

## Between Gods and Ghosts: Gothic Resonances in Kavita Kane's Mythological Narratives

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### ABSTRACT

The Gothic and mythological retellings have the most in common when it comes to their shared focus on silenced voices and hidden truths. Gothic aesthetics focus on repression and haunting, while mythological retellings try to bring back points of view that have been hidden. Myths are shared memories, and telling them again often shows how violent they are. Gothic settings make this violence worse and show how it affects people over time. So, feminist retellings in Gothic style not only give women back their power, but they also show how trauma affects people across generations. By looking into the classic of Gothic literature by Jane Eyre and the contemporary mythological retellings of Kavita Kane, this article aims at looking into the intersection of these traditions. Myth places characters in the space between gods and people, while Gothic puts them in the space between life and death, sanity and insanity. The study proceeded by first establishing Jane Eyre as “a representation raw feminine instincts” by using gothic features. Then the presence of this literary technique will be analysed in the novels *Ahalya's Awakening* (2021) and *Lanka's Princess* (2017) by Kavita Kane. This will be used in order to bring out the common interest in thresholds, which lets retellings use Gothic settings to make mythic battles more dramatic.

### INTRODUCTION

The Gothic novel and mythological retellings may seem to come from different literary traditions, but their overlap is a great place to look into trauma, identity, and cultural memory. Gothic aesthetics, which focus on darkness, the strange, and psychological depth, are a great way to look at mythological stories in a new way. On the other hand, retellings of myths add depth to Gothic literature by connecting its moods to stories that are universal and timeless.

The Gothic novel first appeared in the late 1700s and is known for its haunted places, beautiful landscapes, and constant feeling of fear. Its style is based on mystery, repression, and the strange return of what is hidden or silenced. The blending of Gothic style and retellings of myths makes a new type of story that is both revisionist and scary. It lets myths be told again not just as stories of empowerment, but also as stories of repression, silence, and strange returns. By combining the dark moods of Gothic literature with the universal themes of myth, writers create stories that question cultural memory, bring attention to voices that are often ignored, and show how trauma can last for a long time.

### GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN JANE EYRE

There are various elements regarding Gothic literature that are considered parallel to Middle Age reading. Hence, integrating similar kinds of settings as well as themes fascinating the readers made way for this thrilling novel ideal which led to popularizing this movement (Boschalk, 2017). There are various components that are related to the Gothic literature that compelled the audiences both in the past and present that involve suspense, fear, mystery, supernatural events, etc. Thus, Gothic elements like these and more have been discussed in a generalized manner below:

#### *I. An atmosphere of Suspense & Mystery*

The most important aspect of an enchanting Gothic story is giving rise to feelings of fear and suspense. Any aspect that is considered to beyond the understanding of science paves the way to mystery and so the Gothic literature uses this as a leverage code. Various works of Gothic include events, objects, and scenes like evil potions, candles, frightful concepts, burials, flickering, etc. (Casanova-Vizcaíno & Ordiz, 2017). For example, in Jane Eyre, a mystery was created behind the

past of Thornfield and Rochester in which Jane could sense that there was something peculiar. Also, elements II, III & IV are inculcated under this atmosphere only.

**II. Supernatural Events**

This aspect explains all the dramatic and amazing events that occur in the story such as the walking of giants or the ghosts or may some inanimate objects (like a painting or a laugh or a blanket) come to the living. In few works, events like these are finally given some kind of natural explanation, wherein sometimes these events are considered to be truly supernatural. For example, in Jayne Eyre, the ghost of Mr. Reed appeared then further sinister and ghoulish laughter of Bertha Mason (Foley, 2020).

**III. Ancient Prophecy**

This aspect is interlinked with a castle or its residents which might be current or former. This prophecy is generally considered to be partial, ambiguous, or vague (Ford, 2018). A modern example for this might amount to the fact that is usually said that the “ghost of an old man Krebs still meanders these hallways”.

**IV. Visions, Omens, and Portents**

This aspect focuses on the fact that a character might be having agitated dream visions or this incident might be recorded as the coming of some events. For example, when a statue of the lord falls then it might portend as his death. In a modern kind of fiction, it might happen that a character sees a shadow figure killing another shadow figure but eventually, think of it as a dream (Hirst, 2020). This all can be considered as a form of “imitation vision”.

**V. Women in Distress**

This aspect creates an appeal for the reader regarding sympathy and pathos, wherein, the characters usually come in contact with events that abscond them with screaming, fainting, sobbing, or terrified. The central figure of the novel is generally, pensive, oppressed, and lonely and her miseries are pronounced even more. This shows that a woman suffers more when they are being left alone, forsaken, etc. Also, a woman is in distress and is considered to be suffering more and more because there is nobody to come to her rescue when she needs it the most (Harris, 2015).

**VI. Overwrought Emotion**

This aspect is considered to be highly sentimental as the characters present usually overcome their sorrow, terror, surprise, and anger. Here, the characters are known to be suffering from a feeling of imminent catastrophe and raw nerves. Emotional speeches, panic attacks, crying, screaming, and breathlessness are constant components here. These listed emotions are considered to be high in the sense of their frequency and sentiments which leads a way for the emotional aspect in the narration and also paves for the readers to have connect with the characters of the novel.

**VII. The metonymy used for gloom and horror**

Metonymy is considered as a subtype of metaphor wherein, something is utilized for standing for something else such as rain is used for showcasing the sense of sorrow, films using rain as metonymy at the time of a funeral scene (Machado, 2016). These factors help in generating the interest of the readers. Also, it is to be noted that the metonymies for “gloom and doom” suggest various elements of the supernatural, danger, or mystery in the story.

wind, especially howling	rain, especially blowing
doors grating on rusty hinges	sighs, moans, howls, eerie sounds
footsteps approaching	clanking chains
lights in abandoned rooms	gusts of wind blowing out lights
characters trapped in a room	doors suddenly slamming shut
ruins of buildings	baying of distant dogs (or wolves?)
thunder and lightning	crazed laughter

**VIII. Women being threatened by a tyrannical and impulsive male**

This aspect focuses upon the fact that one or more than one male character has higher power, authority and acts as a king, father, lord, or guardian and demands the female characters for doing something that is intolerable. This woman might be ordered to marry a person that she is not in love with (it might be possible that a male is more powerful). For example, in the novel, Jane Eyre St. John’s forced Jane to marry him and become a missionary wife because she does not deserve to be loved (Moura, 2017)

**IX. Setting in a castle/ Manor House**

This aspect focuses on the fact the action is going to take place in the region of an old castle that seems to be abandoned or might be occupied but with a lesser number of people. The castle would have various secretive paths, rooms, hidden staircases, trap doors, ruined sections, etc. (Plaza Salguero, 2018). It is not necessary that the castle might be a haunted one it's just that gothic novels are generally set-up in a castle or manor house. The castle chosen might be interlinked with several caves that showcase their own flavor or haunting and branching.

**X. Vocabulary related to Gothic**

The frequent utilization of an appropriate set of vocabulary builds an atmosphere of gothic in the novel. It is important to use the rights words that help in maintaining a dark-&-stimulated feeling which describes Gothic (Billington, 2018). This vocabulary that is related to gothic is utilized in novels such as Jane Eyre to make it purely a gothic kind. For example, below are various words that are utilized in various categories that form a vocabulary of gothic.

<b>Mystery</b>	diabolical, enchantment, ghost, goblins, haunted, infernal, magic, magician, miracle, necromancer, omens, ominous, portent, preternatural, prodigy, prophecy, secret, sorcerer, spectre, spirits, strangeness, talisman, vision
<b>Fear, Terror, or Sorrow</b>	afflicted, affliction, agony, anguish, apprehensions, apprehensive, commiseration, concern, despair, dismal, dismay, dread, dreaded, dreading, fearing, frantic, fright, frightened, grief, hopeless, horrid, horror, lamentable, melancholy, miserable, mournfully, panic, sadly, scared, shrieks, sorrow, sympathy, tears, terrible, terrified, terror, unhappy, wretched
<b>Surprise</b>	alarm, amazement, astonished, astonishment, shocking, staring, surprise, surprised, thunderstruck, wonder
<b>Haste</b>	anxious, breathless, flight, frantic, hastened, hastily, impatience, impatient, impatiently, impetuosity, precipitately, running, sudden, suddenly
<b>Anger</b>	anger, angrily, cholera, enraged, furious, fury, incense, incensed, provoked, rage, raving, resentment, temper, wrath, wrathful, wrathfully
<b>Largeness</b>	enormous, gigantic, giant, large, tremendous, vast
<b>Darkness</b>	dark, darkness, dismal, shaded, black, night

**FOCUS OF CHARLOTTE BRONTE’S WORKS**

Charlotte Brontë, who was the oldest of the Three Brothers, surviving in adulthood and whose novels were classics of English literature, was an English writer and poet (21 April 1816-31 March 1855).

She started school at Roe Head in January 1831, when she was 14 years old. She left to teach her sisters Emily and Anne at home the year after her return as a governess in 1835. In 1839, she was named governor of the Sidgwick family, but she returned to Haworth after a few months, where the sisters opened a college that failed to draw students. Instead, they began writing and publishing under the pen names Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell for the first time in 1846. Although her first novel, The Professor, was rejected by editors, her second novel, Jane Eyre, was published in 1847. The sisters accepted their Bell’s pseudonym in 1848, and literary circles began in London the following year.

Rev. Brontë sent four of his eldest children in 1824 to Cowan Bridge Clergy Daughter School to read. School conditions were bad and at school fever continued to erupt. During her lifetime, Charlotte would attribute her sisters Maria and Elizabeth, who all succeeded in tuberculosis, to the bad circumstances of the school’s demise. Their children’s aunt Elizabeth Branwell became the new teacher after the death of their sisters, Charlotte, Emily, and Anne were removed from the school and taken home.

While the other children were deeply troubled by the death of two of their mothers, they filled their time with fantasy and fiction. For example, after their father gave the toy soldiers to Patrick Branwell in 1826, the children were inspired to invent and write sagas about the fairy realms of Angria and Gondal. Given the monotony of Yorkshire, it is not surprising that the Bronte children began their early discovery of their imagined powers.

Charlotte was sent to Roe Head School, a university headed by Mrs. Wooler and consisting of seven to ten more students, in 1831. Charlotte wanted further schooling to be economically stable because her father’s health was deteriorating. Charlotte’s time at the Roe Head School was difficult: she was apart from the other students, and she suffered from homesickness as a result of her Irish accent, erratic teaching, and quaint wear. Ms Wooler, on the other hand, was a supportive teacher. Charlotte’s previous schooling allowed her to overcome its shortcomings. Charlotte was hired as a teacher at the school in 1832, and she earned several honors for her outstanding bachelor’s degree.

### Her Novels

- **Jane Eyre**

A novel by French author Charlotte Brontë, published on 16 October 1847 by Smith, Elder & Co., London, under the pen name "Currer Bell," by Jane Eyre, originally published as "Jane Eyre: An Autobiographer." Harper & Brothers of New York published the first American edition the following year. [1] Jane Eyre is an educational novel that follows the heroine's experiences, including her adult growth and love for Mr. Rochester, the brooding master of Thornfield Hall.

- **Shirley**

Shirley's A Tale is a social novel written first in 1849 by the English writer Charlotte Brontë. After Jane Eyre (originally written under the Brontë name Currer Bell), this was Brontë's second book. It was published in Yorkshire in 1811–12 after the Napoleonic Wars and War of 1812 industrial crisis. The book takes the form of the Yorkshire garment industry's Luddite uprisings.

Shirley is the name of a woman because of the success of the book. The name that her father wanted to give a son was assigned to the title character. Shirley was an unusual, though clearly male name, until the release of the book. He is still considered a distinguished feminine name.

- **Villette**

The novel Villette is published in 1853 by Charlotte Brontë, an English novelist. After a familial tragedy, the main character Lucy Snowe journeys to the French fictional city of Villette from her native England to enroll in an adventure and romance school for girls.

Villette was the third and last book written by Charlotte Brontë in her lifetime. The Professor (his first book is a reworking of Villette), Jane Eyre and Shirley were followed in fiction.

- **The Professor**

Charlotte Brontë's first book was The Professor, It was published before Jane Eyre, but several publishers have dismissed it. In 1857, with the consent of Charlotte Brontë's widow, Arthur Bell Nicholls, it was posthumously published, and the text was read and edited.

The novel is William Crimsworth, a young man and from his viewpoint is a first person narrative. It outlines his maturation, his teaching experience in Brussels and his personal connections.

The story starts with a letter written by William to his friend Charles, in which he expresses his reluctance to make his uncle a clergyman and to visit his rich brother Edward. Edward assigns William the position of an assistant to his career as a broker. Edward, on the other hand, is envious and dismisses William despite his credentials and intelligence. William was demoted due to the polite Mr Hunsden's behavior, but he started his new work at a boys' boarding school in Belgium.

- **Emma Brown**

Emma is the title of Charlotte Brontë's manuscript, left unfinished when she died in 1855. Clare Boylan wrote and released one pastiche in 2003, called Emma Brown.

In 1853 Brontë started working on Emma. Her marriage in 1854 and her husband's timid zeal for the enterprise may have helped make her advance slowly. The following: When she died in 1855, the book was incomplete.

The original manuscript consists of two chapters which describe the arrival at an expensive private school of a seemingly rich young girl, 'Matilda Fitzgibbon.'

### GOTHIC ELEMENTS IN JANE EYRE

The tradition of Gothic undertakes various elements like complicated histories of families, suspense, horror, mystery, supernatural events, dark secrets, remote locations, manor houses, haunted castles, women in distress, terror, and the primary plot of the novel Jane Eyre is considered to be including most these gothic elements listed above (Rodríguez, 2019). These Gothic elements hold reader's interest and do not let it fall apart. Also, there are various instances of Gothic elements in *Jane Eyre* that are discussed further.

Thornfield, Lowood, and Moor House are all considered as remote locations in the novel, & further Thornfield such as Gateshead is undertaken as an ancient manor home. Furthermore, both Jane and Rochester have complicated histories related to their families then moving forward, Bertha the hidden wife of Rochester is considered as a dark secret at the core of the novel. The most significant moment of the novel is when Bertha is being exposed along with the mystery that surrounds her is the primary source of suspense created in *Jane Eyre* in an effective and efficient manner.

In *Jane Eyre* there are various other Gothic incidences such as Jane coming across the spirit of her dead Uncle Reed inside the red-room; then the moment of a supernatural conversation between Rochester and Jane, when Jane hears the voice of Rochester calling out to her across misty heath which was located miles away; and then Jane misunderstood Rochester's dog named Pilot for a "Gytrash", a ghost from North England manifesting it a dog or a horse (Zeffer and Khurrana, 2018).

Bronte's utilization of Gothic elements in her novel heightens the interest of her reader's along with adding a philosophical and emotional tension in the novel, and then various incidences related to supernatural aspect are being elucidated as soon as the story moves forward (Boschalk, 2017). Also, it was seen that the use of Gothic elements in the novel is used for anticipating and elevating the vitality of the plot's turning point in a very coherent way along with increasing the interest of the readers. Some specific scenes are presented below:

I. *"While I paced softly on, the last sound I expected to hear..... though very distinct, it was very low"* (Bronte, 1847/2018, p. 98).

This particular scene took place at the Thornfield, and this was considered the first time when Jane heard mysterious laughter. This event primarily showcases an atmosphere of suspense and mystery that a novel of Gothic nature must consist of (Foley, 2020). This element of mystery and suspense is created in the novel which gives rise to uncertainties. Also, Mrs. Fairfax conveys to Jane that she feels that it's just Grace Poole but this all adds up to the increasing uncertainty that is going on in the house.

II. *".....I thought the swift-darting beam was a herald.... My heart beat thick, my head grew hot.....someone near me"* (Brontë, 1847/2018, p. 11)

This particular scene took place at the Gateshead, inside the red-room. This was also the first instance wherein, Jane encounters a supernatural event which is a major part of a Gothic novel. Also, while Jane was inside the red-room, she believed that the ghost of Mr. Reed is back from the dead (Ford, 2018). This also symbolized another element of a haunted castle which mainly means the "hidden depths in the mind" wherein, Jane was forced inside the red-room where Mr. Reed's spirit appeared to her, and then from there Jane was haunted by experiences like these all her life, from then.

III. *"At this moment a light gleamed on the wall...while I gazed, it glided up to the ceiling.....then, prepared as my mind was for horror....I rushed to the door and shook the lock in a desperate effort"* (Brontë, 1847/2018, p. 16).

This particular scene took place when Jane remembers the night that she had spent inside the red-room as a part of her punishment at the ancient prophecy of Gateshead after Mr. Reed struck her. This gives the reader a significant moment as well as a gothic and terrifying experience when she was locked in that red-room. When she looked back through the memory lane, she admitted that the light she had seen was mostly like a glimmer from the lantern, but while being in that moment in the past she thought that the light was a vision of her Late uncle Reed. Jane then elucidates how this supernatural vision frightened her and became a crucial aspect in the abuse that she had to suffer at the Gateshead in the hands of her Late Uncle Reed (Billington, 2018).

IV. *"That night I never thought to sleep...I was transported in thought to the scenes of childhood.....inclining a glorious brow earthward"* (Brontë, 1847/2018, Ch. 27).

This particular scene focuses upon Jane describing the supernatural dream that came across her a night before leaving Mr. Rochester and Thornfield. The dream was described by Jane as a mysterious weather, ominous, supernatural interconnection with her days of childhood along with a visit from her mother's ghost that warned her about not giving into temptation. Jane recognized these supernatural and gothic elements as a sign of caution to the dark times further which encouraged her of leaving Thornfield behind and living a better life ahead in the future.

V. *"I, too, had received the mysterious summons... needed not the deeper shade of the supernatural"* (Vol. 3, Chapter 11).

This particular scene was pulled towards the conclusion of the book wherein, Mr. Rochester conveys to Jane regarding a supernatural and strange experience that had occurred to him a night before. Also, here Jane prompts the reader about the "mysterious summons" that she had on the same night itself and in that similar manner only. Jane identifies the connection but rather choose not to tell it to Mr. Rochester as he was already in a phase of "too prone to be gloom" (Casanova-Vizcaíno & Ordiz, 2017). Also, the fact that Jane and Mr. Rochester are interconnected because they had sensed each other at a similar time even though they are far apart is not only considered as mysterious but also romantic and very gothic in nature.

VI. *"Thornfield is neither haunted nor a castle, but this huge, imposing house has a mysterious and threatening atmosphere."* (Billington, 2018)

This particular speech was acknowledged by Elizabeth because Thornfield was considered to have a sinister and dark side which was similar to the thorns in a rose. Also, Thornfield was neither treated like a castle or a haunted castle but it was treated like a manor house that did not have any nobleman's state because here, Bertha the wife of Mr. Rochester was given very little power for conducting things (Machado, 2016). This also showcased another gothic element of setting up a manor house for the conduction of things.

VII. *"If people were always kind and obedient....I am sure we should - so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again"* (Brontë, 1847/2018, ch. 6)

This particular speech happens at the time when Jane was having a conversation with Helen Burns at Lowood. Also, Helen sets down the idea of "turning other cheek" when ill-treated, Jane strongly believes that it is vital for people to defend them and make sure that they are not ill-treated again by someone. This showcases another element of the gothic novel is a woman in distress who eventually rise (Foley, 2020). Jane is not able to mirror the passivity of Helen at Lowood and also her strength and passion of her character would be assisting her in overcoming various impediments in her lifetime.

VIII. *"I knew you would do me good in some way, at some time.... there are grains of truth in the wildest fable. My cherished preserver, good-night"* (Brontë, 1847/2018).

This particular quotation happens instantly after Bertha had set up Mr. Rochester's bed on fire and Jane came to rescue him. Mr. Rochester then obscures his sarcasm for the first time specified in the book and then admits his significant feeling and emotional attachment with Jane. This intimate instance was only possible because Mr. Rochester was in a vulnerable position, and then Jane and the reader both began to notice a person that lives under his distressed and brooding exterior. This showcases the gothic element of overwrought emotions between Jane and Mr. Rochester as the novel continues further. Bronte continued to discover that Mr. Rochester and Jane are kindred characters as the book progresses, as these few lines lay seeds for blazing passion that would pervade further in the relationship of Jane and Mr. Rochester (Boschalk, 2017).

IX. *"Then my own thoughts worried me...masked in an ordinary woman's face and shape, uttered the voice, now of a mocking demon, and anon of a carrion-seeking bird of prey?"* (Brontë, 1847/2018, p. 54).

This particular scene wins the factor of reading a real gothic novel because this showcased a gothic element of secrecy, crime, supernatural event, and mystery. This presents that there had been a secret and an unnamable crime that is attached to Thornfield which cannot be resolved for various mysterious unknown reasons. This leads the readers to identify that it is a human woman which is not at all ordinary because the wound of the bite states that it is an animal or a vampire bite (which was eventually found out that it was Bertha). Thus, this is considered as a disturbing aspect of the novel because this was a terrible crime which was not at all supernatural (Zefffer and Khurrana, 2018).

X. *"She bit me. She worried me like a tigress when Rochester got the knife from her...She sucked the blood: she said she'd drain my heart."* (p. 212)

This particular speech took place after Bertha attacked Richard Mason badly. Even though the attack took place Mr. Rochester prohibited Richard Mason and Jane to voice about what had happened but Jane could not help but overhearing this hint of mystery at Thornfield. This brings in the picture of a gothic element of mystery and Suspense. Further, with the description given by Mason, Bronte was able to represent the nature of Bertha as bestial (meaning Tigress) and vampiric, a term that explains itself in the tradition of Gothic Literature (Hirst, 2020). Here, Bertha is not only considered similar to the world of animals in all the chaos happening, but she is even more carnivorous type as she tried to take life of his brother in a similar manner that her existence terrorizes to take away Mr. Rochester's happiness of being with Jane. The irrepressible animal nature of Bertha gives contrasts to Jane personality of being rational and placid even though Jane also possess few blistering passion like Bertha but Jane could control her proclivity with humanity.

XI. *"Grace!" exclaimed Mrs. Fairfax. I really did not expect any Grace to answer....with a hard, plain face: any apparition less romantic or less ghostly could scarcely be conceived"* (p. 118-121).

This particular scene elucidates that Jane seems very keen on finding a spirit in the garret of Thornfield or it might be that she is just a little bit paranoid because of her occurrence with the ghost of Mr. Reed that happened or looked like it happened. This showcased the gothic element of a supernatural event that had occurred with Jane (Moura, 2017). Nevertheless, her first and the foremost effort of finding something creepy in the attic of Thornfield is considered to be unsuccessful because all she could find there was a red-handed, stout, and middle-aged servant.

XII. *"God and nature intended you for a missionary's wife. It is not personal, but mental endowments they have given you: you are formed for labor, not for love....I claim you - not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign's service"* (Brontë, 1847/2018, St. John Rivers).

This particular statement was made by St. John when he was trying to convince Jane for marrying him and become a missionary of country India. St. John declared that Jane was mainly formed for “labor, and not to be loved” which emphasized his belief more and more that there is no place of passion and love in moral life. This showcased the gothic element of women being threatened by a tyrannical and impulsive male because here, St. John is acting like a male that wants power over a woman and not gives them love (Harris, 2015). The argument regarding ownership by St. John’s also underlines his view about Jane as a submissive companion and not a woman who can have her own independent thoughts. Jane then too gives approval to St. John’s morality but refuses to sacrifice love and become the woman that St John wants.

#### SOME SIGNIFICANT ASPECTS RELATED TO GOTHIC NOVEL:

In order, to be truly called a gothic novel it was vital for Bronte to undertake a Gothic theme in *Jane Eyre* which she did in very effective manner. There are certain components related to gothic themes that are undertaken. These themes involve various components such as isolation, the supernatural, disease, horror and psychological distress, etc. All in all novels like these have various attributes that portray the aspects of tragedy or darkness in the most effective and efficient manner (Zeffer and Khurana, 2018). *Jane Eyre* is considered a Gothic novel because it contains gothic themes such as:

- Psychological Distress

Jane is considered to be evolving throughout the book in a steady manner. Although this is undertaken as a rocky procedure wherein, Jane is persistently looking at herself in an “inner battle”

- Religion

Even though, the aspect of religion is showcased in a positive way in the book, cynicism of such aspect is present. The aspect of religion is continuously utilized as a supervision factor for the actions of the character (Rodríguez, 2019).

- Isolation

The main culprit of Jane’s life was that, that she lived in a Gateshead where she felt unloved and alone that is why she scuffles to find true love and a proper place so that she can live a better life ahead.

*Jane Eyre* is regarded as undertaking the aspect of Pathetic Fallacy because a Gothic novel intends to utilize factors such as surroundings specifically the weather for communicating the alterations in the characters along with the present situation prevailing in the novel. Furthermore, Gloomy weather and storms are generally utilized to provide gothic novels with their attribute of darkness. As, this attribute of darkness is considered to be an important aspect of a gothic novel (Harris, 2015).

In *Jane Eyre*, the weather continuously provides an indication of the state of Jane. From the commencement, in Gateshead, Jane is considered to be describing the setting of winter as “somber along with a rain that is so penetrating”, same as this Jane also feels angsty as well as sad because of her Aunt Reed and the abuses that she has to tolerate inside that house which was very difficult

As soon as a proposal was made by Mr. Rochester to Jane the “rain rushed down” and the tree “horse chestnut” was “smacked by lightning, and was split into half”. This mainly foreshadows the nature of immortality of their unions as well as the difficult times that were about to come for them (Moura, 2017). These all aspects are considered to be pathetic fallacies that were undertaken by Bronte in *Jane Eyre* which in end increased the interest of readers to continue further with the novel.

Charlotte Bronte the author of *Jane Eyre* focuses on the fact that this should a pure gothic novel that inculcates all the gothic elements possible so that the readers are fascinated enough for reading this novel. The use of gothic elements increases the interest of readers as it creates a sense of mystery, horror, terror, supernatural incidences, etc. which builds an atmosphere for exoticism and much more for the readers (Plaza Salguero, 2018). Also, in *Jane Eyre*, there were various occurrences of gothic elements that justified its all over theme genre and theme in the most effective manner. Also, it is considered that *Jane Eyre* took place mainly in the era of Victoria wherein, Gothic Fiction was well-known to other literary genres.

The importance of *Jane Eyre*’s dreams and paintings is shown by the moonlight symbolism. The female voice’s anxiety that Jane’s feminist dream will be realized inside the novel’s gothic setting is prophesied by being trapped in marriage as the “angel of the House.” The “anxious excitement” and “regrets of a firewall between her and Rochester” that Jane and Rochester felt were mirrored in her dreams, a child that Bessie described as “a sure sign of danger.” Jane is well aware that her unjust marriage would cause problems. Jane’s prophetic salvation from this unjust marriage is embodied in visions as “the fear of the dedication moment” (Gordon). When Jane arrives in her dream at Thornfield’s “dreary ruin” on a moonlit night, patriarchal power will give way to Jane’s recognition as the same. As the “crescent” resembles a “kingly crown” in Jane’s third watercolor sketch, on the giant head of Latmos – it is foreseen that Rochester will blind her as Jane’s

guide, just as she is when the 'Gytrash' falls. Then Jane creates a haven for herself, as Bront asserts the importance of a place where fair marriage is possible. Rochester's metaphorical castration by ignorance is evident in the documents.

They also acknowledge that Victorians lack such a voice, regardless of whether these gothic elements express feminine anxieties. Furthermore, the Gothic interference, as well as the plot resolution, imply that, although Jane cannot help but love Rochester, she must achieve economic and family independence in order to reconcile with him, and he must adapt. Rochester's overt 'punishment,' to demonstrate to Jane that she is equal, then implies that Jane has no other means to compare him in an overtly oppressive culture. When Jane refuses to marry Rochester for fear of him losing her identity by overpowering her and showering her with material, Bertha leaves a bridal veil, symbolizing the failed engagement, and Bertha attempts to burn Rochester after trusting Jane. Bertha is filling in for Jane, who is unable to do so.

When the boy dies as a result of Jane's dreams, he wraps his knees in Jane's symbolic death, symbolizing the death of Jane's passion for younger people, and the Gothic interference transports Jane to Rochester. Jane found her dream matriarchal guides in a symbolic way: "the torch was burnt out, the room was full of lights on the day of the Moon," and more importantly, a voice calls out "Jane" External Gothic agents, rather than Jane's own agency, carry out Jane's decisions. Jane had realized her dream of bettering people, but she had to return to Rochester.

Many collaborations have been dubbed "Jane Eyre." The contrast between Jane's first name and the name of a well-known woman (White, Eliza, Georgiana, Diana, Rosamond) and the traditional mix of the 'simple' book emphasizes Jane's lack of rank thus emphasizing her lack of pretense. Jane's surname has many meanings, none of which are mutually exclusive. "Eyre" is an archaic spell for "air," and as Jane flies windwardly from one location to another in her book, she is bound to the spiritual or the ethereal. "Aire" refers to a bird's breeding site, among other things. In the book, Jane is often compared to a pigeon, and she uses her imagination as a kind of "nesting room," a private space where she can feel protected.

## GOETHIC LITERATURE AND MYTHOLOGICAL RETELLINGS

While *Jane Eyre* builds mystery around the secrets of a manor, the narratives of Ahalya and Meenakshi build mystery and dread around the supernatural powers of the characters. They further highlight the terrifying consequences of their actions.

Gothic literature relies heavily on events that science cannot explain. This manifests in mythological retellings through curses, shape-shifting, and divine interventions that create an atmosphere of helplessness and awe. The story of Ahalya depicts the terrifying power of a curse that defies natural laws. When Rishi Gautam discovers Indra has seduced Ahalya by taking his form, he pronounces a curse. The outcome of the curse pronounced by him transforms Indra's body into a grotesque canvas of "a thousand vulvas". This marked Indra with his shame.

### 1. Supernatural and Dread

The depiction of Ahalya herself undergoing a supernatural transformation adds depth to the feeling of dread. She is cursed to remain "invisible to the human eye,". Her, "surviving on air and lying in ashes," and "essentially turning into stone or a state which depict suspended animation," described as a living death. Meenakshi (Surpanakha) is deeply entrenched in the forbidden arts. Her grandmother, Taraka, teaches her the magic of sorcery and witchcraft. The novel describes them as arts that invoke supernatural powers. These are the acts which her father, a rishi, explicitly disapproves of as dangerous and evil. Meenakshi uses these occult practices to prepare potions and spells, seeking to change her beauty and form, embodying the Gothic trope of using arcane knowledge to alter reality.

### 2. Fear, Suspense, and the "Stalker"

Similar to Jane Eyre sensing something peculiar at Thornfield, the female protagonists here experience intense psychological suspense and the feeling of being watched or hunted.

In *Ahalya's Awakening*, the narrative builds suspense through Ahalya's fear in the forest. She senses a presence while bathing in the river, feeling a "cold ball of fear" uncoil inside her as she runs blindly down dark, narrow paths, terrified of the "darkness closing in on her". This unseen stalker is Indra, who hides in the thicket, watching her with obsession, creating a classic Gothic atmosphere of vulnerability and dread. Meenakshi's life is fraught with the suspense of violence. As a child, she fears the unstable temper of her brother Ravan, who strangles her pet lamb, leading to a violent confrontation where she first displays her "monstrous" nature by clawing him. Later, the suspense revolves around the political intrigues of Lanka, where she constantly fears for her husband's life, a fear realized when he is murdered not in battle, but by treachery within the palace.

### 3. Frightful Concepts and Body Horror

Gothic literature often employs grotesque imagery to evoke fear. Both texts utilize body horror to depict the physical and psychological scarring of the characters. In *Lanka's Princess*, the depiction of Surpanakha's mutilation is visceral and frightening. The scene describes her face exploding in pain as her nose and ears are sliced off, leaving "straggly remains" lying at her feet while blood gushes over her skin. This physical transformation from a princess into a "monster" with a gaping hole in her face is a quintessential Gothic horror element.

Meenakshi embraces the identity of a monster. She acknowledges that she has "long, curling talons" and is often referred to as a "wildcat" or "Surpanakha" (one with nails like winnowing fans). She eventually views herself as a creature of hate and revenge, mirroring the "madwoman in the attic" trope but with agency and political power.

### 4. Burials, Death, and the Macabre

The theme of death and burial is central to the Gothic atmosphere in these stories, often linked to tragedy and vengeance. Meenakshi experiences a horrific moment of discovery, similar to finding a dark secret. She is taken to a bamboo forest to find her son, Kumar, decapitated. The text describes the "large red stain on his headless neck" and his head flung a foot away, a scene of brutal violence that fuels her descent into vengeance. Ahalya's fate is described as a psychological burial. She becomes "frozen into stone," immobile and senseless to the outer world, trapped within her own consciousness while the world moves on without her. It is described as a "bloodless death" where she cannot breathe or move, encrusted in a shell of indifference.

The epilogue of *Lanka's Princess* offers a Gothic conclusion where Surpanakha walks into the ocean. It describes her feeling the "sifting ground under her feet giving way to a bottomless, dark abyss," a literal and metaphorical descent into the unknown.

### 5. Atmospheric Settings

Just as Thornfield Hall sets the mood in *Jane Eyre*, the settings in these texts contribute to the mystery. In *Lanka's Princess*, the Dandak forest is described as a place of "ravaged wilderness" where Meenakshi finds beauty in the grotesque. It is a place where she feels reborn as the monster Surpanakha, away from the "golden prison" of Lanka. The golden city of Lanka is depicted not just as a place of wealth, but of suffocating secrets, political treachery, and looming war, where the "opulence of the palace" is stifling.

The various words that are utilized in various categories that form a vocabulary of gothic. Gothic vocabulary in *Ahalya's Awakening* and *Lanka's Princess*, we must look for words that evoke dread, the supernatural, physical grotesque, and emotional torment. These novels utilize specific lexicons to build an atmosphere of terror and mystery similar to the "evil potions" and "frightful concepts" mentioned in Gothic literature. Both novels use language related to forbidden knowledge and forces beyond human control to establish a Gothic mood.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates how feminist retellings employ Gothic style to reclaim power from violent myths and elucidate their harsh aspects. We first see *Jane Eyre* as a picture of what strong women want on the inside, using Gothic tricks like locked rooms and ghostly hints. Jane fights against men's strict rules, going from being a trapped girl to being a free woman. Kavita Kane's books, *Ahalya's Awakening* and *Lanka's Princess*, also have this same Gothic power. The stone curse on Ahalya's wife in *Ahalya's Awakening* turns her into a frozen figure, like a Gothic statue that has come to life. This shows how much pain gods and husbands can cause. Surpanakha is shown in *Lanka's Princess* after she has been cut, and her body is now roaming broken places, full of anger and revenge from old stories.

Both *Jane Eyre* and Kane's retellings are about borders or thresholds. These let the stories turn mythic fights into big dramas. The attic in *Jane Eyre* is like Ahalya's stone trap: a place where normal life and strange change meet. Surpanakha's scars are connected to Jane's hidden fire; both women are pushed to the edge by men's power. Myths put people between gods and people; Gothic puts them between life and death, clear mind and madness. This mix gives the old stories new life and strength.

Kane follows Brontë's lead but makes it fit with Indian myths. Like Jane, her heroines get stronger by breaking free from curses and cuts. The darkness of the Gothic makes their wins stand out more. These kinds of retellings give women their voice and strength back. They show how violence in the past affects people and families over time. By combining myths with Gothic elements, these authors enhance the realism and excitement of battles. This study shows that there is a connection between old Gothic books and new Indian retellings. It shows how borders can be used to help women take back power from stories that were used against them.

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