ABSTRACT


**CHAPTER I: ‘Introduction’** defines Gothic and traces its origin. The much influencing Gothic novels like Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* and Ann Radcliff’s *The Mysteries of Udolpho* are discussed in this chapter. The chapter then analyses American gothic and American gothic writers.

**CHAPTER II:** ‘The Female Gothic and Joyce Carol Oates’ analyses the nature of female gothic and the works of Joyce Carol Oates. The Gothic novels of the well known female gothic writers Ann Radcliff, Mary Shelley and Charlotte Bronte are discussed. The psychological disturbances of the characters of Oates are analysed and the treatment of violence by the author is studied.
CHAPTER III: ‘The Victorian Gothic: *The Mysteries of Winterthurn* and *Bellefleur*’ explains the nature of Victorian Gothic and views the urban setting in these two novels. The important Gothic features like mystery, terror, the appearance of ghosts, cemeteries, haunted houses, superstition and madness found in the novels analysed in this chapter.

CHAPTER IV: ‘The Gothic within Families: *A Bloodsmoor Romance* and *Foxfire: Confessions of a Girl Gang*’ describes the elements of family gothic and cites examples for family gothic. It analyses the complicated family situations like hatred, revenge, disappearance, kidnapping, abuse and scandal happening in the families in these two novels.

CHAPTER V: ‘The Gothic and the American Identity in *Because It Is Bitter and Because It Is My Heart* and *American Appetite*’ defines different kinds of American dream. The American concept of violence as solution for all problems is analysed in the novel, *Because It Is Bitter and Because It Is My Heart* and magnanimity as a variety of American dream is explored in *American Appetite*.

CHAPTER VI: ‘Conclusion’ highlights the importance of the thesis. It reveals how Oates is able to depict the reality of the contemporary world. It categorises the depiction of the modern predicament in each novel. It declares how efficiently and successfully Gothic genre has been used by the writer to picturize the reality of present day.