

Grutsina Mariia Alexeyevna

MA Student

Ryazan State University named for S. Yesenin

Russia, Ryazan

Academic supervisor: Guskova Natalia Nikolaevna

THE ROLE OF SUSPENSE IN A GOTHIC STORY

Abstract. *The article focuses on the role of suspense in gothic fiction. The author shows that suspense is the element that moves the narration forward and creates a definite atmosphere involving the reader in the events described. Analysing an extract from a story the author shows that suspense is created on different levels, linguistic means and stylistic mechanisms interacting with each other within a context to cause the desired effect.*

Keywords: *suspense, gothic literature, tenseness, uncertainty, anxiety, linguistic means, stylistic mechanisms.*

Груцина Мария Алексеевна

магистрант

Рязанский государственный университет имени С.А. Есенина

Россия, г. Рязань

Научный руководитель: Гуськова Наталья Николаевна

РОЛЬ САСПЕНСА В ПРОИЗВЕДЕНИЯХ ГОТИЧЕСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

Аннотация. *В статье рассматривается роль саспенса в произведениях готической литературы. Автор показывает, что саспенс является элементом, который движет повествование вперед, создавая определенную атмосферу и делая читателя участником описываемых событий. На примере отрывка из*

рассказа автор доказывает, что саспенс создается на разных уровнях. При этом лингвистические средства и стилистические механизмы создания саспенса тесно взаимодействуют друг с другом, создавая желаемый эффект.

Ключевые слова: саспенс, готическая литература, напряжение, неопределенность, беспокойство, лингвистические средства, стилистические механизмы.

Gothic fiction has definite characteristics that make it different from any other genre. Among them suspense is believed to be essential and even indispensable. Works belonging to the genre of Gothic fiction no matter if they have the elements of romance, horror, mysticism, or any others always have suspense as a force that moves the narration forward interlacing the events of the plot with the emotional reaction to them both on the part of the characters themselves and on the reader's part. Such a characteristic feature of suspense as keeping the reader alert is reflected in dictionary definitions of the term.

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English gives the following definition of the word «suspense»: «(from Latin *suspendere*, where *sub* is «up» and *pendere* is «to hang»): a feeling of excitement or anxiety when you do not know what will happen next; tension (*suspense novel/story/movie, etc*)» [1, p. 1780]. In Webster's New World Dictionary the word «suspense» is given the following definitions: «1) the state of being undecided or undetermined; 2) a state of usually anxious uncertainty as in awaiting a decision; 3) the growing interest and excitement felt while awaiting a climax or resolution, as of a novel, play, series of events, etc.» [2, p. 1349]. Thus, it infers from the above definitions that suspense is a device that authors use in order to immerse the reader into the atmosphere of tenseness, giving them a feeling of anxiety and uncertainty about the events that will follow. H. L. Borringer singles out another essential feature of suspense saying that suspense is «to be regarded via its basic components of fear and hope as a «generator of fear»» [3, p. 90]. It is these features of suspense that keep the reader emotionally involved in the story up to the end of it, now

fearing the fearful things that may happen, now hoping that thanks to some lucky chance the character will avoid disaster.

To perform its function as a means of capturing and keeping the readers' interest suspense is to be built by the author on different levels: syntactical, lexical, and phonetic, all of them interacting within a context.

On the level of syntax, suspense can be created by means of: delay of the main clause, parenthesis, questions, specific tense sequences, ergativity, ellipsis [4, p. 265]. Imperative constructions, asyndeton, inversion, short sentences [5, p. 49] also contribute to the effect of suspense that the author intends to achieve. On the lexico-semantic level suspense can be built with the help of words that have cataphoric semantic elements (danger, etc.), epithets rendering horror, metaphor, semantic contrast, narrative details and unexpected collocations [4, p. 269]. On the level of phonetics, suspense is kept due to alliteration and/or assonance, those two adding to the general effect created on the other levels.

The mechanism of creating the effect of suspense can be seen in the following extract from the story 'The Outsider' by H.P. Lovecraft.

«Unhappy is he to whom the memories of childhood bring only fear and sadness. Wretched is he who looks back upon lone hours in vast and dismal chambers with brown hangings and maddening rows of antique books, or upon awed watches in twilight groves of grotesque, gigantic, and vine-encumbered trees that silently wave twisted branches far aloft. Such a lot the gods gave to me—to me, the dazed, the disappointed; the barren, the broken. And yet I am strangely content, and cling desperately to those sere memories, when my mind momentarily threatens to reach beyond to the other».

The extract above opens the story and immediately renders a heavy tone to the narration due to the inverted word order (*Unhappy is he...*). The heavy atmosphere is reinforced by the anaphoric repetition of the same syntactical pattern (*Wretched is he ...*), semantic repetition (*unhappy, wretched*) adding to the desired effect of misery and gloom. Within the same sentence the gloomy atmosphere gets even gloomier and the tension implicit in the first sentence becomes almost palpable due to the narrative

details (*brown hangings, maddening rows of antique books, wine-encumbered trees*) and the accumulation and amplification of lexical units having «fear» as their main (implied or expressed) semantic element. The words *'fear', 'wretched', 'dismal', 'maddening', 'disappointed', 'barren', 'broken', 'desperately', 'sere'* being put into the micro-context in the very first passage of the narration are meant to emotionally involve the reader causing anxiety and dismay that they will not be able to shake off up to the end of the story. The reason for that lies not only in the choice of wording, though that is of great significance, but also in appealing to the feeling of empathy in the reader while introducing the main character (*Such a lot the gods gave to me – to me, the dazed, the disappointed; the barren, the broken*). The epithets chosen by the author in this sentence are meant to make the reader feel the atmosphere of darkness and gloom, the effect being reinforced by the alliteration (*dazed, disappointed; barren, broken*). Another function of the accumulated lexemes is to arouse the reader's interest and make them look forward to the events to come as well as to the account for the reasons that made the character feel like that.

As we see, to create suspense in the context under analysis the author resorts to different linguistic and stylistic means, all of them interacting with each other. It is mainly due to the careful choice of means or mechanisms in every particular case that the desired effect is achieved making it a real suspense story.

REFERENCES

1. Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English for Advanced Learners. – London, England: Pearson Education Limited, 2009. – 2081 p.
2. Webster's New World Dictionary of American English / ed. Victoria E. Neufeldt. – New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988. – 1574 p.
3. Mikos L. The Experience of Suspense: Between Fear and Pleasure // Suspense: Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations / eds. P. Vorderer, H. J. Wulff, M. Friedrichsen. – NYC: Routledge, 1996. – pp. 84-108.

4. Fill A. Linguistic Devices for the Creation of Suspense / B. Ketteman, G. Marko // Expanding Circles, Transcending Disciplines, and Multimodal Texts: Reflections on Teaching, Learning and Researching in English and American Studies. / eds. B. Ketteman, G. Marko. – Gunter Narr Verlag, 2003. – pp. 263-277.

5. Yazikovie sredstva sozdaniia saspensa v proizvedeniakh zhanra «triller» i sposobi ikh aktualizatsii (na materiale romanov angloyazichnikh avtorov) [Linguistic Means of Creating Suspense in Thriller Novels and Means of their Actualization (Based on the Works by American and British Authors)] / Zhogova I. G., Kuzina E. V., Medvedeva L. G., Nadezhdina E. Y. // Yazik i kultura. – 2018. – № 43. – pp. 46-57.