

Wuthering heights gothic genre

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



What is Gothic genre? “ The idea of a gothic novel was invented almost single-handedly by Horace Walpole, whose ‘ The Castle of Otranto’ (1764) contains essentially all the elements that constitute the genre. Walpole's novel has greatly influenced novels not only written from that period of time but also until this date, he has also had great influence upon the short stories, poetry, and even in gothic genre film making up to this present day” Emily Bronte was influence by 'The Bridegroom of Barna', published in the nineteenth century when writing 'Wuthering Heights' The gothic genre consists of many codes and conventions that distinguish it into being gothic like. Often when authors write novels that include Gothicism, they use various techniques to help them build up certain emotions in the readers by using certain themes, motifs and symbols. One of the techniques that are often used in gothic novels is the use of pathetic fallacy. This is when the atmosphere or mood is reflected by the weather. In the case of Gothicism is it often very miserable weather. In the novel of Macbeth for example we are able to see that main type of weather found throughout the play is thunder and lightning storms which occur when evil deeds are carried out. Another example that pathetic fallacy is used within a gothic novel is Frankenstein, where the quotation of 'it was a dreary night of November' reflects on one of the characters moods. Another important element is usually the use of super natural events such as the presence of ghosts or vampires. This is a clever technique as in the eighteenth century many people either superstitiously believed in ghosts or where simply fascinated in reading about them, so, that era was therefore dominated by gothic novels that featured supernatural events. Lastly one other very vital element is the setting. The setting plays a

huge role because it automatically sets the ambiance and atmosphere.

Gothic novels are often set in dreary places such as old castles that are often haunted and dark a surrounding to put the sense of unease and tension in the reader How does Bronte use or adapt the conventions of Gothic Fiction in the opening of her novel, Wuthering Heights? There is an immediate scene of gothic genre in chapter one, page 12 where Mr Lockwood ‘ paused to admire the grotesque carvings lavished over the front door’. Instantly we get a flash image of the massive Wuthering Heights’ that was built in the ‘ 1500’. The book was originally written in the 1800, so the house has been built for approximately 200 years, this automatically puts an idea into the readers mind that the house might be haunted due to its old age. The house is ancient and unwelcoming which a perfect reflection of Heathcliff. The house also seems to be existing on the peripherals of society as if it is physically there but feels out of place and that it should belong elsewhere else, maybe in a more surreal world to match the weird and dreamlike events that take place there. On Mr Lockwood’s arrival he realizes that the house is not at all homely as it does not have any signs of ‘ saucepans or colanders on the wall’ but instead has a ‘ villainous old gun’ hung above the chimney and two heavy black chairs ‘ lurking’ in the shade. Bronte somewhat uses inanimate objects to describe the personality of their owner Heathcliff. At this point she could be using contrasts by proposing that Heathcliff is as dangerous as his villainous guns and has a nature of always lurking in the dark, which he does do later on in the book when Catherine is dying. The place strikes both readers and Mr Lockwood as an uninviting and bleak environment.

Furthermore Wuthering Heights is situated in a place far from the hustle and

bustle of society, high up in the moors. This makes the place very isolated and cut off from everyone around including neighbors and friends. The continuous mention and emphasize of the moors surrounding Wuthering Heights constantly reminds the reader that there is nowhere to go or anything to see except that of which nature provides. At the beginning of chapter two, Mr Lockwood says ' on that bleak hill-top the earth was hard , and the air made me shiver through every limb', we can see Mr Lockwood's immediate physical discomfort as he approaches Wuthering heights, and we get the sense that he does not want to be there at all. The moors represent the sublime because their vast size could seem uplifting and magnificent to see, but also, the size of it could also be overwhelming at the same time. Other than the scenery we notice the personality of the first major character we meet, Heathcliff. Heathcliff is first introduced by Nelly as a Gypsy boy found on the streets of Liverpool. He was referred to as ' it' and called names such as " wicked" and " imp of Satan." He is described as being a diabolical man, dark and mysterious. We are able to see that Bronte is at her best when describing the character of Heathcliff as she wants him to come across as a complex character throughout the entire novel. Some readers may sympathize with his situation however others would see him as beastly. Heathcliff's acts are often violent, brutal and always have a vengeful intention behind it, such as hanging Isabella's puppy. He does this to show how much he despises her. He has a way of grinding those less powerful than him as he even says ' the tyrant grinds down on his slaves, and they don't turn against him, they crush those beneath them'. Showing he is ultimately the most dominant character in the novel and he can do whatever

evil act he desires, as no one will question him. Heathcliff is a dark character full of hate and anger, which was implanted in him from a young age through being constantly beaten by Hindley. This hate is carried out from the first chapter till the last. This gives the novel a feel of constant gloomy and sinister ambiance. Another very strong indication, that the novel has a gothic genre is through the supernatural events that occur. In chapter three Mr Lockwood is taken to a chamber that he is not supposed to be in as Heathcliff 'had a notion' about the chamber. Immediately we get a warning sign that something bad might happen because he was forbidden access into the room in the first place. Mr Lockwood wakes from a frightening dream, whilst sleeping in Catherine's bed, and claims he has seen a ghost. It is a young girl who calls herself Catherine Linton. He describes how he feels when, 'his fingers closed on the fingers of a little, and ice-cold hand' and how 'the intense horror of the nightmare came over him'. The way the ghosts are presented does not particularly make it clear if they are real or simply a hallucination, because of the frequent occurrence, and the realism of them. Usually people are unable to see ghosts let alone touch them and feel their temperature. Bronte chooses to be ambiguous in this way to let the readers decide if the ghost of Catherine was genuine or was merely a part of Mr Lockwood's imagination. Usually ghosts are negative as they represent fear and trepidation, but in the case of Wuthering heights Ghosts mean a lot certain characters such as Heathcliff. When Catherine dies later on in the novel, Heathcliff begs her to haunt him, saying "I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always — take any form — drive me mad!" showing the desperation he is in to be with his lover. In chapter one Bronte

uses a foreshadowing technique when describing the dogs as ‘haunting’ other recesses’. This could mean that Heathcliff might also get haunted by someone later on in the novel. At this point Bronte’s novel has a gothic-romantic twist to it. Dead characters refuse to leave the living alone, and the living accept that the dead find ways of coming back to haunt them.

Opposed to gothic traditions often the ghosts in Wuthering heights are welcome. There are two different narrators, Mr Lockwood and Nelly. Nelly has a very ambiguous role when narrating the novel because as readers we don’t know which side she is on because often she refers to herself as being a Linton. This confusion in the novel could cause opinions to be slightly biased but all in all adds a whole load of mystery. Nelly was most convenient to narrate as she has been through all the generations and knew the characters thoroughly. Bibliography [www. sparknotes.com](http://www.sparknotes.com) [www. heckgrammer. co. uk](http://www.heckgrammer.co.uk) [www. virtualsalt. com](http://www.virtualsalt.com) [www. shmoop. com](http://www.shmoop.com) Macbeth

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