

The Gothic genre allows writers to explore taboo subjects, by exploring the idea of transgression and breaking boundaries. Often the use of the supernatural or the divine is used to portray the 'unthinkable' to evoke 'excitement'. The 'unthinkable' is considered to be something that is beyond our human understanding; for example, within *Wuthering Heights* the appearance of ghosts as well as Heathcliff and Catherine's love being able to break the boundaries between the afterlife and life. Similarly, in *Frankenstein* the creation of the Creature is performed by 'unthinkable' actions and Victor's defiance of God and nature. The same themes are seen within *Doctor Faustus* accept Faustus deals directly with trying to gain knowledge beyond human understanding, ultimately paying the price for this by being dragged to hell for eternity.

I briefly touched upon the idea of the supernatural being used in order to 'excite' the reader, and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is a novel comprised of the supernatural, capturing the eerie atmosphere and reader's interest. The first example of the supernatural occurs in chapter 3, during Mr. Lockwood's dream. Straight away, even before anything has happened, Brontë uses the dream to create a sense of liminality, as there is a sense of ambiguity in whether Mr. Lockwood is awake or not. This creates a 'blur' between what is real and what is not, as the branch turning into the "ice-cold hand" and blood 'soaking the bed-clothes', is merged with the frenzied shouting which was "not ideal". Mr. Lockwood is shocked to this as it is beyond his understanding, as well to that of the reader, primarily because he is from a civilised place, opposed to the Moors, which is more representative of the uncivilised and of nature. Thus, opening up the possibility of the 'unthinkable' is more believable, and the importance placed upon religion and superstition is still in effect, shown by Nelly's belief in dreams being prophetic. "I was quite sceptical about dreams then, and am still". Returning to Catherine's ghost, there is a major theme of breaking boundaries being used by Brontë, as a ghost is defying the boundaries between life and death. As we later learn in the novel, the love between Catherine and Heathcliff is the reason for this defiance to occur, since their love is considered to be a 'force to be reckoned with' equal to the power of nature. Nature is a key theme of the novel since it affects everyone in some way, e.g. Mr. Lockwood not being able to travel due to the storm or Catherine becoming isolated and entrapped at Thrushcross Grange. Only the strongest characters are able to overpower nature, in some way, but Brontë keeps nature as the overpowering force except when regarding the supernatural. What keeps Catherine from reaching Heaven, is her disobedience to 'abandon' Heathcliff, her true love, and as she says, "I am Heathcliff" and Heathcliff stating she is his 'soul'. Brontë uses the love between them to portray the 'unthinkable' through the supernatural as this is the cause of Catherine wandering the Moors for "twenty years" waiting for Heathcliff to join her, and his screams for Catherine in chapter 3 makes the scene become 'more' real since Mr. Lockwood is unsure to what has unfolded in his mind. Brontë utilised the supernatural as a way of 'exciting' the reader