



Dominance of early gothic literature on contemporary & American gothic with special reference to Frankenstein and Dracula

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Abstract: *The history of Gothic fiction has gone a long way since the publication of Horace Walpole's "The Castle of Otranto" in 1764. Gothic literature has been the work of romance, victorian legacy, horror, and unnatural elements since the beginning. From this perspective, the paper will examine the transformation of Gothic fiction in the 19th century and 20th centuries. Many research papers have been developed to understand the aspects of gothic literature, this study will work on the influence of gothic literature and transformation over the decades and how different writers used the essence of gothic integrated with elements of the modern era. The study has taken data from two well-known Gothic icons, Frankenstein and Dracula, and American literature to evaluate the impact of Gothic literature elements on American gothic and the influence of gothic literature.*

Keywords: *Gothic Fiction, Protagonists, Vampires.*

1. INTRODUCTION:

Humans have a natural, primal inclination to dread the unfamiliar. Religion, superstition, and mysticism were the initial fires that fueled mankind's ignorance of the dark, but as civilizations advanced, science, reason, and logic supplanted these intangible faiths and creeds. The darkness was eradicated, but humanity's terrible fascination with the dark persisted.

If the psychology of humans can be broken down and described it explains why the darkness has had such a profound effect on art and culture. Humans live their lives with continual reminders of what is good. Evil is buried into the subconscious; in many instances, the subconscious unlocks the gates and allows the darkness to flee in the shape of art. From Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, to Cold War science fiction and Stephen King's vast library of Magical Realism. Benedict believes Mankind has a pathological obsession with the dark. Says Benedict Cumberbatch:

Frankenstein was all about the idea that, through electricity and the destruction of night, man created light and darkness, we took on god-like powers and then abused them like gods, and we are only men. That's a story about a man making a man in his own image. The inversion of natural order.(1)

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, compares embedded structures to the Gothic motif of living burial. Tales that have been textually "buried alive" in Gothic novels resurface to alter the plot that surrounds them. Thus, the genre's focus on materiality has a pervasive impact not just on the kind of stories conveyed, but also on how these authors tell them.

Ahmed Saadawi reconstructed Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) in Iraq in 2005 in *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. Sarah Perry's latest novel *Melmoth* resurrects Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820). Chase Berggren framed Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in her poetry narrative *R E D*, released in May. (1897). This study can take place in a real archive, it always takes place in the words. History repeats itself.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW:

Gothic fiction is frequently literature of changes, in which identity is in flux and sanity is a questionable condition of being. At the end of the nineteenth century, a new Gothic form arose, a modern Gothic, whose narratives centered on the urban present, refracting contemporary issues through the prism of terror literature.

Modern Horror in Gothic fiction is literature of changes, in which identity is in flux and sanity is a questionable condition of being. Modern Horror trends include the use of creepy creatures mixed with social issues which were earlier supernatural evil forces. Gothic literature has served as a huge source of inspiration for blockbuster films and books. Creepy clowns are another illustration of our obsession with creatures that lurk in the shadows, frightening and enthralling us.

Every year, as Halloween approaches, there is a heightened interest in ghosts, ghouls, and spooky creatures. Halloween derives from the Samhain holiday celebrated by the Celts of ancient Britain and Ireland. During the Samhain festival, it was thought that the spirits of those who had died would return to their homes. People built bonfires on hilltops to drive away evil spirits, and they occasionally donned masks to prevent being identified by the ghosts. Xavier believes Gothi has its own special place in literature world Says Xavier Aldana Reyes:

Gothic, as a type of literature that is quickly becoming defined by the cultural work it carries out and by its transnational reach, has found in monstrosity, especially in its mediation of alterity, of traumatic national pasts and of the viral nature of the digital age, a fertile ground for the proliferation of new Nightmares. (1)

Ghost and horror stories, and other modern styles have largely superseded Gothic literature. Jane Austen humorously depicted Gothic literature in her novel *Northanger Abbey*. *Absalom, Absalom!* and *The Sound and the Fury* are examples of experimental tales. Gothic preoccupations—threatened houses, family secrets, destined romance—were transported to the American South by William Faulkner. In his intergenerational epic *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Gabriel Garca Márquez creates a violent, surreal story centered on a family home that takes on a sinister life of its own.

3. DISCUSSION:

Gothic literature, often known as the gothic novel, is a literary genre of fantasy that developed in the mid-18th century in England and flourished in the early 19th century.

Romances in the Gothic Style: Phyllis A. Whitney, Joan Aiken, Dorothy Eden, Victoria Holt, Barbara Michaels, Mary Stewart, and Jill Tattersall wrote Gothic Romances in the 90s. Several men authored Gothic romances under female pen names. For example, British author Peter O'Donnell wrote under the pen name Madeleine Brent.

Modern fright: Many current writers of literature have strong Gothic sensibilities, such as Anne Rice, Stella Coulson, Susan Hill, Poppy Z. Brite, and Neil Gaiman, as well as some of Stephen King's sensationalist works. *The Priest* (1994) by Thomas M. Disch was inspired in part by Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*. Du Maurier's.

In terms of schooling: Educators in literary, cultural, and architectural studies value the Gothic as a subject that allows them to investigate the origins of scientific certainty. "The Gothic was (...) a counterweight developed by authors and intellectuals who felt the force of the past continue to retain sway in the present.

Other forms of media: The themes of the literary Gothic have been adapted for use in different media. The Dark Mansion of Forbidden Love and The Sinister House of Secret Love by DC Comics, Charlton Comics' Haunted Love, Curtis Magazines' Gothic Tales of Love, and Atlas/Seaboard Comics' in the early 1970s.

The iconic Universal monster pictures of the 1930s, Hammer Horror films, and Roger Corman's Poe cycle all saw a noteworthy comeback in 20th-century Gothic horror films. Beginning with the films *Mahal* (1949) and *Madhumati* (1950), the Gothic heritage was merged with features of Indian culture to give rise to an "Indian Gothic" genre (1958). *Sleepy Hollow*, *Interview with the Vampire*, *Underworld*, *The Wolfman*, *From Hell*, *Dorian Gray*, *Let The Right One In*, *The Woman in Black* and *Crimson Peak* are examples of modern Gothic horror films.



Penny Dreadful, a Showtime TV series, draws gothic figures in Victorian London (2014 debut). In Penny Dreadful TV series, the character of Vanessa Ives says:

We're most who we are. Unrestrained. Ourselves. (1)

Gothic writers such as H. P. Lovecraft's themes were also exploited by gothic rock and heavy metal bands, particularly in black metal, thrash metal (Metallica's *The Call of Ktulu*), death metal, and gothic metal. Heavy metal vocalist King Diamond, for instance, takes great pleasure in telling tales of satanism, theatrically, horror, and anti-Catholicism in his music.

Several video games include Gothic horror themes and stories. For example, the *Castlevania* series explores dark, fighting vampires, werewolves, and other gothic elements.

The essence of Mystery and Suspense: Mystery and Suspense are the main elements in early Gothic architecture. The early examples can be found in Poems and Victorian Texts from Edgar Allan Poe to Fritz Lang's 1927 Film *Metropolis*, Ann Radcliffe's Novel *The mysteries of Udolpho* in 1794. Mystery can always create multiple illusions in readers mind Anne Frank says:

Look at how a single candle can both defy and define the darkness. (1)

Element of Paranormal Activity: To generate the essence of fear authors often used Ghosts, Spirits, and Vampires. The early examples of Paranormal activity can be found in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in 1897 Gothic fantasy.

Unnatural Setting and weather: These unrealistic settings of Gothic literature typically fall in dark forests, castles, and other dark and void places with religious significance that have secrets and mysteries of their own.

Dramatic elements: Dramatic elements run deep into gothic literature that highlights the essence of Gothic literature.

Overburdened male Protagonist: Gothic Fiction has Solidified, the Vulnerable yet strong dark male Protagonists.

Inner Devil: The Main characters are tapped in two anxieties with different faces, that awaken the inner beast. The early examples include Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).

Death: Death is a common affair in Early Gothic literature. Evidence can be derived from early Vampires and Spirit-based Characters. There is also evidence of Gothic novelists' obsession with dead women.

Nightmares, a common affair: Gothic novelists use Nightmares to intensify the fear, dark plot, and Paranormal activities. The writers such as Walpole, Stoker, and Shelley took inspiration from unsettling and vivid nightmares to depict emotion.

Distress: Emotional Distress in a Character runs deep in Gothic literature. It is found in many gothic Novels from the 20th Century such as Emily in Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and Matilda in Horace Walpole's " *The Castle of Otranto*". Another critic Edmund Burk says:

Beauty in distress is much the most affecting beauty. (312,313).

The writers, Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*), and Bram Stoker (*Dracula*), beautifully depicted gothic literature elements such as Mystery, Suspense, horror, unrealistic seating, death, and evil minds.

In the novel *Frankenstein*, Shelly used a mysterious and supernatural plot to depict horror. She uses mystery and suspense to have the main character Victor Frankenstein. She beautifully employed the elements of science that were yet to explore, like macabre research and the rising of the dead. Victor Frankenstein's lab used to create experiments creating suspense and mystery.



In the Novel *Dracula*, Bram Stoker used three main elements of gothic literature including nature, isolation, and a supernatural setting. Forces of nature and feared animals such as wolves and forests were seen throughout the novel. While the unrealistic plot of *Dracula's Castle* is far from human reality, Many other gothic elements were added such as death and blood to add more spark into horror. *Dracula* was portrayed as an evil mind which plans on dominating the world by conquering London.

Science- Both *Dracula* and *Frankenstein* are frightening adventures questioning science that makes them supernatural. All in all these novels had gothic elements but questioning science and creating supernatural monsters and evil minds was the main theme. *Frankenstein in Shelly's Frankenstein says*

The ancient teachers of this science promised impossibilities...They have acquired new and almost unlimited powers; they can command the thunders of heaven, mimic the earthquake. (Shelly 46)

The journeys, Nightmares, and unrealistic settings like wilderness, forests, and evil characters can be seen in American Gothic literature based in Native America.

The American Novelists have also inspired Madness into Characters. The evidence can be found in the Novel *Edgar Huntley* or *Memoirs of SleepWalkers*. Charles Brockden Brown wrote about two characters being deranged.

4. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, Gothic literature witnessed a huge transformation from 19th century to 20th-century novels, but the idea behind the dark, and mysterious genre remained the same. Today's modern authors try to depict current societal issues and social cultures through the lens of gothic literature. The American Gothic literature took influences from European gothic literature and exploited the genre with Puritan imagery that has a significant impact on American society. All in all, early gothic literature has had an impact on modern gothic literature and American gothic literature for many centuries, these early texts continue to inspire modern writers to see through modern society in gothic literature.

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