



Cappadocia University

School of Graduate Studies and Research

Department of English Language and Literature

**THE GOTHIC-FEMINIST CRITIQUES OF SOCIETY
THROUGH THE *NORTHANGER ABBEY* STORY**

Belgin UÇAN

Master's Thesis

Nevşehir, 2025

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KABUL VE ONAY

Belgin Uan tarafından hazırlanan “The Gothic-Feminist Critiques Of Society Through The *Northanger Abbey* Story” başlıklı bu alıřma, 21.02.2025 tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda başarılı bulunarak jürimiz tarafından Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Barış Ağır (Bařkan)

Do. Dr. Sinan Akıllı (Danıřman)

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Ömer Fatih Parlak (Üye)

Yukarıdaki imzaların adı geen öğretim üyelerine ait olduğunu onaylarım.

Do. Dr. Sinan Akıllı
Enstitü Müdürü

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my thesis supervisor, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sinan Akıllı. His patience, support, and encouragement throughout this journey have been invaluable. This thesis would not have been possible without his mentorship and guidance.

I am thankful to the jury head, Assist. Prof. Dr. Ömer Fatih Parlak, and the jury member Assist. Prof. Dr. Barış Ağır. Even with their busy schedules, their readiness to dedicate time to review my thesis, along with their essential constructive feedback, thoughtful recommendations, and questions during the defense, has greatly improved and enhanced the quality of my work.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my family. To my father, Mahmut Serdar Uçan, my mother, Sevgi Uçan, and my sister, Berra Uçan, who have consistently supported me with their unwavering love. Additionally, I want to offer my heartfelt thanks to my grandfather, Mehdi Uçan, and my entire extended family, whose belief in my abilities has driven me to stay motivated and excited throughout this research. Your faith in me has been my source of strength, and I dedicate this work to all of you.

ABSTRACT

UÇAN, Belgin. *The Gothic-Feminist Critiques of Society through the Northanger Abbey Story*, Master's Thesis, Nevşehir, 2025.

This thesis will demonstrate how the Gothic genre allows for the inclusion of feminist criticism through a Gothic-feminist viewpoint in 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story,' with reference to Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* (2014), and ultimately encourages women to be more confident and stronger. In this respect, the study aims to reveal the manner in which women's wants and anticipations are controlled in both the literary and social realms by combining feminist criticism with Gothic customs. Both novels centre on encouraging readers to rethink what is possible for women's sentimental and logical autonomy. Thus, the introductory chapter explores the birth of the Gothic novel in the eighteenth century, as well as the elements of the Gothic and the Gothic parody in 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story.' The feminist criticism and its relation with the Gothic compare 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story' in terms of the Gothic and feminist critique, and reinterpret Austen's era with the modern era through this critique. The first chapter will analyse 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story' with a special focus on the Gothic representation and the Gothic parody of the setting in the novels under study. The second chapter will focus on feminist critique and the Gothic conflicts, as well as interpreting the Gothic features as expressions of women's oppression and how the oppression is reflected to acts and thoughts of the characters in the selected novels. After analysing the novels, the study will conclude by offering insights about the different aspects of the Gothic genre and its feminist critique, and how it enriches the understanding of the role of women and the expectation from women in two different eras. The conclusion will emphasize literature's permanent capacity to provoke Gothic nightmares as well as feminist dreams, allowing readers with a sense of critique and possibility.

Keywords: Gothic literature, feminist critique, the Victorian era, *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen, Val McDermid.

ÖZET

UÇAN, Belgin. *Northanger Manastırı Öyküsü Üzerinden Toplumun Gotik-Feminist Eleştirileri*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Nevşehir, 2025.

Bu tez, Gotik türün, Jane Austen'ın *Northanger Manastırı* (1817) ve Val McDermid'in *Northanger Manastırı* (2014) adlı eserlerine referansla, '*Northanger Manastırı* Hikâyesi'nde gotik-feminist bir bakış açısıyla feminist eleştiriye nasıl yer verdiğini ve nihayetinde kadınları daha özgüvenli ve güçlü olmaya nasıl teşvik ettiğini gösterecektir. Bu bağlamda çalışma feminist eleştiriye gotik geleneklerle birleştirerek kadınların istek ve beklentilerinin hem edebi hem de toplumsal alanda nasıl kontrol edildiğini ortaya koymayı amaçlamaktadır. Her iki roman da okuyucuları, kadınların duygusal ve mantıksal özerkliği için neyin mümkün olduğunu yeniden düşünmeye teşvik etmeye odaklanır. Bu nedenle, Giriş Bölümü, Gotik romanın on sekizinci yüzyılda doğuşunu ve '*Northanger Manastırı* Hikâyesi'ndeki Gotik ve Gotik parodi unsurlarını incelemektedir. Feminist eleştiri ve bu eleştirinin Gotik ile olan ilişkisi '*Northanger Manastırı* Hikâyesi'ni Gotik ve feminist eleştiri açısından karşılaştırılmakta ve Austen'ın dönemini bu eleştiri üzerinden modern çağ ile yeniden yorumlanmaktadır. Birinci Bölüm, '*Northanger Manastırı* Hikâyesi'ni, incelenen romanlardaki Gotik temsil ve ortamın Gotik parodisine özel bir odaklanma ile analiz etmektedir. İkinci Bölüm, feminist eleştiri ve Gotik çatışmaların yanı sıra Gotik özelliklerin kadınların ezilmişliğinin ifadesi olarak yorumlanmasına ve bu ezilmişliğin seçilen romanlardaki karakterlerin eylem ve düşüncelerine nasıl yansıdığına odaklanmaktadır. Bu romanların analizinin ardından çalışma, Gotik türün farklı yönleri ve feminist eleştirisi ile iki farklı dönemde kadınların rolü ve kadınlardan beklentilerin anlaşılmasını nasıl zenginleştirdiği hakkında içgörüler sunarak sonuçlandırılacaktır. Sonuç Bölümü edebiyatın gotik kâbusları ve feminist rüyaları kışkırtma konusundaki kalıcı kapasitesini vurgulayacak ve okuyuculara bir eleştiri ve olasılık duygusu verecektir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Gotik edebiyat, feminist eleştiri, Viktorya dönemi, *Northanger Manastırı*, Jane Austen, Val McDermid.

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INTRODUCTION

During Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901), the Gothic genre, which had its birth in the late eighteenth century, found fertile ground for development. The desire for the past took the form of a preoccupation with the mysterious, the grotesque, and the supernatural. With the retrospective Gothic enthusiasm of the early Victorian era, many writers retreated into a backward-looking world of sentiment, chivalry, and terror, often inspired by Ann Radcliffe and Walter Scott's mediaeval Gothic (Thompson). The most popular writer of Gothic stories, Ann Radcliffe, made significant contributions to the Gothic genre. She turned the Gothic book from a thrilling supernatural story into an intelligent investigation of suspense, dread, and psychology. Her work influenced many other Gothic writers, including Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*, and Jane Austen, who parodied the Gothic in *Northanger Abbey*. Moreover, one of the most influential historical writers, Sir Walter Scott, was also popular with his relation to medieval Gothic. The historical background, romantic ruins, mystical aspects, gloomy surroundings, and historical focus were characteristics of his medieval Gothic style. His Gothic tales were frequently set in abandoned castles and abbeys during the Middle Ages, a time known for mystery, mysticism, and the supernatural. Thus, the rise of interest in Gothic literature in the Victorian era was motivated by a fascination with the grotesque and the enigmatic, as well as a yearning for the past. Ann Radcliffe and Sir Walter Scott were the writers who had a significant influence on the rise of Gothic literature in the Victorian era.

The main aim of returning to the past was the desire to escape the Victorian era's intense industrialisation and social upheaval. By withdrawing into a romanticised past, writers explored issues of loss, nostalgia, and the dread of development. There was a rising fascination throughout this era with exploring the subconscious and the unknown through the attraction of the supernatural and the unusual. The fascination with the Middle Ages is seen in the enigmatic, extravagant, and terrifying writings of Radcliffe and Scott.

A 'Gothick' novel or "romance," as Fred Botting appropriately defined it, is "an invented amalgam of pre-Enlightenment forms" (Botting 199). Written in England in the

late eighteenth or early nineteenth century, it features a complex and sensational plot set in pre-Reformation England or the Continent, with themes of incest, illicit passion, murder, and ghosts or things that look like ghosts. All of these elements are wrapped up in the oppressive space of an old abbey, castle, or ancestral home—a classic Gothic space linked to an oppressive past that usually ends in flames. So, this genre is characterised by a sense of mystery, suspense, and fear. It frequently draws influence from Gothic architecture, which has dark, massive structures and a sense of history. There are several key aspects of Gothic literature. The first one concerns the setting. Gothic stories take place in ancient castles, decaying monasteries, or distant landscapes, creating a sense of isolation and vulnerability. Another notable feature of Gothic is the use of supernatural elements. Gothic literature incorporates ghosts, vampires, werewolves, and curses, blurring the boundaries between reality and the unknown. The goal of Gothic fiction is to create tension; and dread is also an important component. Writers use darkness, secret passages, and frightening foreshadowing to keep readers curious. Gothic fiction explores the dark and monstrous, both literally (through monsters) and symbolically (through villains or social concerns). Horace Walpole's 1764 masterpiece, *The Castle of Otranto*, is considered the first example of British Gothic literature. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), written by Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) are three novels which are regarded as the foundational works of the Gothic horror genre, having had a significant effect on literature and popular culture. First, Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) is often regarded as refining the Gothic novel traditions. It has a grasping the plot, evocative setting, and focusses on psychological terror instead of explicit violence or supernatural themes. Radcliffe's influence may be observed in many subsequent Gothic books, including *Frankenstein* and *Dracula*. Secondly, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818) explores issues of scientific ambition, creation and destruction, and the essence of humanity. It is regarded as one of the first science fiction books, and has been adapted several times for cinema, television, and other media. *Frankenstein* continues to captivate readers today, raising concerns about the ethical implications of scientific advancement and the risks of unrestrained ambition. In addition, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897) popularised the classic picture of the vampire and established many of the traditions associated with the monster, such as fangs, aversion to sunlight, and immortality. *Dracula* also has aspects of suspense,

horror, and adventure, and its study of topics such as dread of the unknown and the spread of diseases has made it a timeless classic.

Gothic literature, with its emphasis on the dark and terrible, usually exploits a pathos effect to heighten the reader's emotional connection and create a lasting impression. Using the pathos effect in Gothic literature creates the emotional manipulation and exploitation of the reader's worries and concerns in order to elicit sentiments of sympathy, dread, and suspense. However, what may be called the *pathos* effect has not been the sole consequence of Gothic literature and, thus, its critical appreciation. Feminist critics use the Gothic genre to show the limitations put on women in Victorian society and analyse Gothic literature through the lens of gender and power dynamics. For example, the damsels in distress imprisoned in deteriorating mansions represent the limits put on Victorian women who are restricted to the domestic realm. Males are the superior power in the patriarchal society that strives to regulate feminine behaviour and sexuality. Furthermore, feminist critics investigate how female protagonists in Gothic stories defy these limits. A powerless heroine who escapes from imprisonment or overcomes a villain is interpreted as a rebellion against societal expectations and a celebration of female autonomy.

One of the most prominent British writers of the Victorian era, Jane Austen, was born on the sixteenth of December in 1775, in Steventon, United Kingdom, and died on the eighteenth of July in 1817, in Winchester, United Kingdom. She constructed the status of women in the Victorian era in the first chapter of her novel *Northanger Abbey* (1817) as follows: "If adventures will not befall a young lady in her own village, she must seek them abroad" (Austen 11). In this respect, the aim of this thesis is to reveal the manner in which women's wants and anticipations are controlled and used in both the literary and social realms with reference to both feminist criticism and Gothic customs. This thesis will comprehensively examine and compare the representations of the Gothic and its feminist critique in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* (2014) within the framework of adaptation studies since McDermid's novel is an intra-medial adaptation of Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. Both novels centre on encouraging readers to rethink what is possible for women's sentimental and logical autonomy. The primary objectives of the study include revealing how the duties and

responsibilities of being a woman in the Victorian period were expressed through the Gothic genre. Jane Austen uses the Gothic genre as a parody, aiming to show the restrictions of society on women in *Northanger Abbey*. Val McDermid uses the Gothic genre, adding some contemporary examples of Jane Austen's work about the role and place of women in the modern age. Through this comparative study, which emphasises the similarities and differences between primary focusses and narrative techniques within the frame of the Gothic and its feminist critique, this thesis seeks to contribute insights into the ways these novels engage with the Gothic and its feminist critique of the place, the role, and the expectations of women in society in two different historical periods and cultural contexts.

This study will also contribute to a deeper understanding of how the Gothic genre is represented in these works in various ways. The analysis offered in this study is combined with a feminist critique of the existing social order, which was an important issue for the Victorian period. The restrictive expectations that were placed on women in Austen's day, particularly with regard to marriage, domesticity, and intellectual pursuits, are portrayed in 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story,'¹ and despite historical changes, some societal concerns about female agency and social expectations are still relevant in our day. With the support of Gothic parody, these concerns can be compared to contemporary feminist issues through an analysis of Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey*.

As it can be seen in the novels, the main character, Catherine, is a dreamer, and she loves reading novels. Since she spends most of her time reading Gothic novels, she imagines unreal events in *Northanger Abbey* and begins to view the events taking place there as mysterious and suspicious. Since her family raised her according to the female role that would meet the expectations of the society, Catherine has not been able to experience the real world very much, and her dreamy behaviour is underestimated and ignored by her male friends. However, thanks to the character of Catherine, these novels aim to destroy women's dependence and the strict attitudes of society towards women and also reveal the necessity of expressing their thoughts freely. The novels emphasise the idea that women should use their imagination and express their opinions freely. They

¹ The phrase refers to the cliché story first introduced by Austen and survived via various adaptations as a recognizable and distinct story.

should live for themselves, moving away from the requirements of the roles determined by society, and not allow themselves to be trivialised by accepting any restrictions just because they are women. So, attention is drawn to the importance and necessity of women standing on their own two feet and being free to express their opinions.

The aim of both Jane Austen's and Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* stories is to depict women achieving independence in two distinct historical periods. Since the goal of both Jane Austen's timeless classic and Val McDermid's contemporary adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* is to depict women's quest for independence within their own historical contexts, the rise of Gothic literature in Britain offers a rich background against which these stories take place.

The study hypothesises that by playfully subverting Gothic conventions, 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story' emphasises the challenges that women encounter in everyday life rather than in supernatural realms, demonstrating their absurdity and using satire and humour to criticise social norms about women through the perspectives of the Victorian era and today's England.

With the help of the comparative study of these novels, which intends to examine different aspects of the Gothic genre and its feminist critique through the perspective of adaptation, this thesis will enrich understanding across the roles of women and the expectations of women in two different eras. First, an exploration of the Gothic genre and its feminist critique will be presented in the next section.

The Gothic genre, which incorporates aspects of dread, the supernatural, and the uncanny, connects well with Victorian anxieties and societal limitations. The Gothic, with its investigation of the grotesque and the suppressed, gives perfect ground for the fears to emerge. Female characters, who were formerly limited to the domestic realm, rise to prominence in Gothic fiction. Their confinement in dark houses, lonely settings, or restrictive social circles reflects the limits put on women in Victorian society. Furthermore, Gothic novels frequently address the themes of feminine imprisonment and the struggle for autonomy. Their efforts for freedom and self-preservation are similar to the simmering desire for greater gender equality in Victorian society. The Gothic genre gives a unique opportunity for female authors to question accepted norms. Using the

genre's traditions, they are able to examine issues of female oppression, suppressed voices, and the constraints put on women's lives in a way that resonates with many readers. The Gothic and feminist critiques of the Victorian Era are inextricably linked. Female authors use the genre's dark undercurrents to shed light on the shadows of patriarchy, leaving a literary legacy that remains popular with readers today.

Gothic literature, which has its roots in the second half of the eighteenth century, provides an opportunity for examining themes of agency, identity, and autonomy while reflecting the social unrest and cultural changes of the period. This genre provides an engaging lens through which to look at how women's roles and aspirations have changed over time in various historical eras. It is distinguished by its mysterious location and examination of the darker sides of human nature. Examining the complicated nature of Gothic literature allows us to better understand the timeless appeal and relevance of stories that examine female independence against the backdrop of social norms and limitations.

Gothic literature represents a captivating combination of historical, cultural, and literary influences, leading to a genre that keeps captivating audiences worldwide. It was a reaction to the Enlightenment's rationalism and the rapid changes of the Industrial Revolution, as writers sought to investigate the darker aspects of human nature and society. Gothic literature, with its fearful and gloomy settings, supernatural elements, and emphasis on emotion and the dark side, ushered in a new era of storytelling that still captivates readers with its blend of horror, mystery, and romance.

Gothic novels were particularly denigrated as sexist considering their supposedly immoral and often dark content as well as their extraordinary appeals, especially to female readers (Davison 2). As the statement implies, Gothic novels face criticism for their gloomy themes, which are viewed as immoral and appealing to corrupted tastes, particularly among female readers. This critique is intensified by the genre's popularity among women, who are charged with both producing and reading these potentially destructive literary works. Stereotypical beliefs about Gothic writings and their alleged moral decay result from this unfavourable view.

Consequently, Gothic literature is portrayed as a potentially harmful cultural force

that poses a special threat to society's moral structure, with women at the heart of this moral panic. The confusion surrounding the relationship between Victorian society's ideals and the Gothic style grows even more.

The Victorian age, which is linked with proper conduct and advancement, nevertheless witnessed a strong obsession with the terrifying and the dark. This obsession resulted in the creation of Gothic literature based on suspense, dread, and the investigation of the strange. While the roots of Gothic literature originated earlier in the eighteenth century, the genre fully bloomed throughout the Victorian era, and Ann Radcliffe, an outstanding novelist, deserves a significant amount of the honour. Though some critics criticise the Gothic genre for appealing to evil delight, Ann Radcliffe stands out as a force to be attributed to in this regard, changing minds and elevating the genre's standing with her skill at uncertainty, psychological depth, and expressing the dilemma of female sexuality. The fact that Radcliffe creates a fictitious language and a set of norms that allow "respectable" feminine sexuality to exist makes her accomplishment all the more impressive (Wolff 98). Hence, the Gothic story affirms a woman's perception of herself as fundamentally a sexual being, a notion that society has frequently struggled to disprove (Wolff 99). Therefore, in contrast to the picaresque form, which has evolved along with the societal excesses it aims to highlight, the Radcliffian Gothic model has endured largely unaltered, nearly to the point of becoming a cultural myth (Wolff 98). Radcliffe's inventive use of suspense and psychological investigation altered the Gothic genre, taking it to a more intellectual level despite the genre's criticised drive to sensationalism. Contrary to some of her fellow writers who revelled in outright brutality, Radcliffe excelled at building fear via suspense, ambiguity, and hints of otherworldly powers. Radcliffe's heroines, generally young and decent women pushed into terrible situations, became famous personalities. They exhibited both fragility and strength as they navigated the hazards of collapsed castles, pursued enigmatic characters, and confronted terrifying enemies. These heroines allowed readers, particularly women, to investigate issues of agency, terror, and the power of logic in the face of the unknown. According to Donna Heiland, what makes Radcliffe's works so successfully feminist is her ability to endow her female characters with agency in the public sphere (quoted in Zlotnick 279). As Walter Scott called Radcliffe a "mighty enchantress" (Flood), comparing her with the other Gothic writers of the same era, she is regarded as a pioneer of Gothic fiction.

Essentially, Ann Radcliffe revolutionised the Gothic fiction genre and established her status as a pioneer with her emphasis on psychological depth, suspense, and strong female heroines who demonstrated amazing agency. Her writings had a profound effect on Gothic literature and beyond, captivating readers with their evocative locations and captivating narratives while providing a forum for the exploration of difficult issues of gender, power, and the human psyche.

Radcliffe was not only successful in her time but also inspired Jane Austen, one of the leading writers of the Victorian era. One of Radcliffe's most popular novels, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which created enormous success during Radcliffe's lifetime, also became a subject of mockery, as demonstrated by Jane Austen's satire *Northanger Abbey*, which cleverly parodied the Gothic clichés that Radcliffe had made popular. Austen gently mocks the bizarre storylines and heightened emotions that are common in Radcliffe's novels and also uses the implications of this tradition to portray different aspects of Catherine Morland's teenage awakening, even in spite of the liberties she takes (Wolff 105).

Austen's use of suspense and a hint of the strange reveals a greater grasp for the genre's possibilities. Radcliffe's popularity paved the way for the Gothic's investigation in *Northanger Abbey*, which Austen uses as an umbrella for social critique and humorous observation.

To turn to the elements of the Gothic, the work's ability to reveal social anxieties is a result of the stereotypes' own grotesque character and feelings of awkwardness. In 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story,' which includes Austen's nineteenth-century *Northanger Abbey* with oppressive Victorian attitudes and McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* with modern but hard-headed views, the "unmasking of social anxieties" (Milbank 77) is demonstrated through the use of the Gothic genre. Because women should fulfil the requirements of their roles that society expects of them as females. For her piece, Austen uses the title *Northanger Abbey*, and she takes inspiration from the Northanger novels and rewrites "North Anger" with the Gothic genre not because she does not agree with her sister authors (Gilbert and Gubar 135) on women's self-assurances, but because she feels women have been imprisoned more effectively by miseducation than by walls and by more financial dependency (135). The Northanger novels are Gothic novels that were

popular in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These books typically feature dark and mysterious settings, supernatural aspects, and intriguing plots, and they are mentioned by the protagonist, Catherine Morland in Jane Austen's novel *Northanger Abbey*. Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* and *Udolpho*, which served as Jane Austen's inspiration for *Northanger Abbey*, are listed in the Northanger novels. *Castle of Wolfenbach* (Eliza Parsons 1793), *Clermont* (Regina Maria Roche 1798), *The Mysterious Warning* (Eliza Parsons 1796), *The Necromancer* (Karl Friedrich Kahlert using the pseudonym Lawrence Flammenber 1794), *The Midnight Bell* (Francis Lathom 1798), *Orphan of the Rhine* (Eleanor Sleath 1798), and *Horrid Mysteries* (Carl Grosse 1796) are among the Northanger novels too. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Radcliffe is satirised in Austen's novel *Northanger Abbey*, in which a naive young woman comes to see her acquaintances and friends as victims and Gothic villains and ends with a satirical result.

The Gothic genre, famous for its weird ambiance and study of its dreaded aspect, offers an intriguing subgenre: the female Gothic. When examined, this term, which is controversial and reveals a number of recurrent storylines authored by female authors and was also particularly popular during the Victorian era, is authored by female authors and involves heroines who confront issues of societal limitations, worries about femininity, and the defiance of gender rules and regulations, all wrapped within a shroud of tension and dread. The phrase was created by Ellen Moers, who alludes to the works of Ann Radcliffe, one of its pioneers, whose heroines are "simultaneously persecuted victims and courageous heroines" (Mulvey-Roberts 98). The female Gothic is highly significant for many different reasons. One of the initial reasons is to provide a forum for female authors during a period when their views were frequently marginalised. Using the Gothic framework, writers were able to investigate issues that questioned the existing status, including female captivity in the context of domesticity, social standards about marriage and sexuality, and the oppressive silence of women's voices. The destroying castles and silent settings reflected the sense of confinement under societal standards. Mystical components may be viewed as representations of the threats women confronted, which included unwelcome approaches or cultural demands to meet. Furthermore, the heroines' trips might be considered a type of protest since their real and psychological getaways from imprisonment provide readers with an awareness of autonomy. The female Gothic keeps going to be popular among readers presently.

Modern interpretations address similar topics but use a clearer feminist perspective. For example, Bram Stoker's well-known vampire story *Dracula* has been adapted many times; films such as *Dracula* (1992) maintain the essential aspects of the novel while presenting it in a contemporary environment. The Gothic horror classic *Dracula* by Bram Stoker is full of the archetypal elements of the genre, such as ominous castles, paranormal horrors, and a menacing, enigmatic anti-hero. Despite being essential to the story, the female characters in the book are mostly reduced to passive positions as objects of desire or victims. For example, Mina Murray turns into a struggle between the demonic powers trying to save her and Dracula's predatory instincts. The patriarchal standards of the Victorian era, in which women were frequently portrayed as weak and in need of male care, are reinforced by this dynamic. However, the 1992 film adaptation, directed by Francis Ford Coppola, presents a more modern and detailed view of female characters. It adds a feminist viewpoint while preserving Stoker's novel's central plot and Gothic ambiance. A bigger part is given to Mina, who is recast as Elisabeta, Dracula's fallen love. She is now a complex woman with agency and rebellion, no longer just a victim. The movie also defies the Victorian restrictions that frequently defined Gothic heroines by examining topics of female sexuality and desire. In addition, the movie gives other female characters more prominent roles. For example, Lucy Westenra is portrayed in the movie as a stronger, more self-reliant woman than she is in the novel. Coppola's adaptation challenges conventional Gothic clichés and provides a more empowered image of women by reworking these characters. Even though it stays true to the Gothic horror subgenre, the movie takes a step in the direction of a more feminist telling of the classic story. The other example is from Edgar Allan Poe's classic *The Fall of the House of Usher*. It has been adapted for television and film several times; some versions keep the nineteenth-century setting, while others modernise it to a more modern day. *The Fall of the House of Usher* by Edgar Allan Poe is a classic Gothic story with classical, dark, and unknown Gothic elements, and there are not many noteworthy female characters in the plot. The only female character, Madeline Usher, is portrayed as a frail person who is finally reduced to a ghostly apparition. This image is consistent with the archetypal Gothic heroine, who is frequently portrayed as a helpless object of supernatural power or misfortune. The chance to rethink these characters and stories from a feminist perspective presents itself when the work is adapted for television. Although adaptations differ, it is

usual practice to give female characters more roles or create new ones. Madeline is shown to be a multifaceted person with agency, possibly even the real narrator, rather than being presented as a helpless victim. This new interpretation questions the archetypal Gothic woman. It challenges gender norms and questions patriarchal institutions and power disparities by inverting or challenging the interactions between male and female characters. This method can provide a scathing critique of social conventions. The adaptations can add to a larger discussion on gender and representation in Gothic and horror literature by rewriting the story from a feminist perspective. Moreover, *The Haunting of Hill House* (Netflix) is a contemporary adaptation of the beloved ghost story by Shirley Jackson. Furthermore, *Frankenstein*: Mary Shelley's seminal work on the perils of scientific ambition is still an inspiration for contemporary adaptations. A future setting is used to explore the subject in films such as *I, Frankenstein* (2014). A classic work of Gothic fiction, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* explores themes of creation, monstrosity, and the boundaries of human ambition. The novel presents a critique of these conventions through the character of the creature, even if it is a product of its period and mirrors the patriarchal systems of the nineteenth century. The majority of the female characters in *Frankenstein* are marginalised; they frequently play idealised mother roles or helpless victims. This is especially true of Elizabeth Lavenza, who is portrayed as a kind and innocent lady who finally falls victim to the creature's wrath. This image is consistent with the archetypal Gothic heroine, who is frequently portrayed as a feeble and defenceless person. However, in the 2014 film *I, Frankenstein*, the Frankenstein legend is reimagined in a future context, with a focus on action and captivating visuals. The movie greatly deviates from Shelley's original work in terms of gender and representation, even if it still has certain Gothic aspects like gloomy, atmospheric locations and the investigation of monster creation. Numerous powerful female characters are introduced in the movie, including Terra, a warrior who organises a resistance movement against the beasts. This is a far cry from the world of Shelley's work, which is ruled by men. In contrast to Shelley's book, the movie gives female characters greater agency, yet it also perpetuates several harmful gender stereotypes. The last example is *Penny Dreadful* (Showtime). This Victorian-era drama combines a contemporary perspective with classic Gothic figures like Dorian Grey and Frankenstein's monster. *Penny Dreadful* explores gender norms and female autonomy in the Victorian era while

reimagining traditional Gothic horror clichés. Within the Gothic genre, it offers a sophisticated and nuanced examination of gender and power. Examining how genre tropes and the historical era in which it is situated empower and confine female characters is one of its many good opportunities. These contemporary stories allow readers to address current issues about gender expectations, societal constraints, and the ongoing quest for equality. In this way, these Gothic works can be seen from a more modern and feminist perspective and offer today's readers the chance to look at classical works from a different and more modern perspective.

Similar subjects are covered in more modern interpretations, which are more pleasant for readers now since they adopt a more modern viewpoint. Six modern authors reinterpret Jane Austen, whose six novels served as the basis for several cinema adaptations, spinoffs, sequels, and retellings. This project is called the Austen Project. The first of them is *Emma: A Modern Retelling* by Alexander McCall Smith. This imaginative reworking of Jane Austen's lovable, troublesome heroine is skilfully brought into the twenty-first century by the best-selling author of the *No. 1 Ladies' Detective Agency* series. Jane Austen's wit and characters are a wonderful fit for Alexander McCall Smith's warm, traditional sensibility and gentle humour. Even though Mini Coopers have taken the place of carriages and cappuccinos have replaced tea cups, Emma's narrative is incredibly ageless. Secondly, *Bridget Jones's Diary* by Helen Fielding, *The Secret Diary of Lizzie Bennet* by Bernie Su and Kate Rorick, *Unleashing Mr. Darcy* by Teri Wilson, and *Austenland* by Shannon Hale are the retellings of *Pride and Prejudice*. Moreover, *Sense and Sensibility* by Joanna Trollope and *The Dashwood Sisters Tell All* by Beth Pattillo are the retellings of *Sense and Sensibility*. Last but not least ones are *Persuaded* by Misty Dawn Pulsipher and *Persuading Annie* by Melissa Nathan. They are the retellings of *Persuasion*. As a consequence, thanks to adaptations, the classic works can be viewed through a contemporary lens, providing readers with an opportunity to examine them from a different perspective. For example, adaptations of Victorian classic works can provide different perspectives on the same works. Even when these works are analysed from a Gothic-feminist perspective, they offer a way to examine the limited social traditions of the Victorian era and their impact on women, especially through the Gothic with the help of the context of feminist criticism. The next section will present the feminist critique in the Victorian Era through the Gothic genre.

In the Victorian era, all women's decisions and experiences, "at home, at work, and on the streets" (Abrams 1), were influenced by the idea of distinct spheres: woman in the private realm of the home and hearth, and man in the public realm of business, politics, and sociability (1). The fundamental function of women during the Victorian era was to offer a caring and moral shelter for their spouses and kids. The focus on domestic duties severely restricted women's possibilities. They were frequently excluded from further education and job opportunities. The lack of action by the government in this regard simply widened a massive gap between what was regarded as proper for various sections of society. In this regard, a mandatory education meant that working-class girls attending state schools were educated for domestic roles, with courses in laundry, home management, and needle skills (Levine 32). On the private educational side, which was for the middle class, a number of feminist-inspired and feminist-managed education courses were offered to middle-class girls, and the courses were remarkably similar to the ones offered to their brothers (32).

Inadequate women were thought to become authors or governesses due to a lack of other "ladylike" employment opportunities (G. Eliot 3). Although the works they wrote were usually highly successful, women authors were occasionally criticised by people who considered that the position of women was at home or in the "private sphere" (Bloom, 'Henry Austen' 6). "Be not a baker if your head be made of butter," says a phrase, which, when understood, may suggest that no woman ought to jump into publishing without getting ready for consequences (G. Eliot 18) because there was always a prejudice about women's capacity in terms of thinking and writing.

The main difficulty may be "what" or "who" is meant by the term "subject" (Morgan 6). Male reviewers, who had long dominated the area of nineteenth-century British fiction in both authorship and publication, did not view the nineteenth-century British heroine phenomenon as noteworthy (6). They just missed it while approving more obvious topics. This is not to suggest that heroines were not investigated and appraised. They were, but in different forms from the typical "subject" (essentially male) (6). Furthermore, "the heroines and their novels" were usually appraised according to the way they fit into the readers' unquestioned conceptions of the "subject" (6).

The potential for public criticism may have motivated Austen's resolve to publish

her work anonymously (Bloom, 'Henry Austen' 6). Five months after Jane Austen's death, her elder brother Henry published *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* simultaneously, as neither had been published during Austen's lifetime (5). Henry revealed Jane Austen's identity in the publication for the first time (5-6). Austen published anonymously throughout her life, although her style was really commendable and possessed every aspect of this style and polished of the eighteenth century (Bloom, 'T.E. Kebbel' 51-52), and it was neither awkward nor artificial. It portrayed the mood of a nice society instead of becoming monotonous. The first chapter of *Northanger Abbey* was an example for each young girl novelist of the present day: a sample of clear, rich English that combines all the power of the male with all the softness of the feminine manner (51-52).

Unfortunately, Victorian women were also under the pressure. Even if they were very talented and successful, they could not reflect this openly and comfortably in society. The view of women in the Victorian era is clearly understood considering the fact that Austen could not present her talent to society comfortably and tried to publish her works anonymously. If a male figure, namely her brother Henry, had not been a pioneer in publishing her works under her name, this talent would not have been discovered as Jane Austen, and the history of literature would not have recognised this talent as Jane Austen.

In Victorian culture, domesticity was regarded as a domain exclusively for women (Abrams 2). The ideology that attributed the public spheres of industry, trade, and politics to men and the private sphere to women had become largely accepted by the time the Industrial Revolution reached its peak in Britain (Abrams 2). So, getting married to a wealthy man was a woman's only way of gaining social prominence and a voice beyond the home for Victorian women. After getting married, a woman's official status is effectively swallowed by her partner's. However, within the limitations of this system, marriage provided women with the sole legitimate opportunity to exert an impact in public. They were seen as the moral guardians of the family, promoting suitable ideals in their kids and ensuring a good upbringing. This granted them authority in the home realm. As getting married was the sole chance for women to get involved in society, the young girls left their homes, met their future partners, who would be appropriate for them both financially and socially, and gained acceptance into society. Sarah Stickney Ellis was an

influential English writer, who gained recognition for a widely popular series of improving books aimed at women, starting with *The Women of England* in 1839. Her novels *The Wives of England* (1843), *The Mothers of England*, and *The Daughters of England* are also among these well-known works. She maintained that it was the religious responsibility of women, in their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers, to exert a beneficial influence that would improve society. This assertion often appeared in the literature of the early Victorian era, enabling women to claim a unique position in shaping the moral character and destiny of the English nation.

Here, the question reveals, “What is my actual position?” Even though this question is crucial during a woman’s youth, it becomes even more crucial right after marriage because a woman’s status is inherently dependent on her husband’s (Ellis 206). In this case, a man can elevate or degrade his wife, but a woman cannot, unless in extremely rare circumstances, financially change her husband’s station or rank (Ellis 206). So, by getting married to prosperous men, women might improve their social standing and obtain prestige in society. Therefore, marriage provided an opportunity to get away from economic hardship and a chance for a safer existence in society. It was also linked with gaining a limited amount of autonomy, which at least made their voices heard. However, charitable attempts started to broaden the scope of women’s contribution during the nineteenth century, and Victorian feminism became a powerful political movement (Abrams 1). Queen Victoria was, in fact, seen as a model of a stable marriage and virtuous home life. Her marriage to Albert served as a model of a harmonious marriage. Known as “the mother of the nation,” she came to represent the notion of a comfortable, domestic space (Abrams 1). As Abrams aptly puts, “Victoria became an icon of late-nineteenth-century middle-class femininity and domesticity” (1). However, except for the queen, the ideal Victorian woman’s role and value in society were determined according to the male figure in her life. Jane Austen, the famous writer of the era, expresses the place and value of the Victorian woman in society, and what kind of characteristics a woman should have in order to take part in Victorian society, by exemplifying them through the heroines in her works, and she expresses the ways for women to gain autonomy and discover themselves. To illustrate societal expectations and the routes to female empowerment, Jane Austen incorporates these themes into the stories of her heroines, frequently showcasing their journeys of self-discovery in both physical

and emotional realms.

In each and every one of Austen's novels, impressionable young ladies travel on horses out of their homes and move to unfamiliar places in search of their future and their identity. Horses are really used for specific purposes other than transportation. Actually, horses serve as the protagonists' way of transportation, not only on their way to move to new locations and meet new people but also to discover their own identities and to reach their inevitable maturity. Horses carry the protagonists (mostly little girls) from their childhood, full of naive and inexperienced thoughts and behaviours, to mature and self-sufficient adulthood. Horses literally act as a mode of transportation, enabling the protagonists to visit new locations and interact with their inhabitants. The protagonist's transition from one stage of life to the next can be represented by this bodily movement. However, on a deeper level, horses represent freedom and independence. For young females, who are frequently brought up to be dependent on others, this might be especially crucial. In this regard, horses are vehicles, not just for movement in the physical sense but also for growth on an emotional and psychological level. Thanks to horses, the journey starts with a sense of empowerment and freedom, and the horses push the naive protagonist into the real world. As the girl encounters the darkness of the world and societal limitations, she struggles to gain her autonomy and turns into a self-sufficient individual. From this perspective, "it is even possible to argue that Jane Austen was Whistlejacket; that the novelist who represents the maturation of the English novel proper was a horse" (Akıllı 106), and this description is a totally suitable expression for colouring this idea because, thanks to Jane Austen's leadership, her protagonists gain self-respect.

Gothic novels have always highlighted the intermixing of cultures and the experiences of individuals who travel abroad (Phillips 108). Gothic fiction frequently examines the social and psychological upheaval that heroes who discover strange nations and customs go through, exposing the biases and fears that result from interaction between cultures. However, Jane Austen breaks with this tradition in *Northanger Abbey*. Despite her Gothic imagination, Catherine is mostly bound to her home's domestic setting and the socially conservative Bath. By limiting Catherine's experiences to these comfortable surroundings, Austen highlights how repressive Victorian society was for women, especially due to a lack of opportunities for independence and personal

development. In essence, Austen emphasises the restriction of women inside their own society by excluding usual Gothic themes.

In view of the restrictive social norms of the Victorian era, such as the restriction of women from social life, Austen uses the Gothic genre as a subtly effective literary device to illustrate how women are oppressed in Victorian society. She highlights the limitations placed on women by social norms and standards in her novels, like *Northanger Abbey* and *Mansfield Park*, by utilising Gothic elements like gloomy settings and mysterious characters with hidden secrets. In *Northanger Abbey*, the protagonist, Catherine, visits Allens' home in Bath. During her travel, she meets new people, makes new friends, and encounters Henry Tilney. The journey aids her personal growth, and she is no longer the naive and cute girl at her family home. However, when she meets the Tilneys and goes to Northanger Abbey with them, she dreams of mysterious stories and acts at Northanger Abbey, which is because Catherine enjoys reading Gothic books and has a limitless imagination and fantasy world in her mind.

Like in the example of the protagonist of *Northanger Abbey*, Austen addresses the limitations on women's agency, autonomy, and expression through her heroines, who frequently endure harsh patriarchal systems. The oppressive and restrictive nature of society's expectations, particularly with regard to marriage, social standing, and propriety, is symbolised by the Gothic atmosphere. In *Northanger Abbey*, the Gothic setting acts as a satirical lens through which Austen analyses the era's cultural constraints and expectations, notably those about marriage, social position, and manners. First of all, the Gothic focus on secret, hidden passageways and forbidden love reflects the illicit nature of courting during Austen's time. Young women were frequently sheltered, and their love choices were highly impacted by family norms. As a result, heroines such as Catherine frequently encounter moral dilemmas and criticism from society. Catherine's interest in the Gothic derives from a need to feel the rush of transgression, even if only in her mind. Her anxieties of being exposed in compromising situations reflect social concerns about female reputation. Catherine's overactive imagination, fuelled by Gothic novels, causes her to mistake everyday happenings at the Abbey as ominous. This demonstrates how society's expectations and worries distort perception. Furthermore, the Abbey's history strengthens imaginative thoughts. The Abbey's rumoured history of

General Tilney's wife reflects the Gothic preoccupation with the past, as well as the possibility of secrets being concealed inside outwardly respectable institutions. This preoccupation with the past is further amplified by General Tilney's authority, which creates an atmosphere of both intrigue and fear within the Abbey. General Tilney's harsh demeanour and authority over his own household reflected the patriarchal power systems of the time. Catherine's concern of displeasing him reflects the cultural pressure on women to conform to norms. As a result, by employing the Gothic atmosphere, Austen satirises these societal expectations, emphasising their absurdity and the constraints they imposed on individuals, particularly women, and encouraging readers to question conventional norms and embrace a more nuanced understanding of human relations.

Jane Austen, as well as other female Victorian writers, had a significant influence on the development of literature both during and after their own era. Beginning with her works, women involved in the prevalent actions of nineteenth-century British literature, courting and marriage stories, and also heroines with a unique story to share, these stories present the most flattering portrayals of women in literature (Morgan 11). With her sharp intellect and perceptive observations of societal norms, Jane Austen wrote novels that were timeless classics even after her time. Austen invented the novel of manners (Byrne 297) with her works, exploring the complexities of interpersonal relationships and social conventions with a unique blend of humour and insight. Her pioneering spirit and literary accomplishments, which opened the door for later generations of female writers to express their distinct voices and make a lasting impression on literature, are what make her so important today. Owing to Austen's ability to convey the limitations faced by women during her time and the sense of independence she gave to her heroines, her works remain relevant in contemporary life. Still, Austen's works have numerous adaptations today. Because adaptations are essential since they help keep stories alive. They make it possible for them to grow and reach new audiences, make certain the essential concepts and ideas remain relevant throughout generations. However, the crucial point is that "adaptation is repetition, but repetition without replication" (Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* 7).

Since language always represents one thing in terms of another, figuration is an inevitable aspect of all language (Elliott 267). Similar to how a palette strives to replicate

an unlimited combination of colours with a finite amount of paint, language attempts to represent an infinite diversity of experiences in a limited number of thoughts and phrases. As a result, language must always change to accommodate new circumstances and a shifting environment. One of the most striking illustrations of this process of adaptation is seen in figurative language. It allows language to continuously reinvent itself by tying new ideas to well-known ones. Their distinctiveness offers a recognisable language that can be discussed and exchanged (repetition), while their wide range of uses and interpretations allows for theoretical variety (variation) (267).

Adaptation is a discussion between the ancient and the modern, which keeps literature fresh and interesting. Writers and producers adapt classical but outdated works of literature for two main reasons: to reach new readers and audiences and to introduce new views that are more contemporary for the modern era. An adaptation is not simply a copy-and-paste operation. Each adaptation may bring essential concepts and protagonists to a contemporary reader. The idea of fidelity, along with the accompanying rear-view reading strategy, can make critics feel free, which was encoded from the start in nineteenth- and twentieth-century definitions of adaptation (Jellenik 15). This is especially true for those who wish to move the focus away from the constraints placed on Romanticism's concepts of originality and towards a more postmodern aesthetic that engages with the cultural and critical possibilities of retelling, replaying, and recycling (15). We cannot really get to the point where we can read and go forward unless we uncover and comprehend the past (15). By adopting this understanding, writers and filmmakers may take an established story and add their own twist to it. This might include modernising the setting, shifting the plot's subject matter, or even introducing fresh protagonists. It enables the story to connect with current audiences and stimulate fresh debates. Adaptations might also let you explore further into the setting or characters presented in the source work. Preludes, subsequent works, and spin-offs might delve into supporting characters, history, or various aspects of the original story. This may be an excellent approach to gratifying existing readers and giving them further enjoyment of the narrative they admire.

While the majority of adaptations involve books being adapted into films or television series, there is also a fascinating realm of intra-medial adaptations. There are

some reasons why authors could take on this task, as well as the specific issues required. One of the main reasons for this is that an author may be impressed by a famous work yet desire to approach it from a new perspective. This might entail shifting the perspective, placing it at a different age, or even rewriting the genre completely. Moreover, a complicated literary classic may be challenging for new readers, so an adaptation might rework the story in a more approachable form or style, exposing the fundamental concepts to a new audience.

However, there are several issues with an intra-medial adaptation. Unlike a film adaptation, which may compromise certain aspects of the visual expression, an intra-medial adaptation must maintain the core of the source work. Even in a book-to-film adaptation, the adherence to a language metaphor and the visual impression are inextricably linked (Stam 62-63), and sometimes language constructions organise whole scenes, even entire films (Stam 62-63). So, compared to a film adaptation, an intra-medial adaptation must be more sensitive and careful to preserve the essence of the source work because of the lack of visuality. Even if presented through an alternative lens, the main characters, ideas, and story aspects should be easily identifiable. The most difficult issue may be developing a unique voice that complements the primary writer's work. The recent piece should not seem like a weak replica but rather a unique interpretation that can stand on its own. The new author must strike a delicate balance between appreciating the source material and providing a captivating new story that does not seem copied.

Novel-to-novel adaptations can serve as an enjoyable way to revisit favourite narratives and see them from new perspectives. They provide new entrance points for readers who may not have felt captivated by the original and prompt new discussions about the topics and characters. It demonstrates the timeless power of narrative, as a single work may inspire and impact generations of readers and authors.

Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* is an excellent example of an intra-medial adaptation. It is part of the Austen Project series, in which modern authors reinterpret Jane Austen's classic books. Six modern writers who are experts in various fields take on the task of rewriting six of Jane Austen's most beloved books in the series: *Sense & Sensibility* (Joanna Trollope), *Northanger Abbey* (Val McDermid), *Emma* (Alexander McCall Smith), *Pride & Prejudice* (Eligible-Curtis Sittenfeld), *Persuasion*, and

Mansfield Park.

With the Gothic feminist interpretation of Jane Austen's classic, *Northanger Abbey*, Val McDermid gives the classic novel a fresh lease on life and explores the social restrictions that women in the Victorian era faced in greater detail while adding a greater sense of mystery and suspense to the story. McDermid's retelling emphasises the female characters' subjugation and oppression while enhancing the Gothic aspects of the narrative. McDermid examines the different aspects of female agency and questions conventional gender roles by drawing upon the feminist themes found in Austen's work. Her adaptation offers a new viewpoint on the challenges faced by women facing a patriarchal society, in addition to paying tribute to Austen's wit and charm. McDermid's adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* is evidence of the themes of Jane Austen's work remaining relevant even when viewed from a modern feminist perspective. As Hutcheon suggests with the following quote, adaptation inherently involves reinterpretation. McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* exemplifies this, reframing Austen's novel to illuminate themes of female empowerment and self-discovery through a modern feminist lens.

As a creative process, adaptation typically entails (re-)interpretation followed by (re)creation; based on the author's point of view, this has also been referred to as appropriation or recovery (Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* 8). An adaptation is just as valuable as the source text. When compared to the source text, it might come in second, but that does not imply it has any less significance. Thus, an adaptation represents "a work that is second without being secondary" (9)—a source that is not considered to be derivative. It functions as a "palimpsestic" (9) object unto itself. On the other hand, the notion that an adaptation is "second without being secondary" fails to consider the possibility of losing original intent in some cases. This is especially noticeable in the frequent simplification of complex issues. The risk of simplifying is a fundamental fault in many adaptations, particularly those intended for a large audience. Source materials frequently deal with challenging moral and ethical dilemmas, with the goal of stimulating thinking and providing cautionary lessons. However, in order to appeal to a wider audience, adaptations usually reduce these intricacies to simple tales. For example, Disney's versions of ancient fairy tales, such as *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*, turn warning tales about social perils and human shortcomings into stories of pure virtue

against evil, complete with guaranteed happy endings. This procedure eliminates the original message, which frequently included cautions against greed, vanity, or harsh facts of life, in favour of readily, consumable but ultimately less profound ethical concepts.

While some adaptations simplify the original's deeper moral issues, both versions of *Northanger Abbey* preserve Catherine's powerful use of her personal traits to defy society norms. In both the original and adapted versions of *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine uses her curiosity, wit, and free spirit to subvert social norms and stereotypical gender roles. By actively creating her own story and pursuing her passions and goals, she challenges the stereotype of women as passive objects. The limitations imposed on women in their specific time periods are explored by both authors throughout Catherine's experiences, emphasising the value of freedom and self-exploration in the quest for fulfilment in life. Catherine's circumstances involve psychological abuse. She is not directly exposed to it, but she is raised under stereotypical social conventions; therefore, she is not allowed to express her feelings freely, so she conveys her suppressed ideas through Gothic parody. Catherine's sheltered upbringing, shaped by the strict societal norms of her time, makes her highly susceptible to General Tilney's manipulative actions. Although not intentionally cruel in the sense of causing deliberate harm, his behaviour inflicts a form of psychological stress that resembles abuse. His abrupt changes in attitude, shifting from charming host to cold authoritarian, leave her in a state of perpetual discomfort. She is unable to perceive his deliberate manipulations, such as his feigned interest and subtle control over her movements within Northanger Abbey. Bound by the societal expectations of female politeness, she feels compelled to tolerate his veiled rudeness and authoritative declarations without voicing any dissent. For example, his sudden alterations to plans, his controlling enquiries, and his dismissive attitude towards her concerns regarding his late wife all contribute to her increasing anxiety. She feels confined, compelled to appear cheerful and obedient, while his behaviour, likely motivated more by his own ambitions and social image than by any intention to cause hurt, leads to considerable emotional turmoil for her as she attempts to make sense of his conflicting actions within her narrow grasp of social influence and manipulation. Though General Tilney's behaviour unintentionally causes psychological turmoil for Catherine, her path ultimately uncovers a different kind of resilience, as she manoeuvres through these social challenges and grows into an independent main character. Finally, Catherine

is revealed as a self-sufficient protagonist who challenges patriarchal limitations and claims a unique self in a society that frequently tries to limit and define her.

Although gender roles were strictly regulated in the literature of the Victorian era, they have actually been influential in all periods. Nonetheless, it was shown to be more dominant in the works of the Victorian period. Each gender was expected to behave in a manner appropriate to that role. Undoubtedly, women faced numerous barriers to freely expressing their opinions in the community, including limited employment prospects, dependence on male figures, and financial incapacity. As demonstrated by Michel Foucault's analysis of the oppressive "Victorian discourse on sexuality" (Foucault 30), revisiting can be both a recursive and potentially liberating process. This statement indicates that exploring how Victorian society discussed and perceived sexuality, as examined by philosopher Michel Foucault, produces two important outcomes. To begin with, it can be recursive, suggesting that revisiting this discourse leads us back to similar thought patterns and behaviours in the current society. By grasping how Victorian society restricted and defined sexuality, we observe reflections of those limitations in modern attitudes and practices. Additionally, this examination can also be potentially liberating. By critically evaluating the historical formation of sexual norms, we confront and dismantle those societal expectations that continue to restrain and oppress individuals. This awareness empowers us to challenge and resist societal norms surrounding sexuality, fostering greater freedom and self-expression. Re-examining Foucault's exploration of Victorian attitudes towards sexuality functions as a reflection of our current societal prejudices while also acting as a means to liberate ourselves from those constraints. Foucault argues that the subject is not an inherently existing entity but is shaped through discourse. Her interpretations of the Gothic, although occasionally flawed, represent a form of agency, allowing her to shape her own subjectivity within the existing discursive frameworks. This corresponds with a Gothic feminist interpretation, where women use the resources available to assert their agency.

By expanding on this comprehension, we can observe how modern re-interpretations of Foucault's theories, similar to the "appropriations and adaptations" mentioned by Sanders, do not aim to erase history but to contest its perceived stability and reveal the fundamental power dynamics that persist in influencing our perception of

sexuality. The “appropriations and adaptations” are not undoing history; rather, they are calling into question the certainty of it (Sanders 143). Linda Hutcheon observes that “postmodernism does not deny [history]” (119); it solely examines the way we are able to understand previous actual events today, apart from their evidence, their texts, the evidence that we construct, as well as those that “we grant meaning” (Hutcheon, “Historiographic Metafiction” 119).

When analysed through a contemporary feminist lens, McDermid’s adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* demonstrates the themes of Jane Austen’s lasting significance. This is evidence of the intertextual aspect of literature, in which “appropriations and adaptations” offer to fascinate investigations of the ways in which art inspires literary works and art develops from literature. McDermid’s adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* through a feminist lens exemplifies how intertextuality, with its focus on the dynamic relationship between texts, not only reveals the enduring relevance of Austen’s work but also provides a valuable framework for understanding the creative process itself.

Intertextuality as a concept and its particular expressions in “adaptation and appropriation” naturally draw interest in the process by which “art produces art” or “literature is produced by literature” (Sanders 1). As it happens, not much is new. The majority of things are just variations of their previous forms. Writers are influenced by what they read. Actually, when it is considered that there are no new things, everything is an adaptation of the previous ones, not a replica of them. They can be made to fit their times, societies, and modern or contemporary ideas and points of view with a few minor adjustments. Thus, it takes the already-present idea that humans are adaptations of what they read to its logical conclusion (Goode 57). Copying anything is useless because, whether it is a book, essay, song, movie, poem, or anything else entirely, it offers nothing new to readers or viewers and does not enable them to view the original work from a variety of angles. Adaptation, on the other hand, brings fresh vitality to previous works. It reinterprets the key themes of a story, poem, or song for a different audience or situation. Adaptation expands on the original, whereas copying just repeats it. It allows writers to experiment with different topics, introduce new characters, and even change the scenery to provide a distinct viewpoint. Considering copying to be like a flat mirror, it merely reflects what is already there. On the other hand, adaptation functions as a prism,

reflecting the original work through an entirely fresh perspective and uncovering previously unknown depths. Copying may result in a similar item, while adaptation has the ability to produce something completely unique and remarkable. It may generate fresh discussions and encourage people to go deeper into the original work.

Adapting literary masterpieces may be a thrilling but tricky endeavour. Many readers have deep emotional attachments to their favourite novels. Living up to these expectations may be difficult for writers, and any alterations to the original work can cause fury among admirers. In order to meet the demands of the modern era in terms of the viewpoints and ways of life of its inhabitants, it ought to be more comprehensive and up-to-date. Thus, as T. S. Eliot states, “Art never improves, but... The material of art is never quite the same” (38), so there are not many differences; it is just a more contemporary exchange of the original work that occasionally adds or defends opposing viewpoints. Across various mediums and audiences, adaptation fosters an ever-changing interaction of ideas and narratives, acting as a vital link between literature, film, and other media.

Furthermore, adaptation enables themes, characters, and settings to be explored and reinterpreted in ways that appeal to modern audiences. It creates an environment that encourages creativity and innovation as creators rethink well-known tales using a range of viewpoints, aesthetics, and cultural settings. The value of adaptation and adapted works changes and develops over time, reflecting societal demands, inclinations, and technological advancements. The constant human desire to retell and reimagine stories throughout both space and time is reflected in adaptations and adapted works, which have remained essential to the preservation, evolution, and dissemination of culture through all periods.

Naturally, there should or must be a personal touch when modifying the work to represent her or his opinions about the particular piece of work. However, there is a chance that this process of looking into or reading adaptations ends up being rather self-serving (Sanders 1), only serving to further the academic field of literary criticism by encouraging the afterlife of texts (1). It suggests that the author prefers the recurring process of revising and polishing their work to the idea of creating wholly original material. This method recognises that a lot of writing entails expanding on pre-existing

concepts, passages, or themes, and that actual imagination frequently manifests itself in the cautious creation and reworking of these bases. The urge to “rewrite,” which goes far beyond “simple imitation,” is frequently described theoretically using terms like “intertextuality” (Sanders 1-2). Many well-known theorists of intertextuality emerged from the 1960s structuralist and poststructuralist movements, notably Roland Barthes, whose assertion that “any text is an intertext” (Barthes, “Theory of the Text” 39) underscores the perpetual presence of literary works from earlier and neighbouring cultures, highlighting the profound influence of diverse sources on the creation and interpretation of texts (Sanders 1-2). Barthes also emphasised how readers who built their own intertextual connections helped texts gain meaning, showing that texts did not rely only on their authors to produce meaning (2). According to Barthes, the expression “the death of the author” (“The Death of the Author” 145) means that when a writer produces a piece of writing, there is no right answer or unvarnished perspective because the writer does not offer commentary on the work or share his or her personal views on the subject. Regarding background information or the manner in which they live, think, and experience things, each reader has a unique commentary. These adaptations should provide this. It can be altered, and new, modern ideas can be added, but the writer’s personal views should not be included. This term ought to remain faithful to the original work. This is typically accomplished by presenting an updated perspective from the “original,” providing speculative justification, or speaking up for the marginalised and silenced (Sanders 19).

Furthermore, the term “pastiche” has further evolved or expanded in the context of art and literature, where it is now most frequently used to describe works that imitate an artist or writer’s style in length (5). Adaptation can also be a more straightforward attempt to use “proximation and updating” (19) to create works that are “relevant” (19) or understandable for “new audiences and readerships” (19). In *Northanger Abbey*, Val McDermid provides updates on certain places and events to keep up with today. ‘The *Northanger Abbey* Story’ by Austen and McDermid is like an intertextual déjà vu with some differences. Val McDermid’s *Northanger Abbey* has differences from Jane Austen’s in terms of the temporal setting and technological additions such as Facebook, sharing posts, and setting. However, the fundamental narrative and characters are the same in both Austen’s and McDermid’s *Northanger Abbey*. She employs certain terms that are

frequently used on social media, such as “need 2 talk to u -, big news coming down... or OK. C u soon...” (McDermid 157). McDermid also changes some of the settings. While Jane Austen preferred Bath as the location for the protagonist’s destination, since she thought that this city was popular in Victorian Britain, Val McDermid uses Edinburgh because she thinks that “Bath was not going to work as a setting for the novel in the twenty-first century” (348). As the quotation “Constantly metamorphosing in the process of adaptation and retelling” (Sanders 62) puts it, adaptation can be viewed as a metamorphosis because some changes have been made to the original work to meet the expectations of the modern era. Adaptations, according to Sanders, undergo constant metamorphosis; so too do the anxieties that fuel them. While classic Gothic novels often explored themes of religious guilt and social violations, contemporary adaptations tend to focus on more modern anxieties, such as the rise of artificial intelligence.

The combination of “lovingly” (Hutcheon, “Historiographic Metafiction” 169) and “ripped off” (169) with intimacy and a feeling of intrusion, or maybe guilt, reflects effectively the duality concerning adaptation that *A Theory of Adaptation* introduced: “familiarity” (169) and disdain, universality, and mockery. However, from what we have observed, many variations of a story emerge from one side rather than in a vertical direction.

Adaptations are derivative, but they are not “second-rate” (169). Adaptations borrow inspiration from source works and revitalise a story by introducing new perspectives, settings, or themes, so they demonstrate artistic creativity within a recognisable framework. Each adaptation is unique, allowing readers to see the fundamental story through a contemporary lens. It is like looking at a familiar artwork through a kaleidoscope; the core remains, but the colours and details change, producing a compelling new experience. It offers a dialogue between the past and the present. This continual dialogue keeps narratives alive and allows them to change alongside our changing world. This ongoing debate between adaptations and originals is especially significant in the Gothic genre. As social worries and fears grow, so do the Gothic characteristics that appeal to readers.

The Gothic genre thrives on adaptability. Its central themes of terror, the strange, and disobedience resonate permanently at different ages, yet they may be reimagined to

represent modern fears. By applying Gothic themes to modern contexts, technological advances, societal collapse, and isolation may be examined from a terrifying perspective. The adapted versions not only keep the genre current but also expose Gothic chills to new audiences, maintaining its long-term significance.

The Gothic genre has had a remarkable evolution since the eighteenth century with Walpole. While Victorians frequently concentrated on concerns about social order, religion, and the supernatural, current interpretations dive deeper into contemporary issues. Technology, loneliness, and psychological trauma have become recurring themes, reflecting the uneasiness of the modern age. This permits the Gothic to remain current by using the old elements of haunted homes and supernatural beings to address the very real worries that humans face currently.

In order to reinterpret the components of the Gothic within an up-to-date lens, one needs to look into the psychological foundations of current anxieties and appeal to readers' worries and fears. The following are ways that contemporary psychological themes could potentially be incorporated into some classic Gothic components: isolation and alienation are among the components. Characters in classic Gothic literature frequently find themselves alone in great mansions and isolated places. In a contemporary setting, this loneliness might be interpreted as a metaphor for the estrangement that many individuals experience in a world that is becoming more digitally connected and disconnected. The characters may struggle with social media challenges, digital dependency, or the disintegration of traditional society.

Moreover, the Gothic genre frequently studies gender stereotypes and expectations; an up-to-date reworking would possibly challenge these accepted norms. While men in fiction may struggle with toxic masculinity or social pressures to repress their feelings, female characters may reject gender norms in order to turn into the heroes of their own stories. From an updated psychological perspective, writers may rewrite classic Gothic themes to produce stories that speak to readers today while hauntingly and provocatively addressing the worries and anxieties we experience every day. Revising Austen's Gothic masterpiece, *Northanger Abbey*, from a contemporary viewpoint presents an intriguing chance to explore current psychological concerns. Renowned for her captivating crime fiction, Val McDermid could add psychological complexity to the

narrative without sacrificing its key components. This is how McDermid would rewrite *Northanger Abbey*, with a focus on contemporary concerns for readers today.

Catherine Morland plays an important part in presenting the Gothic genre in both Jane Austen's classic and Val McDermid's modern version of *Northanger Abbey*, with slight differences. In Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine's love of Gothic books influences her impression of Northanger Abbey. She misinterprets daily occurrences as evidence of a dark history, emphasising the genre's focus on tension and mood. In McDermid's *Northanger Abbey*, she uses more current Gothic aspects, such as psychological thrillers or serial killers, to represent the genre's growth. While Austen gently mocks Gothic clichés like hidden chambers, dictatorial heroes, and young girls in misery through Catherine's ridiculous interpretations, in McDermid's version, Catherine's assumptions may be even more at odds with the current context, resulting in a more humorous effect. Catherine's disillusionment reflects the restrictions imposed on young women during the Victorian period. Her escape into Gothic fantasy helps her imagine a more thrilling and adventurous existence. In the modern period, McDermid's representation may address contemporary worries such as social media or isolation, providing a new perspective on the genre's investigation of dread and the unknown. This is clear in the section where Henry jokes with Catherine regarding her hopes for the weekend trip. The quote below underscores the way Catherine's contemporary worries and her love for Gothic literature intersect, resulting in a humorous impact that defines McDermid's reinterpretation of traditional literary works.

She'll point out that there's no mobile phone signal anywhere in the abbey and then she'll leave you, straining to hear the echo of her receding footsteps, convinced you can hear a strange fluttering in the chimney. And then you'll discover the door has no lock.' By now Cat was giggling. 'You've been reading too many Hebridean Harpies books. No wonder Ellie doesn't get many visitors. I don't believe your housekeeper is called Mrs Danvers either.' Henry chuckled. 'You'll have to wait and see. But don't shriek when she introduces herself, that really annoys her.' (McDermid 214)

He humorously cautions her about the poor mobile phone signal, which is a typical contemporary concern, and implies that there may be limited privacy and an unusual housekeeper, gently alluding to Gothic elements. The arrival at this isolated abbey will test Catherine Morland's concerns about connectivity and her passion for dramatic

narratives in unexpected ways.

Catherine Morland could be described as a young woman who is addicted to social media and always compares her daily life with the carefully sculpted pictures of perfection she views there. She has an imaginative mind and misinterprets what is happening around her. McDermid explores issues of mental health and gaslighting, where the people in Catherine's immediate surroundings challenge her sense of actuality. She is a severely humiliated girl exposed to a challenging process that has lately been named "gaslighting" (Gilbert and Gubar 143). She is manipulated by Henry Tilney in terms of her lack of education, so this affects her opinions about herself, and she thinks herself an ineligible woman. Contemporary advances may increase the effects of gaslighting strategies, making Catherine question her own sense of sanity and finding it difficult to differentiate between manipulation and facts.

While Jane Austen employs her heroine for subtle social criticism and gentle mockery of feminine restrictions of the day, Val McDermid modernises these components by infusing them with current Gothic sensibilities and a harsher social critique pertinent to today's digital age. This technique would enable McDermid to craft a thought-provoking adaptation that preserves the core of Jane Austen's classic while also providing a new and incisive viewpoint on the human psyche in the twenty-first century.

By reinterpreting Austen's era with the modern era through feminist and Gothic critique, the first chapter will analyse 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story' with a special focus on the Gothic representation and the Gothic parody of the setting. The Gothic genre, which emphasised mystery, suspense, and supernatural themes, was a prominent literary style during Jane Austen's lifetime. Austen effectively employs Gothic conventions in *Northanger Abbey*, but in a humorous manner. The novel's setting, Northanger Abbey, is a suitable example of this Gothic satire. The massive abbey's dark halls, secret tunnels, and diminishing buildings create a feeling of fear and mystery. However, Austen defies these Gothic clichés by presenting the abbey's true nature as a pleasant, although slightly outdated, family home. The novel's protagonist, Catherine Morland, first succumbs to her Gothic imagination, thinking the abbey to be full of evil secrets and hidden dangers. This humorous misreading highlights Austen's witty rejection of Gothic traditions.


Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* effectively subverts the original's Gothic parody by putting the narrative in modern Edinburgh. This difference in setting converts the intended Gothic ambiance into a contemporary thriller. The towering Northanger Abbey transforms into a decaying, abandoned home on the outskirts of the city, grounded by mystery and rumoured to be haunted. McDermid plays with Gothic traditions such as secrecy, hidden passages, and dreary shadows, but instead of supernatural aspects, she uses psychological suspense and a terrifying mood. Catherine, the novel's protagonist, is a young lady obsessed with Gothic novels, and her imagination runs wild as she investigates the frightening home, believing that it contains terrible secrets. McDermid carefully blurs the borders between fact and fantasy, making it difficult for the reader to distinguish between Catherine's fantasies and the actual dangers lurking within the walls of the abbey. Finally, while Austen parodies Gothic norms of her day, McDermid takes them a step further by putting her work in a modern Gothic setting, emphasising the Gothic genre's ongoing appeal and capacity to adapt to multiple historical and cultural settings.

The second chapter will focus on feminist critique and the Gothic conflicts, as well as interpreting the Gothic features as expressions of women's oppression and how the oppression is reflected in the acts and thoughts of the characters in the selected novels. *Northanger Abbey*, by Jane Austen, gently criticises the Gothic genre's characterisation of women as passive victims or hysterical creatures. By mocking Gothic traditions, Austen highlights the genre's limits as well as societal pressures on women to adhere to specific ideals. Catherine Morland, the protagonist, is first attracted by Gothic novels, but she ultimately learns to differentiate between imagination and reality. Catherine's transformation from a naïve girl to a discerning young lady illustrates Austen's feminist viewpoint, as she rejects established gender stereotypes and embraces her own intellect.

Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* is more explicitly feminist, examining the Gothic genre's ability to empower women. Catherine is a strong and independent woman who challenges traditional norms. She is not afraid to face danger and defy authority, proving that women can be both vulnerable and resilient. McDermid's Gothic setting is a metaphor for the harsh circumstances women encounter in society. By confronting the darkness within the convent, Catherine represents the patriarchal constraints that limit

women's independence and agency. In conclusion, Austen and McDermid, through their different Gothic parodies and reimaginings, demonstrate how the Gothic genre can be used to critique patriarchal institutions and empower female characters, eventually defying established gender roles and social expectations.

After analysing these novels, the study will conclude by offering insights about the different aspects of the Gothic genre and its feminist critique and how it enriches the understanding of the role of women and the expectations from women in two different eras. The conclusion will also emphasise, within the framework of adaptation studies, literature's permanent capacity to provoke Gothic nightmares as well as feminist dreams, allowing readers a sense of critique and possibility.



CHAPTER ONE

THE CRITICAL FUNCTION OF GOTHIC SETTINGS IN ‘THE *NORTHANGER ABBEY* STORY’

This chapter aims to analyse in depth the Gothic elements in ‘the *Northanger Abbey* Story,’ both in its representation and its parody. In *Northanger Abbey*, the representation of Gothic aspects refers to how Jane Austen combines and shows traditional Gothic novel genre traits inside the plot. First, Austen creates a thrilling and intriguing atmosphere, notably at Northanger Abbey, with descriptions of dark halls, hidden tunnels, and ancient chambers. Besides, this story includes characters such as General Tilney, who represents the stereotypical Gothic villain with his harsh demeanour and hidden past. On the other hand, the parody of Gothic aspects refers to how Austen satirises and mocks the Gothic novel’s tropes. Catherine’s imagination is one of the aspects in the parody. Catherine, the heroine, is highly affected by Gothic books (particularly Radcliffe’s works), and she frequently sees everyday situations through a lens of Gothic fiction. Additionally, Austen breaks away from traditional Gothic plotlines by exposing that the mysteries of Northanger Abbey are not supernatural, but rather the product of human acts and societal traditions. So, by depicting and parodying Gothic features, Austen produces a complex and interesting story that simultaneously honours and parodies the popular genre of the period.

Gothic novels, with their creepy atmospheres, are often set in isolated castles, with mysterious events, trapped protagonists, and perhaps supernatural beings. Although most reviewers agree that *Northanger Abbey* escapes the moralistic clichés associated with Gothic books and trendy pleasures, the productive relationships between concentrated reading and female knowledge remain ambiguous (Wyett 262). As the quotation implies, although *Northanger Abbey* receives praise for avoiding Gothic clichés, there is still openness to interpretation when it comes to the novel’s examination of the relationship between reading and female emancipation. *Northanger Abbey* is not an exception to the social criticism that Jane Austen’s books frequently received for the way in which they portrayed women and their places in society. The heroine of the novel, Catherine Morland, is frequently interpreted as a mirror of Jane Austen’s own struggles and

experiences growing up in a culture that restricted women's access to intellectual pursuits and opportunities. Still, feminist critiques of Victorian society, while present in these novels, are overshadowed by their important connection to the Gothic genre.

Austen does more than just play with Gothic themes; she employs the genre's traditions as a playground for her protagonist, Catherine Morland, through her active imagination. Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* serves as a playful parody of Gothic literature. In *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen both takes this genre seriously, fuelling readers' excitement, and satirically exposes the gap between the Gothic expectations of the young and dreamy Catherine Morland and reality. While this approach criticises the dark and uncanny nature of Gothic novels, it also explores the limits of Catherine's imagination and how literature affects the reader. Val McDermid, the author of the modern version of *Northanger Abbey*, is known as one of the pioneers of modern crime novels and has also created a series called "The Austen Project," which revives Jane Austen's classic novels with contemporary interpretations. While Austen uses the setting for playful social criticism, McDermid has the opportunity to create a truly Gothic atmosphere that contributes to the plot and tension. Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* is set in the present day and adapts the narrative of Catherine Morland. McDermid's rendition is expected to keep the central storyline of Catherine's visit to an old mansion named Northanger Abbey, but with an updated twist.

With McDermid's reinterpretation of the dark and mysterious elements of Gothic literature in a modern context, *Northanger Abbey* is adapted for the readers of the modern era. McDermid sees Gothic novels not only as eerie and suspenseful stories but also as a genre that reflects critical perspectives on society. In *Northanger Abbey*, the protagonist's passion for Gothic novels leads her into a tension between romantic idealisation and dark reality. McDermid uses this tension to offer sharp observations on issues such as gender roles, class privileges, and family dynamics in English society. In the work, Gothic elements are explored through the descriptions of the setting and the inner worlds of the characters.

The new version of *Northanger Abbey* provides readers with an updated window into gendered experiences of psychological violence, self-questioning, and reclaimed agency that are still integral to anglocultural young women, where cultural norms that

reject and discourage adolescent girls stay the same while also making Austen's story have an unconventional impact (Manizza Roszak 607). Acquiring an understanding of how McDermid's Gothic style simultaneously reflects and evolves on Austen's novel's complexity is critical to reviving her most unusual literary attempt (Manizza Roszak 607). Through the satire, McDermid emphasises the fun and exciting aspects of Gothic novels while at the same time pushing the boundaries of the genre and presenting it to a modern readership. Both Austen and McDermid use the Gothic atmosphere to present critical perspectives on society in two different eras while at the same time satirising the melodramatic and exaggerated elements of the genre.

Northanger Abbey is a coming-of-age narrative wrapped in Gothic satire. The story revolves around Catherine Morland, a young woman whose fascination with Gothic literature fuels her imagination. Upon arriving at the magnificent Northanger Abbey, Catherine releases her imagination, conjuring up images of hidden rooms and potential villains. These imaginary thoughts reflect the restrictions imposed on women in Victorian England, when their intellectual interests were frequently limited to ridiculous stories and speculative thinking. Catherine's Gothic dreams provide an escape from the confines of her social reality, a world in which individuals have more autonomy than conventional expectations. However, as Catherine navigates Bath's social whirlpool, dealing with misunderstandings and heartbreak, she realises that the real world is far more difficult than the pages of her favourite Gothic books. This disillusionment mirrors the Gothic critique of society's concealed darkness, exposing that the actual villains are not supernatural entities but rather the social and emotional manipulations that rule human interactions. Catherine's journey demonstrates the limitations of escapism and the significance of embracing the complexities of reality, even if they are considerably less romantic than her Gothic visions.

Although the setting of Bath is far from Gothic, the first part of the story takes place there. Bath is a thriving resort town full of vitality and social activities. However, the seeds of Gothic influence were carefully created at Northanger Abbey. The abbey is situated in a distant and isolated region and is set in a rural area, far from the hectic pace of daily life. It is an ancient and imposing structure that may hint at a mysterious past. Catherine's preconceived thoughts of Northanger Abbey are strongly impacted by the

Gothic books she reads. Her reading of Gothic books inspires her imagination, and she searches the abbey for hidden passages, perceives shadows as lurking people, and sees the faded tapestry as a possible hiding spot for a long-lost manuscript. Austen creates an environment that might be very disturbing, but through Catherine's eyes, it becomes an exciting journey. Austen uses this Gothic sensibility for both humour and suspense. By showing the ordinary truth behind Catherine's perceptions (for example, the strange, dark closet is a linen closet), Austen mocks the Gothic genre's dependence on exaggerated components. However, Catherine's initial fear and rising suspicion create a feeling of mystery, keeping the reader interested. The Gothic literature makes Catherine understand her very own immaturity and folly. She perceives, following her mistakes at Northanger Abbey with understanding the world in Gothic concepts, how absurd she herself is and, despite experience, continues to be (Mathison 147-148). Therefore, through her incorrect impressions and experiences at Northanger Abbey, the Gothic literature exposes Catherine's immaturity and stupidity, acting as a catalyst for her self-awareness.

Gothic stories usually revolve around ancient, remote castles that are concealed in mysteries and hidden passages and may be haunted by supernatural beings or have a gloomy family past. However, *Northanger Abbey* does not embrace the entire Gothic mood. Instead, it employs Gothic motifs to create a joyful and ironic setting. The abbey itself provides a stage for Catherine's imagination to run wild, emphasising the distinction between her romanticised ideals and everyday reality. The next quote illustrates this joyful and ironic Gothic mood as follows:

Catherine, as she crossed the hall, listened to the tempest with sensations of awe; and, when she heard it rage round a corner of the ancient building and close with sudden fury a distant door, felt for the first time that she was really in an abbey. Yes, these were characteristic sounds; they brought to her recollection a countless variety of dreadful situations and horrid scenes, which such buildings had witnessed, and such storms ushered in; and most heartily did she rejoice in the happier circumstances attending her entrance within walls so solemn! (Austen 171)

Ironically, this Gothic atmosphere serves to heighten Catherine's awareness of her own fortunate circumstances and underlines Austen's playful subversion of Gothic conventions, creating a playful contrast between expectation and reality. Austen uses this contradiction to criticise the Gothic genre's tendency towards melodrama while also

showing the value of reason and a clear-eyed perspective on the world.

Catherine, with her overheated and alarming imagination, easily puts Gothic tropes onto the Abbey, and Austen exemplifies Catherine's first impressions about the Abbey as follows: "Northanger Abbey! These were thrilling words that wound up Catherine's feelings to the highest point of ecstasy. Her grateful and gratified heart could hardly restrain its expressions within the language of tolerable calmness" (Austen 141). The phrase "Northanger Abbey" excites her and reflects a preconceived notion of the location, fuelled by her love of Gothic books. The use of such emotions as ecstasy emphasises her happiness. Northanger Abbey is more than simply a vacation; it is a dream come true. Despite her overwhelming emotions, she strives to maintain a sense of normality. This implies a battle between her social politeness and her boundless enthusiasm. In short, the line depicts Catherine's initial reaction to Northanger Abbey as a pleasure. It is more than a home; it may serve as the scene for fantastic Gothic adventures similar to those she reads about. Although this may seem to be the initial idea, in fact, after providing Catherine with an escape, the Gothic world becomes a mirror reflecting her own stupidity and immaturity. The way Catherine's obsession with Gothic horror and mystery can help her become more aware of reality and therefore more mature is that she appreciates them, so the perspective about life through Gothic becomes her own; she is moved to an unfamiliar world, seeing everything through fresh eyes and grasping it with a different mentality (Mathison 147). While losing herself in these magical stories, she also gains a new perspective on life, which helps her to accept her own inadequacies and to develop as a person. Her realisation that, despite its mystery and intrigue, Northanger Abbey is ultimately just a regular location without the Gothic horrors she had anticipated is a clear example of this transition.

Val McDermid's aim is different from Austen's. The plot is situated in a modern location, such as a large, ancient, and remote estate. McDermid generates a Gothic ambiance with a more nuanced and psychological approach. It includes a more dangerous environment, a history of bloodshed or dark secrets linked to the house, and possibly even otherworldly forces. McDermid describes Cat's first impressions of Northanger Abbey by saying "the abbey was vampire heaven" (McDermid 101). Here, the setting itself would play an active role in contributing to the story's tension and mystery. The

protagonist's anxieties and perceptions of the situation cause unease. The house has a dark past or disturbing elements that Cat interprets from a current Gothic perspective.

Another example of Cat's thoughts on the Tilneys' mysterious and suspicious behaviour comes from a moment at the Book Festival. Isabella and Catherine have a chat about Henry Tilney and his odd behaviour, and Isabella gently pokes Cat in the arm, saying, "That is it; he is a vampire. That is why he is not available this evening. It is far too bright for him to be outside" (McDermid 46). This playful conversation between Isabella and Catherine demonstrates how McDermid transforms Catherine Morland's obsession with Gothic novels into Cat's interest in contemporary vampire romance (Stovel 112). This statement exemplifies how Isabella's vampire joke mirrors McDermid's changes to Catherine's characteristics. In the adventure that begins with Catherine's naive personality, her first impressions of her visit to the abbey are conveyed by Austen as follows:

She was to be their chosen visitor; she was to be for weeks under the same roof with the person whose society she mostly prized; and, in addition to all the rest, this roof was to be the roof of an abbey! Her passion for ancient edifices was next in degree to her passion for Henry Tilney—and castles and abbeys made usually the charm of those reveries which his image did not fill. To see and explore either the ramparts and keep of the one or the cloisters of the other had been for many weeks a darling wish, though to be more than the visitor of an hour had seemed too nearly impossible for desire. (Austen 142)

It depicts Catherine's enthusiasm about her approaching visit to Northanger Abbey. There are two causes for her happiness. First, she will spend a long period of time living with Henry Tilney, whom she adores. Secondly, Northanger Abbey is an ancient abbey, and Catherine has an interest in investigating historical places. In fact, her affection for abbeys and castles is equal to her affection for Henry. Catherine has been dreaming of visiting the abbey's interesting hallways and cloisters for weeks, and her wish has finally come true. It is unimaginable that she will be able to spend more than a brief visit at Northanger Abbey, so her long stay is a dream come true. The final two sentences let the sublimation process extend from Catherine's thoughts into the written word. By carefully editing Henry out of himself, the text hides the aspects of him that Catherine would have wished to learn more about syntactically. In addition, the word "desire" serves as a reminder of Catherine's innate tendencies at the conclusion of a very polite sentence (Loveridge 28).

Though the reader's perception of Catherine's heroine's "passion" for Henry is reinforced to a great extent by the author, Catherine is left stunned when she finally sees Henry's crenellations (Loveridge 28). The following quotation supports the previous one and again makes it easier to convey Catherine's first impressions and feelings to the reader.

Northanger turned up an abbey, and she was to be its inhabitant. Its long, damp passages, its narrow cells and ruined chapel, were to be within her daily reach, and she could not entirely subdue the hope of some traditional legends, some awful memorials of an injured and ill-fated nun. (Austen 142-143)

Austen's descriptive language creates an image of a potentially scary location, ideal for Gothic secrets. The Abbey is characterised as an ancient building, standing pretty much alone in its grounds with long, melancholic pathways and dusky, tapestry-hung chambers. McDermid expresses Catherine's impressions as being a visitor as follows:

And now she was the General's chosen visitor, she would be cheek by jowl with the man of her dreams for as long as she was at Northanger Abbey. And that was the icing on the cake. Cat's passion for atmospheric architecture was only just second to her passion for Henry. Her imagination had always been filled with images of pinnacles and buttresses, battlements and cloisters, priests' holes, and secret passages. Long before she'd ever clapped eyes on Henry, they'd been the stuff of her fantasies. (McDermid 187)

General Tilney invites Catherine to the Abbey, and it is during this visit that the changeover between Catherine at Bath and at Northanger is expected and mostly executed (Loveridge 27). The reason for Catherine's change is the General's unexpectedly unpredictable style of speech, which stems from his implicit belief that the person he is speaking to is just as heroic as he is financially (Loveridge 27). He works on her emotions while stroking her with words, his thoughts focused on her potential advantages, until he reaches his fortunate conclusion (Loveridge 27). Still, the leading factor in Catherine's misperception is actually General's son Henry. Henry Tilney's description of Northanger Abbey shapes Catherine's perception of the abbey into a thrilling place filled with secrets and intrigue. Jane Austen describes it as follows:

To be sure, I have. Is not it a fine old place, just like what one reads about? And are you prepared to encounter all the horrors that a building such as 'what one reads about' may produce? Have you a stout heart? Nerves fit for sliding panels and tapestry? Oh! yes—I do not think I should be easily frightened,

because there would be so many people in the house—and besides, it has never been uninhabited and left deserted for years, and then the family come back to it unawares, without giving any notice, as generally happens. No, certainly. We shall not have to explore our way into hall dimly lighted by the expiring embers of a wood fire nor be obliged to spread our beds on the floor of a room without windows, doors, or furniture. (Austen 161-162)

With this parting cordial she curtsies off—you listen to the sound of her receding footsteps as long as the last echo can reach you—and when, with fainting spirits, you attempt to fasten your door, you discover, with increased alarm, that it has no lock." "Oh! Mr. Tilney, how frightful! This is just like a book! (Austen 162)

This atmosphere leads to Catherine's subsequent misinterpretations of *Northanger Abbey*. Henry creates a picture of *Northanger Abbey* for Catherine, and at the same time, he actually limits Catherine's imagination and makes her perceive the abbey from his perspective. McDermid, on the other hand, explains Catherine's reactions to the description of Abbey as follows:

Henry shook his head. 'And are you ready for all the horrors that a house like that has to offer? As well as an iron constitution, are you fearless? Are your nerves up to it?' He dropped his voice to a ghoulish pitch. 'Can you handle sliding panels, priest holes, secret passageways hidden by ancient tapestries?' Cat laughed. 'What, you think I'd be scared so easily? You don't know me, Henry Tilney. Besides, there'll be lots of people in the house. It's not like it's been standing empty for years and we're coming back to face down the old ghosts – which is what it would be if this was really a horror movie. (McDermid 213)

He is attempting to scare Catherine with the thought that *Northanger Abbey* has dark secrets like sliding panels, priest tunnels, and ghosts. This is an allusion to the Gothic literature Catherine enjoys reading. She dismisses the thought of being terrified. She even criticises Henry, claiming that the situation is cliché. Henry attempts to create tension, but Catherine reduces it with reasoning. It portrays her as a strong heroine who is not easily intimidated by Gothic clichés. In fact, the traditional Gothic storyline of *Northanger Abbey* is limited to Henry Tilney's provocative narratives, in which he traps the naive Catherine in a novel that describes her visions of the Abbey and portrays her as its heroine, trapped inside (Stern 31-32). "Will not your mind misgive you," he says, "when you find yourself in this gloomy chamber-too lofty and extensive for you, with only the feeble rays of a single lamp to take in its size..." (Austen 162). His story unfolds

into a sequence of terrifying events that prevent the young heroine as she investigates a hidden room, finds a door skilfully concealed under a falling tapestry, and endures the terrors of a haunting vault (Stern 31-32). Henry's narrative, full of suspense and terror, culminates in a dramatic cliff hanger when Catherine discovers a secret room and confronts an uncanny cellar. His suspicious behaviour, marked by his secretive demeanour, adds to the overall mystery and intrigue of the story.

However, Henry is not the only one who behaves mysteriously; there are also mysteries about his mother, which are also covered up. Cat asks unknown facts about Mrs. Tilney and suspects that Mrs. Tilney is a victim of domestic abuse and may be imprisoned in the old tower (Stovel 112). Austen demonstrates Catherine's concern as follows:

Here was another proof. A portrait—very like—of a departed wife, not valued by the husband! He must have been dreadfully cruel to her! Catherine attempted no longer to hide from herself the nature of the feelings, which, in spite of all his attentions, he had previously excited, and what had been terror and dislike before was now absolute aversion. Yes, aversion! His cruelty to such a charming woman made him odious to her. (Austen 185-186)

The quote demonstrates Catherine's emotions when she sees a portrait of General Tilney's wife. The image shows that Mr. Tilney does not value his wife, and Catherine concludes that he must have treated her cruelly. This realisation changes Catherine's feelings towards General Tilney from terror and dislike to utter aversion. McDermid changes Cat's thoughts about the mystery of Mrs. Tilney as follows:

The rejected portrait was, in Cat's eyes, another proof of the General's disdain for his wife. And what would a vampire do to a wife he no longer loved? Would a disease of the blood be the perfect cover? Was she a vampire too? And could one vampire kill another from their family group? Was that allowed? And if not, where was Mrs. Tilney now? (McDermid 252)

In Catherine's eyes, this abbey hosts mysterious and dangerous events, and the Tilneys mask them. McDermid depicts Cat's journey to Northanger as a detective investigation (Stovel 112). The Scottish setting creates this atmosphere and lets McDermid build upon her extensive knowledge of the country, transforming it into a Gothic setting for mediaeval abbeys surrounded by thirsty vampires (Stovel 112). Thus, inspired by her Scottish background, McDermid's Gothic depiction of Northanger Abbey evokes a sense

of mystery and danger, as the Tilneys are thought to be hiding dark secrets, echoing Catherine's detective-style inquiry. In the next quote, Austen expresses Catherine's feelings and her question mark in her mind during the tour of Northanger Abbey as follows:

An abbey! Yes, it was delightful to be really in an abbey! But she doubted, as she looked round the room, whether anything within her observation would have given her the consciousness. The furniture was in all the profusion and elegance of modern taste. The fireplace, where she had expected the ample width and ponderous carving of former times, was contracted to a Rumford, with slabs of plain though handsome marble and ornaments over it of the prettiest English china. The windows, to which she looked with peculiar dependence, from having heard the general talk of his preserving them in their Gothic form with reverential care, were yet less what her fancy had portrayed. To be sure, the pointed arch was preserved—the form of them was Gothic—they might be even casements but every pane was so large, so clear, so light! To an imagination which had hoped for the smallest divisions, and the heaviest stone-work- for painted glass, dirt, and cobwebs- the difference was very distressing. (Austen 165-166)

Catherine is initially excited to be at a real abbey, but a brief look around collapses her hopes. Northanger Abbey is a completely contemporary structure. The home decor does not reflect her romanticised image, and General Tilney is so eager to show off the latest features that anything purchased two years ago appears to be rather old (Moore 66). Firstly, the furniture is sleek and modern, in sharp contrast to Catherine's concept of mediaeval simplicity. The huge fireplace she planned, with its broad opening and massive carvings, was eventually replaced with a more contemporary Rumford fireplace. It contains modest marble slabs and beautiful English china decorations, which is not what she was expecting. This is functional, but it differs significantly from Catherine's dream. Of course, Austen wants readers to laugh at Catherine's ridiculous expectations that the Tilney house would be a Gothic replica of Ann Radcliffe (Moore 66). Actually, Catherine's dream also highlights her immaturity. She is so obsessed with Gothic literature that she is unable to discriminate between truth and sensationalised narrative. This emphasises a recurring topic in Austen's work: the importance of clear judgement and not being misled by appearances or previous assumptions. By contrasting Catherine's fantasy with the actual abbey, Austen creates a humorous situation while also remarking on the dangers of an overworked imagination and the appeal of sensationalised fiction.

Morrison explains the atmosphere of the abbey as follows:

With the walls of the kitchen ended, all the antiquity of the abbey...all that was venerable ceased here. The new building was not only new but declared itself to be so; intended only for offices, and enclosed behind by stable yards, no uniformity of architecture had been thought necessary. Catherine could have raved at the hand that had swept away what must have been beyond the value of all the rest for the purposes of the mere domestic economy. (Morrison 12)

This quote displays Catherine's romantic and Gothic novel-influenced preferences. She seeks the ambiance of the past and is dissatisfied with the present, utilitarian approach. General Tilney, who is showing her around, most certainly has a different perspective, prioritising practicality over appearances. According to McDermid, Catherine depicts the abbey as a modern vampire house as follows:

It was the décor that astonished and dismayed her. Instead of a massive carved fireplace, rough stone walls, and a flagged floor, the room looked like an illustration from a Scandinavian lifestyle magazine. Blond wooden floors with bright modern rugs, plastered walls adorned not with stags' heads and salmon in display cases but with tapestries and hangings in contemporary style. The furniture flew in the face of tradition also; everything had been designed to within an inch of its life with comfort, beauty and function carrying equal weight. Treacherously, Cat remembered James talking about the family home of an Oxford friend – 'So cool it wanted to snog itself.' Given that she'd been expecting atmosphere and cobwebs, Cat felt almost distraught. It reminded her of nothing so much as the ultra-modern home of the vampires in the first Twilight film. (McDermid 219-220)

The decor is completely contrary to Cat's expectations. The description suggests a scenario straight out of a modern living magazine. Furthermore, the emphasis on clean lines, design, and utility contrasts with Cat's preference for a more atmospheric, historic setting. Also, the comparison to Twilight's ultra-modern vampire house emphasises the coldness and lack of warmth that Cat connects with contemporary decoration. So, Cat's experience shows a mismatch between personal preferences and current aesthetics. She wishes for a setting rich in history and ambiance, but instead finds herself in a bright, practical room that seems impersonal and uninspired.

Catherine is disappointed because there is not enough concrete evidence for her unlimited imagination. The tour's main aim is of a completely different order: it is less a

tour than a slight survey, less an exercise in enlightened concern than in panoptic power. Catherine suspects that there are many chambers secreted (Morrison 13). However, the real image of the abbey does not offer a feeling of mystery or distrust. Yet, Catherine's intuition says there is more to the Abbey than meets what appears.

Catherine, like a detective, goes into secret rooms to uncover the truth. Her goal is to discover the truth and the horror of Mrs. Tilney and her mysterious death. Austen conveys this to her readers with the following quotation:

Catherine, for a few moments, was motionless with horror. It was done completely; not a remnant of light in the wick could give hope to the rekindling breath. Darkness, impenetrable and immovable, filled the room. A violent gust of wind, rising with sudden fury, added fresh horror to the moment. Catherine trembled from head to foot. In the pause which succeeded, a sound like receding footsteps and the closing of a distant door struck on her affrighted ear. Human nature could support no more. A cold sweat stood on her forehead, the manuscript fell from her hand, and groping her way to the bed, she jumped hastily in, and sought some suspension of agony by creeping far underneath the clothes. To close her eyes in sleep that night, she felt must be entirely out of the question. With a curiosity so justly awakened and feelings in every way so agitated, repose must be absolutely impossible. The storm too abroad so dreadful! She had not been used to feel alarm from wind, but now every blast seemed fraught with awful intelligence. The manuscript so wonderfully found, so wonderfully accomplishing the morning's prediction; how was it to be accounted for? What could it contain? To whom could it relate? By what means could it have been so long concealed? And how singularly strange that it should fall to her lot to discover it! Till she had made herself mistress of its contents, however, she could have neither repose nor comfort; and with the sun's first rays she was determined to peruse it. But many were the tedious hours which must yet intervene. She shuddered, tossed about in her bed, and envied every quiet sleeper. (Austen 174-175)

This quote shows Catherine's loss of control and vision, which is a classic horror cliché. The abrupt rush of wind heightens the terror, creating a sense of discomfort and the unknown. Catherine's terror grows as she imagines footsteps and a closed door. Her bodily response is tremendous. She trembles, sweats, and seeks sanctuary behind the blankets. Sleep is impossible, and the long hours before daylight become agonising. She envies the tranquillity of people who can sleep, emphasising her own troubled condition. Overall, this part depicts a drastic transition in Catherine's emotional condition. From early scepticism to overwhelming terror, the darkness and imagined sounds leave her

interested yet scared to uncover the truth. McDermid presents the same horrible situation to her readers as follows:

Cat edged the door open and slipped through. Darkness again engulfed her as she silently pulled the door to and let the latch slip back into place. She tiptoed down the hall then turned on the bright screen of her phone app. It created an eerie glow, splashing shadows up the walls. But it provided decent light to climb the stone stairs, so old and worn that each step had a depression in the middle. Within a few seconds she had rounded the first turn in the spiral. She heard a scrabbling by her feet. Cat stifled a shriek and splashed the light downwards to reveal a tiny grey mouse paralysed with fear. Annoyed with herself, she shone the light upwards again. Ahead of her were more steps but now she could see the way ahead was blocked by a set of iron railings like an old-fashioned prison cell, fastened with a heavy galvanised padlock. Cat crept closer, studying the padlock in the phone light. She didn't know whether to be relieved or disappointed at the cobwebs and dust that festooned the padlock and the nearby bars. It was clear that nobody had disturbed it in a very long time. Then all at once noise and light seemed to fill the hall way. Swift footsteps clattered up stairs and a bright overhead light bathed her in its brilliance. Even if she'd had time to make her escape, Cat was frozen with fear. The General was coming. The General would not, could not let her get away. (McDermid 274-275)

As a whole, this part shows the tension through opposing feelings (relief vs. disappointment) and a rapid change in tone. It leaves the reader hanging, wondering who "The General" really is and what will happen to Cat. However, Catherine's Gothic dreams are broken frequently and humorously, ending in Henry's condemnation of her crazy imaginings of the General's alleged cruelty (Moore 66). Catherine's seeking for the world of a Gothic novel conceals a deeper ambition: to discover any remains of the ancient institution upon which the Tilneys have constructed their rural estate (Moore 66). Although she is curious about the abbey's past, she is surprised to see so little of it preserved (Moore 66). Though initially appealing, Catherine's Gothic dreams ultimately function as a diversion from her more profound desire to learn more about the abbey's past, exposing her underlying ambition and curiosity among her fantastical imaginings. While this part emphasises the Gothic representation of the setting in *Northanger Abbey*, as a source of mystery and intrigue, the following part focusses on how the Gothic setting is actually parodied.

Northanger Abbey is a Gothic parody, especially with regard to the fantastical settings it uses. The eerie mediaeval of Northanger Abbey serves as the backdrop for a

humorous parody of Gothic clichés. The apparent dread of Gothic settings is eventually undermined by Austen's skilled implementation of the genre's traditions to create a hilarious condition. The Gothic novel's surroundings are ideal for creating a feeling of tension and dread. The genre is symbolised by old castles situated on windswept cliffs, winding hallways, and hidden rooms. There is a passing similarity between these Gothic surroundings and Northanger Abbey. An ancient building, standing pretty much alone in extensive grounds, is how the abbey is described. The extensive grounds provide a feeling of seclusion that is characteristic of Gothic literature. However, Austen soon eliminates any possibility of real terror by emphasising how well-kept the abbey is. The heroine Catherine Morland finds it promising rather than alarming, noting that it is not by any means decaying.

Austen parodies the Gothic obsession with the past even more. Being an enthusiastic reader of Gothic fiction, Catherine is full of anticipation when she arrives at Northanger Abbey, full of ideas of secret passageways and lurking dangers. She perceives everyday items incorrectly as clues to a shadowy past. A shipwreck tapestry captures her curiosity about a terrible family past, and a plain chest turns into a possible storehouse of antiquated secrets. The abrupt contrast between Catherine's idealised Gothic vision and the dull reality of the abbey is what gives birth to the humour. The grand narrative of a haunted past she envisions is utterly absent. In the following quote from *Northanger Abbey*, Henry Tilney confronts Catherine Morland about her intense worries.

If I understand you rightly, you had formed a surmise of such horror as I have hardly words to—Dear Miss Morland, consider the dreadful nature of the suspicions you have entertained. What have you been judging from? Remember the country and the age in which we live. Remember that we are English, that we are Christians. Consult your own understanding, your own sense of the probable, your own observation of what is passing around you. Does our education prepare us for such atrocities? Do our laws connive at them? Could they be perpetrated without being known, in a country like this, where social and literary intercourse is on such a footing, where every man is surrounded by a neighbourhood of voluntary spies, and where roads and newspapers lay everything open? Dearest Miss Morland, what ideas have you been admitting? (Austen 204)

When she quickly exits the room because she is tired of investigating and runs into her beloved Henry Tilney, her humiliation is complete (Hopkins 413). Henry bursts the whole

wonderful bubble once the first shock of meeting in that location has worn off (Hopkins 413). Just like with Marianne Dashwood, Miss Austen takes pleasure in making Catherine come to her senses (Hopkins 413). Mr. Tilney criticises her for allowing herself to indulge in such grotesque ideas. However, Henry's sarcasm, in a sense, works against us to create a false psychological security, giving us the impression that the "delusion" he forces Catherine to reject could not have been as easily and thoroughly described as it first appeared (Kearful 524). Then, he continues to serve as a reminder of their true situation: England is a Christian country with laws and social systems that forbid the type of awful acts she has read about in her Gothic books. Therefore, the best use of human nature is to let culture shape it; naturalness is characterised by accepting new sensibilities, like a love of flowers, rather than by replicating pure feelings or rejecting artificial embellishments (Fleishman 658). By bringing up the open communication and mindful ethics of English culture, he highlights the ridiculousness of her perspective. While Henry never focused his irony on his father (Kearful 522), he basically tells Catherine to apply reason and observation of the outside world instead of allowing her imagination to run wild. Moreover, burlesque reductionism is by no means relevant to the General's strict manner or actually disagreeable actions (Kearful 522). Furthermore, the adventure's main problem—Mrs. Tilney's death—is undeniably genuine; this is not just a case of our imagination going too far (Kearful 522). This indicates that the storyline of the novel is based on a true tragedy rather than being purely motivated by Catherine's overactive imagination. The next quote from Val McDermid's reimagining of *Northanger Abbey* does not actually appear in Jane Austen's novel. Still, it displays McDermid's use with a more direct and modern tone and again emphasises the inaccuracy of Cat's perception.

Anything else would have been awful.' 'You say awful, but that's what you were thinking, isn't it? Jeez, Cat, is this how you generally behave when you're invited into people's homes? Just think for a minute what you've been fantasising about. What kind of people do you think we are here? We're not the kind of low-life heathens I find myself defending in court every week. I don't know what life's like in Dorset, but here in the Borders we don't deal in the kind of atrocity you've been imagining. Besides, how do you think my father could get away with murder? Or, what? Keeping my mother locked up like a princess in a tower? (McDermid 281)

McDermid sets the story in a more straightforward and modern tone than Austen's work and emphasises even more the differences between the Tilney family's reality and

Catherine's Gothic fantasy. She also stresses the use of reason and reasoning to dispel her unreasonable worries. The following part marks a turning point for Catherine in *Northanger Abbey*.

The visions of romance were over. Catherine was completely awakened. Henry's address, short as it had been, had more thoroughly opened her eyes to the extravagance of her late fancies than all their several disappointments had done. Most grievously was she humbled. Most bitterly did she cry. It was not only with herself that she was sunk—but with Henry. Her folly, which now seemed even criminal, was all exposed to him, and he must despise her forever. The liberty which her imagination had dared to take with the character of his father—could he ever forgive it? The absurdity of her curiosity and her fears—could they ever be forgotten? She hated herself more than she could express. (Austen 205)

Her romantic illusions of Henry Tilney and *Northanger Abbey* have been utterly destroyed. The ridiculousness of her Gothic fantasies is shown by Henry's clear explanation. She is crushed by her own fantasy, and the regret and shame consume her. Worse, besides feeling stupid, she worries that Henry will always hate her. The next quote from Val McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* shows Catherine struggling with her delusions.

The visions of romance were over. Henry's words, brief though they had been, had such an impact that all she could see was the absurd extravagance of her recent imaginings. She had humiliated herself, shamed herself, abused her hosts. Sobs shook her shoulders; it wasn't only that she despised herself. Henry too must hold her in total contempt now. Her terrible folly was laid bare before him. He tried really hard to treat it like a joke, but it had become clear to her that he was wounded at the notion she should think so badly of his father. She hated herself more than she could express. (McDermid 281-282)

Her intricate Gothic illusions are destroyed by Henry's direct words, leaving her vulnerable and extremely embarrassed. The line "The visions of romance were over" establishes a depressing tone, which highlights the quote's emotional effect. Furthermore, the statement "she had humiliated herself, shamed herself, and abused her hosts" emphasises how serious her misunderstandings were and how they affected the way she behaved. The last depiction, which is similar to Austen's work, is one of intense self-hatred. Although McDermid's portrayal of Catherine reflects the essence of her realisation in Austen's work, it does so in a more straightforward and modern manner.

Catherine is liberated from the connections of her imagination through the use of judgement, intelligence, observation, and a sense of the likely. We are taught that the “visions of romance” are now behind us. Now fully awake, Catherine lets her mind run wild and discovers the extravagance of her late fancies and the liberty which her imagination had dared to take (McDermid 281-282). Before turning in for the night, she muses over the folly that had been all a voluntary, self-created delusion, each trifling circumstance receiving importance from an imagination resolved on alarm, and everything forced to bend to one purpose by a mind which, before she entered the abbey, had been craving to be frightened this evening (McDermid 281-282). Catherine’s imagination is never a source of truth; instead, it is always the source of deceit due to its exaggeration and mistaken identification of Gothic-romantic ideals with reality (McDermid 281-282). Catherine is constantly misled by her imagination, which distorts reality with incorrect and exaggerated ideas of Gothic romantic ideals. In the end, this causes her to have a severe self-examination as she sees how foolish her false beliefs and concerns were. Austen shows Catherine’s sense of intense self-reproach as follows:

The liberty which her imagination had dared to take with the character of his father—could he ever forgive it? The absurdity of her curiosity and her fears—could they ever be forgotten? (Austen 205)

The part conveys a strong feeling of introspection. Catherine feels terrible for the way her imagination has distorted reality and fears the consequences it might have on her relationship with Henry and the Tilney family. At this point, the significance of expressing herself begins. Hélène Cixous examines the societal barriers that have historically kept women from speaking up about their experiences in “The Laugh of the Medusa.” Cixous emphasises that language has served as both a potential catalyst for human freedom and a place of subjugation for women (Cixous quoted in Cordón 42). The examination of language by Cixous in “The Laugh of the Medusa” demonstrates the language’s dual function as an instrument of oppression and liberation, exposing the social constructs that have traditionally suppressed women’s voices and restricted their freedom of expression. Catherine, too, blames herself for the woman’s restricted use of language and the resulting misrepresentations, because the environment does not allow her the freedom to express herself freely. McDermid illustrates Catherine Morland’s heartbreaking admission of her errors as follows:

Her imagination had taken liberties, and now she would have to pay the price. It was over with Henry. Nobody could forgive the absurdity of her curiosity and suspicions. Thank God she hadn't said anything about her vampire convictions. (McDermid 282)

McDermid clearly expresses the essence of Catherine's emotional turmoil. Because of her vivid imagination, her heroine is faced with a harsh reality check and fears rejection and loneliness. With its dark humour, the last phrase adds a realistic human aspect and illustrates how, even in the midst of misery, we may find comfort in small victories, even if they are only thoughts. The individual is frequently denied her "turn to speak" (Cixous 879) due to the prevalent and stereotyped attitude towards women, whether by estimation, blindness, randomness, or custom (Cordóon 42), and this leads the protagonist to fear rejection and loneliness. In this part, Austen states that Catherine deals with the complexity of human nature.

There, such as were not as spotless as an angel might have the dispositions of a fiend. But in England it was not so; among the English, she believed, in their hearts and habits, there was a general though unequal mixture of good and bad. Upon this conviction, she would not be surprised if even in Henry and Eleanor Tilney, some slight imperfection might hereafter appear; and upon this conviction she need not fear to acknowledge some actual specks in the character of their father, who, though cleared from the grossly injurious suspicions which she must ever blush to have entertained, she did believe, upon serious consideration, to be not perfectly amiable. (Austen 207)

As the quote states, she had thought that individuals could be simply classified as angels or evil, but her experiences in England have made her doubt this oversimplified perspective. She sees in the English, even in the supposedly flawless Tilneys, a "general though unequal mixture of good and bad" (Austen 207). She may now admit to having overstated her prior suspicions regarding Henry and Eleanor's father thanks to this additional knowledge. Despite his innocence, Catherine's growing viewpoint has led her to view him as having somewhat of a harsh personality. McDermid describes the turning point for Cat's realisation about complex human nature as follows:

It was time to let it go. Cat had to start seeing the world as it was, not as she dreamed it. People were not angels or devils. Even in her darkest imaginings, she had still been forced to consider the General's magnanimity. And she must acknowledge to herself that, even with such paragons as Henry and Ellie, some slight imperfection might eventually appear. Everyone had shades

of grey between the black and the white of their extreme characteristics. It was just that some, like the General, were less amiable than others. (McDermid 284)

After this remark, Cat undergoes changes. She understands that it is time to let go of her idealised perception of the world in which individuals are either good or bad. Despite her initial concerns, the General's act of goodwill leads her to recognise this complexity. The character whose dialogue is most frequently recorded in free indirect speech is the mysterious General Tilney. For example, the narrator's revelation of the General's unpleasant personality, followed by an unexpected courtesy recorded in free indirect speech, sets off a warning alarm of his underlying duplicity (Shaw 594-595). It is possible for even seemingly ideal people, like Henry and Ellie, to have flaws because everybody possesses a combination of positive and negative characteristics, as the quotation highlights the idea of "shades of grey." The General is not necessarily evil; he is just not as kind as other people. Still, General Tilney's changeable demeanour makes Catherine's misunderstandings much easier. However, through personal growth and new insight, Cat is able to let go of her harsh opinions and adopt a more grounded perspective on the world. Greed and deceit, led by General Tilney, drive a misunderstanding that left Catherine as its victim, and the next quote from Austen expresses it.

She was guilty only of being less rich than he had supposed her to be. Under a mistaken persuasion of her possessions and claims, he had courted her acquaintance in Bath, solicited her company at Northanger, and designed her for his daughter-in-law. On discovering his error, to turn her from the house seemed the best, though to his feelings an inadequate proof of his resentment towards herself and his contempt of her family. John Thorpe had first misled him. The general, perceiving his son one night at the theatre to be paying considerable attention to Miss Morland, had accidentally inquired of Thorpe if he knew more of her than her name. Thorpe, most happy to be on speaking terms with a man of General Tilney's importance, had been joyfully and proudly communicative; and being at that time not only in daily expectation of Morland's engaging Isabella, but likewise pretty well resolved upon marrying Catherine himself, his vanity induced him to represent the family as yet more wealthy than his vanity and avarice had made him believe them. (Austen 254-255)

This quote makes it clear that the real reason General Tilney invites Catherine to stay at his house is that he thinks Catherine is richer than she really is, thanks to John Thorpe's misinformation. Thorpe overstated her family's wealth in an attempt to win over the

General and maybe get married to Catherine. After learning the facts, the General believed Catherine should be banished because of her lack of riches. His anger at her alleged deceit as well as his contempt for her family's actual financial circumstances were evident in this brutal conduct. McDermid expresses Catherine's comment on the Tilneys' kind of vampirism as follows:

For the longest time I thought you were vampires. The way you all avoid the sunlight. The way you all look young for your years. The fact that none of you looks like the woman you call your mother. The food you eat – rare steaks and liver, all that blood. But you Tilneys are a different kind of bloodsucker. It's money you're interested in, not blood.' Henry stopped in his tracks, his mouth open, his expression bewildered. 'Vampires? You mean, like in those books and films? With all that misogyny and oppression and werewolves and shit?' 'Exactly. Because what is your father if he's not oppressive and misogynist? Treating me like dirt, and all because he believed Johnny Thorpe. (McDermid 336)

The quote illustrates Catherine's humorous misinterpretation of the Tilneys. She first sees their actions from the perspective of a vampire, driven by her love of Gothic literature. However, she compares the brutal treatment of General Tilney based on riches to the dominance of the traditional vampire, branding them as a distinct type of "bloodsucker" that is fixated on money rather than blood. The many vampire myths all share a few key elements. First, this theory holds that the human body is in a process of transition and that vampires are created, not born (Tamas and Voigts 90). They experience two different births: the human birth and the vampiric birth (90). Then, although all vampires have the potential to become eternal, they are unable to do so unless they adhere to a set of rules, which include hiding from sunlight, living only at night, and sacrificing (or changing into) their warm-blooded human counterparts (90). Many of these features provide facts that support the scenario that Catherine has constructed in her head. Their dislike of sunlight turns into a vampire cliché, their young look is dubious, and their consumption of rare meat is mistaken for bloodlust. Henry's shocked response draws attention to how ridiculous her misperception was and emphasises even more how different her imagined and real worlds are. Although the Tilneys' are not traditional vampires, General Tilney is such a bloodsucker for money.

By depicting Northanger Abbey in this way, Austen and McDermid highlight the absurdity of the Gothic movement's dependence on stereotypical settings. Seen in a clear-

eyed, humorous light, the grand old house disguised in mystery loses its terrifying force. The transformation of *Northanger Abbey* from a place of terror to one of amusement highlights the Gothic genre's ability to evoke genuine fear.

To sum up, the setting of *Northanger Abbey* is a masterful parody of the Gothic novel. While Austen creates a witty and perceptive criticism of the Gothic genre by using well-known Gothic motifs and then reversing them, McDermid adapts the Gothic motifs in an updated form. The grand, decaying manor, the dark atmosphere, and the obsession with the past are shown to be literary devices rather than actual sources of fear. The key message of the *Northanger Abbey* Story is that wit and satire have the ability to lighten even the darkest and most ominous situations.



CHAPTER TWO

FEMINIST CRITIQUE AND THE GOTHIC CONFLICTS IN 'THE *NORTHANGER ABBEY* STORY'

This chapter aims to analyse in depth feminist critique and the Gothic conflicts in 'the *Northanger Abbey* Story.' Known for the cult of domesticity, morality, and respectability, the Victorian age witnessed significant social and political changes. Women in particular start to question society's patriarchal systems and their accepted roles. This encourages the emergence of a feminist criticism that addresses a wide range of topics, including restrictions on legal rights, double standards, and limited educational prospects. In fact, the rise of the feminist movements of the period makes it possible to show that women are subjected to various negativities in social life, making it possible to witness that they are reflected as inferiors in society in many different ways, and they aim to reduce these negative impacts on women.

To begin with, the first component is the lack of property rights and is referred to as limited legal rights. In legal terms, married women could neither inherit nor possess property; they are seen to be their husbands' property. Because of their societal dependency on their spouses, women are viewed as less valuable members of society. As a result, the idea that males are superior to women in all respects is accepted as a result of society's double standard. So, the following component is related to double standards and sexual morality. The cult of domesticity is one of the crucial terms for the component. According to this term, women are supposed to stay at home and dedicate their lives to raising children, taking care of the home, and practicing their religion because "domesticity was trumpeted as a female domain" (Abrams 2). Women are given moral obligations to their households, particularly their husbands, but also to society at large through their domestic responsibilities (Abrams 2). Therefore, males are the distinct superiors in Victorian society, and women are merely instruments to support this superior power.

Moreover, the main reasons that compel women to be dependent on their husbands are based on the educational rights that are not provided to women. Since women, who

are deprived of their right to education, do not have sufficient knowledge and equipment, they unfortunately have a very limited working area in business life. In *Northanger Abbey*, through Cat and Ellie's aspirations for their careers, McDermid illustrates these narrow ranges of occupations that are seen as appropriate for women as follows:

Mum thinks I should train as a nanny, but I'd quite like to be a writer, she said. Not for grown-ups, for kids. I'm really good at making up stories for the kids in the village. And I do the storytelling at Junior Church. Hey, you could be my illustrator! That'd be fun. Maybe we could try to start one while you're here? Yes, why not? (McDermid 269)

The quote illustrates how women's opportunities for employment are restricted throughout the era. The protagonist, Cat is under pressure from her mother to become a nanny, even though she would much rather be a writer. This is a reflection of the cultural norms prevalent at the period, which frequently restrict women to home duties and constrain their ability to grow in their careers. Furthermore, the concept of co-authoring a children's book expresses a yearning for freedom and creative expression, but it also highlights the difficulties women encounter in obtaining fulfilling employment.

As supported by the quotation, for women who do not have access to economic freedom and many educational options, the only solution to ensure a decent standard of living is to be dependent on their husbands. Women's intellectual growth and employment opportunities are restricted by the frequent denial of formal education. This lack of being a sufficient individual causes the limitations for women in society.

The last but certainly not least item is social and cultural constraints. This topic distinguishes between two kinds. Insufficient social mobility is the first one, and in this case, women are frequently restricted in the social roles they play and in the connections they have. Mental health difficulties make up the other component of this topic. Women's mental health issues are made worse by social pressures, opportunity constraints, and cultural norms. For society, "He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other" (Beauvoir 16). While "she" (representing women or femininity) is reduced to the role of the "Other," the marginalised, excluded, and dependent, "he" (representing males or masculinity) is portrayed as the essential, dominating, and universal subject. This indicates a hierarchical binary, and many people believe that patriarchal discourses and systems that have traditionally favoured males and marginalised women are the source of

this duality.

Therefore, the feminist criticism of the Victorian era paves the way for more equality and justice for women by criticising patriarchal standards and laying the foundation for the women's rights movement of the twentieth century. Within the greater Victorian feminist movement, Gothic feminism becomes a prominent subgenre. Gothic feminism makes use of Gothic literary tropes, such as eerie, gloomy locations, supernatural components, and themes of oppression, lunacy, and death, to criticise patriarchal systems and social norms that place restrictions on women.

The following are a few of the main features of Gothic feminism. The initial one among them is the investigation of female autonomy. Gothic literature frequently stars powerful female characters who question patriarchal authority and disregard social standards. The other component is the critique of patriarchal oppression, in which Gothic fiction regularly highlights the brutality, cruelty, and oppression that women endure in Victorian society. These works' supernatural themes frequently function as allegories for the mental and emotional struggles that women experience, and the exploration of feminine lunacy supports this important feature. Gothic literature has employed the cliché of female lunacy to criticise the silencing of women. The characters are commonly presented as the products of patriarchal tyranny, with their insanity being seen as a sign of their defiance of social norms. The last one is the subversion of established gender norms. In this component, Gothic feminism questions gender norms by presenting women as strong, self-reliant, and even otherworldly entities. These individuals show the possibility of female autonomy and resistance while also defying social norms.

As a result, Gothic feminism provides a special and effective way to examine the possibilities for female autonomy in the Victorian era and to critique patriarchal tyranny. These works show the dark side of Victorian society and question conventional gender roles by using Gothic literary techniques.

By examining Gothic elements, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* presents a nuanced yet potent feminist critique. Austen uses a parody of the Gothic genre in her work to highlight the restrictions and prejudices that were placed on women during this era. The main character, Catherine Morland, is first lured to the Gothic genre and dreams

of treasures hidden away and about secret passages and enigmatic villains. Yet as she gets mature, she starts to doubt these idealistic ideas and realises the risks associated with letting her imagination run wild.

The point of Austen's criticism is to show how Gothic traditions serve to restrict women's autonomy and maintain patriarchal stereotypes. Austen, in *Northanger Abbey*, makes mockery of the exaggerated actions of the female characters, who would respond to an insult with silence, avoidance, or flirting as a kind of response, by drawing on her knowledge of narrative structure (Cordóon 46). By referring to her heroine as "natural," Austen demonstrates how well Catherine understands her thoughts and feelings; Miss Morland does not need to filter her expression through other people's expectations (46). Additionally, by showing her personal ability to avoid such restrictive standards, the narrator challenges the societal script for women (46). Through her parody of the Gothic, she argues that women ought to confront and comprehend the reality of their own lives rather than being restricted to such dramatic and sensationalised stories. In fact, the Gothic scenes at Northanger serve to highlight by contrast that Catherine can only find happiness in accepting the general ordinariness of life, as demonstrated by the witty and original, but completely unromantic Henry Tilney, and not in fantasy or romantic escape from reality (Glock 38). To sum up, Austen challenges the social restrictions placed on women through her criticism of Gothic traditions in *Northanger Abbey*. Austen promotes a more genuine and self-aware attitude toward feminine expression by mocking the dramatic and excessive actions of Gothic heroines. Austen's concept of female liberty is personified by Catherine Morland, who is a natural and unfiltered figure. In the end, Austen implies that embracing life's everyday routine and rejecting the appeal of romantic fancy is the path to genuine happiness.

Val McDermid's adaptation of *Northanger Abbey* delves into Austen's work in terms of feminist issues from a more modern lens. The underlying issues and social expectations that the female heroine must deal with are still relevant even if the Gothic aspects have been altered to fit a contemporary environment. Because McDermid believes that "one of the strengths of Jane Austen's work is that when we reread her, she rewards the different sensibilities of our age" (McDermid 356). Besides, McDermid highlights her admiration for Austen's works with the following quote, and says:

We might not read the novels of Mrs Radcliffe and Thomas Love Peacock these days, but human nature remains the same. We all know people who live their lives convinced the zombie apocalypse is just round the corner or who place the same faith in Bridget Jones and her fellow heroines as the young protagonist, Catherine Morland, places in the reality of the horror novels she loves. And with equally unfortunate emotional consequences. The satire bites as hard as it did at the time of writing. (McDermid 356)

In a Gothic atmosphere, McDermid explores a variety of topics, including the complicated relationships of female friendship and rivalry, the constraints placed on female autonomy in patriarchal societies, and gender-based violence. The Gothic features represent the dark side of social systems and the protagonist's internal turmoil. McDermid provides readers with an alternative perspective on enduring themes of feminism and the Gothic by setting *Northanger Abbey* in a contemporary setting, which enables them to relate to the narrative on a personal level. The following parts focus on how the Gothic features contribute to showing the oppressions on women and the internal and external conflicts that the protagonist faces in both Jane Austen's novel and Val McDermid's adaptation of *Northanger Abbey*.

Although the main focus of Austen's work is a parody of manners, it also quietly examines the limitations placed on women in this historical period. Austen examines how Gothic norms, which frequently portray women as weakened victims, reinforce negative stereotypes and patriarchal power systems through the lens of her protagonist, Catherine Morland. By examining the Gothic elements in *Northanger Abbey* and seeing how they relate to the subjugation of women, Austen's satirical purpose can be better understood, and her broader critique of gender norms and social expectations can be better appreciated. In her work, Austen first shows the inequality of the opportunities between the genders by showing through Henry how both sexes use the English language. Although Henry seems to be complimenting women on their letter-writing skills, his remarks really highlight gender norms and underlying social expectations that restrict women's intellectual and creative ability, as demonstrated by *Northanger Abbey*'s Gothic elements in the following quote.

My dear madam, I am not so ignorant of young ladies' ways as you wish to believe me; it is this delightful habit of journaling which largely contributes to form the easy style of writing for which ladies are so generally celebrated. Everybody allows that the talent of writing agreeable letters is peculiarly

female. Nature may have done something, but I am sure it must be essentially assisted by the practice of keeping a journal". "I have sometimes thought," said Catherine, doubtingly, "whether ladies do write so much better letters than gentlemen! That is—I should not think the superiority was always on our side". "As far as I have had opportunity of judging, it appears to me that the usual style of letter-writing among women is faultless, except in three particulars." "And what are they?" "A general deficiency of subject, a total inattention to stops, and a very frequent ignorance of grammar". "Upon my word! I need not have been afraid of disclaiming the compliment. You do not think too highly of us in that way". "I should no more lay it down as a general rule that women write better letters than men, than that they sing better duets, or draw better landscapes. In every power, of which taste is the foundation, excellence is pretty fairly divided between the sexes". (Austen 21-22)

The quote discusses the topic of letter writing and the comparison between men and women's abilities in this area. Henry argues that women are generally better letter writers due to their frequent practice of journaling. Still, Henry Tilney displays a manly enthusiasm for reading novels, and he has found that males read novels nearly as well as women do (Hopkins 398). He says:

I, myself, (he says to Catherine Morland), have read hundreds and hundreds. Do not imagine that you can cope with me in a knowledge of Julias and Louisas. If we proceed to particulars, and engage in the never ceasing inquiry of 'Have you read this?' and 'Have you read that?' I shall soon leave you as far behind me as. . . your friend Emily herself left poor Valancourt when she went with her aunt into Italy. (Austen 110-111)

As the quotation implies, it is accepted that both men and women have strengths and weaknesses in writing, while he argues that men read novels almost as well as women. It is still accepted that women's style is more refined and more enjoyable to read. Nevertheless, the important point here is obvious: the only way women express themselves is using language effectively. Hélène Cixous examines the societal barriers that have historically kept women from speaking up about their experiences in "The Laugh of the Medusa" (quoted in Cordón 42). Cixous's observations highlight how crucial language is to a woman's ability to express herself. She emphasises that language has served as both a platform for human freedom and a location of subjugation for women (quoted in Cordón 42) and expresses her thoughts by saying,

I mean it when I speak of male writing. I maintain unequivocally that there is such a thing as marked writing; that, until now, far more extensively and repressively than is ever suspected or admitted, writing has been run by a

libidinal and cultural—hence, political, typically masculine—economy; that this is a locus where the repression of women has been perpetuated, over and over, more or less consciously, and in a manner that's frightening since it's often hidden or adorned with the mystifying charms of fiction. (Cixous 879)

As the quotation makes clear, writing has traditionally been controlled by a male-centric viewpoint, maintaining the suppression of women through both explicit and implicit tactics. However, it is more crucial for the female gender to express themselves more. The following quote is from McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* and she expresses the comparison between the sexes in social life in a more modern way as follows:

'You're telling me that guys don't do exactly the same thing?' Henry nodded. 'We do different stuff. We talk about sport or politics or who got impossibly drunk on Friday night. We don't do the chit-chat about our lives the way you girls do. We talk about serious stuff. Plus, we have better punctuation and grammar'. Cat hooted with laughter. 'Now you really are kidding. Here's one thing that guys do much more than women – trolling. You are the evil that stalks the Internet, with your shouty capital letters and your swears and your truly terrible mangling of the English language'. Now he was laughing too, enjoying the effect of what she realised was a wind-up. 'To be honest, I think the honours are pretty much divided between the sexes,' he said. 'Men are just as gossipy as women, and you girls can give as good as you get in the abuse stakes'. (McDermid 29)

The quotation draws attention to the gender norms that influence behaviour and communication. It implies that men and women converse in distinct ways, with men concentrating on important subjects and women chit-chatting more intimately. Even though Catherine's speech seems less elegant in comparison to Henry Tilney's skilled use of language, naturally, being less linguistically capable is not a sign of being less intelligent (Cordón 49). In fact, this part subtly criticises the societal demands imposed on women throughout the era. Gothic literature frequently highlighted women's limitations, including their confined social positions and the repression of their intellectual and creative potential. This sentence reaffirms the Gothic motif of women's disempowerment, implying that women are less eloquent. This is consistent with the fact that Gothic literature frequently depicts women as victims of male dominance and societal limitations, with their voices typically silenced or ignored. Actually, by making an unintentionally humorous comment, Catherine demonstrates the unplanned wisdom of feminine speech (49). While Catherine Morland is expressing her emotions, she uses the

language in a straightforward, honest, and open manner (49). Still, the quote dispels these myths by emphasising that both sexes are capable of gossiping and arguing. This implies that both genders are capable of a range of behaviours and that the distinctions in communication styles may be deeper than previously believed. However, this myth is only one of stereotypes about gender roles because this era has lots of strict rules about the roles and expectations from genders. As the following quote captures, nineteenth-century society has some strict ideals around romance and gender roles.

...That no young lady can be justified in falling in love before the gentleman's love is declared, it must be very improper that a young lady should dream of a gentleman before the gentleman is first known to have dreamt of her. How proper Mr. Tilney might be as a dreamer or a lover had not yet perhaps entered Mr. Allen's head, but that he was not objectionable as a common acquaintance for his young charge he was on inquiry satisfied; for he had early in the evening taken pains to know who her partner was, and had been assured of Mr. Tilney's being a clergyman, and of a very respectable family in Gloucestershire. (Austen 24)

Austen concentrates on the interaction between genders. In a fresh relationship between two genders, it is believed that males are viewed as active pursuers and women as passive, waiting for men to show love interest. Also, it highlights this double standard that a woman should not dream of a gentleman until he has shown interest. This statement clearly addresses a key aspect of Gothic-feminist criticism: the repression of feminine desire. Women in Gothic literature are typically represented as passive objects of male desire, with their agency and autonomy severely restricted. The idea that a woman should not dream of a gentleman until he expresses interest shows this repression. This restraint mirrors the patriarchal systems of the time, which denied women the ability to pursue their own wishes and limited their social and emotional independence. This cultural expectation, as stated in the passage, is an important point of conflict within the Gothic-feminist worldview. Women are supposed to keep their calm and refrain from seeming overly eager or forward. Moreover, the significance of respectability and social position is also emphasised in the quote. According to Mr. Allen's background inquiry, socioeconomic status and family connections play a big role in choosing suitable partners for Mr. Tilney.

The Victorian period is one of the most effective periods in showing the sharp

boundaries between the sexes. While women are expected to be sensitive, obedient to men, and dependent on men, men are expected to be authoritarian, dominating, superior, and ruling. In the next quote, McDermid tries to show the expectations of the genders in society by adding a little difference by putting forward the debate on whether Henry is gay or not.

Satisfied that he wasn't a gay man in disguise, Susie tucked a hand under Cat's arm. Sounds like she'd be a perfect pal for you, Cat. I hate to drag you away when you two are just getting to know each other, but we're on a tight schedule. (McDermid 31)

The quote exposes gender and sexuality-related prejudices and preconceptions in society. The narrator's concern that Mr. Tilney may be "a gay man in disguise" draws attention to the prejudice and anxiety that sexual and gender minority community faced at the time. Moreover, the word "gay man" is insulting and out of date, and it shows a lack of awareness about and tolerance for other sexual orientations. The narrator's hypothesis that Mr. Tilney could be concealing his sexual orientation highlights the pressure from society to adhere to conventional gender norms and expectations.

However, it is also insufficient that only the sexes fulfil the expectations recognised in society. Many factors, such as gender roles, economic competence, and family structure, are some of the characteristics that need to be met in order to be suitable individuals accepted by society. The next quote from McDermid describes the way in which Catherine and Henry meet and try to find out more about each other, despite the main aim being to emphasise the importance of family structure in the choice of a partner.

Her first port of call had been Facebook. Disappointingly, Henry didn't share his information with people who weren't his friends. And since they had no friends in common, there was nothing she could glean by a more circuitous route. Next she tried Google. There, she did find a Henry Tilney, but since this one was a much-decorated general who had made his name in the Falklands war before Cat had even been born, this obviously wasn't her dance partner. Out of curiosity, she clicked on the 'image' button. Even allowing for the scale of the photo on the phone, the resemblance between General Tilney and her dance partner was so uncanny that the relationship between them was immediately obvious. Father and son, no question about it. (McDermid 33-34)

The main focus is on the points made on gender and family dynamics, even if the quote

notes that Catherine tries in vain to locate Henry Tilney's Facebook profile or through a more indirect search. It is indicative of prevailing views about family dynamics and men's roles in society that the narrator instantly assumes the general is Henry Tilney's father. It implies that the narrator expected the general would have a son because of his military profession and typical masculine character. As stated, a number of requirements must be met in order to become an acceptable member of society, including strictly defined gender roles, financial literacy, and family dynamics. To be a suitable person who is accepted by society, one needs to possess these characteristics.

As discussed in the previous paragraph, social conventions and expectations frequently act to confine individuals, but Austen's *Northanger Abbey* provides a refreshing critique of these limitations, especially for women. This section concludes by explaining how Austen's *Northanger Abbey* masterfully challenges the Gothic genre, which is frequently connected to heightened anxiety and the victimisation of women. Austen gently criticises the social restrictions placed on women while parodying Gothic clichés through Catherine Morland's imaginative adventures. A deeper level of Austen's work is revealed to readers by analysing the Gothic aspects in the novel. Her depiction of Catherine's early interest in Gothic novels and her eventual disenchantment reflects the social constraints that women in this era experienced. Therefore, Austen's satire provides a means of examining the restrictions imposed on women as well as the ways in which cultural myths maintain patriarchal power systems. Ultimately, Austen's ability of satire and social criticism is evident in *Northanger Abbey*, which provides a sophisticated examination of gender roles and society's expectations.

A fascinating viewpoint on Austen's original work is found in Val McDermid's modern version of *Northanger Abbey*. The main plot points of Austen's narrative are preserved in McDermid's work, but it also adds new issues and topics. McDermid examines how gender, class, and societal expectations have changed over time by modernising the characters and setting. Her work offers an insightful analysis of these issues' timeless quality and ongoing significance in modern society. With the help of characters like General Tilney, Henry Tilney, and others, the next section uses feminist critique to explain the Gothic dilemmas that the main heroine, Catherine Morland, experiences.

The parody of Gothic extravagance emphasises meaning by representing the role fantasy plays in human life and the dangers of blind adherence to imagination without the support of reason (Glock 36). As seen in both Val McDermid's modern retelling and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, the Gothic genre provides a lens through which to analyse the complex connection between fantasy and reality due to its focus on the power of imagination. The Gothic is a genre widely used to examine how gender norms and societal expectations can limit and influence women's imaginations. This part analyses Gothic elements and their impact on women in these selected novels.

'The *Northanger Abbey* Story' demonstrates how Gothic tropes, which are frequently connected to tension, terror, and supernatural aspects, can be used to question patriarchal power systems and the restrictions placed on women when seen from a feminist viewpoint. Initially captivated by Gothic literature, Catherine Morland in Austen's *Northanger Abbey* dreams of secret tunnels, hidden treasures, and enigmatic villains. Her preoccupation with these aspects suggests a desire for autonomy and agency while also reflecting the expectations society places on women. Nevertheless, as the story goes on, Catherine's Gothic visions are shown to be delusions, underscoring the necessity to face reality and the risks of depending too much on romantic ideals.

By adapting the story to a modern context, McDermid's *Northanger Abbey* offers a novel examination of Gothic themes and their applicability to current culture. Although the work keeps the essential components of Austen's original, it also presents fresh viewpoints and difficulties. For instance, McDermid's Cat reflects the changes in society since Austen's day by being a more self-reliant and outspoken figure. She still has to deal with restrictions imposed by patriarchal systems though, underscoring the persistent existence of gender inequity.

In both novels, the representation and treatment of women in society are criticised through Gothic aspects. Through an analysis of the terror, tension, and paranormal aspects present in these works, readers get a more profound comprehension of the power structures involved and the constraints placed on women. In the end, the Gothic conflicts in *Northanger Abbey* are an effective feminist criticism weapon that highlights the persistence of patriarchal power systems and the continuous fight for gender equality.

In addition to exposing the patriarchal power dynamics between men and women, *Northanger Abbey*'s Gothic themes also draw attention to the internal conflicts that exist within the masculine gender as males struggle with control and supremacy, and Austen illustrates the patriarchal tensions between General Tilney and his son Henry Tilney in the following quotation.

The general, accustomed on every ordinary occasion to give the law in his family, prepared for no reluctance but of feeling, no opposing desire that should dare to clothe itself in words, could ill brook the opposition of his son, steady as the sanction of reason and the dictate of conscience could make it. (Austen 258)

General Tilney is a controlling man who is used to getting his way in his family. Only emotional resistance, not obvious vocal disagreement, will be tolerated; he wants obedience and surrender. For the first time in his life, Henry is inspired to rebel against his father by Catherine after General Tilney expels her from Northanger Abbey and sends her home (Cordón 57). He also has the support of Catherine's example to support his revolt. Henry "has been open and bold" in his interactions with his father, as the story makes clear. Up until this point in the novel, Henry has rarely been outspoken and never brave. Having been "accustomed on every ordinary occasion to give the law to his family," Henry surprises Catherine when he eventually has the courage to stand against his father (57). Because of his stereotyped thoughts and behaviours, the general is unprepared when his son dares to disagree with him on the basis of conscience and reason. He reacts strongly to this unexpected challenge to his authority that is based on principle rather than mere sentiment. Thanks to the use of Gothic literature, which frequently examines the repressive powers of society and the subversion of conventions, the themes of individual rebellion and patriarchal authority support asking readers to think about larger social concerns and how people oppose oppressive systems by analysing the dynamics of power and control inside the family. According to McDermid, this section represents an instance of patriarchal power relations, in which the father's authority is unchallenged and maintained by a strict set of norms.

‘Do you have to do everything your father tells you?’ Cat said. ‘My dad hardly ever puts his foot down because he knows we generally don’t pay the least attention.’ A muscle tightened in Henry’s jaw. ‘My father takes the view that anyone who lives under his roof plays by his rules. (McDermid 151)

Henry's circumstances reflect a more conventional, authoritarian structure, whereas Cat's family appears to function on a more relaxed, permissive dynamic. This difference between Henry and Cat's experiences emphasises the various ways that patriarchal systems emerge. The complexity and diversity of ways that gender roles and power dynamics can be dealt with within various family systems are highlighted by this comparison. McDermid also examines Henry's psychological reactions to such strict supervision, arguing that it causes him to feel resentful, rebellious, or driven to reject his father's influence.

Furthermore, the repressive aspect of patriarchal control is further highlighted by the conflict between Henry and his father. The story is made more psychologically difficult by Henry's internal conflict between his ancestral duty and his need for freedom, which emphasises the damaging effects of patriarchal power. By examining these subjects, both authors encourage readers to think about how patriarchal authority prevents personal development and causes internal conflict. While the preceding analysis delves into the destructive impact of patriarchal control on individual autonomy, the quotation that follows turns the attention to the limitations placed on young women by romantic ideals and cultural expectations.

The quotation implies that young women generally have a propensity to put their love aspirations ahead of the limitations of reality. "But no young woman has ever allowed reality to stand in the way of her romantic fantasies, and in this respect, Cat was no exception to the rule" (McDermid 271). Gothic literature frequently examines the darker aspects of human nature, especially those related to obsession, insanity, and the paranormal. This quotation emphasises how romantic fantasy may turn into a terrible power, which is consistent with Gothic themes. There are harmful consequences when romanticised ideas of love are prioritised above reality. By upholding this romantic ideal, Cat is exposing herself to sorrow, disappointment, or even a run-in with the less pleasant parts of life.

According to feminist criticism, the quotation emphasises how society forces women to live up to particular romantic standards. Young women are frequently urged to put love and marriage ahead of their own goals and satisfaction. This presumption

restricts their options and maintains gender inequity, and Cat's devotion to romantic fantasy is a result of a patriarchal culture that upholds conventional gender norms and expectations. By integrating Gothic and feminist viewpoints, the quotation means that Cat uses her romantic idealism as a means of escape, enabling her to momentarily escape the confines of her everyday life. Nevertheless, this escape is also a kind of self-deception, which results in pain and disappointment. In summary, the quotation provides a nuanced examination of the human propensity to choose illusion above reality, especially when it comes to love relationships. It draws attention to the possible risks that such idealism poses to both the individual and society at large. Examining the quotation from a feminist and Gothic perspective helps us better understand its underlying concepts and consequences.

The preceding section investigates the psychological complexities of interpersonal interactions and the attraction of illusion, whereas the next section presents a distinct perspective. An analysis follows, exploring how the literary domain, with a focus on Gothic fiction, serves as a reflected surface, echoing and questioning existing societal standards. Examining McDermid's rewriting of the novel's conclusion demonstrates how literature enables people, women in particular, to stand up to repressive powers and claim their own agency.

By rewriting the novel's ending, McDermid gives her young female heroine a loud, explicitly resistant voice to condemn Gothic psychological cruelty, furthering Cat's regained demonstrations of agency (Manizza Roszak 607). Through this rewrite, Cat is able to show her strength and regain her agency towards society and to have an opportunity to publicly condemn the mental suffering she experienced, rejecting the classic Gothic narrative that frequently victimises and marginalises female protagonists. The next quotation is from the ending part and highlights gaining Henry and Catherine's independence and love above their families' expectations and shows the destruction to the social norms.

It was some time before they reached the Allens' house and afterwards, neither would have been able to give any sort of account of the conversation that took place there. By the time they returned to the vicarage, the matter was sealed. Henry explained to the Morlands that he had argued so fiercely with his father that he feared there could be no reconciliation. 'But I have a

profession,' he said. 'I'll be fully qualified by the end of the year. I can support myself without taking a penny from him. I'll be fine. Straightening things out with Cat has been worth much more than any amount of money.' The two young lovers looked at each other. 'Vampire,' she said. 'Lesbian,' he replied. And to the astonishment of the Morlands, they burst into helpless laughter. (McDermid 338-339)

This quotation highlights a crucial turning point in the lives of the protagonists, when they decide to put their independence and love above their families' expectations. They show strength and resolve by choosing to continue their relationship in spite of possible conflict and financial insecurity. Using self-deprecating labels, the couple's amusing interaction demonstrates their endurance and capacity for humour in challenging situations. This humorous exchange highlights how deeply they are connected and how they understand each other. The couple's strength is demonstrated by their courageous choice to put their love and independence above custom.

The final example shifts the focus a little bit and tries to show how the same-gender characters Catherine and Isabella have distinct personal concerns and societal expectations. A more nuanced view of such differences results from the complexity of female agency, which is frequently impacted by both personal concerns and cultural expectations. Disparities in experiences, viewpoints, and ideas on gender roles and equality can give rise to feminist critique among women. Even if a woman makes a choice, she questions it if she believes it limits her own freedom or reinforces traditional gender standards. This occurs in a number of settings, including personal relationships and family arrangements.

In *Northanger Abbey*, Isabella and Catherine stand in for a sharp contrast in morals and characteristics. The primary reason why Isabella, a cunning and shallow young woman, befriends Catherine is for her own benefit; she wants to use the Morland family's fortune to advance in society. Isabella has the most confidence in the capitalist market's ability to provide a platform for female self-assertion among all the female characters (Zlotnick 281). Isabella is totally different from Catherine. Austen describes Catherine while Catherine is expressing her opinions as follows: "Catherine again discerned the force of love. 'Indeed, Isabella, you are too humble. The difference of fortune can be nothing to signify'" (Austen 123-124), Isabella expresses her ideas from a totally different

perspective and says:

Oh! My sweet Catherine, in your generous heart I know it would signify nothing; but we must not expect such disinterestedness in many. As for myself, I am sure I only wish our situations were reversed. Had I the command of millions, were I mistress of the whole world, your brother would be my only choice. (Austen 123-124)

Despite Isabella's exaggerated language, the proclamation exposes her dishonesty and her belief that having money is a definite way to achieve freedom, which is the only way to ensure true choice. Isabella believes that a phrase that starts with "Had I the command of millions" can only conclude with "choice" since, to her, having millions is logically equivalent to having choice (Zlotnick 281). Isabella actually only has authority over herself, and since he is the only man who has selected her, James Morland turns out to be her "only choice" at the moment (281). As the quotation supports, Isabella thinks that the key to freedom and choice is wealth. She believes she could pick any man, even James Morland, if she were rich. She does not have a lot of money, though, and she has few choices. Since he is the only one who has selected her, James Morland is actually her only option.

Her main priority is finding a wealthy husband, and she is prepared to compromise her morals and interpersonal ties in order to accomplish this. Catherine, on the other hand, is the antithesis of Isabella (Zlotnick 283), as a young woman who is "open, candid, artless, guileless, with affections strong but simple, forming no pretensions, and knowing no disguise" (Austen 213). Catherine is a young, idealistic, and naïve lady who is readily influenced by Isabella's charm and flattery. Although Catherine Morland is a naïve girl, creating the modern protagonist Cat Morland was a bit challenging for McDermid. She expresses the difficulties about creating the modern protagonist as a naïve girl in a modern world by saying,

That was one of the toughest challenges. In a world where teenagers spend so much time on social media and consuming YouTube, it was hard to imagine a background for Cat that would provide that essential innocence and unworldliness. So I set her down in a small Dorset village, the daughter of a vicar, and kept her close by having her home-schooled. (McDermid 348)

Due to her naivety and inexperience, at first, Cat is unaware of Isabella's actual character

since she adores her. But as a result of her experiences, Catherine eventually comes to understand Isabella's true character and frees herself from her control. She gradually learns to distinguish between genuine compassion and superficiality.

Because Catherine's progress from innocence to self-awareness complements the novel's investigation of the Gothic genre and its influence on perceptions of reality, this dynamic emphasises the issue of disillusionment and the value of critical thought. While Catherine's self-discovery journey emphasises the individual's battle against social norms, McDermid's observation of the larger societal restrictions placed on women puts these difficulties in negotiating their identities and relationships in even more context. Catherine and Isabella perceive the same subjects through very different lenses due to their disparate experiences, perspectives, and attitudes on gender roles, and the following quotation illustrates this clearly by saying,

And we're women. We're supposed to flirt and be changeable. A woman's prerogative, like Beyoncé says.' 'But I've not been changeable. I never flirted with him in the first place. You're describing something that never happened, Bella'. (McDermid 193)

Catherine is challenging the idea that women are inherently flirtatious and changeable. She clarifies that this is not how she has behaved and that the charge is unfounded. Given how women are portrayed in popular media as strong, independent, and in charge of their own lives, the allusion to Beyoncé's song *Single Ladies (Put a Ring on It)* is noteworthy. Nevertheless, Catherine is arguing that this representation of the strong woman does not necessarily fit with preconceptions and expectations from society.

Ultimately, this quotation highlights the complicated and frequently conflicting nature of gender roles through the characters of Catherine and her antithesis Isabella. By substituting the readers' romantic fantasies of the boundless possibilities available to them (and to characters in love novels) with a realistic understanding of the constraints in real life, Jane Austen sought to ensure her readers' confidence in her version of reality—a normative reality (Stone 70). As it is emphasised, the demands of society result in a distorted sense of self, but interpersonal deception makes the process of becoming self-aware much more difficult. However, in Austen's novels, to think properly is to submit to the current social order, and there is little sign that she thinks any significant changes

are necessary. The influential female author, Jane Austen, is also the novelist who is the freest from stereotypes about male and female roles (70). Even though Jane Austen, a master of characterisation, frequently challenges gender norms, Isabella Thorpe is a female figure that defies all societal expectations. The next quotation emphasises the conflict between Catherine's developing understanding of her friend's genuine character and Isabella's deceptive actions.

Cat could hardly believe her ears. Not only was Bella flirting shamelessly with Freddie, she was brazenly doing it in front of her fiancé's sister. She was afraid that if she stayed any longer she might overhear something she could not in all conscience keep from relaying to her brother. (McDermid 194)

Women are expected by society to uphold high moral standards, especially when it comes to their conduct in public. It is seen as extremely wrong and can harm one's reputation to flirt, especially in front of a fiancé's sister. Isabella's self-centredness is highlighted by her complete disregard for social conventions. She is willing to take the risk of social rejection in order to follow her own desires, which in this case include getting Freddie's attention. On the other hand, Isabella's behaviour worries Catherine. As a young lady who respects truthfulness and morality, she feels compelled to tell her brother about Isabella's actions.

This internal conflict is a reflection of the complicated social constraints that Victorian English women experienced, as they are frequently divided into the need to fit in with society's expectations and the desire for personal liberty. Finally, these excerpts emphasise the intricacies of female friendship and the influence of social norms on individual behaviour, especially within the framework of Victorian England.

In conclusion, through their literary interventions, McDermid's and Austen's interventions are both substantive and resistive (Manizza Roszak 620). They both provide important criticisms of social norms and expectations. Particularly, Austen's narrator employs a vocabulary of resistance at essential points in *Northanger Abbey*, which highlights the patriarchal nature of its own sociohistorical world (620). Still, McDermid's overt and forceful reworking provides an effective counter-narrative to the sometimes repressive Gothic genre's clichés. McDermid's contribution is especially well-suited to a current cultural time where readers are demanding more and more stories that not only

denounce social injustice but also imagine better futures (620). Both writers add to a rich literary heritage that never stops inspiring and stimulating thinking in their own unique ways.



CONCLUSION

By focusing on ‘the *Northanger Abbey* Story,’ this thesis has attempted to comprehensively examine and compare the representations of the Gothic and its feminist critique in the selected novels within the framework of adaptation studies. It has also contributed to a deeper comprehension of how the Gothic genre is represented in these works of literature in a variety of ways. The analysis offered in this study has connected with a feminist critique of the current social order, which was a major concern in the Victorian era. ‘The *Northanger Abbey* Story’ depicts the restrictive expectations placed on women in Austen’s day, particularly in terms of marriage, domesticity, and intellectual pursuits, and, despite historical changes, some societal concerns about female agency and social expectations remain relevant today. These concerns, supported by Gothic parody, are potentially related to modern feminist difficulties through an examination of Val McDermid’s *Northanger Abbey*.

The purposes included illustrating how the duties and responsibilities of being a woman in the Victorian era have combined with the Gothic genre. In her novel *Northanger Abbey*, Jane Austen parodied the Gothic genre in order to demonstrate society’s restrictions on women. Val McDermid used the Gothic genre, along with some current instances, to support Jane Austen’s thoughts about the role and position of women in the modern day.

There is a natural but underexplored interaction between the feminist viewpoint and the Gothic genre, and the novels *Northanger Abbey* by Jane Austen and Val McDermid, respectively, demonstrate this connection with a few distinctions. ‘The *Northanger Abbey* Story’ is a satirical Gothic parody that indicates and deconstructs the patriarchal anxieties and social conventions imposed on women since the first publication of Austen’s novel, observed through the eyes of a young woman’s imaginative misunderstanding.

Through the protagonist, Catherine, these works have aimed to eradicate women’s dependence and society’s harsh attitudes toward women, as well as highlight the need of

openly expressing one's ideas. Women should be encouraged to use their imaginations and openly express their opinions. They should live for themselves, free of societal constraints, and refuse to be trivialized by accepting any limitations merely because they are women. As a result, the emphasis has focused on the importance and necessity of women standing on their own two feet and expressing themselves freely. With a comparative analysis of these books, this thesis has aimed to look into various aspects of the Gothic genre and its feminist critique from an adaptation perspective, thereby enhancing comprehension of the roles and expectations placed on women in two distinct historical periods. Moreover, using satire and humor to critique social norms about women from the viewpoints of Victorian England and modern-day England, the study has indicated that 'The *Northanger Abbey* Story,' by humorously subverting Gothic conventions, highlights the difficulties that women face in everyday life rather than in supernatural realms, proving their absurdity.

In the first chapter, it has been pointed out that *Northanger Abbey*'s setting is an outstanding satire of Gothic novels. While Austen provides a witty and skilled critique of the Gothic genre by reversing well-known Gothic tropes, McDermid updates the Gothic motifs. The vast, decaying manor, the gloomy mood, and the preoccupation with the past are revealed to be literary inventions rather than genuine sources of anxiety. The central idea of 'The *Northanger Abbey* Story' is that wit and satire can brighten even the darkest and most dreary situations. Both Austen and McDermid, despite functioning in very different literary eras, use the Gothic genre as a rich ground for parody. Austen, in particular, effectively deconstructs Gothic literature standards, changing expected clichés into hilarious and satirical situations. The great manor of Northanger Abbey, which is frequently used as a symbol of dread and mystery in Gothic literature, has transformed into a setting for humorous misunderstanding and youthful optimism. McDermid's contemporary retelling expands on this parodic approach. She embraces Gothic characteristics such as the intimidating backdrop and the research of the past but recontextualizes them within a contemporary framework. She emphasizes the ongoing appeal of Gothic fiction while also stressing its limitations and potential for rebellion. Both authors eventually demonstrate the power of satire in exposing the ridiculousness of Gothic customs and providing a more nuanced perspective of human nature and the world around them.

In the second chapter, the Gothic genre, as seen in both Val McDermid's modern retelling and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, has provided a lens through which to examine the complex relationship between fantasy and reality because of its emphasis on the power of imagination. The Gothic genre has commonly been used to explore how gender roles and societal expectations limit and impact women's imaginations. This section has examined Gothic characteristics and their impact on women in these novels. Examining the Gothic and feminist themes in these works has provided insight into how gender norms and societal expectations can impact women's imaginations. In *Northanger Abbey*, Catherine Morland's love of Gothic novels causes her to experience the world through a shifted lens, blurring the borders between fiction and reality. Her imagination, inspired by the Gothic, elevates the seemingly commonplace to the spectacular. Similarly, McDermid's work examines how women's needs and worries are frequently ignored or dismissed in patriarchal society. The Gothic allows these women to challenge cultural limits and envision alternate futures in which they could gain agency and power. By evaluating the Gothic aspects in these writings, the intricate ways in which women navigate the tension between their inner and outside worlds have become clear, and it has contributed to demonstrating how the Gothic genre provides a unique viewpoint on these experiences.

To conclude, the convergence of Gothic and feminist analyses in the literary pieces examined in this thesis has provided an insightful perspective on the lasting influence of these works. By investigating how Austen and McDermid interact with the Gothic genre, we have revealed the intricate relationship between historical background, literary heritage, and modern social concerns. Through examining how these authors related to the Gothic tradition, it has clearly been illustrated how societal expectations and cultural norms have shaped women's experiences and viewpoints.

By examining themes such as gender, class, and power, Austen and McDermid reveal how Gothic fiction continues to challenge traditional narratives and provide fresh perspectives on the human experience, particularly for women. Analysing these works through a feminist perspective has highlighted how the Gothic genre has been employed to both uphold and undermine patriarchal systems while also amplifying the voices of marginalized individuals. Both authors, although distanced by centuries, are cognizant of

the constraints placed on women by societal norms. Austen's satirical examination of Gothic conventions in *Northanger Abbey* acts as a nuanced yet impactful critique of the limiting standards that regulated women's lives in the nineteenth century. McDermid's modern reinterpretation of the novel emphasizes the lasting significance of these concerns, showcasing how gender roles and expectations persistently influence women's experiences.

Viewed through a Gothic perspective, Austen and McDermid reveal the more sinister aspects of human behaviour, especially as they appear within patriarchal systems. By delving into themes of fear, obsession, and the uncanny, they encourage readers to question the underlying beliefs and power relations that support these systems. In this way, they provide a lasting critique of society that continues to resonate with audiences over the years. In the end, the Gothic and feminist aspects of these works enhance our insight into literary history and modern culture. By exploring how these texts interact with both the past and the present, we have reached a greater recognition of the lasting ability of literature to question, stimulate, and motivate.

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