



Book Review

Book review of the Monk in terms of psychological perspective

Tugce Pinar Tukenmez¹

Master student, Social Sciences Institute, Istanbul Aydin University, Istanbul, Turkiye

Article Info

Received: 22 November 2022

Accepted: 17 December 2022

Available online: 30 Dec 2022

Keywords:

Gothic

Horror

Monk

Psychological perspective

Terror

Abstract

This work of gothic literature (*The Monk*) was written by quoting the two important elements of gothic literature, 'horror' and 'terror', through the examples in the book and the ideas of important gothic literature representatives (Ann Radcliffe etc.). And what the reader feels while reading this book and what emotions he finds himself in, this situation is discussed psychologically in the article. There is a discussion of space, which is another of the Gothic elements. What feelings does the reader find himself in when he visits these places? And in the last part this gothic of mine. I discuss my own perspective and feelings towards the elements.

2717-7602 / © 2022 The PRESS.

Published by Young Wise Pub. Ltd.

This is an open access article under

the CC BY-NC-ND license



To cite this article

Tukenmez, T. P. (2022). Book review of the Monk in terms of psychological perspective. *Psychology Research on Education and Social Sciences*, 3(4), 127-129.

Introduction

This essay critically examines *The Monk* that is written by Lewis by highlighting the function of the gothic features, such as “horror “and terror in keeping with the claims of Ann Radcliffe. In the pages that follow, it will be depicted things that creates” experience of sublime” and it will be addressed another gothic fiction terms such as “taboo, “transgression”, and “violation”, that are essential. Finally, this essay will be finished by discussing, sharing and explaining my opinion as to where I would pinpoint in this literary work of Lewis in accordance with Todorov’s scale.

This paper has been divided into three parts. The first part deals with “horror” and “terror” with the claims of Ann Radcliffe by analysing *The Monk* by Lewis. Gothic literature has two important and essential terms that are “horror” and “terror”. One of the pioneer of this literature is Ann Radcliffe claims her ideas and explains them in detail and with examples on her works. She separates them. ²Radcliffe posits that terror is the useful thing for the readers, since terror gives the reader extensive perspective. It invokes the reader, expands the soul of the reader and also opens a new door to the reader when it reads it. The reader wonders and feels unease because of unknown. It does not give any description or show anything to the readers. It just evokes the feelings of the readers by suggestive way. Alarm bells are set off during the novel or a story. The possibilities are given to the reader and the reader starts to think that terrifying things can happen in a moment. All in all, it is beyond the reader’s and our signification, reason, knowledge or mundane that is

¹ Master student, Social Sciences Institute, Istanbul Aydin University, Istanbul, Turkiye. E-mail: tugcetukenmez@stu.aydin.edu.tr ORCID: 0000-0001-7269-8100

² ENG570, Fantastic Literature, 19th April, 11-12,13.

usual. Terror alerts the reader's attention throughout the story or the novel. So, the reader's expectation lasts throughout it. Moreover, it is a vital thing in a gothic novel or story. If the story or the novel does not have this feeling, it is a rubbish. When *The Monk* is analysed in terms of the "terror", there are various examples in it. Therefore, the reader feels the terror in deep down. First of all, when Raymond's story was analysed in terms of "terror", he and his servants had an accident in the dark forest, they sheltered in a cottage house.³ Suddenly, he realizes that terrible things will happen in this house through Marguerite who is the wife of Bapsiste. She shows a sheet which is full of blood, this action confuses him. So, she starts to terrify because it is abnormal thing, he cannot know what happens in the end. So, the reader can start to terrify. Since nothing is shown or described. It is beyond the signification and mundane life. The reader starts to wonder question possibilities. Moreover, another example of "terror" is again Raymond's story with Bleeding Nun. When Raymond and Agnes makes an escape plan by using Bleeding Nun, everything turns upside down. Bleeding Nun comes to carriage, thunder, lightning, darkness area happening, and the owl that symbolises death and terrible possibilities provide in the dark area but it is not described what will happen a minute later. It is not shown explicitly It is shown in a suggestive way. This the alarm bell for the reader.

The reader starts to feel experience of sublime. It is not usual thing, it is unknown. Furthermore, this⁴ Bleeding Nun starts to visit Raymond, before it comes, everything becomes strange. The lights turning on and off suddenly. So, this actions takes the reader's attention by giving a suggestive way. Nobody can know what will happen in the end. It terrorizes the reader and makes the reader unease. In addition to these examples, there is a story on Ambrosio who is clerk. When he and Matilda travel to a cave, there are terrifying object everywhere around the graveyard. There are terrifying noise and strange lights around it. It is again given in a suggestive way, not explicitly described to the reader. The reader starts to terrify repeatedly, these are not explained. They are beyond the knowledge and the reason. Possibilities are emerged into. Unknown and unfamiliarity keep the attention of the readers.

⁵The second term "horror" is explained by Ann Radcliffe. Radcliffe claims that "horror" is a negative thing and it has bad effects on the reader. They are morally bad for the people and the reader. Violence, assaults, rapes, murders are the explicitly shown in the story or the novel. Hence, it freezes the mind of the readers, readers cannot think any possibilities. Therefore, the reader has a passive role during the violence, rape, assaults and murders part in the text. It gives all description of these horrible things. So, these kinds of terrible things misguide the reader and it does not give the sense of sublime. It just makes shocked the readers. It damages the mind of the reader with these horrific scenes. On the contrary of "terror", it disables the reader in the text. Everything takes down with this element. In a nutshell, it is an unnecessary thing for a story or novel.

In the analysis of *The Monk* in terms of "horror", there are clear examples on Ann Radcliffe's assertions. ⁶In Raymond's story, Marguerite kills her husband mercilessly with the help of Raymond. This scene is too horrible. Therefore, it misguides to its reader. The reader cannot think any of the possibilities, it just focuses on the violence. As it seen, it has no good effect on the readers. On the other hand, when Ambrosio' story is analysed, he tries to rape Antonia. It again misguides and affects badly to its readers. In this scene, reader's attention is directed to the violence that is experienced by an innocent girl. The reader's mind freezes at the moment of this scene, it cannot think what will happen a minute later. Later, Ambrosio kills Antonia's mother mercilessly. The reader again morally is disrupted by the violence. The reader has no role in such actions, since these passivates the reader in the story or the novel. To sum up, Ann Radcliffe's assertions on "horror" and "terror" effects in a text are clearly examined with the help of *The Monk* by Lewis. Her claims are on these terms and effects are undoubtedly suit when a book is analysed with her perspective.

³ Lewis, Gregory Mathew, No Date, No Publisher, 149-151.

⁴ Lewis, Gregory Mathew, No Date, No Publisher, 212, 219

⁵ ENG570, Fantastic Literature, 19th April, 11-13

⁶ Lewis, Gregory Mathew, No Date, No Publisher, 165-166.

⁷The second part of this essay aims to analyse *The Monk* in terms of “taboo”, “violation” and “transgression” with the claims of Fred Botting. There are some certain taboos in every community. One of the most important is prohibiting killing people and raping. People must obey these rules. There is a sharp barrier for the people. However, in the assertion of Freud (he uses a kid example. “When a mother prohibits something for her kid, it desires to actualize this prohibition.” Hence, taboos are seemed more desirable for a person since it is forbidden. In *The Monk*, Ambrosio’s desire to actualize this forbidden thing is the example of this. He mustn’t have a sex with a woman because he is a clerk but he exceeds. Firstly, he starts to have a sex with a woman and after he cannot control himself. Hence, he tries to rape Antonia and kills her mother mercilessly. Moreover, he gives his soul to the Lucifer. These taboos wake him. He cannot handle it. On the other hand, he violated these norms and taboos by acting like this. “Violation” destroys these taboos by killing the people and raped them. Violation is not morally good thing. Moreover “transgression” does not destroy these taboos and norms. It does what it should be. In *The Monk*, Ambrosio tortured because of sins and also he will be killed in front of the people. It should be happened because he violated the rules. He should be punished and killed. This is not morally bad thing. He deserves that. Hence this taboo should be transgressed.

⁸Finally, this part of the study focuses on discussing and sharing my opinion as to where I would pinpoint in *The Monk* according to Todorov’s scale. My hesitation keeps until the end of the novel. In the end, I accept the supernatural beings such as Lucifer are existing. I can explain them in terms of my faith. There are demons such as Lucifer. Their existences can be explained by the religion. They seduce and manipulate people for forbidden things easily. Ambrosio is seduced by the demons. However, he is worse than the demons. Since, he killed his own mother and tries to rape his own sister!

References

- Botting Fred, Routledge, 1995, 4-6.
 ENG570, Fantastic Literature, 19th April, 11-12,13.
 ENG570, Fantastic Literature, 19th April, 11-13
 Edward, J., & Farah, M. (2012). *The Cambridge Companion to Fantastic Literature*, Cambridge University Press
 Lewis, Gregory Mathew, No Date, No Publisher, 149-151
 Lewis, Gregory Mathew, No Date, No Publisher, 212, 219
 Sandner, D. (2006). Theorizing the Fantastic: Editing Fantastic Literature: A Critical Reader and the Six Stages of Fantasy Criticism. *Journal of the Fantastic in the Arts*, 16(4)(64), 277–301.
 Todorov, Tzvetan, A Structural Approach to A Literary Genre, Cornell University Press, New York, 1975, 41,43,45.
 Todorov, Tzvetan, ENG570, Fantastic Literature, 22nd of March, 41-47

⁷ Botting Fred, Routledge, 1995, 4-6.

⁸ Todorov, Tzvetan, ENG570, Fantastic Literature, 22nd of March, 41-47