

## Exploration of Mortality and Concepts of Evil in Horace Walpole's "The Castle of Otranto"

Qays Khaleel Nsaif<sup>1</sup> - Mahmoud Ali Ahmed Omer<sup>2</sup>

### ABSTRACT:

This paper examines morality and concepts of Evil in Horace Walpole' Novel " The Castle of Otranto". For the purposes of this paper the researcher adopts analytical deductive approach because it is appropriate with the nature of this study. Furthermore relevant extracts are drawn exclusively from the novel (The Castle of Otranto). A number of results were found out; some of the most important ones were portraying evil in this novel some indications show that Horace Walpole has evil expressions in his novel. His thoughts are highly affected due to the environment of the Gothic in which he was exposed to. With reference to the study's results, the researcher recommended that further studies relevant to this field should be conducted and place more emphasis on other aspect concerning Horace writing. Horace others views that evil needed to be highlighted by other concerned researchers.

**Keywords:** Gothic novel – Supernatural- Evil

### المستخلص:

تفحص هذه الورقة مفهوم الاخلاق والشر في رواية هوراس والبول (قلعة اوترانتو). لاغراض هذه الورقة تبني الباحث طريقة التحليل الاستنتاجي لأنها مناسبة مع طبيعة هذه الدراسة. إضافة لذلك أخذت مقاطع متوافقة تستخدم على سبيل الحصر من رواية قلعة اوترانتو. عدة نتائج وجدت وأهمها تصوير الشر في هذه الرواية: بعض المؤشرات أوضحت ان هوراس لديه تصوير للشر في روايته وأفكارها تأثرت بالبيئة القوطية التي عاشها ووصى الباحث استناداً لنتائج الدراسة بأن الدراسات في هذا المجال يجب أن توجه لزيادة التأثير على المظاهر التي تناولها الكاتب هوراس في كتاباته وبعض أوجه كتابات هوراس في الشر يحتاج إلى تسليط الضوء عليها بواسطة الباحثين الآخرين.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** الأدب القوطي – الظواهر الخارقة – الشر.

### INTRODUCTION:

As a Gothic text, The Castle of Otranto provides various tropes through which terror and disgust are expounded upon. The characterization of Manfred in particular is intriguing in that he is portrayed not only as a novel's antagonist, but also as a man who succumbs to villainous behavior because of his own lack of self- control. He is a powerful made figure who allows his sinful positions and evil native to obscure the reason and goodness he possesses, self-control the Christian virtue that was often discussed in other literature of the period, something he utterly lacks. Manfred abandons Christian

virtues in favor of Gothic passion, a passion so intense that it obscures his ability to reason, resulting in his seeking an incestuous affair and the dissolution of his legitimate manage. As a Gothic untlaiy Manfred's choice of fin is incest, creating a conflation of erotic, romantic, and familial love that inhibits his ability to reason. The representation of Evil in Horace Walpole's the Castle of Otranto is a 1764 novel written by Horace Walpole. It is regarded as the first Gothic novel, initiating a new literary genre which became extremely popular in the late, 18<sup>th</sup> and early centuries. Gothic literature's desire to explore the unknown, the unexplainable

inexplicable and the terrifying can be seen as a reaction to the Enlightenment's emphasis on the rational and knowable. The Enlightenment rejected the belief in superstition, and religion. Reason, deductive logic, and observation were the methods of examining the world. A clash of these two approaches is noticeable in Otranto. The novel violates 18<sup>th</sup> century tradition.

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 look 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.

Gothic literature appeared and intermingled with Victorian fiction before it becomes dominated, when pure romance is mixed up with horror and fear which intensified in modern Gothic horror movies like vampires, Dracula and the Walking dead.

#### **Statement of the problem:**

- A major concern of this paper is to explore the morality and concept of Evil in Horace Walpole's Novel the Castle of Otranto, also to investigate the system literature forms which was used art which to a very large extent shape a system of particular values and beliefs.

- This paper is hoped to provide some insight and practical help in decoding the Evil appeared in the novel The Castle of Otranto.

#### **The questions of the study:**

1. To what extent do Gothic literatures differ from Victorian literature?
2. What are the supernatural elements in the Castle of Otranto?

#### **The hypotheses of the study:**

1. The Gothic Literature is different from Victorian literature that:

Victorian literature deals with romantic literature while Gothic literature deals with supernatural elements like horror and mysteries.

2. The supernatural elements in The Castle of Otranto are the horror and fear which intensified in Modern Gothic horror movies like Vampires, Dracula and the Walking dead.

#### **Theoretical framework:**

The eighteenth century witnessed the beginning of the Gothic movement was considered to be rational. In this sense seen the Gothic which is basically men barbaric was seen as a dark counterpart to the coherent culture of mainstream that much was the most dominant in the Victorian era: The central theme of all Gothic novels is the presence and symbolism of the Gothic castle. Depiction of ruinous abbeys, monasteries, subterranean passages.

Vaults, secret panels, and the trapdoors is a standard method of achieving the atmosphere. Howells sees The Gothic Castle as being a shadowy world as ruins and twilight scenery lit up from time to time by lurid flashes of passion and violence (6). Therefore, the gloominess of the exterior and interior environment is illuminated by intense emotional and passionate moments of the characters that inhabit the Castle. As sage claims, the Castle is "The lair of the villain" (66) and it is inaccurate reflection of his dark and frightening character.

Gloomy, dark, and dangerous, the Castle reflects the emotions and psychological experience of many of the novel's characters.

The setting in Otranto is almost a character in the novel. The Castle with its ghosts, bleeding statues, the images of giant hands, and feet, and the helmet that crush the walls, spurs on much of the novels action. The Castle is also a witness of conflict.

To whom does it rightfully belong is a question that is a main motif of the story. Let us concentration two main "characters" of the story, whose fates are tied. Gloomy, mysterious atmosphere of the Castle is a reflection of Manfred's character.

Two great critics wrote on this point with a close resemblance of their ideas. Mighale. R. claims that the entangled relation between the Victorian friend 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).

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 naïve, some are innocents and they are influenced by the work of Evil characters and some characters are half innocent half evil. Stephanie F. (2012;9).

All characters of the novel regardless of their innocence or evil deals seem to have faith and believe in religion and they accept vision and prophecies as a sign of heaven or messaged 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 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)

#### **Methodology:**

The researcher adopted the analytical – deductive approach because it is appropriate with the nature of the study. Further more relevant extract are drawn exclusively from the castle of Otranto. The study will use following questions for collectives the data relevant to the present study.

1. To what extent do Gothic literatures differ from Victorian literature?
2. What are supernatural elements in The Castle of Otranto?

The following are the extracts drawn exclusively from the Castle of Otranto.

1. Manfred is not legitimate because his grandfather stole the claim to the principality. He is able to hold on as long as he can because said grandfather also made a promise to pay for his sins by building convents and accepting that one day his line will be kicked out of the principality. Even through Manfred and his fore fathers are powerful, wealthy, and capable of administering control over their holdings, they are putting up against a great force of law. Theodore descends from Alfonso the Goad, a ruler whose claim to Otranto is never actually fleshed out in the text, but remains a touchstone. Everything in Nature and Heaven supports Theodore manifesting that support in signs, omens, specters, storms.

2. Walpole –as- Marshal points out that the sin of the father is main mural of the story. Indeed, this classic biblical and literary trope is central to Otranto Don Ricardo fabricated his claim to the principality and set in motion the deleterious events that would lead to the killing of the innocent people, designs of divorce and incest, violence, and disarray.

Children are fated to bear out what their fathers do, which is reminder to men and women to lead virtuous lives lest, their sins continue to echo down the generations.

#### **Conclusion and suggestions:**

This paper analyzes Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto*. Duet the fact that the above mentioned novel remarkably has tackled Horace Walpole thoughts from different views of points. It is obviously that Horace Walpole has ability to treat evil in his novel, some indications show that Horace Walpole use evil expressions in his novel and he is highly affected due to the environment of the Gothic he lead.

By the end of this paper it wishes to find its way to put forward a solution for the

problems of the research also it politely suggest that:

- other researcher relevant to this filed should place more emphasis another aspects concerning Horace Walpole's type of writing.

- Horace Walpole other view evil world-view needed to be highlighted by other concerned researchers

#### **References:**

1. Baldick, Chris (2001) *The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
2. Ed Jerrold E. (2008;56)
3. Ed Jerrold E. (2008;56)
4. Jerrold E. (2008), *Hogle. Cambridge: Cambridge UP*.
5. LOISEAU Charlotte (2011) *The Castle of Otranto: The First Gothic Novel*, Année universitaire .
6. Stephanie F. (2012) Craig: *Ghosts of the Mind: The Supernatural and Madness in Victorian Gothic Literature*.
7. Stephanie F. (2012) Craig: *Ghosts of the Mind: The Supernatural and Madness in Victorian Gothic Literature*.
8. Stephenie F (2010;9)
9. Walpole, Horace. (2008), *The Castle of Otranto*. 1764. Ed. W. S. Lewis. Oxford: Oxford UP.