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Compare how authors use the supernatural to present ideas in their novels. 'The supernatural' could be defined as the manifestations or events considered to be beyond scientific understanding or origin, such as ghosts. Thus it is no surprise writers such as Wilde and Waters heavily integrated aspects of the supernatural to shape such gothic and frightening descriptions within their novels: simultaneously exciting and interesting the reader – making them curious to know what happens next. Many critics believe that within both novels, this theme is used to do such that – create a sense of tension and suspense (significant as the reader wants to read on).

Wilde and Waters convey the threat of malign forces in different ways. The picture of Dorian Gray seemed more focussed upon the gothic element of the supernatural theme – hinting at other interpretations such as the haunting of others shown by Henry's influence on Dorian and the way the portrait haunts Dorian's moral sense of what's right and wrong. Whilst Water's novel seems more focussed upon the " typical" ghost element of a supernatural theme, and the horror and destruction that is caused. This may be because of the time in which each book was written, because the picture of Dorian Gray was published in the late 19th century, around, 250 years before the little stranger was published in the early 21st century. As a result, influences of the authors would've been completely varied, meaning such supernatural stories (often originating from folk law) would be significantly different. Whilst Wilde introduces the haunting of Dorian with relative immediacy through the portrait's creation and introduction to Lord Henry's influence in the opening chapters, Waters chooses to extend the gradual and uncertain period of hauntings over a larger section of the novel, creating a

build-up of suspense for the reader. This structural decision enables the presentation of the haunted characters, such as Roderick and Mrs Ayres to be treated with more suspicion, creating tension through the decline of Hundreds Hall which undergoes a 'slight but definite shift,' vividly intensifying its process of decay as the novel progresses, coinciding with the increasing tension and fear. This physical decay of the house can be seen from the opening of the novel, which uses retrospective narration to recall that 'the Ayres still had most of their money then, were still big people in the district.' This suggestion of deteriorating social stance as well as the physical decay of Hundreds Hall is exacerbated gradually throughout the novel by the increasingly damaging effects of 'The Little Stranger,' which coincides with the financial collapse of the Ayres family to leave the whole family in desperation.

Similarly, the deliberate use of darkness helps explore the theme of the supernatural throughout both novels. In both novels we see similar structure of chapters showing a supernatural journey, followed by a frightening event. In the little stranger, Mrs Ayres is exploring the abandoned floor of the house which the servants previously lived on. The reader is informed that the corridor has 'noticeably lower ceilings' which not only create a claustrophobic dark setting, but also would compliment the 'milky light' which 'lit up the stairwell with a chill' meaning the corridor was 'gloomier than ever'. The use of the superlative 'gloomier' only emphasises the depressing and frightening setting created by the darkness, along with the 'milky' white light - creating an almost artificial and unnatural connotations for the reader. Similarly, in the picture of Dorian Gray, we see dorian leaving

his luxurious estate in London to head to an opium den. The English opium narratives construct a London landscape that restricts choice once the journey has begun.

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In the little stranger, once Mrs Ayres finally reaches the room on the abandoned floor we see another supernatural encounter. Waters' sibilance in describing 'the swift, soft pattering of footsteps,' and the 'faint, moist susurrations,' that juxtapose the guttural sounds of 'the cry of a hungry baby.' This eerie yet forceful presence adheres to the typical conventions of the genre, with a supernatural spirit inspiring terror by its unnatural actions and malevolent motivations. This is similar to Wilde's use of nature paired with the supernatural when Dorian is leaving for the opium den. On his way, Wilde

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deliberately uses the supernatural theme to make the animals seem almost against him going - as if they were possessed.

In the 19th century it was believed animals could detect things humans couldn't, like sense an earthquake. Perhaps Wilde is playing on this opinion to make it seem as if the animals can sense an idea of danger from dorian's actions. As dorian travels, we hear that ' far away in the darkness, some wondering seagull screamed'. Again the reference to darkness exacerbates the links to blackness with evil. One similarity we see in both novels, is the sense of mystery created during the first shown presence of the supernatural theme