

Research Article

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Parabatai Bond's Attachment Styles In Cassandra Clare's *Lady Midnight*

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Abstract

Lady Midnight is an urban fantasy novel which centralizes around the special bond of the main characters, Emma Carstairs and Julian Blackthorn called parabatai. Parabatai designates a distinctive type of characterization, and the type ignites the writer's interest to study further. This study intends to describe the characteristics of urban fantasy and attachment styles of the parabatai bond present in the novel. This study would be carried out as a library study. The analysis would come in two parts: the characteristics of urban fantasy and the attachment styles between Emma Carstairs and Julian Blackthorn. This study would be beneficial for those who wish to understand more about urban fantasy and attachment styles in a novel. As one of the most well-known works of Cassandra Clare, this novel discloses a broad description of urban fantasy and attachment styles.

Keywords: urban fantasy; attachment styles; parabatai; shadowhunter; community law.

1. Introduction

Urban fantasy novels typically set in the present modern day and its presence of fantasy is hidden away from the mainstream society, or often referred to as the "unseen", as it was right in front of the whole population's eyes but they have no idea it exists [1, p. 463-464]. One of the famous novels of the past decade that could fall into the genre of urban fantasy is a novel called Lady Midnight, written by Cassandra Clare, a charming story which revolves around the life of a demon hunter, or in this case, referred to as the Shadowhunter. The novel itself is part of the The Dark Artifices series, which consists of three novels: Lady Midnight, Lord of Shadows, and Queen of Air and Darkness. However, this study will focus on the first installment of the series, Lady Midnight.

One of the prestigious cultures in Shadowhunter world is the parabatai, a bond between two Shadowhunters that would require them the willingness to lay off their life

for each other in battle. This parabatai bond is a form of attachment, since the bond itself is unbreakable until the death of one of them, with only a few exceptions. The attachment that was formed between the two main characters, Emma and Julian is also affected by what they had experienced as a child. Their relationship with their parents would be the main effect on how their attachment in adulthood becomes. Attachment is one of the most important aspects of someone's life, an attachment that people formed when they are in their early years will determine how they would form another one when they entered adulthood. Everyone has a different story in their upbringing and understanding the main concept of how a certain case would provide a certain attachment style would help one understand better about how one tends to form a bond with others. It would also help one to understand the characteristics of each style.

This paper strives to give an understanding of how attachments are portrayed in fiction since fictional portrayals of attachment are important, especially in young-adult novels, where the readers are mostly in their early adulthood as well. By looking at these portrayals, it would help the readers to understand the character as well as themselves, as they might see some resemblance of their own characteristics.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Urban Fantasy

Often referred to as its sub-genre is the term urban fantasy, urban fantasy focuses more on the combination of the aspects of fantasy such as magic, myth and folklore into the ordinary of everyday life. Urban fantasy novels typically set in the present modern day and its presence of fantasy is hidden away from the mainstream society, or often referred to as the "unseen", as it was right in front of the whole population's eyes but they have no idea it exists [1, p.463- 465]. According to Stefan Ekman in the *Urban Fantasy: A Literature of the Unseen in The Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, Volume 27, Ekman determine a few accounts that can be categorized into these four major threads, which are as follows.

2.1.1 Settings and Worlds

2.1.1.1 Setting of time

Setting is the set in the modern primary world, for example, in the 20th or 21st century [1, p.463].

2.1.1.2 Setting of place

An urban fantasy could be set in both primary and secondary worlds; the setting also does not necessarily need to be a metropolitan city [1, p.457-458].

2.1.1.3 Setting of social environment

The social environment setting is usually where there is a whole hidden world that exists in the real world or in this case, referred to as the unseen. It also brings the supernatural aspects of creatures, such as werewolves, vampires, faeries or warlocks [1, p.463-466].

2.1.2 Distinctive characters

The first distinction is that urban fantasy characters often come from a variety of humans and parahuman. Female protagonists, who radiance confidence and boldness and possess the ability to use weapons are often the center of the story. The second is that the main character is often an investigator, detective or monster hunter; in other words, they are the supernatural world problem solver. The third is that parahuman and non-human characters are present in the story, some of the common parahuman or non-human characters are werewolves, vampires and faeries [1, p.459-460].

2.1.3 Fantastic elements

Whether urban fantasy set in the primary world or the alternative one, the supernatural aspect is always around. The supernatural world could coexist with the real world or in an alternative one, the supernatural could become commonplace. The protagonist is usually the one who tries to maintain the balance between the real world and the supernatural. They often face threats from the supernatural creatures, but they are also able to form an alliance with these creatures [1, p.462-463].

2.1.4 Literature of the unseen

The unseen is a concept developed by Ekman according to the most prominent accounts in the urban fantasy. The unseen covers the juxtaposition or things placed together with contrasting effect, in this case, it covers the way the supernatural or fantastic world coexist with the modernity or urbanity of the primary world, or the urban and modern aspects are emphasized on the setting of the secondary world [1, p.463].

2.2 Attachment

According to the Handbook of Attachment, attachment theory as described by John Bowlby, as the pioneer of the study, was initially a study on children's relationship to their mothers or caregivers [2, p.3]. Ainsworth finds three types of attachment observed from the 'Strange Situation' participants: the secure attachment, the anxious-avoidant, and the anxious-ambivalent. Though later, researchers added the fourth type of attachment styles, the disorganized attachment [2, p.120].

2.2.1 Attachment styles in childhood

2.2.1.1 Secure attachment

Children who are securely attached to their attachment figures will show confidence in the relationship, although a separation would still cause distress to the children but once their attachment figures return, they would greet them in a positive way. The attachment figures of this type are usually responsive, emotionally available and loving. Children who have a secure attachment developed a good start in later life because their attachment allows them to have the confidence to explore their environment and to be more open to learning [3, p.12].

2.2.1.2 Insecure-avoidant attachment

Insecure-avoidant children often appear to be unbothered whether their attachment figures are with them or when they disappear. They show very little attachment behavior and act as if it was not important to have an attachment. However, it is actually the children's defence mechanism to cope up with the feeling of being rejected by their attachment figures [4, p.427], and it is not equal to non-attachment. The attachment figures of this type are often seen to be angry and intolerant towards the children. The children of this type tend to not be upset at things that usually distress other types because they have learned to expect rejection. Insecure-avoidant children tend to focus their attention on the outside world by relying on themselves [3, p.13-14].

2.2.1.3 Insecure-Ambivalent Attachment:

Children who are insecure-ambivalent get very upset upon being separated from their attachment figures. Even when they are reunited, it is often not enough to calm the children. They tend to want close contact with their attachment figures and would also get upset when the attachment figures are being insensitive or not understanding enough [4, p.16- 18). These children seek a strong attachment bond but have no confidence in it and in later years, they tend to have disturbances in their autonomous capacity because they are uncertain about their attachment figures' response [5, p.15-16].

2.2.1.4 Insecure-Disorganized

Mary Main and her colleagues identify the insecure-disorganized type. Children that are insecure-organized usually have an issue with parental behavior that frightens them [6, p.180]. This caused the children to have a disorganized pattern of attachment. For example, when separated from their attachment figures and then reunited, these children sometimes approach them but later seem to ignore or push away their attachment figures. This usually happens because of unresolved childhood trauma that led the children to lack the ability to trust. Children within this type are usually conflict-avoidant because of their fear and uncertainty of their attachment figures' response [7, p.226].

2.2.2 Attachment styles in adulthood

2.2.2.1 Secure attachment

Their memories of their primary caregiver or in this case, typically parents, they are warm and affectionate. In relation to their beliefs, attitudes and expectations, they have high self-worth and self-efficacy and only a few self-doubts. They generally think that others are well-intentioned, good-hearted, trustworthy, dependable and altruistic. They are also interpersonally oriented, which makes them generally liked by others. For goals and needs, they desire intimate relationships and interdependence while also seeking a balance of closeness and autonomy with mutual care and support. For plans and strategies, they acknowledge distress that is happening in their lives and constructively modify its negativity. They also invest in relationship development and maintenance [8, p.62-66].

2.2.2.2 Dismissing-avoidant attachment

Dismissing-avoidants refers to adults who maintain their sense of self-worth by emphasizing achievement and self-reliance at the expense of intimacy. This dismissing-avoidant style is drawn from both secure and avoidant groups [9, p.234].

2.2.2.3 Fearful-avoidant attachment

Fearful-avoidant refers to adults who avoid any close involvement that may result in loss and rejection. However, they desire intimacy. This style typically has social insecurities and lack of assertiveness [9, p.234].

2.2.2.4 Anxious-ambivalent attachment

Their fathers are typically unfair in their memories. In beliefs, attitudes and expectations, they appear to have difficulties in understanding the complexity of others, relational ambivalence, have little control over their lives and have unrealistic expectations for their partners and relationship because they are typically desperate for love and support. For goals and needs, they desire extreme intimacy and validation from their partners, they seek lower levels of autonomy and fear of being rejected or abandoned by their partners. For plan and strategies, they are prone to distress and anger, they can be demanding to satisfy their own emotional needs [8, p.62-66].

3. Research Method

In this study, the writer uses library research methods to collect data related to this study. George describes library research as, “an investigation involving accepted facts, unknowns, speculation, local procedures rigorously applied, verification, repetition, and ultimately an interpretation of findings that extends understanding,” [10, p.22-23]. Library research itself is a process from determining a topic, articulating research questions,

looking for various approaches and sources to either support or oppose one's research and to determine one's own crafted insight about the topic [10, p.65]. By using the resources, the writer uses the process of content analysis, "researchers systematically work through each transcript assigning codes, which may be numbers or words, to specific characteristics within the text" [11, p.118].

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Urban Fantasy

4.1.1 Settings and Worlds

4.1.1.1 Setting of time

Lady Midnight is set in the year 2012, there are also a few flashbacks to the year 2005, but most of the storylines are set in 2012. At the beginning of the story, Emma mentions that, "He always wanted to play video games ... I hate video games" [12, p.17]. It proves that the novel is indeed set in modern times since the invention of video games are popular in the 20th century.

4.1.1.2 Setting of place

To be categorized as urban fantasy, the novel could be set in both real and imagined worlds. In this case, the novel is set in Los Angeles, California, precisely around Santa Monica, "Emma looked out into the Los Angeles night, at the brilliant explosion of electricity that was the skyline" [12, p.20].

4.1.1.3 Setting of social environment

The social and historical conditions in the novel are not particularly safe, there is a dispute between Shadowhunters and faeries regarding the Cold Peace, a law set by Shadowhunter to limit the faeries because of their previous involvement in the Dark War, a war that turns Shadowhunters against each other, "The Cold Peace was Shadowhunter Law ... They called it a Law, at least. What it really was, was a punishment" [12, p.9].

4.1.2 Distinctive characters

The presence of Emma Carstairs along with Julian Blackthorn emphasizes the novel to be an urban fantasy one: first, they are Shadowhunters, a hybrid between human and angel. Emma Carstairs, as the main protagonist, radiates a female character who is bold, independent and skilled with weapons. Second, they are in charge of keeping the world safe, which requires them to conduct an investigation when something suspicious happened. Third, other than Shadowhunters, faeries, warlocks, werewolves and vampires

also appear in the story, though it is faeries and warlocks that will leave a significant impact in the story.

4.1.3 Fantastic elements

The fantastic features can shortly be described in two features: one, the appearance of supernatural creatures such as faeries, warlocks, werewolves and vampires. Two, the protagonist is supposed to be the one who maintains the balance between their kind and others.

4.1.4 Literature of the unseen

The Shadow world is completely hidden from the society of people in general. In the novel, the world is hidden by using glamour, “Glamour was illusion magic, commonly used by downworlders and Shadowhunters as well to hide themselves” [12, p.24], and it is forbidden for anyone who lives in the shadow world to reveal their identity, “Tell a mundane about the Shadow World and be disciplined, even exiled” [12, p.243].

4.2 Attachment

4.2.1 Attachment styles in childhood

Emma grows up as a brave and playful kid because she has a good support system. Her parents love her and encourage her to explore new things, that is why she is not afraid to make mistakes, engage in mischief and train as best as she could. Having a healthy relationship with her parents and growing up as someone who is not afraid of the uncertainties, Emma’s childhood attachment style is considered as a secure attachment type. This allows her to have the freedom to learn and discover new things on her own. Looking at the description of Julian’s behaviour when he is with Emma, both of them are brave and not afraid to explore new things. Just like Emma, he knows that if something goes wrong, his parents would have his back. These traits appear in a secure attachment type. In the writer’s interpretations, both Julian and Emma are compatible with each other because they have similar family backgrounds that allow them to grow as securely attached kids.

4.2.2 Attachment styles in adulthood

Seventeen years old Emma’s purpose in life is to avenge her parents’ death to whoever is responsible. Her close relationship with Julian makes him pretty much the only thing that she feels like she has left. Meanwhile, Julian also deals with the same problem of losing parental figures, though in his case, it is his father since his mother has already passed away earlier. Julian has to kill his own father during the Dark War, and it leaves him with a deep feeling of guilt, “When Julian Blackthorn was twelve year old, he killed

his own father ... More like a monster wearing his father's face ... It didn't matter. Julian saw Andrew Blackthorn's face, and his own hand holding the blade and the blade going into his father" [12, p.110].

The trauma which both Emma and Julian experience during their early teenage years affect how they see attachment towards each other. This becomes the reason why adult attachment styles are generally based on their childhood attachment styles, but a major event in life could actually change it. After losing their parents, both Emma and Julian have to change their priority and people whom they want to associate within their life. It is why they have different attachment styles from their childhood days. That is to say, the attachment styles shift from secure attachment style in childhood to fearful-avoidant attachment style in adulthood.

5. Conclusion

Lady Midnight could be one of the best existing novels, which perfectly describes the characteristics of urban fantasy. From its modern setting, the dual world of the real world and the shadow world, a half-human and half-angel characters who act like detectives, a strong female protagonist, fantastical creatures and the implementation of the unseen, where two worlds coexist with each other but are ignored by the general population. *Lady Midnight* also portrays the attachment styles which are present in the *parabatai* pair, Emma and Julian. The novel presents how the *parabatai*'s attachment styles change over time because of unfortunate events. It shows that the pair, Emma and Julian, are attracted to each other because they have similar attachment styles during their childhood days, which is the secure attachment style. During their adulthood, both of their attachment styles change due to some circumstances, but they still possess similar traits of being a fearful-avoidant attachment style. This study shows how these attachment styles are present in fictional characters.

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