'The face at the window': Gothic thematics in *Frankenstein, Wuthering Heights,* and *The Turn of the Screw*

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Whether conservatively defined as referring to a group of novels written by English authors between the 1760s and the 1820s – a definition which would include *Frankenstein,* but not *Wuthering Heights* or *The Turn of the Screw* – or more liberally as a genre still vital and evolving, the Gothic novel is characterized by several established features. The predominant characteristic is an emphasis on fear: stories in the Gothic mode are overtly affective in intent, concerned with eliciting as well as portraying extremes of emotion. Also generally found in the Gothic novel are a prominent use of the supernatural (even when all phenomena have been logically explained away by the end of the tale), an archaic setting, the depiction of violence and passion, and stereotyped characters.

It is a commonplace that the Gothic is essentially a middle-class genre, having first emerged in a period of instability in personal, social and political realities. In the Gothic novel there is a precarious oscillation between anxiety and reassurance, as regards the alien or disruptive, a sustained tension between the expression and repression of irrational or unwholesome desires. While Gothic fiction seems ostensibly to uphold prevailing social structures and mores, implicit in the genre is a social critique, which may be directed, as for example in the three novels under discussion, against public institutions such as the Church or the Law, whose efficacy is implicitly questioned. There is a correlative exploration of the issue of personal responsibility in the domestic sphere. Mothers in Gothic novels die before the narrative begins, or very early on, and are thereby freed to be idealized. Fathers and father-figures also disappear regrettably early, but often not before committing some minor sin of omission or inadequacy which will result in the tribulations of the hero or heroine.

David Punter has suggested that the defining fundamentals of

a Gothic narrative are the concepts of paranoia, the barbaric, and the taboo.[1] Gothic fiction invariably involves a theme of persecution, often ambiguously rendered, with the victim of persecution being transformed into a persecutor, or vice versa. An undercurrent of insanity is a staple of any Gothic plot, with ambition or vengeance driving at least one character to the brink of madness. The barbaric, in the broadest sense, is that which is not conformable with generally accepted ethical and behavioural codes, that which is disorderly and chaotic, challenging by its very existence what is assumed to constitute the civilized. The preoccupation of Gothic writers with the barbaric, metonymically represented in the image of a monstrous face peering in at a window, manifests itself as a symptom of class anxiety, the various narrators of *Frankenstein, Wuthering Heights,* and *The Turn of the Screw* interpreting the phantoms which they encounter as a threat to the *status quo.* Whereas early Gothic novels demonstrate an anachronistic fascination with the aristocracy, in *Frankenstein, Wuthering Heights,* and *The Turn of the Screw,* the social order is threatened from below. This threat is associated with taboos suggestively transgressed. The aura of sexual taboo which surrounds the outcasts of these novels involves the necrophilic, the incestuous, and in the case of *The Turn of the Screw,* the paedophilic. The other aspect of the 'taboo' broached in these texts, in the double meaning of the word as 'unclean' and 'sacred', is the hubristic tampering with the occult in which Frankenstein, Heathcliff and James's governess all engage.

It can be said then that all of these elements of the Gothic novel together constitute the basic question which it raises and only ever partially resolves, namely what the 'proper' response of an individual or of a society to the strange or unnatural or uncanny should be. *Frankenstein, Wuthering Heights,* and *The Turn of the Screw* are strikingly similar in the ways in which they both exploit and explode certain premises and motifs of the Gothic, and in their almost obsessive literariness. Through the depiction of the unwished-for bonds between the protagonists of

1   *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day* (London, Longmans, 1980), Chapter 15.

these novels, and the respective demons which destabilize their worlds, these texts blur the hitherto clear distinctions between hero and villain, the respectable and the reprehensible.

The signal traits of the Gothic hero or heroine are established early in the history of the genre. As exemplified in the novels of Ann Radcliffe, these include sensibility, the capacity to feel and express emotion in sympathy with others; a love of literature, with books often performing the function of substitute parenting; and a heightened responsiveness to the sublimities of nature, natural surroundings being preferred to the material luxury and artificial stimulation of city life. Along with these manifestations of sensitivity goes the ability to read faces.

In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1799),[2] the heroine, Emily, and her saintly father consistently display this natural aptitude for physiognomy. The idea of placing one's trust in people on the basis of their appearance is rejected by Emily's aunt, Madame Cheron who, however, is herself fatally deceived by the dark and handsome looks of the glowering villain, Montoni. Emily is misled by appearances only once, when a charming Italian woman, to whom Emily had warmed, is discovered to be a high-class prostitute. This embarrassing error is quickly glossed over in the text. In William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794), a novel which has several affinities with *Frankenstein,* the work of Godwin's daughter, the eponymous hero repeatedly appeals to his accusers to read his innocence in his face. The most nightmarish aspect of the persecution of Caleb throughout the novel is that the discrepancy between his features and the crimes with which he is charged is taken as evidence, not of his blamelessness but of his villainy.[3]

The trope of the legible countenance, as revelatory of a person's class and personality, becomes increasingly problematic in later Gothic novels, and is foregrounded particularly in *Frankenstein* and *The Turn of the Screw*. In the former, Walton straightforwardly interprets Victor Frankenstein's refined countenance, noble bearing and resonant voice as indications of a

2   Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (London, The Folio Society, 1987).
3   *Caleb Williams*, ed. David McCracken (London, OUP, 1970).

superior character. 'He must have been a noble creature in his better days, being even now in wreck so attractive and amiable.'[4] The reason Frankenstein offers for Caroline Frankenstein's adoption of Elizabeth Lavenza is that she appears to be of 'a distinct species', differentiated from her foster-siblings in the peasant family at Lake Como (p.83). The sole basis for Frankenstein's precipitate rejection of his creature is the fact that, although he should have been beautiful – was designed to be beautiful – the moment of animation revealed him to be grotesque. Applying the rules of physiognomy consistently, Frankenstein and the other humans encountered by the monster read his appearance as evidence of innate evil. The monster, whose love of learning, reverence for environmental splendour and powers of empathy are demonstrably no less than those of his 'author', argues effectively that he has been created to be misread, his malevolence resulting directly from the way he has been treated and from his enforced isolation.

The issue of the 'reality' or otherwise of the apparitions in any of the novels under discussion being set aside here as ultimately unimportant, each 'face at the window' encountered by James's, Shelley's and Bronte's narrators can be considered in the light of David Collings' assertion that 'the window represents the mirror, a framed surface on which always appears the nonspeaking face of the other, of the self's daemonic double.'[5] Collings is referring specifically to Frankenstein's monster, who appears at the casement, like an hallucination, just before Frankenstein aborts the female monster, and again when he is embracing the murdered body of Elizabeth. As the nurturant, innocently curious Henry Clerval is the image of Frankenstein's prelapsarian or potential self, and Walton his double as scientific aspirant, so the monster – Frankenstein's 'vampire' – incarnates the intrication, in Frankenstein's subconscious, of sex and death, the extent to

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4   Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (3rd edn, 1831 – Penguin Classics, 1985), p.76.
5   'The Monster and the Imaginary Mother: A Lacanian Reading of *Frankenstein*', in *Mary Shelley: Frankenstein*, ed. Johanna M. Smith (*Case Studies in Contemporary Criticism*, Boston, Bedford Books of St Martin's Press, 1992), p.250.

which his capacity for intimacy is compromised.[6]

In various critiques of Shelley's novel, much has been made of Frankenstein's dream, experienced just after he has given life to the creature – the dream in which he kisses Elizabeth, only to find himself kissing the rotting corpse of his mother. The creation of the monster and desire for Elizabeth are guiltily associated with the sacrilegious exhumation of his mother, with the re-imagining of her as corruptible flesh rather than the self-abnegating 'angel' of the family's chosen memory. As in *Wuthering Heights*, idealization of the dead is complicated by situational, if not sanguinary, incest. Unlike Frankenstein, the monster, despite being compiled from corpses, is apparently potent, although he refrains from rape when given the opportunity, wanting companionship as opposed to mere sexual gratification. The spectre of miscegenation is raised again when Frankenstein imagines a female monster lusting after human men, thus being doubly monstrous, as it were.

Monsieur Waldman teaches Frankenstein that philosophers of science 'penetrate into the recesses of nature, and show how she works in her hiding places' (p.96). Frankenstein regards this nature which is the province of scientists simultaneously in carnal terms – as a female entity waiting to be explored – and as passive or dead matter, objectively separate from himself and available for appropriation and control. This nature becomes his unnatural substitute for the realm of human interaction. In contrast with Walton, he becomes callously neglectful of his family during the two years of his scientific pursuits in Ingolstadt. His experimentation serves in part as a rebellious attempt, at a subconscious level, to supplant the father – that father whom he will later blame for his own interest in recondite sciences and thus, by implication, for the existence of the monster itself (pp.87-8). Frankenstein's apprehension of nature as malleable private property is split off from his appropriately Romantic appreciation of scenic grandeur as soothing and elevating his spirits. As a consequence of his impertinent

6   For a discussion of Frankenstein's alter-egos see Anne K. Mellor, *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, Her Monsters* (New York, Routledge, 1989), Chapter 4.

unveiling of nature concealed, he forfeits access to the healing powers of landscape – nature manifest. By the subtitle of *Frankenstein: The Modern Prometheus*, Shelley emphasizes that her novel is about a man whose over-reaching is blasphemous in its implications. One reason for the novel's persistent popularity is that it lends itself so easily to an allegorical reading which is just as appealing in a secular age as in more god-fearing times – as a warning against technological advancement not constrained by appropriate legal and ethical safeguards.[7]

Various critics approaching *Frankenstein* from a Marxist perspective have read a politically coded subtext, offering a reading of the monster as a metaphor of the emerging, and potentially threatening, proletariat. The rapid growth of an urban proletariat, a social class which had hardly existed before the eighteenth century, was one result of the Industrial Revolution. 'The very logic of capitalism', Warren Montag suggests, 'has produced the means of its own destruction: the industrial working class, that fabricated collectivity whose interests are irreconcilable with those of capital and which is thus rendered monstrous in the eyes of its creators.'[8] The analogy is tenable insofar as Victor Frankenstein, having dreamt of creating a race which would worship him as a master, has succeeded only in imprisoning himself in a perpetual state of vigilant servitude. This is most ironically obvious when the monster addresses him as 'slave' after Frankenstein has destroyed the female creature, precisely because he fears her potential to breed a race which would dominate his own.

There is a further irony in the reversal of position indicated by the designation of Frankenstein as 'slave': the loss of free will being inherent in the state of slavery, the slave, it follows, is necessarily absolved of responsibility for his or her actions. Frankenstein, having played God to his monster's Adam, acknowledges several times that the creature's crimes are ultimately his responsibility. Frankenstein's final exoneration of

7   As for example Laura Kranzler, 'Frankenstein and the Technological Future', *Foundation 44* (Winter 1988-89), pp.42-49.

8   '"The Workshop of Filthy Creation": A Marxist Reading of *Frankenstein*', in *Mary Shelley: Frankenstein*, p.304.

himself notwithstanding, the prevailing judgement has been that Frankenstein is culpable, having heedlessly brought into being a creature to whom he should have acted as father. A dissenting reading has been offered by Judith Barbour, who sees the monster as Mary Shelley's cryptic indictment of William Godwin with Frankenstein in the role of Percy Shelley as beleaguered son-in-law.[9] This is an enticing reading if one accepts as just the portrait of Godwin outlined in Emily W. Sunstein's *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality*: the Godwin who hounded his daughter and her inamorata for financial support throughout their lives, even during the period when he was ostracizing them.[10] Neither reading necessarily displaces the other, the autobiographical traces in *Frankenstein* being of less concern in the Gothic trajectory of the plot than the interplay of nurturing and abandonment, self-vindication and remorse, between and within individual characters as constructs.

In *Wuthering Heights* (1847), which is replete with inadequate fathers, Heathcliff is the most 'unnatural', regarding the tenuous life of his own son as subordinate to his scheme of revenge. In the economy of the novel, as Ronald R. Thomas suggests, Heathcliff plays almost every possible part: 'he is dispossessed orphan and tyrannical father, servant and master, victim and tormentor, husband and lover, the embodiment of brutality and the soul of sentiment.'[11] He is, is other words, a fusion – or confusion – of both the archetypal hero and villain of the Gothic mode, described in language which is suggestive, by turns, of something vulpine or of a lowering Radcliffean aristocratic manipulator.

Heathcliff and the first Catherine, the presiding ghost of the novel, together personify the barbaric for the other inhabitants of the Heights and the Grange, each being the focus and paradigm of unresolved desire. Heathcliff is socially protean, all traces of

9   In a seminar on Mary Shelley's *Life of Godwin* held in the Department of English, The University of Sydney, 30 March 1993.

10   Emily W. Sunstein, *Mary Shelley: Romance and Reality* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), see for example p.89, and Part II *Passim*.

11   Ronald R. Thomas, *Dreams of Authority: Freud and the Fictions of the Unconscious* (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1990), p.130.

his origins having been erased. Nelly Dean, apparently content in her multiplex though subaltern role in the household, encourages the child Heathcliff to 'frame high notions of [his] birth', to assume the dignity of the refashioned self of his choice.[12] The contempt of Hindley and Edgar for Heathcliff's lowliness, on the other hand, is directly proportionate to their fear of his capacity to usurp what is theirs.

A particularly capricious ghost, the dead Catherine haunts Heathcliff by her absence, by withholding herself from his vision. She appears (if one excepts the testimony of the shepherd boy at the end of the narrative) only to the sleeping Lockwood, as if invoked by his reading of her handwritten *oeuvre*, superimposed on printed texts, and the carved repetitions of the three names of her partial and irreconcilable selves. In contrast with Quint and Jessel, this apparition does speak, identifying herself, describing her condition as one of loss and exclusion, and pleading to be allowed in at the window. That the visitant should appear to Lockwood is superficially incongruous as, for all his pretensions to refinement and intuitiveness, Lockwood clearly lacks that sensibility which should characterize the romantic hero which he aspires to be. Like Frankenstein, Lockwood has hitherto refused to allow passion and intimacy into his life, and will remain as isolated and imperceptive at the end of his narrative as he is at the beginning. His frenzied scraping of the waif's wrist across the broken glass of the window reveals the depth of his fear of what such an intrusion could represent.

In his description of the miscarried love-affair at the coastal resort, Lockwood has already revealed himself capable of love only in the abstract. As a sort of belated courtly lover *manqué*, he enjoys the prospect of romance only when his feelings are safely unreciprocated. (Hence, the marriage of a sixtyish Lockwood to the elegant silver-haired widow of Hareton Earnshaw in *Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights* constitutes the only major flaw in Lin Haire-Sargeant's witty parodic sequel to

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12 *Wuthering Heights*, ed. David Daiches (Penguin Classics, 1985), p.98.

Bronte's novel'.)[13]

Wuthering Heights has been described as a hybrid of the Gothic tradition and the sub-genre of Domestic Fiction,[14] with critics disagreeing as to whether Bronte's novel finally offers a subversive or a conformant comment on the place of women in her time. Through the fictional trial of Justine and Frankenstein's confrontations with magistrates, Shelley protests against a legal process which cannot accommodate the strange or unsayable, but operates rigidly on the basis of the plausible and coherent. In Bronte's novel, the plight of both Isabella Linton and the younger Catherine in the power of Heathcliff demonstrates the lack of protection afforded women by contemporary matrimonial laws, which effectively made them the property of their husbands. It has been argued that Gothic fiction written by women simultaneously represents the fears of women and their fantasies of escape from the feared.[15] Certainly in *Wuthering Heights*, the domestic situation, into which various female characters become (sometimes literally) locked, is both a refuge and a prison – at least until the novel swerves into a celebration of endogamy which banishes in Heathcliff the unacceptable face of patriarchal tyranny.

Apparently the strongest and most substantial of the four brides of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine Earnshaw proves least able to reconcile herself to the conventional requirements of marriage. Unable to make a choice which contravenes societal expectations, and although able to assume for herself a 'wide latitude' as Nelly puts it, she dies of what seems to be a self-induced illness, rather than live with insupportable psychic conflict. The far more naive Isabella Linton wilfully misreads the 'pitiless, wolfish' outsider as a means of escape from the claustral gentility of Thrushcross Grange. The seventeenth chapter of the novel, in which Isabella's flight from Heathcliff is recounted, highlights Emily Bronte's insight into the

13 Lin Haire-Sargeant, *Heathcliff: The Return to Wuthering Heights* (London, Random Century Group, 1992).
14 See, for example Lyn Pykett, *Emily Bronte* (London, Macmillan Education Ltd, 1989), Chapter 5.
15 Lyn Pykett, *Emily Bronte.*

complexities of human emotions, in its acute representation of the difficulty entailed in ending a masochistic dependence. One recurrent self-parodic feature of the Gothic novel is the warning given to the heroine to suppress her over-sentimental or foolishly romantic tendencies and to focus on the rational. In many ways, *Wuthering Heights* gestures more obviously and anti-romantically towards the folly of fanciful hopes of storybook love.

The Turn of the Screw (1898) can be read as containing a reiteration of the same warning. The governess alludes to three books during the course of her narrative – Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Fielding's *Amelia*. In each of these, the man loved by the heroine succumbs to degrading temptation, and must experience chastisement before being reunited with his pure beloved. Radcliffe's Emily St Aubert learns that her swain Valancourt had turned to gambling and womanizing whilst in the corrupting milieu of Paris, and is thus obliged to reject him. Later, however, it is revealed that his vices were of the financial kind only, never sexual. Therefore, duly humbled, Valancourt is able to be reclaimed by Emily and to marry her. Jane Eyre's employer Mr Rochester had also succumbed to the fleshpots of Paris, fathering the illegitimate daughter who is Jane's pupil. Moreover, he is still married, to mad Bertha in the attic, when he makes romantic overtures to his daughter's governess. Mr Rochester loses a hand and his sight in the fire which frees him of his wife. Having been morally cleansed as well as rendered eligible, he is able to marry Jane Eyre. The heroine of Fielding's novel learns that her husband has been unfaithful, but generously forgives him. After a period of suffering, her devotion is rewarded with an inheritance and happiness.

When she is strolling alone through the grounds of Bly at twilight, half-expecting to meet someone, James's governess seems to be identifying herself with Emily, whose solitary walks on several occasions offer her unexpected glimpses of a real or imagined Valancourt. That the governess's daydream should be interrupted not by the master from Harley Street, but by the 'horror' Quint, is thus as humorous as it is frightening. As Punter suggests, what seems most to disturb the governess about

Peter Quint is merely 'his anomalousness, his being where he is not supposed to be ... What she fears in Quint is the way he has escaped from his role as servant...'.[16] The Quint whom the governess and Mrs Grose together construct has irreverently transgressed the limits of his social stratum by charming Miles, Miss Jessel, and the master – all of whom were his social superiors – into treating him as an equal. That the governess herself is entertaining fantasies of hypergamy accounts in part for the horror which Quint's disruptiveness arouses in her, insofar as he serves as an abject mirror for her unrealistic desires.

The governess essentially becomes a tyrant of reason and order in the service of a romantic fantasy which she knows to be insubstantial. Her absent Gothic hero, having been led astray in licentious London, will not repent and prove himself worthy of her esteem. He is merely a man who feels no guilt about reneging on his duty to his young relatives. Deprived of the opportunity to 'teach' the master to control his sexuality, she seeks to impose her will on Miles and Flora. In what she perceives as a competition for their attention against their predatory former caretakers, she places a covertly sexualized pressure on the children. From what Mrs Grose tells her, she speculates that the children were to some degree participants in the affair of Quint and Jessel, and her response is the more fervently to attempt to claim them as her own. She 'covers them with kisses' as if to conceal them from Quint and Jessel, and to erase, by exceeding it, the earlier 'familiarity' of those companions.

Having assumed the privileges of a Gothic heroine upon her arrival at Bly, the governess is initially confident of her right and ability to assess those about her. Confronted immediately with contradictory evidence in the form of the cryptic letter from Miles's headmaster and the child's own angelic face, the governess chooses to believe the anatomical rather than the documentary testimony. Presumably never having seen a play, she nevertheless reads Quint's appearance as 'like an actor', in other words, not gentlemanly, but complacently motley, barbaric (like Frankenstein's monster and Heathcliff) in its suggestion of

16   *The Literature of Terror*, p.297.

slippery plurality. She takes it upon herself, literally and figuratively, to read for Mrs Grose, depicting their relationship in terms of an exchange of moral support and information through meaningful looks and gestures.

> 'You see me asking him for a visit?' No, with her eyes on my face she evidently couldn't. Instead of it even - as a woman reads another - she could see what I myself saw... .[17]

The fallibility of the governess's assurance that Mrs Grose is transparent is most clearly shown after the two have followed Flora across the lake, and the governess has challenged her predecessor to appear. The governess's triumphant interpretation of Mrs Grose's 'dazed blink', as proof that the apparition of Miss Jessel is a shared experience, is displaced by Mrs Grose's question – 'Miss! Where on earth do you see anything?' (p.239). The governess describes Mrs Grose's eyes at that moment as 'hopelessly sealed'. At the end of her story, she refers to the 'sealed eyes' of Miles, acknowledging for the first time that he cannot see the Peter Quint of her own vision, standing outside the window 'like a sentinel'. As she is about to write the death of Miles, and must therefore vindicate herself to herself and to others by finally denying the possibility that the ghosts are merely irruptions out of her own unconsciousness, the governess reads the boy's failure to see as her sign that he has been exorcized.

As Julia Briggs puts it, as the daughter of a clergyman, the governess should have known better than to undertake the dangerous task of an exorcism.[18] Unlike her fictional role models, Emily St Aubert and Jane Eyre, she never turns for help to the god of her fathers. Her refusal, twice in the novel, to attend a church service with the family of Bly suggests that she may be the one possessed, as well as the one, as she openly confesses, desiring to 'possess' (p.228). Heathcliff's most shocking encroachment upon the taboo, the opening of Catherine's coffin, is less disturbing to Nelly Dean than his

17 Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*, in *The Aspern Papers and The Turn of The Screw* (Penguin Classics, 1986), p.208.

18 *Night Visitors: The Rise and Fall of the English Ghost Story* (London, Faber, 1977), see pp.151-9.

refusal to confess his sins as he approaches death. Nelly's conventional Christian morality in conflict with Heathcliff's private cult of Catherine's ghost exemplifies clearly the tension in Gothic fiction between the subversion and the support of the appurtenances of the social order. Emily Bronte, another clergyman's daughter, is having it both ways.

The complete absence of religious authority in *The Turn of the Screw* can be regarded in one sense as a culminating expression of the tendency in all Gothic literature implicitly to treat religious piety as accessory. Whilst proper Gothic heroes and heroines reflexively turn to prayer in times of crisis, it is human endeavour or mere chance which brings about a resolution, never the intervention of a deity.

The Gothic novel in English originates out of the anxieties of a middle class uneasily watchful against 'unnatural' change, in religious beliefs, in the distribution of power, and interpersonal dynamics. In this context, David Punter asserts, 'the middle class is perfectly imaged in the form of the man [sic] sitting rigidly in the darkened chamber while monstrous faces press against the windows.'[19] Those righteous middle-class narrators – Walton, Lockwood and the governess – purportedly attest to the eventual expunction of transgressive forces. However, the endings of all three novels allow for the possibility that this has not been effected. In *Frankenstein*, a novel in which many promises are made and few kept, it is not certain that the monster will commit suicide by immolation, out of sight and off the page. Nor does the text offer assurance that Walton has learned the lesson against impious aspiration which Frankenstein offered, having failed fully to learn it himself. The death of little Miles is a spurious closure to *The Turn of the Screw*, clearly not necessarily signifying the defeat of Quint and Jessel, or the successful suppression of unsettling desire. The frame of the novel is literally left open, inviting the reader to come to his/her own exegetical conclusion. The reader of *Wuthering Heights* is more likely to give credence to the testimony of the shepherd boy than that of Lockwood, regarding the repose or otherwise of the spirits of Heathcliff and Catherine. The very circularity of the

19 *The Literature of Terror*, p.421.

Earnshaw family's recorded history, begun in 1500 with the first Hareton's inscription of his name on Wuthering Heights, allows for the possibility of future destabilization, by forces from without.

Shelley, Bronte and James exploit the catastrophic potentialities of Gothic fiction to expand the limits of the genre. Although abiding by the conventions of the genre, by going through the motions of drawing a curtain over the window, they do not guarantee that the monstrous face thus obscured has really gone away.