

# **Yorkshire in the Gothic Imagination**

**Yorkshire Gothic from 1847 to the present.**

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**December 2019**

## Abstract

This thesis will consider the emergence and continuing popularity of what I term ‘Yorkshire Gothic’, a strand of Gothic writing which adapts some of the conventions of the Gothic tradition to Yorkshire settings. It divides up the geography of Yorkshire into three different kinds of space – rural, coastal, and urban – and it analyses two key texts under each heading. In the rural chapter, I will think about how Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Ross Raisin’s *God’s Own County* (2008) draw inspiration from and Gothicize the setting of the Yorkshire Moors. In the coastal chapter, I will consider the role played by Bram Stoker’s *Dracula* (1897) in establishing Whitby’s Gothic legacy, and the ways in which Robin Jarvis’s *The Whitby Witches* (1991) draws upon, and adds to, this rich folkloric culture. Finally, in the city chapter I will think about two collections of short ghost stories: *The Ghosts of York* (1899), compiled by local historian William Camidge, and *The Ghost Walk of York* (1984), which differently present Gothic supernaturalism to their readers. Throughout these individual chapters, I will bring the later text into dialogue with the earlier, in the process thinking about how this reflection on precursor texts helps to create the ‘Yorkshire Gothic’ that is the object of my enquiry.

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I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

## Introduction

The Gothic genre is one which has often been associated with the evocation of place. From the Mediterranean Gothic of the Romantic period (notably Walpole and Radcliffe) to the London Gothic of the fin-de-siècle (for example Wilde and Stevenson), the Gothic setting is of utmost importance to how works in the genre are read. This dissertation will consider how Yorkshire Gothic fits into the Gothic canon and why the county of Yorkshire is such a popular backdrop for Gothic narratives. By regionalising the Gothic it is possible to consider more closely the contextual factors which contribute to the genre; as William Hughes states ‘The Gothic... was from its very origins as much concerned with the culturally temporal as with the literally geographical.’<sup>1</sup> The concept of Yorkshire Gothic is one which has not yet been considered as its own subset of the Gothic genre, despite its prevalence in Gothic texts dating back to the publication of *Wuthering Heights* in 1847. Starting with Emily Brontë’s sole novel, this dissertation will cover a range of Gothic texts, considering ‘classic’ literature alongside more modern works of fiction, as well as exploring the oral history and folklore of the region.

Before I begin to look at Yorkshire in the Gothic imagination, I must first establish my own definition of what makes a space Gothic, taking into consideration elements such as historical relevance, folklore and legend, as well as Gothic motifs including abandonment, isolation, liminality, and otherness. For the sake of this dissertation I will be basing my interpretation of the Gothic on the popular assumption that *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is an origin point for the genre.

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<sup>1</sup> William Hughes, “The uncanny space of regionality: Gothic beyond the metropolis”, in *Gothic Britain : Dark Places in the Provinces and Margins of the British Isles*, ed. William Hughes and Ruth Heholt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018) Accessed June 1, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central: 6

By its very nature, the Gothic genre is heavily overdetermined, sparking a constant debate into its origins and characteristics: ‘The very name Gothic originated in a spirit of contempt... and the art was regarded... as barbaric, and without principles’.<sup>2</sup> Charles Herbert Moore’s characterization of Gothic architecture is also relevant to thinking about the origins of Gothic literature, which takes its origin from the same Germanic Goths, and their barbarous associations. Just as the term Gothic was applied to architecture out of contempt, Horace Walpole utilised it as an elaborate joke to describe *The Castle of Otranto*; the first novel to describe itself as a work of Gothic Literature.

*The Castle of Otranto* marks the beginning of the Gothic as a defined literary genre. This period from 1764 up until the publication of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* in 1818 marks the first significant wave of Gothic literature, during which notable Gothic works, including *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) by Ann Radcliffe and *The Monk* (1796) by Matthew Lewis, were published. Though the Gothic genre is not necessarily limited to a specific era, there was a clear resurgence of the genre around the fin-de-siècle, running from *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886) by Robert Louis Stevenson up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This era included works such as *Dracula* (1897) by Bram Stoker, and *The Picture of Dorian Grey* (1891) by Oscar Wilde. There is also an argument to be made for the emergence of a third wave of the Gothic genre more recently, from Angela Carter’s *The Bloody Chamber* (1979) to Stephanie Meyer’s popular, but divisive, *Twilight Saga* (2005-2008).

Since 1764 the Gothic genre has evolved in accordance with contemporary anxieties and approaches to terror and horror literature. As the Yorkshire Historian, W. M. Camidge, stated in 1899: ‘the improvement and cheapening of literature, has done much to remove the blight of superstition, and the incubus of ghosts and kindred beliefs from the minds of the

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<sup>2</sup> Charles Herbert Moore, *Development and Character of Gothic architecture* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1899):

people'<sup>3</sup> The earliest Gothic novels generally focused on more religious superstitions, often reflecting anxieties surrounding corruption and temptation, making use of historical settings in which ordinary people – though not key characters – retained such popular beliefs. During the Gothic literary revival of the late nineteenth century, major novels explored not so much the superstitions of the past as the specific cultural anxieties of the fin-de-siècle. Modern Gothic fiction is often more psychological, reflecting modern scepticism, whilst a trend of children's fantasy Gothic still focuses on more supernatural elements of terror and fear.

As the first self-described Gothic text, *The Castle of Otranto* acts as a kind of dogma for the Gothic genre, especially in the earlier Gothic texts. The way in which Walpole utilises elements of time and space to construct a Gothic setting can still be seen in modern Gothic texts. For example, the historical aspect of the Gothic space is something that has evolved with the genre. Walpole purposefully confused the timeline of *The Castle of Otranto* placing it specifically in the medieval past, whilst also never being clear about the exact time during which the narrative operates. He portrays the narrative as a historical document, translated and re-interpreted by its contextual 'discovery'. There is a layering of narratorship in the text, creating a tension between the imagined original author and translator. This device of portraying novels as true stories was common in early-published novels and can be seen in works such as *Oroonoko* (1688) and *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), where the narratives are framed by claims that these are true events that have been experienced or witnessed by the narrator. These examples, however, are often present events of recent history, whereas Walpole uses this device to historicize his work. Ann Radcliffe also sets her narratives in a distant past in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), where the narrative takes place in In Mediterranean France and Italy in a specific year, 1584. Interestingly, Radcliffe does not use

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<sup>3</sup> W. M. Camidge, *The Ghosts of York* (York: "Yorkshire Gazette" Limited, 1899): 1

a framing narrative to legitimize the events of the novel. Her work stands alone, and never claims to be anything other than a work of fiction.

Robert D. Hume states that in Gothic fiction ‘time and place are irrelevant as long as they are vague or remote’.<sup>4</sup> Whilst I agree that Walpole’s establishment of the Gothic space is one that is ‘vague or remote’, I do not believe that this makes the time and place irrelevant. Rather, the time and place is even more relevant because it is ‘vague’ and ‘remote’. If Walpole is to be considered the origin point for Gothic fiction, Then it is useful to think about the way in which his work influentially evoked space in terms of a general atmosphere rather than a particular time and place. Since 1764 the possibilities of Gothic space have significantly expanded, making Gothic fiction an ever-evolving genre, impossible to simply categorize.

The decision to focus specifically on Gothic texts set in the Yorkshire region was predominantly inspired by Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, but Yorkshire has a long literary history dating right back to the very earliest English writing. The first named poet in England was Caedmon, who was a monk in what is now Whitby shortly after the original Abbey was founded. This literary legacy has been cemented over the years by prominent authors including the Brontë’s, Wilkie Collins, Bram Stoker, and numerous others who were inspired by the Yorkshire setting in their works. Yorkshire also has a rich culture of folklore and legend, ranging from the ghost stories of York to the Barghest which roams the moors. The folklore of Yorkshire is constantly changing and being added to. One example of this is the prevalence of ghost tours in York, which draw upon existing ghost stories and introduce new ones. These ghost walks repurpose Yorkshire’s folkloric culture for a mass audience, packaging these stories in a way which is digestible for tourists visiting the city.

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<sup>4</sup> Robert D Hume, “Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel.” *PMLA* 84 no. 2 (1969): 282-90, accessed Nov 6, 2018, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/1261285?seq=5#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1261285?seq=5#metadata_info_tab_contents)

Robert Mighall states that ‘The Gothic is a process, not an essence; a rhetoric rather than a store of universal symbols; an attitude to the past and the present, not a free-floating fantasy world.’<sup>5</sup> It is by this idea of Gothic as a process that I will consider the ‘Yorkshiring’ of the Gothic genre; a process by which the geographical backdrop, as well as the cultural values and historical events influence the development of the Gothic narrative within Yorkshire.

The oral tradition of folklore, which has often inspired Gothic literature, will also be a focus of this thesis as it often underpins the Gothic references to local ghost stories and history. By oral tradition I am referring to the transmission of stories, folklore and history via spoken word. The oral tradition has often been appropriated by Gothic narratives such as *Wuthering Heights* in order to create the sense of a timeless Gothic tale which is being told orally, despite its true status as a fictitious novel.

This thesis will be divided into three chapters focusing on different spaces of Yorkshire: rural, coastal, and urban. The rural setting covers most of Yorkshire and provides the backdrop to the novels of arguably Yorkshire’s most prominent authors: the Brontë sisters. In this chapter I will focus on Emily Brontë’s sole novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847) alongside a more modern text: *God’s Own Country* (2008) by Ross Raisin. Each of these texts is set in part of rural Yorkshire, although *Wuthering Heights* is set in West Yorkshire, just south of the Pennines, whilst *God’s Own Country* is set on the North Yorkshire Moors. Despite the two distinctly separate settings, I chose these two texts to compare both the treatment of rural Gothic across two distinct time periods, as well as the treatment of rural landscapes in Gothic literature; both novels provide a conflated view of rural Yorkshire in the Gothic imagination. *Wuthering Heights* is a classic, and arguably iconic, example of the

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Mighall, *A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) Accessed 1 June, 2020, [oxfordscholarship.com](http://oxfordscholarship.com): xxv

Yorkshire Gothic, and Raisin's debut novel is a critically acclaimed work of modern fiction. They offer interesting and distinct comparisons in the way Gothic literature functions against a rural Yorkshire setting.

In the coastal chapter, I will be considering Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) alongside Robin Jarvis' *The Whitby Witches* (1991). Published almost a century apart, these two texts each offer a different approach to one of Yorkshire's most famous, and most Gothic, coastal towns; Whitby. Whitby's Gothic reputation has led to the town becoming home to a bi-annual Goth Weekend, and the spiritual centre of the modern-day Goth subculture. Both *Dracula* and *The Whitby Witches* rely on the mysterious aura and Gothic feeling of Whitby, as well as its long history and literary roots. Again, I have chosen to consider a classic text alongside a more contemporary work of fiction in order to consider how the Gothic genre in Yorkshire has evolved over time, as well as the evolution of Gothic fiction and terror in literature generally. The choice to include a children's text, *The Whitby Witches*, was a conscious one, in order to compare techniques for creating terror in fiction and consider the role an increasing market for children's literature has played in the evolution of the Gothic genre.

The final chapter focuses on the city Gothic, and in particular the city of York. Though York is a famously haunted city, home to numerous ghosts and plenty of dark history and legends, there is a distinct lack of novels set in the historic city. For that reason, this chapter will focus on 'non-fiction' Gothic and ghost tourism. I will examine a number of short ghost stories printed in pamphlets and collected works, all of which are presented as historical accounts, and read them alongside the fictional texts previously studied, considering how these 'non-fiction' stories fit into the Yorkshire Gothic canon. These 'non-fiction' texts are not necessarily true to existing historical folklore which has existed in Yorkshire, rather they are usually examples of more recent myths and legends.

## Chapter One: How rural Yorkshire functions as a Gothic setting in *Wuthering Heights* and *God's Own Country*

Since the publication of *Wuthering Heights* in 1847, the exact location of its setting has been a topic of debate. It is a subject that most Brontë academics have an opinion on, and whilst it is clear to readers that Emily Brontë intends for the narrative to take place within Yorkshire, she is deliberately vague about exactly where. This section will examine Emily Brontë's sole novel alongside the contemporary novel, *God's Own Country* (2008) by Ross Raisin. Although the location of *Wuthering Heights* is more likely West Yorkshire, whilst the events of *God's Own Country* take place on the North Yorkshire Moors, both texts engage with their rural settings throughout, using the landscape to create tensions within the narrative. Looking at elements of dialogue and characterization alongside the distinctly rural setting, this chapter will consider the ways in which the Yorkshire countryside in general functions as a Gothic setting.

In 1881, J. H. Dixon writes:

Let the reader turn to *Wuthering Heights* and, if he know anything of Craven or its scenery, he will find in that wonderful novel some truly graphic sketching. Long before we knew anything of the author, we said, "This is Craven!" and we knew where to find the bleak and barren moorland solitudes, where the misanthrope hero had his crazy dwelling.<sup>6</sup>

Dixon is confident in his assertion that the Craven Dales, near where Emily Brontë attended school at Cowan Bridge, provided the backdrop for her only novel, but in 1888 J. A. Erskine Stuart states that:

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<sup>6</sup> J. H. Dixon, *Chronicles and Stories of the Craven Dales* (Skipton: Edmondson and Co, 1881): 18

Sowdens [Farm], ... where there is an inscription similar to that “H. E. 1500” in “Wuthering Heights” is supposed by some Haworth-ians to be the real Wuthering Heights, but we have it on the best authority that the original is some lone farmstead on the moors not far from the fall, so that anyone who visits Ponden [Hall] during a snowstorm, as we did, will be thoroughly able to appreciate Lockwood’s walk from Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange<sup>7</sup>

Erskine Stuart acknowledges the debate surrounding the locality of Wuthering Heights, as well as asserting his own stance locating it far closer to Emily Brontë’s home in Haworth. These are just two opinions among many regarding the location of ‘the real Wuthering Heights’ in a debate that has now spanned over a century. Each of these theories has its merits, and it would not be unrealistic to assume that Emily Brontë was inspired by the landscapes around her, but it is important to remember that Wuthering Heights is not a real place, rather a fictitious, composite version of Yorkshire constructed by Emily Brontë. She draws on her own memory and experience to construct a fictionalised Yorkshire, which is a blend of both the expansive Yorkshire Dales and the open Yorkshire Moors. As Christopher Heywood states: ‘By defining her Dales setting in general terms and combining it with a moorland of southern Pennine type, Emily created a generalized Yorkshire setting for her story’. Heywood argues that Brontë constructs a double landscape by overlapping ‘the region around Ingleborough’ with ‘a moor, patterned on the southern moorland which reaches southward from Skipton’. The novel does clearly construct a duality within the setting, but to try and specifically locate such a constructed version of Yorkshire does little to enhance understanding of the microcosm within which the narrative takes place. In Charlotte Brontë’s preface to the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights* she states that ‘to strangers who knew

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<sup>7</sup> J. A. Erskine Stuart, *The Bronte Country: Its topography, antiquities, and history* (London: Longmans, Green and Co, 1888): 176

nothing of the author; who are unacquainted with the locality where the scenes of the story are laid... *Wuthering Heights* must appear a rude and strange production'. In her preface, Charlotte Brontë addresses the negative critical response to the first edition of *Wuthering Heights*, never explicitly defending her sister but explaining the context in which the novel was written with reference to Emily Brontë's own creativity and imagination, as well as the specific locality within which the narrative was constructed. When she defines the novel as 'rude' she means something like 'primitive'. She is linking locality with temporality to suggest that the imaginary Yorkshire of her sister's novel is primitive in comparison with the increasingly industrialised reality in England at the time of publication. The fact that she specifically relates this 'rudeness' of *Wuthering Heights* to the interpretation of 'strangers' likens these unsatisfied readers to the figure of Lockwood in the novel, who is also 'unacquainted with the locality' and thus finds it strange and primitive in comparison with London. She highlights the dynamic of insider versus outsider within the text, where this dynamic is what separates Catherine from Heathcliff, and Lockwood from the narrative itself. Charlotte Brontë goes on to state that 'The wild moors of the north of England can for [unacquainted readers] have no interest; the language, the manners, the very dwellings... must be to such readers in a great measure unintelligible and – where intelligible – repulsive'.<sup>8</sup> Charlotte Brontë's own interpretation of her sister's novel places significance on the locality of its setting and the influence of the sisters' surroundings in Haworth, but she never specifically cite any reference point for where *Wuthering Heights* is located other than west Yorkshire. Elizabeth Gaskell contributes to the Gothicization of Haworth in her own writing about the life of Charlotte Brontë: '[Gaskell] constructs the North as a fictional space that is simultaneously Gothic and realist. Gothic, she implies, is the natural idiom of Haworth

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<sup>8</sup> Charlotte Brontë, "Editor's Preface to the New [1850] Edition of *Wuthering Heights*", *Wuthering Heights*, edited by Linda H. Peterson (Boston: Bedford/St Martins, 2003): 21

and its surrounds.<sup>9</sup> The setting of Emily Brontë's novel is deliberately indistinct because it is her own invented vision of Yorkshire, drawing on the moors in the south, the Yorkshire Dales, Cowan Bridge, Haworth, Withins Height, and likely numerous other locations visited by Emily Brontë in West Yorkshire.

One of the key features of Brontë's imagined Yorkshire, in *Wuthering Heights*, is that it is isolated from the rest of the world. Throughout the narrative, Brontë constructs *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange* as if they are in a microcosm, cut off from society, where time and place are experienced differently. This idea is first introduced by the narrator, Lockwood, who states that 'In all England, I do not believe I could have fixed on a situation so completely removed from the stir of society.'<sup>10</sup> The narrative is immediately distanced from the rest of the world, and established as being something which is self-contained and isolated. By immediately segregating her characters from the rest of the world, Brontë adopts, and adapts, a common trope of Gothic narratives, in which the action often takes place in strange, unwelcoming spaces. In the eighteenth century Gothic canon these spaces were often old and imposing buildings, as in Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), however in Brontë's writing she is often more preoccupied by the wild moorlands surrounding *Wuthering Heights*, than the house itself, therefore shifting the sense of the uncanny outdoors. It is because of this that Brontë needs to isolate the surrounding landscape from society. In earlier Gothic fictions the house or castle or abbey would act as the microcosm cutting off the novel's protagonists from the outside world and entrapping them within the walls of a terrifying narrative. In *Wuthering Heights* Brontë utilises the vast and often wild landscape as the terrifying space, whilst also using it to

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<sup>9</sup> Catherine Spooner "'Dark, and cold, and rugged is the North': Regionalism, Folklore and Elizabeth Gaskell's 'Northern' Gothic" in *Gothic Britain : Dark Places in the Provinces and Margins of the British Isles*, ed. William Hughes and Ruth Heholt (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018) Accessed June 1, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central: 27

<sup>10</sup> Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*, ed. Christopher Heywood (Ormskirk: Broadview Press, 2002):93

construct a world in which her characters are encounter one another. There is a sense of entrapment in Brontë's setting, especially in the second half of the novel, when Heathcliff controls the lives of young Cathy and Hareton, but also with Catherine who seems to suffer a self-inflicted entrapment due to her own attachments to *Wuthering Heights* and the surrounding moors. Whilst Cathy and Hareton become physically entrapped by Heathcliff's control, Catherine's entrapment is more psychological, based upon her own limited ambitions and childlike attachment to the moors.

Brontë relies primarily on isolation and distance to separate the characters and events of *Wuthering Heights* from the outside world. Lockwood states that *Wuthering Heights* is his only neighbour whilst he is at Thrushcross Grange, and even then the two homes are four miles apart. The only other indication the novel gives of the distance to the outside world is when Mr Earnshaw travels to Liverpool stating that it is a sixty-mile walk: 'I'm going to Liverpool to-day, what shall I bring you? You may choose what you like: only let it be little, for I shall walk there and back: sixty miles each way, that is a long spell!'.<sup>11</sup> This reference is one of the few indicators in the novel that connects *Wuthering Heights* to the outside world, briefly removing it from its fictional bubble. Emily Brontë's home in Haworth is itself approximately 60 miles from Liverpool. The choice to contextualise the novels' location with relevance to Liverpool rather than London, which would go on to become a popular centre point for fin-de-siècle Gothic, places it within a distinctly northern preoccupation. Josh Poklad goes on to suggest that the use of Liverpool, rather than other northern cities such as Leeds or Bradford, 'enables Emily to sustain the physical isolation of her fictional time-space unit by excluding modern environments from its immediacy.'<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 128

<sup>12</sup> Josh Poklad, "Time-Space Compression in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*", *Brontë Studies*, 42 no. 2 (2017): 101-102

The northern-ness of the novel is thrown into relief by Brontë's choice of narrator, Lockwood, who comes from London and acts as a kind of representative for the reader as the one who is hearing, and reacting to, the story told by Nelly Dean; Catherine Spooner states that 'The urban traveller experiencing displacement is a stock motif of these Gothic narratives, enabling articulation of the tension between the modernity of the city and the archaic rural landscape.'<sup>13</sup> Lockwood represents the world outside of Brontë's fictional Yorkshire bubble, and is thus an outsider throughout the events of the novel. As Luke Spencer states 'The tenancy formalises the temporary nature of [Lockwood's] relationship to the locality. This is ironically enforced first by his initial fantasy of self-sufficient isolation... then by its abject collapse into determination to escape back to London'.<sup>14</sup> Lockwood's status as outsider is key to constructing the isolation within which the events of the narrative take place. Whilst young Catherine and Hareton are trapped by Heathcliff, Lockwood's experience of him is temporary and he is able to return to London at the end of the novel. The only time Lockwood is ever directly involved in the narrative is when he is trapped at Wuthering Heights during a snowstorm. It is during the night spent there that Lockwood sees the ghost of Catherine and is introduced to the tragic nature of Heathcliff's existence, thus prompting his curiosity and acting as a catalyst for the narrative.

Lockwood's role in the novel can also be read as an adaptation of the Gothic heroine as popularised by the novels of Ann Radcliffe. In the early chapters of the novel Lockwood's misguided curiosity is what leads him to be trapped and terrified in Wuthering Heights. Throughout the novel Emily Brontë likes to subvert gender norms, and there is a distinct lack of maternal presence in the novel which reflects her own life experiences as Brontë's own mother died when she was only three years old. Lockwood's femininity, however, is the

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<sup>13</sup> Catherine Spooner, :33

<sup>14</sup> Luke Spencer, "Wuthering Heights as a version of pastoral", *Bronte Society Transactions*, 23 no. 1 (1998): 47

most notable subversion of gender. In Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) the heroine, Emily, is notably characterized by her fearful curiosity; as the events of the novel present her with unanswered questions, she goes about solving these mysteries. In one passage of the novel, Emily is locked in a room, and her curiosity gets the better of her: '[a curtain] seemed to conceal a recess of the chamber; she wished, yet dreaded, to lift it, and to discover what it veiled... she seized it, in a fit of desperation, and drew it aside.'<sup>15</sup> This quality of the Radcliffian heroine is one which is shared by Emily Brontë's Lockwood, as he peruses the late Catherine's diaries at *Wuthering Heights*: 'An immediate interest kindled within me for the unknown Catherine, and I began, forthwith, to decipher her faded hieroglyphics.'<sup>16</sup> This similarity in character likens Lockwood to these types of heroines, and thus feminises his character. He is further feminised later in the chapter when his interaction with the ghost of Catherine casts him as the damsel in distress: 'I sat shuddering, yet, and wiping the perspiration from my forehead'.<sup>17</sup> The feminine qualities given to Lockwood are reflective of Brontë's commentary on society, and, in particular, the metropolitan lifestyle. Lockwood serves to represent the outsider in the novel, coming from London – a location that epitomises both the south of England, and the big city, in contrast with Brontë's rural Yorkshire upbringing that inspires the setting for the novel. By feminising Lockwood, Brontë suggests that the rural lifestyle is harder than the urban lifestyle. Considering contemporary interpretations of the novel as 'primitive' and 'rude', Brontë uses a subversion of gender norms in the novel to distinguish the segregation of urban and rural cultures in the nineteenth century.

The sense of isolation in *Wuthering Heights* is also constructed through the social isolation observed in the narrative. As previously mentioned, *Wuthering Heights*' closest

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<sup>15</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998): 348

<sup>16</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 110

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, 118

neighbour is four miles away. There is also a small village in the valley but that is all. The social isolation of the older Catherine is expressed through her discussion of suitors with Nelly Dean; when Nelly asks ‘But there are several other handsome, rich young men in the world: handsomer, possibly, and richer than he is. What should hinder you from loving them?’ Catherine responds, ‘If there be any, they are out of my way: I’ve seen none like Edgar.’<sup>18</sup> Catherine’s approach to Edgar shows just how isolated she has been. Her entire social circle is limited to her brother, Heathcliff, and the Lintons. In her eyes Edgar Linton is the only eligible suitor for her, as she disregards Heathcliff when her brother forces him into servitude. When Nelly prompts her about her reasons for ‘loving’ Edgar, Catherine’s reasons are materialistic and shallow and yet she has no desire or intention to seek anything better than she already has within her extremely limited world. The limited circle of characters within the narrative is perhaps the result of Emily Brontë’s own social isolation: as Keith Sagar remarks that ‘Emily Brontë had no social life, few relationships outside the household, and neither knew nor cared about the world beyond Haworth. Her inner life was turbulent and passionate.’<sup>19</sup>

Whilst Emily Brontë’s writing was never as autobiographical as Charlotte Brontë’s work appears to be, there are distinct parallels between her own attitudes to society, and the attitudes of her characters, especially the older Catherine. The social constrictions of the novel are again felt at the end of the narrative when Lockwood returns to find the young Catherine and Hareton together. Not only are the pair cousins, but they are treated by the novel as reincarnations of the older Catherine and Heathcliff. The second generation mirror the relationship dynamics of the first generation but serve to right the wrongs committed by their parents. Where the older Catherine chooses Edgar over Heathcliff, the younger

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 117

<sup>19</sup> Keith Sagar, “The Originality of *Wuthering Heights*”, *The Art of Emily Bronte*, ed. Anne Smith (London: Vision Press, 1980): 121

Catherine eventually chooses Hareton thus bringing the novel full circle. In Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, the Friar states that 'A tyrant's race must be swept from the earth to the third and fourth generation.' He is suggesting here that the sins of the parents have ramifications for their children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren. In *Wuthering Heights* Brontë builds on this idea that the children bear consequences of the actions of the parents, but she allows the younger generation to redeem their parent's sins. The first half of the novel depicts the sins of the adults, and the love triangle between Catherine, Heathcliff, and Edgar, whereas the second half depicts the suffering of the children, Catherine, Hareton, and Linton, at the hands of the heartbroken Heathcliff, and their eventual redemption when Heathcliff dies and Catherine and Hareton are finally able to be together. Lockwood's interest in the younger Catherine never comes to fruition as he remains an outsider throughout the novel and is never allowed to be a part of the limited social circle surrounding the inhabitants of *Wuthering Heights*. His only connection remains through his temporary tenancy at Thrushcross Grange and by extension his friendship with the housekeeper Nelly Dean, herself treated as an outsider by the primary characters in the novel, due to her status as a servant.

As well as segregating her narrative socially and geographically, Emily Brontë also temporally distances the environment, within which *Wuthering Heights* takes place, temporally from contemporary 'reality'. The novel opens with the date '1801';<sup>20</sup> a date forty-six years prior to the publication of the novel, and seventeen years prior to Brontë being born. The narrative that Brontë constructs is a layered one, with '1801' acting as 'the present' when Lockwood arrives at Thrushcross Grange, whilst the primary events of the text take place

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<sup>20</sup> Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*, 93

prior to this, in ‘the past’ as told by Nelly Dean. The layering of time in the text adapts a common Gothic trope, as seen in *The Castle of Otranto*:

The following work was found in the library of an ancient Catholic family in the north of England. It was printed at Naples, in the black letter, in the year 1529. How much sooner it was written does not appear... If the story was written near the time when it is supposed to have happened, it must have been between 1095, the era of the first Crusade, and 1243, the date of the last, or not long afterwards.<sup>21</sup>

In this opening passage, Walpole defines the importance of time in the setting of the Gothic genre. The period in which the text is set is indistinct, whilst also being loosely medieval. Walpole juxtaposes the broad scope of the ‘ancient’ family’s library with the incredibly specific date of printing: ‘the year 1529’. Brontë is using a similar device, though far less fleshed out, in her initial construction of *Wuthering Heights*’ setting. By simply stating the date ‘1801’, Brontë establishes a historical duality within the novel. Not only are the narrative’s events set in the past, as experienced by Lockwood’s framing narrative, but the entire novel is also a product of an imagined past. The relevance of the date ‘1801’ is unclear, however one of the numerous attempts to locate a ‘real’ *Wuthering Heights* does note that ‘*Wuthering Heights* opens with the date 1801. The date which is inscribed on the stone over the porch at Ponden Hall and which is still there for all to see.’<sup>22</sup> The choice to set the novel at the turn of the century also creates a sense of liminality in the temporality of the text. The use of liminal spaces is a common trope in the Gothic genre, and here Brontë utilises that sense of the threshold in relation to the temporal setting of the novel. This choice

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<sup>21</sup> Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 5

<sup>22</sup> Mary A. Butterfield, *The Heaton’s of Ponden Hall and the legendary link with Thrushcross Grange in Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights* (Bradford: Roderick and Brenda Taylor, 1976): 20

of the date '1801' reflects a sense of superstition regarding the turn of the century and contemporary fears of bad luck or harm associated with such a significant threshold.

Not only is Emily Brontë's novel set within an imagined past; it also treats time as something malleable and changeable which serves to further isolate the narrative by constructing two distinct chronotopes (arrangements of time and space, as represented in language and discourse). M. M. Bakhtin states that:

In the literary artistic chronotopes, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history. This intersection of axes and fusion characterizes the artistic chronotopes.<sup>23</sup>

In the case of *Wuthering Heights*, time is used to separate two distinct spaces geographically within the novel and create a divide between two chronotopes. Josh Poklad identifies Lockwood's position on the fault-line between the two worlds of Brontë's narrative, stating that 'Lockwood's sensitivity to the stagnated time at the heights asserts his possession of a fundamentally different set of time-space perspectives'.<sup>24</sup> This can be seen in the novel when Lockwood spends the night at Wuthering Heights in Chapter Three stating: '[I] looked at my watch, and soliloquised on the length of the night: "Not three o'clock yet! I could have taken oath it had been six – time stagnates here – we must surely have retired to rest at eight!"'.<sup>25</sup> Lockwood comes from an outside world where time is experienced more quickly than it is within Brontë's microcosm. This separation between the fast-moving

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<sup>23</sup> M. M. Bakhtin, "Forms of Time and the Chronotopes in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics", *Narrative Dynamics: Essays on Time, Plot, Closure, and Frames*, edited by Brian Richardson (Columbus; Ohio State University Press, 2002): 15

<sup>24</sup> Josh Poklad, "Time-Space Compression in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*", 102

<sup>25</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 120

modern chronotope which Brontë associates with the urban space represented by Lockwood, and the stagnated rural environment of Wuthering Heights is representative of the changes that Brontë herself would have observed in West Yorkshire during her lifetime. Though Emily Brontë always had a strong connection to nature, and the rural, as evidenced in Charlotte Brontë's preface to the eighteen-fifty edition: 'her native hills were far more to her than a spectacle; they were what she lived in', she observed significant industrial changes in the area surrounding Haworth.<sup>26</sup> A report published in 1850 stated that 'There are several worsted spinning and weaving mills in the neighbourhood of Haworth, three of these are within the hamlet of Haworth itself'.<sup>27</sup> The report goes on to note that between 1838 and 1849 the average age of death was around twenty-five. Even though Patrick Brontë distanced his children from the struggles faced in Haworth, Emily Brontë would have been well-aware of the fast-paced industrial revolution that was taking place on her doorstep, and in nearby cities. Her own associations and experiences likely influenced her exploration of the relationship between the rural moors surrounding Wuthering Heights with the modernity of the 'outside world'. As Poklad states, 'the implied world external to the text's primary time-space unit is modern in character, and subject to a quicker temporal structure'.<sup>28</sup>

Heathcliff is another character who helps us to think about the different chronotopes of the novel. Like Lockwood, Heathcliff is depicted by Nelly Dean as an outsider to the stagnated rural microcosm surrounding Wuthering Heights. He also comes from an urban space – in this case Liverpool – and therefore has a different relationship with his new setting. Heathcliff's otherness is key to the way that the narrative plays out, and in the first half of the novel this is characterized by his social status being below that of Cathy. His role

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<sup>26</sup> Charlotte Brontë, "Editors Preface", 22

<sup>27</sup> Benjamin Hershel Babbage, "Public Health Act, (11 & 12 Vict., cap. 63.) Report ... on a preliminary inquiry into the sewerage, drainage, and supply of water, and the sanitary condition of the inhabitants of the hamlet of Haworth" (London: 1850) accessed May 16, 2019 [www.bl.uk/collection-items](http://www.bl.uk/collection-items)

<sup>28</sup> Josh Poklad, "Time-Space Compression in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*", 104

is distinctly inferior, and made all the clearer when Mr Earnshaw dies, leaving Hindley as his heir. Heathcliff's situation in the first half of *Wuthering Heights* is made clear when Catherine states 'I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if that wicked man in there [Hindley], had not brought Heathcliff so low I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff, now'.<sup>29</sup> It is after this exchange between Catherine and Nelly is overheard by Heathcliff that he leaves Wuthering Heights and does not return for three years. As Poklad states:

Emily is... required to replenish Heathcliff's otherness mid-narrative, something which can only be achieved by re-infusing the character with her external chronotopes... whereas Heathcliff's original geographic otherness is most easily read along racial and social lines, upon his return, his dissimilarity is better interpreted in geo-economic terms<sup>30</sup>

In order for Heathcliff to maintain his outsider status, he must be forced out, and his otherness reinforced. Upon his return, he has mysteriously accumulated an amount of wealth that continues to grow throughout the remainder of the novel. His return marks a distinction between the two worlds that Emily Brontë has constructed. On the 'inside' very little has changed. Catherine has done exactly what she intended and married Edgar Linton, subsequently moving to Thrushcross Grange, and Hindley continues to pursue questionable habits at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff, however, is depicted as having changed so much that Nelly Dean does not initially recognise him when he appears at Thrushcross Grange: 'I distinguished a tall man dressed in dark clothes with dark face and hair... "you do not know me? Look, I'm not a stranger!"'.<sup>31</sup> He represents the fast-paced modernity of the 'outside

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<sup>29</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 173

<sup>30</sup> Josh Poklad, "Time-Space Compression in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*", 104

<sup>31</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 186

world', influenced by the sudden boom of the industrial revolution in the early Victorian period.

Heathcliff's temporal shift allows him to once again be presented as 'other' within the text, as he is now placed somewhat ahead of the other characters in the novel. He has become modern, whilst the Earnshaws and the Lintons are decidedly not. His mysterious accumulation of wealth also distinguishes the seemingly faster pace of the world outside of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange as he has somehow gone from rags to riches in only three years, although Emily Brontë never explicitly explains this in the novel. This can be read as Brontë once again segregating the urban from the rural, in this case on a geo-economic level. She sees the cities as wealthy, and the rural towns and villages of Yorkshire as predominantly poorer, therefore Heathcliff is able to find wealth when he leaves Wuthering Heights and presumably goes to a city (possibly Liverpool or London) to find fortune. When he returns to Wuthering Heights a far richer, and more experienced, man, he is able to manipulate his former rival Hindley, and thus inherit Wuthering Heights when Hindley dies.

Lockwood introduces the Gothic atmosphere of storms to the text when he first visits Wuthering Heights stating that 'Wuthering Heights is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling, "wuthering" being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed, in stormy weather'.<sup>32</sup> His definition of the term "wuthering" matches up with that of the Oxford English Dictionary, which defines "whithering" as 'To move with force or impetus, to rush; to make a rushing sound, to whizz; to bluster or rage, as the wind.'<sup>33</sup> Both versions of the term are generally associated with Northern English and

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<sup>32</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 94

<sup>33</sup> "whither", *Oxford English Dictionary*, accessed May 23, 2019, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/228660?rskey=gMgQZK&result=1#eid14388860>

Scottish dialects. This is significant to how we read the setting of Emily Brontë's novel, as not only does she once again emphasize the northern-ness of the setting, but she also emphasizes the significance of the Yorkshire weather in the novel, in particular storms.

The first of these storms takes place during the opening chapters of the novel when Lockwood foolishly goes to visit Wuthering Heights when a snowstorm is brewing and is forced to spend the night. It is this particular weather episode that sets in motion the necessary events for the narrative to begin. It is during the night at Wuthering Heights that Lockwood encounters the ghost of Catherine, and his curiosity regarding her identity, and the strange situation at Wuthering Heights is piqued. The storm also serves to reinforce Lockwood's status as an outsider as he mistakenly assumes that the storm will blow over quickly, only to be told 'you run a risk of being lost in the marshes... People familiar with these moors often miss their road on such evenings, and I can tell you there is no chance of change at present'.<sup>34</sup> The moors are depicted here as a wild and dangerous space that serve to further alienate those who are considered 'other' (Lockwood, and arguably Heathcliff) from the microcosmic setting of the novel. Against the wishes of both Heathcliff and Lockwood, Lockwood is forced to spend the night at Wuthering Heights, where he lodges in Catherine's old room. In this first example, the use of the storm as a literary device serves to trap Emily Brontë's characters together in the titular residence and represents the true beginning of the narrative. Something which stands out particularly about the way the storm is described by Lockwood, is that it is primarily experienced from within the house: 'I heard distinctly the gusty wind, and the driving of the snow; I heard also the fir-bough repeat its teasing sound'.<sup>35</sup> Brontë similarly describes the storm that takes place the night that Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights from the inside, as Margaret Homans states: 'Brontë quickly switches the

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<sup>34</sup> Emily Bronte, *Wuthering Heights*, 102

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid*, 116

narrative from Cathy to the scene indoors, so that most of the storm is narrated in terms of how it feels and sounds from inside'.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting that in a novel so preoccupied with nature, Brontë often chooses to separate the characters from nature. Where other novels treat the imposing house as somewhere to be feared, and often haunted, Brontë presents the moors as haunted, by the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff, and *Wuthering Heights* and Thrushcross Grange as places of sanctuary. The experience of the storms from the inside illustrates this divide, and the safety that the indoors offers from the unpredictable wilderness of the Yorkshire countryside. In doing this, Brontë is presenting a 'Yorkshiring' of common Gothic conventions, adapting elements of haunting and fear to fit with the wild nature of the Yorkshire landscape. Robert Mighall states that 'places and people are Gothicized, have the Gothic thrust upon them' suggesting that the Gothic is a process rather than an 'essence'.<sup>37</sup> In *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë appropriates the process of Gothicization in her treatment of the landscape and rural setting of the novel.

Another way in which Emily Brontë emphasizes the Yorkshire setting of *Wuthering Heights* is through the use of dialect, most notably illustrated by the character Joseph. In his study of dialect speech in *Wuthering Heights*, K M Petyt begins;

I was struck by some of the dialect features recorded in the speech of old Joseph. I began to wonder whether this was just a 'stage Yorkshireman' with a scattering of some of the grosser features associated with North Country speech... or whether Emily Brontë was recording the dialect best known to her, that of Haworth.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Margret Hamons, "Repression and Sublimation of Nature in *Wuthering Heights*", *Modern Language Association*, 93 no. 1 (1978) accessed June 24, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/461816.pdf> : 9

<sup>37</sup> Robert Mighall: xxv

<sup>38</sup> K M Petyt, *Emily Bronte and the Haworth Dialect: A study of dialect speech in Wuthering Heights* (Menston: Scholar Press, 1970): i

Unfortunately, the dialect of Joseph throughout the novel is at best inconsistent – a problem which can be traced back to the difficulties suffered during the novel’s original publication in 1847, and its second edition in 1850. As Christopher Heywood remarks: ‘undoubtedly the misprints, the removal of the pause between her two sets of seventeen chapters, and the numbering from her fifteenth chapter onwards were Newby’s work’.<sup>39</sup> This mistreatment of the novel by Emily Brontë’s publisher, Newby, was arguably the cause of the initial negative reaction towards the novel, but Heywood also remarks that Newby did indeed leave Emily Brontë’s rendering of the Haworth dialect intact in the first edition of the text. The problems with the treatment of dialect in the novel arose during the editing of the second edition. K M Petyt states that:

Problems were multiplied when Charlotte worked over the text for the 1850 edition. She wrote to the publisher: ‘it seems advisable to modify the orthography of the old servant Joseph’s speeches; for though as it stands it exactly renders the Yorkshire dialect to a Yorkshire ear, yet I am sure Southerners must find it unintelligible; and this one of the most graphic characters of the book is lost on them.’<sup>40</sup>

This note from Charlotte Brontë suggests that in the original version of the text, Emily Brontë had exactly recorded her familiar Haworthian dialect for the servant Joseph or had at least recorded a similarly accurate and specific dialect for his character. It is likely that Charlotte Brontë’s edits have reduced the dialect in modern versions of the text to that of a ‘stage Yorkshireman’.

Though Joseph has the most noticeable elements of Yorkshire dialect in his speeches, aspects of the dialect are evident throughout the text in other characters. Whilst Joseph speaks in a thick northern accent which suggests through its lack of correctness a sense of being of a

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<sup>39</sup> Christopher Heywood, “Introduction”, *Wuthering Heights* (Ormskirk: Broadview Press, 2002): 81

<sup>40</sup> K M Petyt, “*Emily Brontë and the Haworth Dialect*”: 2

lower class, Christopher Heywood describes Nelly Dean's speech as an 'expressive use of northern standard English'.<sup>41</sup> This version of the Yorkshire dialect is suggested by Emily Brontë through the use of punctuation to indicate pauses: 'yes, yes, he's rich enough to live in a finer house than this; but he's very near – close-handed; and, if he had meant to flit to Thrushcross Grange, as soon as he heard of a good tenant, he could not have borne to miss the chance of getting a few hundreds more.'<sup>42</sup> Again, elements of this speech were lost in the 1850 edition as Heywood states '*up stairs* and *up-stairs* are standardised to 'upstairs', notwithstanding the distinction in Yorkshire English, which Brontë preserved, between *up stairs* (up the staircase) and *up-stairs* (on the first/second floor).'<sup>43</sup>

The use of Yorkshire dialect in the text, does still serve to distinguish certain characters as specifically Yorkshire in nature, but significant elements of the dialect and its specificity have been lost in editing, particularly in Charlotte Brontë's work on the 1850 edition. This leaves behind an inconsistent use of dialect, and a predominantly standardised narrative that does not truly reflect the Yorkshire tale that Emily Brontë wanted to record and represent accurately.

The use of dialect does, however, tell us something about the novel's relationship with oral tradition. To quote Heywood again:

Newby's text retains spoken forms which point to his having printed his edition from the manuscript which Emily Brontë used for performance in the family circle at Haworth. In [a translated form], possibly, they suggest the eloquence and humour which were intended as part of Joseph's character and would have been rendered flawlessly, uproariously, and intelligibly at the oral performance. Her punctuation in the

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<sup>41</sup> Christopher Heywood, "Introduction": 83

<sup>42</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 126

<sup>43</sup> Christopher Heywood, "Introduction": 82-83

remainder of the text is spoken rather than grammatical: her novel is an oral text. Silent reading may obscure Nelly Dean's expressive use of northern standard English for a narrative which Emily read aloud.<sup>44</sup>

Oral tradition here is treated on a number of different levels. Within the narrative itself, *Wuthering Heights* depicts the oral retelling of Heathcliff's life as Nelly Dean recalls it. Though the reader experiences the novel through Lockwood's eyes, it is Nelly's version of events that is told to Lockwood over a series of visits. This dual narrative hinges on the oratorship of Nelly Dean and her own recollections growing up alongside Heathcliff, Catherine, and Hindley, and acting as nurse for Hareton, Catherine, and briefly Linton. The additional element of *Wuthering Heights* as narrated by Emily Brontë places the novel within the oral tradition – a tradition of communicating thoughts and ideas through the spoken medium – rather than the written tradition, despite its popular status as a classic novel. *Wuthering Heights* appropriates the genre of the oral tale, despite having been recorded and published, it is probably best experienced and understood when read aloud. *God's Own Country* is also constructed as an oral tale, with the narrative told directly to the reader through Sam's voice. This oral tradition is one of the links between the two novels that allows for them to be considered alongside each other as examples of rural Yorkshire Gothic.

*Wuthering Heights* set the standard for Gothic novels set in rural Yorkshire, but a number of texts, including the novels of Peter Robinson and JB Priestly, have used the backdrop of the moors and the dales as inspiration. Another such text is Ross Raisin's *God's Own Country* (2008), a contemporary novel which is arguably influenced by *Wuthering Heights* in its use of orally transmitted stories to convey a Gothic narrative set against the Yorkshire landscape. In the next part of this chapter I will look at how the more modern text

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid, 83

treats the Yorkshire landscape and how Raisin's novel takes inspiration from the Gothic canon in comparison with *Wuthering Heights*.

Whilst *Wuthering Heights* is set around the moors south of the Pennines, *God's Own Country* is set on the North Yorkshire Moors, between York and Whitby. Unlike Emily Brontë, Ross Raisin is often extremely specific with the locations of events throughout the narrative. He name-checks real locations including Goathland and Garside, and the Hole of Horcum, throughout the novel, with the narrative actually reaching its climax on the outskirts of Whitby.

Raisin's use of real and familiar locations as a backdrop for the narrative constructs a sense of the uncanny in his novel. As Sigmund Freud wrote: 'the uncanny is that class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old and long familiar.'<sup>45</sup> By interweaving a fictional narrative through a very real setting, Ross Raisin is able to achieve this sense of the uncanny, particularly for a reader who is familiar with the North Yorkshire Moors. Each location is described with exact detail in order to reinforce this sense of familiarity with the setting, making the events of the narrative all the more unsettling as the situation between Sam and Josephine escalates. In one passage the narrator, Sam, describes: 'The Hole of Horcum... is a dip in the land – a crater a mile wide full of ditches and crags and patches of forest'.<sup>46</sup> Even though this description is quite simple, it is recognisable and specific to the real Hole of Horcum allowing for no uncertainty in the setting of the narrative. Despite this, the village in which the main characters live is never named. Even though Raisin relies on specific landmarks in the surrounding area that create this uncanny version of Yorkshire, the central town is presumably fictional, though clearly based on the kind of villages that can be

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<sup>45</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'", *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Volume XVII (1917-1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, accessed August 1, 2019 [http://www.layoftheland.net/archive/ART6933-2012/weeks6-12/Freud\\_TheUncanny.pdf](http://www.layoftheland.net/archive/ART6933-2012/weeks6-12/Freud_TheUncanny.pdf): 219

<sup>46</sup> Ross Raisin, *God's Own Country* (London: Penguin Books, 2009): 174

found across North Yorkshire: 'I took a walk through town. There were plenty of folk about. I didn't recognise many of them, though, as I went down the street, which was fine by me'.<sup>47</sup>

There is a sense of unfamiliarity in the small town, despite the fact that the narrator has grown up there, as Sam does not recognise people who may be his neighbours. This also suggests a number of outside visitors to the town which is an ongoing theme throughout the novel with the narrator's dislike of ramblers, tourists, and 'Towns' who are encroaching on the Yorkshire countryside.<sup>48</sup>

Most of the first two thirds of the narrative focus on the narrator, Sam's, strange and lonely home life, and are predominantly set away from the town, and away from distinguishable landmarks, focusing on the tops of the Moors, and the farm where he lives and works. Where in *Wuthering Heights* characters like Catherine seem to be somewhat trapped by their moorland surrounding, in *God's Own Country* the moors represent freedom to Sam, and initially to Josephine: 'I felt peaceable out there, once I reached the brow where the Moors lashed out, a million miles of heather and gorse and rock but not a person in sight.'<sup>49</sup> It is the loneliness and isolation of the North Yorkshire Moors that allows Sam to feel a sense of freedom away from the judging and prying eyes of the locals in town, or his parents. In *God's Own Country* the expansive moors appear endless and inviting to both Sam, and to Josephine. It is the sense of freedom that they appear to offer that initially entices the pair to run away together after Josephine has a fight with her mother. As the novel progresses, however, the moors lose their sense of freedom for Josephine when Sam refuses to let her return home:

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid, 30

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 5

<sup>49</sup> Ibid, 27

She couldn't free herself with her hands tied behind her, but that wasn't going to stop her struggling... we made our way toward the bracken end, and I undid her hands so she could step easier down the steep bank. I didn't need to worry, for she was too tired to try coddling me<sup>50</sup>

Josephine is physically trapped and restrained by Sam, but the moors also accentuate her predicament as she is unfamiliar with her surroundings and exhausted from being out there with little food or water. When she does try to run away, Sam's familiarity with the setting, as well as his own stamina and strength from working and living on the moors, allows him to catch up to her and it becomes impossible for her to escape his clutches, and the unforgiving landscape of the North Yorkshire Moors.

As in *Wuthering Heights* isolation is a key factor in the setting of *God's Own Country*. Ross Raisin uses the moors to create a sense of distance and isolation between the key locations of the narrative. As the narrator, Sam constructs a segregation between the town and the country, imposing his own prejudiced views upon those who have come from a different background to him. The first sign of a divide comes when Josephine's family move into the neighbouring farm:

These who'd moved into Turnbull's were a different sort to the folk from town. They had brass, and folk with brass always wanted to keep themselves separate, not have their snouts in other people's doings the whole time like them lot down there. But they were still towns, mind... the country was a Sunday garden to them.<sup>51</sup>

This passage details a number of different prejudices held by Sam, the narrator and 'protagonist' of the novel. First of all, he repeatedly uses the slang term 'towns' to refer to

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 175

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, 10

anybody not originally from the countryside. Throughout the novel he is shown to distrust and dislike anybody who comes from an urban setting, particularly taking it out on ramblers and those moving to new 'rural' developments. The way Sam discusses 'towns' throughout the novel creates a sense of superiority, believing that he is better than them because he understands the moors and farming, whereas to them it is all just 'a Sunday garden'. Sam also distinguishes his new neighbours from other 'towns' based on their assumed class. He talks about them having 'brass', meaning money, and thus separating themselves from those who are of a lower class, living in the village. Josephine's family, the Reeves', are implied to have chosen to isolate themselves by purchasing the farmstead outside of town rather than moving into the village itself. The narrative places the two main characters – Sam and Josephine – in quite close proximity to one another, whilst simultaneously isolating them from the rest of the world.

Sam and Josephine are not only physically isolated by the setting of the text, but, like Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*, they are also socially isolated. Sam's isolation is clear from the outset of the novel. His past actions have caused him to become an outcast: 'She'd know me before too long. Not me, course, but my history... [Delton] was out for me now... And the second she spies her chance – that Sam Marsdyke, let me tell you what he does to young girls like you.'<sup>52</sup> His reputation among the locals, and the accusation against him of attempted rape, keep him isolated from his peers, trapped working for his father on the farm. Even though the moorland setting offers him freedom, throughout the first half of the novel he remains trapped by the watchful and untrusting eyes of both his parents and the locals who know him. In this sense, there are a number of similarities between Sam and Heathcliff. Both of them are othered in the Yorkshire context within which they were raised, with Heathcliff being treated like a servant by Hindley and Sam is simply not trusted by his family or

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, 7-8

neighbours. They also both display a possessive attitude towards female characters – Heathcliff with Catherine, and Sam with Josephine. They are both distinctly troubled characters, who have suffered from being isolated throughout the narrative.

Josephine's social isolation comes more gradually. Early on in the novel we are told she has a boyfriend, but the relationship ends after Sam intervenes:

He was moving past me and I kicked at the front wheel, but he'd set off too quick and I missed, and my foot jammed under the pedal... the bike keeled to the ground with him falling on top of it and me somewhere underside the both... I felt a wallop then as the Cyclist kicked me in the kidneys<sup>53</sup>

After the altercation between Sam and the boyfriend, Josephine's isolation only increases as she starts skipping school and spending more of her free time with Sam, culminating in her asking him to run away with her. By this point in the novel her social interactions seem to be limited solely to her own family, and Sam. The isolation of the countryside completely cuts her off from her peers and places her in a vulnerable situation, which is taken advantage of by Sam. The sense of isolation on the moors is further emphasized when Sam 'abducts' Josephine and they hide out on the moors. The North York Moors become somewhere so isolated, in the narrative, that Sam and Josephine are able to remain concealed for days. Sam describes the Hole of Horcum as the 'Best hiding place on the Moors'.<sup>54</sup>

Another key factor of Ross Raisin's narrative, which *God's Own Country* shares with *Wuthering Heights*, is the significance of temporality. Where Emily Brontë uses the fictional microcosm of Yorkshire to construct a chronotope separated from modernity, Ross Raisin's

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid, 87-88

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 174

fictional Yorkshire is impacted by modernity which is rapidly encroaching on the rural setting of the novel: ‘These were dark days for the old boys in town, certain. The shadows of cities were sneaking in both sides of the valley’.<sup>55</sup> Throughout the narrative runs the sub-plot of ‘The Fat Betty’, the local pub, being purchased by a chain and renovated. This is another example of Raisin injecting reality into the narrative, as statistics show that 893 British pubs closed in 2009; the year after *God’s Own Country* was published.<sup>56</sup> Gothic fictions commonly reflect contemporary societal anxieties and, in the case of both *Wuthering Heights* and *God’s Own Country*, the apprehensions staged by the texts relate to a fear of the urban encroaching on the rural, whether that be Emily Brontë’s allusions to Industrialisation, or Raisin’s commentary on village pubs dying out. As Catherine Spooner states ‘The fictional shift from exotic locations to homely ones over the course of the nineteenth century matched a corresponding movement to collect and preserve British folklore, in the wake of industrialisation and urban migration.’<sup>57</sup> This correlation reflects the presence of social anxieties in Nineteenth Century literature and it is a feature of the Gothic which Raisin reflects in his own narrative.

In Emily Brontë’s novel, Lockwood represents the industrialised, modern world that is treated with unease in her Yorkshire landscape; he finds it harsh, desolate, and ultimately falls ill. In *God’s Own Country* it is Josephine who is the primary representative of ‘towns’. She acts as a bridge between the ‘towns’ and Sam, as she segregates herself from other urban encroachers by referring to them as ‘snobs’.<sup>58</sup> Sam also distinguishes Josephine from other ‘towns’ in his narrative, when Josephine asks, ‘You must really hate us, mustn’t you?’ Sam responds ‘I don’t hate you. She was silent. I don’t hate *you*, I should’ve said’.<sup>59</sup> His emphasis

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid, 29

<sup>56</sup> BBC, “British village life ‘dying out’ after pub closures”, *BBC News* (18/9/10) accessed July, 2, 2019 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11353767>

<sup>57</sup> Catherine Spooner: p. 30

<sup>58</sup> Ross Raisin, *God’s Own Country*, 120

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 57

on 'you' distinguishes Josephine from the collective 'us' that she refers to. The closer she becomes to Sam throughout the novel, the further away she gets from being considered a 'town'. Unlike Lockwood who is never able to penetrate the microcosm of Wuthering Heights, Josephine is gradually allowed in by Sam to the point where he ultimately traps her within his expansive moorland landscape.

Unlike in *Wuthering Heights*, the actual narrative structure of *God's Own Country* is a linear one. Ross Raisin doesn't explicitly set his novel in the past, or employ historic devices, as other Gothic texts do, but he does explore the theme of repetition and uses events in the past to set up a foreboding narrative. The idea of repetition in Gothic narratives is set out in *The Castle of Otranto* through numerous different scenarios and motifs repeating throughout, including Matilda's presence in three separate deathbed scenes, and two different characters forgiving Manfred in very similar ways. David B. Morris states that:

There are two separate and equally improbable recognition scenes reuniting grown children with long lost parents [in *Castle of Otranto*]... their prevalence does far more than simply reinforce the specifically Gothic vision of history in which the past interpenetrates the present time, as if events were never entirely the unique and unrepeatable product of human choices, but rather the replication of an unknown or buried pattern<sup>60</sup>

This kind of repetition is also evident in the narrative of *God's Own Country*. It is in Chapter 3 that the events of Sam's past are revealed when he states that: 'I had to quit my schooling when I was sixteen on account of trying to rape [Katie Carmichael] in Wetherill's formroom'.<sup>61</sup> He goes on to give his account of the event:

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<sup>60</sup> David B. Morris, "Gothic Sublimity", *New Literary History*, 16 no. 2 (1985) accessed July 2, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/468749?seq=1>: 304

<sup>61</sup> Ross Raisin, *God's Own Country*, 17

Wait on, I tell her, Wetherill's out his room, let's go there. No, she says. Don't worry, it's all right, and I'm holding her by the forearm, it's only the next corridor. We go in the room shut the door it's cold inside someone's left a window open, but we're not bothered about that... [they said] you're lucky she's not pressing charges because there are bruises all up her arm, what more proof do we need?<sup>62</sup>

Sam's version of events profess a misunderstanding between himself and his teachers, his peers, and the locals. Throughout the novel he is convinced of his innocence, however, even within his own narrative, the reader can understand that the misunderstanding is not the collective 'they' of the locals, but Sam's. He doesn't understand that Katie said 'No' and he doesn't seem to connect his treatment of her, 'holding her by the forearm', with the bruises she has after the event. To a reader it is clear that Sam is guilty, but he still believes his own innocence. This repeats itself in the events of the novel with Josephine. The past begins to repeat itself in Chapter 19: 'She was stood on the pavement still. Come on, quick, I told her, and I took hold her hand. Come on! I shouted, pulling her along... You hurt me, she said, her cheeks slippery with tears.'<sup>63</sup> In this instance, the physical force that Sam uses with Katie is mirrored with Josephine in the way that he pulls her along, and she accuses him of hurting her. This mirroring of past events continues on from this point in the narrative as Josephine increasingly resists Sam, even trying to run away from him at one point leading him to keep her tied up: 'she couldn't be trusted yet, though, not while she was in this mood. I was right being firm with her.'<sup>64</sup> Sam's assertion that his treatment of Josephine is right shows his clear lack of understanding and mimics his ongoing declarations of innocence regarding the incident with Katie.

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 18

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 150-151

<sup>64</sup> Ibid, 174

The novel ends by jumping ahead four years after Sam has served a prison sentence and is preparing to be released. This jump in time allows Raisin to reiterate the cyclical progression of events in the novel, as despite rehabilitation efforts, there are suggestions that Sam hasn't learnt anything and that events will continue to repeat themselves: 'she's a mentalist if she thinks I'm letting go of her now'.<sup>65</sup> The use of similar language here, and the repeated motif of Sam holding onto someone, likens the woman (a careers advisor) to Josephine and Katie. The end of the novel marks her as Sam's next target.

In *Wuthering Heights* the story is narrated by Lockwood, who is an outsider looking in on the situation at Wuthering Heights. Even Nelly Dean, who relates the story to Lockwood, is still an outsider to the affairs of Heathcliff and Catherine due to her status as a servant. In *God's Own Country*, on the other hand, Sam is very much an insider in the narrative. He is the native in Yorkshire, whereas Josephine and her family are outsiders. Despite this, Sam often imagines himself on the outside. He comments that the pubs in town 'just didn't want me on their property.'<sup>66</sup> In terms of the narrative Sam is integral to the plot and could be considered 'the monster' of the novel. Raisin interestingly chooses to narrate the events of the narrative from the perspective of the 'monster' or antagonist, Sam, rather than the Gothic heroine, Josephine. Throughout the novel, Raisin makes references to a number of other Gothic texts, but most notably he includes the nickname 'Lankenstein' for Sam, in reference to Mary Shelley's Gothic novel *Frankenstein* (1818). This allusion to and ongoing parody of Shelley's work shows an acknowledgement of the novel's precursors in the Gothic canon. Sam's situation throughout the narrative is also similar to that of the monster in *Frankenstein*: 'I am malicious because I am miserable. Am I not shunned and hated by all

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid, 209

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 31

mankind?’<sup>67</sup> Frankenstein’s monster also considers himself to be ostracized by humanity based on misunderstanding, and attributes his own faults and misdeeds to this treatment. Sam also recognises the reason why he had been shunned from society, but he doesn’t realise that he is malicious. He sees his treatment of Josephine throughout the novel as reasonable, even mocking the court case in the final chapter because he thinks that they are the ones who don’t understand what happened, when really it is Sam who doesn’t realise that he is a predator. In this sense the narration of *God’s Own Country* is strikingly similar to that of *Lolita* (1955) by Vladimir Nabokov: ‘a bad accident is to happen quite soon’<sup>68</sup> Humbert’s commentary throughout *Lolita* is often flippant, and he is a definitively unreliable narrator. As a narrator he flips between giving an account of self-defence and distancing himself from ‘accidents’ and events within the novel, and self-incrimination, admitting regularly his obsession with Lolita: ‘Lolita, with an incestuous thrill, I had grown to regard as my child’.<sup>69</sup> Sam’s narration has a similar wavering aspect to it in which he repeatedly asserts his own innocence, offering, in his defence, a lack of ill-intent; he is blissfully unaware of the harmful repercussions of his actions. This defence, however, is given directly alongside an outright admission of guilt, much like Humbert’s self-incrimination in *Lolita*. By choosing to tell the novel from Sam’s perspective, Raisin complicates the idea of ‘the monster’ being black and white. This does not necessarily elicit sympathy for Sam’s situation, but it does provide a specific insight into the psychology behind the antagonist and potentially foster some understanding of Sam’s perspective on the world.

One way in which Raisin highlights the Yorkshire-ness of his novel is through the use of dialect and the treatment of the narration as if it were oral history, rather than a written

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<sup>67</sup> Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein* (Project Gutenberg, 2018) accessed Sept 6, 2019 <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/84/84-h/84-h.htm>

<sup>68</sup> Vladimir Nabokov, *Lolita*, accessed Sept 6, 2019 <https://epdf.pub/lolita-vladimir-nabokov.html>

<sup>69</sup> Ibid

novel. Interestingly there are no speech marks in the novel, only Sam's recollection of what is said, retold in his voice. The entire novel reads as if it is being spoken, playing on the oral tradition that often influences the Gothic genre; just as ghost stories and folklore have often been passed down through word of mouth, Raisin frames his narrative in a similar way, as if Sam's story is being told to the reader, rather than being read. This choice to frame the novel as such allows Raisin to incorporate a significant amount of Yorkshire slang and dialect: 'I could see outdoors the wood it was a gradely day.'<sup>70</sup> Terms like 'gradely' (meaning nice looking) are generally dated examples of Yorkshire slang, more often associated with rural areas. Sam's use of this, and other similar slang terms, characterizes him as someone who is distinguishably rural in his accent, and also highlights his lack of a relationship with his own generation, instead speaking like to those his father's age. Even though there isn't any direct speech in the novel, Raisin does emphasize the use of speech by exaggerating the accent of the speakers. Sam's own narration is a standardized version of Yorkshire dialect, whereas the speech is recorded more accurately to how it would sound: 'I'm fain glad to see you, I am. I want to ask on yer father. How's he keeping?'.<sup>71</sup> Raisin uses phonetic spelling in Sam's recording of speech to highlight the individual idiolects of the characters in the novel and distinguish these passages from Sam's narration.

Overall there are a number of similarities between *Wuthering Heights* and *God's Own Country*, such as the reliance on the oral tradition in the narration of the text and the comparable characters of Heathcliff and Sam, but there are also a number of differences. Changing attitudes towards dialect allow Raisin to experiment more with the voices in his novel, whereas Emily Brontë was very much restricted and edited during the production of *Wuthering Heights*. Both authors explore Yorkshire Gothic in quite similar ways, but an

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<sup>70</sup> Ross Raisin, *God's Own Country*, 159

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 30

increase in literary experimentation has allowed for the Gothic genre to develop quite significantly in Raisin's novel which creatively engages with precursor texts. This kind of allusive engagement by contemporary works with literary forbears precisely establishes the idea of 'Yorkshire Gothic' tradition. *God's Own Country* isn't strictly a Gothic fiction, more a novel which draws upon the lexicon of Gothic tropes and conventions.

## Chapter Two: How the Yorkshire coastal town of Whitby functions as a Gothic backdrop for *Dracula* and *The Whitby Witches*

In the year 1890, Bram Stoker took a holiday in the seaside town of Whitby, where he stayed in a guesthouse on the Royal Crescent and spent a week on his own before being joined by his wife and son. It was this trip that inspired Stoker to feature Whitby so prominently in *Dracula* (1897). The trip was so integral to the writing of *Dracula* that Stoker uses his own experience of Whitby immediately upon Mina's arrival: 'Lucy met me at the station, looking sweeter and lovelier than ever, and we drove up to the house at the Crescent, in which they have rooms'.<sup>72</sup> Having Lucy and Mina stay in the very same place in which he stayed during his visit, Stoker is able to demonstrate the connection of his fictional setting to everyday reality. This section will consider *Dracula* alongside a more contemporary text, Robin Jarvis's *The Whitby Witches* (1991), Exploring how the two novels represent the coastal setting of Whitby and its shipping history, and how they use local folklore and legend, and Yorkshire dialect.

The previous chapter dealt with the explicitly rural settings of Yorkshire Gothic, and the next will consider elements of urban Gothic, but the coastal setting of Whitby falls into neither category. In both Stoker's own experience of Whitby, and in the context of Lucy and Mina's visit in the novel, Whitby is a retreat. It exists away from London, and away from Yorkshire cities like Leeds, York, and Bradford, but it is not as isolated as the working landscape of rural Yorkshire. Whitby is introduced in the text by Mina:

This is a lovely place. The little river, the Esk, runs through a deep valley, which broadens out as it comes near the harbour. A great viaduct runs across with high piers, through which the view seems, somehow, farther away than it really is. The valley is

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<sup>72</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, ed. Glennis Byron (Hertfordshire: Broadview Press, 1998): 95

beautifully green and it is so steep that when you are on the high land on either side you look right across it, unless you are near enough to look down. The houses of the old town – the side away from us – are all red-roofed, and seem piled up one over the other.<sup>73</sup>

Mina's description of the town blends industrial elements like the harbour and the viaduct with the natural setting of the steep valley which encases the town. This overlap of the two settings constructs Whitby's semi-urban space. The idea of the houses being piled up atop one another also implies a level of social and urban development in the Whitby setting. Despite the urban elements, Whitby generally functions in the text as an escape from the urban which is beneficial to Lucy's health, and Mina's descriptions are more often preoccupied with the graveyard and its views of the coast: '[it] has a full view of the harbour and all up to the bay where the headland called Kettleness stretches out into the sea.'<sup>74</sup> These descriptions solidify Whitby's status as distinctly coastal – a fact which is important to the narrative, and characterizes the choice of setting. Whitby is Dracula's entry point to England.

Whitby is in numerous ways a liminal space in the novel. In the most literal sense, Whitby harbour represents the liminal space between land and sea, but it also represents the liminal spaces of engagement, sleepwalking, and is the liminal point of the narrative between Jonathan's encounter with Dracula in Transylvania, and Dracula's impending arrival upon British soil. The anthropologist Victor Turner considers the liminal state of social structure and time, stating that the liminal is 'a place that is not a place, and a time that is not a time'.<sup>75</sup> For Lucy and Mina, their respective engagements to Arthur and Jonathan are liminal portions of time between their unmarried lives, and their soon to be married lives. When

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid, 95

<sup>74</sup> Ibid

<sup>75</sup> Victor Turner, *Dramas, fields, and metaphors : symbolic action in human society* (London: Cornell University Press, 1974): 239

Lucy takes up sleepwalking again Mina remarks that ‘I daresay it is the waiting which disturbs her, she will be alright when he arrives.’<sup>76</sup> She suggests that it is the time before marriage in which Lucy is trapped that causes her to enter her sleepwalking state, another liminal element of the Whitby narrative. Mina also suffers in the period of her engagement as she states that ‘This suspense is getting dreadful. If only I knew where to write or where to go, I should feel easier, but no one has heard a word of Jonathan since that last letter.’<sup>77</sup> Manuel Aguirre states that ‘Gothic protagonists are (or become) liminal figures uneasily straddling two worlds, caught midway between past and present, or between antithetical states of being’.<sup>78</sup> During their time in Whitby the concept of the liminal applies more to Lucy than it does to Mina, and Mina is often simply the narrator of Lucy’s impending fall. The state of sleepwalking puts Lucy in a position halfway between consciousness and unconsciousness, and it is this habit which sends her straight into Dracula’s path. Vampirism itself can be interpreted as a liminal state between life and death, and it is the shared state of being trapped between two states of being that bring Lucy and Dracula together. Gothic liminality is brought together with elements of Yorkshire specificity; Whitby as a liminal space represents a ‘Yorkshiring’ of Gothic tropes and conventions within the narrative.

Bram Stoker emphasizes the coastal setting of Whitby most notably through the arrival of Dracula aboard the *Demeter*. Stoker makes use of the novel’s epistolary form in the accounts of the ship’s arrival, by writing in the form of newspaper articles pasted into Mina’s journal, as well as Mina’s voice before and after the event. This use of varying forms allows Stoker to parallel the *Demeter*’s journey from Varna to Whitby with the shipwreck of the *Dmitry*; a ship travelling from Narva, in modern day Estonia, which was wrecked in October

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<sup>76</sup>Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 105

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 106

<sup>78</sup> Manuel Aguirre, “Thick Description and the Poetics of the Liminal in Gothic Tales”, *Orbis Litterarum*, 72 no.4 (2017) accessed August 26, 2019 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/oli.12138>: 309

1885. In an article from *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette* an account is given of a ship from Scarborough running ashore due to a ‘storm of great violence’.<sup>79</sup> The report goes on to tell of a second ship being sighted an hour later:

About an hour after the stranding of the *Mary and Agnes*, another vessel was sighted a few miles out flying signals of distress. The gale was then at its height, and the sea even more dangerous than before... The greatest excitement prevailed among the thousands of people on shore, for it seemed certain that if the vessel was cast upon the rocks she would be immediately dashed to pieces and the crew drowned. The craft, however, steered straight for the port, and by good seamanship got into the harbour safely. She proved to be the Russian brigantine *Dmirty*.<sup>80</sup>

The similarities between this account of the *Dmirty*’s miraculous arrival in Whitby, and Stoker’s fictional story of the *Demeter* are undeniable. In both cases the ship arrives in the harbour unscathed, despite there being a certainty among onlookers that the respective ships would be wrecked. In a ‘Cutting from the *Dailygraph*, 8 August (*pasted in Mina Murray’s Journal*)’ the account of the *Demeter*’s journey goes as follows:

Before long the searchlight discovered some distance away a schooner with all sails set, apparently the same vessel which had been noticed earlier in the evening. The wind had by this time backed to the east, and there was a shudder amongst the watchers on the cliff as they realised the terrible danger in which she was now... A great awe came on all as they realised that the ship, as if by a miracle, had found the harbour, unsteered save by the hand of a dead man!<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> “The Gale” *The North-Eastern Daily Gazette* (Middlesbrough, England), Monday, October 26, 1885; Issue 5814. *British Library Newspapers, Part II: 1800-1900*. Accessed Dec 19, 2018

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>81</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 111-112

Stoker's version of the tale is, of course, sensationalised for the sake of fiction – the original story of the *Dmitry* features no dead crew members steering the ship – but this extract is unmistakably similar to the real news story. In Stoker's notes for *Dracula* he writes 'On 24 Oct. 1885 the Russian schooner "Dimetry"... Ran into harbour by pure chance avoiding rocks'.<sup>82</sup> He goes on to include within his notes an extract from the Coast Guard's Log Book detailing the events of the 24th October 1885. These notes definitively prove that Stoker was drawing on real events in his depiction of the *Demeter* and the events surrounding *Dracula*'s arrival in England. His engagement with the Coast Guard, and local shipping tradition in Whitby, is not only paramount to the plot of *Dracula*, but also to the establishment of a coastal Gothic, in which the seaside setting of Whitby is susceptible to supernatural arrivals. It is known, from Stoker's notes, that he had been planning *Dracula* prior to visiting Whitby, and had originally planned to set *Dracula*'s arrival in Dover. The coast was, from the very beginning, a key feature of the plot and *Dracula*'s arrival; the coast represents an area of national weakness in the novel and is particularly significant to the narrative's anxieties surrounding immigration and otherness. Stoker has explicitly chosen not to have *Dracula* simply show up in London, but instead to witness his exploitation of England's coastal borders. Dover has a historic tradition of being an entry point to England, hence Stoker's original consideration of the location, but Whitby offered a less conspicuous arrival for *Dracula* to escape attention, whilst also allowing Stoker to draw on the Gothic history of the town. By utilising true, local history in his narrative, Stoker creates an uncanny sense of realness and familiarity within the narrative.

As well as including local history, Stoker also uses local legends of the black dog, or the Barghest, in his description of *Dracula*'s arrival in Whitby. Spectral hounds are found all

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<sup>82</sup> Bram Stoker, *Bram Stoker's Notes for Dracula: A Facsimile*, Annotated and Transcribed Robert Eighteen-Bisang and Elizabeth Miller (North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2008): 139

over the world, in local legends and folklore, and Yorkshire is home to a particular apparition known as the Barghest. There are numerous tales of the Barghest haunting the North Yorkshire Moors or the Shambles in York, as well as stories of ghostly black dogs closer to Whitby; according to W. R. Mitchell: ‘A ghost story of a dog-that-never-was has been told on an unnamed house “on the cliffs not far from Whitby”’.<sup>83</sup> The most famous Barghest story in Yorkshire, however, is that of Trollers Gill, a limestone gorge in North Yorkshire:

And a dreadful thing from the cliff did spring,  
And it’s wild bark thrill’d around –  
It’s eyes had the glow of the fires below –  
‘Twas the form of the Spectre Hound!<sup>84</sup>

Stoker would likely have heard stories such as these during his visit, and, they became the inspiration for Dracula’s appearance as he arrived in Whitby:

A good deal of interest was abroad concerning the dog which landed when the ship struck, and more than a few members of the SPCA, which is very strong in Whitby, have tried to befriend the animal. To the general disappointment, however, it was not to be found; it seems to have disappeared entirely from the town. It may be that it was frightened and made its way on to the moors, where it is still hiding in terror. There are some who look with dread on such a possibility, lest later on it should in itself become a danger, for it is evidently a fierce brute.<sup>85</sup>

Interestingly, Stoker never explicitly states that the dog is Dracula; he merely implies it through the Demeter’s log and the significance placed on this dog’s arrival in town, and its

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<sup>83</sup> W. R. Mitchell, *Ghosts Of Yorkshire* (Clapham: The Dalesman Publishing Company, 1987): 31

<sup>84</sup> William Hone, “The Legend of the Troller’s Gill”, *The Table Book* (London: Hunt and Clarke, 1827) accessed Sept 6, 2019 <https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=bmpMAAAAMAAJ&hl=en&pg=GBS.PP11>

<sup>85</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 115

subsequent disappearance. The fact that Stoker chose to use the image of the black dog is important for a number of reasons. First, and foremost, the black dog has long been considered to be an omen of death. The motif finds its origins in pagan mythology, with figures such as Cerberus and Anubis. Both of these examples are linked with the idea of death in their respective cultures, with Cerberus being the three-headed guard dog of the underworld in Greek mythology, and Anubis being the god of the underworld in Egyptian mythology, depicted as having a dog's head. There are numerous other examples, and it is these associations with the black dog that were appropriated by Christianity to link the image of the dog with the devil and sin. These associations became woven into folklore across the world, with stories of spectral dogs existing throughout most of the western world. The use of such a universal omen of death, by Stoker, is an ominous device; Dracula's arrival in the form of the dog serves as a warning of the death and horror that is to follow. Within a few hours of Dracula's arrival a 'half-breed mastiff... was found dead in the roadway opposite its master's yard' and just a couple of days later, Mina writes that 'Mr Swales was found dead this morning on our seat, his neck being broken.'<sup>86</sup> He had evidently... fallen back in the seat in some sort of fright'.<sup>87</sup> These deaths are cleverly constructed by Stoker to seem unrelated at first glance, but they are both significant effects of Dracula's 'invasion' of Whitby. The initial attack upon the dog is portrayed as a deadly fight between two dogs, the 'native' and Dracula in dog form, but Stoker goes on to give a gruesome description of how the 'native' dog has been mutilated, clearly marking this death as being of significance. Similarly, the death of Mr Swales seems on the surface to have been a terrible accident, but Stoker's description of the 'look of fear and horror on his face that the men said made them shudder' adds a layer of

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<sup>86</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 69

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 121

terror to the narrative and makes it clear that there is something unnatural going on in Whitby.<sup>88</sup>

Another reason why Stoker's use of the black dog is important is its connection to local folklore. Stoker utilises superstition and belief in the accounts of spectral hounds haunting the Yorkshire coast to overlap fiction with reality. His use of familiar stories and legends as inspiration for his novel contributes to the uncanny narrative that makes *Dracula* such a terrifying work of Gothic fiction. As previously mentioned, stories of spectral hounds are well known in Yorkshire, particularly on the Moors and in the area surrounding Whitby, but these aren't the only stories of spectral hounds that would be familiar to readers. For example, Conan Doyle writes of a 'foul thing, a great, black beast-shaped like a hound, yet larger than any hound that ever mortal eye has rested upon'.<sup>89</sup> This quotation from *Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902), published just a couple of years after *Dracula*, shows the prevalence which spectral hounds have in British folklore. Barghests, and other ghostly dogs, are common features within folklore across the UK making them a familiar image for Stoker to utilise in his narrative.

The Barghest isn't the only example of local folklore and history that Stoker incorporates into his narrative. He also features the Abbey and the nearby graveyard, where Mina spends so much of her time during this part of the novel. The Abbey is first introduced in the novel through Mina's description in her journal: 'Right over the town is the ruin of Whitby Abbey, which was sacked by the Danes... it is a most noble ruin, of immense size, and full of beautiful and romantic bits; there is a legend that a white lady is seen in one of the windows.' Some legends suggests that the white lady is the ghost of Whitby's founding

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, accessed Sept 6, 2019 <https://www.planetebook.com/free-ebooks/the-hound-of-the-baskervilles.pdf>

abbess, St Hilda. Mina's description of the Abbey immediately links it with the supernatural and demonstrates her own personal interest in folk tales and ghost stories. The presence of folklore in the narrative allows Stoker to construct Whitby as a Gothic landscape much like writers before him had done across Yorkshire; Catherine Spooner states that 'In Gaskell's northern Gothic... place is constructed not just through landscape but also through the accumulation of legends and folklore'.<sup>90</sup> Mina goes on to describe the graveyard between the Abbey and the parish church as 'the nicest spot in Whitby' and that she will 'come and sit here very often myself'.<sup>91</sup> This establishes the graveyard as the focal point of the narrative's time in Whitby. It is the place where Mina spends most of her time leading up to Dracula's arrival, and it is where she finds Lucy after having been taken by Dracula. Stoker uses the graveyard to play on obvious Gothic tropes surrounding death and ghosts and religion, but also to incorporate the entire coastal town into the events of the narrative. As Mina writes, the graveyard 'has a full view of the harbour and all up the bay to where the headland called Kettleness stretches out into the sea.'<sup>92</sup> It also allows the narrative to witness Dracula's arrival on the *Demeter* via onlookers watching the storm from the cliff.

The short period of the novel that focuses on Whitby is divided between the indoor spaces of the house on the Crescent, and the outdoor spaces of the town, the graveyard, and the cliffs. These settings seem to be divided temporally as well as spatially as Mina only mentions the room in which she and Lucy are staying in relation to evenings and nights, and when recording her days tends to focus on time spent outdoors. The notable exception to this is the night that Lucy disappears to the graveyard, and Mina goes after her, during which she notes her discomfort at the situation: 'I was filled with anxiety about Lucy, not only for her health lest she should suffer from the exposure, but for her reputation in case the story should

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<sup>90</sup> Catherine Spooner, 29

<sup>91</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 95

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid*

get wind'.<sup>93</sup> Her concerns are primarily for Lucy, who has managed to sleepwalk all the way to a graveyard in her nightdress. Lucy's sleepwalking habits within the novel represent a dichotomy in her character. As Carol A. Senf states 'Lucy Westenra exhibits signs of schizophrenia, being a model of sweetness and conformity while she is awake but becoming sexually aggressive and demanding during her sleepwalking periods'.<sup>94</sup> Her leaving the house undressed after dark is a provocative action that forebodes her eventual transformation into a lustful vampire.

After Lucy's excursion, the window in the room which she shares with Mina becomes a considerable focus. The window is a liminal space between the inside and outside spaces. This space is significant throughout the text as Van Helsing remarks '[Dracula] may not enter anywhere at the first, unless there be someone of the household who bid him to come; though afterwards he can come as he pleases'.<sup>95</sup> The divide between the inside and outside is especially significant because of this characteristic, and therefore the liminal space at the window represents the place where that divide is breached, and throughout the novel is where Dracula lures Lucy to feed. *Dracula* is not the only Gothic text in which windows represent liminal spaces between two distinct settings. Gero Bauer states, in their analysis of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 'standing at one of the hall's windows, in a liminal space between the old and the new, nature and architecture, foreign and familiar, [Blanche] experiences a truly Romantic epiphany'.<sup>96</sup> The windows represent a dividing space between two worlds that is sublime in its conjoining of what is strange and what is known. A similar observation can be made of the window in Lockwood's room when he stays at Wuthering Heights, and the apparition of Catherine which sparks the main narrative. In *Dracula* they divide and unite the

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid, 126

<sup>94</sup> Carol A. Senf, "'Dracula': The Unseen Face in the Mirror", *The Journal of Narrative Technique*, 9 no. 3 (1979) accessed Aug 23, 2019, [www.jstor.org/stable/30225673](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30225673): 162

<sup>95</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 279

<sup>96</sup> Gero Bauer, *Houses, Secrets, and the Closet: Locating Masculinities from the Gothic Novel to Henry James* (Germany: 2016) accessed Aug, 19, 2019, [www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxrd8](http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxrd8): 69

innocence of Lucy and Mina and the corruption of Dracula, becoming a source of anxiety for the narrative. The window is a point of entry for Dracula, as although he is not invited in, at the window he is able to feed and to gain access to Lucy: ‘there distinctly was Lucy with her head lying up against the side of the windowsill and her eyes shut. She was fast asleep, and by her, seated on the window-sill, was something that looked like a good-sized bird.’<sup>97</sup>

Stoker emphasizes the Yorkshire setting of *Dracula* through the use of Yorkshire dialect spoken by Swales. He represents the locals of Whitby in the text, being Mina’s regular point of reference for local knowledge and stories. The use of transcribed dialect in his speech distinguishes him from primary characters in the text, who generally speak in Standard English, although Stoker does utilise colloquialisms throughout the novel. Christine Ferguson remarks that:

The fact that a middle-class South Englander such as Mina should be confused by Swales's rough dialect is unsurprising; that she then transcribes it word for word into shorthand, with all the zeal of a dialectologist, is simply astonishing. Swales's speech, like the vulgar idiom of the dockworkers, comes to us from reporters who claim not to understand what they hear but who are nonetheless able to find some signification in the unfamiliar words.<sup>98</sup>

Ferguson’s analysis of the interaction between Mina and Swales in the novel touches upon a number of interesting elements. The first of which is the separation that speech causes between Mina and Swales. Swales’ ‘rough dialect’ casts him as being of a lower class than the middle-class Mina. Graeme Trousdale states that ‘a dialect is in a subordinate position relative to a language. That subordination is both spatial and social: a dialect is smaller than a

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<sup>97</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 129

<sup>98</sup> Christine Ferguson, “Nonstandard language and the Cultural Stakes of Stoker’s “Dracula””, *ELH*, 71 no. 1 (2004) accessed Aug 26, 2019, [www.jstor.org/stable/30029928](http://www.jstor.org/stable/30029928): 232

language.<sup>99</sup> The use of a dialect is spatially specific, in this case to Whitby, but it also creates a hierarchy between Mina and Lucy, and Swales. Because Mina and Lucy speak Standard English in the text, they are elevated on a class level, much like the distinction made in *Wuthering Heights* between the protagonists and Joseph. At one point in the novel Mina remarks ‘I nodded for I thought it better to assent, though I did not quite understand his dialect’.<sup>100</sup> This highlights the distinction between the two modes of speaking and others Swales for his manner of speaking. Since the novel, at this point, is narrated from Mina’s perspective, it is Swales who is alienated despite Mina being an outsider in Whitby. She is, in this case, equivalent to Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights* in her curiosity and also in her own ‘invasion’ of the Yorkshire landscape. Unlike *Wuthering Heights*, however, *Dracula* doesn’t portray Mina as being on the liminal boundary between the narrative and the narration. She is very much a protagonist in the novel at the heart of the story.

Ferguson’s analysis also highlights the strange fact that Mina manages to record a dialect which she doesn’t fully understand in her shorthand journal. The recording of unfamiliar speech crops up numerous times throughout the narrative, and is always transcribed meticulously: ‘the narrative is full of speech that is neither familiar nor comprehensible to those who record’.<sup>101</sup> These transcriptions somewhat give the form of the novel away, breaking the illusion of the epistolary, but Ferguson argues that the protagonists’ knowledge of dialect and speech transcends language, with them able to make sense of the unfamiliar. In a conversation with dockworkers, Van Helsing states ‘They say much of blood and bloom and of others which I comprehend not, though I guess I know what they mean’.<sup>102</sup> This understanding of the unknown allows the protagonists of the novel to cross liminal

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<sup>99</sup> Graeme Trousdale, *An Introduction to English Sociolinguistics* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) accessed Aug 23, 2019, [www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g09zx3.11](http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.3366/j.ctt1g09zx3.11): 5

<sup>100</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 98

<sup>101</sup> Christine Ferguson, “Nonstandard language and the Cultural Stakes of Stoker’s “*Dracula*””, 231

<sup>102</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 357

boundaries and make sense of that which is sublime or uncanny, ultimately winning them their victory over Dracula. Stoker's use of language and dialect in such a way constructs a barrier which only the protagonists are able to break; Dracula's own lack of understanding is his shortcoming.

Swales represents the typical Yorkshireman within the narrative, as he is the predominant voice for the region. In considering Victorian ideas about the North of England, and Yorkshire in particular, C. Dellheim states that 'Local literature presented the Yorkshireman as hearty, shrewd, vigorous, manly, practical, matter-of-fact, unimaginative, progressive, and perhaps above all, independent.'<sup>103</sup> In Mina's first encounter with him, Swales seems to be all of these things as she states 'He is, I am afraid, a very sceptical person'.<sup>104</sup> He is reluctant to tell her anything about local folklore and legend, so instead she asks him about whale-fishing. Swales' scepticism draws on this idea of the unimaginative and practical Yorkshireman that existed at the time, but his stance shifts later on in the narrative when he gives what Mina describes as a sermon on local legends: 'It be all fool-talk, lock, stock, and barrel; that's what it be, an' nowt else. These bans an' wafts an' boh-ghosts an' bar-guests and bogles an' all anent them is only fit to set bairns an' dizzy women a-belderin'.<sup>105</sup> Though his scepticism remains, he is no longer reluctant or unimaginative, as he tells Mina and Lucy about the empty graves: 'in nigh half of them there bean't no bodies at all'.<sup>106</sup> Swales' approach to folklore and legend is a practical one, weighed down by scepticism, and by his very nature as a stereotypical Yorkshireman. In Mina's final encounter with Swales, however, his general scepticism gives way to sentimentality: 'I'm so nigh it that the Aud Man is already whettin' his scythe... Some day soon the Angel of Death will sound

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<sup>103</sup> C. Dellheim, "Imagining England: Victorian Views of the North", *Northern History*, 22 no. 1 (1986) accessed Aug 8, 2019, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1179/007817286790616426>: 220

<sup>104</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 96

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid*, 97

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid*, 98

his trumpet for me.’.<sup>107</sup> In his final appearance Swales gives a foreboding speech about his own death, in which he references a number of superstitions surrounding the figure of death, and the idea of death personified. These create a duality within the character of the Yorkshireman; on the one hand he is practical and unimaginative, but on the other hand, the extensive myths and legends surrounding the area of Yorkshire are woven into the culture of the Yorkshireman. Swales becomes one of Dracula’s first victims on English soil as Mina states ‘He had evidently, as the doctor said, fallen back in the seat in some sort of fright for there was a look of fear and horror on his face that the men said made them shudder... Perhaps he had seen Death with his dying eyes!’.<sup>108</sup> Since Swales existed in the text as a representative Yorkshireman, his death represents Dracula’s first step towards conquest. By killing Swales, he has taken Yorkshire.

Whitby’s literary reputation existed prior to Bram Stoker’s use of the harbour town in *Dracula*, as the home of the first named English poet Caedmon, and for entertaining visits from authors such as Charles Dickens and Wilkie Collins. *Dracula* built on this reputation, creating a veritable hub for Gothic culture, and Whitby has continued to provide the backdrop for numerous Gothic novels since, including Robin Jarvis’ *The Whitby Witches* (1991). *The Whitby Witches* is the first novel in a series of three, aimed at older children. Particularly over the last few decades, children’s literature has begun to explore Gothic ideas, especially in the fantasy genre. As Michael Levy and Farah Mendlesohn state:

It was the folk tale that put the ‘fairy’ in fairy tale... from folk traditions of the supernatural as well as the specifically fairy, to what might be called the new folk tale of the anthropologist. Beast tales descended from Aesop; tales of enchantment from the Arabian Nights and from Grimm;... traditions of Gothic fiction from the turn of the

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 107

<sup>108</sup> Bram Stoker, *Dracula*, 121

century... all these, along allegorical neo-Christian quests, were grouped together as 'fairy'.<sup>109</sup>

This section will consider how children's literature can be considered alongside more traditional Gothic texts such as *Dracula* and how Jarvis adapts the setting of Whitby for his narrative, considering the elements of local folk stories, the isolation of Whitby, and the role of the coast line in the events of the novel.

It is important to remember that *The Whitby Witches* is first and foremost a children's novel. Children's and Young Adult fictions have produced a number of the biggest selling works of literature over the past few decades, including the *Harry Potter* series and the *Twilight Saga*. The fantasy genre is one that is especially prominent within the umbrella category of children's literature and is one which often takes its cues from the Gothic literary canon. Levy and Medlesohn remark that 'For children, ghost stories were a staple fare for Halloween, sleepovers and camp nights, but this was primarily an oral tradition'.<sup>110</sup> In their discussion of children's fantasy fiction, the roots of the tradition are found in the same place as that of Gothic fiction; in the oral history of ghost stories and folklore. The trope of scary stories being associated with typically childlike things such as Halloween and summer camps is one which is common in popular culture, and the concept of telling stories to frighten children is not new. Almost every culture has its own version of a bogeyman story, designed to scare children into going to bed. It is a culture which has woven its way into children's literature, creating a new style of Gothic writing specifically aimed at younger audiences, that is often distinctly fantastical and relies primarily on supernatural threats, whilst still constructing terror through the uncanny and sublime.

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<sup>109</sup> Michael Levy and Farah Mendlesohn, *Children's Fantasy Literature: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016): 31

<sup>110</sup> Levy and Medlesohn, *Children's Fantasy Literature*, 185

*The Whitby Witches* opens with the two young protagonists, Jennet and Ben, being sent by train to Whitby to stay with an elderly family friend called Aunt Alice, much like Mina arrived in Whitby by train. The train journey to Whitby is one which has occupied a place in literary imaginations since Charles Dickens first travelled on the line in 1836, writing some years later to Wilkie Collins (another prominent writer inspired by his visit to Whitby): ‘In my time that curious railroad by the Whitby moor was so much the more curious. That you were balanced against a counter-weight of water, and that you did it like Blondin.’<sup>111</sup> In his letter Dickens refers to the famous French tightrope walker Charles Blondin, known for walking a tightrope across the Niagara Gorge in 1859, illustrating the dangerous nature of the early trainline to Whitby.

The opening to the novel constructs the protagonists as orphans, being sent to live with an elderly family friend. This draws on the common trope of the orphaned child in Gothic literature, examples of which include *Jane Eyre*, *Great Expectations*, and the more recent *Harry Potter* series, which in another example of children’s literature drawing on Gothic conventions. Chloe Buckley states that ‘twenty-first century children’s Gothic fiction begins with a violent act of un-homing.’<sup>112</sup> I would argue that this act of un-homing far predates the twenty-first century, and in fact Jarvis is drawing on a long tradition of orphaned children in his treatment of Ben and Jennet.

In *The Whitby Witches* Jarvis draws on the remote nature of the journey to Whitby. The narration asks ‘Just how far away was Whitby? It seemed as if they were going beyond the reaches of the civilised world.’<sup>113</sup> The journey to Whitby removes the children from the life they had before the events of the novel and creates a sense of isolation and desolation

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<sup>111</sup> Charles Dickens, *Letters of Charles Dickens: 1833-1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) edited by Georgina Hogarth and Mary Dickins, p. 524

<sup>112</sup> Chloe Buckley, 1

<sup>113</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches* (London: Egmont UK, 2017): 10

from the offset. This divide created between Whitby and ‘the civilised world’ creates a microcosm in which the narrative exists, where the supernatural seems commonplace to the inhabitants of Whitby. This is reinforced in the second chapter of the novel when Aunt Alice, and the reader, learn why Ben is considered to be ‘creepy’ by his former foster homes: ‘He has “the sight”, a marvellous gift which should be encouraged’.<sup>114</sup> Aunt Alice has no issue with Ben’s peculiarities and treats it as something special rather than something to be feared. The immediate isolation of Whitby marks it as other; it is a place which is distinctly different and unusual, much like the character of Ben. In the first chapter Ben is also constructed as someone other, who doesn’t fit in with the outside world: ‘The child stared back and said nothing’.<sup>115</sup> The description of him simply as ‘The child’ strips him of any identity – he is not referred to by name, or as ‘the boy’, or by any other identifying label. This removes him from his strangeness and uniqueness, but also defines him as ‘other’. There is something sinister about the image created here of a silent staring child. In the first few chapters there is a silencing of Ben by the ‘civilised world’, and in his initial meeting with Aunt Alice, he continues to exist in this silence until he deems her to be strange enough to be trustworthy. As Jennet instructs him on the train ‘You’re not to talk of that with this one, right?’.<sup>116</sup> This is one of the early allusions to Ben’s strangeness, in which Jarvis purposefully avoids giving any specific information. This skirting around the subject creates a sense of uncertainty and serves to silence Ben and his ‘gift’, given the unspoken nature of it. His ‘gift’ is distinctly supernatural in itself and is suppressed in the ‘civilised world’ but when the children reach the supernatural microcosm of Whitby, Aunt Alice is accepting of Ben’s gift, essentially drawing the two children into her world of strangeness.

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<sup>114</sup> Ibid, 32

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, 13

<sup>116</sup> Ibid, 6

Although Whitby is described as isolated, it is not rural, and Jennet's description upon arriving in the harbour town is of a distinctly urban environment:

The buildings of the East Cliff were more densely bunched together than Jennet had at first thought. They had been built in the days before planning permission was heard of and their higgledy-piggledy clusters formed a vast number of dark alleys, lanes and yards. The Whitby of the East Cliff was gazing at the world from an earlier time all its own.<sup>117</sup>

In the microcosm in which the narrative takes place, the setting is isolated from the rest of the world, whilst also being urban, dense, and dark. This description evokes a sense of London Gothic, which was popular during the fin-de-siècle period, appearing similar to this description from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*: 'Over the low roofs and jagged chimney-stacks of the houses rose the black masts of ships. Wreaths of white mist clung like ghostly sails to the yards.'<sup>118</sup> Both Wilde's description of London and Jarvis' of Whitby use the striking image of buildings being packed in together is utilised, expressing the confinements of the urban setting.

The London Gothic of the fin-de-siècle was in itself a distinct sub-genre in which the idea of urban Gothic began to take form. As Roger Luckhurst states 'the Gothic revival of the late Victorian era ... was the moment when a distinctively urban Gothic was crystallized.'<sup>119</sup> In the introduction of Whitby as a space within *The Whitby Witches*, Jarvis uses similar language to create this sense of an urban locale from an earlier era, and a claustrophobic environment in which the narrative takes place. This combination of isolation with narrow,

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid, 18

<sup>118</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (London: Penguin Books, 2003): 178

<sup>119</sup> Roger Luckhurst, "The contemporary London Gothic and the limits of the 'spectral turn'", *Textual Practice*, 16 no. 3, accessed Dec 4, 2019, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/09502360210163336?needAccess=true>: 530

confining spaces constructs Whitby as an unsettling and unusual setting for the events of the novel.

The action of the narrative moves between two distinctive types of setting: the interior settings of Aunt Alice and Rowena Cooper's respective houses, and the exterior settings of Whitby, focused particularly on the graveyard and the coastline. Aunt Alice's home is introduced early on in the novel, when Jennet and Ben arrive in Whitby. The house is described in detail from Ben's perspective:

It was a funny house. There were lots of weird prints on the walls and old sepia photographs of Victorian Whitby. There were also a good many corn dollies hanging up all over the place. A table in the hall was reserved for things Miss Boston had found while out walking... It was not the sort of house you would expect an old lady to live in... no obvious sign of knitting, no fat lazy cat sprawled on the sofa clawing away at the cushions and – best of all to Ben – the place did not smell of lavender.<sup>120</sup>

This description of the house juxtaposes the stereotype of an old lady's home with Aunt Alice's own eccentric dwelling. The inclusion of 'a good many corn dollies' also introduces pagan ideas about spiritualism and superstition into the setting. They are defined as being an old superstitious tradition which has over time evolved into an art form. Corn dollies are used in pagan ceremonies and are now a decorative art form, often reflecting superstitious beliefs. They are symbols of good luck and fertility and can be used to thank Mother Earth for the Harvest. The presence of these, in presumably significant numbers, in Aunt Alice's house creates a space where superstition, spiritualism, and elements of paganism are accepted and encouraged. Despite this open display of such beliefs, Aunt Alice's parlour is treated as a mysterious and unknown space until about halfway through the

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<sup>120</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches*, 21-22

novel, as Aunt Alice asks the children to stay in the Kitchen when Tilly Droon asks for help finding her cat, Eurydice: ‘The sound of voices filtered through the parlour door, so the children kept quiet and listened.’<sup>121</sup> Later in the narrative, the parlour is revealed to be the location of the ladies’ circle séances, and therefore the centre of Aunt Alice’s spiritualistic practices or witchcraft. Jennet is curious about Aunt Alice’s practices and does enter the parlour a couple of times describing it as ‘papered [in] a rich burgundy and lined with shelves of dusty volumes. A large round table dominated the centre of the room and in the corner, a tall grandfather clock monotonously ticked the time away.’<sup>122</sup> The parlour is traditionally a reception space used for hosting, and in this case the primary function for Aunt Alice’s parlour is hosting the ladies’ circle. The descriptions at this point in the narrative are not especially specific regarding the contents of the room, but the number of ‘dusty volumes’ and the unusual presence of a large table do suggest that this is not a traditional parlour. After Tilly Droon’s mysterious visit, Jennet enters the parlour again: ‘A sweet, heavy scent laced the air; on the table was the jug of water and an empty black lacquered bowl. Jennet went up to it and ran her fingers around the rim. It was wet.’<sup>123</sup> What Jennet sees in the parlour is the set-up from one of Aunt Alice’s rituals, in this case a ritual for locating a cat. Jennet does not realise this at the time, but the mysterious nature of the parlour and its uses does pique her curiosity, and approximately halfway through the novel Jennet finds out that Aunt Alice is a witch, or ‘I prefer the term ‘wise woman’’.<sup>124</sup>

Unlike Aunt Alice’s house, which represents a safe and positive centre of witchcraft and spiritualism, Rowena Cooper’s house is portrayed as a more traditionally Gothic home. The house is introduced as an abandoned building in chapter two, when Eurydice is found

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 43

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 39-40

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 43-44

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 80

hiding in there. It is described as ‘an ugly house with mean little windows, quite secluded. Jennet shuddered at the thought of living there; at night it would be pitch dark for there were no street lamps. It was a dismal lonely place.’<sup>125</sup> This description more closely fits the Gothic tropes of the house within a text, such as that of Udolpho in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which is described as possessing ‘solitary grandeur’, being ‘gloomy and sublime’, and residing among ‘neighbouring mountains [which] were scarcely distinguishable from darkness itself.’<sup>126</sup> The descriptions in these two texts focus on similar Gothic elements, such as darkness and solitude to construct the unwelcoming and uncomfortable setting of the Gothic house or haunted house trope. The interior of Rowena Cooper’s house is first seen by Ben, who sneaks in to get Eurydice whilst the house is still in a dilapidated state:

The exposed floorboards moved as he walked on them; they had warped and no longer fitted properly. He put his head round the door of the front room, but only a collection of empty tea chests stood morosely in the middle of the gloom. The whole house smelt damp and musty. Ben shivered. What a horrid dank place it was... The stairs still possessed their carpet – too worn to be worth removing... It was dark on the first floor, for there was no landing window and all the bedroom doors were shut.<sup>127</sup>

This description of the house paints a vivid image of the abandoned house, including signs that it had at one time been a home such as the empty tea chests or the worn down carpet. The backdrop of the abandoned building is one which is used particularly in more modern Gothic texts to create a sense of the uncanny. Luckhurst states that ‘Forgotten and despised areas, abandoned buildings or empty rooms work as conductors to revivify buried histories.’<sup>128</sup> He suggests that spaces which have been abandoned or forgotten about, like

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid, 45

<sup>126</sup> Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 212-228

<sup>127</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches*, 48-49

<sup>128</sup> Roger Luckhurst, “The contemporary London Gothic and the limits of the ‘spectral turn’”, 529

Rowena Cooper's house at the beginning of the novel, bring light to histories which have also been forgotten about or abandoned. Ghost narratives are often about casting light on that which has been forgotten, and in *The Whitby Witches* this house ultimately becomes the home of someone from Aunt Alice's friend, Prudence's, past, as it is her husband's buried history which must be uncovered, as well as the buried history of the aufwaders (also known as fisher-folk, they are a folkloric race invented by Jarvis who inhabit the coast at Whitby) which begins to be uncovered over the course of the narrative.

This scene in the narrative is arguably the first example of Gothic horror in the text, as Jarvis constructs a terrifying event:

He picked up the box... carrying [Eurydice] out of the room. Only then did Ben begin to wonder; who had shut that door in the first place... The boy turned cold. As he passed under the dark loft, all the hairs on the back of his neck prickled and rose. He felt sure something was up there, watching him from the shadows – the same something that could close bedroom doors. He made for the stairs quickly but as he ran down them two at a time, he chanced to turn back and was horrified to see a small dark figure drop silently to the landing and begin creeping after him.<sup>129</sup>

This episode in which Ben encounters a threatening figure hidden in the attic of the abandoned house is reminiscent of older Gothic narratives. Jarvis evokes terror through uncertainty, allusion, and the unseen, by presenting Ben with the dilemma of who or what shut the bedroom door behind Eurydice. He also uses paranoia and the idea of being watched to present a narrative event very similar to those of classic Gothic texts such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847). In *Jane Eyre* Jane repeatedly recounts incidents of feeling

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<sup>129</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches*, 49-50

watched by something or someone she cannot see, and is terrorised by Rochester's wife, Bertha, who inhabits the attic, much like Ben's tormentor.

This house is next seen in the novel after Rowena Cooper has moved in, when she invites the ladies' circle round for tea: 'There was something creepy about the place; everything was in order and yet...'.<sup>130</sup> The use of ellipsis here is interesting because it leaves the problem open to interpretation. The narration from Aunt Alice's perspective remarks on how quickly the house has been fixed up and how spotless it is, yet that it remains 'creepy'. The attic is also a continuing source of fear in the narrative as Aunt Alice swears that she sees something move. Her comment on this causes tension with Rowena: 'The change in Rowena was immediate and startling. The smile vanished from her face and she almost snarled at the old woman.'. <sup>131</sup> This is the first instance in the text where Rowena's true nature is shown. Whilst Alice and the ladies circle are portrayed as being 'good' witches or wise women, Rowena represents darker magic and witchcraft. Alison Waller states that 'witchcraft narratives tend to focus on the affirmative qualities of the fantasy rather than any fearful properties of black magic (unless they are part-horror)'.<sup>132</sup> In this case the witchcraft narrative offers both sides. Aunt Alice is an affirmative presence in the fantasy element of the text, but Rowena's presence, and the setting of her house, contribute the Gothic terror that Jarvis constructs throughout the narrative and makes *The Whitby Witches* 'part-horror'.

The graveyard of St Mary's Church acts as the backdrop to a number of key scenes in the narrative of *The Whitby Witches*, and is one of the primary outdoor settings in the text. Jarvis presents recognisable features of Whitby such as the church, the one-hundred-and-ninety-nine steps, and Church Lane, to name a few, in order to create an uncanny backdrop

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<sup>130</sup> Ibid, 118

<sup>131</sup> Ibid, 124

<sup>132</sup> Alison Waller, *Constructing Adolescence in Fantastic Realism* (New York: Routledge, 2009): 23

which is familiar to anyone who visits Whitby. The graveyard in Whitby is a popular tourist attraction, partially due to its prevalence in *Dracula*, and in *The Whitby Witches* provides a Gothic setting for the narrative. One key event which takes place in the graveyard is Ben meeting Nelda, the aufwader: 'On one of the tomb slabs sat a small figure. It was silhouetted against the horizon and, until his eyes adjusted to the light, Ben could not make it out.' (p. 83). This meeting takes place in the specific setting of the graveyard at dusk. The graveyard is used as a Gothic trope throughout the novel, and the added element of it being at dusk presents the narrative with a liminal timeframe between day and night, constructing a sense of Gothic terror.

Another key moment in the narrative which centres on the graveyard is the death of Alice's friend, Prudence. Having discovered Rowena's secret, and her true nature, Prudence confronts her, and is subsequently killed after she leaves the house:

The ruins of the abbey rose out of the mist to her left as she approached the churchyard. The gravestones were like little islands poking up from a smoky sea as she strode by... The hundred and ninety-nine steps trailed into darkness below as the fog swirled about her ankles and concealed the streets of Whitby. She might have been standing on the roof of the world, for all she could see... She felt afraid, someone was watching her.<sup>133</sup>

This description of the graveyard focuses heavily on the idea of unseen terror through the use of the fog and Prudence's paranoia. The motif of concealment creates the sense of an unknown threat, therefore adding to the construction of terror in the narrative. This terrifying episode uses similar devices to the previous event with Ben in the abandoned house, when he also felt as though he was being watched by something he could not see. As Prudence flees the very same house, she is overcome with that same sensation. Upon looking around,

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<sup>133</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches*, 131

however, she finds herself face to face with a spectral hound, and dies. The horror here comes from a threat which, in the narrative, is very real, rather than being an example of psychological terror. Prudence is the novel's first victim of Rowena Cooper's true nature.

Another key element of *Whitby* which Jarvis uses in order to focus his setting is the sea. Jarvis takes advantage of the coastal setting of the novel by placing the climax of the story out at sea: 'Ben gripped the sides in alarm as the boat rocked uncontrollably. Sister Bridget cast her eyes despairingly upon the surrounding waves. For the first time in her long life she was putting herself at the mercy of the waves.'<sup>134</sup> The decision to set the climax of the novel out at sea emphasizes *Whitby* as a coastal backdrop for the narrative, whilst also utilizing the terrifying qualities of open water. There is an unsettling sense of endlessness that the sea evokes, which Jarvis comments on in the narrative: 'Ben's eyes smarted. They ached from staring at the endless stretch of water... his initial excitement had worn off and the chill wind of the open sea numbed his cheeks and had turned his fingers purple.'<sup>135</sup> The use of the sea also serves to isolate characters. Ben is alone with Sister Bridget and Nelda on the boat, whilst Aunt Alice, Jennet, and Hesper remain onshore. This separation of the protagonists allows Jarvis to create tension in the build-up to the novel's climax. Earlier on in the novel, Jarvis establishes the setting of the sea as something more fantastical than reality when Hesper (an aufwader) states 'you [humans] knew nothing of the sea; though you girdled the world, still you learnt nought. You were ignorant of the mysteries which lie in the deeps, of the Lords who could end everything if they so wished.'<sup>136</sup> The addition of an unseen threat living beneath the waves increases the terrifying nature of the sea as a setting, creating fear through that which is unknown, in this case the Lords of the Deep, who go on to feature in the climax of the book when they drag Sister Bridget to the depths and grant Rowena Cooper

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<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, 252

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, 261

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid*, 108

the knowledge that allows her to possess St Hilda's staff. These characters are not necessarily antagonists to the narrative, instead being portrayed as a neutral party interested in maintaining balance above all else. They only take actions the protagonists knew they would, when specific conditions arise.

On his website, Robin Jarvis states that 'In the *Whitby Witches* I have interwoven many of the existing local legends, such as the frightening Barguest, whilst inventing a few of my own, most notably the aufwaders'.<sup>137</sup> Jarvis primarily uses Aunt Alice to recount tales of local legends and histories, regularly utilizing her voice as a means of communicating elements of Whitby's history:

Caedmon was a cowherd, long before the Normans came... He was painfully shy and awkward, poor fellow. In the winter when fires were lit and songs were sung around them, all the other servants of the monastery would do their party pieces, except Caedmon... Then one night a vision came to him in a dream. It was an angel, which bade Caedmon sing of the glories of God the Maker. Do you know, when he awoke he felt confident as never before and began composing his own verse. Caedmon is recognised as the first English poet.<sup>138</sup>

The legend of Caedmon is based on true history, and the real English poet Caedmon, who, as Aunt Alice states, was the first English poet whose name is known. The legend is one which is well known, especially in Whitby, and Caedmon's Cross is a popular monument in the graveyard. This is one of many examples of the stories which Aunt Alice tells the children throughout the novel, some of which are based more in historical elements, such as that of Captain Cook, and some in fantastical elements, such as her remarks on the ghost walks. When Ben specifically asks for a 'scary' story 'with monsters', Aunt Alice tells him

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<sup>137</sup> Robin Jarvis, *Musings*, accessed Sept 6, 2019, <http://www.robinjarvis.com/whitbyhome.html>

<sup>138</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches*, 32-33

the tale of *Dracula*: ‘the most dreadful monster ever created came ashore at Whitby – Dracula himself, King of Vampires!’.<sup>139</sup> Jarvis’ inclusion of this reference to *Dracula* demonstrates an awareness of Whitby’s Gothic legacy, and the significance that Bram Stoker’s novel played in constructing that legacy. It also serves to heighten the Gothic atmosphere which Jarvis is trying to evoke in his characterization of Whitby.

As well as serving to construct Whitby’s Gothic atmosphere, Aunt Alice’s stories also divulge information which is significant to the progression of the narrative. When the children visit the museum Aunt Alice explains the legend of the Hand of Glory, which is on display there (a detail which Jarvis incorporates from reality): ‘This unpleasant little item was used as a charm by witches and burglars many years ago... It was believed that this charm, if used properly, could put to sleep an entire household so that a thief could ransack the place without anybody stirring.’.<sup>140</sup> Shortly after Aunt Alice tells this story to Ben and Jennet, the hand goes missing from the museum and Dora Banbury-Scott’s house is broken into. The strange thing that the novel emphasises about the break-in is that ‘nobody heard a thing! They slept through it all.’.<sup>141</sup> This detail reiterates the legend told by Aunt Alice at the museum, and suggests that the Hand of Glory was used during the break-in.

As well as including a significant amount of Whitby’s history and existing folklore, Robin Jarvis also introduces his own element of the fantastical with the aufwaders or Fisher-Folk. The first of these creatures to feature in the book is Nelda who is described as follows-

[She was] As large as a child, and wore a dark-blue fishing jersey... Her face was like soft leather. The nose was large and upturned, with a small mouth shaped like a crescent moon and cheeks burnt by the wind. Yet it was her eyes that transfixed the

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid, 33

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 100

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 174

boy. They were as big as his fists and as grey as the stormy sea, and the wrinkles which framed them spread about her brow like ripples on the shore<sup>142</sup>

This description of her paints the aufwaders as being essentially humanoid creatures, but they are also strange and other. Their appearance also marks them as being distinctly related to the sea through the use of similes likening Nelda's eyes in particular to stormy seas and rippling waves. It is quickly established that the aufwaders can only be seen by those who possess 'the sight', as Ben does, and therefore most of these encounters are told through Ben's eyes. The aufwaders are not explicitly threatening in the text, instead being portrayed as a more complex race of beings. The likes of Nelda and Hesper are portrayed as being on the side of good, whilst Silas aids Rowena Cooper in her goals, placing him on the side of evil. Jarvis goes into a great amount of depth concerning the backstory of the aufwaders, how they came to settle in Whitby, their distrust of humans, the conception of the half-human, half-aufwader (Sister Bridget), and the curse that her conception brought about (that female aufwaders will die in childbirth, causing the race to face extinction). They are a fully realised and detailed addition to Whitby's already thriving folklore scene, as Jarvis comments: 'The appearance of the fisher-folk was based on the inhabitants of Victorian Whitby as captured in the wonderful sepia photographs of the time. Looking down from the cliff, I could imagine the wind burned and weather beaten aufwaders wandering the sands and peering into rock pools.'<sup>143</sup> There is an awareness of the past in Jarvis' writing, granting it an uncanny presence throughout the novel, whether this be allusions to the Victorian Whitby of Stokers *Dracula*, reflected in the aufwaders and in photographs kept by Aunt Alice, or the many historical details Jarvis includes through Alice's stories.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid, 83

<sup>143</sup> Robin Jarvis, *Musings*

Like the inaugural ‘Yorkshire Gothic’ text, *Wuthering Heights*, then, Jarvis’s novel in some ways presents readers with an invented Yorkshire. Even though his descriptions of the town, and of true locations, are incredibly accurate and true to life, he does tweak the setting to fit his narrative, by constructing a Whitby which is fantastical and by inhabiting it with supernatural creatures such as the Barguest and the Aufwaders.

As Peter Hunt and Millicent Lenz state: ‘fantasy’ is the ultimately relative term: one person’s fantasy is another person’s norm – who would care to draw their own line between fantasy and reality?’<sup>144</sup> Fantasy is a genre of fiction, usually children’s literature or young adult literature, which has numerous overlaps with the Gothic genre, and could in many cases be interpreted as a re-adaptation of the Gothic genre for younger readers. As Levy and Medlesohn state ‘Fantasy for children has always had a dark side, of course, for without danger there is no triumph and with danger comes a certain amount of fear’<sup>145</sup> *The Whitby Witches* is an example of a children’s fantasy novel, in which Gothic tropes are appropriated to create danger and fear, and therefore lean into that dark side that Fantasy novels almost always include. In the setting of the novel, Jarvis portrays Whitby as being a part of the ‘real’ world, whilst also being distinctly supernatural, as Aunt Alice jokes that ‘I sometimes think Whitby has more ghosts than living residents.’<sup>146</sup> Hunt and Lenz argue that there are two distinct types of setting for fantasy fiction: ‘The most fundamental difference might seem to be between fantasy set in ‘this’ world, where there is a tension between the ‘normal’ and the fantastic elements, and ‘other’ worlds in which the fantastic is the norm’<sup>147</sup> In the case of *The Whitby Witches*, the setting is the former; set in ‘this’ world but with fantastical elements. The tension between the ‘reality’ of Whitby in the novel, and the supernatural is best felt

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<sup>144</sup> Peter Hunt and Millicent Lenz, *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction* (London: Continuum Books, 2003) accessed Dec 4, 2019, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/york-ebooks/reader.action?docID=436091>: 10

<sup>145</sup> Levy and Medlesohn, *Children’s Fantasy Literature*, 185

<sup>146</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches*, 20

<sup>147</sup> Hunt and Lenz, *Alternative Worlds in Fantasy Fiction*, 11

through the characters of Jennet and Ben. Whilst Ben is gifted with ‘the sight’ and can therefore see ghosts and Aufwaders, Jennet is not and does not initially believe that Ben can see these things or that they even exist. As Aunt Alice states: ‘[Ben] is special – and so too are you, Jennet. Throughout all this you have stood by him and protected him, even though you did not fully understand yourself.’<sup>148</sup> Aunt Alice is accepting of Ben’s gift and praises Jennet for supporting her brother despite her lack of ‘the sight’, yet in the first two chapters Jennet constantly insists on her brother keeping his ‘sight’ a secret from Aunt Alice, and is hopeful that she won’t find out.

Despite Jarvis’ accurate depictions of landmarks and history in Whitby, he does somewhat reinvent the landscape through his appropriation of folklore and his own aforementioned addition of the Aufwaders. The reinvention of a realistic setting is not something he is unfamiliar with when he writes *The Whitby Witches*, as Levy and Mendlesohn state:

Robin Jarvis... used animal substitutes in *The Deptford Mice* (1989) to tell a much darker but still heroic tale of mice who worship the Green Mouse of Spring and set out to defeat the Dark Lord. The first book is relatively realistic... in the sense that the characters live and act in a world with no more supernatural content than our own, but in *The Crystal Prison* (1989) and *The Final Reckoning* (1990) the books become darker and far more engaged with spirits and ghosts.<sup>149</sup>

*The Whitby Witches* was the first new novel published by Jarvis after *The Deptford Mice* trilogy, and it reflects the darker sensibilities that Jarvis leaned towards in the second two novels of the trilogy. Even though the Whitby that Jarvis describes seems to match up with a realistic world, no different from our own, with only a distinctly supernatural reputation, it

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<sup>148</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches*, 32

<sup>149</sup> Levy and Medlesohn, *Children’s Fantasy Literature*, 145-146

quickly becomes apparent in the novel that the true reputation of Whitby is a reality in the fictionalised version Jarvis constructs. Jarvis' Whitby is an unassuming centre for the supernatural, where 'spirits and scones' are not entirely out of the ordinary, and where myths and legends are in fact reality: [St Hilda] cut off the heads of the serpents... with a whip or . . . staff... Can it be true?'.<sup>150</sup> In this extract even Aunt Alice is shocked by the reality of one of Whitby's many legends, in this case an old story used to explain the ammonites commonly found in Whitby, before science knew what they were. The legend goes that Whitby was overrun with snakes so St Hilda cut off all their heads and turned them to stone, creating the ammonites. The climax of *The Whitby Witches* presents this legend as true, inventing an additional element not previously included in the story; that Hilda was a sorceress and that she wielded a powerful staff. It is St Hilda's staff that Rowena Cooper seeks throughout the novel, and is key to the narrative climax.

Despite a number of invented elements constructing a fictionalised version of Whitby, Jarvis' descriptions of the town are incredibly accurate. The majority of the action takes place on the old East Cliff between Aunt Alice's house, in a yard off Church Street, the graveyard at the top of the one-hundred-and-ninety-nine steps, and Rowena Cooper's house, which is situated where the Whitby Brewery currently is on Abbey Lane. Jarvis carefully includes details including the strange appearance of Market Square, the arcades on the West Cliff, and the narrow Whitby Bridge: 'They came to a bridge spanning the river. It was only wide enough to take one line of traffic at a time and was jammed with pedestrians, swarming everywhere.'<sup>151</sup> Overall, Jarvis' construction of Whitby uncannily reflects reality, by overlapping folklore with history and distorting the lines between what is true and what is fantasy, whilst also reinventing elements of Whitby's past and its relationship with the

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<sup>150</sup> Robin Jarvis, *The Whitby Witches*, 261

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, 17

supernatural, creating a setting which is both decidedly fantastical, whilst also being sublimely terrifying.

As a setting for both the more traditional Victorian Gothic novel, *Dracula*, and the fantastical children's Gothic, *The Whitby Witches*, Whitby inspires the uncanny and becomes an unsettling backdrop to both novels. In both texts Whitby is presented as an imagined version of itself where the narrative is set in the 'real' world, but incorporates supernatural elements both inspired by local folklore, like the Barguest and Dracula's arrival in Whitby, and introducing new elements, such as the aufwaders or Dracula himself.

### **Chapter Three: Non-Fiction Gothic narratives and the City of York.**

At the heart of Yorkshire is a city which often claims to be among the most haunted cities in the UK with over five-hundred known hauntings<sup>152</sup>. York is home to numerous ghost walks and tours capitalising on the city's long history of myths, legends, and hauntings that have been passed down over the years. As Brendan Foley states, albeit with perhaps some hyperbole: 'York [is] a city with a thousand ghosts and for every ghost story a hundred versions'.<sup>153</sup> With such a Gothic reputation, it is interesting that York itself has not provided the backdrop to any major Gothic texts over the years. Though some have mentioned the city in passing, the events of Yorkshire Gothic narratives have remained primarily in countryside or coastal locations, rather than urban ones. This chapter will consider York's Gothic reputation and some of the most famous stories associated with the city, taken from texts which deal with the subject of York's ghosts. The two primary texts studied in this chapter each come from similar time periods (one is Victorian, whilst the other is late Twentieth Century) to the fictional texts previously studied. Considering the history of the oral transmission of these narratives and their ongoing legacy, there are interesting comparisons to be drawn between these texts and the fictional Yorkshire Gothic examined in previous chapters. Unlike the novels previously considered, these two texts are collections of short stories, presenting themselves in a more non-fiction style. This style appeals to those with an existing interest in the supernatural and suggests a more academic approach to ghostly narratives.

Considering the status of these texts in the Yorkshire Gothic canon it is important to contemplate the existing relationship between avowedly fictional narratives and narratives

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<sup>152</sup> "York: most haunted city in the world!" BBC, 2014, accessed Aug 7, 2019, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/northyorkshire/uncovered/ghost/most\\_haunted.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/northyorkshire/uncovered/ghost/most_haunted.shtml)

<sup>153</sup> Brendan Foley, *The Ghost Walk of York* (York: Heslington Publications, 1984): 1

drawing upon popular tradition and story in the Gothic genre as a whole. *The Castle of Otranto* was presented as ‘non-fiction’ in the preface of its first edition. More recently *Dracula* suggests that the events of the narrative are ‘non-fiction’ through the use of the epistolary form. In the case of *The Castle of Otranto* and *Dracula*, even though these are actually works of fiction, their writers purposefully blur the lines between what is real and what is not, and even incorporate elements of real history and ‘non-fiction’ ghost narratives into their novels. Though *The Ghosts of York* and *The Ghost Walk of York* are comparatively recent texts, they are drawing on centuries of history and legends that have been passed down through oral tradition. It is the oral tradition of folklore and ghost stories which has provided an inspiration for much Gothic Literature, especially the Gothic subgenre of ghost fiction. The stories recorded in these two anthologies are a part of that tradition and are therefore integral to considering Yorkshire Gothic. Their treatment of local spaces, whilst in each text different, is recognisable in the fictional literature of Yorkshire Gothic. *The Ghost Walk of York*’s specific approach to locations is similar to the way that Bram Stoker constructs his version of Whitby, meticulously true to actual places. In these examples the use of specific locations in the individual narratives constructs terror through a blurring of reality with the supernatural narratives, suggesting to the reader (or listener) that these events are in fact real. *The Ghosts of York* has more in common with the fictionalised Yorkshire seen in *Wuthering Heights* where the lack of specific features creates a sublime vagueness to the setting, where it is both recognisably Yorkshire in nature, but also foreign and strange.

In the stories compiled by these two collections, the treatment of Gothic space can vary significantly. In W. M. Camidge’s *The Ghosts Of York* (1899) he is purposefully vague about the locations of the stories in order to in order to keep these locations secret, as well as to accentuate their Gothic atmosphere. Though he makes some reference to ‘a little way from the walls of York’ or ‘a field to the south-west of the city’ he never gives any more specific

details.<sup>154</sup> Camidge also tells a number of stories which do not necessarily have recognisable links to contemporary York. In ‘The Field Ghost’ he mentions ‘a field to the south west of the city, but now within its boundary’ (Camidge, p. 14). Camidge explains the vague settings of his narratives in the introduction of the first story: ‘It would be manifestly unfair to both owners and occupiers of property, reputed to have at one time been haunted, to indicate the precise locality... in which these visitors are reputed to have held their revels.’<sup>155</sup> His vagueness comes from respect for those who would likely be affected by contemporary ‘ghost hunters’ attempting to locate the hauntings detailed in the collection of stories he is telling. The text pre-dates any notion of ‘ghost tourism’ and in the late Victorian period, Camidge is more interested in preserving and protecting the ‘real’ spaces than constructing a pseudo-tour-guide. This somewhat distinguishes his narratives from those of fictional texts, where writers are less concerned about divulging the precise location of their settings. Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* gives the name of the central setting in the title of her novel, but this does not actually exist, and its locality is merely fictional (despite attempts to suggest otherwise). Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, on the other hand, specifies sites such as ‘the Crescent’ and Whitby Abbey. These, however, are generally fairly public spaces that Stoker incorporates into his fictional narrative. Camidge is concerned in his text about protecting private spaces from possible unwanted attention.

An important factor to consider in the urban Gothic landscape is the relationship between indoor and outdoor. Whilst in the rural and coastal Gothic, outdoor spaces will always play a significant role in the narrative, urban settings tend to utilise the buildings of a city or town in their narratives. This relationship is illustrated through several of the stories recorded in *The Ghosts of York*. ‘The Mansion Ghost’ is set in ‘Another old mansion on one

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<sup>154</sup> W. M. Camidge, *The Ghosts of York* (York: “Yorkshire Gazette” Limited, 1899): 7-14

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid*, 7

of the streets of the city [which] had at one time the reputation of having a ghost.’<sup>156</sup> Firstly, the use of ‘another’ to open the story suggests an inherent assumption that there are numerous mansions which are home to ghosts. The haunted house trope is common throughout Gothic literature and ghost stories, so this is not an especially unusual assertion to make in Gothic collections. The story does not offer much description of the mansion in question, instead giving a concise account of the haunting which supposedly took place there. The lack of specific identifiers makes the setting of ‘The Mansion Ghost’ so vague that the story could be set anywhere. Though the author tells us that this is a house in the city of York, there is nothing else within the narrative to support that assertion, so ‘The Mansion Ghost’ could easily exist in any urban setting. This raises the question of how we might classify narratives with urban settings as ‘Yorkshire Gothic’. A number of Camidge’s stories refer to notable York landmarks such as the Minster or the Bar walls – ‘close by a churchyard within the walls of the city’;<sup>157</sup> ‘a little way from the walls of York’ –<sup>158</sup> but he rarely gives any more details to suggest the Yorkshire-ness of a text. Most of his texts do not include speech, and those that do, do not use a recognisably Yorkshire dialect as seen in other Yorkshire Gothic texts. The Yorkshire-ness of Camidge’s stories is entirely reliant upon the presence of York landmarks, rather than distinctly Yorkshire characters (such as Sam in *God’s Own Country*, or Joseph in *Wuthering Heights*) or landscapes. The use of landmarks reflects the urban nature of these texts in comparison with other examples of Yorkshire Gothic, as well as reflecting on the distinct history of York. The history of the city is both long and layered, York having been subject to waves of occupation and settlement from the Romans onwards. This historical element to the city is often woven into the myths and legends that have developed in York and it provides an intriguing setting for texts like *The Ghosts of York*.

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid, 22

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 31

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 7

Another of Camidge's stories explores the ever-changing relationship between the urban and rural setting. 'A Solitary Visit' opens with the line 'Before the city had reached out its arms towards the country... a pinfold stood close by the York of former days'.<sup>159</sup> Though the location of this particular ghost story has since been absorbed into the city of York, at the time at which the events of the narrative took place, the setting was outside of the city walls. In this case the setting can be considered to be semi-rural, but the story does remain linked to the city and to the urban Gothic: 'some little distance away there was a solitary house occupied by an old man and a member or two of his family, who, like most people in suburban dwellings, retired to bed at an early hour'.<sup>160</sup> There is a sense of liminality to the setting of 'A Solitary Visit' as it exists almost halfway between the urban and the rural. The bells of the Minster feature in the narrative, as does a legend about 'a man being hung in chains on the moor which abutted on the City Walls'.<sup>161</sup> This ensures that the narrative remains tied to recognisable features of York itself and thus connects it to the urban setting, whilst also taking place on the moors outside of the city. In contrast to the indoor urban Gothic, this example of outdoor urban Gothic takes the events of the narrative almost outside of the urban remit to feature a more rural landscape as a backdrop for the haunting. Though there are a number of ghost stories set in the streets of York, it is interesting that in several of York's urban ghost legends, the narrative strays into a semi-rural space. For example, 'The Field Ghost' is set in 'a field south-west of the city, but now within its boundary'.<sup>162</sup> The relationship here between the historical and Gothic narratives is particularly interesting considering the evolution of the urban landscape. More overtly than rural and coastal settings, which can often remain unchanged for centuries, the urban setting is constantly evolving. The city has been growing constantly, and therefore a number of York's ghosts pre-date modern

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<sup>159</sup> Ibid, 10

<sup>160</sup> Ibid

<sup>161</sup> Ibid, 11

<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 14

city limits. These stories can be considered alongside Ross Raisin's *God's Own Country* in which he reflects on the urbanisation of the Yorkshire Dales through the local pub sub-plot, and Sam's attitude towards 'towns' throughout the novel. Stories like 'A Solitary Visit' reflect the realities of the urbanisation the narrator resists in *God's Own Country*. The unchanging chronotope depicted in *Wuthering Heights* exists to clearly segregate the rural from the urban, but in more modern narratives, Yorkshire Gothic is forced to confront the county's ongoing evolution, and the relationship between the urban and the rural.

The way that time is treated in ghost narratives is often quite different from more obviously fictional texts, although they do share some similarities. The fictional texts previously considered have been predominantly in the past tense, demonstrating a pre-occupation particularly with recent history. *Wuthering Heights* is narrated in 1801, though the majority of key events in the text take place a generation earlier. Similarly *Dracula* is told as a collection of documents, curated after the events as a record of what took place, and *God's Own Country* is constantly referring back to Sam's encounter with Katie a few years prior to when the text itself is set. Each of these texts relates specific events; they relate to specific events in a character's own timeline and are generally set in a more contemporary time period than Gothic novels such as *The Castle of Otranto* which has a distinctly historical setting in the medieval Mediterranean. The ghost narratives under discussion in this chapter, by contrast, seem to have more in common with the traditional Gothic of *Otranto* than the more recent histories of other Yorkshire Gothic works. Whilst the preoccupation with the past remains constant throughout the Gothic genre, the ghost stories of York tend to rely more on distant and vaguely evoked periods of history, rather than specific events in a character's life. The accounts in *The Ghosts of York* are generally vague about the temporal settings of each narrative, although all but one appear to be set in the quite distant past, as is suggested by the author's remarks on the changing city limits, as in 'The Field Ghost', and the apparent end to

the hauntings: ‘he has long ago wearied of his wanderings’.<sup>163</sup> These historical narratives link Camidge’s text with traditional Gothic tropes and create a sense of the uncanny by presenting something familiar, such as contemporary York, in an unfamiliar manner. The notable exception to this is a story aptly named ‘A Modern Ghost’ which Camidge features as a contrast to his more distantly historical ghosts, though he still introduces her as ‘a woman [who] lived some years ago’.<sup>164</sup> Though she is by his estimations a modern ghost, her story still exists in the past. He goes on to remark at the conclusion of her story that ‘she is credited with paying nightly visits to her old home... and every now and then revealing herself with charges of guilt’.<sup>165</sup> In this example the haunting is not suggested to also be in the past, but retains a sense of ongoing timelessness, although Camidge does stipulate that she visits ‘those who had assisted her in her wrong-doing’ suggesting that there is a potential time-frame on her existence as a ghost, and once the people in question have passed, she will cease to haunt the living.<sup>166</sup>

Not all of the stories told in *The Ghosts of York* are entirely vague in their historical reference, however. ‘The Funeral Ghost’ tells the story of Archbishop Scrope, who was executed by Henry IV in 1405. This particular story has a very strong basis in history, focusing on well-documented central characters. The story tells of the Archbishop being seen conducting his own funeral, stating that ‘the first thing falling on the sight of the seer was a coffin, suspended in air, and floating along easily, but slowly’.<sup>167</sup> Camidge states that ‘After his death a ghost was said to be seen in the neighbourhood, which appeared and re-appeared as the generations went by... within the present century people professed to witness this scene’.<sup>168</sup> Despite the specific origin of the ghost, Camidge’s construction of the ghost

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid, 15

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, 40

<sup>165</sup> Ibid

<sup>166</sup> Ibid

<sup>167</sup> Ibid, 17

<sup>168</sup> Ibid, 17-18

remains timeless, as he emphasizes that the hauntings were still taking place when the text was written. Similarly in ‘Two More Visitants’ Camidge recounts a story which originates in ‘about 1575, when beds were provided for the lodging of [the poor]’.<sup>169</sup> In this case the haunting seems to happen during a narrower time frame: ‘several young people died in the home, and to visit the sin upon the head of the master appeared nightly in batches of three or four or more’.<sup>170</sup> Due to the nature of the person being haunted, rather than the location in question, it could be assumed that the haunting would cease upon the death of that individual. Despite this Camidge goes on to state that ‘a time existed when persons of nervous temperament avoided that locality at night’ suggesting that some believed the haunting to have continued beyond that point.<sup>171</sup>

The only story in Camidge’s text that is more specific about the events of the haunting is ‘Another Church Ghost’ which varies significantly from the other narratives. Every other story is told in the third person, with a distinctively sceptical narrative voice. In ‘Another Church Ghost’, however, Camidge transcribes the contents of a letter – ‘this story came to [the Rev S. Baring Gould, M. A.] in the form of letters written to him about the time of the appearances’<sup>172</sup> which recounts the events in a first person narrative: ‘Whilst staying in York at this time last year (1865), or perhaps a little earlier, I first heard of the apparitions or ghosts supposed to be seen in . . . Church’.<sup>173</sup> The narrator of these letters repeatedly emphasizes the truth of the apparitions, stating ‘I emphatically declare I did see’ but ends his telling of his own experience with:<sup>174</sup> ‘Some clever performer... could in all probability throw considerable light on the appearances, and explain the whole of the mystery; but with

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid, 33

<sup>170</sup> Ibid

<sup>171</sup> Ibid

<sup>172</sup> Ibid, 26

<sup>173</sup> Ibid

<sup>174</sup> Ibid, 29

the performer, the ghosts have disappeared.’<sup>175</sup> The anonymous narrator is simultaneously convinced of what he has seen in the church, and sceptical of the existence of ghosts, though the conclusion to the story does seem to suggest that the whole thing was staged. Camidge interestingly chooses to divulge the name of the individual who received the letter transcribed here, but not who wrote it. As the letter was supposedly sent in the 1860s, and Camidge’s text was published in 1899, it is possible that this decision was dictated by concern for the individuals, or their families. There is, alternatively, the possibility that the letter is a fabrication written by Camidge and drawing on more contemporary Gothic styles in which the epistolary form was very popular (having been used by writers such as Mary Shelley and Bram Stoker). It is possible that Camidge consciously chose to present the text as a true history, much like *Castle of Otranto* does. That being said, Camidge was an author of numerous biographies and histories of York, so such narrative playfulness would be atypical of his writing.

The story told in ‘Another Church Ghost’ is also one of only a few narratives in Camidge’s collection that somewhat resembles popular ghost narratives which circulate in York today. The explanation given by the narrator for the appearances is as follows:

The father of the child seen on the window died in York, and was buried in the churchyard of the parish; that then during the plague the child dies, and was buried in the plague pit at Fulford, whence the mother went daily to lament o’er the dead child’s grave, that on the death of the mother she was buried in the churchyard and that weekly she fetches the child to see the father’s grave<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 30

<sup>176</sup> Ibid, 29-30

This story resembles one recorded in both *The Ghost Walk of York* and the *Horrible Histories* series by Terry Deary:

The plague came to York many times. They say a father died of plague and was buried in Holy Trinity Church. But when his child died of plague a new law said victims had to be buried outside the city walls. His wife died of a broken heart and was buried next to her husband. I've seen her restless ghost wander through the graveyard looking for her lost child. Sometimes she meets the child and hugs it, but is forced to walk back to her grave, weeping and waving goodbye.<sup>177</sup>

Though the stories vary slightly in their accounts of the haunting, the origins are the same, and it is likely that ghost stories such as this one would evolve and gather accretions over the space of more than a century due to the nature of oral history and myths and legends. The majority of Camidge's stories have not been found recorded elsewhere, which brings up questions about the legitimacy and reliability of narrator. The narrative voice used by Camidge is sceptical, and these stories are not written for the purposes of generating tourism. As previously mentioned, there is the possibility that *The Ghosts of York* is in fact a collection of fictional narratives purporting to have an authentic popular provenance, much like *Castle of Otranto*, although the nature of Camidge's other works suggests that this is unlikely. It is more probable that the text is intended as a historical account of York's hauntings, but that these specific tales have, for the most part, fallen out of popularity.

*The Ghost Walk Of York* (1984) by Brendan Foley approaches York's ghosts quite differently from Camidge. Considering that the Ghost Tour market is a tourist industry, these accounts tend to focus on very specific locations which can be visited within the city. As Emma McEvoy states that 'however much [ghost walks] might play to generic

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<sup>177</sup> Terry Deary, *Horrible Histories: York* (London: Scholastic Children's Books, 2005): 80

expectations... [they] never failed to leave me with the sense that it is somehow intrinsic and special to this town.<sup>178</sup> York in particular is home to numerous ghost walks including *The Original Ghost Walk of York*, founded in 1973, which claims to be ‘the first exclusive Ghost Walk in the World!’<sup>179</sup> It is this burgeoning market which Foley’s *The Ghost Walk of York* capitalises on, portraying itself as a guidebook to some of the most popular haunted locations in the city.

One such example is the Bedern Arch story – a popular tale on Ghost Walks which has been recorded by Brendan Foley: ‘In the reign of good Queen Victoria the York Industrial Ragged School at Bedern was not a place that people visited willingly’.<sup>180</sup> Foley’s introduction to the story not only gives a specific location which can still be found in York today, he also specifies a time period and the type of space it once was, in this case an Industrial Ragged School. The specificity of his account connects this particular story both historically and geographically to a recognisable space, constructing a real life chronotope in which the story takes place. Foley accentuates the Gothicness of this space at the end of his story stating that ‘the laughter of long dead children may be heard echoing through the old archway of Bedern’.<sup>181</sup> This ties the historical setting of the story to the modern day haunting. This weaving together of the past with the present is a common trope of Gothic literature, as seen in *Wuthering Heights*, but where Emily Brontë’s haunting is vague and unspecified in its exact location, the story of Bedern Arch is very specific, owing to the growing trend of ghost tourism in York. As this text was produced almost a century after *The Ghosts of York*, this difference in attitude is likely a reflection of the time in which each text was written. From around the early 1970s, Ghost tourism has been a growing industry, and it remains popular

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<sup>178</sup> Emma McEvoy, *Gothic Tourism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016) accessed 10 July 2020, <https://www.dawsonera.com/readonline/9781137391292/startPage/120/1> :107

<sup>179</sup> *The Original Ghost Walk of York* accessed 10 July 2020 <https://www.theoriginalghostwalkofyork.co.uk/>

<sup>180</sup> Brendan Foley, *The Ghost Walk of York*, 14

<sup>181</sup> Ibid

today. ‘The Original Ghost Walk of York’ claims on its website that it was ‘established before 1973 and was an original creation believed to be the first in the world.’<sup>182</sup> Michelle Hanks writes that ‘While many analysts of modernity anticipated a decline in belief in ghosts due to secularization and the popularization of science, this has not happened’.<sup>183</sup> An Ipsos poll published on 31 October 2007 states that 38% of Britons believe in ghosts, whilst only 37% of respondents considered themselves to be religious.<sup>184</sup> Despite roughly two in five people claiming to believe in ghosts, Hanks suggests that the popularity of ghost walks does not rely on a firm belief in ghosts: ‘Tourists do not see their taking a ghost walk as an implication of their internal beliefs in a meaningful way’.<sup>185</sup> She remarks that one participant whom she spoke to stated that ‘Just because I don’t believe in ghosts doesn’t mean I don’t want to hear a few ghost stories’.<sup>186</sup> This places the focus of these ghost tours on their narrative elements, rather than on their ability to portray a ‘truth’. Whilst ghost walks often include true historical elements and facts about the city, the stories serve more of an entertaining purpose than an informative one, though each walk does vary. Some ghost walks are more theatrical and lean very heavily into the comedic and entertaining side of ghost stories, whilst other tours are more of an engaging medium through which to relay the dark history of the city.

Due to the nature of ghost tourism York’s ghost stories are now far more specific in their locality, and are quite often related to modern sites which can be visited. In 1899, however, nothing like this existed, and Camidge specifically wanted to prevent his readers attempting to visit the sites of the hauntings which he recorded. This lack of a distinct

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<sup>182</sup> ‘The Original Ghost Walk Of York’, *The Original Ghost Walk of York*, 2019, accessed July 15, 2019, <http://www.theoriginalghostwalkofyork.co.uk/about.html>

<sup>183</sup> Michelle Hanks, *Haunted Heritage: The Cultural Politics of Ghost Tourism, Populism, and the Past* (California: Left Coast Press Inc., 2015): 18

<sup>184</sup> Ipsos MORI and Ben Schott, *Survey on Beliefs*, Ipsos, 2007, accessed Aug 7, 2019, <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/survey-beliefs>

<sup>185</sup> Michelle Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*: 83

<sup>186</sup> Ibid

relationship between narrative and space in Camidge's accounts highlights the different purposes of these two texts. Whilst *The Ghost Walk of York* is specifically aimed at the tourist market, and focuses on a populist approach to storytelling, *The Ghosts of York* is more academic in its accounts, taking the historical approach. Considering these two distinct approaches to ghost narratives, it is interesting that the more historical account chooses to leave out numerous historical details, regarding time and place, which are included in the more popular narratives. This is perhaps due to Camidge's own scepticism causing him to leave out details which might suggest any truth in the narratives. The heritage-based approach to ghost stories also serves to reflect contemporary, as well as historical attitudes about belief and tradition. The way that these stories are reimagined in popular culture and modern folklore says just as much about the consumers of these stories, as it does about the characters within them. Ghost walks are meant to be somewhat informative, and there is an increased level of credibility when ghost stories are interweaved with history, providing a certain form of access to the past. Michele Hanks remarks that 'The National Trust, who now owns the Treasurer's House, presented Martindale's encounters [of the Roman Soldiers] as a way of making the Roman past engaging and fun to the public.'<sup>187</sup> The existence of ghost walks as a form of heritage informs the way that these stories are treated and the way in which they are told. These stories are simultaneously informative and historical, whilst also being an entertaining and intriguing method of understanding periods of history. Hanks goes on to state that 'A ghost walk guide pointed to the story as a means of critiquing the authority of archaeological researchers and heritage officials... it signified that anyone could unearth new information about the past through encounters with the ghostly.'<sup>188</sup> Hanks argues that ghost

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<sup>187</sup> Ibid, 12

<sup>188</sup> Ibid

walks break down barriers between ordinary people and historians by presenting heritage in a more affordable and accessible way.

In the Gothic narratives set in York, the city's history plays an important part in setting the backdrop for these stories. As aforementioned, the story about Bedern Arch specifically places itself both geographically and historically, and originates with the true story of George Pimm, the master of the York Industrial Ragged School, and the children who died in his care. By rooting stories in true history, their credibility increases thus constructing a sense of terror. Another story rooted in York's history is 'Mal-Beast – York's Own Golem' by Chris Firth. The story opens with the rhyme;

Twixt a high gate and a low gate

Where Earth meets the sky

In view of cross and Holy Rose

You'll find Mal-Beast's eye<sup>189</sup>

The rhyme specifies a location within York which is fairly easy to decipher, where the Mal-Beast's eye is supposedly kept. Firth, having introduced the concept of the Mal-Beast goes on to tell of its origins: 'Jazeb Jonahs, a Jew of York, fled after surviving the terrible atrocities committed in York at the castle around Cliffords Tower in the month of March in the year 1190'.<sup>190</sup> Though Firth does adapt history for dramatic effect in his narrative, by basing his story in a real, historical event he blurs the line between history and legend to create a narrative that is believable and therefore shocking. If this story was incorporated into a ghost walk, it would also offer in insight into the true history of the city and become part of the city's heritage. Hanks states that 'Ghosts, like many forms of heritage, reveal more about

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<sup>189</sup> Chris Firth, "Mal-Beast – York's Own Golem", *Ghost Stories From Whitby – The Mulgrave Tales* (Whitby: Electraglade Press, 2015): 70

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 71-72

the social world that produces them than the historical era from which they originate'.<sup>191</sup> In the case of the Mal-Beast the story reflects post World War Two anxieties regarding York's anti-Semitic past. Ghost stories often illuminate elements of history which might otherwise be left out and preserve some of the more unpleasant events of history, such as the massacre of the Jews at Cliffords Tower in 1190.

As previously mentioned, there is one notable indoor location which features in a number of York's ghost walks. Included in *The Ghost Walk of York*, this narrative offers a more specific indoor setting in the city of York than Camidge does in any of his stories, 'the cellars of the Treasurer's House'.<sup>192</sup> Immediately this story asserts a recognisable location within the city walls, both establishing itself as distinctly urban in setting, whilst also recognisably Yorkshire. Foley goes on to give further details about the cellar, describing the 'thick' and 'solid' cellar walls to suggest a dark, cool, and distinctly urban indoor setting, also using York's history to further establish the story as specifically belonging to the Yorkshire Gothic canon: 'it is now known that the Treasurer's house was built on top of a Roman road.'<sup>193</sup> Despite this, the relationship between indoor and outdoor spaces in York's Ghost Walk culture is distinctly different from other accounts of ghosts. Though it is possible to visit the cellar of the Treasurer's House during the day, Michelle Hanks comments that on Ghost Walks 'Guides lead visitors from the setting of one story to another, but tourists are never able to access the interior of these sites. The city centre of York acts as an atmospheric setting for ghost stories.'<sup>194</sup> This segregation between the interior hauntings and the exterior ghost walk creates a barrier between the two Gothic spaces, with ghost walks generally relying on York's medieval streets to create an atmospheric setting, rather than any genuine

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<sup>191</sup> Michelle Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*, 16

<sup>192</sup> Brendan Foley, *The Ghost Walk of York*, 9

<sup>193</sup> Ibid

<sup>194</sup> Michelle Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*, 80

proximity to the haunted space. Hanks goes on to suggest that this division between the interior and exterior is due to the casual nature of ghost walks as an activity: ‘Visiting the Ghost Cellar [at the Treasurer’s House] entails a larger degree of commitment than participating on a ghost walk.’<sup>195</sup> Ghost Walks in York usually last no more than ninety minutes, and are a relatively cheap evening activity, usually costing between £5 and £10. This casual attitude towards the Ghost Walks is reflected in the stories told on these walks, as well as in the way such stories are relayed by guides.

In the stories from *The Ghost Walk of York* claims are made about the enduring presence of the events narrated: ‘Even now, many honest and reputable people claim that the laughter of long dead children may be heard’.<sup>196</sup> Though these stories may be related to a specific historical period, such as Roman or Victorian, the haunting itself is often depicted as timeless in order to increase the fear factor. The purpose of ghost stories told on these walks is to frighten and entertain tourists visiting York, which is best achieved when the ghosts are supposedly still lurking. These stories weave the past with the present. As Michelle Hanks comments ‘[Ghost Hunters]’ understanding of historicity and hauntedness was tied closely to visual anachronisms’.<sup>197</sup> The presence of something or someone from a distinctly ‘other’ time period existing in modern day York is what makes York itself a part of the Yorkshire Gothic. Whether that be the Roman soldiers marching through a 1950’s cellar, or figures in Victorian clothes roaming the streets, York by its very nature is a perfect backdrop for ghost narratives due to its anachronistic juxtaposition of old and new. The city centre is full of high street shops occupying distinctly old buildings, creating striking visual contrasts between the modern shop fronts and the historic architecture. One example of this is on the Shambles. What was once a dark and narrow alley claimed as one of the many spots haunted by the

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid, p. 81

<sup>196</sup> Brendan Foley, *The Ghost Walk of York*, 14

<sup>197</sup> Michelle Hanks, *Haunted Heritage*, 147

Barghest – ‘A large black phantom dog with red eyes, said to prowl the Shambles preying on strangers. But we think he’s just misunderstood.’ – is now populated by numerous Harry Potter themed shops and remains brightly lit throughout the night.<sup>198</sup> York is both a historic city and modern town centre, and it is the combination of these two worlds coexisting that adds to its Gothic reputation.

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<sup>198</sup> Barghest Gifts of York, 2019, accessed Aug 7, 2019, <https://www.barghestgiftsyork.co.uk/>

## **Conclusion**

When we consider the idea of a ‘Yorkshire Gothic’, we might first of all think of *Dracula* or *Wuthering Heights*; novels which have been considered alongside numerous other mainstream Gothic works over the years. These are foundational texts in the Yorkshire Gothic canon, but as I have tried to demonstrate in this dissertation, we need to discuss them alongside Yorkshire’s rich folklore, and the oral tradition of ghost stories which still endures within the city of York. As I have argued here, it is the county’s distinctive combination of varied geography and deep history that has helped to generate a ‘Yorkshire Gothic’ tradition which brings together literary heritage and folkloric culture. The congeniality of Yorkshire for the Gothic imagination rests in the way in which diverse sites and spaces so vividly display traces of the past which solicit our attention.

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