



## THE TRADITION OF THE GOTHIC NOVEL IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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### Annotation

The Article devoted entirely to the Gothic fate beyond this time period are usually only lists of books and authors, descriptions of plots without comparative analysis, and there is often no agreement among scholars as to whether a particular novel is Gothic or not. The relevance of the article is determined by the fact that in foreign and domestic literary studies the theme of continuity of fiction effects of the "gothic" novel has been little explored.

**Keywords:** Gothic novel, Gothic story, medieval, fear, horror, the sublime, the castle, chronotope, supernatural, folklore, neo-myth, archetype, virtue and villainy, mysterious and frightening

### Аннотация

Статьи, полностью посвященные готической судьбе за пределами этого периода, обычно представляют собой лишь списки книг и авторов, описания сюжетов без сравнительного анализа, и среди ученых часто нет согласия относительно того, является ли тот или иной роман готическим или нет. Актуальность статьи определяется тем, что в зарубежном и отечественном литературоведении тема преемственности художественных эффектов "готического" романа мало исследована.

**Ключевые слова:** готический роман, готический рассказ, средневековый, страх, ужас, возвышенное, замок, хронотоп, сверхъестественное, фольклор, нео-миф, архетип, добродетель и злодеяния, таинственный и пугающий.

### Introduction

The English "Gothic" novel of the 18th and early 19th centuries, also known as the "mystery and horror" novel, influenced not only mass literature, but also the work of the most prominent writers of the 19th and 20th centuries, passing down a number of universal fiction techniques that help create a tense atmosphere of fear and vague anxiety. The aim of the article is to consider these artistic techniques, to determine





why authors continue to use them to this day - and in what context they are used, and to identify the main directions of the development of the "Gothic". In order to achieve this goal, the following tasks must be accomplished:

- To discover universal narrative elements in "gothic" novels,
- To determine why they cause fear in readers,
- To trace, using several works of 19th and 20th century English literature as examples, the changes that the "gothic" formulae underwent over time.

The relevance of the article is determined by the fact that in foreign and domestic literary studies the theme of continuity of fiction effects of the "gothic" novel has been little explored. The literature on the Gothic novel is vast, and the Gothic tradition has been touched upon in a number of works, but most often in passing, briefly, as a supplement to the history of the Gothic novel from the middle of the eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century. Article devoted entirely to the Gothic fate beyond this time period are usually only lists of books and authors, descriptions of plots without comparative analysis, and there is often no agreement among scholars as to whether a particular novel is Gothic or not. Moreover, literary scholars usually look at all the books of interest in isolation, so that even when they identify "gothic" motifs in different authors, they do not build a "chain" of continuity that would clearly show that the elements listed are indeed common.

The main direction of the development of the "Gothic" is psychological. In the 19th century writers appeal to "Gothic" motifs is explained primarily by the desire to keep the reader's attention. Fear plays only an auxiliary role, it is needed to enhance the tension of the narrative and the drama of the action, to express the negative emotions of the characters at the turn of the 19th century.

In the twentieth century, "gothic" motifs become a reflection of the subconscious and unconscious urges that overpower man. In the twentieth century writers use the formal techniques of the "mystery and horror" novel as parts of a constructor, consciously choosing them to create a general tense atmosphere, ideal for revealing the true desires and fears of "test" characters.

Horror evokes all that frightens and repulses in real life, a natural reaction to things and events that are unpleasant and creepy, and terror is vague anxiety, but without a negative undertone, anticipation, keen curiosity, intense anticipation, forcing the reader to turn page after page.

"Fictional Time in the Space of the 'Gothic' Novel" is devoted to the "scenery" in which the events of "Gothic" works unfold. In the 18th century "gothic" novel a special world is created, a "playing field" fenced off from everyday life, in which the writer can use his imagination more freely. The time of action is removed from readers by several





centuries. In the first preface to *Castle of Otranto*, Horace Walpole, disguised as the "translator" of an ancient manuscript, describes the era to which the events of the novel relate as a time of wonder - or, at least, belief in it.

His followers also refer in their books to the Middle Ages, when miracles, prophetic dreams and witchcraft dominated human life. At the same time, the medievalism of "gothic" books looks conventional-historical accuracy is sometimes not observed at all (for example, if the action takes place in the 16th century, the characters may well ride in a lardo, as in *The Mysteries of Oudolf* (by Anne Radcliffe), and the characters' speech is not necessarily stylized "for old times". The writers do not seek to recreate the life and mores of a different era. Their aim is to place the characters within the framework of extraordinary circumstances.

The place of action of the "gothic" novel, as well as the time of action, is largely conventional Horace Walpole in *"The Castle of Otranto"* writes about medieval Sicily, Anne Radcliffe describes in *"Oudolf Mysteries"* France and Italy of the 16th century, the events of *"The Monk"* by Matthew Gregory Lewis take place in Spain, And Matthew Matherin partially transports the action of *"Melmoth the Wanderer"* to that country, William Beckford's story *"Vatek"* deals with the fabulous Arab East, Mary Shelley's novel *"Frankenstein"* deals with Switzerland and the icy Arctic wilderness. But the "foreign country" in a "gothic" novel is not just another state, but a model of another world where unfamiliar laws apply, a kind of kingdom beyond a trinity of lands, which has no relation to everyday life. Moreover, space can be reduced to the dimensions of a dusky, sometimes partially ruined ancient building (castle, abbey, etc.) and its desolate surroundings.

The heroes find themselves isolated on an island of unreality, a dark labyrinth full of forbidden rooms, closed doors and underground passages. It is a kind of "sanctuary of wonders. Special rules apply here' ghosts roam and portraits begin to speak. Some mysteries and miracles later receive a rational explanation (as in Anne Radcliffe), but mystical events can also be self-sufficient, inexplicable, as in Horace Walpole. At the same time, all horrors - including supernatural ones - are localized, "locked" in a limited territory and do not go beyond it, and therefore are not able to break through into the ordinary world. The reader can follow the development of the plot, worry about the misfortunes of the characters, but at the same time with the satisfaction of knowing that with him, fortunately, nothing like this will not happen. And even if the characters of the novel are frightened, the reader knows that all will be well, as long as they get out of the "enchanted circle.

The attention of writers is now attracted not so much by the mysterious past as by the troubles of the present, and the gloomy "gothic" sketches complement the authors'







intentions small details help to convey the unsettled state of the characters, negative emotions, confusion of feelings. The typical "gothic" weather - storm, hurricane wind, dusky sky - emphasizes what is going on in the human soul.

In the "gothic" novel of the 18th and early 19th centuries, the scene is the setting for a terrible ordeal, cut off from everyday life. In the mid-nineteenth-century realist novel, gloomy "gothic" sketches are used merely as a means to emphasize particularly dramatic moments in the narrative. At the end of the century, the scene complements the characters' images and is a literal, material expression of their feelings, thoughts, and vices. Events tend to take place not in the past, but "in the present moment," writers strive to show that fears and evil thoughts exist close to readers-and perhaps lurk within them themselves. Since the middle of the twentieth century, the place of action has taken on the nature of an artificially created sphere for experimentation, characters are placed in given conditions, and the essence of each of the characters is revealed in the absence of external influence.

In the "Gothic" novel of the eighteenth century there was a clear division of characters into two main camps - virtue and villainy (with the former being dominated by female characters and the latter by male ones). The contrast eventually became overly exaggerated Jane Austen, joking about the novels of Anne Radcliffe and her followers, wrote that the Alps and Pyrenees may not have mixed characters, and one who cannot be called an angel apparently has the soul of a demon, but in England this is not so. In "Northanger Abbey," the writer debunks the image of the "gothic" villain. Henceforth, in realistic works, negative characters are often endowed with grotesque features, as Crook from Dickens' "Cold House" or Silas Ruffin from the novel "Uncle Silas" by Le Fanu.

In the nineteenth century, the complication of images gradually leads to the fact that the negative and positive traits are combined in one person. In the novels of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, the heroines retain their impressionability, their ability to acutely experience fears both real and imagined, yet they are unpredictable, rebellious natures, fierce in their love and hate. Jen Eyre is only a "humble" governess, but she lacks the meek humility of Anne Radcliffe's heroines. She seems to be an elf or a witch, often makes strange speeches about her mysterious powers, which are especially evident in the scene when she hears Rochester's call. Katherine Earnshaw in "Wuthering Heights" also has witchy traits.

First the male and then the female characters become open to both good and evil. Even the seemingly ideal heroes now have dual potential (Olalla in Stevenson's story will one day turn, quite unwittingly, into an evil monster, just like her mother, in Stoker's Dracula the girl of angelic purity - Lucy Westenra - becomes a vampire, and





the main character, Mina Harker, barely escapes the same fate). Evil and Good go hand in hand, easily replacing each other. The intervention of negative characters (as in Le Fachot's *Carmille* or Stoker's *Dracula*), some physical influence (as in Machen's story *The Great God Pan*), or being in a mentally unfriendly environment (as in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*) can awaken in any person a deeply hidden dark essence. While in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* the hero and the monster he spawned were different beings, in the Victorian era they can become different embodiments of the same self, like *Jekyll and Hyde*.

In the 20th century "gothic" characters fit naturally into the fabric of the modern novel, many authors deliberately borrow the features of 18th and 19th century "gothic" heroes for their characters, in order to present their readers with psychological and philosophical puzzles related to the presence of evil in this world - a faceless force, personified in a vaguely familiar, stereotypical "gothic" appearance - within the framework of the familiar genre. It is no coincidence that the main negative character often has features that are universal and typical rather than individual (as Steerpike in Mervyn Peake's *Gormenghast*) or does not appear at all (as Mr. Grin Smith in Iris Murdoch's *Unicorn*, Rebecca in Daphne du Maurier), but lives on in the memory of the other characters as a constant reminder of the dark side of the human mind. Moreover, if in the 18th century the images of "gothic" heroes were static, in the 19th century - ambivalent, in the 20th century they allow for multiple interpretations (thus, the heroine-victim Hannah Grin-Smith in Iris Murdoch's *The Unicorn* generates only suffering around herself, "psychic vampires" in Graham Joyce's *Soon to Storm*, trying to change the lives of others, gradually lose control over their own destiny and move towards self-destruction).

The "gothic" tradition has undergone several stages of revival. Themes and motifs of the "Gothic" are introduced into novels that cannot be called fully "Gothic," transformed into universal techniques of horror suspense. The world described by "gothic" writers and their followers seems mysterious and frightening. But with the help of fear, with the help of shock, the "Gothic" seeks to break stereotypes, to warn, to make us think - about the limits of reality, about magic in this world, about the presence of evil in the human soul.

"The Gothic" novel takes a close look at society's contemporary (or timeless, timeless) anxieties. Moreover, by their example, it explores human nature, changing with society, being a mirror image of the typical features of a particular era. If for the classics of the "gothic" novel fear was the price for entering the world of magic and extraordinary experiences, for the writers of the 19th and 20th centuries it became a means of exploring the human soul - in all its diversity.





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