

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE IN MANIFESTATION OF HOPE IN GOTHIC LITERATURE

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Abstract: Gothic literature is recognized by elements of the macabre, the supernatural, and the psychological depths of human experiences. While these dark settings and psychological distress are frequently seen in these fictions, there is still hope lying beneath the centre of the whole picture, fragile and flickering yet existing. This article explores how Gothic authors use figurative language in the form of metaphor, symbolism, personification, irony, and allegory to express hope lying under horror or despair. By employing the qualitative approach with a descriptive methodology grounded in conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), psychoanalytic Gothic theory (Freud; Kristeva), this paper examines a variety of recognized Gothic texts from both the 18th and 19th centuries and their modern counterparts. Maintaining that thread of hope through figurative language, Gothic writers can strongly express the complexity of human resilience, the longing for transcendence, and redemptive possibilities implied in suffering. Furthermore, this article discusses how figurative language accomplishes two apparently opposing tasks: to unsettle and elevate at the same time, and to show the grotesque while visualizing the sublime. Therefore, this paper works best for readers and scholars, or individuals who seek to find out the interactions of form and meaning that can serve as tools for the depiction of hope and create a layered emotional effect.

Keywords: figurative language, Gothic literature, hope, manifestation, fictions

I. Introduction

Gothic literature has been represented with haunted landscapes, grieving heroes, and supernatural occurrences. Enlightenment rationalism in the late 18th century ignited the Gothic genre, which offers an aesthetic experience rooted in fear, wonder, and the sublime. Gothic literature has been on a long journey from “*The Castle of Otranto*” by Horace Walpole (1764) to “*Frankenstein*”

by Mary Shelley (1818) and “*Wuthering Heights*” by Emily Brontë (1847), exploring madness, isolation, oppression, and the unknown. However, hope is rarely absent even in their bleak atmospheres, but still smolders tenaciously within the Gothic’s darkest moments. Thus, the use of figurative language is vital in attaining a balanced synthesis of terror and hope. The spectrum of emotions and affect in the works of the writers of the Gothic

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genre is quite broad. The use of metaphor, symbolism, and allegory converts physical disintegration into spiritual rebirth and haunted places into sites of psychological revelation and salvation.

The current study, through the exploration of the use of figurative language in the works of the writers of the Gothic genre, reveals its role as the primary means of expressing hope. Hence, the discussion of the selected works of the genre reveals the aspects of the grotesque and the possibilities of healing and salvation. The paper is divided into several thematic sections, each of which explores a specific type of figurative language and its role in the expression of hope.

II. Literature review

The Gothic literary genre, which has conventionally been characterized by darkness and decay, frequently conceals intricately psychological trauma along with its ominous atmosphere. Among such hidden complexities, hope surprisingly makes an appearance forming a part of the intricate themes in the genre. The literary devices used in handling hope include metaphor, symbolism, personification, and allegory. This paper will examine the current body of works related to figurative language in Gothic literary texts.

The Gothic mode of literature, according to Hogle (2002), often resorts to metaphorical language to project internal desires and fears, including themes such as redemption and liberation, which encompass the concept of hope. In David Punter's work "*The Gothic Tradition*" (2013), he makes the important distinction between the fear and hope entwined in the Gothic mode. Indeed, he identifies *hope*, rather than fear, as being central to the mode, in as much as "*the*

possibility of transcendence" defines the existence of *hope* in contrast to fear. Thus, in "*Frankenstein*" by Mary Shelley, the Arctic environment surrounding Victor's tragedy underscores his despair, although his hope of companionship, conveyed in poetic language laced with symbolism, defines his connection with his creation.

Although much work has been done in the realm of Gothic studies, specifically in relation to the use of figurative language in the genre, surprisingly few direct investigations have been made between such stylistic features and the related themes of hope. Rather, investigations have predominantly been made related to fear, death, and madness, providing an understudied avenue in relation to the discourse of resilience in and through metaphorical language. Indeed, according to Byron (1999), the Gothic narrative invites us to imagine alternatives even in a discourse of fear.

Research Questions

1. How is figurative language used to manifest or symbolize hope in Gothic literature?

2. What types of figurative devices (e.g., metaphor, symbolism, personification) are most commonly employed in expressing hope within Gothic narratives?

3. How does the interplay between despair and hope in Gothic literature reflect broader social, psychological, or philosophical tensions?

4. In what ways do gender, setting, and historical context influence the figurative representation of hope in Gothic texts?

This study seeks to fill a scholarly gap by investigating how figurative language mediates the paradox of hope within a genre largely defined by its focus on fear and despair.

III. Methods

3.1. Setting of the study

This study analyzes the cultural and literary context that led to the emergence of the Gothic genre, focusing on its development from the late eighteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. Despite extensive studies of traditional Gothic genre topics such as fear, darkness, and trauma, this article sheds light on aspects that are rarely discussed in the intersection of literary analysis and

3.2. Participants of the Study

Table 1. Corpus Selection Criteria

Corpus	Criteria of Selection	Canonical status	Thematic richness	Gothic critical engagement
<i>Frankenstein</i> by Mary Shelley		√	√	√
<i>Wuthering Heights</i> by Emily Brontë		√	√	√
<i>The Castle of Otranto</i> by Horace Walpole		√	√	√
<i>The Monk</i> by Matthew Lewis		√	√	√
<i>The Haunting of Hill House</i> by Shirley Jackson		√	√	√
Selected short stories by Edgar Allan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft		√	√	√
Contemporary works such as <i>Rebecca</i> by Daphne du Maurier and <i>Mexican Gothic</i> by Silvia Moreno-Garcia		√	√	√

3.3. Design of the Study

The present study follows a qualitative descriptive research design, which includes aspects of text analysis and topic coding. By applying literary hermeneutics, the present study adopts an interpretivist approach to reveal deeper meanings. The research design is primarily non-experimental, which is appropriate for addressing aspects of subjectivity present in any piece of literature. The present research aims to explore the role of figurative language and related tools in revealing aspects of hope in Gothic literature. The present research is not concerned with generalizing the findings, but rather with depth, richness, and the development of insights. As per

historical setting. Emerging from political and social conflicts, the study comes at a time when the Enlightenment era has begun to lose its glory. At the same time, the dawn of Romanticism, the Industrial Revolution, and the Civil War created a multifaceted setting of Gothic literature that features despondency and hope. In both geographical and symbolic settings, there are considerable opportunities to analyze how the manifestation of hope is subtly reflected in Gothic literature.

the criterion of sampling, the selected texts have been ensured to provide substantial evidence of the thematic exploration of Gothic elements and hope.

3.4. Data collection & analysis

3.4.1. Data selection

The methodology for collecting the data involves a close reading of the texts, focusing on the identification of figurative language that could serve as indicators or symbols of hope. The procedural steps of the methodology are textual annotation, extraction, clustering, and comparison.

3.4.2. Data analysis

The analysis process takes place at two levels: descriptive coding and interpretive thematic analysis.

- *Descriptive coding*: Each part of figurative language used in the texts was coded based on the type of figurative language used like metaphor, symbolism, allegory, personification. This gives permission for frequency analysis and the identification of dominant devices along the texts.

- *Thematic analysis*: The coded texts are analyzed for what they contribute to the creation and manifestation of hope. This consists of interpretive reading, contextual comparison, and theoretical application.

3.5. Analytical framework

The research employs an analytical framework to investigate the selected texts by integrating literary theory, metaphor theory, and Gothic criticism. The main theoretical perspectives used in this research are conceptual metaphor theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980), psychoanalytic Gothic theory (Freud; Kristeva), which provides an understanding of human desires and the uncanny, potentially linked to sublimated forms of hope, narratology, and thematics.

IV. Findings

4.1. Light in darkness: Metaphors of illumination

One of the most successful figurative devices conveying hope in Gothic fiction is the metaphor of the contrast between darkness and light. Often, the glow of enlightenment, spiritual awareness, or moral truth symbolized by the metaphor of light is contrasted with darkness.

Frankenstein, the work by Mary Shelley, incorporates the symbolism and metaphor of “light” in multiple ways. The obsessive quest of Victor Frankenstein to attain scientific knowledge is explained in

terms of “*pursuing the spark*,” whereas the creature talks about “*fire and light*” in terms of his quest for “*warmth*” and “*learning*.” Even in the ominous ending of the novel, the concluding dialogue, spoken by the creature in the Arctic environment, is saturated with “*metaphoric*” elements related to “*light*.” He states, “*I shall ascend my funeral pile triumphantly, and exult in the agony of the torturing flames.*” (Shelley, 1818, *Vol. III, Chapter VII*).

“*Flames*” in this instance could be interpreted in terms of both “*destruction*” and “*resurrection*” in the “*metaphorical*” phoenix.

Rarely does illumination appear in “*The Monk*” by Matthew Lewis. In detail, it arrives from time to time in moments of moral recognition or spiritual enlightenment. For instance, when Ambrosio admits the last confession, the situation is lit up by heavenly imagery. In the room shone by the moon, the scene is manifested almost to carry a quality of divinity, even in the most horrifying settings.

Actually, the metaphorical descriptions of light ought to be regarded as a fulcrum of expression, not an abatement in Gothic concerns with darkness or trauma. They encourage the reader to consider the notion that hope may be possible even amidst the dark despair of existence.

4.2. Nature as a symbolic refuge

Another common theme found in these works of fiction is the use of nature as a metaphorical tool for expressing hope and comfort. In the genre of Gothic fiction, the concept of nature is often portrayed as having two functions: one of articulating dark and apprehensive aspects of reality, and the other of redemptive power. The

novel *“Wuthering Heights”* represents the use of the moors by Emily Brontë in the articulation of the Gothic atmospheric properties of the moors and the metaphorical properties of the moors in the representation of the mental states of the characters. The imagery of *“Catherine’s desire to ‘become one with the wind’”* (Brontë, 1847, Vol. II, Chapter 2) and *“Heathcliff’s burial with her in ‘soft grass’”* (Brontë, 1847, Vol. III, Chapter 14) points to a certain peace offered in terms of the possibility of being one with nature even in death. The device of personification, whereby the moors *“weep”* or *“howl”* or *“embrace”* certain personalities, lends the moors the quality of emotionally equipped entities. The ending, with *“Cathy and Hareton walking together in the garden,”* is depicted in *“springtime images with gentle natural metaphors.”* (Brontë, 1847, Vol. III, Chapter 14).

The theme of nature is also apparent in the novel *“Rebecca”* by Daphne du Maurier (1938). Even though Manderley, the estate, is haunted by the spirit of *“Rebecca”* in the form of a ghost, the protagonist often feels rejuvenated in the vicinity of the sea or in the overgrown garden. The overgrown garden, with all the weeds, represents the possibility of *“rebirth”* in as much as the untamed, rather cruel, natural world outside must be offset by nature in the sense of nurturing and fertility.

The figurative function of nature in such works bears the implication that hope, even in precarious forms, might be grounded in the natural, the cyclic, and the eternal.

4.3. The supernatural as a vehicle of hope

The supernatural in Gothic fiction is frequently used to provoke fear, although the supernatural can also be used in hope,

especially when figured in literary terms, such as when death is figured not as an ending, but rather a transformation.

“The Haunting of Hill House” by Shirley Jackson is one such *“haunted house”* narrative, wherein the house represents both psychological disturbance and spiritual yearning. Whereas the ending might seem sorrowful inasmuch as Eleanor does indeed die, her ultimate identification with the house is narrated with words playing significantly on themes of belonging and return. The house *“welcomes”* her in, and her mind is preoccupied with *“sleep”* imagery and ideas of *“homecoming.”*

Edgar Allan Poe’s stories often involve supernatural imagery with strongly metaphorical overtones. The resurrection of Ligeia, in Emerson’s favorite *“Ligeia,”* is supernatural, with imagery heavy with religious and mythological meaning. But notice the contrast between the grim, rather horrible quality of Ligeia’s death, when *“she breathed her last sighs,”* with *“her white arms to fall,”* and the radiant, awe-inspiring quality of the resurrection, with *“her masses of long and dishevelled hair”* which *“was blacker than the raven wings of the midnight!”* (Poe, n.d., pp. 415-420).

These supernatural occurrences, when portrayed in metaphor and allegories, provide metaphorical maps in which hope is envisioned in terms beyond logic’s rational boundaries.

4.4. Personification of emotional landscapes

Personification appears to be one of the most important devices of figurative language used in the expression of internal conflict and desire in Gothic fiction. Through personification, the novelist

projects human qualities into inanimate objects, weather, or architectural features, turning the environment itself into a character representing or opposing the internal world of the protagonists.

Horace Walpole, in his work *"The Castle of Otranto"*, also personifies the castle in such a way that it reflects the quality of human judgment. The castle walls "groan," doors "shriek," and portraits "frown" in disapproval. These elements, although contributing to fear, also speak of a moral world in which justice is an absolute, in which one might hope to secure justice in place of punishing wrongdoing. Again, in *"Mexican Gothic"* by Silvia Moreno-Garcia, the house bursts with life in terms of fungi and psychic energy. This personification, whereby the house symbolically embodies qualities of being alive, almost motherly, nurturing, but also incarcerating, reflects the fight to be liberated experienced by the protagonist. However, with Noemí fighting back and ultimately conquering the influence of the house, the qualities attributed to the house fade away, symbolizing a restoration of her lost independence.

This means that the architectural and natural scenery of the Gothic, when personified, became not only mirrors of fear, but also battlegrounds of hope.

4.5. Memory, love, and redemption

A prevalent element in Gothic literature is the transformative role of memory and love. This is achieved through symbols and allegories. Love in Gothic literature is often able to transcend death, madness, or even sinful behavior.

In Henry James' *"Turn of the Screw"*, the governess's love for the children is conveyed with words that nearly attain the status of a religious iconography. Although

it is left uncertain at the close of the novel as to the status of the governess's love and care for the children, her conviction about her protector role is conveyed through the symbolism of "light," "purity," and "sacrifice." The governess's manuscript can well be called a symbol of memory and love.

In Poe's *"Annabel Lee,"* love is declared to be eternal, beyond the reach of death and separation. *"The sea"* - which is at other times related to the unconscious or the sublime - is here used as a "metaphor for the speaker's grief." But the refrained line of the poem itself draws upon hyperbole and metaphor to raise the emotional tie to a sublime or spiritual level.

These figurative uses of love and memory universalize experiences of personal loss to suggest that hope is embodied not in results, but in emotional loyalty.

4.6. Structural hope: Narrative arcs from despair to transcendence

Going beyond simple metaphors and symbols, findings revealed that whole story forms within Gothic literature can also be used as full-length allegories of hope. A journey from chaos to order, from haunting to healing, is often a reflection of a spiritual journey.

In *Jane Eyre*, a classic example of a "domestic Gothic" novel by Charlotte Brontë, Gothic conventions abound in Jane's progression as a character in the story: a mysterious mansion, secrets, the fall into madness, as well as a degree of exile. However, in a figure of speech that permeates the whole book, Jane is portrayed as a character who is akin to a phoenix. Fire is a theme that keeps repeating in the story: the literal fire that

damages Mr. Rochester, the symbolic fire of Jane's burning passions, as well as the transformative fire of Jane's discoveries.

Discussion

What becomes evident in this particular case is the fact that the use of figurative language in Gothic literature is a more complex issue than just the concern with the negative emotions like fear, darkness, and mental disturbance. Statedly, there is hope in this type of literature that is underestimated. One of the most intriguing discoveries to have arisen out of this analytical process is the usage of the metaphor as the "*light in the midst of darkness*". This is more than the simple affirmation of the richness of the Gothic tradition as a literary mode because it demolishes the Gothic assumptions. Clearly, there is a dialectical tension between despair and transcendence that is obviated through the usage of the literary metaphor.

Moreover, the employment of personification of the environment reveals another aspect of the Gothic as the externalization of emotional and psychological experiences. One other aspect is the employment of the supernatural as a metaphorical trope. While one could say that the supernatural is a fear of madness - a view of it that goes back decades as a means of looking at this trope in literature - that part of the story can also be a metaphorical way to say what one is trying to say. Ghosts, for one thing, instead of just horror figures lurking in stories, could mean a number of things, ranging from memory to a sense of justice.

In the end, the incorporation of figurative language in the overall composition of a story in terms of the hope for a recovery among those experiencing

hopelessness is the element that indicates Gothic literature, as a response to the negativity that permeates the genre itself, not defined or driven by the negativity. Consequently, there is hope within the aesthetics that needs to be identified.

V. Conclusion

This paper attempted to investigate the role of figurative language in the expression of hope in Gothic literature because it is usually defined in terms of fear and horror. From the close reading of Gothic literature carried out for this paper, it is apparent that metaphors and symbols have been playing a crucial role not only in creating a sense of fear and horror associated with Gothic literature but also in expressing hope.

These outcomes depauperate naïve assumptions of Gothic literature as a pessimistic or nihilistic genre. Alternatively, they show that there is a form of emotional experience in which hope co-exists with despair, sometimes reservedly, sometimes recklessly. This cannot be made without a variety of figurative tools, including illumination, topographical healing, and ghosts serving as indicators of narrative as well as figurative entities.

On the other hand, these findings are important in the greater context of literary studies as they not only locate the Gothic mode within the framework of "*dark*" cultural and psychological expression but also within the purview of transformation, hope, and resilience. Therefore, this work provides a background for the interrogation of hope, love, or faith as marginalized emotions in "*dark*" genres.

One direction that might be taken by future research in this area is the investigation of such figurative hope in

non-Western varieties of the Gothic. One thing that can be confidently asserted at this point, however, is that hope is not simply the opposite of horror in Gothic fiction but is constructed from it through the imaginative power of the figure.

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NGÔN NGỮ TƯỢNG HÌNH TRONG BIỂU LỘ HY VỌNG Ở VĂN CHƯƠNG GÔ-TÍCH

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Tóm tắt: Văn chương Gô-tích có đặc trưng luôn khai thác những điều rùng rợn, siêu nhiên, và chiều sâu tâm lý trong trải nghiệm của con người. Trong khi những bối cảnh tối tăm và nỗi trầm uất thường xuyên xuất hiện thì vẫn có bóng dáng của hy vọng nằm ngay dưới bề mặt của rùng rợn và tuyệt vọng. Bằng lối tiếp cận định tính và phương pháp miêu tả dựa trên lý thuyết ẩn dụ khái niệm (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) và lý thuyết Gothic phân tâm học (Freud; Kristeva), bài viết xem xét các tác phẩm văn học Gô-tích nổi tiếng từ thế kỷ 18, 19, cũng như những bản tương đương hiện đại của chúng. Giữ mạch biểu lộ hy vọng, các nhà văn theo trường phái Gô-tích có thể nêu bật lên sự phức tạp trong khả năng phục hồi của con người, khát vọng siêu thoát, và những khả năng cứu chuộc ẩn chứa trong đau khổ. Hơn thế nữa, bài viết cũng thảo luận cách ngôn ngữ tượng hình thực hiện hai nhiệm vụ song hành nhưng dường như đối lập: vừa xáo trộn vừa nâng cao giá trị, vừa thể hiện sự kì dị vừa vẽ lên sự siêu phàm. Do đó, bài viết này hữu ích nhất cho những độc giả và học giả, hoặc bất kỳ ai muốn tìm hiểu sự tương tác giữa hình thức và ý nghĩa được sử dụng như những công cụ để miêu tả hy vọng và tạo ra hiệu ứng cảm xúc đa tầng.

Từ khóa: ngôn ngữ tượng hình, văn chương Gô-tích, hy vọng, biểu lộ, văn xuôi

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