THE GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN BATMAN
(ARKHAM ASYLUM VIDEO GAME)

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ABSTRACT

Gothic in literature is known as a genre stressing in a horror situation and supernatural event/creature. Gothic is not only found in literary work such as a novel, but it can also be found in modern media such as video game. Unlike novel, gothic in video game can be identified from the text as well as audio visual and it has more than one method to be analyzed. The focus of this research is identifying the existence of the gothic element in Batman: Arkham Asylum video game. The gothic element occurs in two aspects: settings and atmosphere. Employing qualitative method, the data that consist of picture or screenshot will be analyzed and explained about the gothic elements. The researcher uses theory from Robert Harris, he listed several elements of gothic in literature. The result of analysis found that element of gothic in this game, can be identified in two aspect, settings and atmosphere of the game. Setting of this game has a function to built a mystery through building and the secret in it. The characters and scene of this game also help in showing an overwrought emotion such as fear and sadness.

Keywords: *atmosphere, Batman, character, emotion, gothic, setting.*

INTRODUCTION

Gothic is a part of literature that can be found in novel, movie, and video games. Gothic is usually known as a genre of literature related to horror elements, such as a murderer, unknown creature or a ghost. According to Robert Harris (2013), there are several elements of gothic such as settings in a castle or old mansion, an atmosphere of mystery and suspense, an ancient prophecy, omens or vision, supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events, high and overwrought emotion, women in distress and metonymy of gloom and horror Thus, gothic is not only about a frightening event, architecture, or supernatural creature but an emotion such as sadness is also part of gothic.

Gothic genre occurs since the 17th century, it still exists in this modern era and can be

found in modern media such as movie or video game. Modern media often exploiting this genre, video game is one of the example.

The researcher found issues related to gothic in Batman: Arkham Asylum video game. Batman: Arkham Asylum is an action-adventure video game developed by rocksteady studios and published by Warner Bros in 2009. The story takes places around Arkham Asylum, in this story, Batman tryingto stop Joker from taking control of Arkham Asylum. In order to stop Joker, Batman should exploreThe Arkham Asylum. In the exploration, there are several gothic elements that can be seen. This game contains gothic element through settings and atmosphere.

The objective of this research is identifying the gothic element represented by the game. The data consist of a screenshot from the game. The method used in this research is a qualitative method, each data will be described and the researcher tries to identify the function.

The previous research discusses gothic entitled "Gothic Videogames, Survival Horror, and the Silent Hill Series" by Ewan Kirkland,this research focuses on identifying the relation between narrative, gameplay and aesthetic on silent hill video game with gothic. Meanwhile in this research entitled "THE GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN BATMAN: ARKHAM ASYLUM VIDEO GAME" discuss the existence of a gothic element in a non-horror genre.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The analysis of this game result in the finding of several elements of gothic, it can be identified through the aspect of setting and atmosphere of the game. The function of this aspect is importantto the game, it create the sense of gothic in this game.

Setting in Batman: Arkham Asylum

Settings in Batman: Arkham Asylum video game contains an element of gothic through its architecture and condition. Robert Harris (2013) stated element of gothic occur with actions that take place in or around an old mansion or castle, with the condition of those place is abandoned or occupied. The old mansion/castle contain secret such as hidden room, passages or ruined section and also connected to a cave. Related to this statement, similar condition can be seen in Batman: Arkham Asylum. There is plenty of secrets that can be found in Arkham Asylum.

In Batman: Arkham Asylum, The action takes places in or around Arkham Asylum. Before functioned as an institution for rehabilitation, Arkham Asylum is a big mansion belong to Mr.Amadeus Arkham. Since Mr.Amadeus Arkham pass away, Arkham asylum is

controlled by Gotham city Government as an institution for criminally insane or psychopath. The element of gothic can be seen through the setting of location. Arkham Asylum has a building with gothic architecture, it can be seen through the pointed arch of the building, and it is typical with an old church in Europe that usually use gothic architecture.

The first data showed in Figure 1. In this figure, there is several building in front of Batman.

Figure 5.architecture of Arkham Asylum

The Arkham Asylum can be seen as a huge mansion with more than one buildings. The condition of the places seems abandoned but the fact is it occupied. Arkham asylum contain secret such as hidden room, in this room, there is a mysterious blueprint, and it looks like a map of a location.

figure 6.hidden room

From figure 1 and 2, the element of gothic in Batman: Arkham Asylum can be seen

from the location of the story that takes place in an old mansion that functioned as an asylum. It contains an element of mysteries such as a hidden room with a mysterious blueprint inside. The function of the setting of this game is creating an atmosphere of mystery and suspense.

The atmosphere in Batman: Arkham Asylum

The atmosphere in Batman: Arkham Asylum video game usually occur with suspense. According to Robert Harris (2013), an element of gothic consist of atmosphere that creates a threatening feeling that comes from the unknown creature and the plot often built in mystery such as disappearance. The threatening feeling can be found in the game from several aspects such as characters and location.

The example of threatened feeling on this game can be seen in the section, it involved antagonist character called Killer Croc,he is an enemy of Batman. In order to find an antidote, Batman should go to the underground of Arkham asylum specifically to Killer croc lairs. Killer Croc real name is Waylon Jones, he has a rare geneticcondition giving him a crocodilian appearance, he also has power equal to superhuman strength. This section gives an atmosphere typical with threatened feeling especially terror, this atmosphere occurs from two aspects of this game, first is a character of killer croc and the setting location that give Killer Croc advantages. In his lairs, Killer croc can easily appear and disappear through the water. In figure 4, it can be seen that this location consist only of floating wood to step on. In a random sequence, Killer croc surprisingly appears and chasing Batman.

figure 3.threatened feeling

Figure 4 also portrayed a scene when Batman is on escape from Killer Croc, this chasing scene gives an atmosphere of suspense, once Batman caught the "game over" scene will appear. This scene of Batman chased by Killer Croc is also an example of the atmosphere of gothic that create a threatened feeling. The visual appearance of Killer Croc also help in creating an atmosphere of terror and threatening, for example, can be seen in figure 4.

figure4. visual of killer croc

The aspect of the game such as Killer Croc character has a function to create an atmosphere and also help in delivering a sentimental narration with stressing on emotion of fear.

Related to sentimental narration, Robert Harris (2013) stated that gothic element such as high and overwrought emotion can be identified through a sentimental narration that makes the character often experiences anger, sadness, shock, fear and terror. From this statement, there is sadness among others emotion, this is a contrast to other emotion. It means gothicis not only related to a horror aspect that stressing in emotion such as fear, shock, and terror. Gothic also related toan emotion consist of sadness. Sadness can be seen in one scene showing an overwrought emotion from Batman.

There is one scene in Batman: Arkham Asylum portrays a sentimental narration related to sadness. This scene occurs as a representation of Batman emotion and trauma. It

represent Batman sadness regarding his past, when he was a child, he witnesses the murders of his parents. This scene is created with an emotional narration, the music and also the scene portrayed an overwrought emotion of Batman, specific sadness. This scene can be seen in figure 5.

Figure 5.sentimental narration scene

The function of scene in this game is creating an emotion. The gothic element such as an overwrought emotion can be seen through several scene, and for example the scene in figure. It creates an overwrought emotion of sadness.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis in the previous section, there are several gothic elements in Batman: Arkham Asylum. It consists of two elements of gothic, Setting places and atmosphere. The gothic element of setting places is portrayed by secret around the Arkham Asylum, for example, a hidden room. The hidden room and property inside it have a function to create an atmosphere of mystery. The atmosphere of the game also represents an emotion, the example can be identified through characters and scene. The character such as Killer croc creates an atmosphere of terror and threatening. The emotion in gothic is not only fear, shock, or terror, but also sadness. Sadness is a part of gothic and it also represented in this game.

Although this is not a video game with the horror genre, the gothic element can be found throughout this game. It means that another researcher can implement the idea of this research, which is identifying the gothic element in non-horror literature or modern media such as video game and movie. The researcher hopes that this research help in introducing gothic and introducing that video game is also a part of literature.

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