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## **Fear and Wish-fulfilling Flights of Fancy: Walpole's Nightmare of Class Conflict and the Restoration of Aristocracy in *The Castle of Otranto***

### Abstract

This article discusses *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole as the first gothic work dramatizing, through the theme of “usurpation”, the emergence of the new but “greedy” bourgeoisie in England in the eighteenth century as a threat against the long-established, and from Walpole’s perspective, “divinely ordered” aristocratic system. Au fait with the worries and expectations of aristocracy, for he is the son of Robert Walpole (the first Prime Minister of England), and a member of nobility and the Parliament, Walpole, in his work, cannot help defending the established system against the emerging bourgeois paradigm. In the article, Walpole’s concern with the chaotic state of his country, which he reveals through building a devastating class conflict in Otranto, will be analyzed with the help of biographical, historical, and Marxist approaches. Finally, by referring to the Freudian theory of “wish-fulfillment through dreams”, Walpole’s solution for the conflict will be shown to be a self-gratifying one, satisfying the author’s aristocratic self.

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## Introduction

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, gothic fiction emerged as a reaction against the neoclassical movement in literature, which, by relying on particular classical canons, emphasized rationality, clarity of thought, and decorum. During this period, industrialization had already started to change the face of Britain, forming, in the process, the new classes that were to confront the established socio-economic order in the country. With the middle classes beginning to usurp aristocratic power in order to establish their own culture with its base and super-structures, literary works about cultivation, social morals, harmony, and propriety became secondary among the growing tastes determined by the new bourgeois *Weltanschauung*. Augustan standards, which included ‘the literary tenets imposed by [the] neo-classicism... [of] Enlightenment philosophy’ (Botting 1996: 22) were being discarded on account of the rigidity of the neoclassical adherence to reason, and the reaction came in the form of a romantic-gothic release of pliability and fictitiousness. In fact, ‘The rise of Gothic, with its stress on the irrational, the inexplicable, the pessimistic and darker realms of human psyche, was a reaction against the Enlightenment philosophy’. (Koç 2005: 73) Horace Walpole (1717–1797), with *The Castle of Otranto*, helped release the suppressed (or hidden) faiths and traits of the semi-enlightened, semi-superstitious middle class people, stimulating their delusions to make them aware of a dimension far removed from the rationalist received wisdom: as Anne Williams claims, this type of fiction has become the ‘requisite dash of irrationality’, and gradually turned into ‘full-fledged Gothic narrative’ (qtd. in Fitzgerald 2002: 29).

Gothic fiction *per se* is a revolutionary movement against the *status quo* and its representative institutions. In the work of the founder of the genre, however, the representative institutions of the age are not destroyed, but restored and *renovated*. Having recognized the great schism between the polarized and othered realms (aristocracy and bourgeoisie) in his age, Horace Walpole, with his pioneering work (in fact *a coup de main* against the established literary tenets), emphasizes the need to amalgamate the newly emerging bourgeois ethics with the established values of aristocracy, and sees the burgeoning bourgeoisie as trying to form a new, greedy (in fact, capitalist) paradigm which threatens the “natural rights” of aristocracy. Trying to find a way out, he emphasizes in the work the necessity of the co-existence of past and present paradigms rather than the clash of the two, revealing — especially with the

ending of the work, where the hero of the novel stands on his own among the ruins of the castle — that there will be victory neither for the bourgeoisie, nor for the aristocracy. Instead, it will all end in ruin and nothing more.

In this article, Walpole's desire to blend the two opposite views (or truisms) mentioned in the prefaces (1996: 5–15) to the first and second editions of *Otranto*, and expanded in the work itself through the clash of bourgeois and noble characters, will be discussed through biographical, historical, Marxist, and psychoanalytic approaches. Walpole's personal life and social preferences (covertly revealed through the work's central discussion and dominant ideology), and the climate of opinion in his time will be highlighted, while a Marxist evaluation will help analyze *Otranto* from a class-driven perspective. Consequently, by making use of the psychoanalytic approach, we will see *why* Walpole attempted to merge the conflicting aristocratic and bourgeois paradigms, in fact a kind of wish fulfillment for the author. The article will finally reach the conclusion that, through *The Castle of Otranto*, Walpole creates an *outopia*<sup>1</sup> to reveal his dream vision in which all the social classes, instead of clashing among themselves, come together in a new political corpus for a new experience and understanding.

### Walpole's Frustration Revealed in His Political *Outopia*

Walpole declared in a letter (Sabor 1987: 64–65) addressed to William Cole<sup>2</sup> in 1764 that the inspiration to create *The Castle of Otranto* came to him in a dream which he had while living in the gothic grandeur of his replica of a medieval castle at Strawberry Hill. His state of mind was marred by the news regarding his beloved cousin, Henry Conway, both an accomplished military man and a statesman, positioned at the House of Commons and serving as Groom of the Bedchamber and as Colonel of the 1<sup>st</sup> Royal Dragoons, who had been forced to resign after his opposition to the king (Ketton-Cremer 1940: 211) about a matter concerning John Wilkes: it will be remembered that Wilkes was a member of parliament who defended his voters' rights and fought for parliamentary reform. Walpole had advised Conway to vote against the king's and the parliament's charges concerning the radical demands (Ketton-Cremer 1940: 242–243) of Wilkes whose popularity with the urban middle classes was seen (by the ruling aristocratic class) as a threat to the established monarchy, and to the parliamentary body, which had already discarded the reform demands of the middle classes, and which was in favor of punishing Wilkes for his radicalism<sup>3</sup>. Conway followed Walpole's advice to defend Wilkes, and was dismissed from the king's chamber, and from the command of his regiment. His dismissal caused Walpole to feel both guilty and angry. He tried to defend his cousin in the parliament, but in vain. It was, in fact, this miscalculated event that initiated his dream-like narrative: feeling guilty for his cousin, and angry with courtly and parliamentary machinations, Walpole voiced his social anxiety in his work, and '[...] the manifest plot of the romance, fueled by terrifying violence and conflict centered around a ruthless tyrant, is a slight exaggeration, if an exaggeration at all, of the political intrigue in which Walpole as a member of the parliament found himself' (Cameron 1966: 52). Moreover, creating such a fiction saved 'Walpole from mental collapse following the Conway

<sup>1</sup> The word utopia is a pun on the Greek 'outopia' meaning 'no place' — see *A Handbook to Literature* (Harmon, Holman 1996: 535).

<sup>2</sup> William Cole was a Cambridge antiquary and Walpole's close friend. For more information on Cole, see *The Dictionary of National Biography* Vol.11 (1909).

<sup>3</sup> See *John Wilkes Papers 1741–1790* (2010) for detailed information on Wilkes.

incident' (Samson qtd. in Clemens 1999: 40). He spent these troubled times at Strawberry Hill, which became the setting of his dream. He describes what he saw in his dream saying,

I waked one morning in the beginning of last June from a dream, of which all I could recover was, that I had 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 armor. (Norton 2000: 4)

As Walpole 'wandered [in his castle] Otranto began to rise, in all its gloom and horror' (Ketton-Cremer 1940: 211). Feeling overwhelmed and desperate for the well-being of both his cousin and country, the dream he had turned out to be a way for him to express his viewpoint on the political and social issues of his time, along with his sympathy for his beloved cousin, Conway.

The work, Walpole declares in the preface, is the creation of a dream. This dream can be read as an allegory; for the villain of the story, Manfred the usurper, demonstrates middle class aspirations which Wilkes and his cousin supported<sup>4</sup>. On the other hand, trying to find a mid-way without being seen as totally on the side of the bourgeoisie, he stresses the power of the established order, but points at the threatening class schism in his age and the consequent emotional disorder the individuals from both classes demonstrate. The castle, in fact, stands for England, and the conflict between the new and old owners of the castle represents the class struggle for political power in the country:

The periodic appearance of a gigantic supernatural Alfonso heralds the restoration of the principality to its legitimate blood line whilst the sighing animated portrait of Ricardo suggests the guilty conscience of those who have usurped such legitimacy. (Smith 2007: 21)

The old paradigm which comprises aristocracy (Theodore and Alfonso) and clergy (Father Jerome) clashes with Manfred, the secular, self-reliant bourgeois character, and what he stands for politically. Hence, Walpole's use of the supernatural 'arrives to announce and correct a lapse in the rightful possession of property' (Clery 1995: 71). This is the outlet Walpole has created in order that he can cope with the anxiety and frustration of his times.

When Walpole wrote *Otranto*, he was a member of the Whig party, the political institution which stressed the idea of legitimacy. 'The Whigs believed that they were the rightful owners of political power going back to the Saxons' (Smith 2007: 22). Worried by the power shifts in England, Walpole, whatever his sympathies were for whiggish reform, felt that the political power had to be in the hands of the aristocrats rather than the middle class people. As a true Englishman and caring very much about the welfare of England, which 'in Walpole's eyes, was often threatened' (Becker 1911: 261). He was anxious that the rising bourgeoisie would come to replace the aristocratic hegemony, changing, meanwhile, the existing power distribution in the country. Hence, he prefers to show in his work the potentially devastating consequences of a clash. The conclusion of *Otranto* suggests not a victory for the aristocratic (and also peasant) Theodore, but demise from the ashes of which a new paradigm, with a new aristocrat (or aristocracy) in power representing the lowest and highest classes, can be built. Having lost everything he possessed upon collision with aristocracy, the repentant bourgeois character (Manfred) will be forgiven, and the problem will thus be solved. Hence,

<sup>4</sup> As E. J. Clery asserts: '[...] the declared function of supernatural agency in the tale is to support reality of possession, an authenticity dependent on inheritance, the transmission of property and title through a family's male line' (1995: 72).

Walpole's aristocratic phantasmagoria for a new political system comes true in the *outopia* of his work. In that regard, Walpole's work 'represents an ironic, "Whig" rewriting...' (Clery 1995: 72) of history.

### **Creating a New Literary Fashion to Combine the Ups and Downs in the post-Augustan World**

Walpole's interest in combining the extreme poles of thought of his age can be traced in his career and life as a reputed scholar. He was one of the widely recognized art historians of England, an influential revivalist of Gothic architecture, and the son of Robert Walpole. His aristocratic lineage and family history influenced his choice of profession, and he pursued a career in politics like his father. He took a position in the parliament despite the fact that his interest was more consumed by arts and literature, for both of which he had a fine taste, especially for gothic architecture and medieval literature. Having acquired enough philosophical maturity through his interest in humanities, and broad political views, he was above the standard politician. Hence, he did not let any constant political preoccupation dominate his life. Despite his aristocratic origin, he was a moderate member of the parliament. He recognized that aristocratic power was being replaced by the power of the middle class people who were producing new economies through international trade, and he saw this as a threat only when he realized that the bourgeoisie was thinking of overthrowing the monarchy with its established institutions. His preference was neither aristocratic oppression, nor bourgeois hegemony. Instead, he was in favor of a system in which there would be a balance between the two powerful bodies. Well aware of the fact that aristocracy was losing ground, his aspiration to 'restore an aristocratic line' is animated as an 'allegory of political decline' (Smith 2007: 22) in *The Castle of Otranto*.

In a letter to his friend Madame Deffand, Walpole points out that his work is compatible neither with the literary nor the philosophical ideology of the era:

I have not written the book for the present age, which will endure nothing but cold common sense. I confess to you, my dear friend... that this is the only one of my works with which I am myself pleased; I have given reins to my imagination till I became on fire with the visions and feelings which it excited. I have composed it in defiance of rules, of critics, and of philosophers; and it seems to me just so much the better for that very reason. I am even persuaded, that some time hereafter, when taste shall resume the place which philosophy now occupies, my poor Castle will find admirers. (Walpole in Sabor 1987: 90)

Walpole recognizes that his work is not in tune with the climate of opinion of the era and yet; he still chooses to write in the style he sees appropriate. Criticizing his age for being under the domination of cold reason rather than taste, he reacts to the 'cold common sense' of the age through forming an unorthodox work.

Though politically motivated, Walpole was the first author to develop a new genre and a system for building suspense (the Gothic machinery), which the following gothicists would use in their works. He blended the genres like romance, tragedy, legend, and fairy tale into a "novel", resurrecting a 'medieval tradition of fatalism and numinous dread' which was in conflict with the 'positivistic spirit of his age' (Koç 2005: 74). To encourage superstition by his use of 'the irrational and anti-Enlightenment manifestation of gigantic and supernatural

justice' (Botting 1996: 51) he turned back to the faux medieval past, to let imagination roam freely. Darkness, gloom, secret passages, castles, supernatural beings, and violence reigned over the optimistic, enlightened, and rationalist worldview of the eighteenth century. Hence, with *The Castle of Otranto* Walpole created a retrospective vision of a world where chivalric heroes of noble blood and envoys of religion win, while the figures representing the new age are defeated.

From the two prefaces Walpole wrote for the different editions of his work, one may understand that he attempts to reconcile the past with the present so that the foul image of aristocracy could be restored through the anti-enlightenment themes. In other words, by blending two kinds of romance, 'the ancient and the modern' (Walpole 1996: 9) Walpole brings the medieval (associated with the aristocracy) with the modern (associated with the emerging middle classes). In the preface to the first edition he says that:

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. Invention has not been wanting; but the great resources of fancy have been dammed up, by a strict adherence to common life. But if, in the latter species, Nature has cramped imagination, she did but take her revenge, having been totally excluded from old romances. The actions, sentiments, and conversations, of the heroes and heroines of ancient days, were as unnatural as the machines employed to put them in motion. (Walpole 1996: 9)

The first preface urges the reader to perceive the work as an example of medieval romance, whereas the second one announces that the work is a new genre of writing. The first preface claims that the work is an attempt to reanimate the medieval world, while the second preface focuses more on a reconciliation: the compromise between the past (aristocracy, and the mercantilist social order of the middle ages) and the present (the industrializing 18<sup>th</sup> century world and the newly emerging middle classes).

As a historian and experienced politician, Walpole must have been very well acquainted with the "bourgeois revolution" led by Oliver Cromwell<sup>5</sup>, and its far-reaching consequences. Known also as the "English Civil War", it was the most catastrophic event of seventeenth-century Britain: the victorious revolutionists executed Charles I, and ruled the country for twenty years (1640–1660) under the dictatorship of Cromwell. Moreover, 'written in 1764, in the peaceful interregnum between the two violent events: the Jacobite uprising of 1745–46 and the Gordon riots of 1780' (Miles 2002: 90) *The Castle of Otranto* demonstrates the author's insight about the past, the present, and the future, and is a warning for both the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy. *Au fait* with the middle class greed for power, Walpole seems to have developed the notion that the ownership of land and authority by inheritance is much better than the middle-class "usurpation" of property through political authority. For that reason, the new bourgeois individual, realistic and rational in his demands, and ignoring inheritance and privilege, is the man to be feared and shunned. In a letter written to Lady Ossory in 1793<sup>6</sup>, Walpole demonstrates his conviction that this man is but a monster:

I write unwillingly; there is not a word left in my dictionary that can express what I feel. *Savages, barbarians* etc., were terms for poor ignorant Indians and blacks and hyenas, [...] What tongue

<sup>5</sup> For detailed information on Cromwell, see *Western Civilizations: Their History and Their Culture* (1984).

<sup>6</sup> <http://images.library.yale.edu/hwcorrespondence/page.asp?vol=34&seq=196&type=b>.

could be prepared to paint a nation that should avow atheism, profess assassination, [...] and who, as if they had destroyed God as well as their King, and established incredulity by law, give no symptom of repentance? These monsters talk of settling a constitution — it may be a brief one, [...] ‘Thou shalt reverse every precept of morality and justice, and do all the wrong thou canst to all mankind’. (Walpole 1996: 34–178)

The “monstrous” figure Manfred, as the current prince of Otranto, knows about the illegitimacy of his state, and wishes to secure his lineage through the marriage of his son Conrad to Isabella, a plan which fails due to his son’s death caused by the supernatural interference of Alfonso. He also knows about an ancient prophecy which pronounces “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 1996: 17). He, as the representative of the rootless but rising middle class, disregards this prophecy. Yet, as a ‘pragmatic, opportunistic rationalist’ (Just 1997: 39) Manfred thinks that he can outwit the established system and its supernatural protectors.

### **Feudal Aristocracy, Capitalist Bourgeoisie and the Problem of Usurpation**

The work is ‘clearly concerned with the legitimate restoration of an aristocratic line and the destruction of an illegitimate one’. (Smith 2007: 22) And Walpole attempts to reveal the hazards of disregarding aristocracy through Manfred’s greed and obsession with Otranto. This non-aristocratic anti-hero represents the new individual in the burgeoning capitalist system in the eighteenth century for Manfred ‘is completely immersed in his social role, and he sees his task as to be the one who by his rigor guarantees the propagation of this social system...’ (Just 1997: 39) For Walpole, the emerging socio-political order, which is about to disregard the role of nobility, naturally endangers the well-being of society. Revealing also the shortcomings of the emerging socio-economic system and its greedy individual through Manfred’s flawed character, he warns the eighteenth century paradigm of the dangers attendant upon discarding the past for the sake of the present. Hence, the greatness of the work does not only stem from the gothic atmosphere in the work, but also from the seriousness of the subject discussed.

Manfred, as the representative figure of the new middle class, does not care about the “noble” past paradigm, and the glorious rule by aristocracy, as he seems to be more interested in the present “vulgar” opportunism. A product of the new epoch, Manfred’s ambitious attachment to power and materialism is recognizable in an age when a great transition from the mercantilist to the capitalist economy was taking place. The prevalent aura of Walpole’s age, and why he created such a “villain”, can be explained through Marx’s view on the formation of capitalist ideology. Marx states that:

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas. (Marx, Engels 1932: 21)

Hence, the existence of “villainous” Manfred, from the Marxist perspective, is the proof that the means of production, power, and intellectual force (or ideology) no longer belong



to aristocracy, but to the new individual. Being the product of the new epoch, and as the new ruler of Otranto, Manfred is in charge of the system: he has the control of the castle, and he knows that his possession gives him the right to spread “the ruling ideas” among the people. Walpole sees that and shows how the past (or mercantilist system) will try to redeem itself on the present (capitalist system) through the supernatural power of Alfonso, who will destroy Manfred, and the spirit of the past will have taken its revenge on the present. In other words, the past paradigm will resist change itself.

The dominance of the past over the present seems unusually resonant in a novel that is itself presented as a version of the past. The past is the repository of the truth, a truth that the present has disregarded, but whose force will nonetheless be manifested in the present. (Ellis 2000: 33)

Using Alfonso as his own persona, and creating the aura of truthfulness around this ghost, Walpole, in fact, warns the middle class people, through what Manfred undergoes, against what might happen if the past is to be ignored and frowned upon.

Portrayed as a rising middle class character, Manfred is constantly warned by the supernatural power (of Alfonso) that represents the past. Yet, stimulated by the concept of progress (in fact, an eighteenth century dictum), Manfred uses every means in his power to establish his family line (Koç 2005: 82) (or the capitalist system) through usurpation or rape. His individual passions are very much like the ones embraced by the greedy middle class people. ‘The social ambition and economic development of the middling sort of people attracted much comment’ (Earle 1989: 9) since the middle class people in England [in Walpole’s time] yearned to climb the social ladder with the means they had. Walpole’s opposition to the sort of individual who has ‘the desire to increase always his property by continuous speculations’ (Earle 1989: 9) is overtly expressed through Manfred, who represents such blind ambition and desire. There is nothing more important than the ownership of Otranto. His family, which he sacrifices for his passions, comes next or does not matter at all. After Conrad is crushed to death, Manfred only thinks about finding another way to keep Otranto in his hands rather than mourn for his dead child:

As little was he attentive to the ladies who remained in the chapel: on the contrary, without mentioning the unhappy princesses his wife and his daughter, the first sounds that dropped from Manfred’s lips were, Take care of the Lady Isabella. (Walpole 1996: 19)

Manfred already seems to have left Conrad behind and started to plot for keeping Otranto in his hands. He is ‘depicted as a typical bourgeois obsessed by the idea of progress rather than “natural rights”’. (Koç 2005: 83) Believing that the “natural rights” represent the previous mercantilist paradigm, and having already discovered his individual potential to challenge and change the established system, he goes to the extent of opposing Alfonso’s, and thus providence’s, interference in restoring the “natural order” of things. A godless outcast and an anti-hero, he is also a new figure in literature.

When Manfred’s position is analyzed from the Marxist perspective, his role can be interpreted as constituting the bourgeois aspirations to defeat the feudal system and its “divinely ordained” hierarchy in the class struggle:

The bourgeoisie, wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his ‘na-

tural superiors', and has left remaining no other nexus between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous 'cash payment'. It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervor, of chivalric enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of calculation. (Marx in: Cauter 1967: 76)

As Marx states, the anxiety about birthright (here embodied in Manfred) is representative of this class:

the emergence and the establishment of this new class marked the end of nobility, paving the way to a change in the concept of "birth right" when it came to ownership. This class also prioritized the materialistic tenets and obliterated the romantic values of the aristocracy involving passion for chivalry and religion, and the new individual was unstoppable and powerful with a calculative mind, focusing on the materialistic gains. (Marx in: Cauter 1967: 76)

As the polarized secular figure in the story, Manfred is determined to accomplish his goal no matter how many times he is warned by supernatural happenings, and by the ghost of Alfonso, which forms 'a symbol of our past rising against us, whether it be the psychological past [...] or the historical past, the realm of a social order characterized by absolute power and servitude' (Punter 1996: 47). Walpole endeavors to show the emergence of the new secular class that already severed the ties with the past through discarding the values attached to it. He tries to re- evoke those tenets by creating a numinous threat (Alfonso) in Otranto, which destroys everything before leaving the castle. Walpole puts the blame on Manfred for the destruction of the castle, and leaves Theodore, who is now the new lord of Otranto, among the ruins.

Though bitter pill to swallow, the solution Walpole finds to the conflict in the story is Theodore, the peasant-aristocrat hero. In the character of Theodore is laid the hope for a solution, for he emerges as the amalgamation of all the social classes: he is the son of father Jerome and the grandson of Alfonso, and thus a semi-religious and semi-aristocratic figure representing the feudal order, and also a peasant, representing the majority of the subjects, perhaps covering also the bourgeoisie if their roots are seen as relying on peasantry. Modern enough for a romance hero, for he is both distinct (aristocrat) and ordinary (peasant), this figure, with the hyperbolic description of Walpole, is shown as chivalric, romantic, and ethical. Though "peasant" in social status, he has the birthright to climb up the social ladder. Hence, Walpole reveals his notion of individual progress: only the ones with a birthright are able to move up the social ladder. By making Theodore finally come to power, Walpole demonstrates his creed that a restoration will naturally take place. This is the "poetic justice" of the author, taking Theodore to the top of the ladder, and making Conrad and Matilda pay for the sins of their fathers, and Manfred repent at the end. And Walpole finds contentment for the (un)fortunate Theodore: though still in love with Matilda's memory, Theodore comes to marry his relative Isabella for the sake of Otranto, and gradually finds happiness with her:

Frederic offered his daughter to the new prince... But Theodore's grief was too fresh to admit the thought of another love; and it was not until after frequent discourses with Isabella of his dear Matilda, that he was persuaded he could know no happiness but in the society of one with whom he could forever indulge the melancholy that had taken possession of his soul. (Walpole 1996: 115)

Finding melancholy satisfaction with Isabella, he obeys the rules of aristocracy, and reestablishes the aristocratic order with a new form. Hence, the new prince fulfills Walpole's desire for the renovation of nobility, for he merges in his personality all the social classes.

From Walpole's depiction of Theodore, it can be discerned how Walpole saw the present state of aristocracy in his age. Their status impoverished, and their rights and estates "usurped", aristocracy is no different from Theodore. Yet Walpole thinks that the providence of God and His "poetic justice" will restore this ancient social class. With such noble depiction of aristocracy, Walpole also satisfies his desire to rise above the middle classes. His portrayal of Manfred as a tragic figure, who, as a result of his error of judgment, ignores all the warnings and is doomed to experience a catastrophe and a tragic flow, is, in fact, Walpole's wish-fulfillment. As the origin of the work goes back to a dream Walpole had at a time when political and social turbulences were giving him unease, within this context, his dream of a giant hand on the banister can be interpreted as the gratification of his wish, which means the restoration of the power of aristocratic paradigm he was a part of, and the insertion of the new political ideology into his own age.

### ***The Castle of Otranto: a Bizarre Wish-fulfillment for Walpole for the Political and Mystical Lacunae in His Age***

If we take *The Castle of Otranto* as Walpole's gratification of his desires concerning the restoration of aristocratic order (Theodore becomes the new prince of Otranto), and as his wish-fulfillment as Walpole merges all the distinct classes within the personality of Theodore the prince, we should, then, concentrate on Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), for the work helps us understand the psychology of the author, and his ulterior motives while composing the work.

As Freud indicates, dreams are psychic phenomena

[...] and indeed the fulfillment of a wish; it takes its place in the concatenation of the waking psychic actions which are intelligible to us, and it has been built up by a highly complicated intellectual activity. But at the very moment when we are inclined to rejoice in this discovery, a crowd of questions overwhelms us. If the dream, according to the interpretation, represents a wish fulfilled, what is the cause of the peculiar and unfamiliar manner in which this fulfillment is expressed? (Freud 1913: 103)

The reason for Walpole having such a dream (as suggested by Freud) stems from his deep anxiety concerning the future state of aristocracy and social order in his society. Moreover, his deeply-felt remorse for the destruction of his cousin's career as a statesman and his ideas on the ideal political and social order are the two important reasons why he, through his work, triggered by his dream about a giant hand, attempts to realize his ideals. In that sense, both the dream he had at Strawberry Hill and his work are the reflections of his intense yearning to fulfill his desires.

Seeing that aristocracy is in a decline, and having already observed the bourgeois demand for radical reform, Walpole flees from the mundane world, and takes refuge in the dream world of his fiction, creating meanwhile a genre that would both fulfill the wishes and haunt the prospects of an era. This dream world, as Freud suggests, 'expresses the realization of the desire somewhat indirectly; some connection, some sequel must be known-the

first step towards recognizing the desire' (1920: 75). In accordance with Freud's postulation that the dreams consist of 'the (disguised) fulfillment of a (repressed) wish' (1920: 265), Walpole's suppressed or unrealized wish to restore the aristocratic order is fulfilled when Theodore gets what is rightfully his, and when Manfred learns his lesson. Walpole also satisfies his desire for violence by destroying the castle: 'A clap of thunder [...] shook the castle to its foundations; the earth rocked, and the clank of more than mortal armor was heard behind ... the walls of the castle behind Manfred were thrown down with a mighty force...' (1996: 112). With this destruction Walpole expresses his desire to found a new, yet altered, aristocratic system. Now Manfred is repentant and Theodore is the new prince, a new system can be founded for the benefit of all classes, and this is the ultimate realization of Walpole's dream. As Adler points out, 'Dreams attempt to solve problems according to the individual style of life [...] the ancients always considered dreams in connection with a problem of life' (1936: 16). Walpole confronts and finally overcomes the fear and disappointment in his psyche through the expression of his dream in *The Castle of Otranto*.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, Walpole, by blending the two genres in his work (tragedy and romance) not only creates a new literary form, but also a new *outopian* paradigm (in fact, a dream world). In favor of amalgamating aristocracy, clergy, bourgeoisie, and peasantry (the distinct social classes that are sometimes in conflict, and sometimes in cooperation), he comes to claim in *Otranto* that his age needs a new, but a "ripened paradigm" where all the classes will have their distinct voices represented through the new type of an aristocratic ruler to create the all-embracing civil corpus for an "egalitarian" system. Seeing the rise of bourgeoisie as the major threat in his age, he depicts this phenomenon in his work as a disastrous political upsurge, which destroys not only the aristocracy, but also the bourgeoisie. Hence, he does not want to accept the fact that history has to progress on account of economic determinism, and that the middle classes, having acquired enough wealth and power, will try to overthrow any *ancient regime*. Finally, Walpole's offer of a solution in the form of a new aristocratic order represented by the noble princes, who are themselves reconciled and at ease with all the social classes, who have already acquired enough maturity through suffering and sacrifice, and who have come to the point that their aspirations are no greater than the welfare of all, is but a day-dream. A profound wish-fulfillment, in fact, for an aristocratic and idealistic politician.

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## Streszczenie

Przedmiotem refleksji w artykule jest *Zameczysko w Otranto* Horacego Walpole'a rozpatrywane jako pierwsze gotyckie dzieło dramatyzujące — poprzez wprowadzenie tematu „uzurpacji”, druzgocącego konfliktu klas w Otranto — problem nowej „chciwej” burżuazji w XVIII-wiecznej Anglii, stanowiącej z perspektywy Walpole'a zagrożenie dla „odwiecznego” „boskiego” systemu arystokratycznego (dodajmy, że autor był synem Roberta Walpole'a, pierwszego premiera Anglii oraz członkiem Parlamentu). Przedstawiając obawy i oczekiwania arystokracji, Walpole, w obliczu rodzącego się paradygmatu burżuazyjnego, nie potrafił nie stanąć w obronie dotychczasowo systemu. Problem konfliktu klas w Otranto analizowany jest w pracy za pomocą biograficznych, historycznych i marksistowskich metod badawczych zwieńczonych odniesieniem do teorii sublimacji i marzenia sennego Freuda, według której rozwiązanie konfliktu przez Walpole'a jest jedynie spełnieniem własnym, zadowoleniem arystokratycznego „siebie”.

Horace Walpole, literatura gotycka, burżuazja, arystokracja, Marks, Freud