

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Background of the Research

Australia is well known by its land and its past. British colonization in the eighteenth century affected the whole aspects of Australia, one of the aspects that emerged is the gothic genre in Australian literature. Gelder (2009) claims that gothic novels in Australia refers to a style that has a genre of back home; the colonization also influenced Australia's architecture (115). The gothic image is linked with mystery, horror and blood; gothic elements also contain sites and topography such as dark forest, abandoned landscape, destroyed abbeys, and middle age castle (Cuddon 308). Moreover, gothic novel in Australia has sort of connection with the nature and appeals during colonization that primarily imply the literature with the dark past of colonialism. Gothic in Australia embody their unique landscape, and what asserted in that landscape. In his research, Turcotte (1998) explains that Australia was imagined as a distorted land with ugly creatures long ago. The indigenous of Australia or Aborigines is one of the presences of gothic settlement in Australia that settler their life in the bush (1). Bush is definitely one of the characteristics of gothic novel in Australia, Scahffer (1988) examines that bush is the location with spiritual darkness emerge from its land (160). This explanation conducts the specific features of gothic in Australia.

The connection of colonization and the judgment of Australia perhaps causes the consistency of gothic. *Picnic at Hanging Rock* by Joan Lindsay shows some aspects of Australian gothic such as bush life, colonialism, myth, mystery,

sacred place, etc. Furthermore, in his research, Kirby (1978) states that Joan Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* brings the vulnerability of natural forces and also delivers the strong character of Australia and its laws and spirit (255).

The story of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is set near Mount Macedon, Victoria, Australia. Focus on the two places in the story, Appleyard College and Hanging Rock. *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is one of the masterpieces of Australian gothic novels, set in 1900 and published in 1967. As far as reading this novel, the reader would understand the whole novel is narrated by the author with third-person point of view because the use of the name in the story while the author narrates it. The novel contains the mysterious story of the girls of Appleyard College in the Hanging Rock while picnicking on Valentine's Day.

Joan Lindsay was born in St. Kilda, Victoria, Australia on 16 November 1896 with full name Joan à Beckett Lindsay and called Lady Lindsay, and she is known as one of the best gothic authors in Australia with her work titled *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. It is said that the novel's story is influenced by her journey while writing the story as seeing Hanging Rock since her childhood. In addition, she wrote the novel only around four weeks and slightly indicated whether it was fiction or an actual event. Furthermore, Frith (1990) in her research explains that the mysterious disappearance of the girls was related to nature and some folklore in Australia (3).

Hanging Rock is located in Victoria, Australia. It was a volcano named Mount Diogenes. Refers to the article by Macedon Ranges Shire Council in 2021,

Hanging Rock tells so many histories such as the sacred place for indigenous Australians, with Joan Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* book, the history and tales Hanging Rock and Macedon explained. Furthermore, this Hanging Rock site is the main point of the ambiguity and mysterious event in the story. In 2005, Annabel Carr's research shows the setting of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* is related to sacred and religious aspects of the place of Hanging Rock. She explains that the relation of the indigenous Australians has a sort of connection with the consequence of nature and natural world (124). Moreover, the connection of the unique natural world of Australia to the theme of gothic in the story is powerful, for example, the presence of Australian bush with mythological aspects in the story.

This thesis will examine how Joan Lindsay uses gothic elements in the setting of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. Australian gothic fiction is about horror, haunting and takes a deep exploration of the dark past trauma of colonialism in the setting of Australia (Shannon). Therefore, the research mainly focuses on the gothic aspects of the story, especially in setting.

I took this topic willingly to explore more about gothic literature especially in Australian Gothic novel since I want to study and explore the gothic elements in setting of the story that being the central gothic in the story, primarily in the Australian gothic novel, and analyzing the element of gothic as the setting in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. Joan Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging* is considered as one of the best Australian gothic literatures, the way Joan Lindsay portrays gothic elements through the tragedy of the missing girls in Hanging Rock which is related to bush life, religious aspects, history, and many other aspects of Australia. I hope this

research is beneficial for people who want to read about Australian Gothic novel to enrich their knowledge of Gothic literature, especially about setting in *Picnic at Hanging Rock* by Joan Lindsay. Therefore, this research is entitled **Gothic Elements in the Setting of Joan Lindsay's Novel *Picnic at Hanging Rock***.

## 1.2. Identification of the Problem

*Picnic at Hanging Rock* by Joan Lindsay has long been claimed as one of the best Australian gothic novels. The novel's story is set mainly at two places; Appleyard College and The Hanging Rock. After reading the novel I found out that the setting of places plays important roles in building the gothic atmosphere in the novel by creating mystery, horror and ambiguity. Furthermore, the focus of gothic fiction in Australia is the experience of colonialism and dark past with the landscape of Australia; the way Joan Lindsay used gothic elements in her story's setting is somehow detailed. In this analysis, I would like to expose and examine why this novel is one of the best Australian gothic novels by the focusing on the gothic elements through an analysis of the setting's story in order to add the specific analysis of setting in Australia as the gothic elements in the novel by Joan Lindsay entitled *Picnic at Hanging Rock*.

## 1.3. Review of the Related Literature

Australian Gothic novel is placed in Australia, one of the most notable places is in Australian bush. The novel *Picnic at Hanging Rock* takes place in Hanging Rock, Victoria, Australia, located in a bush area. The researchers have analyzed the novel like the connection of the history and gothic literature. For example, the first research by Sarah L. Frith entitled "Fact and Fiction in Joan

Lindsay's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1990). The research provides the actual historical event and relates the relation of people in Australia at that time. Also, the writer analyses the symbolic aspects in the story, which explore the actual place of Australia at that time. This research enlightens me about the real place in Australia when the novel setting occurs: this might help write the setting analysis throughout history.

On other hand, in the research by Chunyan Sun entitled "Horror from the Soul-Gothic Style in Allan Poe's Horror Fictions" (2015), she examines the style of gothic through Allan Poe's horror stories. Chunyan Sun study the related forms of American literature with gothic horror fiction. The research focuses on how Poe used tradition and gothic fiction and then connect it as sub-consciousness; the preliminary result of this study that the critical factors in gothic literature relate to expressing terror and building the atmosphere. This research enriches me with knowledge about the essential aspects in gothic literature.

Concerning about the gothic aspects in literature, the research by Sarah Lundwall entitled "Gothic Horror and the Folktale – A Formalist Approach to Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*" (2013). She studying the factor of gothic novel focuses on the characterization of the character in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. The research used the story as the primary source using close-reading examination. The research analyses the connection of folklore with gothic aspect. It turned out that gothic literature could be conclude as part of folklore after analyzing the similarities of the two structures. This research gives me information about focusing on story as the primary source in the analysis and using close-

reading examination with the formalist approach to analyzing an intrinsic aspect through the story. This close-reading examination could help analyze the story's setting in *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, with the help of using a formalist approach to focus on the work itself.

In 2012, the research entitled "Gothic Landscape: An Analysis of Gabrielle Lord's *Tooth and Claw*, Elizabeth Jolley's *The Well* and Tim Winton's *In The Winter Dark*" by Alarcos and Pilar examine the Australian gothic fiction by analyzing Gabrielle Lord's *Tooth and Claw*, Elizabeth Jolley's *The Well* and Tim Winton's *In the Winter Dark*. The result found that the three novels above is the center of the contemporary gothic literature in Australia. It was found that the three novels have nature outweigh the architecture, this is important in European gothic, the landscape in Australia appears as an ungracious land, a territory apprehension of western (363). The image of Australian gothic such as Australian bush replaced by the gothic architecture. The character, through the story in the middle of the nature and faces the danger ahead. This research gives me insightful knowledge in analyzing gothic story; in this thesis, the setting focused on gothic architecture.

After reading the sources above, I declare to research on gothic literature with Joan Lindsay's work, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, with a genre theory and gothic elements theory. The previous studies above focus on the way of gothic literature imply as the analysis. Moreover, some of the research analyze the factual event and the ambiguity of the gothic in Australia. The other research uses another works to analyze gothic, for example, Poe's greatest horror stories, the analysis come out with the aspects in gothic such as the atmosphere. The other research uses a



formalist approach to analyze the story by close-reading the text to find the story's primary source, such as character and setting. All the previous studies above enrich the knowledge to analyze gothic literature, especially in setting aspect throughout the story; this research will examine Australian gothic in *Picnic at Hanging Rock* by Joan Lindsay.

#### 1.4. Research Questions

This thesis is focusing on finding answers for the following questions:

1. How are settings in the novel being utilized to present the Gothic atmosphere?
2. How does the gothic elements in this novel show the significance of Australian gothic novel?

#### 1.5. Scope of the Research

This research focuses on the elements of Gothic in Australian novel *Picnic at Hanging Rock* by Joan Lindsay. The research focuses on exploring elements of gothic in the setting of the novel. It will analyze and observe how far the setting delivers the gothic elements in the story. In addition, this research will also reveal and examine the specific place in the story that contain gothic elements, such as bush, forest, college and Hanging Rock, as written by Joan Lindsay.

#### 1.6. Objectives of the Study

Based on the research question, this research objective is to reveal and prove the Gothic elements in the setting of an Australian gothic novel by Joan Lindsay entitled *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. This research analyzes the setting of the novel to

find the Gothic elements that help build the Gothic atmosphere in the story. Furthermore, in analyzing the setting, the process will be focused on classifying the elements found based on the Robert Harris Gothic elements theory and proof the significance of this novel as an Australian Gothic Novel.

This thesis also aims to enrich the reader's knowledge about *Picnic at Hanging Rock*, particularly about Australian gothic novels. Hopefully, this research will be helpful as a reference and source for future research studies. Therefore, this research also could be a source for the reader who wants to analyze *Picnic at Hanging Rock* that needs a better understanding, especially in the setting of Australian Gothic novel in the story.

