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THE GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN ROMANTICISM AND POSTMODERNISM : COMPARISON



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Abstract :

This paper is a comparative analysis of Gothic Romanticism and Gothic postmodernism; these movements are separated by time and culture. Both movements are to some extent rejected the past. After a brief introduction of gothic, the elements of gothic in Romanticism and postmodernism will be analysed. This paper is divided into three parts, the first part explains what Gothic is and the second part is Gothic Romanticism and the third part

explains Gothic postmodernism as well as similarities between the Gothic Romanticism and Gothic postmodernism.

Keywords : Terror and Horror, sublime of terror, Female gothic, postmodern sublime, hauntology

Research Paper :

What is Gothic ?

The term *gothic* was basically referred to describe the art and literature; later it occupied all the areas of the fantastic and supernatural. The Gothic novel, a literary genre was formed in 1764 when Horace Walpole wrote 'The Castle of Otranto' comprising the Gothic elements. The Gothic novels deal with terror, horror, insanity and the supernatural mystery. The setting and atmosphere of gothic novel is gloomy, haunted houses, old castle with secret passages, trapdoors, it creates horror in mind.

Gothic Romanticism :

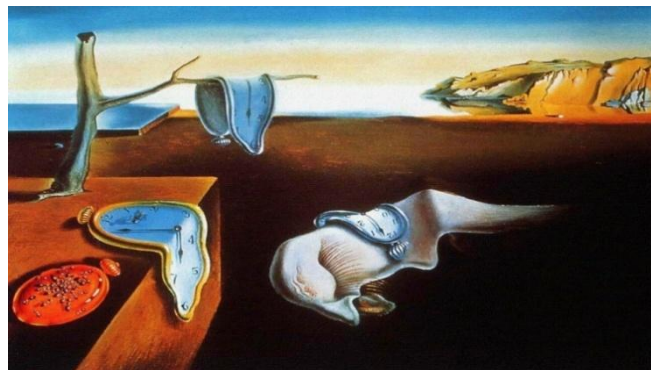


The murder of Archbishop Thomas Becket, at Canterbury Cathedral, is depicted here in a stained-glass window.

Gothic and Romanticism are the two genres which began in 18th century, many romantic writer have depicted the gothic horror. The gothic writers in Romanticism are the romantic Byronic hero Lord Byron (Augustus Darvell), John Polidori's *The Vampyre*, Samuel Coleridge's *Christabel* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, John Keat's *Isabella or The Pot of Basil*. Early Romanticists and Gothic fiction are inspired from the medieval literature, John Macpherson's poems are Gothic in nature and there are Gothic elements in painting. Gothic painting describes the style of natural forms and delicate realism. The greatest Romantic painters Henry Fusseli and Francisco Goya depicted ugliness and starkness, terror and pain and the elements of sublime. The late 18th century Gothic architecture, stained glass flourished as the expansion of immense window spaces in gothic cathedrals. Red and Blue were the predominant colours.

Most of the Gothic novels in Romanticism were written by female writers. There were one or two male characters having the power to dominate women. Basically, women are depicted in bad condition. They reject the patriarchal order and the leading characters in Gothic novel are heroines. R.D. Hume defines Gothic in a 1969 article titled "Gothic verses Romantic : A Revaluation of the Gothic novel", he differed the novel of terror and the novel of horror. He argues that the novel of terror is Redcliffean means the novels written by Ann Redcliff whereas the novel of horror is Lewisian means the novels written by Lewis. Edmund Burk's 'Sublime of Terror'. In *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1757), he argues that sublime is the source of terror, pain and danger. Terror and pain are the parts of emotions. Anything that is great, excessive and vague could be an object of terror and the sublime.

Gothic Postmodernism :



Dali's use of bent and melting clocks represents an unusual perception of time

The Gothic postmodernism encompasses a wide variety of disciplines or areas of study including Art, Architecture, Music, Film, Literature, Sociology, communication, Fashion and Technology, paintings of Salvador Dali's Maria Beville analyses in Gothic postmodernism that Gothicism is deeply rooted with postmodernism which shows binary oppositions, the example of a Gothic postmodernism is Paul Auster's City and Glass. Auster depicts the detailed issue of the emotion of terror as it connects to loss reality and selfness and to death. Another example of Gothic postmodernism is 'America Psycho' by Bret Easton Ellis. It belongs to slasher film genre. It contains the elements of postmodernism as well as Gothic. America Psycho focuses on the superficiality of a consumer society and it parodies horror narratives. Gothic postmodernism shows comical exaggeration, parody, irony or superficiality.

Margaret Atwood's novels are highly rooted in Gothic Postmodernism. Atwood explores the meaning of art and literature as well as the Gothic in the poetry collection *The Animals in that Country* (1968), has been assessed as fitting neatly into the Gothic tradition. In Atwood's 'Lady Oracle' the protagonist John foster who writes "costume Gothics" is a good example of Gothic Postmodernism. The relationship between mothers and daughters in this novel depicts twentieth century female identity. Atwood's other novel contains the Gothic elements and other gothic novels of Atwood are 'Handmaid's Tale, Cat's Eye, The Servant Girl, The Blind Assassin, Surfacing has been considered as an example of female Gothic.

Derrida, Lyotard, Baudrillard and Zizek talk Gothic imaginary in the interpretation of Lacan. Lyotard views to the postmodern sublime which is observed as directly related in terror. Zizek on sublime relates to Lyotard and explores how the Gothic sublime is depicted in postmodern texts. Derrida's Hauntology is basically related with history. Derrida points out that as a matter to be or not to be: Repetition and the first time, but also repetition and the last time, since singularity of any first time makes of it also a last time. Altogether other staging for the end of the history it is called Hauntology.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, this paper has defined and analysed the major features of Gothic Romanticism and Gothic postmodernism namely the crises of self, originality, parody, violation of boundaries. I wish to analyse Gothic elements by defining both movements and their relation to Gothic literature while analyzing the two periods. We will come to know the similarities of female Gothic writers. In postmodernism, female gothic writers are influenced by Romantic female gothic writers. As lady oracle has been compared to Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey for its parodic elements and commentary on the relationship between reality and representation of it in Gothic literature. The Blind Assassin paralleled with twisted, complex plot, female protagonist which underlines sense of terror, narrative structure. It closely resembles romantic work of Gothic literature. To single out the features of Gothic romanticism and Gothic Postmodernism, the difference is as follows :

Gothic Romanticism	Gothic Postmodernism
Anti-Humanist	Antiform
Decorum	Anarchy
Return to nature	Return to science
Female Gothic writer	Polymorphous
Sublime of terror	Postmodern Sublime

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