CONCLUSION

This research analyses the origins and characteristics of Gothic novels and their influence on the major Romantic poets – Coleridge, Shelley, Byron and Keats.

The term “Gothic” comes from the word ‘Goths’, one of the German tribes that invaded Europe during the fifth and sixth centuries and took part in the conquering of the Roman Empire. Subsequent generations considered them to be barbaric and uncivilized, and thus during the Renaissance, critics referred to the architecture of the thirteenth century as ‘Gothic’; medieval creations in architecture which were considered mysterious and reminiscent of superstitious nature. The style of Gothic architecture was distinguished by tall pillars, high vaulted ceilings, pointed arches, abbeys and castles equipped with subterranean passages, hidden chambers of torture, and dark towers which evoked feelings of horror.

However, with the passage of time the term ‘Gothic’ evolved to be used in a number of different fields: as a literary term, as a historical term, as an artistic term, as well as an architectural term.

In a literary context ‘Gothic’ is most usually applied to a group of novels written between the 1760s and the 1820s. Their authors are: Horace Walpole, Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee, William Beckford, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Mary Shelley and C.R. Maturin. When thinking of the Gothic novel, a set of characteristics springs readily to mind: an emphasis on portraying the terrifying, a common insistence on archaic settings, a prominent use of the supernatural, the presence of highly stereotyped characters and the attempt to deploy and perfect techniques of literary suspense.

In Gothic fiction the reader passes from the reasoned order of the everyday world into a dark region governed by supernatural beings, a region
that inspires dread and horror, where decay abounds and death is always at hand.

During the last decades of the eighteenth century, England found itself in the midst of a societal unraveling. It is believed that out of this social climate the Gothic novel grew: a new and fearful genre for a new and fearful time. The spectre of social revolution is manifested in the supernatural spectres of the Gothic; a crumbling way of life emerges as a crumbling and haunted Gothic manor; the loss of English social identity becomes the Gothic hero or heroine’s search for identity.

The Gothic revival which appeared in English architecture before it got into literature, was the work of a handful of visionaries, the most important of whom was Horace Walpole. In the 1740s Walpole purchased Strawberry Hill and set about remodelling it in what he called the Gothic style, adding towers, turrets, battlements, arched doors, windows, and ornaments of every description, to create a kind of spurious medieval architecture.

When Gothicism made its appearance in literature, Walpole was again its chief initiator. His short novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), had for its ingredients a haunted castle, a Byronic villain (before Byron’s time—and the villain’s name is Manfred), mysterious deaths, supernatural happenings, a moaning ancestral portrait, a damsel in distress, violent emotions of terror, anguish, and love. The work was tremendously popular, and imitations followed in such numbers that the Gothic novel became probably the commonest type of fiction in England for the next half of eighteenth century.

The main stream of Gothic fiction which issued from Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* diverged into three parallel channels: first, the Gothic—Historical type developed by Clara Reeve and Sophia Lee; secondly, the school of terror initiated by Mrs. Radcliffe and maintained by a host of imitators—perhaps the most extensive Gothic type in which superstitious dread is aroused by constant, dim suggestions of the supernatural; and lastly, the works of the
school of horror, distinguished by lurid violence and crudity. Walpole adumbrated the machinery and characters of a Gothic story; Miss Reeve designed the characteristic Gothic ghost in English setting; while Mrs. Radcliffe spread all over the warm colours of her romantic imagination. Eventually, the two Gothic streams of terror and horror met in the genius of Mary Shelley and Charles Robert Maturin. The writers of ‘Gothic’ gave to the English novel the technique of a dark impressionistic portrayal of nature and the power of harmonizing tempests of the soul with external storms.

The Gothic villains are a prime example of their creators’ instinctive feeling for psychologically interesting characters who yet merge with the pervading theme of the supernatural. One can distinguish three types of Gothic villain: the character of Manfred as fashioned by Walpole in 1764, a type composed of ambitious tyranny and unbridled passion, who develops through Lovel of Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron*; the early villains of Mrs. Radcliffe, culminating in the character of Guzman in Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer*. The latter type presents an ‘imposing figure’. He is an outlaw, a sentimentalist, a humanitarian who combats life’s injustices, follies, and hypocrisies and is haunted by a sense of loneliness, helplessness, and despair. Similar victims of Destiny are La Motte in Radcliffe’s *The Romance of the Forest* and others.

The third type of Gothic villain is the terrible superman whose way lies in darkness and whose strength originates far beyond mortal thought. He is a new avatar of the Satan; drawn on lines of Milton’s Satan in *Paradise Lost*. This Miltonic superman makes his appearance for the first time in Eblis – the ruler of the realm of despair in Beckford’s *Vathek* (1786). Nine years later Lewis introduces Lucifer in *The Monk*.

Clara Reeve’s *The Old English Baron* (as her preface expresses it), brought the technique introduced in *Otranto* “within the utmost verge of probability” (Reeve, p. 4). Reeve presented her own slightly revised formula for combining “a sufficient degree of the marvelous to excite the attention,
enough of manners of real life, to give an air of probability to the work; and
enough of the pathetic, to engage the heart in its behalf" (ibid).

The Orient had always fascinated the western mind by its glamorous
reality – a reality that the popular travel books emphasized throughout the
period 1775-1825. In Beckford’s *Vathek* the East was portrayed in a manner
unlike anything before in English literature. The East came back once more to
fertilize the fancy of the West, and contribute its whit towards the development
of Gothic Romance.

Gothic literature also owes much to Edmund Burke’s theories expressed
in his essay *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the
Sublime and Beautiful*. In his essay he distinguishes the concept of the sublime
which he associated with vastness, strength, gloom, fear and the beautiful
which he associated with harmony, delicateness and pleasure. He stated that
terror was a source of sublime.

The concept of the ‘sublime’ is a key concept when analyzing Gothic
romance. It can be defined in terms of feelings of awe and terror at the power
of nature and of the supernatural. The Gothic texts make use of the norm of
antithetic – namely life and death, good and evil, order and chaos, reason and
magic, agony and ecstasy, in order to develop and express their thematic
concerns.

The word ‘Gothic’ was associated with the concepts of medieval and
supernatural. The plots of Gothic novels were usually set in Middle Ages, and
the setting was represented by ruins, haunted castles, monasteries which
created the ‘Gothic gloom’ with their dark prisons, long corridors, hidden
passages. The Gothic novelists discovered the charm of horror and the power
of the supernatural which was created by a particular mysterious and
frightening atmosphere reinforced by the use of supernatural beings such as
monsters or ghosts or male characters who are defeated because of their
negative impulses. As a consequence the main purpose of Gothic novels was to
terrify the readers rather than to amuse them. Their plots were centred around terrifying descriptions and extraordinary situations.

As expressed earlier, the publication of *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764 by Horace Walpole marks the beginning of Gothic fiction – a new trend that was going to dominate the literary scene for the next few decades. The Gothic genre became so popular that its influence upon the English writers – was indisputable.

In Mrs. Radcliffe’s hands the Gothic novel gained a new dimension. She excited the imagination by supernatural apprehensions, phantom effects and half-heard sounds. In her fictional world the palpable – gusts of wind, the cracking door, even the sound of a common footstep became sources of terror and mystery. The crude machinery of Walpole’s story – secret trapdoors, sliding panels, spiral staircases, and subterranean vaults – in her fiction became artistic instruments to evoke an atmosphere of suspense and beauty.

She was skilful in producing terror by awakening a sense of mystery. The sequence of her narrative is so managed that it moves our minds to a feeling of impending danger, and we hold our breath in suspense. Her vast, antique chambers have about them a sense of unearthly presences; where an ominous silence prevails; where echoing footsteps die away in prolonged gloom; where phantoms lurk in dark corridors; and where whispers come from behind the tapestry as it flutters in the gusts of wind. She alarms with terror and agitates with suspense; intense feelings are aroused by mysterious hints and obscure intimations of unseen danger.

What Walpole left inexplicable, and Reeve laboured to make credible, Mrs. Radcliffe reduced to a fascinating illusion. She would have gained artistically had she left its existence a possibility; the simplicity of her explanations destroys the mystery. The supernatural continually fascinates, but in the end is proved to be a cheat. Of all the tales of horror, *The Monk* is probably the most extravagant. Lewis had enlivened his sensational story of
rape, incest, murder, magic, and diablerie with an obvious sensuality. In spite of its extravagance, *The Monk* remains a romance of extraordinary fascination and power.

Earlier Gothic machinery had included flickering candles, glimmering and disappearing lights, haunted chambers, mysterious manuscripts, obscure heroes, and other similar properties. But the ‘intense school’ of ‘Monk’ Lewis introduced stalking spectres, devils, evil spirits, sorcerers and demons, magic mirrors, enchanted wands, phosphorescent glow, and other paraphernalia associated with black magic. The character in Lewis’s novel *The Monk* moves in a world of midnight incantations, poisonings and stabbings, amidst an atmosphere of thunder, lightning, storm, sulphurous fumes, and miracles. Lewis wantonly gloats over scenes of matricide and unconscious incest.

Walpole’s *Otranto* had contained a crude accumulation of terror striking incidents. The Gothic novel, in his hands was remarkable only for its ‘Gothic’ and ‘mysterious’ character. For Walpole had sought in the Middle Ages what was most frightening and most savage. Clara Reeve attempted to moderate the extravagances of her predecessors, while in the hands of Mrs. Radcliffe the Gothic novel gave genteel shivers and suggested the uncanny. But with one blow Lewis swept away all the previous effusions of the Gothic school. In his novel *The Monk* each horror became more ghastly than the one which preceded it.

*Frankenstein* was created when Mary Shelley, Percy Bysshe Shelley and Byron were cooped up in a cottage on the shores of Lake Geneva with a storm raging all around. They challenged each other to write a ghost story. The party was so impressed by Mary Shelley’s story that she was persuaded to turn it into a full-length novel.

*Frankenstein*’s creature, the monster, is an expression of social injustice. He becomes a symbol of Romantic concern for the isolation of the individual by the society. As long as he does not come into contact with society (in fact,
the monster shows love and generosity towards everybody), he wanders about
the country as a creature of curiosity and benevolence. But the horror and
hostility with which people react at his sight frustrates his attempt at making
friends. He soon finds himself rejected because of his being “different”. The
creature is turned into a monster by human prejudices.

Frankenstein’s monster reminds us of Byron’s poem *Lara*. The
protagonist of Byron’s Oriental tale — *Lara*, is a pirate chief whose life has
been adventurous and wild. His taciturn and brooding character keeps him
isolated from the rest of the society. In his opinion he is a victim of fate and
nature, not of his own faults.

Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* is a novel, which combines Miltonic
language and sublime imagery with description of violence, horror, and
decay. In many ways, the structures of Shelley’s and Byron’s works present us
with compelling, albeit different representations of consciousness as well as
foregrounding the extent to which the Gothic presented Romantic writers with
a conventional language through which they could explore fundamental
problems of representation, knowledge, interpretation, and consciousness.
Mary Shelley and Byron increasingly found in the Gothic, a language for
philosophical and psychological inquiry. They took their cues from writers like
Radcliffe and Maturin while redirecting the focus of their texts away from
romance narratives and toward the representation of extreme states of
consciousness.

The definitive Gothic novel is Maturin’s masterpiece *Melmoth the
Wanderer* (1820). The whole text shows an atmosphere of foreboding,
claustrophobia, torture, alienation and paranoia. As an Irish Protestant, Maturin
was keen to attack the tyranny of Catholicism and expose the methods of the
Spanish Inquisition. It is at best a haunting and powerful portrait of suffering
and guilt. One part of the book set in a monastery, exposes slowly the cruel
conspiracy of a clandestine order, which prepares to torture a young cenobite
whose only crime has been hearing voices at night.
Maturin invests his horror with startling realism and great suggestive power. Readers are compelled to linger on the hunting atmosphere of desolation in the opening chapters of the book, where the picture of a lonely and decaying farm, cold and gloomy weather, leafless trees, and a luxuriant crop of weeds and nettles, create an inexplicable feeling of paralyzing dread and of some impending disaster.

Dreams do contribute to a sense of the macabre and are a definite source and inspiration for a number of Gothic tales. *The Castle of Otranto* was (as Walpole reveals) the result of an architectural nightmare. Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* was likewise born out of a dream. Undoubtedly there is a strikingly close relationship between dreams and supernatural impressions. Mystical presences usually haunt one in nocturnal hours when one arises from slumber. A guilt-laden individual starting up from sleep, imagines himself confronted with the phantoms of those he has wronged. The lover beholds the spirit of his dead beloved, for perhaps in dreams his soul had gone in quest of her.

The theme of incest – as in *The Monk* – makes the dread of this sin to be somehow deeply intertwined with the roots of primitive religion. In this novel, Ambrosio ends up by raping and murdering his own sister. Henceforward, the incest theme seems to pass into the convention of the Gothic novel. Even in *The Castle of Otranto* there is a vague suggestion of it. Mrs. Radcliffe hovers around it in *The Romance of the Forest*, and this theme was used by Maturin in the Spaniard’s tale of *Melmoth the Wanderer* to further heighten the shocking situation.

Gothic has long confronted the cultural problem of gender distinctions. Women are the figures most fearfully trapped between contradictory pressures and impulses. It is *Otranto*’s Isabella who first finds herself in what has since become the most classic Gothic circumstance: a helpless heroine caught in a web of intrigues and cruelty. (Similarly, Ellena in Raddiffe’s *The Italian*, Agnes in Lewis’ *The Monk* are illustrative of the oppression against the women.
However, despite the power and authority of the Gothic men they at the end are condemned figures of failure and despair. For example Manfred in *The Castle of Otranto*, Montoni in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Schedoni in *The Italian*...)

The Gothic romance with its ruined abbeys, dark castles, haunted galleries, feudal halls, pathless forests and lonely landscapes, created a ruthless world of oppression, suppression, terror, mystery and awe.

The Gothic through its fiction proved to become one of the most popular and influential literary genres, whose themes and trappings can be traced from the works of the Romantic poets and the horror movies of today. The Gothic became the obvious choice when looking for a literary form to write about violence, madness, the supernatural, the unconscious, and social taboos like incest and cannibalism. When the topic of Gothic literature is discussed most readers immediately think of the vampire stories, tales of horror and terror, and supernatural tales, but the use of Gothic in poetry also has enhanced the images of stories in these shorter works. While the longer Gothic novels and tales can elaborate upon the defining characteristics of the genre, the poet can create the same chilling fantasies with limited words as seen in many representative Gothic-style poems.

The development of the Gothic novel from the melancholy overtures of sentimental literature to the rise of the sublime in the graveyard poets had a profound impact on the budding Romantic Movement from Coleridge to Keats. The astounding features and use of the sublime and the overt use of the supernatural, profoundly influenced the style and material of the emerging romantics.

The Gothic novel and Romantic poetry were in constant interaction, many writers of each making frequent sallies into the domain of the other. The average Gothic novelist was a poet too. The verses that intersperse their novels are romantic in tone and atmosphere. Besides, Mrs. Radcliffe, Lewis, and Maturin wrote Gothic ballads and versified many Gothic incidents. While the
Gothic romancers tried their hands at fragments of Romantic poetry, the Romantic poets experimented with Gothic fiction in the novel and drama. The first generation of Romantic poets drew their inspiration from contemporary romance.

The Romantic Movement in poetry and the Gothic Movement in novel share in common an interest in medievalism and in the supernatural. At times Gothic qualities appear to be one aspect of Romanticism.

The resemblance between Gothic fiction and Romantic poetry appear in the following aspects: the philosophy of composition, the portrayal of the characters, the treatment of external nature. We notice in both the novels and the poems the same handling of grotesque and repellant themes; the same nuances of style – the use of close wrought suspense, and vast, for example, by comparing the narrative method of Byron's *The Giaour* and *Lara* with Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. All are mystery tales, unrolled backwards by the explanation at the end.

Gothic villain and Romantic hero came of the same lineage, the villains Manfred, Montoni and Schedoni in the novels of Walpole and Mrs. Radcliffe show us the Byronic hero. These figures move in a similar world: the panoramic landscape setting, the Gothic interiors evoking terror and fear – in fact the whole machinery of Mrs. Radcliffe and the authors of her school furnished the pattern and set the style for poets of the succeeding generation.

During the Romantic Movement around the beginning of the nineteenth century people felt an attraction for the past. This led to a revival of interest in all things Gothic and medieval. Romanticism emerged as a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment. The Romantics wanted to escape from the concrete historical situation. They used various ways to achieve the goal; some looked back to the medieval past, some sought it in religion or the supernatural, others tried to find it in nature. During the Romantic period Gothic became associated with the dark, the strange, the bizarre. Many motifs and themes in
Romantic art have remarkable similarities with the Gothic as the present study has tried to show.

Gothic impulse in the Romantics is what we are trying to establish through this study. This Gothic impulse in the poets varies from Coleridge down to Keats. Each poet responds to the Gothic in different manner, for example, in Coleridge it is the call of the supernatural and a study of psychological responses of the characters. In the case of Shelley and Byron, it is how aspects of Gothicism helped in the expression of their own ideas and poetic concerns. In Keats, it is the charm of the Middle Ages and chivalric attribute.

The works of the Romantic poets carry many features that link them to the Gothic tradition. Coleridge bases his play Remorse on the Sicilian’s tale in Schiller’s Ghost-Seer; his Christabel is a masterpiece of the poetry of horror. He successfully creates a ‘Gothic’ atmosphere in the opening line of this poem, and displays a complete mastery over Gothic materials, while every subtle detail of the descriptive background evokes a sense of eeriness and fear. The poem with its sense of foreboding and horror of the serpent-maiden narrates a true Gothic tale.

Coleridge’s interest in the Gothic is reflected from his reviews of the Gothic novels by Mrs. Radcliffe, Lewis, and Maturin. He explores the human psyche through the Gothic. He adopts a tone of Gothic horror to comment on the effect of evil on innocence (as in Christabel). In the hands of Coleridge the supernatural acquires a new scope and character. Instead of confining himself to an outworn dread of spectres and phantoms, he moves over a wide range of emotions and touches equally on guilt and remorse, suffering and relief, hate and forgiveness, grief and joy. For example, in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Coleridge tells an exciting tale of a man’s sin against nature and his repentance and reconciliation.
As Coleridge worked on his poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, he widened its scope and created something much richer and more human. The weird adventures of his mariner take place not in the Gothic setting of a medieval castle (as in *Christabel*) but on a boundless sea with days of pitiless sun and soft nights lit by a moon and attendant stars. The delicacy and subtlety of the poetic genius of Coleridge produced the weirdness of *The Ancient Mariner*, who is akin to the Wandering Jew, a man haunted by his crime. The poet uses the dream as a device for revealing the future, and piles up a number of Gothic conventions rather than horror. The sinking of the fearful skeleton ship, the seven nights spent in company with the dead, the re-animated spectre-corpses, all are reminiscent of Gothic tradition.

In Coleridge’s *Christabel* (full of mystery and evil) readers get a sort of nightmare situation, situated in the atmosphere of old castles. The protagonists Christabel and Geraldine symbolize the opposing forces between good and evil. This evil is rendered through the supernatural and the power of dreams.

*Kubla Khan*, an unfinished work like *Christabel*, is set in the fabulous Ancient Orient. Written under the influence of opium, it is the rendering of erupting images out of the unconscious. The poem is a fantastic evocation of a strange world. The end of the poem is often referred to give a taste of Coleridge’s magic.

Of all the major Romantic poets, Shelley was the most avid reader of ghost stories and dark romances as a child he had read all the Gothic novels on which he could get his hands on. The wonder and curiosity which marked the romantic temper manifested itself in the poet’s ardent desire to probe and perceive the mysteries of nature and the hidden secrets of the world. This curiosity impelled Shelley to haunt ruins and graveyards and invoke ghosts and spirits in order to learn about the world from them. He borrowed the art of Gothic writing from Lewis and his school of horror, made full use of Lewis’ methodology especially in his early Gothic romances *Zastrozzi* and *St. Irvyne*. 
From the beginning Shelley was attracted to the sensational type of German literature and its imitations. Schiller's *Robbers* and Goethe's *Faust* were works with which he was familiar, and which took the deepest root in his mind and had the strongest influence on his character. The influence of German literature is evident in his poems, *The Revolt of Islam* and *The Cenci*. Shelley took the idea of the Wandering Jew from Lewis' *The Monk* and the idea of the Rosicrucian from Godwin's novel *St. Leon* (1799) and the hero of Maturin’s *Melmoth the Wanderer*.

Not only Shelley’s novels are an excellent study in Gothic tradition but his poetry as well is wonderfully illustrative of the Gothic influence on him.

His early poetry is a young man's expression of abhorrence of the tyrannical institutions such as monarchy, aristocracy and Christianity. In *Queen Mab* Shelley attacks kings, priests, statesmen, and such other drones and parasites for ushering in and perpetuating the various shades of evil. They are the persons who are directly responsible for the slavery of the people because they maintain their privileged position by exploiting the weak.

The Gothic theme of incest has been closely associated with romantic poets. Shelley had borrowed the theme of incest for his poem *The Cenci*, (it is the story of a debauched and vicious father whose cruelty and incestuous passions drive his victim, his daughter to murder) from Gothic tradition and moulded his hero, Cenci in the style of other Gothic villains, such as Radcliffe’s Montoni and Walpole’s Manfred. It has a recognizably Gothic framework in its themes of parental wickedness and filial suffering.

In *A Vision of the Sea*, Shelley adopted from Coleridge’s poem *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* not only the governing Gothic aesthetics and the ocean setting but particular images and plot details too. He has paid considerable attention to the correction of style as necessary to enhance the Gothic atmosphere of Mary Shelley’s Gothic novel *Frankenstein*. This study also highlights Shelley's attempt to work on the Gothic emotion of fear; the
lurid patches in *The Revolt of Islam*, the decaying garden in *The Sensitive Plant*, the tortures of Prometheus, or the agonized soul of Beatrice in *The Cenci* all are captured in words of anguish and despair.

Byron achieved popular acclaim through a series of long poems heavily influenced by the very texts from which he had earlier distanced himself.

The Gothic villain who had evolved from Manfred in *The Castle of Otranto*, through Lord Lovel in *The Old English Baron*, and through Malcolm, Mazzini, the Marquis Montoni, and Schedoni of Mrs. Radcliffe, finally taking on various traits in Eblis of Beckford, or Maturin’s Melmoth, went on to become “the Byronic hero”, an evolving, changing concept, although individual and distinctive in each of his manifestations.

Byronic heroes are aristocratic, moody, self-tortured souls, driven by disillusion to an eccentric philosophy and way of life — Harold (*Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*) to aimless wandering; the Giaour (*The Giaour*) to a total retreat from the world; Lara (*Lara*) to contemptuous and passive tolerance.

Byron first sketched out his hero in 1812, in the opening stanzas of *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage*, Canto 1. At this stage he is rather crudely depicted as a young man, prematurely sated by sin, who wanders about in an attempt to escape society and his own memories. Conrad, the hero of *The Corsair*, becomes more isolated, darker, more complex in his history and inner conflict, and therefore more frightening and more compelling to the reader. The hero of *Lara* is a finished product he reappears two years later, with variations in Canto III of *Childe Harold*, and again the following year as the hero of Byron’s poetic drama *Manfred*. The figure of the Giaour finds ample precursors in Gothic writing. Haunted by his own dark deeds and mixed allegiances, the Giaour becomes in effect, an embodiment of Gothic, like the character of Schedoni in Radcliffe’s *The Italian*. Byron’s debt to Gothic romance is reflected in his poem *Childe Harold*. The nature description of *Childe Harold*, in style, tone, and material is reminiscent of Mrs. Radcliffe.
The poet pictures the elemental phases of nature, mountain, sea, and storm. The description of Venice in Canto IV, Stanza XVIII, strikes a close correspondence between Radcliffé’s prose and Byron’s poetry. Also some passages in The Giaour, including one of a deserted palace, are of a Radcliffian turn. Byron’s Siege of Corinth, some passages in The Giaour, and The Bride of Abydos abound in gory details.

This last is very much a versified Gothic romance. Giaffir kills his brother to gain power, and proposes to marry his daughter to a villain to gain still more power. In The Siege of Corinth, the Gothic spectre of a damsel appears to her lover after her death, though he thinks it is she in person. She chills him with a touch. In Lara, Byron makes use of a Gothic situation in which the terror is not explained away. Attendants reach in and discover Lara stretched on the ground in a semi-conscious state with his sabre half drawn; what has happened we are never told. Manfred abounds in Gothic machinery: a curse, remorse, large Gothic halls, a fiery star, an attempted suicide, spots of blood on the goblet, warning abbot, terror-stricken and chattering domestic servants, and a mysterious death by blasting.

If a distinguished pattern of Gothic appropriation emerges in Romantic writing, it lies in the ability of authors like Coleridge and Byron to find the formal means of neutralizing the Gothic’s negative critical reputation-usually by setting their works in the distant past or in distant lands or cultures. With this pattern in mind, we can see a poem like Byron’s The Giaour: a Fragment of a Turkish Tale calling upon a host of conventions familiar to readers of Gothic and Oriental Fiction while at the same deploying an array of legitimating strategies common among Romantic writers.

John Keats, a romantic poet of the second generation can be regarded as a direct successor of many crucial aspects of Gothic novel writers. Keats’ interest in the Gothic is further evidenced from his poems by the innumerable allusions to Beckford’s Gothic novel Vathek. The novel seems to have found an appreciative reader in him. The influence of Mrs. Radcliffé on Keats is very
evident from the similarities between their works, as discussed in the chapter on Keats.

Keats was a great lover of the Middle Ages. He responded more than any other poet to the spell of medieval romance. The Middle Ages exercised a special charm on poets by virtue of its chivalry, romance, knight-errantry, supernatural beliefs, etc. Keats, who was chiefly a poet of pure imagination, was naturally fascinated by the charm of Middle Ages. He pays his tribute to the Middle Ages in *The Eve of St. Agnes*, *The Eve of St. Mark*, *La Belle Dame Sans Merci*, and *Isabella*. Keats’s use of the medieval model associated with the Gothic is evident in these poems.

Poetic anxiety emerges in Keats’s world of romance as a successor of haunting. Isabella is haunted by the loss of her murdered lover, the Knight-at-arms is forever tormented by his encounter with a fairy creature, Endymion is troubled by the absence of Cynthia, Lycius’s philosophic enquiry is disrupted by Lamia’s presence, and Madeline’s waking hours are unsettled by her dream. This aspect adds to the Gothic dimension in Keats poetry.

This study has tried to explore the strong links between the Gothic and Romanticism: the desire to test the boundaries of experience, the exploration of passion, the dominance of the imagination, the foregrounding of the irrational, the opposition to restriction and tyranny, the advocacy of political, emotional and imaginative freedom are the major features of these two movements.

It is generally agreed that Gothicism is related to romanticism. The two movements are connected chronologically. The eighteenth century Gothic writers are often described as precursors to Romanticism because they valued sensibility, exalted the sublime, and appealed to the readers’ imagination. They shared many of the same themes, like the hero-villain with a secret, suffering and guilt, incest, interest in the supernatural and magic and deal with psychological processes. That the Gothic novel left an indelible stamp on the romantic characters is undisputable. Gothic threads of horror were inextricably
woven into the new romantic material. The currents of influence though diffused are vital to the spirit and method of treatment in Romantic composition. Gothic elements abound in Romantic poetry like Coleridge’s *Christabel*, Byron’s *The Giaour*, Shelley’s *The Cenci* and Keats’s *The Eve of St. Agnes*. The Gothic writers presented Romantic writers with a conventional language through which they could explore fundamental problems of representation, knowledge, interpretation, and consciousness.

Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats all found in the Gothic, elements which they could use for distinctive purposes, and in doing so they simultaneously widened the scope of Gothic and made explicit certain connections which had previously been only implicit.