

## The Integration of the Gothic Elements in the Main Stream into Victorian Fiction

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### ABSTRACT

In this paper, the researcher intends to discuss the integration of the gothic elements in the mainstream into Victorian fiction with reference to “The Castle of Ortanto”. The researcher starts with a brief introduction about the notion of Gothicism, then poses the hypotheses of the topic which are Victorian fiction is highly influenced with the Gothic trend where the elements of the Gothic literature became the core of Victorian fiction. Besides, the novel of “The Castle of Otranto” written by Horace Walpole is vivid with elements of gothic literature thus marking it as a Gothic fiction itself. In order to prove these hypotheses, the researcher poses some questions for instance; what are the gothic elements? How are the Gothic elements integrated into the Victorian Fiction? How can “The Castle of Otranto” be seen as a gothic work? Then, the researcher relies thoroughly on literary approaches of analyses to conduct this study by bringing gothic elements and Victorian fiction under the spotlight as a method to investigate this topic. Finally, the researcher reaches the findings most importantly are; The movement of gothic literature appeared towards the end of the Victorian era at the end of the eighteenth century and hence after interwoven with Victorian fiction, the researcher recommended that other researchers relevant to this field will dig deep in Horace writing and search for the main ideas about Horace evil writing Inver moment his influence with Gothic traditions.

**Keywords:** Victorian Fiction - Gothic Elements, The Castle of Otranto

### المستخلص

تناقش هذه الورقة موضوع اندماج عناصر الادب القوطي بصورة سائدة في الادب القصصي الفيكنتوري بالرجوع إلى رواية قلعة اوترانتو للكاتب هوراس والبول. يبدأ الباحث بعرض مقدمة موجزة عن حركة الأدب القوطي ومن ثم يعرض الفرضيات ومن اهمها ان الأدب القصصي الفيكنتوري قد تأثر وبصورة كبيرة بالحركة القوطية حيث اصبحت عناصره من صميم خصائص الادب الفيكنتوري, إلى جانب ان رواية قلعة اوترانتو تعتبر عمل ادبي قوطي لاحتوائها الثر على عناصر وسمات هذه الحركة ولكي ما يثبت الباحث هذه الفرضيات طرح اسئلة مهمة تتمثل في: ماهي عناصر الادب القوطي؟ كيف تداخلت مع الادب الفيكنتوري؟ ومن أي منظور تعتبر رواية قلعة اوترانتو عملا قوطيا أدبيا؟. اعتمد الباحث في هذه الدراسة على مذاهب التحليل الاستنتاجي التي تتسق والموضوع ومن ثم توصل لبعض النتائج اهمها: ظهرت حركة الأدب القوطي أواخر العهد الفيكنتوري وفي بداية القرن الثامن عشر حيث تداخلت مع الأدب الفيكنتوري القصصي، يوصي الباحث الباحثون الآخرون في هذا المجال بالبحث العمل في هذا المجال ومدى تأثر هوراس بالتقاليد القوطية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأدب القوطي - الأدب القصصي الفيكنتوري - قلعة اوترانتو

### INTRODUCTION:

Gothic is a word that can be looked at from three different angles. It refers to a

certain types of buildings that in shape they look like cathedrals with high ceilings, gothic also

refers to a certain type of writing and finally Gothic also refers to a certain type of literature with unique characteristics. Some of the characteristics of stories of gothic style are; set normally in castles, churches and cathedrals or high old terrifying places that are dark and full of secret doors and passageways that looks like a maze to anyone who is not well familiar or acquainted with them. A sense of horror and mysteries is also found in Gothic stories together with many supernatural or inexplicable events that reject to adhere to any laws of God, nature or humans and they are hard to be absorbed by the human brain, yet they are there to cause confusion within readers or spectators.

A villain, a doppelganger and a heroin who is oppressed by a powerful male are also to be mentioned when talking about gothic literature. Tracing the history of gothic literature will go further back to the end of the eighteenth century and towards the beginning of the nineteenth century when the Victorian period was still in glory. Gothic literature appeared and intermingled with Victorian fiction before it becomes dominated, when pure romance is mixed up with romance horror and fear which intensified in modern gothic horror movies like vampires, Dracula and the walking dead.

The gothic trend of literature is said to start earlier than Horace Walpole's time but he is the first to write a gothic story. "The Castle of Otranto" is claimed to be a translation of an earlier Italian manuscript. Walpole doubted his ability of writing fiction that is why the novel at first was published as "a translation of an ancient Italian manuscript". Later in its second edition the novel was reprinted

under the title "A Gothic story" (The novel was successful so Walpole issued the second publication under his real name asking for the reader's pardon).

#### **The Objectives of the Study**

This study aims at providing rigorous grounding in the work and thematic preoccupation of the most influential gothic writer both historically and contemporary. The researcher intends to stand at how Victorian fiction is influenced with Gothic trend as well as the researcher intends to prove The Castle of Otranto a Gothic fiction through Gothic elements interwoven in the novel.

#### **The Questions of the Study**

In an attempt to investigate the topic under study, the researcher poses the following questions;

- 1-What are the gothic elements?
- 2-How are the Gothic elements integrated into the Victorian Fiction?
- 3- How can "The Castle of Otranto" be seen as a gothic work?

#### **The Hypotheses of the Study**

This study claims that, firstly, Victorian fiction is highly influenced with the Gothic trend where the elements of the Gothic literature became the core of Victorian fiction. Secondly, the novel of The Castle of Otranto written by Horace Walpole is vivid with elements of gothic literature thus marking it as a Gothic fiction.

- 1.The Gothic elements are horror and misters and have other supernatural events.
2. The Gothic elements change Victorian Fiction.
- 3.The Castle of Otranto seem as a Gothic work because it portrays the evil beyond its lines.

### **The Methodology of the Study**

This study examines the phenomenon of the movement of Gothic literature with reference to The Castle of Otranto through analytical deductive approach. The researcher relies thoroughly on literary approaches of analyses to conduct this study by bringing gothic elements and Victorian fiction under the spotlight, the researcher examine some scholars and critics point of views about Horace writing.

### **Discussion of the Topic**

The eighteenth century which witnessed the beginning of the gothic movement was considered to be the “age of reason” for it was subjugated by new- classical architecture and conversations that are considered to be rational. In this sense, the gothic which basically meant barbaric was seen as a dark counterpart to the coherent culture of mainstream that much was the most dominant in the Victorian era. Though, towards the turn of the century, the Victorian was itself the gothic one. Clery, E. J. (2008: 112).

Two great critics wrote on this point with a close resemblance of their ideas. Mighale. R claims that the entangled relation between the Victorian trend and the gothic one was not only logical but also crucial justifying it that in order to understand the modern culture of gothic, it was crucial to study the old barbarous notions of the past against the Victorian ones Fiction. Ed. Jerrold E.(2008: 56)

On a similar track, wolfurys, J points out that gothic literature is not a new trend rather than it's a part of Victorian that gothic has existed in. as for the Victorians themselves everything that dark, mysterious and creepy was a gothic one. For instance, the old deserted buildings

that all types of rumors and omens go about, the strange statues in cemeteries and high gates with feelings of being haunted or possessed, gothic features were everywhere. Simpson, J.(1989: 126)

### **The Use of Place; the House and the Castle**

In the setting of gothic literature, the house is always seen as an important place in the life of a human that is why the house in gothic literature has always been used as a powerful symbol. For an individual, the house represents a shelter that protects a person from the dangers of nature and human as well, a house is a sign of safe background and source of stability and well determines his social status, it's a source of pride, power and triumph over nature and other people. Abrams, M. H.(2007: 145),

The house as looked upon by some critics is seen as place of stability and the house is also seen as a female zone as its always in gothic literature represented through a female heroin who lives happily and peacefully until she is faced by the brutality of a male tyrant who changes her life dramatically from happiness to great sadness and melancholy. The house in gothic literature usually is a peaceful, domestic and sacred place in the past inhabited by respectful people until its dominated by a rough barbarous villain with a vision or an omen that promises the destruction of the bad inhabitants being killed or kicked out of the house by a good inhabitant who turns to be the true owner of the house. Sometimes this happens at the consent of nature signed by a great storm, rain, lightening or thunder that struck the building g. Devendra P.(1966: 84).

In the castle of Otranto, the castle was seen once a sacred place owned by Alfonso who was a great prince and knight, but with the application of some devious ways the castle ownership descended to Manfred's grandfather. yet a vision early at the beginning of the novel promises the return of the castle to its true owner (later turned to be Theodore, son of Jerome) and the destruction of the evil inhabitants (in this case Manfred whose family has fallen apart starting with the disastrous death of his son Conrad then killing his own daughter, losing the castle and his marriage is about to be ended by the church for the discovery of blood relation between him and his wife). Baldick, Chris (2001: 213)

In gothic literature, the house is a place of peace, domesticity where a character leads a normal life while others are tormented (the case of Matilda), the house can be a place of forceful confinement against the will of a character as in the case of Isabella who was kept to be wedded to Conrad then to his father, also Theodore who was wrongly accused of killing Conrad by controlling the giant helmet with some sort of magical power and he was imprisoned to be killed later. Guest, Harriet.(1996: 66)

#### **The Characters**

The characters in gothic literature are carefully chosen to represent different roles within the story. Some characters are evil, some are trapped with the evil ones, some are naive, some are innocents and they are influenced by the works of evil characters and some characters are half innocent half evil. Stephanie F.(2012: 9)

In "The Castle of Otranto" Matilda and Isabella are both innocent, Matilda is the daughter of the owner of the house and Isabella is kept against her will, and at the

end of the novel they both are seen suffering and affected by the evil of Manfred. Also, the character of Theodore who was oppressed and was about to be killed under the order of Manfred but he was saved and presented as the true successor of the castle. On one hand, Hippolita is half innocent, she showed no evilness throughout the novel against other characters yet she kept of her incest marriage. Raymond W.(1980: 221).

On the other hand, Manfred is the true villain of the novel and pure source of evilness which started earlier than his days when his grandfather poisoned great Alfonso and took his castle, then Manfred married Hippolita knowing that they are elate in blood, he also bribed the guardians of Isabella and brought her to be wedded to his son then after the death of Conrad he decided to marry her himself as he intended to divorce Hippolita which was against the church notions. Manfred also ordered the death of Theodore, he decides to give his daughter's hands in marriage to Fredrick, then to top it all he killed his own daughter. Perkins Gilman, Charlotte.(2002: 72)

#### **Prophecy and visions**

Prophecy is a worldwide notion that works as guidance to human beings or a voice of warning to restore them to the righteous. It's normally related to great love, religion or faith which is in this case is Christianity. The novel is vivid with scenes that support the idea of faith; for instance the words of the priest Jerome "My Lord, said the holy man, I am no intruder into the secrets of families. My office is to promote peace, to heal divisions, to preach repentance, and teach mankind to curb their headstrong passions.

I forgive your Highness's uncharitable apostrophe; I know my duty, and am the minister of a mightier prince than Manfred. Harken to him who speaks through my organs". Hogle, Jerrold E.(2000: 18)

Matilda and her mother Hippolita represent devoted Christian daughter and wife who adhere to the male suppression, Hippolita is even ready to give up her marriage accepting divorce if it's the will of her husband and Isabella finds no other refuge than the church to escape marriage. All characters of the novel regardless of their innocence or evil deeds seem to have faith and believe in religion and they accept visions and prophecies as a sign of heaven or messages from God. At the beginning of the novel, inhabitants of Otranto seem to be not so much concerned with the prophecy of the castle but with the progress of the story and after many incidents, they began to consider it seriously and at the end of the novel they all solely accept it. Jerrold E.(2008: 75)

#### **Atmosphere of mystery, suspense and horror**

The first incident of fear and horror in this novel is the catastrophic death of Conrad who was mysteriously crushed by a giant helmet. A peasant resembles the helmet to the one of Alfonso the great the true owner of the castle connecting it to an old prophecy that the castle will return to its true owner when "should be grown too old to inhibit it" (Walpole 18). The peasant is accused of killing Conrad using a magical power to move the helmet and he was consequently imprisoned. Later, Theodore escapes his imprisonment and hide him somewhere in the castle, and then met by Isabella who was under the run through the dark

passageways and secret doors of the castle. Bruhm, Steven.(2003: 123)

Theodore was caught again and was sentenced to be executed shortly before he is saved by the priest Jerome who realized Theodore as his long lost son. Isabella is terrified at the fact that Manfred will force her to marry him, thus she fled away taking refuge in the church. Matilda who shares a mutual love with Theodore is shocked at the deal between her father and Fredric to exchange her and Isabella in marriage and at the end of the novel she was stabbed to death by her father who mistaken her with Isabella when Matilda a and Theodore were meeting in the church.

The above analysis show clearly how the novel is furnished with senses of shock, fear, mystery, suspense and almost all characters are affected by this atmosphere. Barry, Peter.(2002: 142).

#### **Women distressed by a powerful, impulsive male**

In Victorian fiction women were represented through their attempts to rebel against male domination over them and their attempt to build a new world of their own , yet the gothic literature came to restore the old image of women under the suppression of their males. The castle of Otranto is an excellent example of this, where the three female characters suffer from the oppression of a powerful male in this case Manfred. Clery, E. J.(2002: 48)

Matilda speaks her heart out how her father always treated her unequally to her brother, she showed a deep sadness of how less valuable to her father she is, yet she seems to surrender to this situation and accept it because he is her father after all. Later on when she about to be married by Fredrick, she was ready to reject and fight.



Isabella on the other hand is oppressed by the same character who wants to marry her against her will but she seems to survive this marriage as she was rescued by her father who shortly agrees on a deal with Manfred to exchange their daughters in marriage. Walpole, Horace.(2008: 214),

Prince Hippolita also suffers from the oppression of Manfred who wanted to divorce her to marry Isabella. These gendered fictional representations reflect, influence, and perpetuate patriarchal attitudes toward women. Walpole's novel depicts women without the right to self-determination and submissively accepting their lower status. Barry, Peter.(2002: 142).

#### **Ghosts, Supernatural events**

In gothic literature, supernatural and other extraordinary occurrences are quite familiar and they are one of the essential elements of this genre. The novel "The Castle of Otranto" is no exception to this. In the novel there are many examples of these supernaturals and they all collaborate to build up the story in general and to help the prophecy at the beginning of the novel to be fulfilled. The story starts with a vision that the current inhabitants of the castle will lose their ownership over it at the end of the novel and the real successor of the castle will appear. To help this prophecy come true, the writer uses different incidents, starting with the descending of a giant helmet that killed the only hope of Manfred of getting a heir to the castle, with the death of the only son, and the intention of the daughter to be a nun, Manfred loses any chance of having a grandson to be the owner of the castle after his death and to deny the prophecy as well. LOISEAU Charlotte (2011: 25)

Walpole also answered in advance any question from behave of the reader of why doesn't Manfred have a another boy from his current wife prince Hippolita, by stating that Hippolita is too useless by this time on the matter of giving birth ( meaning too old now for having a child). Then Manfred finds no other way than to have a child himself so he decides to marry Isabella by force. At this point, the true owner of the castle had to be prepared and brought into the image, here Walpole presents Theodore first as a peasant, he was imprisoned in the castle and was about to be executed but he was saved by a priest who recognized him as his long lost son. Other incidents like the sigh of the portrait, the giant food, the nose bleeding of statue and the walking skeleton, were all to prepare Manfred to believe that he is definitely not the owner of the castle and the prophecy is true. The use of the priest and the church were to give these occurrences a solid ground of faith and present them as signs from God to make them easier to be accepted. Blair, David.(2002: 15)

#### **Findings of the study:**

After a panoramic investigation to the topic of this study, the researcher comes into the following understanding;

The movement of gothic literature appeared towards the end of the Victorian era at the end of the eighteenth century and hence after began to interwoven with Victorian fiction.

With the complete development of gothic movement, its literary elements were shaped and thus marked a difference from the Victorian genres.

Some of the elements that marked literary works as gothic are; Setting in a castle,

An atmosphere of mystery and suspense ,Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events, An ancient prophecy, Omens, portents and visions, High, even overwrought emotions and Women in distress threatened by a powerful male.

“The Castle of Otranto” written by Horace Walpole is a gothic work of literature as it includes many of the elements of gothic mentioned above.

### **Recommendations to upcoming researches**

The researcher suggests that other research to examine other works of the gothic literature which emerged in the Victorian period in a broad historical and cultural context that allows critics to shape an understanding of how these various works of gothic genre participated in the development of the movement.

The researcher recommends other researchers to offer a critical account to the ways in which important developments in literary theory such as historical, ideological, theological and material culture debates have influenced a modern understanding of the Gothic and will be encouraged to mobilize and challenge a number of key critical terms and ideas within their textual analysis.

### **Recommendations:**

The researcher recommended other researchers relevant to this field most dig deep in this area about Horace Wolpol's evil expressions in his novel "The Castle of Otranto."

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