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(Premises and influences)**

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Referenți științifici:

Prof.univ.dr. Codruța Mirela STĂNIȘOARĂ

Conf.univ.dr. Mirela IONIȚĂ

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BĂDESCU, MARIA IUSTINICA

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ARGUMENT

The following pages are an attempt to emphasize once more the extreme importance of the *Gothic* phenomenon swiftly spread around the world from the latter half of the English Romanticism until nowadays. The *Gothicism* launched itself into the difficult task of demonstrating the complicated moral structure of humans and the antagonism between the two sides of man's personality.

This work offers a periple through the history of the *Gothic* novel, surprising the moments of its emergence, spectacular crystallization and accreditation by the literary canons. The bypass of this novelistic type and its incredible composition are defined by the elements that give the distinctive aspect of the *Gothic* creation. Thus, its idiosyncrasy resides in a vernacular acceptance of this new novelistic pattern that encodes a clear message: the man puts off the heavy sinful cloak and shows his naked soul to the Providence expecting feverishly for a proper judgement. This, if we accept transcendentalism as a normal thing and lesbianism or homoeroticism as the innocent souls prisoners of incompatible bodies. Those, among many others, are crucial motifs approached by the *Gothic* creation.

The endless variety of the *Gothic* themes, motifs and their proper significations were explained in all the four chapters of this work; the *Gothic* valences were rendered through the point of view of exquisite authors whose stupendous biographies form the content of an entire chapter in this work. Some ways of characterization are proposed for the representative types of *Gothic* characters focusing on the villain, the heroine and the vampire.

Gothic is the novel of the moon which enlightens the vampires' ascension from their graves in order to haunt their

victims; it is the novel of the lunatics that carry with resignation the stigmat of their madness; at last, it is the novel of the human's fall presented in a decadent way. It means revenge, personal ambitions and violent passions. It is the lament of the souls enchained in Purgatory appalling the humanity and suing for mercy. But *Gothic* means also the triumph of good on evil; it is the teacher of equilibrium and purification for its readers, the glim from the tunnel and the sun's uprise for a new life.

All these facts are presented in this work in their chronological order, through coherent ideas, simple methods and personal style.

In this light, we consider *Gothicism* the best achievement of Old, Middle and Modern times that appeared from the human necessity of self-discovery, self-satisfaction and better comprehension of the moral values. Their preservation and appreciation must be the main objective of the man all over the world.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GOTHIC NOVEL, A NEW DIRECTION IN THE ENGLISH PROSE

1.1. HISTORY AND TRADITION

1.1.1. THE ENGLISH GOTHIC

The Medieval Period could have been identified in its beginning with a slew of writings essential in the history of literature, in defiance of the general opinion which declared them *woodiness*, *insipid* and thoroughly *platitudinous*. Hence, their importance is crucial: they touch a myriad of themes, motifs and plots, evolve more theories and explain even more conceptions, all these in a world lacerated by interminable bloody fights for power, giants, unstoppable hunting at a full jump of the Holy Grail, superstitions, freakish beliefs and all kind of other apparitions of frightful, dehumanized creatures whose main aim was the human race's expendable perdition. And the documents which bear testimony of all these atrocities, important pieces of the universal legacy comprise from the Grail poems, legends and other stories praising the splendour of the Knights of The Round Table with their brave king Arthur, to the legend of Joseph from Arimathea and even to the work of the barbarian Lonelich. The people's thirst for creating new, attractive works has been immortalized in delicious poems with fascinating plots, characters, descriptions, the headstones of the promising *Gothic* novel. This new genre, invented and developed from the second half of the eighteenth century could be considered, we believe, a clear radiography of the malformation of a soul irremediably chased by the obscure forces of the unknown.

The tradition and the history of the Gothic novel are deeply rooted into the Medieval mysticism, spirit, fictitious

nature, relied on the rich culture interspersed with such characters as: witches, goddesses, ogres and more devilish and angelic entities; its name is derivative from that of the barbarian Goths, an East Germanic people, skilful fighters, fearless soldiers, who had played havoc, destruction, oceans of tears, blood and death among the conquered territories: ‘vastum ubique silentium, secreti colles; fumantia procul tecta; nemo exploratoribus obvius-Tacitus called-facies victoriae’¹.

Albeit the *Gothic* term will be coined much later and the *Gothic* genre will take a shape much later, the literary searcher has to dig to the quick of the earth, ‘to ferret about among’ its epochs in order to discover the provenance of its constitutive elements. On its highest degree, the Old English Period has provided to the Gothic the distinction between good and evil, the ferocity of the beasts, the walking dead, the undead, the pantheism, the animism with all its forms, the superstitions, but also the lament, wandering, bravery, fabulous, all these hyperbolic rendered under the pen of the anonymous authors.

Although the first English poems were written 800 years afore the emergence of Gothicism, many of its elements can be seen running through old masterpieces as *Beowulf*, *Andreas*, *Guthlac* or *Juliana*.

Gothicism is the mixture between fear, suspense, terror, supernatural, uncanny and it is also the symbol of the evil, which at its turn, is an ever flowing fountain for the folk-tales:

‘Hobbling, demons and witches mingle grotesquely with the throng of beautiful princesses, queens in glittering raiment, fairies and elves. Without these ugly figures, folk-tales would soon lose their power to charm... Human nature

¹ *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, vol. 1 of 12; London, John C. Mimmo; 14 King William Street, Strand, MDCCCLXXXVII; page 24.*

desires not only to be amused and entertained, but moved to pity and fear'².

Albeit there are many definitions of the fictitious stories given by authors more or less known, with more or less cogent arguments, one sure thing is that the evil and its derivatives have persisted since the first terrestrial generations; a proper definition is employed by the author of *The Old English Baron*:

'Fictitious stories have been the delight of all times and all countries by oral tradition in barbarous, by writing in more civilized ones; and although some persons of wit and learning have condemned them indiscriminately, I would venture to affirm that even those who so much affect to despise them under one form will receive and embrace them under another'.³

On the other hand, the romances were an extraordinary lavishness of the 'conjuror's supernatural' with all its superabundant repository of such 'tools' including witchcraft, voodoo, harlequins, mysticism, oracle, palmistry, black or white magic and *paraskavedekatriaphobia*, the fear of Friday the 13th, which has its etymology in the linkage of three Greek words: *paraskevi* (*Friday*), *dekatreis* (*thirteen*) and *phobia* (*fear*).

That was considered another invention of the Medieval society in the way of superstition which had a prevalent role in the popular thought being assimilated to 'a belief or practise resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic and chance, or a false conception of causation' (*Merriam-Webster online dictionary*). An illuminating explanation is found in Jacques Collin de Pliancy's *Diabolic Dictionary* that provides the name of the four causes of superstitious beliefs: 'ignorance, fear, pride, fanaticism'. The superstition queens

² Edith Birkhead: *The Tale of Terror, A Study of the Gothic Romance*, London, Constable & Co. Ltd, 1921, page 3.

³ Clara Reeve-Preface of *The Old English Baron*, Project Gutenberg, 2009.

over Christianity, deals with repulsive obsessions, addictions, lustily quests for signs where there is none, reaching its climax with the total submission of our soul and an irreversible brainstorming as well. Scholars have attempted to demonstrate that the superstition and behaviour are interrelated, the latter being adaptive in all organisms including ourselves. Thus, this type of behaviour has been reported in the animals, like the superstitious behaviour in pigeons belonging to the psychologist Skinner. The giblets of the sacrificed birds were used in antique Rome by the priests (called *haruspex, -icis*), to foretell the future. Besides animals and birds, some objects had their role too: the talismans, although very much condemned by the Church in its synods, were supposed to protect the people; the phial kept in the Cathedral of Reims in France contains chrism that had been used by the French kings in order to protect them in the battle fields.

The superstition will be one of the basic towers of the Middle Ages' culture successfully novelized by the Gothic authors and not only. Such writings as: *The Old English Baron*, *The Castle of Otranto*, *Macbeth*, *The Rime of an Ancient Mariner*, *The Raven*, *The Devil's Elixirs or Dead Souls* are just a few examples which deal more or less with superstitions.

Another pylon of the Gothic novel caught up from the Medieval society, although it had reigned since the oldest times, is the dangerous 'witchcraft', which had a lot of practitioners among women and men. The wizard Merlin had been the adviser of King Arthur and with his voodooism. His Royal Highness has realized many a heroic deeds that history proudly recalls today, placing them at the top of the tree in the Medieval England.

The witches were pursuing sorcery, all sorts of enchantments, pronouncing curses, using magic: black and white and shamanistic practices, separating and gathering people, at