CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

This chapter discusses about supernatural as gothic features which is focused on types of supernatural beings according to Shtulman's ideas and shows the manifestation of supernatural beings using Bal's ideas on actors which is divided into subject or object, power and receiver, and helper and opponent.

4.1. Supernatural Beings

In literature, especially in the horror novel, one of the important element is supernatural beings because the involvement of supernatural beings in the horror novel gives a horrifying nuance of terror, eerie, and darkness. Shtulman (2008) categorized supernatural beings into two kinds; fictional and religious supernatural beings. The kinds of supernatural beings that categorized as fictional beings are fairies, ghosts, vampire, and zombies. On the other side, religious beings are angels, messiahs, Satan, and God. The categorization is based on the survey of the participant's knowledge on history, literature, and scripture.

Furthermore, he explained that the distinction between fictional and religious supernatural beings are two things; first, fictional beings tend to be less believable than

religious beings. Second, fictional beings tend to be anthropomorphized in literary work (Shtulman, 2008: 4).

The supernatural beings are manifested in the novel through an events in the story. Supernatural beings is identified by their action or event that related to explanation of the human experience. In *The Preternatural* (2015), supernatural activity in several events is caused mainly by evil spirit. The house owned by the Nathans is haunted. The situation is unfortunate for the Nathan because when a family dwell in the place all they want is comfortable situation, friendly neighborhood, beautiful environments, and so on. The Nathans found that the house where they live is not like what they were expected and imagined. They struggled to avoid and expel the evil spirit which disturbed them and made them frightened. They then seek a help from paranormal research institute which then means that they were connected into other supernatural beings, God and angel. In other words, the Nathan's experience of supernatural phenomena started from receiving disturbance from evil spirit until receiving a help from God. Based on the elaboration above the existence of supernatural being in *The Preternatural* consists of God and evil spirit. Those supernatural being is elaborated as follow:

4.1.1 Evil spirit

The supernatural being in *The Preternatural* is presented when the Nathans move in to their new house in with lovely place. It describes in the novel as following quotation:

> *Augusta signed, "The hardwood floors, the tiled floors, and the backsplash in the kitchen are just stunning! And I absolutely love the front door with the horizontal frosted-glass windows framed in black. It even matches the windows on the garage door. The architect has very good taste and obviously knew what he or she was doing when designing this house." (The preternatural, 2015: 5)*

According to the quotation above, the appearance of Nathan's house is like an ordinary house and there is no something eerie or spooky. The house uses two different type of tile hard wood floors and tiled floors. The different types of floor indicates the two different styles of architecture which is one of the characteristics of postmodern architecture. But, in the Romanticism era especially in gothic style, it just have one main style and presented that characterized with the loftier towers, carved object on the walls, and height walls. In other word, if the architecture occurs in Gothic scope around Romanticism period, it will use one style. Even though Nathan's house is depicted beautifully, there are some the gothic characteristics seen in house "*The front door with the horizontal frosted-glass windows framed in black"*. In gothic scope, black is its distinctive feature, because it represents a darkness. Other features attached to it especially supernatural that represented through the supernatural beings which contained in the plot. One of the supernatural beings in their house was known and showed after Nathans dwelling in that house. The supernatural being is an evil spirit that haunted the house and disturb the Nathans.

The evil spirit in the story is presented by the occurrence of supernatural activities that occur continuously in the Nathans' new house. It is first guessed as prank which was done by one of the Nathans. One of the Nathans saw an opened jar of marshmallow lying on its side near the edge and oozed from the mouth of the jar melted and dripping onto the tiled floor. But, after they investigated, no one of the Nathans member did that and it made them realized that it was caused by evil spirit which can interact with concrete things. It makes the atmosphere becomes eerie and scary. The existence of evil spirit becomes such a terror for them. It shows in the novel based on the following quotation:

> *"Who did this?" Caden signed.*
>
> *"We're not sure," Josslyn signed, "but I think we may have an idea."*
> *"A ghost?" Trina signed. "Or maybe a poltergeist?"*
> *"A poltergeist is a noisy ghost," Caden signed, a little exasperated. (The Preternatural, 2015: 59)*

The conversation between Caden and Josslyn indicates evil spirit as the cause of unexplained phenomena happened in their house. Caden is the character that guess the one that disturb them is one kind of evil spirit called poltergeist. He can guess it as Poltergeist because the evil spirit seems to have interact with the material object and left races that can be seen by the Nathans. Poltergeist is a kind of evil spirit that has the abilities such as move things, drop item, leave a marks resembling something that

human have in common which can be either symbol, writing, or sound. The other scene clearly shows that the evil spirit that haunted them left traces.

> *Caden and Trina stared at a single footprint in a mixture of ketchup and flour. The footprint appeared inhuman—fifty percent larger than a normal human foot, both in length and width. Not only were the five toes larger than human toes, but they were more round and spaced apart by a half-inch, whereas human toes were oval in shape and set closer together*. (*The Preternatural*, 2015: 60)

The quotation above shows when Nathan's children, Caden and Trina, saw an extraordinary footprint. They believe that it was not a human footprint considering the size of it. Its size is five times larger than human's toes and it has also extraordinary shape. They assumed that it was caused by evil spirit known as poltergeist. The appearance of the traces without knowing who did is a terror for the Nathans. Besides leave traces, the supernatural being can move something. There is an event that shows the nuance of horror in the novel caused by involvement other concrete things which frightened Caden, Trina, and Maddie. It presents in the following quotation

> *Nathan closed the front door. He and Josslyn went to the back of the house. Josslyn opened the sliding glass partition and stepped out onto the back patio. "What's wrong?" she signed. "What happened?" "We saw the doors in different parts of the house slam open and bang shut repeatedly,"* (*The Preternatural*, 2015: 76)

The slam of the door without any cause makes the nuance of horror and terror especially for Nathan and Jossylin. It happens when Nathan and Jossylin visit Nathan's parents. Their child, Caden, Trina, and Maddie saw doors slam open and bang shut

repeatedly and stop five minutes before Nathan and Jossylin arrived. Whereas at that time there is not anybody else in their house. In addition of those phenomena, Caden felt whoosh of air that going through parts of house. Based on that phenomena, it reinforced the existence of evil spirit in their house as known as poltergeist and its characteristics also described in the novel on the following quotation:

> *Poltergeist is German for 'noisy ghost,' and they usually rap on walls, doors, windows, move furniture and objects around, and footsteps are heard, and maybe on occasion, they'll throw something across the room, but not always." (The Preternatural,* 2015: 59)

The explanation of poltergeist in the quotation above shows that the evil spirit is not identified as religious beings which refer distinctly in the scripture. As part of culture, the ghost is known locally to German culture and it may be not known by other culture. This is one the reasons, *The Preternatural* explained the concept of poltergeist based on German culture. The chosen ghost indicated the way for the Preternatural to cope with The Nathan's hearing impaired. According to German culture, poltergeist is a noisy ghost and disturb human by their action.

> *'Poltergeist', a German term meaning noisy ghost, is traditionally used to describe the rare but extensively documented phenomenon of anomalous disturbance arising in connection with a particular place or person. The disturbance are characterized by 'rapping' or 'knocking' noises of unknown provenance, along with the anomalous and often violent movement of furniture and other objects.(Colvin, 2016: 1)*

The characteristics of the evil spirit that can interact with concrete object made the Nathans aware of the existence of the supernatural being despite being deaf. It is because Poltergeist has an ability to interact or move concrete things. Based on that elaboration, evil spirit is a supernatural being that brings a terror and threat the Nathans. The chosen evil spirit is caused by the Nathan's impaired hearing. That is because they will not realize what happens before they see it. However, from the Poltergeist's characteristics make them realize with the odd phenomenon in their house. Therefore, they agreed that there is something wrong in their house happen and finally decide to ask a help from several person and finally they ask to paranormal institute.

After Nathans met paranormal institute, Collen as the one of paranormal member explained to them that the supernatural beings that frightened them is not only evil spirit, but they are fallen angel. It shows in the following quotation.

> Understand that they are not only evil spirits, but they are fallen angels who fell from the grace of God eons ago, long before the world was made. By nature, they are preternatural. Now the spiritual battle lines have been drawn between these demons and your family, and the battle has begun for your souls here in this house."
> (*The Preternatural,* 2015: 184)

The quotation above shows the cause of phenomena in their house. There is mentioned about fallen angel which can be identified as religious beings, and according to the quotation the essence of the existence fallen angel reveals the cause of what happened in Nathans house that represented in the story which bring the nuance of horror and terror in their house. It also supported by scripture that the fallen

angel which mentioned in the story is also refer to the scope of Christianity as the religion that related to the novel. In the scope of Christianity, the fallen angel is recognized as the sinned angel which committed to chains of gloomy darkness in human life. According to that, it indicates that fallen angel is the supernatural being that present an eerie and spooky nuances in the novel.

4.1.2 God

God is another supernatural being that exists in the novel. According to Shtulman's ideas (2008), God is categorized as religious supernatural beings. However, it is adopted in the literary works, especially to describe human's belief.

The novel presents God as part of important being that helps the Nathans. God did not appear physically in the story but it occurred in the belief of the Nathans as seen in the following quotation: *"I plead the precious Blood of Christ over me and my family and this house!" Trina signed. "In the holy name of Jesus, amen!"* (2015: 138). The quotation shows that God is the important for the Nathans. They worship Christian God, Jesus. In the novel, God refers to Christianity belief. It taught that God creates everything in this world. The Nathans believe that only God can help them to end up their fearful experienced. They believe that God promises to His followers that He will give protection to His creatures.

A brief about God above indicates that God has his own role in his existence. According to the existence of God, Shtulman (2008) gives other explanation about

God. It is about a similarities between God and Ghost. In his research, he wrote that both of them are undying and unseen. It is because God creates everything include supernatural things, as stated from Knight (1910) that "the supernatural is God the Creator, together with His immediate acts and whatever else has immediate relation with Him". It tells clearly that no one can compared with God. It showed in the novel on the following quotations:

> *William said. "Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen." "Amen," the Bryants signed.*
>
> *"God be with you," Alex said as he walked toward the front door with William by his side, "and God bless you."*
> (*The Preternatural,* 2015: 63)

The quotation above shows that in the end, only God is the main purpose in expecting a protection and no other creatures can provide the protection as strong as the protection by God. Moreover, there is nothing to do for the Nathans in the novel to expel ghost from their home except pray to God and struggling to survive from ghost terror. According to that phenomenon, the existence of God in works of fiction especially in the novel *The Preternatural* (2015) brings the religious nuance that mentioned several verses of bible and served a reminder that for every difficulties, God will always have a way to make it easily. Furthermore, God is trusted by people in

majority even in literary works although as fiction story. It emphasizes that God is religious beings, although it is found in works of fiction.

4.2. The Manifestation of Supernatural Beings

The involvement of several characters in the novel has an interrelated action. The interrelated action can be examined using Bal's class of actors. Class of actors shows an interrelation between subject and object, power and receiver, helper and opponent. According to Bal's idea, examining actors is one way to understand characters. Finally it can reveal the way in which the character is manifested in the novel. To limit the discussion, the manifestation of supernatural beings in the novel is seen from the main character. Thus, the Nathans is positioned as a subject. Others actors is seen based on the Nathan's position.

Bal (1999) stated that the relation between Subject and object are important in the story. Subject will follow an aim and trying hard to get its aim or get an object. In the story, Nathan is main character and the actors that has a goal. Thus, The Nathans can be identified as a subject. As the subject, the Nathans have aim to get a peace life. Since their life was disturbed by the existence of evil spirit in their house, they determined to get rid of it. In other word, evil spirit is the one obstacle for the Nathan to get their aim that is peace of life or the opponent of the subject. It shows in the following quotation *"Pray that God graces us with His protection," Josslyn signed. "Now that they knew there was a demonic presence in their home, it became a cause*

for strain on the family." (*The Preternatural,* 2015: 102) and the quotation becomes a main issue

According Bal (1999) object is not always a person, it can be a things, feeling, or ideas. In this novel, object is not a material object but abstract concept. To make it simple look at the sketch below to recognize the relation between subject and object:

Subject	*function*	*aim*
Nathan's Family	→ pray to the God	→ to expel the evil spirit

In the novel, Nathan's family (subject) want to expel (aim) evil spirit (opponent) from their house because the evil spirit makes them feel uncomfortable. The proses of subject to reach the aim is not simple. Bal (1999) stated that to reach a goal, subject will need function, in others word, the function means a way to reach the goal toward object. The function will affected the object whether successful or not. Because there are many obstacle that hinder them to get the object. There are an interrelation among power, helper, and opponent along with the subject effort in gaining its object.

Subject needs helper to gain its aim. The Nathans is presented to be powerless when they have to face the evil spirit (opponent). They do not have any capabilities to get rid of the spirit from their house. They can only they pray to God to ask for a help.

> *"It just saddens me so much," Trina signed. "It scares me, too. How do you fight something you can't see?" "We fight through prayer and faith. That's all we can do. As humans, we are limited to a certain extent. God imposes limitations on us for His purposes. We have limited minds, power, and abilities to do certain things (The Preternatural, 2015: 128)*

The above quotation shows Trina as one of the Nathans ask help from God. The God is positioned as the one that can help them. The novel emphasizes human as powerless being and God as the most powerful being. However, they do not get what they wish for in the first attempt. God do not present as a helper for the Nathans to get the object when they pray for help at the first place. The way Nathans struggling, they face with a lot of obstacle. They tried to pray but nothing change, and then they ask help to psychic but the condition is still same. They also get same result when pastor and their neighbor help them. Finally, the paranormal institute becomes their intermediary from God to expel that evil spirit.

According to the paranormal institute, they clarified that there is nothing to do except pray. It because they struggle with the unseen things. They need a power and God is the one who has power to get rid of the evil spirit. The Nathans receive the power from God not in a directly way, but through the medium of paranormal institute.

When Nathan's family receive a help from God as what they wish for, Nathan's family becomes receiver.

> *The Lord rebuke that wicked dream! Josslyn prayed in her mind. In the name of Jesus, I rebuke that wicked dream! I bind it and lift it up into the hand of the Lord and I lose the power of the Holy Spirit to convict the author of this sacrilegious dream of its guilt and turn its reproach upon its own head! I plead the precious blood of Jesus over me and my family and our house. In the perfect, holy name and spirit of Jesus Christ, amen! (The Preternatural, 2015: 98)*

The quotation describes that pray is the way they choose to reach their aim to make the evil spirit disappear forever from their life. It has correlated between Subject, object, and the way subject reach the aim. In reaching their goal, the Nathans helped by paranormal institute. They help Nathan's family by doing some rituals and pray in Christianity way. In this case, the paranormal institute according to Bal's ideas (1999) is called helper. It showed in the following quotation:

> *Colleen reached in her bag and withdrew a silver cross, which she handed to Josslyn. She hung onto the cross with one hand and lifted it before her. "Saint Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle!" she signed with the other hand. "Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the enemy who roams the Earth, seeking the ruin of souls!" She felt a burning sensation across her face. Three scratch marks appeared and thin trickles of blood oozed on that side of her face. Her boldness grew even more. "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan! We cast thee forth in the mighty name of Jesus!"*(*The Preternatural,* 2015: 186)

Although helper is often abstract, but in this case, paranormal institute as the concrete things can be categorized as a helper. It is because they become intermediary

to expel the evil spirits Thus, the Nathans can live without any disturbance from ghost or poltergeist.

The Helper is not only concrete thing s but also abstract one. Basically, the God is the helper that gives His power to get rid of the evil spirit. It is showed in the following quotation:

> *Josslyn stepped inside and went to him. "Oh, Nathan, it's not going to obey you. It's doing this to scare us and to get us to leave."*
> *"We can beat this thing, right?"*
> *"Yes, with God's help and with constant prayer, I believe we can."* (*The Preternatural,* 2015: 77)

The quotation above indicates that the God's help made the disturbance of the evil spirit disappear from Nathan's family. Although the paranormal institute is the one that act as a helper, they cannot help the Nathan without God's power. In other words, the helper in the novel is categorized as abstract helper and concrete helper. Both helpers are the one that support subject to reach the aim.

The novel is positioned the evil spirit not only as the one that disturb the Nathans but also as an opponent of the God. It shows in the following quotation:

> *"When you woke up with those scratches that one morning and your son's smartphone showed 666," she said to Josslyn, "that's the devil's way of mocking the Holy Trinity. You know, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The opposite is what we call the Unholy Triad—Satan, the False Prophet, and The Beast." (The Preternatural,* 2015:169*)*

The phenomenon which contained in the quotation indicates that the actions caused by evil spirit which mocking God.

According to the explanation about classes of actor by Bal (1999), the novel *The Preternatural* manifests ghost as the opponent which have a goal to make the subject fail to reach its aim. But, in the end, the evil spirit failed because God becomes the helper that gives His power to the paranormal institute. Thus, it acts as an intermediary of God will.