

English Essay

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Gothic horror is a genre of literature and film which explores horror and romance. Gothic horror literature is enjoyed by readers because it adds a twist to a horror story as it combines horror and romance whilst twisting minds. It creates fear and dread in the reader and creates a scary atmosphere. Texts like *Tell Tale Heart*, *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, *Cask of Amontillado* and *The Raven* create fear and suspense through darkness, symbolism, horror tropes, sensory imagery, plot twists and language techniques like adjectives and similes. They raise suspense and make the reader feel anxious or scared. Suspenseful atmospheres create mental uncertainty which creates anxiety and doubt. Fear creates an unpleasant feeling caused by something that we feel might harm or danger us, real or imagined. This triggers most humans' flight or fight response. People have an adrenaline boost which makes them feel stronger and more powerful the next time they experience something similar.

Darkness is an element of setting which creates suspense and fear. Darkness is commonly a time that is referred to as the devil's playground or a time where monsters lurk in the shadows. Other aspects like castles and midnight have the same effect as darkness in horror texts. Darkness usually symbolises the unknown or a mystery. For example: in the text *Tell Tale Heart*, they use the phrase "The darkness in the room was thick and black," and "When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock – still dark as midnight." The author used darkness as an adjective, and thick and black as a metaphor for the dark for the first quote. The author also describes the darkness as midnight, which uses a simile. This suggests that the darkness is thick because it is inescapable, or it is too dark to see through and it is as dark as it would be if it was midnight. This builds suspense as the reader cannot predict what would come through the darkness. *A Tell-Tale Heart's* author, Edgar Allan Poe, used this to create a mysterious and tense atmosphere, making the reader feel anxiety or uncertainty.

Writers use horror tropes or elements in their text to create storylines or ideas that create fear. Horror tropes are conventions found in most horror texts. Authors might use popular horror tropes or horror tropes that are less common, both are used to create suspense and fear into the reader. For example, in *Dracula*, they made Dracula a vampire, which is a monster horror trope. Bram Stoker sets the main part of this story using the monster trope, his monster was original at the time. He used this in the text to show the main horror part, but this was not his only trait. The story had many twists and turns, and the monster trope helped carry it along. This trope created a fearful atmosphere because of this monster.

Gothic horror authors tend to use adjectives, similes, personification, metaphors, and more language techniques to create more of a mood. They use these to describe settings, people, or personalities better. For example, "His skin scarcely covered the work of muscles and arteries beneath; his hair was of a lustrous black and flowing; his teeth of pearly whiteness. but these luxuriances only formed a more horrid contrast with his watery eyes, that seemed almost of the same colour as the dun-white sockets in which they were set, his shrivelled complexion and straight black lips," Is used in the text *Frankenstein*. This quote uses different language techniques such as adjectives, and similes. This describes how the monster looks using language techniques. This makes the reader feel certain moods revolving around being happy. The author of *Frankenstein* uses this to

create a scary atmosphere which describes the monster, and to make the reader feel like something bad might happen, which creates suspense since the monster looks like a corpse.

Symbolism is used often in gothic horror texts to have more meaning behind items or actions, which can potentially create fear and suspense. Symbolism is usually in items, actions, or people. For example, in the text *The Raven*, the bird often says "Nevermore." The bird represents grief and feeling of separation from his Lenore by constantly saying this. This suggests that he is grieving his loss of Lenore. The bird symbolises his loss of Lenore and by the bird's answer assign different meanings to him. This creates a depressing mood set by the writer to make them feel the loss of Lenore. Another example is the symbolism of light in *Frankenstein*, Victor tells Walton that he hoped his discovery would "pour a torrent of light into our dark world. The darkness symbolises the ignorance of the world and the light symbolises the knowledge and power of discovery. This suggests that Victor wants to bring happiness into the cruel world. This creates a suspenseful mood as it suggests that Victor might do something to bring light into the world.

Sensory imagery is commonly used in gothic horror texts to create more of a mysterious atmosphere that creates fear. Describing a room using words like "dark, creaky, silent, mouldy" can all make the text become more scary or suspenseful. For example, "The driver again took his seat, and shaking his reins, started off at a great pace. This time, after going to the far side of the Pass, he suddenly turned down a narrow roadway which ran sharply to the right. Soon we were hemmed in with trees, which in places arched right over the roadway till we passed through a tunnel; and again, great frowning rocks guarded us boldly on either side. Though we were in a shelter, we could hear the rising wind, for it moaned and whistled through the rocks, and the branches of the trees crashed together as we swept along" is a phrase from *Dracula* that describes the environment using auditory and visual imagery. The writer used the adjectives and nouns such as "rising wind," "whistled," "narrow roadway," "frowning rocks," and "moaned" to describe the environment audibly and visually. This suggests that they are driving around on a windy night, they are travelling around and even if they are in a shelter, you can still hear the whistling of the wind and the crashing of the branches and see the frowning rocks and trees. This sets a mysterious and suspenseful atmosphere to keep the reader on the edge of their seat.

Plot twists are created by writers to create suspense and emotions such as fear, sadness, or anxiety. By making the reader think something might happen, and then completely changing it to trick the reader and create suspense and an unpredictable scene. For example, when Montresor buries Fortunato in a wall alive is a plot twist in the text *The Cask of Amontillado*. In this text, Montresor decided to take revenge against Fortunato because Fortunato insulted him. He took him to his wine cellar below his house and buried Fortunato alive. Edgar Allen Poe made us think that Montresor did not have any bad intentions but then the Poe changed it so that Montresor would bury Fortunato to get revenge for insulting him. The plot twist made by Edgar Allan Poe created a suspenseful atmosphere, which catches the reader off guard.

Gothic horror texts use elements such as darkness, horror tropes and five sense descriptions to create fear and suspense in the reader. Texts such as *The Raven*, *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *A Tell Tales Heart* and *Cask of Amontillado* use language techniques such as similes, adjectives, sensory imagery, darkness, horror tropes, plot twists and symbolism to create a fearful or suspenseful atmosphere. It allows the reader to feel fear and suspense which makes them feel scared or anxious, which people

enjoy because it makes them feel more powerful and strong. Gothic horror is popular because it combines horror and romance into one genre, and it plays with your mind.