

**DIMENSIONS OF THE GOTHIC IN HORACE
WALPOLE'S *THE CASTLE OF OTRANTO*
(GÓTIKUS DIMENZIÓK HORACE WALPOLE
OTRANTO KASTÉLYA CÍMŰ MŰVÉBEN)**

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Lust, murder, incest, and every atrocity that can disgrace human nature, brought together, without the apology of probability, or even possible for their introduction.

We are sorry to observe that good talents have been misapplied in the introduction of this monster.
(The British Critic 7, June 1796)

Introduction

The 18th century provided a big change in literature; namely, Gothicism and Romanticism started to dominate over Neoclassicism, in other words the dominance of imagination, national past, and nostalgia over order, clarity, and the present. This national past deprived of rationality and cultivation was called Gothic, “a general and derogatory term for the Middle Ages which conjured up in barbarous customs and practises, of superstition, ignorance, extravagant fancies and natural wildness”(Botting 22). In this paper my aim is to represent the most characteristic features of the Gothic as a forerunner of Romanticism in the setting of the first English Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto* written by Horace Walpole.

Neoclassicism determined literature in the first half of the century, which style favoured order and clarity in fiction (we can think of the unity of time, place, and action). Writers tried to demonstrate the shortcomings of the society by showing a mirror to it; in addition, they wanted to make the frivolous high society ridiculous by emphasizing and focusing on their errors. Mostly political and social questions were dealt with; and writers expressed general and universal ideas in a rather impersonal style. The most common genre, the satire had a highly critical tone through which satirists

wanted to suggest reforms for the social problems mentioned above and to settle certain values. Besides these, another important feature of the satire is its time-bound existence; therefore, satiric works use reason and rationality to express their 'moral teaching'. Jonathan Swift described the satire as "a sort of glass, wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own, which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets in the world, and that so very few are offended with it" (Swift 10). At the same time he also states that he knows nothing that "moves so strongly but satire, and those who are ashamed of nothing else are so of being ridiculous" (Swift 11).

The first half of the 18th century was also called the Age of Reason since not just in literature but also in science and people's ways of thinking logical ideas and materialism; in other words, reason and reality were dominating. Especially the ideas of Newton influenced the Age of Reason he was also regarded as 'the miracle of the present age'. As Alexander Pope's famous couplet makes clear, Newton personified the enlightenment and was the emblematic figure of the age: "Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in Night; / God said Let Newton be! and all was Light" (Sambrook 2). People started to become sceptic about general ideas and views offered to them, and were gradually reaching the state of mind when they wished to experience the phenomena of the world on their own. On the one hand, this Age of Enlightenment seemed to be great for the dominance of reason especially in the realm of sciences; on the other hand, in England by the time of the 1760's readers started to lack the irrational and mysticism from fiction.

Strangely, 18th century fiction had to be divided into two different sub-genres: the romance and the novel. When we talk about fiction in the 18th century the use of the term Gothic romance is more appropriate than Gothic novel since „romances highlight the link between medieval romances, the romantic narratives of love, chivalry and adventure" (Botting 24). They were imported from France from the late 17th century onwards, and the tales that in the later 18th century were classified as Gothic. In the first half of the 18th century novels and romances meant the same for neoclassical critics, they regarded both as „monsters of imagination" as one critic, John Cleland complained in a review of Smollet's *Peregrine Pickle* (1751):

Serious and useful works are scarce read, and hardly any thing of morality goes down, unless ticketed with the label of amusement. Hence that flood of novels, tales, romances, and other *monsters of imagination*, which have been either wretchedly translated, or even more unhappily imitated, from the French, whose literary levity we have not been ashamed to adopt, and to encourage the propagation of so depraved a taste. (Monthly Review 160)

Such criticism was not rare during the age since fiction as a whole was condemned as “wildly fanciful pieces of folly that served no useful or moral purpose” (Botting 25), while works of classical writers as Plutarch or Horace did. They showed examples of real life that offers guidance in the ways of the world. John Cleland also provided a comparison of classical works and ‘the monsters of imagination’ in his criticism:

For as the matter is taken chiefly from nature, from adventures, real or imaginary, but familiar, practical, and probable to be met with in the course of common life, they may serve as pilot’s charts, or maps of those parts of the world, which every one may chance to travel through; and in this light they are public benefits. Whereas romances and novels which turn upon characters out of nature, monsters of perfection, feats of chivalry, fairy- enchantments, and the whole train of the marvellously absurd, transport the reader unprofitably into the clouds, where he is sure to find no solid footing, or into those wilds of fancy, which go for ever out of the way of all human paths. (Monthly Review 161- 2)

As we can see 18th century fiction did not serve ‘public benefits’; moreover, admirers of Neoclassicism believed it to corrupt readers’ morals. According to another critic, T. Row, who claimed in the *Gentleman’s Magazine* (1767) that reading fiction was a waste of time: „many a young person [...] were corrupted by the giddy and fantastic notions of love and gallantry” (Gentleman’s Magazine 272); in addition, Gothic novels and romances were discriminated since they failed to represent human life and manners, and lacked moral guidance. „Like romances before them Gothic novels were irrational, improper, immoral wastes of time” (Botting 26). In short, critics saw the danger of ‘moral degeneration’ in tales, novels, romances; that was the reason why they discriminated these genres.

However, soon came an unexpected change in literary criticism: in contrast with romances, novels turned out to have moral usefulness. James Beattie supported this change in his essay “On Fable and Romance” (1783) in which he makes distinction between medieval romances and novels. Cervantes’ *Don Quixote* occurs in the focus of his paper about which he says that from Cervantes writers learnt „to avoid extravagance and imitate nature by respecting the rules of probability”. He also states that the majority of romances tend to corrupt the heart and „stimulate the passions”. In addition, „a habit of reading them breeds a dislike to history [...] withdraws the attention from nature and truth, and fills the mind with extravagant thoughts” (Botting 26). He wrote these ideas in defence of morality, virtue, truth, reason, and knowledge against passion, ignorance, and depravity offered by romances.

Samuel Johnson shared Beattie's ideas, as in *The Rambler* he described romances as fanciful tales full of knights, giants and marvellous incidents. On the other hand he defended the novel as a genre that "possesses the capacity to educate readers" (Botting 27), to convey a knowledge of vice and virtue; moreover, novels were not coloured by passion or wickedness, but virtue was emphasised by them (Botting 27). Romances were led by ignorance and superstition; they offended morality, rationality, and order. Clara Reeve in her "The Progress of Romance" compared romance and novel highlighting the priority of the latter in its feature of depicting real life and probability as follows:

The Romance is an heroic fable, which treats of fabulous persons and things. – The Novel is a picture of real life and manners, and of the times in which it is written. The Romance in lofty and elevated language, describes what never happened or is likely to happen. – The Novel gives a familiar relation of such things, as pass every day before our eyes, such as may happen to our friend, or to ourselves; and the perfection of it, is to represent every scene, in so easy and natural a manner, and to make them appear so probable, as to deceive us into a persuasion (at least while we are reading) that all is real, until we are affected by the joys or distresses, of the persons in the story, as if they were our own. (Botting 29- 30)

As the above examples show critics recognised fiction as a most ambivalent genre, while its readership extended gradually. Readers seemed to get tired of order and clarity and their need for the irrational in fiction started to become manifest in the second half of the 18th century.

This need for the irrational and the past evoked the revival of Gothic in literature. Those "values that gave shape and direction to the Enlightenment, dominated as it was by writings from Greek and Roman culture, privileged forms of cultural or artistic production that attended to the classical rules. Buildings, works of art, gardens, landscapes, and written texts had to conform to precepts of uniformity, proportion, and order" (Botting 22). The national past and the Gothic of the Middle Ages totally differed from this as we see from the following paragraph:

While the Gothic past continued to be constructed as the subordinated and distanced antithesis to the Enlightenment culture, the events, settings, figures, and images began to be considered on their own merits rather than as neoclassical examples of poor taste. Gothic style became the shadow that haunted neoclassical values, running parallel and encounter to its ideas of symmetrical form, reason, knowledge, and propriety. (Botting 32)

For those who appreciated Neoclassicism in literature, the settings – ruins, castles, caverns –, the characters – supernatural figures as monsters,

vampires, werewolves, ghosts, and spirits – seemed uncultivated or even childish (Botting 22).

The fact that Gothicism in fiction favoured shadows and especially darkness again strengthens its contrast with Enlightenment. As Fred Botting puts it: „Darkness, metaphorically, threatened the light of reason with what it did not know” (Botting 32). The gloom that darkness spreads showed mystery, passions, and emotions alien to reason. Furthermore, the marvellous creatures of imagination referred to above could start their reign after the night had fallen. These ideas characterised not just Gothic but also Graveyard poetry that also developed in the late 18th century. These two styles seem to share several of their subjects, such as graveyards, night, ruins, death, ghosts, „everything, indeed, that was excluded by rational culture” (Botting 32).

According to Maggie Kilgour, Gothic can also be connected to Rousseauian primitivism, for its 'close-to-nature' ideology; in other words, Gothic, in a way resembling Romanticism, seems more natural than Neoclassicism continuously limited by order. The present can rather be associated with the „corrupting and artificial influence of society” (Kilgour 15). In Gothic the idealised past attempts to deconstruct present. As Clara Reeve writes about the moral purpose in reviving history:

[...] to give a faithful picture of a well –governed kingdom, wherein a true subordination of ranks and degrees was observed, and of a great prince at the head of it. The new philosophy of the present day avows a levelling principle, and declares that a state of anarchy is more beautiful than that of order and regularity. (Kilgour 16)

From the latter paragraph, we can feel the total rejection of Gothic on the side of neoclassicists. However, some writers revolted against the commercial and mechanical present: Edmund Burke or Horace Walpole wrote in a style of the past and about the past (Kilgour 16).*

The Dimension of Time – Circularity

In English literature, Horace Walpole introduced the new genre by writing *The Castle of Otranto*, which can be regarded as the first English Gothic novel. Walpole had clear relations with the Age of Enlightenment since his father, Robert Walpole acted as a well-known politician of the age, and his son could experience the destruction of politics effected his father. Therefore, Horace Walpole escaped from the rough world of the present into

* This revolt against mechanistic and atomistic view of the world will also be emphatic in the 20th century. Writers like Yeats and Eliot tried to emphasise the contrast between the present and the past by describing both.

a Gothic world he constructed for himself, and which resembled the past. In *The Castle of Otranto* he expressed his nostalgia, his longing to escape into an idealised past. He totally opposed to authority and conservativity; he was a Whig; furthermore, he kept a copy of the Magna Charta and the warrant for the execution of Charles I beside his bed. (Kilgour 16) Even in writing *The Castle of Otranto* he revolted against all critical rules as he explains: “I have not written the book for the present age which will endure nothing but cold common sense [...] I have composed it in defiance of rules, of critics, and of philosophers” (Kilgour 17).

For Walpole the already known past is more secure than the continually changing present, as he says: “Old castles, old pictures, old histories, and the babble of old people make one live each into centuries that cannot disappoint” (Kilgour 17). As we can see Walpole worshipped past to a great extent; however, his existence in the present made him construct a novel in which he tried to reach originality and novelty. The Gothic novel was a totally new genre at that time, while he wanted to preserve the past, as well. Therefore, we can say that Walpole attempted to create something new from the past by writing in the style of the past and about the past, yet he created a totally new, original genre in 18th century English literature. Even by using the term, Gothic novel, Walpole presented an oxymoron, which reflects his desire to return to nature and the past, and wrap it up into novelty and originality presented by the new narrative form (Kilgour 17-8). As for the form, we cannot regard it as Gothic romance – strangely, he uses the term romance in his Preface to the Second Edition of the Novel – if we follow the concepts of neoclassicist critics about the distinction between novels and romances referred to in the introductory part of my paper. We should realize that *The Castle of Otranto* is a novel since it offers some kind of a moral teaching no matter how understated it is by the fictitious editor of the novel in the first Preface- who later anyway turns out to be the author himself.

In spite of his being disgusted by the present, Horace Walpole interweave it with his idealised past considering the content and the form. The former truly refers to past; moreover, revives the values and characteristics of the past – we should think of the language or the basic feature of the novel; chivalry, a most common topic of Gothic arts. Meanwhile, the form obviously relates to the present even in two aspects: I have already referred to the first; that is, *The Castle of Otranto* as being the first Gothic novel in English literature belongs to a totally new genre. As the author explains:

I might have pleaded, that having created a new species of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it: but I should be more proud of having imitated, however faintly, weakly, and at a

distance, so masterly a pattern, than to enjoy the entire merit of invention.
(Walpole 48)

By using this new narrative form and filling it in with content about the past and writing it in the style of the past, present and past, become intertwined with each other. As Maggie Kilgour puts it: „Walpole’s text offers a myth of reconciliation of past and present, which suggests that past can be revived in a way that will be empowering and liberating for the present, freeing it from modern aesthetic and political forms of oppression” (Kilgour 18).

The other aspect related to present is the plot itself. According to Walpole, in the plot “everything tends directly to the catastrophe” (Walpole 40); therefore, the unity of time, place, and action (the quintessential elements of neoclassical literature) does characterise the plot. Walpole also emphasises the down-to-earth quality of his characters who act as ordinary human beings would act in the same situation. He wanted to draw figures resembling real people whose reactions are not exaggerated, extravagant, or far from reality, making the plot more credible by this according to the rules of probability. He states that „despite of the continuous presence of miracles, supernatural phenomena, the figures never lose sight of their human character. [...] They think, speak and act as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions” (Walpole 44).

It seems as if the author wanted to convince readers of the present age of his standing aside from extravagancy, folly, or wildness when he emphasised that the plot lacks bombast, similes, digressions, and unnecessary descriptions (Walpole 40). I think Walpole wrote the Preface to the First Edition of the Novel in defence of his novel as if he wanted to convince people that his work was not just a Gothic romance discriminated by critics but had several features fit into the patterns of neoclassical writing. Thus, we can see that present and past are again represented as being combined. He also states that only his characters believe in superstitions, necromancy, and miracles since „belief in every kind of prodigy was so established in those dark ages, that an author would not be faithful to the manners of the times who should omit all mention of them” (Walpole 40). This belief in preternatural events is highlighted in the figures of the domestic servants; as simple folks, they are supposed to be superstitious and this stereotype contributes to advancing the catastrophe.

He also tries to offer some kind of moral teaching – I have mentioned earlier the critics changing of mind in regarding the novels as morally useful and contributing to the education of the readers –; namely that the sins of the fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation which

manifests in the scene when Manfred accidentally kills his own daughter and in the death of his son in the opening scene of the novel. Finally, in the Preface to the First Edition the author – under the guise of the translator – claims that the groundwork of the story must be founded on truth. He says that the place is so well - depicted and described with minute precision that the story must take place in some real castle. There are certain passages, such as „the chamber on the right hand”, „the distance from the chapel to Conrad’s apartment” proving the fact that the author had „some certain building in his eye” (Walpole 42).

As Walpole later explains in the Second Preface, he wanted to induce impartial judgement from the readers and he was not sure how they would like his story that is why he borrowed the personage of the translator and attempted to defend his novel against prejudices in connection with Gothic. He showed willingness to satisfy readers’ needs and expectations; thus, he concentrated on the rules of probability, truth, and morality – these features are summarised in one short sentence of the second Preface: „My rule was nature” (Walpole 44). He contributes to this idea with this passage as well: „... I have no doubt the English reader will be pleased with the sight of this performance. The piety that reigns throughout the lesson of virtue that are inculcated and the rigid purity of the sentiments, exempt this work from the censure to which romances are but too liable” (Walpole 41).

However, the relationship between past and present seems the most significant if we analyse the plot itself. „It refers to the issues of succession and inheritance which flirts with the possibility of incestuous relations, but ends with the rightful distribution of persons and property” (Kilgour 17). Manfred, the villain figure of the novel, tries to perpetuate his illegitimate line into the future; however, the invention of supernatural figures and fate erase the false line, and the true one recovers.

The story begins with the death of Manfred’s son, which does not happen accidentally, it is the starting point to the causal chain of events through which Manfred, the usurper’s plan to perpetuate his illegitimate line by marrying Isabella collapse, the illegitimate line is annihilated while the true one recovers. When Conrad dies, Manfred’s line breaks, which forces him to restore it by himself. He decides to divorce from the virtuous Hippolita and marry Isabella securing his false line through this incestuous act. In the past when Alfonso, the Good was poisoned by his servant, the ancestor of Manfred, the statue of Alfonso became fragmented. As the fragments of the statue are gradually put together in the present, the legitimate line gradually recovers together with the original, true past. As Kilgour writes about this recovery: „Against the disintegration of Manfred’s story, its splintering into isolated and incoherent atoms, occurs the piece - by - piece re - membering

of this statue whose parts are restored into a new whole, which remarks the recovery of an original, pure past” (Kilgour 19).

Until the true line is recovered, we can only meet parts of Alphonso’s gigantic statue. The re - membering of the statue starts at the very beginning of the novel when a gigantic helmet – obviously part of the statue, kills Manfred’s son. Then the two foolish servants resembling Shakespeare’s Rosencrantz and Guildenstern see the gigantic armed leg of it in the gallery, while Bianca, the other domestic servant in the castle sees the hand of the enormous monument on the top of the staircase. Meanwhile, Isabella’s father, Frederic arrives at the castle together with his troops who carry an immense sword with the following lines on the blade of which:

Where’er a casque that suits this sword is found
With perils is thy daughter compassed round
Alfonso’s blood alone can save the maid,
And quiet a long- restless prince’s shade. (Walpole 115)

The prince’s shade has haunted the castle since the descendants of the man who killed him usurped his heritage. Anyway, the usurper is disguised in the convent: when he appears there, the nose of Alphonso’s statue starts bleeding. According to superstitions, when a person appears at the carcass and it starts bleeding that person turns out to be the murderer of the deceased.

When finally the statue is re - membered, Alphonso, the Good descends and tells the whole company that the true heir of his line has returned and he can find eternal peace indeed. A new order is established which is in fact the same as the original. In other words: “A false line and system of authority is broken down and replaced by a new one which turns out however to be true because even older - the original, uncontaminated order” (Kilgour 20).

Besides creating a new genre in literature, Walpole provided new technique in writing for later writers; namely, “to slice stories into bits and pieces and disrupt superficial narrative unity or linearity. In Walpole, the structural and thematic fragmentation of the line of Manfred’s narrative mirrors the breakdown of his succession and of himself as a character: he is increasingly incoherent and unable to get a point” (Kilgour 18).

Walpole also contributed to the idea that each chance is predetermined; cause and effect are bound together, as “past actions relentlessly effect the present” (Kilgour 19). The collapse of the gigantic statue refers to the collapse of Manfred’s plans and when the members are again put together, the legitimate line is given truth; and together with this, the correct past is also re -membered and restored into a new whole. Even Manfred’s horrible actions result in similar events – for his children are murdered, “thus proving

the moral offered by the fictitious editor of the first edition that the sins of fathers are visited on their children” (Kilgour 20). After the marriage of Isabella and the rightful heir, Theodore, a new social system is created which is in fact the same as the original, so the present and the past are joined together.

In fact, Horace Walpole tried to find the balance between present and past; between the modern that banishes imagination and the ancient, which does the same with reality. The balance between the two unites present and past, as the author explains in his Preface to the second edition of the novel:

It was an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern. In the former, all was imagination and improbability: in the latter, nature is always intended to be, and sometimes has been copied with success. [...] The author of the following pages [...] wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability. (Walpole 43)

In brief, we can say that the modern novel can be associated with dry realism, and the past with the fertility of imagination. Horace Walpole refused to choose between these two options but rather combined them creating a new genre with it. This ambiguity is also presented in the Preface to the Second Edition of the Novel in which two extremely important literary figures are mentioned: Shakespeare and Voltaire. The former stands for the past as a kind of patron saint of imaginative freedom for the Gothic and for Walpole he serves as the symbol of British aesthetic freedom who is to be defended against the threat of tyrannical French rules dictated by Voltaire. As Maggie Kilgour summarises the potential conflict between past and present in *The Castle of Otranto*: “Walpole wants to find the balance between mimetic and fanciful forms of representation in order to unite past and present fruitfully” (Kilgour 20).

The Dimension of Place – The Labyrinth

After discussing the relationship between past and present, there is another issue related to time that occurs in the focus of Walpole’s novel; namely, the sequence of crucial events in one’s lifetime. At the beginning of the novel Manfred’s son and heir dies on the day of his wedding that actually coincides with his birthday. Birth, marriage, and death; these crucial events in one’s lifetime take place simultaneously in the novel, which sequence seems to solve the problem of “the static and sometimes disjointed gothic form” (Kilgour 18). The sequence of birth - marriage - death calls Gothic architecture into mind since Gothic cathedrals house these most important elements of human life. “So we should not consider cathedrals simply as remains of architecture but [...] sites of the most important milestones of

human life like birth – marriage – death (baptism- wedding- funeral)” (Abkarovits 48).

This quotation drew my attention to Gothic architecture, which played a crucial role in Walpole’s life. First, we should consider that the contrast between light and darkness, order and barbarism – as Gothic was usually referred to – present and past had also been significant in medieval England, especially in architecture. In the second half of the 11th century, a totally new architectural style appeared chronologically after the Romanesque style but specifically in contrast with classical architecture. Cathedrals built in the Romanesque style (known as Norman style in England) were characterised by thick walls, small windows, rounded arches and their simplicity did not differ from the structure of churches built according to the rules of the classical style.

However, this Norman or Romanesque style soon showed some features that confused the admirers of classicism: besides rounded arches, the pointed arches started to appear. This period during which the Norman style gradually turned into Gothic is the so - called Transitional style. In addition to the appearance of pointed arches some basically Norman cathedrals, such as Durham cathedral possessed the other two quintessential features of Gothic architecture: the ribbed vaults and the flying buttresses. Finally as I have already referred to it, in the second half of the 11th century Gothic became the principal style in English architecture – especially in cathedral - building (like in other European countries as Germany, France, Spain... etc.). Gothic determined English architecture for almost 400 years and this long period can be divided into three sub periods or styles: the Early English style, the Decorated Style and the Perpendicular style, which is also regarded as the national style of England. Each style has its own characteristic features; for instance, Early English was strongly influenced by French Gothic which impact manifested mostly in the vaulting systems, but this style also had its own inventions as the stiff- leaf capital or the dog- tooth ornamentation. The Decorated style as the name indicates is characterised by the rich decorations – geometrical patterns like cusped trefoils and quatrefoils or the naturalistic foliage carving on capitals and bosses; while the national style of England, the Perpendicular omitted rich ornamentations and concentrated on towers and vaults. Its most important features are the increasing glass surfaces, the fan- vault, and the crown of the towers with strong corner- pinnacles. As we can see, these styles of English Gothic differ from each other to a great extent (we can compare Salisbury, Lincoln and Gloucester), though there are some features that characterise Gothic cathedral - building as a whole. Besides the three basic elements mentioned above, linear patterns, very slender piers, columns, stained glass in lancets

and rose – windows, window – tracery, capitals and bosses adorned with figural or abstract ornamentation, arcades traceried with geometrical patterns, beautifully decorated vaults, and finally sculptures and grotesque little figures as corbels or gargoyles which sometimes add delight or sublimity.

The most important characteristics of Gothic architecture were received with the same reaction on the side of classicists as we saw it in the case of the Gothic romance and novel in 18th century literature. Gothic cathedrals made the admirers of classical architecture very upset as one of them; Batty Langley expressed his opinion: “Gothic was a crude and unmethodical order of architecture which resembled neither Doric nor Corinthian... all sorts of foliage were used in the capitals... and worse than all those ignorant Goths... directly violated the most obvious principles of eurythmia” (Taylor 9- 10).

Surprisingly, even Horace Walpole criticised Gothic architecture in his letter to his friend, Sir Horace Mann as he emphasised the contrast between the true taste of Italian Renaissance architecture (in which classical Greek and Roman structures revived) and the “venerable barbarism” of the Gothic North (Taylor 10). In his work, *The Cathedrals of England*, Alec- Clifton Taylor offers an explanation why classicists condemned Gothic as a crude, unmethodical order: “Fantasy, licence, no rules, no canons of proportions: that was what in the gothic worried the classical school so much” (Taylor 11). 18th century critics also reflected on neoclassical taste against Gothicism; they “privileged uniformity and proportion over scale and extravagance” and “classified any deviations from symmetrical structure as the deformities exhibited by the absence of taste of a barbaric age” (Botting 30). The only reason for comparing the two was to emphasise the superiority of classical architecture.

Though he regarded the Gothic north as venerable barbarism, Horace Walpole designed his Strawberry Hill according to laws of Gothicism. Pointed and ogee arches dominated in his rooms (the ogee arch was a characteristic of later Gothic styles), the windows were filled with reticulated bar- tracery, where one single pattern was repeated over the whole area, and stained glass, the walls are decorated with cusped quatrefoils and the top of his bookshelves resembles that of a Gothic tower with its decorated corner-pinnacles. The vaulting system of the gallery, which is a typical characteristic of Perpendicular Style, as a beautiful fan vault, was essentially decorative in origin rather than structural like earlier Gothic rib- vaults.

Strangely, these features of Gothic architecture were not transported into the castle where the story of the novel takes place. The author does not offer descriptions of pointed arches, ribbed vaulting, finely carved capitals or

corbels, or traceried windows, though the structure of the castle is clearly described and certain references to the cathedral attached to the castle are also provided. The dark cloisters beneath the castle, the great gallery hall with its huge staircase, the black tower, the chapels, Hippolita's oratory with an altar, and the subterraneous passage leading to the church of St. Nicholas, referred to as a cathedral by the author himself, with its illuminated windows and the tomb of Alphonso. We can wonder how Walpole could construct theoretically such an immense structure.

The question would be more appropriate if we asked *who* inspired him. The person who made the greatest impact on Walpole in constructing his castle was an Italian engraver, called Giovanni Battista Piranesi. Walpole expresses his great enthusiasm towards Piranesi in the fourth volume of the *Anecdotes of Painting in England* when he advises English artists to study: “[t]he sublime dream of Piranesi who seems to have conceived visions of Rome beyond what is boasted even in the meridian of its splendour. Savage as Salvator Rosa- fierce as Michael Angelo, and exuberant as Rubens [...] He piles palaces on bridges, and temples on palaces, and scales Heaven with mountains of edifices” (Praz 16).

A Danish scholar, Jorgen Andersen, claimed that “there is a passage still unexplored leading from the Carceri – Piranesi's probably most famous engraved work – into the strangely echoing vaults of the English Gothic novels” (Praz 16). In one scene of the Carceri, “there appears a trophy surmounted by a monumental plumed helmet, which in one case hangs threateningly over the dwarfed men below” (Praz 17). Probably this scene returned in Walpole's dream in a little altered form, in the dream that prompted him to write *The Castle of Otranto*. As he remembers back to his dream:

I waked one morning in the beginning of last June from a dream, of all I could recover was that I thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a head filled like mine with Gothic story) and that on the uppermost banister of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat down and began to write without knowing in the least what I intended to say or relate. (Praz 17)

Piranesi's gigantic helmet turned into a gigantic hand in armour both of which can be found in the novel; therefore, we can say that the combination of Piranesi's art and Walpole's dream served as the main source of inspiration. According to Mario Praz, it is Walpole's merit to be able to see the potential in Piranesi's Carceri and use it as the source of his work (Praz 18). Besides the gigantic helmet on the top of the staircase, the influence of the engraver's etchings is also recognizable in the description of the secret

subterraneous passage through which Isabella flees from the castle into the convent attached to the church of St. Nicholas:

The lower part of the castle was hollowed into several intricate cloisters; and it was not easy for one under so much anxiety to find the door that opened into the cavern. An awful silence reigned throughout those subterraneous regions, except now and then some blasts of wind that shook the doors she had passed, and which grating on the rusty hinges, were re-echoed through that long labyrinth of darkness. (Walpole 61)

The *labyrinth* as a most important element of Gothic fiction appears twice in *The Castle of Otranto*, but before calling forth these scenes, we should analyse the meanings and significance of mazes, which again show some differences in the Age of Reason and in the Gothic novel. In the writings of Alexander Pope, Henry Fielding, or Tobias Smollett the maze was used in a quite positive aspect as the symbol of complexity and variety of the society, which remained unified (Botting 80- 81). In Gothic romances the labyrinth refers to fear, confusion, and alienation; darkness, horror, and desire dominate in it. For instance, Lewis' *The Monk* has a scene in an underground labyrinth where the main character, Ambrosio, makes his covenant with the devil and sells his soul to him. Desire and passion led him to the labyrinth of subterranean vaults and he realizes that he can never escape that place. The underground labyrinth with the person imprisoned there is totally separated from the outside world without the laws, rules, and aids of the society. According to Fred Botting, "the horror of the labyrinth and its confusion of fears and desires lie in its utter separation from all social rules and complete transgression of all conventional limits" (Botting 81). In other words, the characters feel the "horrible absence, the death of any familiar or proper order" (Botting 81). This Gothic interpretation of mazes again occurs in full contrast with enlightenment reason and order, since labyrinths are also regarded as places of all forms of excessive, irrational, and passionate behaviour.

When Isabella decides to find the secret passage from the castle to the convent, she realizes its danger but at the same time, she knows that the passage gives the only possibility for her escape since even the affectionate Hippolita lost her control over her outraged husband. On entering the labyrinth "every murmur struck her with new terror – yet more she dreaded to hear the wrathful voice of Manfred urging his domestics to pursue her. [...] She condemned her rash flight, which has thus exposed her to his [Manfred's] rage in a place where he cries were not likely to draw anybody to her assistance" (Walpole 61).

After she saw the door of a vault opening, her confused emotions encouraged her to proceed. However, entering the vault, a gush of wind

extinguished her lamp and she stood in total darkness not far from another human being whose personage she was not familiar with.

Words cannot paint the horror of the princess' situation. Alone in so a dismal place, her mind imprinted with all the terrible events of the day, *hopeless of escaping* expecting every moment the arrival of Manfred, and far from tranquil [...] she remained in an agony of despair. (Walpole 62)

Finally, the person hiding in the vault reveals his true self, and he turns out to be Theodore who offers his assistance to the terribly frightened lady and helps her in finding the trap door that opens to the passage out of the labyrinth.

The next time these two characters get in contact with each other, they meet in another labyrinth, though not in an underground but an open-air one. Theodore released by the lovely Matilda escapes into the labyrinth of caverns not far from the castle. Now he directly searches for the deepest shadows that would mirror the darkness and gloom of his mind. An old superstition comes into his mind that the caves are haunted by ghosts. In spite of this old belief, this labyrinth has a bit more positive aspect here since it gives shelter to Theodore and Isabella. Theodore proves his courage in two ways: superstitions are not able to frighten him; moreover, he again gives assistance to Isabella and defends her, and through this, she again manages to escape from the dangers of the labyrinth.

If Theodore did not guide Isabella she would not be able to get rid of the confusion and anxiety embodied by the infinite passages of the maze. This infinity and anxiety are also symbolized by another element of Gothic tales, *the spiral stairs* that again recalls the name of Piranesi. According to De Quincey who described Piranesi's Antiquities of Rome based on Samuel Taylor Coleridge's account, Piranesi's spiral stairs became the symbol of anxiety. He writes in his *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*:

Some of these [Piranesi's plates] represented vast Gothic halls, on the floor of which stood mighty engines and machinery wheels, cables, catapults... etc. [...] Creeping along the sides of the walls, you perceived a staircase and upon this, groping his way upwards was Piranesi himself. [...] raise your eyes and behold a second flight of stairs still higher on which again Piranesi is perceived by this time standing on the very brink of the abyss. Once again elevate your eye and a still more aerial flight is described and there again is the delirious Piranesi, busy on his aspiring labours: and so on, until the unfinished stairs and the hopeless Piranesi are lost in the upper gloom of the hall. (Praz 19)

This passage tells us that the spiral stairs in Gothic fiction stand for infinite anxiety without any hope to escape. These two elements, spiral stairs

and labyrinths provide the main theme of Gothic tales: “an anxiety with no possibility of escape” (Praz 20). *The Castle of Otranto* seems unique in this sense among Gothic novels since it concludes with the marriage of Isabella and Theodore, the rightful heir and the recovery of the original, pure past. This conclusion puts an end to the sequence of happenings, and characterises the story with finiteness and linearity through this.

This linearity may refer to the linear or historical aspect of time where death puts an end to the sequence of events. Thus, the sequence of the most important milestones of human life – discussed in the introduction of this chapter – can be represented by the vault of the Gothic cathedral. Its form displays birth as a starting point of life, marriage together with having children as a climatic moment in life and, finally, death as the absolute limit, the conclusion of human life. Though the novel ends with “the rightful distribution of persons and property” (Kilgour 17), not the linear aspect of time dominates it, as later we will see.

However, if we examine the external setting of the Gothic novel writing about ruins seems inevitable. As an anonymous critic gives us the recipe of creating a terrifying atmosphere in his essay on “Terrorist Novel Writing”:

Take- An old castle half of it ruinous.

A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.

Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.

As many skeletons in chests and presses.

(Anon., Terrorist Novel Writing 229)

If ruins are mentioned as elements of the external setting of a Gothic tale, ghosts are immediately involved. However, as soon as ruins were associated with preternatural phenomena or superstitious beliefs, they were regarded as Gothic rather than classical. If neoclassical critics saw the decay or the ruins of an old abbey, they realised the triumph of Neoclassicism over Gothicism in it. A Grecian ruin at the same time symbolised the triumph of barbarity over taste. One neoclassical critic, Anna Barbauld defines ruins as “testaments to the ascendancy of knowledge and reason” (Botting 31). She adds: “Always considered as the haunts of ignorance and superstition, the ruins mark the ascendancy of neoclassical over Gothic values” (Botting 31).

The importance of ruins in the Gothic novel is rooted in the validity of old superstitions, which believed ruins haunted. Indeed, we arrived at the point in the Gothic novel when outer and inner settings are interwoven with each other, since inner setting includes supernatural elements and figures like werewolves, vampires, monsters, and certainly ghosts. These supernatural elements of the novel offer us a new interpretation, as a new psychological aspect is provided. In other words, these frightening and

incredible supernatural characters and phenomena give a psychological dimension to the novel. In the next chapter, I am going to pay attention to meanings and origins of this psychological dimension: *the sublime*.

The Psychological Dimension – The Sublime

As I have referred to it earlier, ruins together with other forms of Gothic architecture have strong connections with the inner terror of the Gothic novel since they serve as sources of the *sublime*. I think, before diving into the depths of the sublime we should deal with its origins and meaning. Bishop Hurd who in his work, *Letters* wanted to transform neoclassical function of criticism attacked neoclassical poetry for its imitation of nature. “Poetical truth- he argues- lies beyond the bounds of a natural order. Instead, poetry should explore magical and extraordinary worlds associated with forms of nature that evoke a sense of wonder” (Hurd 101).

Thus, in 18th century poetry nature becomes the main source of inspiration interweaving nature and art in a totally new way. Nature was perceived from new perspectives; the consideration of mountains, for example, has changed a lot. Once mountains were regarded as “deformities disfiguring the proportions of the world that ideally should be uniform, flat and symmetrical” (Botting 38); however, in the 18th century poets became fascinated with the sight of their diversity, irregularity and scale. Moreover, mountains started to evoke very intense emotions in any viewer not only in poets. As Fred Botting tries to describe his emotions on seeing a mountainous landscape: “Wonder, awe, horror, and joy were the emotions believed to expand or elevate the soul and the imagination with a sense of power and infinity. Mountains were the foremost objects of natural sublime” (Botting 38).

However, in the 18th century, first sublime was associated with Longinus’ writings on rhetoric then it had literary and religious connotations, as well, and finally it became the most interesting topic of aesthetic enquiry in the 18th century. In rhetoric, sublime can be defined as injection of divine fire that could raise a speech into a work of genius.

Later natural scenery characterised by such adjectives as wild, harsh and uncultivated (we should note that neoclassicists also used these terms to describe Gothic) was also regarded as sublime as I referred to it above.

Indeed, Edmund Burke was the critic who in his “Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful” gave this term its complete 18th century meaning. Burke made distinction between the Beautiful and the Sublime: the former is characterised by smoothness, smallness and delicacy, and produces a sense of quiet happiness. The Beautiful excites love and evokes tenderness; however, for Burke love is a

less important passion than those to which the sublime appeals. The greatest art reaches towards the sublime and only the lesser art towards the beautiful. Sublime objects are characterised by their vastness, darkness, and obscurity and with these causes terror and awe. It is the reason why mountainous scenery became one of the most important sources of sublime since it is characterised by vastness, wildness and obscurity. Burke's main idea in his "Philosophical Enquiry" is that the sublime arouses delight and at the same time, feelings of fear are part of our delight. Fear is also part of our astonishment provoked by the sublime of nature and of the awe generated by our consciousness of God; therefore, what we consider terrible is sublime, as well. As Burke himself explains it:

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger that is to say whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible subjects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror is a source of the sublime; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion, which the mind is capable of feeling. (Burke 437)

Thus, we can see the strong connections between the sublime and the terror; the feeling that "comes upon us in the gloomy forest and in the howling wilderness in the form of the lion, the tiger, the panther or rhinoceros. Indeed terror is in all cases whatsoever [...] the ruling principle of the sublime" (Burke 438). These ideas of Burke seem to be reflected in William Blake's poetry:

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forest of the night
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry? (Blake 109)

William Blake, similarly to Burke, also believed in the supremacy of the sublime over the beautiful; in addition, he supported the idea that poetry must be obscure and that the world of imagination is the world of Eternity.

Another English Romantic poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge found another source of the sublime; namely, the Gothic cathedral: „On entering a cathedral, I am filled with devotion and awe; I am lost to the actualities that surround me and my whole being expands into the infinite; earth and air, nature and art, all swell up into eternity, and the only sensible impression is that I am nothing" (quoted in Kilgour 30). Hugh Blair in his *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* also names Gothic architecture as a source of the sublime: „A Gothic cathedral raises ideas of grandeur in our minds, by its size, its height, its awful obscurity, its strength, its antiquity, and its durability" (Botting 39).

Gothic buildings, therefore, are typical sublime objects since their rich ornamentation and vastness suggesting divinity and infinity; moreover, we can say that Gothic cathedrals stand for divinity and infinity. A very important feature of Gothic cathedrals is the great height of the building – even if English cathedrals unlike French cathedrals are characterised by their length instead of height – and the beautifully ornamented towers draw our attention towards Heaven and God that again reminds us to our mortality, smallness and insignificance in comparison with the divine power. It is the feeling that Coleridge represents with the sentence 'I am nothing' on entering a cathedral. Besides divinity, infinity can also be associated with Gothic architecture considering the fact that most English cathedrals were built in the 11th or 12th century – or at least many parts of them – and they still stand in our present age proving their durability and the infinity of the divine power they stand for. This durability could also evoke emotions of sublimity; it was clearly displayed by an essay published in the *European Magazine* (1795) with the title "On the Pleasure Arising from the Sight of Ruins or Ancient Structures" in which the author explains: „No one of the least sentiment or imagination can look upon an old or ruined edifice without feeling sublime emotions; a thousand ideas crowd upon his mind, and fill him with awful astonishment" (Monk 141).

I have already indicated in the introductory part of my thesis that Graveyard poets shared several subjects with the Gothic novel, especially night, death, ruins, and ghosts. Furthermore, Graveyard poetry played a crucial role in Gothic revival since its interest towards sublime brought a totally new feature into literature and culture. Mysterious and supernatural phenomena associated with the sublime were excluded from rationality, which again shows the contrast between Gothicism preceded by the Graveyard school and Neoclassicism. If Neoclassicism stands for the light then Graveyard poetry symbolizes darkness and obscurity. Botting thinks that the divine power provided by sublimity was experienced not only in „the grandeur of natural landscape" but also in „the awful obscurity in the settings of Graveyard poetry that elevate the mind into ideas of wonder and divinity" (Botting 39). Even about the spectacle of ruins, a principal poetic subject of Graveyard poetry, changed people's ideas. In the 17th century, ruins similarly to mountains stood for disorder while in the 18th century they developed aspects of infinity and past. We feel a mixed charm of repulsion and attraction on seeing the ruins of some abbey or cathedral, or as the Italian poet, Ippolito Pindamonte described this spectacle: "quell' orrore bello che attristando piace", that is; the beautiful horror which delights while it saddens. (Praz 16) Terror and wonder, fear and astonishment combined with each other; it is what the spectacle of ruins suggests us. This delightful hor-

ror is evoked by the durability of ruins, which on the one hand refers to the past – that once these ruins stood as mighty and immense buildings – on the other hand reminds us to their infinity that again serves as the source of sublime. Mario Praz agrees with this idea in his *Introductory Essay on Three Gothic Novels*, as he says: „Infinity has a tendency to fill the mind that source of delightful horror which is the most genuine effect and truest test of sublime” (Praz 16).

Other poetic subjects of Graveyard poetry besides infinity provided by ruins like graves and churchyards, night and ghosts may be associated with one central topic: death. However, in the poems of the Graveyards this relatively sorrowful part of life was given a further interpretation that can be easily perceived in Robert Blair’s “The Grave” (1743):

Thrice welcome Death!
That after many a painful bleeding Step
Conducts us to our Home, and lands us safe
On the long- wish’d for Shore. (quoted in Botting 33)

Blair encourages the reader to think of death as a ‘gloomy path’ that leads from earth to heaven. As Botting puts it: „Death as a leveller of earthly desires and ambitions, demands religious faith and hope in order to pave the way for souls to ascend to heaven” (Botting 33) – Gothic cathedrals carry the same meaning if we think back to their quality of drawing attention from earth towards heaven. Thus, we can see that the Graveyard poets dealt with death, graves and ghosts in order to raise thoughts to heaven. They emphasise that death should not be feared but accepted as a necessary part of life. Only superstitions cause fear of death in minds who believe in fearful spectres. Another Graveyard poet, Edward Young developed similar themes in his poem, the “Night Thoughts”, where he shifts focus on the life to come by concentrating on death and decay. According to him “fears of mortality and associated superstitions are unwarranted if one has faith” (Botting 34). This again emphasises the supreme power of divinity over human finitude and mortality that again calls sublime into focus. On the other hand, death may also evoke horror in tales of terror. The reason of horror lies in the physical mortality of man; touching a cold carcass or seeing a rotten body arouses horror in a human being. Death here appears as „the absolute limit, a finitude which denies any possibility of imaginative transcendence into an awesome and infinite space” (Botting 75). In fact, it is what critics call ‘negative sublime’, a moment of horror, freezing when temporality can never be regained by the mortal subject.

Finally, I would like to refer to supernatural figures and phenomena as sources of sublime that appear in Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* more frequently than any other sources referred to earlier. The poems of William

Collins, for instance, have similar settings as those of the Graveyard poets; nevertheless, he „attributed a sacred, visionary and sublime power to the supernatural figures of ancient bards as well as to the wildness of nature” (Botting 34). In his “Ode to Fear” (1746) Collins describes monsters, giants, phantoms called forth by the owner of imagination:
Dark power, with shuddering meek submitted thought,
Be mine, to read the visions of old,
which thy awakening bards have told. (Collins II, 51- 3)

Poets and bards of earlier ages were able to produce divine emotions by filling their poems and songs with supernatural figures. Collins attributes an imaginative power to these bards, which power includes „a sense of nature and a capacity to evoke feelings unavailable in neoclassical compositions” (Botting 35).

To sum up the most important sources of sublime that evokes delightful horror and emotions of fear and pain, I would name *vastness* associated both with landscapes and architecture, *rhetoric* according to Longinus’ writings, *infinity* and *divinity* suggested either by Gothic architecture or the ruins of Graveyard poetry, *death* inducing horror and being the source of negative sublime, and last but not least, *the supernatural*. In Horace Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto*, almost all these elements take place, which suggests the great importance of the sublime in the novel.

Considering vastness as a source of sublime in the novel, the first thing that comes into my mind is the gigantic statue of Alfonso, the Good. Even the ancient prophecy suggests the vastness of the statue before it is remembered: „That the castle and lordship of Otranto should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it” (Walpole 51). This passage clearly refers to the future; if the immense statue is finally remembered; when its vastness is completed, the illegitimate line will be broken down. Even the gigantic parts of the monument evoke sublime emotions; especially fear in the minds of the domestic servants. First, the gigantic helmet causes fear and astonishment in the inhabitants of the castle, after it murdered Conrad, the son.

The servant who had not stayed long enough to have crossed the court to Conrad’s apartment, came running back breathless, in a frantic manner, his eyes staring and foaming at the mouth. He said nothing but pointed to the court. The company were struck with terror and amazement. [...] after repeated questions put to him [the servant], cried out, Oh, the helmet! the helmet!. In the mean time some of the company had run into the court, from whence was heard a confused noise of shrieks, horror and surprise. [...] He [Manfred] beheld his child dashed into pieces and almost buried under an enormous helmet, an hundred times more large than any casque made for

human being and shaded with a proportionable quantity of black feathers.
(Walpole 52- 3)

The next part of the statue is found by the two silly domestic servants, Diego and Jaquez in the great gallery of the castle. They tremble with fear and horror when finally they are able to speak about what they have seen, as the following passage shows it:

For Heaven's sake my dear good lord, cried Jaquez, do not go to the gallery. Satan himself I believe is in the great chamber next to the gallery. [...] Diego had no sooner opened the door, then he cried out and ran back [...] Diego said and his hair stood on end- it is a giant I believe; he is all clad in armour, for I saw his foot and part of his leg, and they are as large as the helmet below in the court. (Walpole 68- 9)

Bianca, Matilda's chambermaid, has almost the same reaction when seeing the gigantic hand of the statue on the top of the staircase:

At that instant Bianca burst into the room, with a wildness in her look and gestures that spoke the utmost terror. Oh! My lord, my lord! Cries she, we are all undone! [...] Oh! The hand! The giant! The hand! – Support me! I am terrified out of my senses [...] I will not sleep in the castle to- night. [...] 'Tis the same hand that Diego saw the foot to in the gallery chamber. (Walpole 135)

The last member of the immense statue is brought into the castle by the troops of Frederic, Isabella's father. A hundred soldiers carry the enormous sword, and „seeming to faint under the weight of it” (Walpole 98).

Finally, when all the parts are put together and the monumental frame is re- membered, Alfonso, the Good appears in the form of a shade:

A clap of thunder at that instant shook the castle to its foundations, the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armour was heard behind. Frederic and Jerome thought the last day was at hand. [...] The moment Theodore appeared, the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down with a mighty force, and the form of Alfonso, dilated to an immense magnitude, appeared in the centre of the ruins. Behold in Theodore the true heir of Alfonso!, said the vision and having pronounced those words, accompanied by a clap of thunder, it ascended solemnly towards Heaven, where the clouds parting asunder, the form of saint Nicholas was seen; and receiving Alfonso's shade they were soon wrapt from mortal eyes in a blaze of glory. (Walpole 145)

If this spectacle is not sublime, I do not know what it is. Even the adjectives like 'immense' and 'mighty' used for describing this scene support the idea of vastness.

From the viewpoint of vastness, the gigantic figure of Alfonso serves as the source of sublime in the novel, though not the only source; rhetoric is also a very significant origin of sublime in *The Castle of Otranto*. Considering the way how certain characters express their emotions and passions we can observe the difference between the dignified tone of the princes, princesses and heroes, and the silly confused and often funny tone of the domestic servants. Horace Walpole also calls our attention to this contrast in his Preface to the Second Edition:

In my humble opinion, the contrast between the sublime of the one and the naiveté of the other, sets the pathetic of the former into a stronger light. The very impatience, which a reader feels, while delayed by the coarse pleasantries of vulgar actors from arriving at the knowledge of the important catastrophe he expects, perhaps heightens, certainly proves that he has been artfully interested in the depending event. (Walpole 44)

The naiveté of the domestic servants was clearly represented in the previous section of my paper when Diego and Jaquez can hardly say anything about the terrifying sight of the giant leg. If my aim is to demonstrate the contrast between the simple, undignified tone of the servants and the solemn, sublime dignity of the other characters, I just have to quote some passages from the dialogues of these characters. For this purpose, I have chosen two dialogues, one between Isabella and Manfred, when the latter tries to persuade the former to be his wife:

I desired you once before, said Manfred angrily, not to name that woman [Hippolita]; from this hour she must be a stranger to you as she must be to me: - in short, Isabella, since I cannot give you my son, I offer you myself- Heavens! Cried Isabella, waking from her delusion, what do I hear? You, my lord! You! My father in law! The father of Conrad! The husband of the virtuous and tender Hippolita! - I tell you, said Manfred imperiously, Hippolita is no longer my wife; I divorce her from this hour. Too long has she cursed me by her unfruitfulness: my fate depends on my having sons, - and this night I trust will give a new date to my hopes. (Walpole 59)

The second dialogue I have chosen represents the contrast even more since it occurs between Theodore and Manfred, enemies; nevertheless, Theodore speaks to him in a most sublime tone:

My lord, said Theodore, you wrong my father, nor he nor I is capable of harbouring a thought against your peace. Is it insolence thus to surrender myself to your highness's pleasure? Added he, laying his sword respectfully at Manfred's feet. Behold my bosom; strike my lord, if you suspect that a disloyal thought is lodged there. There is not a sentiment engrown on my heart that does not venerate you and yours. (Walpole 117)

Everyone in the gallery who heard this speech is touched by its form and content, even Manfred seems to be soothed by this confession. However, as Walpole admits in his Second Preface Shakespeare was his master in building up this contrast in rhetoric. In his *Hamlet* the humour of the gravediggers relieve the tension, while in Julius Caesar the clumsy jests of the Roman citizens have the same effect. Here again reveals the contrast between rational and irrational since according to Voltaire „this mixture of buffonary and solemnity is intolerable”. This statement does not really influence Walpole, though he considers Voltaire a genius, adding: „but not Shakespeare’s magnitude” (Walpole 45).

I have already referred to the divinity as the source of sublime when I cited the paragraph about the ascendancy of Alfonso’s shade into Heaven. As a divine phenomenon, his shade informs the people in the castle that Theodore is his true heir and his line is finally restored. After this, the vision returns to Heaven where Saint Nicholas, the patron saint of Otranto already waits for him, and both of them disappear in a blaze of glory. Alfonso’s ascendancy to Heaven suggests that indeed he could find eternal rest. Hippolita is the character who realizes that everything either good or wrong which has happened was the will of Heaven as the following part shows:

The beholders fell prostrate on their faces acknowledging the divine will. The first that broke the silence was Hippolita. My lord, said she to the desponding Manfred, behold the vanity of human greatness! Conrad is gone! Matilda is no more! in Theodore we view the present prince of Otranto. By what miracle he is so, I know not- suffice it to us our doom is pronounced. Shall we not, can we but dedicate the few deplorable hours we have to live, in deprecating the farther wrath of heaven? Heaven ejects us- whither can we fly, but to yon holy cell that yet offers us a retreat? (Walpole 146)

Besides father Jerome, Hippolita is the most religious person in the novel and she always accepts the will of Heaven, no matter how much suffering it gives her- she could also accept her fate when she recognised it as a divorce from Manfred.

When the author suggests in his Preface to the First Edition that in the novel “every thing tends directly to the catastrophe” (Walpole 44), he indicated that some higher, divine power looms the thread of the story. The prophecy at the very beginning and the end of the novel, the several supernatural incidents and the lines written on the immense sword all can be interpreted as elements of divinity, and as such, elements of the sublime as well. As father Jerome said: “Let the will of Heaven be done! I am but its worthless instrument” (Walpole 84).

Piranesi's spiral stairs also ascend towards Heaven and at the same time are associated with infinity similarly to divine power, which is eternal, thus infinite. In the novel, this infinity arouses confusion, anxiety, but basically fear, thus, the labyrinth that captures Isabella represents sublime emotions. In the second chapter of my research paper, I have already referred to the fear and anxiety of Isabella when she enters the windy labyrinth of the dark subterranean vaults. "Her blood curdled [...] every suggestion that horror could inspire rushed into her mind." However, "her dread of Manfred soon outweighed every other terror", and she proceeds in the underground labyrinth when "a sudden gust of wind extinguishes her lamp" leaving the princess in horrible situation (Walpole 61- 2). Thus, we can see that the infinity of the labyrinth arouses fear and anxiety; therefore, the maze can also be regarded as a source of the sublime in *The Castle of Otranto*.

Piranesi's spiral stairs and the labyrinth of the novel both induce a certain degree of anxiety because of their infinite quality, which is also represented in their form. This circular, spiral form can be associated with *circular time* when present, past and future join into an eternal cycle, as it appears in the novel. The past line is poisoned by the present which is soon annihilated and in the future a new line will be established which turns out to be the original past line. This circular aspect of time is also called mythical time as usually associated with mythology and prophecies, thus it stands in contrast with *linear or historical time* symbolized by the vault of the Gothic cathedral.

In *The Castle of Otranto* from these three elements – vault, labyrinth and the spiral stairs – the labyrinth dominates that again displays the existence of the circular time in the novel. However, I have already referred to the peculiarity of Walpole's work; namely, that it concludes with the recovery of the true past and a second - best marriage. Thus, despite of the infinity of the maze, the story is still characterised by finiteness as Isabella can also find her way out of the labyrinth. A remarkable feature is that Theodore guides Isabella in both of the mazes and at the same time, he is the character whose presence puts an end to the story since Alfonso can only find rest when Theodore appears within the walls of the castle. Besides being the protagonist of the novel, Theodore seems to solve the problem of infinity and offers a conclusion.

If we follow the linearity of the Gothic vault we can observe that after the climatic moment that can be marriage in our lifetime, it falls towards death which is the absolute end considering historical time. Death is the phenomenon that arouses horror in us; therefore, it serves as a most important source of sublime. However, in *The Castle of Otranto*, death cannot be observed from a linear point of view because the death of Conrad and Matilda both contribute to the circularity of the events. Conrad's death at

the very beginning of the story is caused by the gigantic helmet that symbolizes the starting point of the restoration. Matilda's death, no matter how sad a happening is, seems inevitable to the recovery of the line. If Matilda stays alive, Theodore will marry her and the line of Manfred, the usurper, remains. However, we know that such ending would be impossible; thus, Matilda's death contributes to the marriage of Theodore and Isabella which seems the only possible way of giving truth to the original line. Furthermore, the death of Manfred's children provides the moral teaching of the novel that again suggests that past actions relentlessly effect present.

Finally, I have arrived at the probably most frequent source of the sublime in the novel: the supernatural. Without any exaggeration, we can state that the whole novel is based on supernatural phenomena. First of all, the castle is haunted by the ghost of Alfonso; whenever a member of the statue appears in some part of the castle, it indicates the presence of the shade in that particular place. When the sword carried by the soldiers of Frederic approaches the castle, the helmet makes a nodding movement as if it was worn by some invisible head. This phenomenon surprises and terrifies Manfred as the author writes in the following passage:

At the same instant [when the trumpets of Frederic sounded] the sable plumes of the enchanted helmet which still remained at the other end of the court were tempestuously agitated, and nodded thrice as if bowed by some invisible wearer. [...] As soon as he [Frederic] approached the gate he stopped and the herald advancing read again the words of the challenge. Manfred's eyes were fixed on the gigantic sword, and he scarce seemed to attend to the cartel: but his attention was soon diverted by a tempest of wind that rose behind him. He turned and beheld the plumes of the enchanted helmet agitated in the same extraordinary manner as before. It required intrepidity like Manfred not to sink under a concurrence of circumstances that seemed to announce his fate. (Walpole 98)

The tempest of wind is induced by the appearance of the ghost, and the invisible wearer is Alfonso's ghost himself. Manfred feels as if this supernatural and unexplainable occurrence was announcing his fate; in fact, it is one role of visions and ghosts in the novel. In the end, the ascending spirit of Alfonso announces the recovery of his line, which again determines the fate of Manfred.

However, announcement turns out to be only one role of ghosts in the novel; they also warn and help human beings. For instance, when the shade of the dead monk who gave the sword to Frederic warns him not to marry Matilda:

The marquis was not surprised at the silence that reigned in the princess's apartment. [...] The door was a-jar, the evening gloomy and

overcast. Pushing open the door gently, he saw a person kneeling before the altar. As he approached nearer, it seemed not a woman, but one in a long wollen wood, whose back was towards him. [...] And then the figure turning slowly round discovered Frederic the fleshless jaws and empty sockets of a skeleton wrapt in a hermit's cowl. Angel's of grace, protect me! cried Frederic recoiling. Deserve their protection, said the spectre.[...] Dost thou not remember me? Said the apparition. Remember the wood of Joppa! Art thou that holy hermit? cried Frederic trembling – can I do aught for thy eternal peace? [...] What is thy errand to me? What remains to be done? To forget Matilda! said the apparition and vanished. (Walpole 139-140)

Though he desires Matilda, Frederic obeys the warning of the spirit and does not marry the girl, which again contributes to the outcome of the story. Manfred himself is also warned by a ghost, the ghost of Alfonso as Bianca tries to find some possible explanation to the supernatural phenomenon what she has seen: "... for certain it comes to warn your highness; why should it appear to me else? I say my prayers morning and evening- Oh! If your highness believed Diego! [...] Father Jerome has often told us the prophecy would be out one of these days" (Walpole 135-6). The ghost of Alfonso warns Manfred when he announces his will to marry Isabella himself. While Manfred rises to pursue her, "the plumes of the fatal helmet which rose to the height of the windows" starts to wave "backwards and forwards in a tempestuous manner and accompanied with a hollow rustling sound" (Walpole 59).

Isabella considers this occurrence the declaration of Heaven against Manfred's impious intentions but we can also regard it as Alfonso's warning against Manfred's incestuous desires. As soon as the prince advances to seize the princess, another strange occurrence captures his attention as if this supernatural figure wanted to help Isabella in escaping from the prince and offered her a little time to find shelter. While the princess tries to exploit her opportunity to flee, Manfred is terrified by the spectacle of the portrait of his grandsire coming to life. He is unable to follow the escaping Isabella and seems to be paralysed by the sight of the picture, which quits its panel and makes a sign to Manfred to follow him:

Lead on! cried Manfred; I will follow thee to the gulf of perdition. The spectre marched sedately, but dejected to the end of the gallery and turned into a chamber on the right hand. Manfred accompanied him at a little distance, full of anxiety and horror, but resolved. As he would have entered the chamber, the door was clapped- to with violence by an invisible hand. The prince collecting courage from this delay, would have forcibly burst open the door with his foot, but found that it resisted the utmost efforts. Since hell will not satisfy my curiosity, said Manfred, I will use the human

means in my power for preserving my race; Isabella shall not escape.
(Walpole 59- 60)

We can see again how past effects present since the portrait of Manfred's grandsire – obviously a fragment of the past – prevents Manfred from catching Isabella. Thus, again an apparition maintains the circularity of the story – if Manfred catches Isabella he will perpetuate his illegitimate line into the future.

Portraits in Gothic fiction seem to have a certain peculiarity: while they commemorate a piece of the past, they still affect present events. The above example certainly shows this but there is another way how “the mysterious portraits of Gothic fiction” (Gardner 16) to show their connections with the present. Taking an example from American literature, I would refer to Henry James's *The Wings of the Dove* in which Milly Theale recognizes herself in the Bronzino portrait (Gardner 16). The same thing happens in *The Castle of Otranto*; Matilda and her chambermaid, Bianca point out the resemblance of Theodore to the portrait of Alfonso with which the princess has fallen in love. First, they only daydream of a young prince resembling that portrait; however, later it comes to realization:

Hearing her father's voice and seeing the servants assembled around him, she stopped to learn the occasion. The prisoner soon drew her attention: the steady and composed manner in which he answered, and the gallantry of his last reply, which were the first words she heard distinctly interested her in his favour. His person was noble, handsome and commanding, even in that situation: but his countenance soon engrossed her whole care. Heavens! Bianca, said the princess softly, do I dream? Or is not that youth the exact resemblance of Alfonso's picture in the gallery?
(Walpole 88)

Theodore's resemblance to that portrait indicates his relationship with the line of Alfonso, though the possibility of the kinship is just hinted and only comes to the surface at the very end of the novel. As we can see almost all sources of the sublime in the novel – vastness, infinity, divinity, death, and the supernatural – support mythical or circular time which manifests in the outcome of the story. The illegitimate present line is erased and a new legitimate order is established which is the same as the original past line. Without divine and supernatural occurrences and the death of Conrad and Matilda, the recovery of the true past would not be possible.

Conclusion

As I have displayed them, it seems that all elements of the setting are interwoven with each other. The first element, time turns out to be circular; however, we can only realize this after observing the place, the environment in which the story takes place and how this environment affects either the characters or the readers. The best example representing the strong relationship between time, place and the sublime in *The Castle of Otranto* is the labyrinth. Basically, the labyrinth belongs to the category of place, which can also be regarded as an outer terror in the novel. It stands for anxiety, confusion and also passion. As soon as this maze of dark subterranean passages and vaults evoke fear in the entering Isabella it becomes a source of the sublime since it arouses sublime emotions. Meanwhile, the labyrinth also symbolises infinity, another source of sublime which, considering the form of the maze, recalls circularity. As soon as circularity is involved, we return to time and its circular aspect, which the whole novel is based on. The most important scene in the novel takes place in the underground labyrinth because here Theodore helps Isabella to get rid of the anxiety and infinity of the labyrinth and at the same time helps to provide a conclusion to the novel.

Indeed, I would like to refer to a further interpretation of sublime, which participated in the transformation of the individual. John Baillie in “An Essay on the Sublime” (1747) explains what sublime means for the individual:

Hence comes the Name of Sublime to everything which thus raises the Mind to fits of Greatness and disposes it to soar above her Mother Earth, Hence arises that Exultation and Pride which the Mind ever feels from the Consciousness of its own Vastness- That Object only can be justly called Sublime, which in some degree disposes the Mind to this Enlargement of itself, and gives her a lofty Conception of her own Powers. (Baillie 4)

This passage emphasises the divinity of the sacred self that indicates a new era in literature: the Romanticism.

Several critics dealt with the relationship between Gothic and Romantic writing, some of them like Eino Railo and Mario Praz consider Gothic writing included in Romanticism; however, as examples of less ideal themes of violence, incest, passion, and agony: Gothic becomes the dark or negative side to Romanticism. According to Fred Botting:

In the period dominated by Romanticism, Gothic writing began to move inside, disturbing conventional social limits and notions of interiority and individuality. The internalisation of Gothic forms represents the most significant shift in the genre, the gloom and darkness of sublime landscapes becoming external markers of inner mental and emotional states. Many

Gothic elements found their way into the work of writers from Wordsworth to Keats; though the significance and resonance of Gothic devices and themes were undergoing notable transformations. While the standard plots of narrative machinery – as established by Walpole, Radcliffe and Lewis – continued to be imitated in many novels and stories well into the 19th century, major innovations, or renovations, of the genre drew it closer to aspects of Romanticism. (Botting 91- 2)

Such innovative devices of Romantic literature were the new Romantic hero characterised by freedom, consciousness and individualism, the first - person narrative highlighting psychological interest in the dilemmas and the division of the individual psyche, which induced a new form of the Gothic ghost, the double or shadow of the original self.

As we can see Gothic can be regarded either as a darker side of Romanticism or as a starting point to the formation of particular Romantic devices. However, one thing is sure: Gothic writing, especially its most peculiar feature – the setting of the Gothic novel – made quintessential impact on later genres and writings. The importance of Gothic settings is represented in Percy B. Shelley's "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" that also mirrors the great influence of Gothic on Romanticism:

While yet a boy, I sought for ghosts and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead. (quoted in Punter 33)

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Rezümé

Dolgozatom a gótika különböző dimenzióinak – idő, tér és egy lelki dimenzió – kapcsolatát mutatja be Horace Walpole *Otranto várkastélya* című művében; továbbá kiemelném a *labirintus* szerepét a műben, mint a regény azon elemét, amely összekapcsolja az említett dimenziókat.

Alapjában véve az útvesztő a tér dimenziójához tartozik, lévén a történet egyik, ha nem a legfontosabb helyszíne. Azonban a labirintus a végtelenséget is szimbolizálja, mely olyan fenséges érzelmeket ébreszt, mint a szorongás, zavarodottság és a félelem. Éppen emiatt a labirintus a fenséges igen fontos forrása, és mint ilyen fontos részét képezi a regény lelki dimenziójának.

A regény idődimenzióját figyelembe véve a múlt és a jelen közti szoros kötődést emelném ki, melyet leginkább a regény cselekménye reprezentál. Maga a cselekmény az utódlás kérdéseit öleli fel, melyek még a vérfertőzés lehetőségét is feltételezik, ám a történet a jogos örökös hatalomra kerülésével végződik. Az eredeti vérvonalat megfertőzte a jelenlegi törvénytelen uralkodó elődje, kinek uralma szintén eltörlődik és az eljövő rend tulajdonképp megegyezik a múltbeli ’eredetivel’. Mivel a jövőbeli vérvonal vissza-

utal a régi jogos uralkodói házra, a múlt, a jelen és a jövő egyetlen végtelen körben kapcsolódik össze. Az idő eme körkörössége dominál tehát a regényben.

Tehát azt mondhatjuk, hogy a labirintus a regény azon eleme, mely legjobban szimbolizálja az idő, a tér és a lélek dimenziójának kapcsolatát. Az útvesztő a végtelenséget szimbolizálja, mely annak körkörös alakjában mutatkozik meg. Ez a körkörös forma az idő körforgását juttatja eszünkbe, mely időaspektus az egész mű alapja. A labirintus egész regényt meghatározó végtelensége ellenére a történetnek mégis van egyfajta befejezése, mivel az az eredeti, törvényes múlt visszaállításával, illetve a jogos örökös, Theodore és Isabella házasságával végződik.