



## ANALYSIS OF MAIN GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN ENGLISH BILDUNGSROMANS

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### ANNOTATION

*This article delves into the Gothic elements existing in English Bildungsromans, exploring the ways in which these elements contribute to the genre. Through a meticulous literature analysis, the study aims to identify and categorize key Gothic features in novels of formation, highlighting their significance and impact on the overall narrative. The authors of this genre often address to the description of horror and mystery in order to raise the curiosity of the reader and make the literary work more appealing.*

**KEYWORDS:** Gothic elements, novels of formation, Bildungsroman, theme, hero, author, genre.

The Gothic genre has long been associated with dark, mysterious settings, strange atmospheres, and supernatural occurrences. While traditionally applied to works of horror and romance, these elements were first used in Spanish literature. Gothic literature is another branch of fiction which became popular in Europe in the late 1700s, and some sources describe such works as “horror novels”.<sup>1</sup> They are novels describing supernatural forces and horrible events in Western European and American literature of the second half of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century.<sup>2</sup>

In “Jane Eyre”, the first novel of formation about a woman (“Female Bildungsroman”), which has a special place in English literature, the writer Charlotte Bronte skillfully used the same combination of elements of gothic style. An example of an English Bildungsromans with Gothic elements is Charlotte Brontë’s “Jane Eyre,” where the setting of the Lowood School and the mysterious atmosphere surrounding Thornfield Hall incorporates many Gothic elements into the narrative.

In the novel, the Gothic feature is manifested, first of all, in the example of the “red room”: ... *hung with curtains of deep red damask, stood out like a tabernacle in the centre; the two large windows, with their blinds always drawn down, were half shrouded in festoons and falls of similar drapery; the carpet was red; the table at the foot of the bed was covered with a crimson cloth.*<sup>3</sup>

Through the imagination of the girl Jane, this room looks mysterious, prison-like and evokes a feeling of horror. Jane, the heroine of the novel, imprisoned in this room, describes the red room as a room with curtains made of dark red thick fabric.

In the course of the work, it is told that Jane grows up, leaves Lowood School, and starts living in Thornfield as the governess of Mr. Rochester’s adopted daughter, Adela. Here, the author confronts the reader with Bertha Rochester, a “ghost” character found in many Gothic novels - a demented woman locked in an attic. Her unusual noises and wild actions increase the suspense in the novel. From the first day, Jane hears strange noises and laughter coming from one of the empty rooms. From the images given by the author, the reader comes to the conclusion that there must be some ghosts in the house. One evening, just after Jane’s eyes fell asleep, she was awakened by a loud noise. It was a strange, indistinct voice that seemed to be just above her. Jane describes the event as follows:

*“I rose and sat up in bed, listening. The sound was hushed. I tried again to sleep; but my heart beat anxiously: my inward tranquillity was broken. The clock, far down in the hall, struck two. Just then it seemed my chamber-door was touched; as if fingers had swept the panels in groping a way along the dark gallery outside. I said, “Who is there?” Nothing answered. I was chilled with fear.”*<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Хотамов Н., Саримсоқов Б. Адабиётшунослик терминларининг русча-ўзбекча изоҳли луғати. – Тошкент: Ўқитувчи, 1979. – Б. 264.

<sup>2</sup> O’rayeva D., Quvvatova D. Jahon adabiyoti atamalarining izohli lug’ati. – Toshkent: Turon zamin ziyo, 2015. – B. 161.

<sup>3</sup> Charlotte Bronte. Jane Eyre. – Smith, Elder and Co., Cornhill, Third Edition, 1857. – P. 14.

<sup>4</sup> Charlotte Bronte. Jane Eyre. Smith, Elder and Co., Cornhill. – Third Edition, 1857. – P. 174.



From his first works, an English writer Ch. Dickens also included in his novels an artistic image characteristic of Gothic novels. He used the rich thematic and metaphorical techniques of these traditions to engage his readers. At the same time, the author manages to reflect the “dark scenes of British society” by creating a scary and mysterious atmosphere.<sup>5</sup> His novel “Great Expectations” is a clear proof of our words. Researcher John Bowen calls this work a “Gothic novel” in his article “The Gothic in Great Expectations Portraits”.<sup>6</sup> The reason for this is that the work is enriched with many supernatural, abstract and mysterious images. The terrifying and mysterious atmosphere that Ch. Dickens gave at the beginning of the novel dominates until the end of the work. The image of the village in the swamp, the foggy day, the arrival of young Pip near the church, the graves of his parents and five brothers, the image of a rude and scary man who appears in front of the church terrifies the reader. The hero of the work, the boy Pip, was afraid thinking that a man came out of the grave, and the reader will experience the same feeling.

Gothic elements in novels of formation can add a layer of mystery, suspense, and often a sense of the supernatural to the narrative. While Gothic literature is typically associated with romance and horror, it has been integrated into various genres, including Bildungsromans. Here are some main Gothic elements you might find in those novels:

#### Atmosphere and Setting:

- Mysterious Settings: Gothic novels often feature mysterious and isolated settings, such as old, imposing schools, castles, or large, eerie campuses.
- Weather: Stormy weather, mist, and darkness contribute to the eerie atmosphere commonly found in Gothic literature.

#### Architecture

- Decaying Buildings: Dilapidated, decaying, or haunted buildings are common in Gothic literature. In educational novels, this might be an old school building with a dark past.

#### Supernatural Elements

- Ghosts and Apparitions: The presence of ghosts, spirits, or apparitions can heighten the supernatural atmosphere, perhaps linked to a tragic event in the school’s history.
- Curses and Prophecies: A curse or prophecy can add an element of inevitability and foreboding to the story.

#### Mystery and Suspense

- Secrets and Hidden Passages: Characters may uncover secrets and hidden passages within the school, revealing a darker side to the institution.
- Unknown Identities: Characters with mysterious backgrounds or hidden identities can contribute to the overall sense of mystery.

#### Romantic Elements

- Forbidden Love: The theme of forbidden or taboo love can add a romantic Gothic element to the plot.
- Tragic Romance: Tragic love stories, often involving lost loves or unfulfilled desires, are common in Gothic literature.

#### Character Types

- Byronic Hero or Antihero: A brooding, mysterious, and morally ambiguous protagonist may be present.
- Villains: The presence of a menacing antagonist or a villainous force can create tension and conflict.

#### Symbolism

- Symbolic Objects: Objects with symbolic significance, such as a key or a specific artifact, may play a role in the plot.
- Dark Imagery: Gothic literature often uses dark and symbolic imagery to evoke a sense of foreboding and mystery.

#### Emotional Intensity

- Intense Emotions: Characters experiencing extreme emotions like fear, passion, and despair contribute to the overall Gothic atmosphere.

The discussion delves into the implications of these findings, exploring the symbiotic relationship between the Gothic and educational elements. The incorporation of Gothic elements in educational novels serves not only to captivate readers but also to emphasize the emotional and psychological aspects of the learning experience. This section also considers the potential impact on

<sup>5</sup> Robert Mighall. “Gothic Criticism”. *A New Companion to the Gothic* (2000). – P. 265-287.

<sup>6</sup> Zakir Ullah, Ahmad Ullah, Haroon Iqbal, Zohaib Zahir, Akbar Zaman. *Great Expectations: A Manifestation of Gothicism and Romanticism. International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD) Volume 4 Issue 5, August, 2020 Available Online: www.ijtsrd.com e-ISSN: 2456 – 6470*



readers and educational discourse, discussing how Gothic elements contribute to a more engaging and thought-provoking narrative.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study illuminates the dynamic interplay between Gothic elements and the genre of Bildungsromans. The infusion of Gothic themes adds depth and complexity to the portrayal of educational settings and characters. Moving forward, scholars and educators can use these insights to explore innovative ways of incorporating Gothic elements into educational literature, fostering a more engaging and enriching learning experience for readers.

Future research could delve deeper into the reception of Gothic-infused educational novels among readers, exploring the psychological and pedagogical implications. Additionally, comparative studies across different cultural and historical contexts could shed light on the universality of Gothic elements in educational narratives.

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