

example demonstrating that the physical setting of the story often interplays with the characters, moulding the course of the plot. Amidst the darkness, the moonlight saves them and the dark itself further reciprocates Isabella's distress at being lost, and having to flee. This can also be related to the direct opposition of setting to Manfred's wishes; conflict exists because the antagonist has to battle against those instances of intervention, to get what he wants.

The different eras within which all three texts were written has had a significant influence over their essence, as one would expect. This can be denoted through a number of ways but this argument will focus mostly on the representation of the supernatural within all three, analyse how they differ, and try to figure out why. The supernatural, in this sense, will also be discussed while taking into consideration its nature as part of the setting of the respective story. The presence of supernatural elements is most notable in *The Castle of Otranto*. The story itself begins on an ominous note about "an ancient prophecy" (p. 12), that Manfred had taken precautions against for fear of it coming true, namely, by marrying his only son, Conrad. In *A Companion to the Gothic*, "Shape and Shadow: On Poetry and the Uncanny", David Punter argues that "eavesdropping, automata, mystery stories are the very stuff of Gothic" (p. 198) and that statement encompasses *The Castle of Otranto*. While Robert Kiely (*The Romantic Novel in England*) claims that "Walpole's ghosts, as might be expected, are gratuitous phantoms which serve little purpose other than to arouse the servants from time to time" (p. 39), the supernatural apparitions all contribute to the tense atmosphere throughout the story. This is not without its effects; Manfred is driven into a raging folly which culminates to the point where he mistakenly murders his own daughter. The supernatural is therefore a very real theme in *Otranto*. The reason why it's represented as such shall now be examined and because of the position of *The Castle of Otranto* as a book that was formerly falsely antedated, this argument