

Gothic Literature Exam Notes

Structure of Arguments

- **INTRODUCTION: Introduce the texts that will be examined in the essay.**
- William Shakespeare's Macbeth (1606)
- Mary Shelley's Frankenstein (1818)
- Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights (1847)
- Introduce the
- **PARAGRAPH 1: What is the definition of "Gothic Literature and why is it relevant in the modern day?"**
- Gothic literature also referred to as Gothic Horror concerns itself with a focus on themes of death, horror and gore and on some occasions romances. - **EXPAND**
- **Historical Context of the Gothic Tradition and Gothic Literature**
- "the goths were one of several Germanic tribes instrumental in the disintegration of the Roman Empire in the 4th century." (Stevens, David, "The Gothic Tradition", Cambridge University Press, UK, 2000, p.8-10)
– **THEME OF DESTRUCTION – reflected in the novels**
- **PARAGRAPH 2: DISCUSSION OF MACBETH**
- Quick assessment of this novel's place in the genre of Gothic Literature
- Key themes of the novel.
- Key characters, their interactions, meanings behind their presence in the novel, key quotes that talk about them or that they say that are important to the novel overall.
- **PARAGRAPH 3: DISCUSSION OF FRANKENSTEIN**
- Repeat assessment of key elements as done with Macbeth
- **PARAGRAPH 4: DISCUSSION OF WUTHERING HEIGHTS**
- Repeat
- **PARAGRAPH 5: COMPARISON OF ALL THREE TEXTS AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE IN THE GOTHIC GENRE**
- Similar themes, comparison of events, women in the novels and their role in the texts, transgression of the social norms
- **PARAGRAPH 6: CONCLUSION – WHY IS THE GOTHIC GENRE IMPORTANT? WHY ARE THESE TEXTS ESSENTIAL TO THE STUDY OF THE GOTHIC? OVERVIEW OF WHAT'S BEEN DISCUSSED**

Secondary Literature

- **FRANKENSTEIN:**
- "one of the most famous gothic novels..."
Reference: Stevens, David, (2000). The Gothic Tradition. United Kingdom. Cambridge University Press. P.76
- **WUTHERING HEIGHTS:**
- "complex, darkly atmospheric novel of human passion..."
Reference: Stevens, David, (2000). The Gothic Tradition. United Kingdom. Cambridge University Press. P.86

- **GOTHIC LITERATURE ON THE WHOLE:**
- “Gothic representations of death are so resonant because they occur in a realm clearly delineated as other than ordinary, the supernatural realm of ghosts and spirits, of revenants and vampires, of monsters and zombies, as they also touch on torture, murder and a transgressive desire for destruction...”

Reference: Mulvey-Roberts, A. P. i. E. L. M. (1998). *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. United States: NYU Press. P.38-40

Important Quotes from the Books/ Play

- **FRANKENSTEIN**

Victor’s Narrative:

- “...electricity and galvanism ... was at once new and astonishing to me.”
- “Destiny was too potent, and her immutable laws had decreed my utter and terrible destruction.”
- “Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay?”

Themes of creation, horror, modernisation through science and destruction of the natural order

The Monster’s Narrative:

- “All men hate the wretched.”
- “Have I not suffered enough, that you seek to increase my misery?”
- “I was benevolent and good; misery made me a fiend. Make me happy and I shall again be virtuous.”
- “Believe me, Frankenstein: I was benevolent; my soul glowed with love and humanity; but am I not alone, miserably alone?”

Themes of misery, displacement, isolation and loneliness

- **WUTHERING HEIGHTS**

Cathy:

- “He's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same.”
- “If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger.”
- “I wish I were a girl again, half-savage and hardy, and free.”
- “My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being.”

Themes of love, transgressions of women, savageness

Heathcliff:

- “Be with me always - take any form - drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I can not live without my life! I can not live without my soul!”

- “Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living. You said I killed you--haunt me then. The murdered do haunt their murderers. I believe--I know that ghosts have wandered the earth. Be with me always--take any form--drive me mad. Only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! It is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!”
- “If he loved with all the powers of his puny being, he couldn’t love as much in eighty years as I could in a day.”

Themes of transgression, necrophilia, death, horror and love

- **MACBETH**

Macbeth:

- “Stars, hide your fires; Let not light see my black and deep desires”
- I have no spur. To prick the sides only. Vaulting ambition, which overleaps itself And falls on the other.”
- Why do I yield to that suggestion Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair, And make my seated heart knock at my ribs, Against the use of nature?

Themes of kingly desires, usurping of power, regret and fears

Lady Macbeth:

- “Come, you spirits that tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here”
- “When you durst do it, then you were a man”
- “Yet i do fear my nature is too full o’th’ milk of human kindness”

Themes of female transgression of the social norms, overpowering women, insanity

The Witches:

- “Something wicked this way comes.”
- “Double double, toil and trouble; Fire burn and cauldron bubble.”
- “Thou shalt get king, though thou be none”

Themes of impending doom, predictions of the future, wickedness and evil

References:

Shakespeare, William, and Brooke, Nicholas. *The Tragedy of Macbeth*. United Kingdom, Oxford University Press, 1998.

Brontë, Emily, and Holway, Tatiana M.. *Wuthering Heights*. United States, Barnes & Noble Classics, 2005.

Shelley, Mary. *Frankenstein: The 1818 Text*. United States, Penguin Publishing Group, 2018.

Stevens, David, *The Gothic Tradition*, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2000, p.8-10.

Mulvey-Roberts, A. P. i. E. L. M. (1998). *The Handbook to Gothic Literature*. United States: NYU Press. P.38-40