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Haunted Ships and Horrific Seas: Hydro-Gothic Forces in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," Poe's "MS. Found in a Bottle," and Beck's *Ghost Ship*

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines how the sea becomes a source of horror and mystery in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Edgar Allan Poe's story "MS. Found in a Bottle", and the movie *Ghost Ship* directed by Steve Beck. It explores how these works interpret the ocean not just as a background, but as a strong and dangerous force that affects the human mind and spirit. In Coleridge's poem, the sea reflects repentance and retribution, within the deeper moral and supernatural experience of the mariner. Poe, in his story, presents the ocean as dark, chaotic, and beyond human understanding, heightening a sense of alienation and terror. Beck's modern take on the haunted ship theme shows how the fear of spiritual and supernatural continue to exist even in contemporary narratives. The study follows a close reading along with a critical comparative analysis of these texts, in alignment to the theory of Hydro-Gothicism, in order to highlight how the sea blurs the line between reality and the supernatural, making it a space of uncertainty and psychological tension. Overall, the paper shows that the ocean remains a persistent symbol of fear and suspense of the unknown.

INTRODUCTION

The Haunted Ship Problem: Enclosure Within Infinity

Water is God's blessing upon humankind, and as pure as saving lives. However, water can take our lives also at any time. In fact, humans cannot fight with a large body of water from rivers, seas or oceans if they face calamities like storm surges, high tides or shipwreck. The ships are usually small like a tiny boat sailing in the huge ocean with unlimited water. The ocean itself is another world with water, and it surrounds people like a prison. Mariners, seafarers, naval officers often experience horrible situations in the middle of life or death. The infinite ocean creates fear of death on the little space of ship imposing the terror that the land is far away, and humans cannot escape from ocean suddenly in case of natural disasters. For example, in the famous epic poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" of S.T. Coleridge, the mariner suffers alone on the ship in ocean because of killing an innocent bird "albatross". The ship becomes like a floating prison trapping the mariner between the sky and the sea. In E.A. Poe's story "MS. Found in a Bottle," the narrator feels imprisoned in a black ship with supernatural forces. Similarly, in the Hollywood movie *Ghost Ship* by Steve Beck, the luxury liner becomes isolated in middle of the ocean with all its people held captive with only ghosts offering no rescue or no escape. Thus, these three fictional works incorporate Hydro-Gothic elements, in their dealings with the fear of water.

Hydro-Gothic as a Research Lens

The term Hydro-Gothicism is a literary thought that explores the deeper, darker relationships between human

beings and water. The famous poem "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" was published in 1798, written by the British poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge in the 18th century the Romantic period and it significantly tells a supernatural sea story about sin, punishment, nature's power, and it made sea-horror and spiritual guilt important in literature. On the other hand, the American story "MS. Found in a Bottle" was published in 1833 by Edgar Allan Poe in the 19th century, and it deepened Gothic Sea fiction with mystery, psychological fear, and strange ocean forces which contributed to Hydro-Gothic forces. On the contrary, the Hollywood movie, *Ghost Ship* (2002) directed by Steve Beck, was released in 2002 in the 21st century, showing a modern haunted ship story with visual horror and cursed souls at sea. Though these works belong to three different centuries, Hydro-fear is common in them. All of them provide Gothic settings on water, where the sea becomes a place of terror, isolation, supernatural events and punishment, and remark that the ocean-based horrible events continue across time in literature.

Corpus and Rationale

The poem, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," the story "MS. Found in a Bottle" and the movie *Ghost Ship* were chosen because of the Hydro-Gothic elements there and the acts of water as most powerful force in nature against tiny humans. In addition, humans cannot fight and cannot show their power in front of water as narrator says in story,

"A whirlwind of foam caught the vessel and hurried it on with inconceivable velocity." (Poe, 1833/2024, para. 5)
Water represents life but in them it represents as death

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coming to humans. The poem, story and movie show the horrible situation inside ships and the presence of supernatural which as main subject of Hydro-Gothicism, the biggest fear of water. By comparing three texts, three time periods are visible such as Coleridge's poem represents Romantic era of 18th century, the American story by Poe represents 19th century Gothic etc. All of them demonstrate frightening truth of water along with ships by showing how sea horror changes over time.

Research Questions

The ocean is an active power that creates haunting and the fear of death. The ocean can destroy anything, even human lives, instead of just providing beautiful and peaceful moments for humans. The real nature of water can be found by exploring it in the depths of water.

Main research questions:

- i. How does the sea punish human beings instead of saving their lives?
- ii. How does isolation create the fear of death and eventually madness?
- iii. Why is the ship like a floating prison and deadly coffin?

Article Roadmap

This article has four main sections. The first section explains the idea of Hydro-Gothicism, focusing on supernatural elements, fear of water, and frightening ship experiences. It shows how the sea becomes cruel and powerful, not life-saving, as seen in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" where Coleridge says about the line "Water, water, everywhere, / Nor any drop to drink" (lines 119-122) presents water as threatening. The second section reviews other studies and explains how humans feel weak before the vast ocean from an eco-critical view. The third section uses text analysis of Coleridge's poem, Poe's story, and Beck's *Ghost Ship* to explore Hydro-Gothic elements. The final section summarizes how water, horror, and the supernatural are deeply connected in all these works.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Gothic Space and Architecture

Gothic incidents usually happen in castles, dare houses but in Coleridge's poem, Poe's story and in Beck's movie, they exist in the interior of ships portraying experiences with ghosts and making the ship look like a moving castle along with the ocean. The scholar Fangpeng (2014) notifies how nature like water sometimes becomes cruel to human beings: "the climate became worse and worse, which was not suitable for the crew's survival" (Fangpeng, 2014, p. 117). The way nature takes revenge on humans are cruelly visible inside the ships. Fangpeng (2014) also expresses how the ship becomes a place of terror which is not any kind of castle but only a ship moving on the ocean water and the mariner felt the real fear of death on ship. The critic Hillard (2019) argues that the gothic refers

to the real fear in his article, "there is only one 'element' found in all Gothic texts, and 'that is fear'" (Hillard, 2019, p. 27). In "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", the ship appears with full of dead bodies. Poe's story "MS. Found in a Bottle" shows the interior of the ship as the dark terrible place with strange men like dead people or zombies. The film presents the ship as decayed, haunted prison of the deadly, ghastly ghosts of the people who already died there and about to kill other alive people.

The Fantastic and Boundary Collapse

The real truth of nature eventually reveals after closely watching and experiencing it as Ancient Mariner also acknowledges it after travelling. He witnesses everywhere only water where the real fear regarding the vastness of water begins. The poem shows how a beautiful ship turns into a *Ghost Ship* with Death and Life-in-Death after killing an innocent bird Albatross. Gothicism mixes elements like real and unreal, life and death, and nature and supernatural in water which creates a kind of reality where every rule breaks. Singh (2022) explains Mariner's good moments turns into haunted periods: "In the figure of the Mariner, haunted by memories and fears the poet gives his special symbol of remorse" (Singh, 2022, p. 16). Poe's story shows the narrator while exploring nature on ship and his mysterious journey becomes terrible because of ship destroys and keep moving towards whirlpool. At that moment, for narrator everything changes like reality into supernatural. In film, how dead passengers returning inside ship and living people stuck in there within dead souls and the reality becomes unnatural in all of them.

Maritime Gothic and the Oceanic Sublime

The ocean is a place of peace, enjoyment with the beauty of water, refreshment as well as it is terrifying and these feeling together called sublimates. In addition, humans are so small around water as it can be beautiful at the same time dangerous and cruel. Fangpeng (2019) adds that human cannot conquer nature, "but they did not realize that when humans tried to conquer nature, they also entered into an antagonistic situation against nature" (Fangpeng, 2014, p. 117). We feel tiny and powerless in front of ocean water. For instance, S.T. Coleridge explains how the Mariner stuck in the middle of the sea instead of being saved by water. According to Singh (2022) the ship makes the journey of the mariner horrible on ship. The researcher claims that ocean acts as unknown and nature's difficult challenges, "For the Mariner, who engages with the ocean as the unknown, the supernatural..." (Matek, 2023, p. 41). In story, narrator refers how ocean becomes violent and terrifying as it seems wild, dark and lonely. Humans cannot fight with water which makes humans helpless.

Eco-Gothic and Blue Humanities

The Eco-Gothic studies focus on nature, which is as powerful and frightening like water and blue humanities

studies shows water as an active force rather than passive settings. Singh (2022) explains, nature as the most powerful force which can be punishable to people and humans become vulnerable as he quotes Wordsworth and says, “The world is too much with us, late and soon,” (Singh, 2022, p. 11). Nature is as much horrific as people can lose their lives in water and nature’s punishment makes the Mariner suffer as Sultan (2016) says, “If the Rime of The Ancient Mariner is “a Green parable of man’s destruction of nature and Nature’s revenge” (Sultan, 2016, p. 151). Nature is much more than we can imagine until we explore. According to Vanlalawmpuia (2023), elements of Gothic present the context of mystery. As the Mariner breaks nature’s law, in story sea destroys everything and *Ghost Ship* film shows how extreme greed leads to destruction ultimately.

Shipwreck, Drift, Narrative

The Hydro-Gothicism creates fear of water that comes in the poem, and maritime Gothic is visible in shipwreck, drift and in lost ships on water. Shipwreck and drifting ships without direction in water is present in poem, Poe’s story and in the film. In every way the stories reveal to everyone, and the Mariner gets punishment of telling story to people always for destroying nature’s rule. Vanlalawmpuia (2023) shows picture of death and decay in his article, “Also, the element of fear is highlighted several times in the poem” (Vanlalawmpuia, 2023, p. 829). The narrator in Poe’s story also finishes writing his terrifying experiences in the form of a message before dying to make easier for everyone to read. The film also presents the hidden story of water and souls trapped inside a ship. Fangpeng (2014) mentions how nature can take revenge with humans in water and they cannot control a single thing (Fangpeng, 2014).

Scholarship on Coleridge, Poe, and Maritime

The poem presents the depth of Hydro-Gothic elements throughout the story of Mariner, Poe’s story and the film depicting the frightening nature and cruelty of water. According to Vanlalawmpuia (2023) the atmosphere of Gothic elements in poem makes it more horrible, “the strange environment of the events that took place, the presence of a picture of death and decay...” (Vanlalawmpuia, 2023, p. 830). The narrator of Poe’s story feels terrible after seeing ghosts walking in the ship. The researcher indicates that nature’s movement on sea makes people think about their last moments of life as in article unnatural situation presents the sea as evil, “The wind stops to blow but a death ship...” (Abbasi, 2014, p. 007). The film explains how an environment can be deadly inside a ship. Many scholars like Sultan, Fangpeng, Abbasi etc. focuses on Coleridge’s poem mostly but very few focuses on the Hydro-Gothicism ideas properly and none of them combine Poe’s story, the film and the poem all together which creates a gap that is not yet filled in any research.

Critical Gap and Intervention

This article will fill a gap of Hydro-Gothic ideas interpreted from the poem, the story and the film. Coleridge’s poem represents ocean as frightening force and fear of death as the Mariner witnesses 200 dead bodies together in ship, an element of the supernatural and deeply connecting Hydro-Gothicism. The short story explains that narrator who suffers in the depth of water from the wish of exploring nature closely leading him to a real terrifying truth of water, and the film presents humans’ helplessness in ships. Sultan (2016) argues about Hydro-Gothic forces, “However, nature grows wilder and more hostile against the violators with its most memorable vengeance images;...” (Sultan, 2016, p. 159). All works together makes a great combination within Gothic space which will fulfill the gap of this idea according to other scholars who focuses only one element. The idea will show three periods which continue across time and place and aim to provide a clear image and idea of Hydro-Gothicism.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Working Definition of “Hydro-Gothic”

According to Mentz (2023), Blum (2008), and Smith and Hughes (2013), this article defines Hydro-Gothic as a mode in which the sea or water produces horror through isolation, instability, and loss of human control. The term Hydro-Gothic means spiritual and horrible events through the water. In addition, we understand from the scholars that humans lose all control under the water that creates their fear of water with the existence of supernatural activities merging Gothic terror.

Ship-as-Architecture

The three works present a common feature of ships as prison, moving castles and coffins of dead people. For example, the film focuses on the abandoned ship which becomes like a prison with supernatural forces. The ship is floating alone in the middle of ocean which is dark, damaged and broken like moving castles or coffins of dead man. The dangerous situation all that happens in ship such as Mariner sees dead bodies together after doing a sin in poem.

Ocean-as-Agent

Water symbolizes the most powerful force of nature as it carries the energy for destruction and it also saves life of humans by providing water to drink or every essential work. Water is itself has different qualities as it acts like moral judge. For example, nature punishes the Mariner in ocean with Hydro-Gothic elements. Poe describes, how sea presents as cosmic destroyer in story and in film, sea becomes as a keeper of cursed history. It reveals the curse of dead souls even all people die in same way on the ship without a girl named Maureen, who come back alive. Thus, Coleridge’s poem teaches us moral lesson about killing an innocent creature can cause to destruction.

Key Hydro-Gothic Motifs

Hydro-Gothic is the horror and terrible moments that comes from water and related to supernatural things which provides the actual fear. It is like a Gothic idea where water creates dark mystery that people feel something under the water and they become helpless. The key Hydro-Gothic motifs such as stagnation, drift and repetition are common in the texts. For example, the poem mentions as Mariner suffers badly with dead sailors who was alive until Mariner gets punishment of isolation. Similarly, Poe mentions about the ship every time which becomes like a dead pool, “In the meantime every moment threatened to be our last” (para. 14). The ship stays in middle of sea while people enter and being trapped by ghosts. The repetition of storytelling to everyone makes it stay forever to us with its secret of silence that ocean creates deep psychological fear.

Method

From the research perspective, Hydro-Gothic forces are visible in all articles, so the theory analyses the Hydro-Gothic elements to create mystery and its terrified views to the readers in a simple way. This study uses close textual reading to analyze sea imagery, haunted ships, and isolation. Through close reading of the text and critical analysis of the film, the Hydro-Gothic components are interpreted. This article applies the theory of Hydro-Gothicism to examine how water produces horror through destabilization and Eco-Gothic ideas are used to explain nature as a punishing force. The scenarios of ships are little different from each other such as one ship drifting, one stays in the middle of the sea and another ship remains in the ocean with supernatural beings.

Comparative Framework

A comparative framework is a clear plan for comparing different texts using the same points or criteria. In fact, it is an analytical structure used to compare texts through shared categories such as space, fear, isolation, and the ocean as a Gothic force to identify both similarities and differences. It helps us to see what changes and what remains the same in the three works in an organized and meaningful way. The three centuries and three genres of work: the poem, the story and the film: show similar experiences of Hydro-Gothic atmosphere such as the British Romantic Period in 1798 and American Romantic Period in 1833 and in 2002 works are presenting same ideas of Gothic. The elements of Hydro-Gothic are common in them though the periods of time are dissimilar. The deep connection with water and spiritual activities like dead bodies are similar and psychological fear and maritime Gothic are also seen in them.

Text Section 1: Coleridge

The Ship as a Moral Miniature

The poem represents a ship floating around the sea like a small prison filled with sufferings instead of feelings of the beauty of the sea. The sea sometimes becomes the

most peaceful and sometimes the cruelest, for example, in Coleridge’s poem, the sea only gives pains and misery to the crew. The old sailor shares his terrible story to a wedding guest at a wedding feast in order to relieve his pain. There is no drinking water for the sailors in the sea, although salty sea-water is visible everywhere. Abbasi (2014) notes that Romantic nature often works as a moral agent, and supernatural elements included in it as it appears with water. The Hydro-Gothic agent appears through ghosts, Life-in-Death and curses that comes from the albatross killing all the evil things happen, but the Mariner cannot be saved and freed from the curse free as the sea and the ship entangle him from every aspect. The Mariner almost dies from the cruelty of nature but he cannot express his emotions, the condition that becomes his punishment.

The Albatross

The poem presents the terrible agony of the Ancient Mariner in the ship after killing an innocent albatross and every negative incident caused afterwards as penalty. The ocean shows its active forces against the Mariner to make him feel how nature can act if anything done wrong to it. For example, while the Mariner is travelling, a violent storm arises and turns the ship to the South Pole turning everything cold, evil and silent. The poet mentions, “The ice was here, the ice was there, / The ice was all around: (Coleridge, 1992/1834, lines 59-62). It means they see ice everywhere around the ship. When the mariner kills a bird without any reason, water becomes a dead pool and punishes them all.

Thirst and Stagnation

The poem shows how all the sailors are dying to drink water while water is just in front of them. But they cannot drink even a little drop. It describes the irony that same water that can save life when pure is harmful when salty. Nature does not want them to drink or even move from the ship, especially the Mariner because nature takes revenge by giving them such difficult situations. The Mariner witnesses supernatural powers, hears ghostly voices are heard, and realizes that the spirits control the ship throughout the journey. After experiencing unnatural appearances, the Mariner almost feels like dead as he loses his sense for a while, and then becomes thirsty, but the existence of spirits comes with water causing fear all over.

Spectral Navigation

The ship represents a *Ghost Ship* after hurting the Albatross with a crossbow by the Mariner as the poet says, “Why look’st thou so?”—With my cross-bow I shot the albatross” (Coleridge, 1992/1834, lines 79-82). In the beginning of the poem, the ship moves in a natural way until the Mariner commits a crime. He breaks the rule of nature by killing an innocent bird which makes water uncontrollable and act like an active force of retribution. Every negative experience they face, especially the guilt-stricken Mariner and supernatural elements like dead

bodies, ghost voices, darkness and silence in the ship stay still in the ocean till the Mariner blesses an animal. The endless ocean, fear of drowning and powerful dark sea makes the poem a Maritime Gothic and a moral lesson in it through the story of the Ancient Mariner.

Compelled Witnessing

The character, the Ancient Mariner, comes back alive after all trouble and fearful situations but gets punishment for lifetime which is storytelling to everyone. The Mariner must tell his story to people for his own relief otherwise he suffocates and cannot be at peace. Nature can punish humans in many ways also saves human lives too, according to scholar, “Any destruction on nature is doomed to get punishment” (Fangpeng, 2014, p. 119). The sea trauma never ends and makes him guilty and vulnerable towards nature. The Mariner shares his miserable story to the Wedding Guest, “O Wedding-Guest! this soul hath been... Alone on a wide wide sea?” (Coleridge, 1992/1834, lines 597-600) Even the Wedding Guest feels strange and connects fear after hearing the story.

Coleridge’s Hydro-Gothic

The poem shows how nature acts as an active powerful force to humans if one tries to break the rule of nature. Nature shows power over human actions, and the Hydro-Gothic force lies here as water punishes moral wrongdoings over nature through constant guilt: “And we did speak only to break / The silence of the sea” (Coleridge, 1992/1834, lines 109-110). The sea acts like a moral to teach about wrongdoing and justice and the Hydro-Gothic fear stays in the Mariner’s mind forever.

Text Section 2: Poe Manuscript Framing

The narrator of Poe’s story presents writing can stay forever to reach the readers to let them know about the frightening force of water. The narrator writes his story before dying and he throws the manuscript into the sea but the writing becomes his last attempt to survive as it appears as a message to the readers. The narrator is a man who loves knowledge, exploring nature and mystery but his journey becomes terrible as the ship destroys because of huge waves. The narrator starts to experience strange things and spiritual events in the ship which shifts forth to destructive. This reveals the truth of water that the powerful force of nature can destroy anything. For that reason, the narrator calls it the darkest, wildest and lonely ocean.

Storm and Drift

The story describes how a ship can be lost and floating without direction to its destruction. We see a powerful storm approaching and destroying the narrator’s ship and drifts without direction like moving castle with only spiritual events. The crew cannot control the movement of the vessel which proves the uncontrollable nature of

water. The ocean shows its extreme power by moving it to its own way which depicts the Hydro-Gothic source abandoning human control over it. The narrator describes the whirlwind as most powerful element around the ship. It shows dangerous act of nature in ocean with great control of water against human rules. The ship should be controlled by humans but in the ocean only water control it.

The Wrecked Ship

The narrator sees a huge black old ship which seems broken and lifeless. Inside the ship strange deadly souls are moving even they do not notice the narrator. It feels like a moving corpse on the sea and it carries this dark and strange secret ghost-like vessel which only exists under water. The real fear of water comes from the horrible situations the narrator faces in the story and throws the written manuscript into the sea to make it stay forever. The ship actually becomes a floating grave of coffins. The elements of Hydro-Gothic appears here because water creates eerie objects and a dreadful setting.

The Silent Crew

The narrator of Poe’s story feels the existence of spiritual activities in the strange ship. The sailors on the ship act as dead passengers and they do not notice the narrator’s presence. These silence and actions cause deep fear of water, spirits and mystery. It feels like all dead souls of sailors in the ship belong to another world which only exists within water. The narrator finds this truth from his interests by exploring nature. The ocean has power to isolate people on the ship. The silent crew that acts like ghosts eventually bring the biggest fear of supernatural elements and the sea wants to erase all mystery with the narrator. The narrator mixes Hydro-Gothic forces by representing water as a source of terror and force of isolation.

The Whirlpool

The story shows human fear and sufferings and it provides ways to survive in the world of water. The strange ship makes the beautiful journey of the narrator into tragedy after a storm destroys the ship. The whirlpool, a Hydro-Gothic force, demonstrates inevitable death, and the terror that life is temporary not permanent. The narrator sees the whirlpool and feels like everything is ultimately pulled into darkness and human identity becomes non-existent in the face of disastrous, monstrous water.

Poe’s Hydro-Gothic Model

The sea plays an important role as a Hydro-Gothic entity. It is not a moral judge instead it creates destruction for humans and also appears as mysterious and chaotic force. Poe describes, how the narrator struggles to write his story about tragic circumstances happening on the ship: “At the last moment I will enclose the MS. in a bottle and cast it within the sea.” (Poe, para 12). The narrator tries to

convey his horror story to the readers and expects some day his message will be recovered from the vast sea. Thus, the Hydro-Gothic elements of creating mystery and fear of the unknown is represented.

Text Section 3: *Ghost Ship* (2002)

The Ship as a Gothic Space

Ghost Ship (2002) appears with an abandoned ship from which the story begins as the main part of the film. The film describes the ship looks so dark, horrible, rusty and closed for years where a group of friends enters and never return except a girl. The corridors of the ship are narrow and frightening which makes the ship feel like a floating prison. Besides, the film presents strange fog, dark and stormy weather, creating a Gothic atmosphere and fear of water. People who enter the ship get entangled with supernatural powers because of its ancient curse inside. The ocean isolates this space from the world and Hydro-Gothic dismay appears through an industrial decay on water that creates fear of death and makes the abandoned ship as coffins for its crew and a Gothic space.

Opening Massacre

The sudden violence and isolation of humans all related with water and the ship. The film begins with a sudden violent massacre, a terrific moment where everyone dies except a little girl but later, she also dies through a dangerous rope, this scene can give a heart attack and it also describes how beautiful moment turn into a terror situation. After that tragedy people are divided into two parts with the dangerous rope and they die and ship becomes a *Ghost Ship*. Ghost soul takes away human's lives who enters the ship by killing them one by one. There is no help or rescue available nearby the ship and for that reason the sea surrounds the victims completely. As a result, isolation makes the violence more shocking and water creates a lawless and terrifying environment.

Greed, Salvage

The group of friends in the film or the salvage crew searches for gold in the ship and finds it right after a box with full of gold. In addition, their desire and greed for money leads them into danger and their greed for gold becomes the reason for the haunting. The ocean hides the violent past secret and curse of the ship that continues for years. The Hydro-Gothic *Ghost Ship* exposes the horror on the abandoned ship with mystery and supernatural events connected. Moreover, the sea punishes human greed, for example, people die one after another because of their attempt to snatch all the gold and leave the ship but the ship trap them with death and imprisoning their dead with souls inside it.

Isolation

The ship is moving one place to other places on the sea far away from lands or islands. In the process, it is isolated from everything without any communication facilities or escape. These situations are visible in film, where humans

are enjoying good moments in the ship until some corrupt man comes to kill everyone and the ship becomes a *Ghost Ship* forever. In addition, the ship is floating alone in the middle of the ocean. It is dark, damaged and broken and there are no living people without ghosts who died already in a tragic situation on the ship. It makes everyone feel isolated and helpless in front of water and its deep truth of supernatural power exists within humans. People who enter the ship feel the real isolation deeply as they are trapped in middle of the ocean and this isolation creates their fear of death in the sea-water.

Repetition

The tragedy that happens in the film after everyone dies, they become cursed and the ship keeps floating as invisible and sometimes becomes visible to only selected people who have greed for materialistic paraphernalia. The film describes a dead soul changing characters to kill people who enter the ship as the character says, "you collect ships, I collect souls" (*Ghost Ship*, last scene). Moreover, the haunt in the film repeats itself and keeps the secrets with it. For example, at the end of the film the way everyone dies except a girl who helplessly and hopelessly watches how the cursed, dead soul returns to take new crew in the ship for his collection of souls. New victims replace old ones and the cycle of this violence continues in the same way as a curse of water. The ocean seems to preserve the curse and time feels like trapped in the ship.

Film Techniques

The movie presents a dark, silent and horrible atmosphere with supernatural power inside the ship. In fact, the film often uses dark blue and green colors, especially at night inside the ship; for example, when the salvage crew first boards the Antonia Graza, everything looks cold and bluish. This dark blue colour makes the ship feel lifeless and haunted. The terrible sounds of stormy weather, sound of waves and the footsteps make loud echo sounds in empty halls; for example, when one of the characters walks alone the echo makes the place feel bigger and scarier in the ship. The music suddenly stops before something bad happens. When the ghost appears, everything becomes dull in order to create tensions and suspense in audience's minds. The camera slowly moves through long empty hallways and we see how the broken furniture, rusty walls, and damaged rooms makes the ship feel abandoned. All these techniques such as the light, sound, silence, dark environment and camera work together and make the ocean feel dangerous and powerful force that creates Hydro-Gothic fear.

The Film's Hydro-Gothic Space

In this film, the sea becomes a space of capitalist punishment that comes from greed and lust, and the violence brings destruction. For this reason, everyone dies one after another and one girl, Maureen, is only left alive because of an innocent dead soul of little girl

named Katie who already died but helps her. The ship becomes a floating graveyard after the curse of dead souls carrying with water. Humans are vulnerable according to the power of water and nature's supernatural elements within the ship. Even modern technology cannot defeat the curse and the vast ocean is hiding crimes, horror and suffering. Hydro-Gothicism shows water as the ground of punishment for greedy people. Ultimately, the ocean never allows people to escape from punishment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Three Models Compared

The sea acts as a moral judge to the Mariner because of his sin of killing the Albatross and it punishes him for breaking the law of nature. The Mariner realizes after getting miserable treatment from the sea but he carries the burden of storytelling to everyone for relief. Sultan (2016) also points out nature's destructive image which is taking revenge from humans and sea demonstrates powerful nature. On the contrary, in Poe's story the ocean does not judge morality but instead represents epistemological fear, horrible experiences with water. Abbasi (2014) describes nature as home to supernatural elements, "Nature as a source of inspiration, wonders and home to supernatural," (Abbasi, 2014, p. 003). The film *Ghost Ship* shows how the ocean becomes a capitalist space where the acts of greediness and desire for gold lead to repeated violence and destruction. Ultimately the reasons of fear are different like guilt, ignorance and greed but the sea and the ship with supernatural powers remains the central force in all three works.

The Ship as the Gothic Body

In three works, ship becomes more than a machine to only travel and starts to feel like a living or dying body trapped in water. The ships present deep truth carries with water such as coffins of dead bodies moving around, creating fear of water that life is too short. Ship carries dead bodies of sailors remain on deck, turning it into a floating coffin. The strange ancient ship of Poe's story looks like decaying corpse drifting to destruction to erase knowledge but ultimately truth always comes out. Scholar Uttama (2016) explains the supernatural existence, how the ship looks like a floating prison in ocean. In film, ship appears like a broken machine-body filled with ghosts, dead souls and combining corpse imagery with industrial decay. Scholar Hillard (2019) argues that nature can save humans and it can also kill humans. These examples showing how water transforms human technology into Gothic space.

Boundary collapse

The three texts show a collapse between life and death, the supernatural, order and chaos that refers to a different world, only few can see and observe it. For example, in Poe's story, the dead sailors rise again and some supernatural powers appear and vanishes, these mixes natural and spiritual worlds. Matek (2023) explains that violent image of nature can be seen after experiencing deep truth of

water and supernatural within it, "nature transforms the ocean into a Gothic space" (Matek, 2023, p. 40). The story shows narrator crosses into a strange cosmic space where logic and scientific knowledge fail. In the film, past and present mix together through flashbacks and ghostly repetition of the massacre with ghosts of dead bodies inside the ship. This boundary collapse shows that the ocean is a space where rules disappear, Hydro-Gothic fear grows and unnatural rules begins with water.

Witness Figures

The narrator of the story tries his last attempt to survive through his writings by the manuscript. Coleridge explains the sufferings of Ancient Mariner to survive alone in whole ocean and through storytelling. The poet says about Mariner, "I fear thee and thy glittering eye, / And thy skinny hand, so brown." (Coleridge, 1992/1834, lines 495-501)

Each work presents a central figure who survives horror and becomes a witness to oceanic psychological fear or trauma. The Mariner is forced to tell his story forever to feel relief from his lifetime pain, showing that sea's punishment continues after survival and on the contrary Poe's narrator writes manuscript and throws into sea. The film shows surviving character carries the memory. All these witnesses that storytelling becomes only way to stop total erasure of Hydro-Gothic forces.

Temporality

The repetition of Hydro-Gothic is clearly visible in film and horror from water is continuing with order of nature. Time and situation behave strangely in works such as by creating danger, drift, and cyclical movement. The story of the poem repeats every time because the Mariner finds a new listener to share his story and get relief to breathe again. The ship of the story drifts endlessly to whirlpool, suggesting unstoppable forward movement to death. Violence and murder repeats in cycles as greed continues from one group to another in the film. This distortion of time shows how the ocean interrupts normal historical progress in collaboration with the supernatural.

Nothing Changes

The historical shifts in fear of water, like historically, all three works move from eighteenth-century Romantic poetry to nineteenth-century Gothic fiction to twenty-first century modern horror cinema. Technology changes across three these periods, from sailing ships to modern salvage equipment and machinery. However, the main structure of fear with water remains the same because ocean always creates isolation, horror, loneliness, supernatural elements and destruction etc. that we see in these texts. Even though the cause of horror shifts from moral guilt of the ocean's punishment to epistemological confusion to capitalist greed but water remains the central Gothic force. This incessancy shows that Hydro-Gothic is not limited to one historical moment but it keeps going like natural order across literary and cinematic traditions.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the ocean as an active physical force in Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner", Poe's "MS. Found in a Bottle", and Beck's *Ghost Ship*, rather than a just background. Water forms action, exploits human behaviors, engenders horror and supernatural elements, and wields moral judgment by punishing contraventions, such as the Mariner's killing of an albatross, the ship's doomed trajectory in Poe's tale and human greed in the film. By comparing moral, epistemic, and curse motifs across historical contexts, the analysis features the Hydro-Gothic's flexibility, establishing the ocean as a central Gothic agent.

Contributions

The article enhances Gothic and Hydro-Gothic scholarship by examining the terrifying intervention of water in these works, expanding eco-Gothic and ecocritical theory to reveal its cruelty and draws to supernatural forces, ships, morality, epistemology, economics, and human destruction. It bridges Romantic literature and modern cinema, producing a historical field of Gothic studies and broadening maritime horror beyond ghosts to encompass moral lessons and punishment.

Limitations

Limited to three texts, this study excludes broader maritime Gothic examples, non-Western narratives, and detailed film theory, focusing solely on Hydro-Gothicism's thematic, textual, and structural horror elements. Future work could incorporate other literary works of and Eastern literature and culture to explore climate change and postcolonial sea narratives, or apply quantitative methods to develop Hydro-Gothicism as a strong theoretical field.

Ultimately, the ocean personifies boundless freedom yet ensnares humans in its vastness, transmuting ships into coffins that blend openness with imprisonment. Water pervades the poem, the story and the film, silently dictating fates through isolation, punishment for defying nature, and misleading terror—interpreting human power pointless against its brutal, one-sided rules.

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