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Research Paper

Manner-of-Motion Verbs and Their Narrative Functions in Gothic Fiction: A Case Study of Poe and Jackson

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Abstract

This study adopted Talmy's (1985, 2000) typological framework of motion events to systematically analyze manner-of-motion verbs in three representative Gothic texts: Edgar Allan Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart" (1843) and "The Black Cat" (1843) and Shirley Jackson's "The Lottery" (1948). The study used both quantitative and qualitative methods, including corpus analysis, to identify key narrative functions of motion verbs (e.g., indicating physical or mental resistance, violence, and deception). It then showed how these verbs built tension, horror, and dread. Findings revealed that fundamental movement verbs dominated (45.6%), establishing an atmosphere of false normalcy, while sudden eruptions of violent motion and physical resistance created a pressure-release dynamic central to Gothic aesthetics. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrated significant stylistic divergences in the authors' employment of motion verbs, reflecting the dual nature of Gothic aesthetics: Jackson's use of ritualistic motion highlighted communal horror contrasting with Poe's focus on psychological disintegration. The paper concluded that Gothic fiction transformed mundane actions into kinetic terror, with motion verbs functioning as both narrative catalysts and psychological markers. These insights advance the understanding of how linguistic structures shape genre-specific emotional effects, offering a quantitative and narrative-functional framework for analyzing Gothic literature.

Keywords: Gothic Fiction, Manner-of-Motion Verbs, Narrative Tension.

1. Introduction

Gothic literature, with its preoccupation with psychological terror, supernatural unease, and physical violence, relies heavily on linguistic devices to construct its distinctive atmosphere (Punter, 2014; Botting, 2013). Within this tradition, motion representation plays a pivotal role in shaping narrative tension as the dynamic interplay between movement and stasis often mirrors the genre's thematic concerns with entrapment, madness, and the uncanny. Cognitive linguistics has long recognized that motion events are not merely descriptive, but are central to how narratives encode spatial and psychological experience (Slobin, 2003, 2004, 2005). In English—a satellite-framed language that privileges the elaboration of manner in motion verbs (Slobin, 2004)—Gothic writers exploit this lexical richness to choreograph dread, whether through stealthy advances ("creep"), violent outbursts ("lunge"), or destabilizing movement ("stagger"). Yet, despite extensive scholarship on motion event typology (Talmy, 1985, 2000; Slobin, 2004, 2006; Ibarretxe-Antuñano, 2006), its use in narrative style (Berman & Slobin, 1994; Strömquist & Verhoeven, 2004), its translation effects (Slobin, 2005; Cappelle, 2012; Veselova & Besedina, 2024), Gothic literary conventions (Hogle 2002; Smith, 2013; Botting, 2013; Punter, 2014) and Gothic stylistic markers (Muhammad et al., 2025; Olkhovska & Skopnenko, 2025; Antonyan, 2024), the systematic role of manner-of-motion verbs in Gothic fiction remains under-explored and none of the studies have directly analyzed how the *kinetic* dimension of language—specifically, manner-of-motion verbs—structures Gothic terror. This gap is particularly striking given the semantic capacity of these verbs to fuse physical action with psychology, directly externalizing internal states like madness or fear (e.g., *stagger* instead of *walk*). Furthermore, they enhance sensory

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immersion by triggering embodied simulation in the reader or render dread palpable. Existing research has neither classified these verbs within a typological framework nor demonstrated their narrative functions across key Gothic texts. By addressing this lacuna, our study asked how Gothic authors strategically deploy manner-of-motion verbs to construct kinetic dread.

We grounded our analysis in Talmy's (1985, 2000) motion event typology, which identified English as a satellite-framed language where manner is typically encoded in the verb root (e.g., "sneak" and "bolt"). Building on previous semantic classifications of manner verbs (Rodríguez-García, 1997; Cifuentes-Férez, 2008), we categorized Gothic motion verbs based on their narrative functions. Through quantitative and qualitative analysis of three representative Gothic short stories—Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Black Cat* (1843) and Jackson's *The Lottery* (1948), this study investigated the typology of manner-of-motion verbs in Gothic fiction. It bridged cognitive linguistics and literary studies by demonstrating how verb semantics shape immersive horror and identifying diachronic shifts in Gothic motion patterns.

2. Theoretical Background

The theoretical foundation of this research was anchored in **cognitive semantics**, a framework that examines the interplay between linguistic structure and conceptualization (Talmy, 2000; Slobin, 2006). Central to this approach is the study of **motion-event encoding**, particularly the role of **manner-of-motion verbs** in shaping narrative meaning. This section synthesizes key theories from Talmy's typology and Slobin's extensions, elucidating how lexicalization patterns influence both linguistic expression and cognitive representation in short stories.

2.1 Conceptualizing Motion Events

Motion events—fundamental to human experience—are linguistically structured around 4 core components (Talmy, 2000):

- **Figure:** moving entity (e.g., *the owl*).
- **Ground:** reference point (e.g., *the hole*).
- **Path:** trajectory (e.g., *out of*).
- **Manner:** means of motion (e.g., *flying*).

Critically, languages diverge in how they prioritize these elements. Manner-of-motion verbs exhibit systematic cross-linguistic variation, reflecting deeper typological patterns in how languages encode motion events. These patterns were primarily shaped by Talmy's (1985, 2000) binary typology of *satellite-framed* (S-) and *verb-framed* (V-) languages and later expanded by Slobin (2004, 2006) to include *equipollently-framed* languages. The typological classification determines whether manner is foregrounded in the verb root, relegated to peripheral constructions, or weighted equally with path with significant implications for narrative style:

1. Satellite-Framed Languages (S-languages; e.g., English, German, and Russian): Manner is typically encoded in the main verb (*run, crawl, sprint*), while path is expressed via satellites (e.g., particles and prefixes: *into, out, across*). S-languages employ a rich inventory of manner verbs (e.g., *dash, scramble, and flutter*), enabling dynamic, granular descriptions of motion (Slobin, 2004). Speakers of S-languages exhibit heightened attention to motion details evidenced by richer mental imagery and memory for manner (Slobin, 2006). This structure facilitates narrative style rich in kinetic detail naturally foregrounding how an action is performed.

2. Verb-Framed Languages (V-languages; e.g., Spanish, Turkish, and Japanese): Path is encoded in the verb (*enter, exit*), while manner is often omitted or expressed peripherally (e.g., gerunds: *"salió volando"* [exited flying]). In these languages, manner is frequently omitted unless pragmatically salient, leading to fewer and less diverse manner verbs (Slobin, 2004). This can result in a narrative focus on direction, with manner being an optional elaboration.

3. Equipollently-Framed Languages (e.g., Mandarin and Thai): Manner and path are expressed with equal grammatical weight, often via serial-verb constructions (Slobin, 2006) (e.g., Mandarin "飞出去" [fēi chūqù, "fly exit-go"] (Shuzhen, 2025)). This structural equilibrium affords narrative flexibility, allowing speakers to attend equally to both motion components without the lexical constraints observed in verb-framed (V-) languages.

These typological differences substantiate Slobin's (2006) thinking-for-speaking hypothesis, demonstrating how language-specific encoding patterns shape cognitive orientation: speakers of satellite-framed languages develop habitual attention to manner details through their verb-rich inventories, whereas verb-framed language users exhibit path-oriented cognition due to morphosyntactic prioritization of trajectory information. The equipollent framework thus reveals a third way of encoding motion event, challenging binary typologies while further underscoring the profound interconnection between grammatical structures, lexical resources, and perceptual biases.

2.2 Classification of Manner-of-Motion Verbs

Building upon the foundational distinctions between Path and Manner verbs, prior research further subdivided Manner verbs into two key categories: (1) Self-Contained Motion (no change of location) and (2) Translational Motion (displacement with an unspecified path). Being initially highlighted by Rodríguez-García (1997), this distinction was later expanded through quantitative analyses, such as that of Cifuentes-Férez (2008). Cifuentes-Férez (2008) significantly advanced the classification of manner-of-motion verbs by empirically validating and expanding the dichotomy between self-contained (22.83%) and translational motion (77.17%) through a corpus-based analysis of 276 English verbs, introducing 7 fine-grained categories for self-contained motion (shake/swing/vibrate, posture [with 7 subclasses: bend/twist/curve, vertical orientation (downwards/upwards), horizontal orientation, to one side,

unspecified], revolve/rotate/spin, unsteady motion, upside-down motion, bounce, and iterative motion) and 15 for translational motion (motor pattern [walk, jump, run], vehicle/instrument use, rate of motion, dance, contact with ground, furtive motion, playful motion, path shape, forced motion, obstructed motion, leisurely motion, smooth motion, motion in file, motion in sports, and noisy motion).

Our refined classification of manner-of-motion verbs (Table 1) builds upon Cifuentes-Férez's (2008) empirical taxonomy while incorporating narrative-functional dimensions that reveal how these verbs shape storytelling. We employed Cifuentes-Férez's (2008) taxonomy as a robust lexical-semantic foundation to ensure a consistent and psychologically grounded identification and initial grouping of manner verbs. This ensured analytical rigor and consistency. Second, and central to our narrative-focused inquiry, we conducted a functional analysis that examined how these semantically grouped verbs operated within the discourse. This involved categorizing them based on their narrative role—such as establishing tension, revealing character psychology, or controlling pacing—as detailed in Table 1. Thus, assignment of verbs to the narrative-functional categories in Table 1 followed this two-tiered criterion. By cross-mapping lexical semantics with their narrative roles, we developed a dual-axis framework that captured both motion typology and discourse function, thereby directly addressing how the kinetic dimension of language structured Gothic terror.

Table 1- Classification of Manner-of-Motion Verbs based on narrative functions

Narrative Function	Definition	example
1. Establishes Fundamental Movement	Basic, physical motion foundational to scene-setting and action	walk, run, jump, swim, fly, gallop, jog, lope, run, scamper, sprint, trot, bound, capriole, curvet, hop, jump, leap, skip, somersault, vault
2. Suggests Physical/Psychological Resistance	Motion showing effort, resistance, or struggle (physical or mental)	trudge, haul, drag, clamber, slog, scramble, shove, yank, tug, crush, break, toil, pound, struggle, stamp
3. Implies Stealth or Deception	Secretive, concealed, or furtive motion, building suspense or secrecy	creep, prowl, sidle, glide, slip
4. Creates Tension or Challenge	Obstructed or hindered movement, increasing narrative tension or difficulty	stumble, trip, falter, bumble, snag, flounder, lurch, stagger, totter, reel, shamble, clamber
5. Suggests Ease or Grace	Smooth, fluid, or graceful movement, often calming or aesthetic	glide, slide, drift, sweep, float, slip, slither, skate, skim, stream
6. Establishes Relaxed Pacing	Leisurely or slow movement, communicating calmness or pleasure	stroll, amble, mosey, ramble, saunter, pad, recline, drift, loll, loiter
7. Conveys Indecision or Lack of Direction	Wandering or aimless motion, suggesting uncertainty or lack of purpose	wander, roam, saunter, traipse, meander, mosey, ramble, rove, stray, drift, loiter, prowl, lag, loll, straggle, pad, shamble
8. Indicates Conflict or Urgency	Fast, forceful, aggressive motion, heightening danger or excitement	charge, dash, lunge, stampede, hurtle, bolt, bound, dart, rush, streak, tear, surge, pound, stamp, storm, thrust, spank, break, burn, crush, spring, sprint, sweep, throng, wrench, yank, hurl
9. Suggests Instability or Impairment	Erratic, unsteady, or off-balance movement, evoking instability	stagger, totter, reel, teeter, dodder, lurch, flounder, wobble, shamble, stumble, waddle, sway
10. Controls Narrative Pacing	Modulates speed/tempo, influencing tension or relaxation	hurry, rush, dawdle, accelerate, decelerate, speed, dash, dart, zoom, whisk, hasten
11. Reveals Character Psychology	Motion reflecting a figure's emotional or mental state or attitude	swagger, traipse, prance, stagger
12. Joyful/Playful Motion	Exuberant, celebratory, or dance-like motion, signaling positive emotion	caper, cavort, frisk, frolic, gambol, romp, boogie, bop, cancan, conga, dance, foxtrot, jig, jitterbug, jive, moonwalk, polka, quickstep, rumba, samba, squaredance, tango, tapdance, twist, waltz
13. Adds Novelty/Specificity/Color	Animal-derived, instrument-related, or rare verbs for vividness or humor	bike, rollerblade, surf, toboggan, zeppelin, rocket, hover, paddle, skateboard, snowshoe, water-ski, pole, glider, tram, chopper, balloon

This framework categorized motion verbs into 12 semantically distinct classes (+ Others) that collectively captured the kinetic spectrum of Gothic narratives: *Motor Pattern* (walking/running/jumping, e.g., *jump*), *Forced Motion* (force-requiring displacement, e.g., *drag*), *Furtive Motion* (stealth-based movement, e.g., *creep*), *Obstructed Motion* (disrupted locomotion, e.g., *stumble*), *Smooth Motion* (fluid/unheard motion, e.g., *glide*), *Leisurely Motion* (relaxed movement, e.g., *hike*), *No Aim Motion* (purposeless wandering, e.g., *roam*), *Joyful Motion* (playful action, e.g., *frolic*), *Violent Motion* (forceful/aggressive movement, e.g., *charge*), *Unsteady Motion* (involuntary instability, e.g., *totter*), *Rate* (speed-denoting verbs, e.g., *dash*), and *State of Figure* (physical-condition indicators, e.g., *limp*). Crucially, the taxonomy distinguished between superficially similar categories (e.g., *Smooth* vs. *Furtive Motion*) by isolating movement quality (*soft* vs. *secretive*) and narrative function, providing a granular tool for analyzing how kinetic verbs construct Gothic atmospheres—from psychological tension (*Furtive*) to physical horror (*Violent*).

3. Motion Verbs as Atmospheric Devices in Gothic Literature

Emerging from Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), Gothic literature established itself as a distinct literary movement characterized by its preoccupation with psychological unease and supernatural terror (Punter, 2014).

Table 2 shows key features of Gothic style: its setting, theme, and narrative technique with a focus on how manner-of-motion verbs contribute to its unsettling effects (Punter, 2014; Botting, 2013; Smith, 2013; Hogle, 2002).

Table 2- Gothic Motifs and Their Kinetic Manifestations

Feature	Key Elements	Narrative Function
Atmosphere & Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decaying architecture Claustrophobic spaces Eerie weather 	Creates psychological pressure through kinetic imagery
Thematic Concerns	Madness Entrapment Moral decay	Embodies existential anxieties through constrained movement
Narrative Devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unreliable narration Sublime terror Kinetic verbs 	Distorts reader perception through motion verb selection

4. Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods framework integrating quantitative corpus analysis and qualitative discourse analysis to examine how manner-of-motion verbs constructed kinetic dread in Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Black Cat* (1843) and Jackson's *The Lottery* (1948). The methodology proceeded in 3 stages: (1) Verb identification and tagging: The first stage involved the manual identification and extraction of all manner-of-motion verbs from the primary texts. Each verb was tagged manually according to a refined semantic taxonomy (see Table 1), which built upon the foundational work of Cifuentes-Férez (2008), but was adapted to better capture narrative function in literary texts; (2) Quantitative frequency analysis: The tagged verbs were then analyzed quantitatively to determine their frequencies and distributions across the selected works; (3) Qualitative narrative analysis: Finally, a qualitative discourse analysis was performed. This involved a close reading of the extracted verbs within their narrative contexts to interpret their specific contributions to building tension. By combining these quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study explained how manner-of-motion verbs worked together structurally and psychologically to create Gothic terror.

The texts were selected for their representative status from different periods of time (pre- vs. post-1900 Gothic) and lexical richness in motion verbs, ensuring a robust analysis of the stylistic and thematic roles of kinetic dread.

Table 3- Corpus Characteristics: Textual Parameters and Gothic Sub-types

Text	Author	Year	Gothic Sub-type	Word and Sentence Count	Verb Count
<i>The Tell-Tale Heart</i>	Edgar Allan Poe	1843	Psychological/individual horror	~2000W, ~140 S	~325
<i>The Black Cat</i>		1843		~1400W, ~80S	~212
<i>The Lottery</i>	Shirley Jackson	1948	Social/folk horror	~3,400W, ~200 S	~427



5. Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of Manner-of-Motion Verbs in *The Tell-Tale Heart*

This section investigates how Edgar Allan Poe employed manner-of-motion verbs to construct psychological horror in "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat", analyzing both their quantitative distributions and qualitative narrative functions. By categorizing the story's motion verbs into semantic classes (e.g., Furtive, Violent, State of Figure), we revealed how kinetic language mirrored the narrator's escalating paranoia and performative control. The table below presents a corpus-based analysis of verb frequencies and their Gothic effects, demonstrating how Poe choreographed dread through precise verb selection—from stealthy premeditation (Furtive Motion) to climactic breakdown (Violent Motion).

Table 4- Classification of Manner-of-Motion Verbs in "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Black Cat"

Narrative Function	Verbs	Raw Count	Percentage	Key Examples from Both Texts	Gothic Effect
Fundamental Movement	e.g., walk, fly, jump, run	44	53.7%	"My soul seemed to fly from my body."	Establishes baseline reality before disruption
Violent Motion	struck, hung, threw	17	20.7%	"I struck wildly."	Conveys physical aggression and bodily harm
Physical Resistance	pushed, held	12	14.6%	"The cat rose and pushed its back against my hand."	Shows struggle and oppositional force
Stealth/Concealment	stand quietly	4	4.9%	"I tried to stand quietly ."	Builds tension through hidden actions
Conflict/Urgency	plunge	5	6.1%	"I plunged into the cellar."	Conveys sudden action and panic
Character Psychology	—	0	0.0%	—	—
Ritualistic Motion	—	0	0.0%	—	—
Total	—	82	100%	—	—

This analysis revealed how Edgar Allan Poe choreographed motion verbs to trace the narrator's psychological collapse in *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Black Cat*. Quantitative analysis showed Fundamental Movement verbs (run, fly; 53.7%) established a veneer of normalcy, while escalating Violent Motion (struck, hung; 20.7%) and Physical Resistance verbs (pushed, pulled; 14.6%) fractured this illusion, mirroring the narrator's descent into obsession. Poe's linguistic precision emerged in contrasts between Smooth Motion and sudden brutality, which would freeze action into tableaux of dread. The narrator's performative control—marked by Stealth/Concealment verbs (4.9%)—collapsed into spasmodic violence, culminating in the cat's final crying out, where motion and sound merged into embodied terror. These verb patterns functioned as a kinetic map of sanity's erosion, demonstrating how Gothic horror operated through semantic choreography: each motion verb acted as both a psychological symptom and a narrative catalyst. The study advanced a methodological framework for analyzing instability in unreliable narrators through motion semantics, revealing how unspoken tensions materialized in kinetic language.

6. Quantitative and Qualitative Analyses of Manner-of-Motion Verbs in "The Lottery"

Table 5 investigates how Shirley Jackson employed manner-of-motion verbs to construct systemic horror in *The Lottery*, revealing how ritualized movement encodes complicity and violence.

Table 5- Classification of Manner-of-Motion Verbs in "The Lottery"

Narrative Function	Verbs	Raw Count	Percentage	Key Examples from <i>The Lottery</i>	Gothic Effect
Fundamental Movement	walked gathered assembled	34	42.0%	"The people gathered ."	Establishes mundane reality before ritual violence
Violent Motion	hit, threw	3	3.7%	"A stone hit her."	Sudden brutality during the stoning climax
Physical Resistance	lifted stirred	8	9.9%	"She lifted a stone."	Restraint and communal complicity
Stealth/Concealment	snatched	10	12.3%	"She snatched a paper."	Ritual secrecy and suppressed guilt
Conflict/Urgency	ran, hurried	4	4.9%	"Bobby ran ."; "They hurried to finish."	Panic and inevitability of violence
Ritualistic Motion	drew, folded, raised	16	19.8%	"Men drew slips."; "He nodded solemnly."	Dehumanizing tradition and mechanized cruelty
Character Psychology	craned, ducked	6	7.4%	"She craned her neck."; "He ducked his head."	Fear, obedience, or defiance
Instability/Impairment	—	0	0%	(Absent—villagers move with rigid purpose.)	—
Total	—	81	100%	—	—

Shirley Jackson’s *The Lottery* deployed a strategic hierarchy of motion verbs to unmask its Gothic horror, with **Ritualistic Motion** (19.8%) and **Physical Resistance** (9.9%) forming the narrative’s oppressive backbone. The villagers’ mechanized actions—*drew* (6), *folded* (2), and *nodded* (3)—codified the lottery’s dehumanizing tradition, while their repetitive precision lulling readers into complacency before the climax. These verbs clashed violently with the sparse but pivotal **Violent Motion** (*hit*, *threw*, *forced*; 3.7%), which erupted in the stoning’s brutal economy: a single verb (*hit*) carried the weight of communal murder.

The facade of normalcy cracked under the **Fundamental Movement** (*gathered*, *stood*, *came*; 42.0%), the mundane frequencies of which initially masked horror. Jackson weaponized banality—children *ran* to collect stones and men *stood* passively—to underscore how atrocity thrived in routine. **Stealth/Concealment** (*snatched*, *put away*; 12.3%) deepened this tension, with furtive gestures (Tessie *snatched* her slip) betraying the villagers’ unspoken dread.



Even **Character Psychology** verbs (*craned, ducked, blinked*; 7.4%) became micro-aggressions, their physical hesitations (*blinked nervously*) exposing fear beneath performative compliance.

Crucially, the absence of **Instability/Impairment** verbs (0%) was telling: no one *stumbles* or *wavers*. Motion was rigidly controlled, mirroring the ritual's unyielding authority. Only **Conflict/Urgency** (*ran, hurried*; 4.9%) fractured this order—Mrs. Hutchinson's *hurried* arrival was a fleeting rupture before the system reasserted itself.

Jackson's Gothic genius lay in this verb calculus: **The most frequent motions are the least violent, yet the most complicit**. Ritualistic and Fundamental verbs (58.1% combined) scaffolded the horror, their neutrality making the final *hit* not a deviation, but an inevitability. The taxonomy revealed a world where movement was both weapon and wound—every *gathered* stone, every *held* slip, a silent accomplice to violence.

7. Motion Verbs as Narrative Devices in Gothic stories

This section examines how semantic categories of manner-of-motion verbs operate as deliberate stylistic devices in Gothic fiction, shaping psychological tension and atmospheric horror across three seminal works: *The Tell-Tale Heart*, *The Black Cat*, and *The Lottery*. By quantifying verb frequencies and analyzing their narrative functions, we revealed how Poe and Jackson weaponized motion semantics to construct distinct yet complementary forms of terror—one psychological, the other societal. The table below aggregates the total occurrences of each verb category, providing empirical grounding for our analysis of their Gothic effects.

Table 6- Combined Data from "*The Tell-Tale Heart*", "*The Black Cat*", and "*The Lottery*"

Narrative Function	Total Verbs (Combined)	Raw Count	Percentage	Key Gothic Examples	Collective Gothic Effect
Fundamental Movement	<i>walked, came, gathered, stood, followed</i>	78	47.9%	"I stood quietly."; "The people gathered."	Establishes deceptive normalcy; makes violent ruptures more jarring through contrast. The high frequency (45.6%) underscores horror's roots in the mundane.
Violent Motion	<i>struck, hit, threw, cut, hung, forced</i>	20	12.3%	"I cut out its eye."; "A stone hit her."	Sudden, explosive actions that punctuate narratives. Though proportionally low (12.9%), these verbs carry disproportionate weight as climax triggers.
Physical Resistance	<i>held, lifted, stirred, pushed, pulled, tied</i>	20	12.3%	"I tied a rope."; "She lifted a stone."	Embodies struggle—both against others and internal coercion. Restraint verbs (<i>held</i>) dominate, reflecting Gothic themes of entrapment.
Ritualistic Motion	<i>drew, folded, raised, nodded</i>	16	9.8%	"Men drew slips."; "He nodded solemnly."	(Unique to " <i>The Lottery</i> ") Mechanized repetition dehumanizes characters, making violence systemic rather than impulsive.
Stealth/Concealment	<i>snatched, slid, put away, slowly opened</i>	14	8.6%	"I slowly opened the door."; "She snatched a paper."	Builds paranoia. Verbs of hiding (<i>put away</i>) often precede violence, while sneaking (<i>crept</i>) signals predatory behavior.
Conflict/Urgency	<i>rushed, hurried</i>	9	5.5%	"I rushed into the	Accelerates pacing toward climax. Poe's

Narrative Function	Total Verbs (Combined)	Raw Count	Percentage	Key Gothic Examples	Collective Gothic Effect
				room."; "They hurried to finish."	protagonists <i>rush</i> in panic; Jackson's villagers <i>hurry</i> with grim efficiency.
Character Psychology	<i>ducked, grinned, blinked</i>	6	3.7%	"He ducked his head."; "I grinned at the corpse."	Physical tics externalize psychological states—forced smiles and nervous gestures reveal repressed terror.
Total	—	163	100%	—	—

The analysis of manner-of-motion verbs in Shirley Jackson's *The Lottery* and Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Black Cat* revealed a systematic linguistic architecture underlying Gothic horror. While English typically encodes manner of motion directly in the main verb (e.g., run and plunge), Gothic fiction sometimes strategically expresses manner peripherally as in "I walked unsteadily toward the cellar or I stood quietly". Fundamental **Movement** verbs (*walked, stood, gathered*) dominated the corpus (47.9%), establishing a facade of normalcy that rendered subsequent violence more jarring through stark contrast. Their high frequency underscored the genre's reliance on mundane actions as a backdrop for horror, making the eruption of brutality psychologically disruptive.

Violent Motion (*struck, hit, threw*) and **Physical Resistance** (*held, tied, lifted*) collectively accounted for 24.6% of verb instances, forming a thermodynamic narrative structure, in which constrained agency (resistance) preceded explosive violence. This pattern reflects the core tension of Gothic literature between oppression and eruption, where accumulated force—whether psychological or physical—demands catastrophic release. Notably, *The Lottery* subverted traditional Gothic ratios by emphasizing **Ritualistic Motion** (*drew, nodded, folded*; 9.8%), which replaced impulsive violence with systemic, mechanized horror. The dehumanizing repetition of these verbs underscored how institutionalized rituals normalized atrocity, distinguishing Jackson's sociological horror from Poe's psychological disintegration.

Secondary categories modulated atmosphere and psychological depth. **Stealth/Concealment** (*snatched*; 8.6%) and **Character Psychology** verbs (*ducked, grinned*; 3.7%) externalized repressed dread, with concealment signaling predatory behavior and physical tics betraying inner terror. The near-equal frequencies of these categories highlighted the genre's dual focus on hidden threats and their psychic toll. Meanwhile, **Conflict/Urgency** verbs (*rushed, hurried*; 5.5%) served as temporal accelerants, their sparse but strategic placement heightening climaxes.

Collectively, these findings demonstrated that Gothic horror operated through choreography of motion verbs, where frequency and distribution encoded narrative tension. Fundamental movement dominated, violence punctured, and ritual or resistance mediated between them. The data suggested that the genre's power lay not in supernatural elements, but in the deliberate subversion of ordinary motion—where every step, grasp, or nod became freighted with menace. This linguistic patterning offers a new lens for analyzing mechanics of horror, revealing how verb choice constructs dread on both structural and psychological levels.

8. Conclusion

This study revealed how Gothic horror strategically employs motion verbs to construct tension. An analysis of Jackson's *The Lottery* and Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* and *The Black Cat* showed that **Fundamental Movement verbs** (47.9%) established mundane normality, making eruptions of violence more jarring. **Violent Motion** and **Physical Resistance** (24.6% combined) created a pressure-release dynamic, where restraint preceded explosive brutality. Jackson's use of **Ritualistic Motion** (9.8%) shifted horror from Poe's psychological impulsivity to systemic, institutionalized terror. Meanwhile, **Stealth/Concealment** (8.8%) and **Character Psychology verbs** (3.7%) externalized hidden dread, while **Conflict/Urgency verbs** (5.5%) accelerated narrative climaxes. Crucially, the systematic nature of these patterns—where specific verb categories correspond directly to narrative functions of establishing, sustaining, and resolving tension—indicated that motion verbs do more than merely describe action. Instead, they function as a primary semantic system, through which Gothic terror is structurally encoded. The findings revealed that Gothic horror derives its power not from supernatural elements, but from the deliberate subversion of ordinary motion into menace, with verb distribution encoding narrative tension structurally and psychologically. Future research should explore how verb hierarchies vary across Gothic subgenres and contemporary texts, particularly in

distinguishing collective versus individual horror narratives. The research advances literary-linguistic methodology by demonstrating how quantitative verb analysis can uncover deeper narrative mechanics in Gothic fiction.

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