced before, and for sharing moments of joy and sorrow, precious memories, and unwavering support.

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Epigraph

"Literature is a space where voices confront patriarchy, and where identities are redefined."

There is no better sentence than this one
that summarizes the essence of this article

Abstract:

This dissertation examines the representation of feminine resilience in Seth Graham Smith's *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, it reflects how feminist and gothic perspectives contributed to the portrayal of women. This master's thesis investigates gothic themes and the imagery of the societal ills as well as the rules imposed by patriarchal system. Using qualitative textual analysis and feminist criticism, theories of gothic literature and various materials on social decay, this study contends that elements of the gothic like death, decay and the collapse of society mirrored the unbending social conventions and the restrictions that were handed down. Due to the analysis, this dissertation shows how fusion of gothic conventions with feminist elements redefines social norms and demonstrated women's autonomy, agency and identity.

Key Words: Feminism, Resistance, Gothic, Zombies, Horror, Romance.

Table of Contents:

Dedications:	II
Acknowledgements:	III
Epigraph:	IV
Abstract	V
Table of Contents	IV
List of Acronyms:	8
General Introduction	9
Chapter One: The Gothic Realm	16
1.1 Introduction.....	17
1.2 Gothic Fiction as an Artistic Movement.....	17
1.3 Jane Austen's Reanimation: Identity, Irony, and the Emergence of Resilience.....	19
1.4 Depiction of Women in Initial Literature.....	23
1.5 Reconsideration of Female Heroines as Symbol of Resilience.....	25
1.6 Combat Training Reshapes and Strengthens Jane's Female Characters to Face Sexist System.....	26
1.7 Conclusion.....	28
Chapter Two: Gothic Decay and The Female Body	29
2.1 Introduction.....	30
2.2 Gothic Symbolism of Physical Decline	30
2.3 Gothic Realm: From Refinement to Terror.....	31
2.4 Women's Bodies and Gothic Monstrosity.....	34
2.5 Repressed Erotic Desire and Gothic Anxiety.....;;.....	35
2.6 Females, Agency, Autonomy, Strength, Identity.....	37
2.7 Conclusion.....	40

Chapter Three: The Role of Satire, Parody, and Romance in Reshaping Female Identity	42
3.1 Introduction	43
3.2 Hybrid Narratives as a Mechanism of Resilience.....	43
3.3 Postmodern Irony as a Feminist Critique Challenging Jane’s Ethical Idealism and women’s oppression.....	45
3.4 Dreadful Metaphors: Decay, Social Collapse, Empowering Female Agency as a Power of Change.....	48
3.5 Conclusion	54
General Conclusion.....	55
Works Cited.....	59

List of Acronyms

PP: Pride and Prejudice

PPZ: Pride and Prejudice and Zombies

General

Introduction

General Introduction

literature has always been significant, continuously developing through cultures and nations, exploring humans psyche and the environment around them specifically British literature that emerged in the medieval period, from the fifth to eleventh centuries, with the Anglo-Saxon community in Britain, it appeared in the works such as Beowulf, then developed through the renaissance alongside with remarkable authors such as Shakespeare.

British literature, serves as a strong depiction of the historical, and cultural development of British society from the Renaissance to the criticism of the Victorian Era that marked a strict gender role, social tensions and patriarchal system where women were expected to accept this problem. These problems made authors concerned with women's struggles.

This movement witnessed the emergence of the greatest writers one of them is Jane Austen whose works mainly addressed themes of identity patriarchy, social classes, gender roles, marriage, isolation and the struggle between tradition and change. That contributed to the development of British literature.

Among this development is feminism which challenged patriarchy and initial representation in the early literature questioning gender roles. This thought is related to *Écriture Feminine*, a concept created by famous writers such as Hélène Cixous , which helped women to be free from male dominated systems . A key figure in the development of this thought is Jane Austen which played a great role in highlighting the restrictions imposed on women in traditional redefined society that existed in her time.

Austen became more widely known over the years, she becomes famous of using satire, parody and romantic themes in the novel to criticize patriarchy using indirect literary forms. Although she lived in a strict, dominated environment her novels kept making her

famous because of the use of social critique and addressing issues of gender hierarchies most of her works.

Austen's work became more visible when she criticized society while living in it. Using sarcasm, intelligence to fight what has restricted her autonomy. Through her portrayal of women's position and through her strength, today Austen is the greatest feminist in the literary texts, her influence extended beyond modern popular culture and attracted many contemporary writers.

One of the common example is, Seth Graham Smith, American author famous for reshaping the classic literature by introducing supernatural and horror elements, so that readers can see his blend of literary classic texts which not only transforms the novel's context but also breathes it with new colourful insights giving more light to her creativity, showing the strength of British literature that came out with the darkest mode of genre known as gothic literature, it appeared in the 18th century as a reaction against realism and logic, writers started using emotions instead of logic.

The development of gothic literature is rich and influenced many modern writers and readers to explore its central themes and elements that break the line between reality and imagination. This genre indeed is captivating and influential because this contemporary literary text demonstrates that human nature can exist easily with horror showing the dimensions of British literature. This narrative whispers the hidden desires of the mind, paving the way for wounded voices to find expression.

It underscores the importance of personal autonomy; as literary texts tell readers that a lack of self-control can prevent one from finding the right direction for their journey. Building on this discussion of gothic narratives, Seth reshaped the Austen world using gothic themes showing its effects on development of the narratively static words.

Seth rewrites Austen's novel and introduces new different themes combining romance with horror, changing Austen's elegant world into a world of decay. This transformation showed that Austen's novel is flexible and can be changed and it welcomed new themes to exist within her world.

This integration of gothic themes in the novel has captivated a wide contemporary audience who blend Austen's classic narratives with Seth Graham culture to delve into the novel's fascinating elements of decadence. Graham kept most of Austen's character's conversations but added a touch of horror and supernatural, his creativity attracted more writers to use his techniques.

Gothic narratives highlight different emotions that confuse the audience, creating an ambiguous emotional reaction in the readers. This type of fiction interprets the horror in people's lives through themes of decay and a gothic aesthetic. Building on these literary genres. Moreover, this reimagining opens space for women to rebel, providing violence, which increases women's agency, giving a perspective for investigating the main concepts of this study, which worth further examination.

As highlighted in the preceding paragraph, this study explores how women rejected the established gender roles, fighting declined society, winning in battles. By adding horror touch, women became stronger, making men's authorities question their roles and power in society.

This combination of genres, has drawn a large audience from Austen's world, blended it with Graham's culture to create what is known as a hybrid.

Seth manipulates Austen's instruments without changing the text's core meaning, while also introducing a prominent genre that captivated contemporary readers, who have developed

a sense of harmony and solace in the blend of intense horror and fantasy. Certain works showed a limited focus on connecting two genres together to explore Austen's adaptations.

Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to existing scholarship by examining the relationships between gothic decay and feminine resistance and analyse how Seth mash up changed women position in society. This what pushed me to delve deeper into this literary genre and I became incredibly eager to explore its themes and its remarkable reanimation which has inspired writers to incorporate it into their own works. I have chosen this novel after my long engagement with zombie's novels and reading about gothic aesthetics. My desire to learn about this novel grew more after finding that it is based on a famous novel written by the most common author in the world.

The project was inspired by an interest in how narrative adaptations contribute to the fusion of gothic features with a feminist viewpoint as they reveal how literature portrays women and reflects society. Hence, my interest is not merely academic but from growing curiosity to learn more about these concepts.

This study aims to connect existing discussions of gothic literature with feminist perspectives. Moreover, it emphasizes the significance of gothic literature in representing marginalized voices and experiences within the Victorian context. So, the thesis is set up in this way: Chapter One starts with the introduction of gothic literature and locates female personages within the realms of gothic and psychological horror whereby it is shown that the novel is an embodiment of fear and self-torment.

Also, this chapter is a study of the portrayal of women and how they turned into the figures of resistance. Drawing on ideas from Sigmund Freud about the "uncanny" and "repression", and Kristeva concept of the "abject" to understand gothic and feminist themes in the second chapter. With gothic decay and the transformation feminine body, the last chapter applies this framework to the novel, analysing *PPZ* humour, romantic with gothic elements and

characters such as Elizabeth, Darcy, Wickham, as well as key symbols, such as zombies, or other common elements, such as the use of martial arts and fighting scenes, are the main themes in the text. Furthermore, this study adopts a qualitative, textual, and analytical approach focusing on:

Close reading of the modern dark novel *Pride and Prejudice* and zombies and analysing gothic and feminist themes to engage with existed published works situating it within literary and socio-cultural contexts, giving new ideas about how gothic and feminine resistance are portrayed together.

The primary corpus used in this study consists of the novel *Pride and Prejudice* and the Adapted version by Seth Grahame-Smith, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009). By focusing on the chosen novel that extended through several centuries and lived between different societies, the research examines how gothic elements are introduced into a modern realistic framework.

The study therefore situates valuable material for understanding how literature represents social change, female identity and expose how authorities affect these female characters and controlling their bodies and their lives. Secondary texts include, academic works on gothic literature, feminist theory, studies on adaptation and re-imagining, this study adopts qualitative approach based on thematic and textual analysis, applying MLA 9th Edition style guide used for research paper writing was used in the references, in-text citations, and some writing styles sections.

The objectives of this study are: to explore gothic narratives and its core themes such as horror, decay and the uncanny. Also to expose how zombies reflect social tensions, showing how patriarchy ruins societies' order, highlighting women's physical empowerment through genre hybridity that mixes parody, terror and romantic themes revealing how gothic uses fusion to reveal hidden anxieties and challenge social expectations.

In addition, the supervisor's instructions were taken into account extensively. Based on this corpus, some questions have been raised to explore the impact of gothic motifs on society and on women:

1. How does the gothic settings in *PPZ* function as a feminist lens to eradicate the patriarchal system within decaying environment?
2. In what ways do gothic and apocalyptic elements represent social decline, values' decay, and the resistance of oppressive gender norms?
3. How does the reconstruction of Elizabeth Bennet through the gothic world and satire redefine women 's autonomy and their endurance in a male-controlled society?

-Using these questions as a guide, to propose hypotheses to see how gothic motifs, and society's expectations depicted women.

- Gothic tropes function as tools to challenge patriarchy by exposing man's oppression showing how women were oppressed, passive and confined by societal and supernatural forces. However, gothic came to grant women the space to fight portraying both their suffering and strength at the same time.

- Gothic used dark settings, decaying houses, huge destroyed mansions with intense feelings of madness, stress, in addition to the appeal of strange creatures to represent social corruption, moral decay and the resistance of gender norms.

- Gothic decay makes a space for women to assert their resilience by transforming them into fighters, this breaks patriarchal authorities, threatening male dominance system, by doing so, women are no longer passive or confined.

Chapter One:

The

Gothic Realm

Chapter One: The Gothic Realm

1.1 Introduction:

Literature plays a great role connecting different people across the world enabling readers to engage with multiple perspectives and human experiences, throughout the narratives readers build a sense of emotional maturity that helps in raising their awareness as it devotes itself to express the various ways of thinking and expose the hardships undertaken by individuals.

1.2 Gothic Fiction as an Artistic Movement:

In a variety of literary movements, gothic literature has attracted the attention of contemporary writers because of its flexible structure and its elements that have influenced all other literary genres and given the rise to new ones. Therefore, to understand the development of this contemporary literature one must first examine its origin.

“Gothic fiction has undergone significant transformations since its origins in the 18th century, with scholars examining its evolution and thematic relevance in both classic and modern contexts. Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is widely regarded as the first gothic novel.” (Seshagiri and Krishna 1112).

Gothic’s context is simply a representation of the darkness, terror, supernatural, and the inner turmoil inherited in every individual's life which explained how this genre reflected the Victorian beliefs. Moreover, it highly influenced classical features and combined it with modern gothic elements to come up with a mix of different literary texts, this shows that this literary genre has influenced many writers, and demonstrates that it possesses strong literary forms and transcends its boundaries by contributing to the development of other literary genres. "In some

dictionary, 'Goth' is defined as one not civilized, deficient, a barbarian and the medieval or 'gothic' age as a cultural wasteland, primitive and superstitious." (Pang et al. 16).

The gothic tradition seemed unstable because it is mainly about strange elements that occurred as well as the existence of supernatural within its environment such as zombie's creatures, ghosts, and vampires but it still highly regarded and it stayed present until today one of the strongest genre in conveying messages using horror and decay and in evoking person's emotions. It demonstrates a deep understanding of how a single story is presented in different literary forms; one example is *PPZ* which is a combination of romance and horror.

The gothic novel is characterized by its different style that embodies horror and evokes terror in the outcasts to frighten the audience. This narrative became mainly concerned with psychological decay such as, horror, lies and fear, it is characterized by dark settings with foggy states full of grey atmosphere and intense focus on the dead. This genre is about horror, surplus and transgression of society's moral values, its narratives show unspoken desires and fear inside the human psyche it challenges the ideals of stability, rationality and balance promoted by enlightenment thought. In this genre writers instead of using logic they started using emotions and imaginations.

This literature functions as a mirror that reveals the decline inside a redefined environment and it is not to terrify readers but to make them enjoy and realize what is happening inside their environment. It often examines disorder and the fragility of human oppression through focusing on the depth of emotions, refusing reason and logic but using imagination, supernatural creatures like zombies, vampires and witches in addition to its powerful mode and themes of repression and confinement. Through haunted spaces, monstrous figures and mysterious incident gothic texts expose the ideological underpinnings of social norms depicting out that horror is not only about paranormal supernatural but also about the fear of the system's

unethical behaviours. Therefore; it goes beyond terror to explore instability, vulnerability, and resistance.

This literature emerged as reaction against contemporary changes and wrong systems that caused inner conflict within humans caused by religious and moral changes. This fiction also came to stand up for women's rights, promoting their independence and questioning their role in society by fighting the systems made by men in order to suppress women's identity. For this reason, fiction uses monsters and macabre elements in presenting the community's queerness to unveil human's darkest intentions.

Additionally, it shows how domination can suppress humans whether the patriarchal father or the controlling husband. Therefore, this literature came to mention this social climbing to reveal how the authority claims to build stable manners but in reality it secretly plans to spread corruption and create an unstable environment. All these factors illustrate the importance of adding horror to ordinary narratives and this contradiction reveals moral weakness that is hidden behind well decorated society.

1.3 Jane Austen's Reanimation: Identity, Irony, and the Emergence of Resilience:

Reanimating Austen's texts is not meant to be only comedic, it aims to raise reader's awareness conveying a profound message and transforming it in a unique blend. It's not simply a formula used to attract readers and offer a new approach on classic works and contemporary horror literature allowing them to laugh, fear and critique society simultaneously. It encourages the audience to embrace the unfamiliar with the normal to connect themselves with different characters through only reading and imagination.

This blend breaks the social and cultural constraints and enhances women's power, strengthening their identity. The reason why readers cannot see gothic literature in a sarcastic

way is because through this fiction female raise the ability to endure and defend themselves. Because of this, the narrative incorporates irony to make the reader reflect and doubt society's rules "blending the macabre with the sublime to evoke terror and wonder. Over the centuries, the gothic genre has undergone significant transformations, modern fiction reinterprets these motifs to explore fears rooted in contemporary realities such as urban alienation, technological disruption, and psychological trauma." (Seshagiri and Krishna 1112).

Revitalization is a tool used to attract the audience's attention and to turn their sarcastic laughter into positive criticism about tyrannical beliefs. Therefore, the reanimations serve as a strong mechanism to spread horror and anxiety making people question their beliefs. Seth Graham added paranormal elements to create an atmosphere of horror, darkness and anxiety. Moreover, he rebuilt the understanding of gender roles and identity and gave them a new perspective, he also made society clean from immoral behaviours so that it cannot stop their personal fulfilment.

The rebirth of the novel attracted wide range since it focused on the depiction of women characters in the in the texts where Seth Graham used decay as a main element to rebuild women identity to tell the reader that it is impossible to build an identity while living in confined spaces. It also has a key role in fighting old traditional values such as arranged marriage, patriarchy and class divisions.

Women were supposed to write with refinement and modesty based on male standards but they desired to write their own thoughts freely without being under male control, these paradoxes indicate that traditions were misleading and incorrect.

As a result, writers included irony in their writings to expel these incorrect practices instead they welcomed new ideas that separate men and women's obligations by giving them their own roles and to make readers understand that traditions needed to be changed. In this

sense feminism and resistance emerged. “Looser argues that Austen challenges the notion of women as mere commodities through her satirical depiction of the marriage market, highlighting the emphasis on wealth and social status.” (qtd. in Saeed and Mocbil 136).

The use of irony and satire are crucial in Jane’s novel and its adaptation since it challenges social norms. By analysing the comedic elements in *PP* and Seth’s version, the novel highlights how Austen’s irony and Seth’s as well exposes the ugliness of social surface, it encourages the audience to engage openly and critically with the behaviours depicted in the texts. “Literary scholar Claudia Johnson (1995) argues that Austen’s satire of the marriage market exposes the dehumanizing effects of societal pressures on women, who are often reduced to mere commodities in the pursuit of financial security and social status” (qtd. in Saeed and Mocbil 141). Johnson’s argument is particularly relevant to the present study because it provides a feminist perspective on the social and economic pressures surrounding marriage in Austen’s novel. This viewpoint supports the analysis of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, where the adaptation reinterprets these pressures through gothic and parodic elements, allowing female characters to challenge patriarchal expectations more directly.

Gothic motifs also show how women changed from being submissive, polite to active against male dominated systems. This is a rejection of old beliefs that established patriarchal thoughts and came out with the idea that women were created to get married and obey men only but new ideas took place to change this misbelief which help women to embrace their strength in order to give themselves a proper position in society.

The mash up criticises false manners and makes women stronger, eliminating the wrong image that was imposed on unmarried and widow women which were received as a victim of society and probably called strange. In Austen’s story, women needed to be independent and strong but in the Seth Graham version heroines needed to be skilful fighters.

Hence literature has evolved and begun to question these issues that have trapped women in an endless cycle of gloom and ignorance beside questioning the traditions and beliefs which imprisoned their femininity just like a bird imprisoned in the cage.

Moreover, writers themselves who lived under these psychological and physical confinement such as Jane Austen that decided to write her own literature and used it as a force to talk against injustice treatments, she turned literature that limited them only to domestic duties into an iron shield that repels everything dared to break it, this act led to the emergence of feminist movements, *Écriture Feminine* and women's solidarity. Cixous's concept of *écriture féminine* is central to this study because it encourages women to challenge patriarchal structures by expressing their own identities and experiences. Rather than remaining passive, Elizabeth Bennet demonstrates confidence, independence, and intellectual authority. In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, these qualities are further developed through her physical strength and combat skills. Consequently, the adaptation expands Austen's heroine into a more explicit representation of female agency and resistance, reflecting the principles of *écriture féminine*.

Additionally, by incorporating gothic elements into a classic work, readers can directly understand what happened during that period. Taking *PPZ* as an example how it reveals the reality of the Regency Era, blending Jane Austen's ideas with gothic elements as if the novel inspired other modern writers to develop its stylistic content. Thus, Austen became one of the most famous English writers and the greatest feminist, her work was mainly defending women positions and criticizing forced traditional marriage, patriarchal system and women's positions in society.

Austen's style is distinguished by originality inspired by the painful experiences she faced that hides the facts and raises corruption. She also focussed on class and women's

restrictions and became famous for her works that combine romance, parody with sincere humour and parodic criticism.

Austen wrote about several issues that surprised readers. That's why when the zombie was added to her famous novel, made everyone questioned because they were only dealing with realism, facts that express reality but choosing a dark narrative was able to scare readers, making them realize hidden facts.

Adding zombie's monster's version to Austen writings was unfamiliar even though she used some gothic elements but sometimes she did satirize and made fun of it in some work. These creatures were added not as not written to scare society but to symbolise the erotic acts that led to the collapse of values and putting women to the battlefield to raise their sword. These changes led to the emergence of the gothic genre in Austen's world, integrating its origins with another mode of fiction.

1.4 Depiction of Women in Initial Literature:

Early literature often portrays females as mad, insane, fatigue and with empty brain that contains negative and pessimistic thoughts and it is revealed through writers' sayings "According to the authors, women writers of the Victorian era and earlier "struggled in isolation that felt like illness, alienation that felt like madness" (Gilbert and Gubar qtd. in King7). Women were portrayed as obedient, dependent only on man, defined by marriage and social hierarchies. These effects are reinforced by depicting female heroine's individuals as lacking autonomy and protection also are unable to defend themselves.

According to Woolf, "the angel in the house was in short immaculate, sinless, obedient, and submissive to males' commands;" She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming." (Woolf and Bradshaw qtd. in Mouaci 200). Leading to the emergence of feminist literature to show how gothic approach resonated with women and gave them a

strong language to express their thoughts openly without any hesitations. The fears and anxieties that surrounded the value of women are manifested in the various forms of torture that female characters often faced.

Women were often related to domestic roles facing hardships starting with their birth until they die, no single woman could express and defend herself even when she died male opinion did not let them rest in peace rather they continued judging her and talked about her reputation badly beyond repair. As days passed, different genres began to embark on a journey of writing modestly and morally about women's identity and her position in the world as many writers started to develop their contents such as Graham Smith that represented women as heroines and independence and should eradicate what society has mentioned about their reputation.

Even though some writings silenced their desires, modern literature presented them as independent figures and gave them the absolute strength to demand their rights and free them from society's expectations. In this context, women's literature began to develop increasingly as an artistic novel to talk about the flaws that dominated the society. This demonstrates how feminist movements are tools of fighting and enduring the stereotypes imposed by the patriarchal system that contributed to creating blurred images of women in early narratives. Moreover, feminist critical studies have exposed these stereotypes that were created by men since they were deeply sexist and offended. The issue of women's representation in the initial narrative attracted many common feminists and female writers to unravel the ambiguity surrounding the representation of women in early classical literature.

“Every time Woolf raised her pen to write, she found herself fighting this spirit or phantom of a Victorian woman which urged her to "Be sympathetic, be tender; flatter; deceive; use all the arts and wiles of our sex. Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own.” (showalter qtd. In Mouaci201).

The quote indicates that the female writers were forced to portray other heroines in accordance with men's beliefs and ideals of the perfect woman at that time. In this regard feminism came to represent women in a good image because it is important in literature to show the reality to readers and it worked because the readers witnessed the development and transformation in the novels where writers described women with strength and courage and make them the main character, this shift paves the opportunity for the future readers to know the real role of women and how they gained power.

1.5 Reconsideration of Female Heroines as Symbol of Resilience:

Modern writers explore reanimating classical narratives through gothic theories and feminist lenses demonstrating that modern characters reflect autonomy and agency, thus challenging patriarchal beliefs. These new adaptations have emphasized strong important themes such as self-defence, agency and resistance. Heroines in some works such as the novel written by Seth Graham are a representation of feminine endurance in Regency England. Through their words, decisions and conversations, they build mechanisms to challenge the traditional expectations of women. They embodied the ideals of autonomy, intelligence and moral integrity.

In the adaptation, women characterisation changed and were recognized by a strong body which plays an important role. Females did not only use their intelligence but they used physical power to resist patriarchy and this is what the narratives tried to portray. But even so, some disagree about the value and effectiveness of women and agreed with patriarchy's idea that says women's body belongs only to men or society but female's heroines appeared to destroy these assumptions and reshape false perspectives.

These are an effective tool which symbolises resistance. By talking about a woman's body and its value, the next paragraph deals with physical strength and teaching self-protection

using martial arts. The body here has become an effective tool for women besides moral intelligence, learning discipline and patience played a great role in turning women from being passive to reclaiming their body to be theirs and not society's property.

1.6 Combat Training Reshapes and Strengthens Jane's Female Characters to Face Sexist System:

Resilience is when women don't accept to be confined or controlled and refuse to be under male dominance, pushing themselves and others to realize their worth to raise their sword against danger and to adhere to social constraints. Despite its multiple layers and perspectives, the struggle against social norms was the main theme in Seth's adaptation, it shows what was dominating the Regency Era, revealing hidden anxieties and repressed desires.

Moreover, transformation of women into professional fighters helped them endure against patriarchal system and this reveals that narrative studied women in different ways, rejecting the old weak representation of women which made them independent and resilient creating dual identity that helped them resist society's norms changing their physical body into sharp weapon and learning to be their own protectors. Based on these grounds, the novel attracted more writers and researchers to interrupt its artistic context while readers agree with how Seth turns the novel alive some writers argued whether its content continue cooperating with the limits of the patriarchy or argues with it. According to Cai "Chen Yehuda (2013) pointed out that "hybrid novels" such as *Zombies* are essentially the products of postmodernism." (qtd. in Cai 95). Yehuda's observation is relevant to the present study because it explains the hybrid nature of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. His perspective provides a theoretical basis for analysing how the novel combines Austen's classic narrative with gothic horror and zombie fiction to produce new meanings while preserving key themes from the original text.

While other writers view the matter differently and have other opinions about its contexts they also believe that the heroine of the novel is consumed by the patriarchal system. “Elizabeth’s thoughts are inevitably influenced and controlled by the patriarchal culture. In this environment, she passively performed the traditional female image in the patriarchal society. First, Elizabeth cared deeply about what men said about her in social situations.” (Cai 96).

And the writer claims that, “as a woman, Elizabeth’s “internalized misogyny” also shows her solidified femininity. Internalized misogyny is the behaviour of women who demean women and accept gender bias in order to support men.” (Cai 97). Cai’s argument is significant to this study because it provides a feminist framework for examining the contradictions within Elizabeth’s character. While Elizabeth challenges patriarchal expectations through her intelligence and independence, Cai’s interpretation also highlights the ways in which she remains influenced by traditional gender norms. This perspective enables the study to explore the complexity of female identity in both Austen’s novel and its zombie adaptation.

However, Cai’s interpretation presents Elizabeth primarily as a product of patriarchal culture. While this perspective highlights the constraints imposed on women, it pays less attention to the heroine’s capacity for resistance and agency, Roberts highlighted that, His subversion of Austen’s work extends to an ironic attempt to destabilise (if not usurp) the authority of the canonical text in a kind of textual coup d’état. Indeed, the appropriation of *Pride and Prejudice* could even include appropriating its very status as a canonical text, since the mash-up seems to be comically aspiring to the ranks of the literary canon in its own right. (5).

When reading the mash up, one knows that Seth recreates Austen’s novel and makes it alive again to entertain and help readers to reach the absolute truth. So, even though writers focus primarily on feminist thoughts and how Seth Graham uses Jane’s novel, in addition to claiming that the zombies weaken feminist power but there was less focus on the importance of

hybrid genre, feminine identity and their resistance within social decay, other writers view the matter differently and have other opinions about its contexts they also believed that the heroine of the novel is consumed by the patriarchal system. Moreover, some studies revealed a limited focus on connecting two literary worlds gothic and feminism together to explore Austen's adaptations.

Building on these perspectives, the present study examines how gothic and feminist elements contribute to the construction of feminine resilience in *PPZ*, this study explores how gothic literature constructs psychological tension through characters. It also examines how the work of *PPZ* reveals deeper anxieties concerning the development of the self in the human psyche and fear, illustrating how these themes are conveyed across diverse narrative texts.

1.7 Conclusion:

Although previous studies have examined how zombie fiction may reinforce patriarchal values and portray Elizabeth Bennet as adopting masculine characteristics, there remains a gap in explaining how *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* reconstructs female resistance through gothic conventions. This study investigates how Elizabeth transforms her body, combat skills, and physical strength into forms of resistance against patriarchal authority while preserving her feminine identity. It also examines how gothic symbols, particularly zombies, blood, and physical decay, represent the moral decay of society and the corruption of traditional social values. These issues constitute the central focus of the following chapter through a close textual analysis of the novel.

Chapter Two:

Gothic Decay and

The Female Body

Chapter Two: The Gothic Decay and Women Body:

2.1 Introduction:

Building on theoretical framework, the study in this chapter will deal with depiction of physical deterioration as powerful imagery of fear, terror and hidden trauma. It introduces Freud's and Kristeva theories and thoughts about the uncanny, abject and repression, this helps explore moral decay of society with its symbolism also to understand fear can explore hidden tension of human psyche. This chapter also demonstrates how gothic elements can hold change, power and introduce martial arts used by female heroine to eradicate patriarchal system.

2.2 Gothic Symbolism of Physical Decay:

In literary studies, a symbol can be defined as a visible object, image, or action that conveys meanings beyond its literal function'' As we all know, symbol in literature can be defined as something you can see that has taken on a meaning beyond itself or a visible object or action that suggests some further meaning, in addition to itself.'' (Pang et al. 18).

Pang et al.'s definition is important to this research because it helps explain how symbols convey meanings beyond their literal appearance. This perspective allows the study to examine how gothic symbols in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* reflect gender roles, social conflict, and women's resistance to patriarchal authority.

In Seth's adaptation, physical decline serves as a strong symbol, it symbolizes immoral behaviours and society's deterioration that excited in the Regency Era where the new, dark style was created to attract different readers. The author used this style cleverly to introduce taboos and decay using imagery to transform the romantic and gentle tone into realm full of macabre and danger by adding gothic elements to the new reinterpretation the body

symbolizes the decline and ruin of society and to change the ways horror was seen. Within the framework, physical decay functions as a symbol of social deterioration, cultural anxiety, and the challenges that women confront throughout the narrative. Consequently, the blend of horror has become capable of engaging with readers, opening up new ways to deliver horror and anxiety.

In the gothic genre, rotting bodies present social tensions and hidden corruption, they mirror fragility and concealed ability provoking terror and exposing societal fears and individual's anxiety. It symbolizes moral and social decline, against which women characters develop forms of resistance and resilience, this shows how transformation of deteriorations corps can expose fear and weakness that society tries to decorate. In other words, the gothic genre is not limited to horror and decay; it also explores themes of death, deterioration, and social anxiety. In doing so, the gothic narratives open a large space for women to express their resistance and assert their agency, it also highlights women's autonomy allowing them to become aware of their inner and external power and to withstand male supremacy to fight earlier representations and claim their bodies.

The corps in gothic spaces exposed signs of decay, pale damaged skin where the body no longer looked human creating dark atmosphere, symbolizing the decline of identity and collapse of humanity, it also creates the atmosphere of the uncanny where something familiar becomes strange and disturbing, where death is not the end but the beginning of the nightmare, showing that even in the shadow of death and in the atmosphere of sorrow, strength and resilience can survive and can fight decaying bodies.

This transformation didn't happen in a stable environment rather it happened in a world consumed by the dead where chaos, dirt and violence invaded the society. This shows

how culture and society's manners are weak and can hide dangerous manners within a decaying body.

2.3 Gothic Realm: From Refinement to Terror:

Gothic atmosphere is very important for representing its dark features for gothic tales. The traditional gothic atmosphere is always located in ruined castles and abbeys, and has dark passages and stairwells echoing with howls, groans and dripping charnel houses which come from the gothic architecture, which bloomed in the 12th to the 16th century. (Pang et al. 18). Gothic narratives blur the line between tranquillity and chaos making societies where menace, confusion exist with refinement and decorum, living areas and environments shifted from ordered structure linked to tranquillity and where the house represents the balance and social refinement. However, it became terrifying and frightening every corner transformed and changed to give meaning to the human's deterioration.

One of the first things that come to mind when one thinks about a proper gothic story is the setting. Whether it is an eerie castle on the top of a hill in the middle of a stormy night, a haunted house, a gloomy dilapidated neighbourhood in a busy city or a dead spaceship drifting in space. (Majlingová 1).

Jane Austen's original text presents a peaceful society without the interference of strange creatures or violence, her era teaches good manners that exist in society guided by decorum and well structured environment with unspoken desires, it's the opposite from the gothic narratives where the stories reveal the fragility of society that welcome threat and danger and has no valid protection that it tries to claim but rather it is just an illusion built by patriarchy to control society. These ruins show how good spaces slowly fall apart and make people feel afraid or uncomfortable because it shows how something once was beautiful has been destroyed creating the feeling of the uncanny.

Castles that once symbolized safety and hospitality are decayed and stand in shattered beauty amidst foreboding and menacing landscapes, and an initially welcoming mansion transforms into a disturbing and suffocating environment, mirroring the psychological unravelling of its inhabitants. (Saeed et al 123).

The gothic houses often a presentation of security turns into a space of terror as idea is explained in “something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated” (Freud).

These explain that horror is not necessarily a modern thing but it is something that already existed but became strange that suddenly arouses terror within a person.

” By making the ordinary seem extraordinary or the real seem unreal, modern gothic fiction destabilizes perceptions of reality and evokes a profound sense of unease.” (Seshagiri and Krishna 1112). Freud's concept of the uncanny is evident in the novel's zombies, whose human appearance remains familiar while simultaneously becoming frightening. This combination of familiarity and fear creates psychological unease and strengthens the Gothic atmosphere of the text. Freud's concept of the uncanny is adopted because it explains how familiar places, people, and experiences become frightening. This concept helps explain how the adaptation transforms Austen's familiar world into a gothic landscape.

The gothic world often transforms manners into danger, showing that the norms can cover what lurks beneath refined society but it also turns women from being obedient and elegant into skilful fighters liberating them from the strict rules applied to them.

Dark elements don't only change women's lives but also disturbs the stability and tranquillity of ordinary established world showing that in gothic literature the warm house is no longer safe and what is traditionally related to tranquillity became destabilized in decaying surroundings. Moreover, these elements uncover the corruption masked by refined authoritarian

figures who look well-mannered, this narrative came to expose all the chaos exists behind façade of beautiful places.

The gothic came as a reaction against corrupted manners and abused power introducing macabre elements that disrupt this fake harmony and transform stability into tension and horror. In the reinterpretations, town is destroyed by plague and corruption all that shows how authorities are weak and can't save people and they can't even push back the sudden danger exposing the fragility and the illusion of people with power because rude and selfish characters are part of oppressive system not like other communities where the house is secured and protected. Instead, the outside is shattered and menacing, the beauty of nature vanishes and home loses security.

In gothic tales, external danger like epidemics and zombies serve as forces that unsettle material spaces and social frameworks, highlighting that the meaning of safety is often deceptive and regular existence of danger shows the instability of social rankings, indicating that even refined societies can easily break down.

The tension that lies between safety and fear shows how gothic genre questions values and cultural beliefs about resistance, expectations and person's ability to survive unknown danger and an overwhelming threats that drains women's lives. By drawing attention on the conflict between the stability and chaos, the gothic home serves as a metaphor for social disorganization a realm where fears and threats meet to make normal life loses its sense of reality.

2.4 Women's Bodies and Gothic Monstrosity:

Women corps in gothic narratives are symbol of strength and danger, they are both beautiful and terrifying because they resisted society's restrictions and that explain why women

body is a threat, their bodies were built due to violence and heavy circumstances because of that women were taken a threat and seen as highly inelegant and strong enough to resist patriarchal societies but even so, male dominated system portrayed them as inferior and with no brain. However, society often relates women's strength to a grotesque because their independence and courage were characterized as abnormal.

While many texts depicted women as victims, passive, and confined by society and supernatural forces, other literature emerged to present them as agents of resistance to demonstrate that literature can do both, reinforces yet challenges patriarchal norms.

Women's strength was seen as a monstrosity and should be under society's control system because men feared women's freedom and tried to keep them away from their autonomy since the female body became dangerous to male dominance system. Gothic narratives revealed how women's corpses are a source of strength and transformation not created only for marriage and domestic roles or to please society's needs but to break traditional norms, showing that femininity is not passive or related to obedience but rather it can be in the form of resistance and elegance. Through the macabre elements, the value of women's bodies changed from being fragile to powerful.

These dilemmas are exposed through social tensions and psychological anxieties that surrounded by the control social's systems. Moreover, gothic literature finds its way to reveal repressed desires through women autonomy since it is not only to uncover what is hidden but also to assert power and transform women's body because it is strong and important theme in gothic genre since it shows combination of beauty and danger.

2.5 Repressed Desire and Gothic Fear:

Repressed desire and horror are the strongest themes in gothic decay where the

individual struggles and resists hidden anxiety that comes from unspoken desires which gothic literature often expresses beside its supernatural and the uncanny, serving as powerful elements to evoke terror and tension influencing contemporary writers to know more about its themes and elements that reflect social concerns, inner struggle and the unhealed memories from childhood throughout centuries.

Readers can understand through the definition that the gothic word refers to fear and horror but it is also considered as the strongest way to show the most corrupted side of human beings. In modern gothic narratives, fear is not merely a reaction to external danger but also a complex psychological and social phenomenon that delves into societal tensions and individual vulnerabilities. Freud declared that the “theory of repression is the corner-stone on which the whole structure of psycho-analysis rests. “(qtd. In Boag 74). Freud theory of repression is reflected in the novel’s depiction of characters who suppress emotions and desires in order to conform to social expectations. Characters struggles illustrate how repressed tensions re-emerge through conflict and gothic violence.

Furthermore, it is possible to take repression as a centre and bring all the elements of psycho-analytic theory into relation with it. means that repression does not disappear but it came back as aggressive hidden desires, “repression” of the memory of a distressing sexual experience which occurs in mature years is only possible for those in whom that experience can activate the memory-trace of a trauma in childhood. (qtd. in Boag75). Freud's theory of repression is used because it explains how hidden fears and desires return in disturbing forms. This helps interpret the novel's gothic monsters as symbolic expressions of repressed social anxieties.

As it is mentioned, in the previous section, this literary narrative is associated with repressed anxieties and complicated emotions, it reflects how women faced

struggles with strange creatures like the unmentionables and this mirror how traditional roles challenged women. Speaking of this genre and repressed emotions the next paragraph looks at how gothic elements expose deep desires that threaten societies and from this point the work traces back the gothic roots where and when it did appear and how the zombie became related to hidden desire.

“The modern zombie has roots in African and Haitian religious folklore; however, the notion of the dead returning to life can be found in multiple cultural texts from Greek mythology to Arabic, Chinese, Scandinavian and later Western European folklore. (Godin 8).”The zombies were said to be created by a bokor, or a type of spiritual sorcerer. Within Haitian culture, the zombie had many uses; they operated as workers, servants, or helpers to their creator. Specific jobs included working the fields, acting as a messenger, or other menial tasks such as serving guests. (Ackerman and Gauthier qtd. in Godin 10).

It means that the modern zombies are similar to men in the way they think, it is not only a strange creature but they share many similarities more than the traditional zombie as it is mentioned in the novel *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, they are capable of speaking and thinking but they are controlled by superior figures, who wants power to invade the country for personal benefits.

2.6 Females’ Agency, Autonomy and Identity:

This genre shows women’s strength by emphasizing their growing control against norms through the abjection. Abjection in Art Literature can be purifying as well as abjection. As Kristeva (1982) writes in *Powers of Horror*: literature may also involve not an ultimate resistance to but an unveiling of the abject: an elaboration, a discharge, and a hollowing out of abjection through the crisis of the world” according to Kristeva (1982: 76), abjection is the most vital and critical stage in making subject and developing identity. (qtd. in

629).Kristeva's concept of abjection can be observed in the representation of zombies and decaying bodies in *PPZ* .these figures blur the line between life and death ,creating feeling of unease, through this imagery , Smith exposes social anxieties and feminine resilience.

Kristeva's theory of abjection is employed in this study because it explains how images of blood, decay, and the body create feelings of horror while reflecting social and psychological anxieties. This theory is particularly relevant to analysing the zombies and bodily decay in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*.

Kristeva's idea about the abjection introduces darkness, blood and deterioration of the body; The signifiers of blood, decay, and zombie bodies symbolize social disorder and moral corruption. These Gothic images reveal anxieties surrounding the collapse of established boundaries and challenge traditional perceptions of identity and social order. Through such representations, Grahame-Smith highlights feminine resilience in the face of social and cultural instability. These elements fight the order and peace, pushing the reader to think about its fascination and disorder at the same time. Seth rebuilt the essence of gender roles and developed women's identity, polishing society from immoral behaviours as they are important for personal fulfilment.

The rebirth of the novel has attracted wide range of readers since it focused on the depiction of women characters in the text. Seth uses decay as a main element to show danger and to rebuild women identity to show reader that is impossible to rebuild a strong identity while living within the patriarchal system that's tried to hide the existence of female's identity. So it was important for women to actively perform for their autonomy.

Society often depicted women's strength as dangerous because their independence and courage were characterized as abnormal and have been treated beyond repair thinking that female agency is incompetent. However, women's power came as reaction to this monstrosity,

they became warrior also independent by choosing what they want without relying on patriarchy's permission but this resistance was not easy, it came with sacrifices since they were often labelled as weak, witches and deadfall.

Women often were, compared, warned and violated because of their attitude, "Within nineteenth-century literature, specifically gothic literature, women are classified by the social and religious constructs that worked in tandem to trivialize the female experience, making them either monsters (transgressive) or saints (obedient). There was no in-between: 'The portrayal of women is generally wicked.'" (Faxneld qtd . in Rushefsky 3).

The figure of the witch functions as a signifier of patriarchal anxiety. Independent women are frequently associated with witchcraft because they challenge traditional gender expectations. This representation reflects society's fear of female autonomy and its attempts to marginalize women who resist established norms.

Thus, the refusal experienced by women and witches were seen as bizarre and this is unfair even though they were portrayed in some literature as very intelligent they with have the ability to protect and heal sick people but still they were misunderstood and feared by society proving that even good witches are marginalized by patriarchal society, just like women who fight and resist to protect their dignity but their internal resistance is misjudged. Thus, the refusal experienced by women and witches mirrors profound uncertainty, where familiar surroundings become no longer safe and turn into a setting of terror and chaos.

Building on this the transformation of women is not merely a monstrosity but a will to change the rules that made them suffer. The image of the dangerous woman reflects society's fear of female power and this representation was created by male who fear women's independence. In the 19th century the Regency Era witnessed stereotypes about women and one of them is that women were created only for the domestic sphere and getting married even

women who work and write were restricted and dominated by male writers.

Women used their thoughts and raised their pen as a defiance to challenge society while creating an appropriate position for theme. Their determination to gain freedom shows the capacity of thinking and performing as they wish without fear of male hegemony and patriarchal dominance, female dual identity emerged against old beliefs showing how women's strength can push back male's opinion.

This duality in feminine identity became one of the most popular tropes in first-wave gothic fiction. It is often employed as a vehicle through which to explore the limitations placed on women by patriarchal imperatives and to promote sentimental values, particularly sentimental codes of identity formation for women, highlighting the manner in which female Gothic novels were influenced by the sentimental tradition. (Landauer).

Dual identity emerged as a resistance and endurance, it balanced between threatening society and resisting it. Throughout the story, they kept their elegance while changing their bodies into sharp weapons against the dead, showing that femininity is not just being obedient and pleasant but it is to refuse the controlling patriarchal system.

2.7 Conclusion:

Women in gothic narratives often embody a dual identity that combines traditional femininity with autonomy and resistance. In *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*, Seth Grahame-Smith employs images of physical decay, violence, and the zombie body not only to create horror but also to reconstruct female identity. Elizabeth Bennet's physical training and combat skills transform her body into a means of resisting patriarchal authority while preserving her intelligence and feminine identity.

Therefore, gothic functions as more than a genre of horror; it becomes a literary framework through which female empowerment, transformation, and resistance are explored. The concepts of the uncanny and abjection, as developed by Freud and Kristeva, provide the theoretical basis for examining how bodily transformation, decay, and horror symbolize both social anxieties and the reconstruction of female identity. These concepts will be applied through a close reading of the primary text in the following chapter.

Chapter Three:

Resistance Through:

Hybridity,

Satire,

Gothic

Fiction

And

Romance

Chapter Three: Resistance Through: Hybridity, Satire, Gothic Fiction and Roman

3.1 Introduction:

To begin with, genre hybridity emerged as a form of resistance against social boundaries that are going to be explained in this chapter, this genre fusion helps us analyse how the novel *PPZ* through Freud and Kristeva's ideas, a modern narrative blended gothic violence and macabre narratives to create a blend romance, horror and satire pushing the narratives to question women's traditional norms and how to resist patriarchal dimensions, mirroring the instability of the society it claims.

3.2 Hybrid Narratives as a Mechanism Resilience:

The blend of literary genres creates strange emotions in the atmosphere. This analytical chapter shows the new features of fusion that emerged and became mixed with humour, satire and dreads adding romantic elements to its space to liberate women from social and patriarchal boundaries.

Seth Graham rebuild the understanding of gender roles and polished society from immoral behaviours as they are important for creating strong identity, making the rebirth of the novel strong to attract big range of audience since it focused on the depiction of women's characters in the literature. Mixing different genres and texts trigger deep emotions of fear, tension, horror, these disturbing themes create suspense within the readers creating the feeling of the abject and the uncanny. In Seth's adaptation, zombies acted as a symbol to speak about the immoral practices that excited in the Regency Era's respectability which is new ideas to be fulfilled, this becomes stronger with the 'Abject' where corps' decay caused identity's death and break the line between reality and imagination where he used such an interesting style to introduce taboos in indirect form.

Through the fusion and by including zombie's fiction, the novel challenged literary forms that represented women as passive. More specifically, this genre can be taken a form of resilience against masculine authority that is visible in the mashup *PPZ* where the writer talked about social norms and decline of values and the superior against the confined. It also dealt with society's expectations and romantic themes mixed with macabre elements in order to break traditional serious narratives. For example, in the novel chosen portraying the Northfield place full of zombies and with the character's psychological struggles. Besides, showing characters like Elizabeth struggled of male's oppression then she changed and embodied strength to repress anxiety and rebelled to save her life in a chaotic environment, trying to balance between pressure of the society and suffering caused by love and survival just like when Mr. Darcy suffered from emotional control, pride and inner struggle.

The emergence of this genre made female heroine existed beyond traditional romantic tales and putting themselves in the middle of danger and tension showing how heroine trained herself in martial arts to fight zombies. Instead of waiting to get married they turning themselves into strong warrior resisting imposed expectations. Thus, hybridity shows that women are not victim in horror literature but they are strong and this genre is an act of endurance.

Among these women is Elizabeth, she is the best example who resisted the obsessive thoughts in literature and in society which sought to suppress female independence. She embodied resistance and transformation, she used her strength and intelligence to define and criticise society. She combined irony, criticism, frankness and direct speech mixed with sharp words in order to express her opinions and feelings without hesitation to protect herself from male's judgment, she was an independent and strong girl who did not accept forced marriage, although it would have protected her future, secure her life and get her a prestigious position in society but she opposed love or without lack of respect.

Elizabeth's qualities helped her endure social pressures. Also her moral judgement, that guided her in figuring out the real intention of people and these qualities distinguish her from the rest making her the main character.

3.3 Postmodern Irony as a Feminist Critique Challenging Jane's Ethical Idealism and Women's Oppression:

The power of satire exists when Austen's used character Lydia to present her acceptance of traditional marriage and gendered roles, the way she accepted to marry Mr. Wickham without even taking her parents or sisters decisions and run out with him when Austen declared: 'Had they [the Bennet family] been aware, in the first place, of her [Lydia's] real character, of her want of consequence in the world, they would not have allowed her to leave the protection of her home. (qtd. in Saeed and Mocbil 141).

Parody what makes both the original and the adaptations powerful together, they portrayed the social rules imposed on women. The phrase "protection of her home" functions as a signifier of patriarchal control. Rather than presenting the home as a place of safety, the novel exposes how domestic spaces restrict female autonomy and reinforce social expectations imposed upon women. 'Hutcheon's statement that 'All parody is overtly hybrid and double-voiced' is certainly applicable to the formula of *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*.' (qtd. in Roberts 20)" The expression "double-voiced" means that the novel presents two ideas at the same time. It keeps elements from Austen's original novel while also criticizing traditional views about women through parody and gothic elements. This hybridity combines Austen's Regency social novel with contemporary zombie fiction. Rather than simply mixing two genres, the novel creates a dialogue between the original text and modern gothic horror, allowing readers to reconsider issues of gender, class, and patriarchy from a new perspective.

Adding zombie to Austen's statement makes story parodic because it shows how people care about "status" and that marriage is linked to money, also it shows how people's hidden desires are shaped by the society's conventions, "Walton (2021) explores the role of wit and irony in Austen's satire, emphasizing how Austen employs these devices to expose the contradictions and hypocrisies of her society. " (qtd .in Saeed and Mocbil 136). In this regard, the novel employs gothic themes that are hybrid together to oppose gender norms and makes fun of old traditional romance. Therefore, the novel's hybrid form strengthens this critique by combining the conventions of classic romance with gothic horror. As a result, marriage is represented not only as a social institution but also as a site of fear, control, and resistance.

Then, parody is when novel makes fun of another novel in a sarcastic tone, for instance Seth started with different sentence to parody Austen's first statement, she goes: "Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies do divert me, I own, and I laugh at them whenever I can." -Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*." (qtd. in Roberts 17).

-To: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a zombie in possession of brains must be in want of more brains." -Seth Grahame-Smith, *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*-

Parody is also used when serious moment or a deep talking getting interrupted and this happened in the ball when Darcy was having a conversation with his friend about Elizabeth and then he misjudged her, she hurried out after she heard him then she stopped because of a sudden female zombie appeared in front her, then she started fighting all zombies to save people after that Mrs Darcy's judgment disappeared quickly and he came to realize that she was one of the bravest. Also, satire worked successfully when Mrs Collins said that he must get married for a reasons when he said: "My reasons for marrying are, first, That I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony" (Austen. 64). She also said: "You could not make me happy." (Austen 19), Elizabeth rejects a socially

advantageous marriage because she values personal choice over economic security. This moment illustrates her resistance to patriarchal expectations, which becomes even more visible in the zombie adaptation.

These reveal that he needs to get married because of his duties as a clergyman, showing how certain men tend to link their success in work with marriage. ‘Renowned literary critic Harold Bloom (1996) commends Austen's adept use of satire, asserting that her comic art, exemplified by Mr. Collins, is unparalleled in English fiction. ‘ (qtd .in Saeed and Mocbil 138).

Also showing how satire is strong in revealing hidden intentions, when the mother said: "A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!". (Austen qtd. In Saeed and Mocbil139). The expression "large fortune" shows that money played an important role in marriage. It suggests that women were often expected to marry for financial security rather than for love. She also mentioned that "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." (Austen 1). By placing "good fortune" before love or personal qualities, Austen immediately presents marriage as an economic institution rather than a purely romantic relationship. This reflects the social expectations imposed on women during the Regency period. Seth Grahame-Smith preserves this famous opening while transforming its meaning through gothic parody.

This quote shows mother's roles in securing their daughters' future by choosing a rich wealthy man, claiming that social status is more valuable than respect, but Elizabeth stood up against these ideas and made clear that she refuses to marry out of admiration and romance.

Moreover, the novel also reveals that women like Elizabeth and her sister show that females can be more just a housewife they can protect and defend themselves instead of being weak, passive and voiceless portraying them walking besides zombies, without the fear from death, this makes the novel different from other usual narratives, revealing the extreme power

of female heroine.

Through this method, women are no longer submissive instead they have come to realize their power and being active against traditional power, this work indicates that parody criticizes and changes how women were depicted earlier. It shows that women can think and act in a difficult situation just like the way Elizabeth transforms horror into endurance, changing her identity into a warrior and saving her own world, like fighting zombies with her own sword and rejecting perfection of old traditional romance, in doing so, the novel questions the rules that oppressed women and confined them inside idealism of marriage.

throughout history men have excluded women and prevented them from shaping their identity as a fighter. The themes of horror, decay and women roles contributed to reveal what was hidden beneath society, demonstrating the strength highlighted by women. However, Elizabeth was neither passive nor submissive instead, she regularly shows her moral and emotional independence even when she faced struggles. Her decision to leave and to endure shows how women are capable and survive without male's protection.

The story rejected the female depiction by portraying the Bennet sisters as agents of resistance revealing how they actively stood up against danger, the novel shows a complicated representation of identity, where endurance and fragility exist together and this combination highlights women's shift from being weak to defending themselves. The novel criticizes gender inequality and refined the traditional depiction of women, it is shown through the presentation of zombie fiction, corruption and decline of values.

3.4 Dreadful Metaphors: Decay, Social Collapse, Empowering Female Agency as a Power of Change:

Zombies are a reflection of human psychology and it represents the decline of societies. They are not that opposite from human appearance but they are similar to human's

bodies as well as their thoughts and destruction, as they also embody fear and show the decline in individuals' souls, moreover, they are symbols of ruin, reflecting patriarchal power. "As Miller notes, "the zombie is a virtual blank slate, a screen upon which we can project a variety of meanings." (qtd in. Godin 13).

The Merton ball was a party of decorum that usually people with status attend but in the mash up these balls became dangerous and threatened by zombies creating the concept of identity showing the downfall of society that hides corruption beneath decoration, changing beautiful spaces into sites of horror. So, zombies here were used to present social concerns, male's expectations and to shed light on the transformation of heroines into professional fighters.

The use of parody to criticize social values, gendered expectations and traditional decorum. The transformation of literary heroines into modern professionals or active owners of their own destiny. Within the story, the unmentionables don't refer only to the danger but also it stands for insecurity and civilization's downfall.

The dead symbolized losing control and identity showing the existence of chaos not only outside but also inside characters. For example, it mirrors George Wickham's psyche and his inner desires. He became mad and suffered from the zombie's influence, his fear came out because of unresolved trauma. As Freud explain in repression theory: Repression" of the memory of a distressing sexual experience which occurs in mature years is only possible for those in whom that experience can activate the memory-trace of a trauma in childhood." (qtd in Boag75). Which means that some experiences do not disappear, they return in unfamiliar and uncomfortable ways.

Wickham, the leader of the dead manipulated villain who wanted fake marriage for personal profits, as he represents the danger within society which supports the idea of fear is

not related only to monstrous but to human's nature. Furthermore, novel used fear as a main lens to explain George inner psyche and his failure.

Furthermore, dreadful can be a metaphor of plagues, immoral values and human's psychological conflict, by blurring the line between the usual and unusual, moving to Elizabeth a woman who faced challenges as she navigated her duty within a patriarchal society as well as training so hard and learning fighting skills. All this is characterised by a strong woman, who emphasises that skills are acquired through experience, through making an effort.

Seth Graham gave strength to women in expressing their frustrations and anger through fighting and using martial arts unlike, in the Austen world, they weren't even allowed to express themselves neither verbally nor physically. So, the speeches changed from polite to violence like the conversations between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are shown as literal battles, also the fight between Darcy and Wickham shows the way Seth Graham transformed normal conversations into a serious combat to create different narratives that excite readers. In the end, Grahame-Smith's rewriting gives women absolute strength in battle and expresses their deeper resistance.

Moreover, the violence becomes fun rather than true empowerment and the feminist message of the original story is recovered behind the terror and the parody. The Bennet sisters who fought for their city are seen as a symbol of resistance, their strength and independence challenged both the zombies and the strict systems that limited women's autonomy. Through them, the story suggests that women can reverse their roles and fight against oppression and rebuild society.

The narrative used fear as an important lens to analyse themes of corruption and danger and personal failure it shows how all of that change the journey of female character and how they endured within chaos. In a world collapsed by the dead where love is not the solution for

survival women asserted their independency and maintained their autonomy.

In this context resilience in the novel emerges not only through physical defiance but through moral and emotional endurance this is embodied in the Elizabeth's character , her evolution is noticed by moments of rejection when she refused Darcy's and Collins proposal and society's obligations, also she rejected to sacrifice her independence or to throw her body to those who claim her and this creates conflict with her mother .Through these actions Elizabeth identity were shaped ,asserting her autonomy with unwavering strength and leading her to a strong renewal changing her from being confined to being equal, it teaches that her identity was built under oppressions and confinement and that women don't need a hero to save them but rather they learned to be their own protectors.

The Bennet sisters preferred to walk alone to the Nether field, this is the act of independence because women back then and even men were rarely moving without extra protection or without the carriage because of the existence of the dead, this broke the ordinary rules at that time. Women didn't care about what society was going to talk about them, the same when Elizabeth went to visit her sick sister without male's protection and Darcy was surprised, mesmerised by her bravery, that she came all alone.

Elizabeth's most prominent strength is shown in the battle against zombie, she transformed herself to a warrior." Indeed, names or titles play a crucial role in gender construction", "naming is both a boundary setting and a norm inculcation." (Cai 98). She breaks social rules by embodying strength, autonomy and agency all together that helped her break male domination.

However, the heroine struggled to gain independence and liberate herself. That's what shaped her identity as a warrior, the refusal to give her body to someone who doesn't appreciate it is considered as a physical empowerment. In the patriarchal society, women's freedom of

choice in marriage has been greatly restricted, and marriage has become the reason for their existence. They are forced to accept the marriage contract arranged by their parents, as if marriage is the only way for them to live a happy and stable life. (Cai 99). This limitation reflects the broader social expectations imposed on women, during the Victorian Era did not have many rights. They were viewed as only supposed to be housewives and mothers to their children. The women during this era were only viewed as people that should only concern themselves with keeping a successful household. (Brooks 3)

Elizabeth are not the only one who acquires skills and qualities that characterise her, but the rest of the sisters as well. All of them have qualities that make them refuse society's expectations. For example, Jane represents sobriety, femininity and patience, but Lydia's personality is different, she is impulsive but also strong and stubborn.

These contradictory qualities allow women to live a normal decent life in a world created by men but Catherine represents a different personality, she uses her status's power and authority to control people and this is another type of women's resistance in literature.

Hence, we see that women derive a lot of different qualities, each of them distinguishes from the other, they offer different shapes of resilience. Not only Elizabeth who challenges the controlling world by gaining physical strength but there are those who use power for personal interests and this shows the differences of power, diversity and complexities in the female personality that guided them to escape patriarchal dominance, these reflect how sister Bennet played a great role even when they were restrained and under pressure it demonstrates that society can't break women's wings nor destroy them to be under male control. Elizabeth's desire to autonomy is more than being confined by marriage, she didn't refuse marriage but refused inequality rather than wanting a relationship that liberates her and doesn't take out her independence.

As the narrative progress, love between Darcy and Elizabeth started to grow and Elizabeth found a real partner that shared independency and equality with because in a world damaged by the zombies, the real couples' union and cooperation help in fighting dead and danger and that's what made Darcy appreciate and admired her, he was supersized about the autonomy of a lady in that time since he wasn't looking for a lady to marry him only for his fortune but he also wished to be with a lady that must have Elizabeth's characteristics, this creates a marriage based on autonomy.

Moreover , her bound with other family members showed how she received the idea of marriage , when she refused to marry Collins because he asked her to give up on her swords and stop being a fighter because no house should have a swords and that women has to obey her husband's order ,Elizabeth refused his thoughts and his proposal but her sister accepted to marry him after he got rejected by Elizabeth, throughout this act Elizabeth defended her opinion in refusing male's proposal because she felt their hidden intention and what they really wanted is controlling women and no more. Elizabeth's journey is not merely a resilience but; it is a narrative of strength, struggle and endurance.

Elizabeth didn't only resist the restrictions applied by man but also sometimes women, she had to confront her mother's decision for example, when she imposed traditional marriage on her at the beginning but she also mentioned that women should have talents rather than having feelings, she finally knew that women do not need only marriage but also a talent and power to endure and her autonomy to perform and her determination to save another woman, all that describe an embodiment of different style of female resilience, beside not relying on men's security, her journey shows the real independent female figure rather she wanted a man to admire her while she lifts her swords, showing that true love doesn't exclude women's power but rises in collapsing world.

3.5 Conclusion:

Genre hybridity, parody, and gothic tropes play a significant role in reshaping the representation of women in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. By combining Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* with zombie fiction, Seth Grahame-Smith reconstructs Elizabeth Bennet as a heroine who challenges patriarchal authority through both intellectual independence and physical strength. This hybrid form also satirizes the institution of marriage by exposing its social and economic motivations while employing zombies, bodily decay, and violence as gothic symbols of moral corruption, social decline, and the collapse of traditional values.

Conclusion

Conclusion:

Pride and Prejudice and its reimagined version have attracted large audience to interrupt its impressive text that helped women to break free from the constraints of society. In *PPZ*, the story is not a simple realism, it blends dark power and resilience to reveal women's power empowering them in challenging patriarchal norms and recover their agency. This combination of genre served as a narrative force, offering the reader an opportunity to interrupt and explain its hidden symbolism.

Thus, the work began by recounting the struggles of women and their early portrayal, then gradually introduced gothic decadence, horror, and all elements of terror adding zombies as a powerful symbol indirectly representing social corruption. It revealed they are not merely monsters, they represent inner anxieties and disturbances. By transforming Austen's novel into a space of violence, the normal becomes strange and abnormal to reveal how an ordinary story gradually morphs into a terrifying narrative.

The study demonstrates how women embodied strength to rebel and to save their lives in a chaotic environment, explaining how the bridge between the self and terror can easily break, giving rise to horror. The final chapter then applies theories on Seth's version, analysing it through the lens of Freud and Kristeva's ideas.

In this context, horror, realism and gothic blend give power to women like the heroine Elizabeth who resisted a society's restrictions and avoided arranged marriage, the decay portrayed as zombie craving more brains to control people's lives, women did not want to be defeated and lose their independency and for this reason they became feminists, resisters and fighters to ensure their safety, which shows that femininity does not mean obeying men but respecting women's choices and turning their bodies into skilled killers, reflecting the essence of a mixture of literary genres. This fusion provided a captivating narrative that smoothly

changed from a gentle atmosphere to a world of horror, challenging the rigid, authoritarian order.

Blending gothic with Austen's world made the message stronger and clearer for the audience. When Seth Graham added elements of the supernatural to make the novel feel eerie and suspenseful, he showed how a single work of realism can be changed and infused with gothic aesthetics and showed how literature could struggle with tension, interpret events differently through this analysis.

In the old literary genre, women were often depicted as evils, but in modern narratives, they became agents of resilience. Thus, reanimating Austen's novel helped change women into warriors using sharp swords and lifting their skirts to push the danger, revealing the fragility of the patriarchal system.

Women evolved from being oppressed into rebellious and resistant, expressing their strength through various forms of intelligence and shrewdness in speaking up against gender roles and using the sword facing threats and going into combat. They have inspired women to know their strength and worth and have moved from domestic rules to a higher status to make resistance more visible and to reach every confined woman in the world.

Women emerged as autonomous individuals, their struggle and independence extended beyond simply opposing social norms. They attempted to strengthen women's place instead of being oppressed at home, surrounded by duties and to enhance their voices and demand their rights. In this way, literature attracts huge audience and introduces them to a new narrative text.

Reading *PPZ* through the mix of genres and adding supernatural the reader now is capable to know what was happening in Regency Era England and also interrupting Seth's novel revealing that the gothic is strong and are capable to change Austen's thoughts and

conversations in captivated way without losing its core meaning, it also reveals how the “unmentionables” can show hidden corruption existed within people’s lives. Thus, both texts revealed how women’s image were portrayed in both Regency and contemporary Era. Ultimately, this creates new perspectives for the research.

The analysis demonstrated that *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies* reflects social anxieties through its use of gothic imagery, decay, and horror. These elements reveal concerns related to gender roles, patriarchal control, and women's position within society.

The study found that the adaptation successfully combines gothic and parodic elements with Austen's original narrative. This combination allows the text to challenge traditional social values while presenting women as active and resilient figures.

The findings revealed that female characters resist patriarchal expectations and demonstrate autonomy throughout the narrative. The study also showed that gothic motifs function as symbols of social pressure, repression, and resistance.

Based on the findings above, it is suggested that the future research may be a comparison of Elizabeth and other female heroine in gothic spaces in different novels, or to explore the role of gothic spaces in shaping female identity, also to study how social class ruins true romance and expose how love is presented in both classic narratives and modern horror tales.

Further contributions are also suggested by examining how independence is reinterpreted in different cultural contexts and comparing *PPZ* with other zombie’s adaptations.

Furthermore, this study emphasizes women's capacity to fight patriarchal societies in both literature and society. Ultimately, acknowledging the importance for women to endure, act and rebel because they are essential for societal improvement.

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التصريح الشرفي

الخاص بالالتزام بقواعد النزاهة العلمية لإنجاز بحث علمي
(القرار رقم 1082 المؤرخ في 27 ديسمبر 2020 الذي يحدد
القواعد المتعلقة بالوقاية من السرقة العلمية ومكافحتها)

أنا الممضي أسفله،

الطالب (ة): بلحاج شيماء خاتمة الزهراء

الحامل (ة) لبطاقة التعريف الوطنية رقم: 1100031000143270000

الصادرة في تاريخ: 2023.01.31

دائرة:

المجال: ولاية عين تموشنت

والمسجل بكلية الآداب واللغات والعلوم الاجتماعية

قسم: اللغة والأدب الإنجليزي

شعبة: اللغة الإنجليزية

والمكلف بإنجاز مذكرة تخرج لنيل شهادة ماستر أكاديمي،

الموسومة بعنوان:

Feminine Resilience and gothic Decay:

A study of Feminism, Social Concerns

and moral Decline in Seth Graham

Smith's Pride and Prejudice and

Zombies.

أصوح بشرفي أن ألتزم بمراعاة المعايير العلمية والمنهجية
ومعايير الأخلاقية المهنية والنزاهة الأكاديمية المطلوبة في إنجاز
مذكرة الماستر المذكورة أعلاه.

امضاء المعني

شيماء

ولاية عين تموشنت في
و يتفق على هذا
2023/01/31

نظر للتصديق علم الامضاءات
السيد (ة) بلحاج شيماء خاتمة الزهراء
ب.ت.و رقم:
الصادرة في:
التاريخ:
2023/01/31

الجمهورية الجزائرية الديمقراطية الشعبية
République Algérienne Démocratique et Populaire
Ministère de L'enseignement Supérieur et de La
Recherche Scientifique
Université Ain Temouchent - Belhadj Bouchaib -
Faculté des lettres, langues et sciences sociales



وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي
جامعة عين تموشنت - بلعاج بوشعيب
كلية الآداب واللغات والعلوم الاجتماعية

الترخيص بإيداع مذكرة الماستر

أنا الأستاذ(ة) المشرف(ة):

Dr. Samira Lacroix

على مذكرة التخرج في الماستر والموسومة بـ:

Feminine Resilience and Gothic Decay: A Study of Feminism, Social
Concerns and Moral Decline in Sir Graham Smith's Pride and Prejudice and Zombies

من انجاز الطالب (بين):

Belhadj Chaimaa F. 2

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ميدان: لغات أجنبية

شعبة: لغات رومانسية

تخصص: أدب وحصانة

أشهد أن الطالب (بين) قد قام (أ) برفع كل التحفظات المطلوبة من طرف لجنة المناقشة
وبإمكانه (ما) إيداع النسخة الالكترونية المصححة على مستوى المستودع الرقمي لجامعة عين تموشنت.

امضاء رئيس اللجنة

امضاء المشرف

الاسم واللقب

الاسم واللقب

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