Gothic Elements in the Novels of the Brontë Sisters

Thesis abstract

Gothic fiction, with its eerie atmosphere and mysterious characters, had a great influence on many later authors. That was without a doubt also the case of the Brontë sisters. Emily’s *Wuthering Heights*, with Charlotte’s *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, all contain profound elements of the Gothic. One of the most interesting aspects and perhaps the leading element here is the variety of Gothic character types, which can be found in these novels. By their actions, motivations, and even physical appearance, these characters very much contribute to the creation of a Gothic atmosphere in the novels. The Gothic novel genre has been described as relying on stock character types, some of which indeed entered later fiction, and here were variously transformed. The thesis will therefore identify such characters, trace their Gothic history, and consequently focus on analysing their relation with other important stock Gothic attributes - the environment (such as buildings or landscapes) and the elements of the supernatural - and their role in the overall atmosphere of the novels.

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