

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Inner Psychology of Characters and The Visual-Psychological Means of Expressing Fear

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## Abstract

In this article, the issues of the expression of fear in narrative structure and the processes related to its perception are examined, namely the interrelation between character psychology and the representation of the fear phenomenon in the text. The creation of a sense of fear is primarily driven by internal monologue and emotions. In this process, the character's inner experiences are described in detail. The feeling of fear is conveyed to the reader through the character entering a dark room, experiencing a rapid heartbeat, and internal anxiety. The sudden appearance of characters and their intense, short-term emotional states, known as affects, are also depicted.

## KEY WORDS

Fear, space, time, conditions, poetics, aesthetic effect, elements of the Gothic novel, character psychology, emotional model.

## INTRODUCTION

Gradual development of fear, i.e., the method of gradation, is an important technique. In Gothic literature, fear does not emerge suddenly; rather, it is formed gradually through small details. The creation of fear is closely connected to the unfolding of events and the step-by-step shaping of what or who has a stronger impact on the situation. The weaknesses and doubts of characters are among the effective ways of representing fear. Instead of depicting characters as ideal or heroic figures, their vulnerable, doubtful, and uncertain aspects are highlighted. This approach makes fear more realistic and emotionally powerful, drawing the reader into thoughts such as "I have the same habit, or I am also afraid of this." As a result, the reader experiences the character's emotions together with them. Through the psychological depiction of the character's weakness and lack of willpower, the reader's natural cognitive processes are engaged. The harmony between imagery and inner psychology is one of the key methods in creating the phenomenon of fear. The

environment merges with the character's psychological state: cold, darkness, creaking doors, etc.

## METHOD

The indirect psychological depiction in a literary work is the revelation of a character's psyche through their actions, speech, facial expressions (mimicry), and physiological changes.[1.76] Through this form of depiction, not only is the character of the image revealed, but it is also possible to create a sense of grandeur in its appearance and produce a strong psychological impact. As U. Normatov emphasizes: "Character creation is the central issue of literature. In this regard, it is necessary not to understand all characters simply as 'character'. A character in literature is the discovery of a new person and his spiritual world; it is a unique individual who embodies the truth of an era, the writer's emotions, thoughts, and reflections." [2.94]

In creating a sense of fear, internal monologue and emotions play a leading role. In this process, the character's inner experiences are described in detail. The feeling of fear is conveyed to the reader through the character entering a dark room, experiencing a rapid heartbeat, and inner anxiety.[3.] The characters' sudden appearance and their intense, short-term emotional states, namely affects, are also depicted. Such a psychological state is described as follows: "At the beginning of an affective state, a person moves away from all human values and does not even think about the consequences of their emotions; even bodily changes and expressive movements become less noticeable. As a result, the individual develops a strong impulse in relation to their emotional experience (fear, anger, disgust, despair, etc.)."[4.236] Such expressive means, depicted through intense emotional states, allow the reader to experience fear together with the character.

In F. Haydarova's textbook "General Psychology," emotions, as one of the psychic processes, are characterized by having a clearly expressed external manifestation. Emotional changes are so distinctly reflected in the body's external expressions that it is possible to understand what is happening inside a person by observing their outward appearance. Among the most explicit and vivid manifestations of emotions are laughter and tears.[4.234]

Another method of representing fear is its gradual development, i.e., the gradation technique. Gradation (Lat. *gradatio* – "staircase," "step-by-step intensification") is a stylistic device consisting of the progressive strengthening of meaning within parts of speech. It is used to fully express artistic situations, feelings, and emotions, as well as to convey intense emotional excitement through comparison. In literary studies, gradation is classified according to its characteristics: based on the mode of expression, it includes logical, emotional, and quantitative gradation; based on the material of expression, it includes lexical and syntactic gradation.[5] The creation of fear depends on the gradual structuring of how an event unfolds and who or what has a stronger impact. It is carried out in such a way that there is an intentional aim of creating an effect, and to achieve this goal all possible means are used, including imaginary representations arising in the character's mind, the interactive influence of the environment, visual effects, and others. While discussing the quality of perception, B. Umarov notes that the conditions during the act of perception are also an objective factor ensuring its quality.

For example, proper lighting is essential for visual perception, while silence is of special importance for auditory perception.[6.188-189] Two principal factors influencing the development and variation of an individual's mood should be examined. The first encompasses objective and subjective characteristics, such as: (a) situations associated with natural or environmental factors; (b) unfavorable interpersonal relations; and other related conditions. The second factor may be conceptualized as a set of subjective circumstances and conditions that contribute to the formation and modification of an individual's emotional state.[4.236]

The character, represented through poetic pathos, is constructed by means of verbal, paralinguistic, and nonverbal psychological devices that progressively enhance the emotional intensity of fear. In this context, fear is not manifested as the character's intrinsic psychological condition; instead, it is visually communicated through imagery and narrative events. The category of the sublime is primarily embodied in the protagonist's strength and power; however, the author further amplifies this quality through detailed environmental descriptions. The sudden act of crying constitutes an emotional reaction generated by experiences of awe and fear. Moreover, such elements as an unfamiliar setting, a spacious room, and portraits serve as psychological instruments that evoke feelings of fear, uncertainty, and emotional unease.

In discussing the psychological effects of the phenomenon of fear, R. Bobokalonov argues that fear constrains human behavioral autonomy, placing substantial restrictions on an individual's perception, adherence to moral norms, patterns of thinking, and capacity for free choice.[7.232] Broadly speaking, representations of death, degeneration, darkness, and menacing landscapes constitute central motifs and imagistic elements in Gothic fiction. These devices are employed to stage and intensify fear, depicting its transformation from an externally perceived threat to an internalized psychological condition.

The depiction of characters' vulnerabilities and doubts serves as an effective narrative strategy for the representation of fear. Instead of presenting protagonists through idealized or heroic attributes, the narrative foregrounds their weaknesses, uncertainties, and ambiguous dimensions. This technique enhances the realism and emotional resonance of fear, fostering reader identification with the characters. Consequently, readers are prompted to recognize parallels

between the characters' experiences and their own fears, thereby facilitating a deeper empathetic engagement with the characters' emotional states.[3] Events and experiences that directly evoke emotions in an individual often generate positive impressions when they are associated with pleasant memories from the recent past. Conversely, if such memories have left negative psychological consequences, information connected to them is likely to be rejected or resisted by the individual. Moreover, a person who becomes immersed in information that evokes feelings of uncertainty and anxiety finds it particularly difficult to place trust in anything, as these emotional states undermine confidence and conviction.[8.129-143] The psychological depiction of a character's vulnerability and diminished volitional capacity serves to engage the reader's inherent cognitive operations. Through the process of comparing and interpreting specific character traits, readers are prompted to experience fear, thereby fostering a deeper level of emotional and psychological involvement in the narrative.

According to the Viennese psychiatrist Z. Freud, human behavior and actions are governed by two principles: the pleasure principle and the reality principle.[9.101]

The representation of a character's emotional experiences in accordance with spatial description serves to evoke a sense of subjective fear in the reader. In this regard, primary attention is directed toward maintaining a balance between the text and its genre-specific features, while also keeping in focus the correspondence of linguistic units within the text to its overall nature. In the creation of a literary work, the author seeks to emphasize and foreground this coherence more distinctly. Through this approach, the credibility of the work is ensured, and the reader's interpretative response is gradually shaped.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

A further underlying tenet of Gothic fiction is the notion that, throughout human existence, demonic or malevolent forces persist in their attempts to conceal truth and manipulate individuals through deception. While human life, the surrounding world, and humanity's relationship with existence have long constituted central concerns of literary and philosophical discourse, the human attitude toward death has consistently remained a subject of controversy and reflection. Consequently, reductionist and unilateral perspectives within literary scholarship have frequently constrained the comprehensive treatment of death as a theme,

notwithstanding its status as a fundamental component of the human condition.

The depiction of deeply internalized ideas and the psychological contradictions arising from an individual's inability to free themselves from such mental constructs constitutes a powerful means of exerting psychological influence on both the protagonist and the reader. By grounding the narrative in the realities of life, the text facilitates a more comprehensive disclosure of character while providing a nuanced psychological representation of feelings such as despair and helplessness. Furthermore, these realities contribute not only to the verisimilitude of the plot, characterization, and setting but also to the stimulation of critical reflection, enabling readers to reconsider and reinterpret life from alternative perspectives.

Gothic literature frequently focuses on the darker dimensions of human nature and various moral deficiencies, suggesting that such weaknesses inevitably consume and destroy individuals from within. These perspectives naturally encourage a deeper understanding of life and serve as a warning that invites individuals to become more mindful of the realities by which they live. In this regard, Gothic novels may be regarded as among the most profound literary forms for exploring complex aspects of human existence.

Furthermore, Gothic literature does not overlook representations of aristocratic families, which are often depicted with a distinctive sense of sublimity and grandeur. Their refined desires and aspirations are portrayed with considerable aesthetic sophistication and artistic skill. At the same time, Gothic novels frequently emphasize the aristocracy's prideful self-perception as members of a superior social class, as well as their belief that only socially compatible individuals should participate in their circles. The morally corrupted worlds they inhabit constitute one of the fundamental foundations of the Gothic tradition.

## **CONCLUSION**

Fear is conveyed to the reader through internal monologue and emotional states—for instance, the character's accelerated breathing, increased heartbeat, and inner anxiety upon entering a dark room. This technique enables the reader to experience fear together with the character. The development of fear is gradual; in narratives, fear does not emerge suddenly but is instead formed progressively through subtle and incremental signs. The depiction of characters'

weaknesses and doubts presents them not in idealized or heroic terms, but as vulnerable, uncertain, and ambiguous figures. This approach makes fear more realistic and emotionally impactful. Furthermore, the harmony between description and inner psychology is achieved as the character's mental state aligns with the surrounding environment (a cold, dark room, creaking doors), which reflects and reinforces their internal fear. Such correspondence intensifies the transmission of emotions to the reader.

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