

Exploring the Gothic Influences in *Game of Thrones*

Dissertation submitted to Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam, in partial fulfillment for the award of M.A degree in English Language and Literature.



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Certificate

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled *Exploring the Gothic Influences in Game of Thrones* is a bona fide record of sincere work done by, Prayaga S Das, Register Number: 210011004036, Bharata Mata College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Literature under the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam during the year 2021-2023.

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Declaration

I, hereby declare that the presented dissertation *Exploring the Gothic Influences in Game of Thrones* is based on the research that I did on under the supervision and guidance of Ms. Merin Jose, Assistant Professor, Post Graduate Department of English, Bharata Mata College, in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of the Degree of Master of Arts in English Language and Literature from Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam. This is a report of my hands based on the research done on the selected topic and it is my original work and interpretations drawn therein are based on material collected by myself. It has not been previously formed basis for the award of any degree, diploma or fellowship or other similar title or recognition.

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Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction	1
Chapter 2: Gothic Literary Theory: An Overview	9
Chapter 3: Analysing the Sublime and the Supernatural in <i>Game of Thrones</i>	19
Chapter 4: Gothic Architecture in <i>Game of Thrones</i>	27
Chapter 5: Conclusion	35
Works Cited	

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Television plays a vital role in upholding the values of freedom of expression and cultural diversity, serving as a pivotal element of democracy. It promotes education, and entices individuals to venture outside of their living rooms, and stimulate their interest. It serves as a representative for the entertainment sector, fostering the discovery of new music, enriching the history and promoting the confluence of many artistic genres. On social networks, they elicit responses and bring people together. Communities are formed around great television shows. Conversation between friends, family, and coworkers is kept lively by TV shows, current events, and news. With the advancement of technology and shifting viewer preferences, television and television series have undergone substantial evolution. They continue to be a significant source of entertainment, knowledge, and storytelling, exhibiting a variety of stories and viewers all around the world. It also impacts how viewers feel and act about people from their own origins as well as about those from different social, racial, and cultural groups.

Television series cover a wide variety of topics in a variety of genres, styles, and formats. The length and structure of television series may vary; depending on the popularity and reception of the programme as well as the producers' and network's creative choices, they can last anywhere from a few episodes to multiple seasons. While some television shows have a planned finale, others may have more than one season if they continue to do well. The medium of television series offers a setting for in-depth character and story development. TV shows have greater time to explore complicated themes and create multi-dimensional characters than films; this makes it possible for lengthy character arcs and storylines that can develop and get deeper over time. An episode of a TV show is often created to be a stand-alone unit that advances the

plot. They frequently adhere to a predetermined format that includes an introduction, growing action, climax, and resolution. To maintain consistency and the flow of the story, certain shows, however, may have ongoing narratives where each episode builds on the one before it. TV shows have the ability to affect society, dialogues, and reflect societal issues. They can address complicated issues, consider societal criticism, and offer viewpoints on a range of topics, such as politics, relationships, identity, and more. To reflect shifting consumer preferences and technical breakthroughs, television shows are always evolving and adapting. They present a rich and varied world of narrative, entertainment, and interdisciplinary cultural research.

The global television landscape has been significantly influenced by American TV shows, which have generated some of the most well-known and influential programmes in history. American television shows are produced in a variety of genres to appeal to a wide range of viewer tastes. American television has something for every taste, from riveting dramas like *Breaking Bad*, *The Sopranos*, and *The West Wing* to enduring comedies like *Friends*, *Seinfeld*, and *The Office*. Many American television shows have been huge success for a long time and have had a significant influence on culture. These are also well recognised for their high production values, with significant funds spent on outstanding visual effects, aesthetically gorgeous sets, and extravagant costumes. Shows like *Game of Thrones*, *Stranger Things*, and *The Mandalorian* are great examples of dedication, production, and storyline. American television shows have adapted serialized storytelling, where character arcs and narrative development happen over the course of several episodes or seasons. This kind of storytelling makes it possible to construct complex stories and characters, which intrigues the viewers and makes them wait in expectation. American TV shows have been at the forefront of television innovation, showcasing excellent narrative, diverse casts, and wide-ranging themes. They

continue to captivate audiences and set trends, solidifying their position as a major player in the global entertainment industry. Due to this reason international viewers were drawn to American TV shows. In order to appeal to audiences around the world, shows like *Friends*, *Game of Thrones*, *Grey's Anatomy*, and *The Big Bang Theory* have amassed sizable fan bases abroad and have been dubbed or subtitled in numerous languages.

American fantasy television series *Game of Thrones* is based on George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* novel series. It made its HBO debut in 2011, and in 2019, it finished its eighth and final season with 73 episodes. David Benioff and D.B. Weiss developed the show, which swiftly grew to have a huge global audience. *Game of Thrones* is a fantasy drama series that is set in the fictitious continents of Westeros and Essos. It centres on the complicated power struggles that several noble families engage in as they compete for the possession of the Iron Throne, Westeros' supreme seat of authority.

The *Game of Thrones* series features a complicated and multi-layered story set in the mythical continent of Westeros, which combines powerful families, political intrigue, and magical aspects. The show is renowned for its complex, multi-layered storytelling. It combines diverse storylines, character arcs, and political intrigues in an engaging way that keeps viewers on the edge of their seats. The story is surprising and interesting because it is full of shocking deaths, unexpected alliances, and plot twists. The show features a sizable ensemble cast of complicated and ethically grey characters. Every character, from brave heroes to crafty con artists, has been painstakingly created with depth and detail. As their motivations, weaknesses, and individual experiences are revealed, viewers can empathise deeply with them. The central conflict of *Game of Thrones* is the struggle for control of the Iron Throne between competing noble houses. The show goes deeply into the complex relationships between political scheming,

alliances, and betrayals. A tense and frightening mood is created throughout the entire series by the complex web of alliances and rivals. *Game of Thrones* had extraordinary production values, which contributed to its aesthetically gorgeous and immersive environment. The massive sets, elaborate costumes, and the locations brought the fabled kingdom of Westeros to life. The show also made use of ground-breaking visual effects to depict dragons, magical components, and epic battles. The television show featured massive fights and dramatic scenes that were comparable to those in big-budget movies. The show presented aesthetically stunning and emotionally dramatic fighting, elevating the bar for television production with the Battle of Blackwater, the Battle of the Bastards, and the Battle of Winterfell. Power, honour, family, loyalty, identity, and the results of one's decisions are only a few of the themes that were explored in *Game of Thrones*. The line between good and evil was frequently blurry, and characters were presented with morally challenging decisions. The television series offers insightful thoughts on human nature and the desire for power. These factors, together with exceptional acting, vivid world-building, were primarily responsible for *Game of Thrones*, its great popularity and cultural impact. The show has made a lasting impression on the realm of television narrative.

The best-selling work *A Song of Ice and Fire* book series by George R.R. Martin was adapted for the big screen by HBO and it turned out into one of the great mediaeval fantasy epics. It has, two mighty families—kings and queens, knights and outlaws, liars and honest men—playing a treacherous game for control of Westeros' Seven Kingdoms to acquire the right to sit on the Iron Throne. The series, which was filmed in Northern Ireland, Malta, Croatia, and Spain, lists Martin as a co-executive producer and one of the authors. The noble families of the Seven Kingdoms are involved in political scheming, coalitions, and conflicts as they vie for power. The Starks, Lannisters, Targaryens, Baratheons, and Greyjoys are among the prominent

families engaged. There are different protagonists in the series of whom the primary ones are The Starks, led by Ned Stark. The series starts with the passing of Jon Arryn, the Hand of the King, which sets off a series of events that result in a struggle for control of Westeros' Iron Throne. Ned from the Stark family, takes on the role of Robert Baratheon's Hand and learns a sinister truth concerning the legitimacy of the King's offspring, endangering the peace in the realm. Ned finds the truth of the upcoming King Jeoffrey Bratheon, who is said to be the son of Robert Baratheon. But when Ned tries to tell the truth, the Lannister family, led by the clever Cersei Lannister and her brother Jaime, betrays him, takes him captive, and then has him put to death. This incident starts a full-fledged war between the Starks and the Lannisters, with other families picking sides.

On the parallel side of the story, the last remaining Targaryen, Daenerys Targaryen, establishes her own power base in the east, gathering an army with her three dragons. She wants to retake the Iron Throne and restore justice to Westeros. There are other narratives and subplots throughout the series. These include the Night's Watch, a brotherhood defending the realm from enigmatic creatures known as White Walkers, the intrigues of the Iron Islands and their bid for independence, the political machinations in the capital city of King's Landing, and the alliances and betrayals amid various families. Power, honour, loyalty, family, and ambition are some of the themes that are explored throughout the series. Major characters are murdered off as the plot develops, alliances change, and shocking developments take place. The two main conflicts that drive the story are the struggle for the Iron Throne and the looming danger of the White Walkers. In the end, *Game of Thrones* exposes the harsh reality of the struggle for dominance and the moral dilemmas that its characters must deal with in a setting where no one is truly secure and are at potentially high risks.

In the series, there is a recurrent theme of the value of family and ancestry. The inherited wealth of the kingdoms and legacy are highly prized in Westeros' noble households. Family ties and the desire to preserve power for future generations frequently act as catalysts for disputes and alliances. In *Game of Thrones*, a variety of characters examine the ideas of honour and responsibility. Characters struggle with the expectations placed on them and the challenging decisions they must make between pursuing their personal wants and carrying out their obligations. The main idea highlights the conflict between one's personal values and the standards of more enduring societal structures. On the other hand, power-seeking and its misuse form a significant problem in *Game of Thrones*. The series examines the destructive implications of power, how far people will go to obtain it, and the consequences of its abuse. Characters take part in treacherous political plotting, alliance formation, and deadly power struggles in order to hold the Iron Throne and rule the Seven Kingdoms. The moral complexity of the characters in the series challenges traditional views of heroes and villains. The distinctions between right and wrong are frequently blurred by characters and there is combination of good and evil characters. This subject focuses on how people make decisions when faced with morally grey choices and on how flawed humanity is. Several characters in the series go on self-discovery quests and struggle with issues of identity. As a result of the difficulties they encounter, they are forced to reevaluate their convictions, allegiances, and the parts they play in the overall story. The central idea examines how people define themselves in a complicated and dynamic environment.

The atmospheric and immersive setting of *Game of Thrones*, improves the storyline by bringing the fictitious world of Westeros to life and engrossing viewers with its highly detailed and evocative environments. The landscapes foster a sense of size and exploration, from the freezing and desolate realms beyond the Wall to the lush forests of the North and the dry deserts

of Essos. The individuals' journeys and the problems they encounter are set against the backdrops of the landscapes. The world of *Game of Thrones* is influenced by both fantasy elements and mediaeval European history. Castles, knights, and wars are extensively featured, and the dress, buildings, and weaponry all have a mediaeval style. The show has a unique ambiance blend into the fusion of historical and mythical themes. The show is well known for its intricate and realistic set designs. The production team built authentic sets, which included well-known places like the Red Keep, Winterfell, and King's Landing. To further enhance the setting's authenticity and grandeur, the filming took place in breathtaking real-world locales like Northern Ireland, Croatia, and Iceland. *Game of Thrones* places symbolic and thematic significance on the varying seasons and weather patterns. The emphasis is on how dangerous the atmosphere is presented through unpredictable winters as well as the looming threat of the White Walkers. Major events are set against the background of the weather, which also affects how the characters behave.

The castles in *Game of Thrones* take a significant place in the story and are essential to the series' plots and power relationships. Major castles in the series are The Red Keep (The King's Landing), Winterfell, The Eyrie, Casterly Rock, Dragonstone, Pyke, Highgarden, The Castle Black and many more. These castles contribute to the larger political landscape and power conflicts in *Game of Thrones* by acting as real representations of the houses that existed. They serve as backdrop for significant occasions, conflicts, and turning points that advance the plot. In the realm of the narrative, noble houses compete for dominance over the vast and varied areas and seasons can endure for years. The stories of numerous noble families, notably the valiant Starks of Winterfell, the cunning Lannisters of Casterly Rock, the ambitious Targaryens with their dragons, and many others, are woven together in the television series. *Game of Thrones* is

renowned for its compelling narrative, surprising plot turns, and a large ensemble cast of multifaceted characters, each with their own motivations and weaknesses. The production values of the performance were aesthetically magnificent and immersive environments, featuring recognisable castles, cities, and landscapes. With its large fan base and widespread acclaim, *Game of Thrones* attracted viewers everywhere. As the series came to an end after its eighth season, it cemented its position as one of the most significant and talked-about shows of the twenty-first century and left a lasting legacy in the television industry.

The series undeniably played a significant role in shaping the landscape of contemporary television and fantasy storytelling, leaving an enduring legacy that continues to influence the genre. This project dwells into the Gothic elements within the modern fantasy settings of *Game of Thrones* and the following chapter discuss the methodology of Gothic literature. Chapter 3 and 4 attempt to explore the Gothic elements and Gothic architecture in detail. The mentioned aspects of *Game of Thrones*, Gothic elements and architecture are summed together in the last chapter.

Chapter 2

Gothic Literary Theory: An Overview

Gothicism in literature, often known as Gothic fiction or Gothic literature, is a writing genre distinguished by ominous surroundings, gory action, paranormal components, romance, and exoticism. In 18th-century England, it became a subtype of Romanticism. As the darkest expression of "Dark Romanticism," a subgenre that arose from America's "Transcendental Movement," it later gained popularity in the United States. Horror, mystery, suspense, romance, decay, and degeneration are common plot devices used by Gothic authors. They address important themes that demand careful consideration using these Gothic elements, like racial discrimination, corruption, gender norms, and more.

The word Gothic was once used to describe Middle-Age artistic styles. The time between the Classical era and the Renaissance is known as the Middle Ages. Because the Italians despised the Goths for destroying the Roman Empire at the time, they named the era Gothic, which indicated it was savage and obscene. Around 1800, some people in the Romantic Movement began to view Middle-Age culture and its associated items as a form of fashion. This cultural trend was centered around romanticism. The romanticist was prepared to leap off the edge of history. Some people wished they could go back to the Middle Ages, while others sought the ideal in mysticism or religion, yet others looked to nature for the solution. Goths came to be associated with mysterious, exotic ghosts throughout the entire Romantic Movement. The older generations of Goths regarded the younger generation with suspicion, questioning their sincerity and disliking the visibility they brought to a subculture that would prefer to remain hidden. It would be challenging to foresee the Gothic movement's future. Gothic culture gave rise to the

following aspects of Gothic art: Gothic literature, Gothic film, Gothic music, Gothic painting, Gothic architecture, and Gothic fashion.

The reader is frequently entertained by the grotesque characters, utter dread, graphic morbidity, and supernatural, and scenic experiences found in great Gothic stories or books. They also draw from gloomy subjects and emotional extremes. The old, gloomy castles, houses, and monasteries that are secluded and in ruins are the typical settings for classic Gothic tales. However, a fresh form of Gothic fiction known as "Modern Gothic" began to appear around the end of the 19th century. The metropolitan locations, convoluted narratives with numerous subplots, and highlighting current issues and concerns form the focus of contemporary Gothic books.

The Goths, a North Germanic tribe in the Middle Ages, were responsible for most of the architecture that is now referred to as Gothic. Dark, complex, and gloomy were the appearances of Gothic architecture. A new literary genre in Europe, known as Gothicism or Gothic Literature, was inspired by this medieval and exotic building, and it was philosophically complex and adorned aesthetically. Beginning in the middle of the 18th century, the Gothic movement first appeared in literature. The writers' collective enthralled by medievalism, encouraged it. They produced books with elements of dread, horror, suspense, superstition, mystery, and romance aspects that finally came to define Gothic literature.

As a subgenre of Romanticism, which was a reaction to the formal structure of the Enlightenment, a European intellectual movement, Gothic fiction truly came into being. Allan Lloyd-Smith, in *American Gothic Fiction*, provides a succinct shortlist of traditional Gothic features:

What makes a piece of writing Gothic? There are a set of simple features which define the early Gothic clearly enough: extreme situations, anxiety, darkness, threat, paranoia; exaggerated villains and innocent victims; subterfuge and plots; ancient houses, castles, monasteries, dungeons, crypts and passages, wild scenery, craggy mountains or winding maze-like tracts; stage machinery, hidden trapdoors, secret passageways; speaking portraits, ghosts, doubles, and other supernatural-seeming beings; monstrous and grotesque creatures; pain, terror, horror, and sadism. (Lloyd-Smith 133)

The sublime, subjectivity, individualism, and the beauty of nature were important themes for the Romantics. While Gothicism and Romanticism had many characteristics, they mostly concentrated on humanity's darker side and obsession with sin and evil. The Gothic writers wanted to evoke strong feelings and emotions in the readers, as opposed to the Enlightenment, which valued reason and science over superstition and blind faith. They largely concentrated on human fallibility, the psychological implications of sin and guilt, self-destruction, retribution, and judgement.

Many scholars claim that the Gothic novel began as a portrayal of the fallen world. Early Gothic literature had a strong emphasis on religion, morality, and philosophy; the villains were frequently employed as metaphors for the different human temptations the protagonist had to resist. They frequently had bad endings, and romance was never the main subject. However, over the decades, Gothic fiction not only expanded but also split into other well-liked subgenres that dealt with a variety of themes. Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Mary Shelley, Charles Robert Maturin, William Beckford, Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker, Robert Louis Stevenson, and others were among the most well-known Gothic authors of the time.

Horace Walpole, an English author, art critic, and Whig politician, used the term Gothic for the first time in literature. He was a significant figure in 18th-century art, literature, society, and architecture and the third son of Sir Robert Walpole, Britain's first Prime Minister. His novel *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1765) used the term Gothic in the subtitle. The writing movement started by Walpole's novel produced monsters, lightning, and damsels in distress for 250 years. The word Gothic, which Horace Walpole used to describe scary things, was taken from medieval Gothic architecture. He is the author of the first Gothic novel, '*The Castle of Otranto*, which also happens to be the first work of Gothic literature. Gothic literature eventually gave rise to the literature of fear. The horror genre might not have existed at all without this precursor to the Gothic book'. It inspired authors like Ann Radcliffe, Edgar Allan Poe, Bram Stoker, and others with its captivating fusion of ominous prophecies, raging passions, and ghostly visits. Therefore, Horace Walpole is regarded as the literary Gothicism's primary founder. He is credited with creating Gothic literature as well as being its first author.

“What it was most impossible to get rid of was the cruel idea that, whatever I had seen, Miles and Flora saw more - things terrible and unguessable that sprang from dreadful passages of intercourse in the past.” (James 89). This epigraph taken from Henry James's *The Turn of the Screw* (1898), anticipates and uncannily shadows our anxieties as they are woven into twentieth-century childhood. Even while Gothic literature had a significant impact on Victorian literature, it also gave rise to several short ghost stories during that time. Additionally, it gave life to Allen Poe's tale with a death theme. After the flurry of Victorian ghost stories, it was called back. The Gothic-style novel saw a renaissance as a form of semi-orthodox fiction around 1880. The authors during this period were Stevenson and Wilder. The most well-known Goth villain was born in Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*; the character surfaced frequently in the Gothic movie.

In 1764, Walpole released *The Castle of Otranto*, claiming it to be a translation of an antiquated Italian manuscript. He did this because he believed the book's style would be poorly welcomed. But to his complete astonishment, it was a huge hit with readers, and Walpole eventually admitted writing it in the second edition of the book, which was published in 1765. He claimed that the nightmare he had at Strawberry Hill, his Gothic mansion in Twickenham, London, served as the basis for the book's plot. Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* features many elements that were innovative for the era and from which many authors drew inspiration. 'The book has gloomy landscapes, paranormal aspects, tyrants, riddles, and secrets—all of which are recognized as typical components of Gothic fiction'. It takes place in a medieval environment with knights, evil usurpers who abuse the women, and religious females who submit to them.

Therefore, *The Castle of Otranto* could be considered a draft of Gothic fiction. *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, one of the biggest novels of the time, by Ann Radcliffe, was written after Walpole's Gothic literary paradigm had been refined. Later works like *Dracula*, *The Monk*, and many others were influenced by Walpole's book. As a result, *The Castle of Otranto* by Walpole created several motifs that have come to characterize the genre. It was a genuine revival of medieval chivalry, but it was distinguished by the blending of the romantic, the darkest and the most unsettling qualities. The most evident combination is a supernatural and the macabre backdrop of a foreign medieval castle. However, *The Castle of Otranto* stands out because it also has humour and wholly surrealistic embellishments that other well-known Gothic masterpieces lacked. Gothic fiction quickly grew popular in Europe, America, and several other nations, including France, following the publication of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story*. It attained exceptional popularity in the 19th century because of its enigmatic and daring tales set in gloomy locations. The audience was drawn to gothic literature because it not only offered

exciting entertainment but also told stories of vulnerability and strife that the audience could relate to. Gothicism in literature has significantly evolved. Many renowned Gothic authors who were successful in writing books of fear and mystery followed Horace Walpole. In their stories, they included Walpole's Gothic motifs but refined them by their peculiar writing styles. By including other, less supernatural, elements into the story and elaborating on the characters, their works contributed to the continued development of the genre.

For instance, Ann Radcliffe was the most well-known Gothic fiction author of the Romantic era. Her Gothic books expertly mixed Walpole and his followers' method of mixing "terror" with emotional but potent landscape descriptions. Her most well-known works are *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Italian*. The Gothic literary subgenre took a fresh turn with the publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. It showed an extraordinary world in which man tries to rival God's power. The first work of contemporary science fiction is commonly regarded as *Frankenstein*. It signaled a new turn in Gothic literature by transforming the conventional Gothic villain from a supernatural being or a wicked man into the corporeal incarnation of human foolishness, brought to life by scientific might.

Gothicism was also captured in films and the first significant Gothic film was *Haxan* (1921), which was directed by a Swede named Benjamin Christensen. After a year, German director Murnau produced *Nosferatu*, which went on to become the first iconic Gothic film in human history. According to Bram Stoker's original novel, American director Browning adapted the vampire Count *Dracula* narrative for the big screen in 1931. The first Gothic talkie is this one, *Vampire's Breakfast*. The first traditional Gothic movie without a vampire image was directed by Frenchman Georges Franju and is titled *Eyes without a Face*. It is important to note that Tony Scott's 1983 film *Hollywood Desire* epitomized the 1980s. Gothic music is typically

thought to be gloomy, cold, and decadent, creating an atmosphere of horror. The general public was made to feel oppressed and despairing. The color black, which symbolizes a willingness to die, was frequently used in creative expression. It was always exhausted from the dullness of the earth. It sounded cold and had an excellent artistic sense. Extreme disdain was displayed for all traditional music. The singer conveyed a lonely life and sensual sentiment in both the lyrics and the performance. The situation of reality was abhorrent, and the spiritual abyss was pursued in its full delight.

In Gothic literature, settings play a crucial role. The most common Gothic settings include graveyards, ancient castles, dilapidated mansions, haunted homes, subterranean crypts and tunnels, dungeons, swamps, and gloomy forests. A dark, deteriorating, or abandoned environment with an air of mystery and suspense is a hallmark of a Gothic story. Horace Walpole was fascinated by Gothic architecture and medieval history. In 1749, he even constructed Strawberry Hill House, a mock-Gothic castle. Additionally, the ancient fortress in medieval Italy serves as the backdrop for his first Gothic novel, *The Fortress of Otranto*. It was this first Gothic book that established the practice of setting stories in Gothic architecture and provoking feelings of wonder, horror, and solitude. As a result, Gothic literature includes a lot of references to Gothic architecture. A castle or sizable estate serves as the backdrop for many Gothic tales. Usually abandoned or at least dilapidated, this castle or substantial mansion. Contrarily, in certain Gothic books, the setting is distant from civilization, making it impossible for anybody to hear your cries for help. Caves or remote locations, a moor or heath are possible additional settings in Gothic literature. Novels like Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* have Gothic settings.

A popular architectural style in the Middle Ages was Gothic architecture. It developed from Romanesque architecture, and the Renaissance adopted it. It began in France in the eleventh century, and persisted up to the fifteenth century. Its features included flying buttresses, ribbed vaults, and acuminate arches. The Catholic Church and other public institutions were where they were most frequently observed. With its high level of technical and creative accomplishments in the history of construction, Gothic architecture has held a significant role. The Assumption Cathedral in Russia, the Duomo del Milano in Italy, the Cathedral of Cologne in Germany, the Westminster Abbey in England, and the Notre Dame Cathedral in France are among the most well-known examples of Gothic architecture. Duomo Del Milano of Italy was the biggest one in the world.

Many different architectural styles and eras can be found in Gothic architecture. The following are some notable examples of Gothic design: 'Early Gothic' this architectural style, which also goes by the names Early English and Lancet Gothic, first appeared in the 12th century. It is distinguished by pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and thin columns. Early Gothic architecture is simple and elegant, with a focus on verticality. 'Decorated Gothic' (sometimes referred to as Rayonnant Gothic): This design style emerged in the 13th and 14th centuries and is distinguished by elaborate tracery and window patterns. Large stained glass windows, intricate ornamentation, and a focus on lightness and delicacy are common features of Gothic constructions that have been decorated. The late 14th century saw the emergence of the 'perpendicular Gothic' architectural style, which persisted throughout the 15th century. The emphasis on vertical lines, fan vaulting, and sizable windows with vertical tracery are characteristics of Perpendicular Gothic architecture. This kind of architecture frequently seems starker and more geometric.

The late 14th century saw the beginning of the 'flamboyant Gothic architectural style', which peaked in the 15th century. Flamboyant Gothic is distinguished by its elaborate decoration, curvilinear forms, and flamboyant and detailed tracery. The colorful and decorative characteristics of the style are well known. 'Venetian Gothic' in the 14th and 15th centuries, in Venice, Italy, gave rise to this architectural style. Byzantine and Gothic features are combined in Venetian Gothic architecture, which is distinguished by polychrome marble, pointed or ogee arches, and intricate tracery. It distinctively combines Eastern and Western influences. 'Brick Gothic' in Northern Europe, notably in the Baltic region, this regional kind of Gothic architecture first appeared in the 13th and 14th centuries. With features like pointed arches, ribbed vaults, and exquisite decoration, brick is frequently used as the principal building material in brick Gothic architecture. A nostalgic resurgence of Gothic architecture gave rise to the 'Gothic Revival' style in the 18th and 19th centuries. It attempted to replicate the aesthetics and architectural characteristics of medieval Gothic buildings. Buildings designed in the Gothic Revival style frequently have pointed arches, ribbed vaults, tracery, and ornate decorations.

The Gothic gives modern readers some understanding of the social and intellectual environment of the period in which the literature was created by focusing on the dark side of human nature and the turmoil of irrationality. The 1750s to the 1850s were a time of revolution and reason, insanity and rationality, and all that dreams and nightmares were built of.

Early cinema included Gothic films, which adapted Gothic literature for the screen much like theatrical melodramas had done before. Gothic literature from the 19th century, including *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* by Robert Louis Stevenson, and *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley, had a significant impact on film. Many silent Gothic films were lost or only had very brief runs, like most early films. The horrors of battle dominated Gothic films in the

years following World War I. Despite not being based on a Gothic novel, German Expressionism was prominent in Robert Wiene's 1920 film *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, which Heidi Kaye claimed "transformed the American approach to Gothic cinema." *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* was deemed a "milestone in the Gothic film". It is difficult to describe the Gothic film genre precisely. Incorporating supernatural and nightmare elements, Gothic elements have also been used in the horror film genre. Filmmakers have worked to develop novel camera techniques that confound viewers' expectations to convey a gothic atmosphere. Contemporary issues were also represented in gothic cinema. Strong visuals, a focus on sensuality, and an emphasis on audience response, according to Heidi Kaye of *A New Companion to The Gothic*, characterize Gothic films just like they did the literary works. The mix of German expressionism, theatrical melodrama, and Gothic literature, according to *The Encyclopaedia of the Gothic*, formed the basis of Gothic cinema. Since the Gothic genre is recognized and applied in every field of literature, the upcoming chapters discuss the use of Gothic elements in the worldwide recognized television series *Game of Thrones*.

Chapter-3

Analysing the Sublime and the Supernatural in *Game of Thrones*

Game of Thrones is an American fantasy drama television series created by David Benioff and D. B. Weiss for HBO. It is an adaptation of *A Song of Ice and Fire*, a series of fantasy novels by George R. R. Martin, the first of which is *A Game of Thrones*. The show aired from 2011 to 2019, spanning eight seasons. The series tells a complicated story of political intrigue, power struggles, and epic wars as noble families compete for control of the Iron Throne and the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros. It is set on the fictitious continents of Westeros and Essos. The series is renowned for its complex character development, morally grey characters, surprise plot twists, and willingness to kill off significant characters. It mixes aspects of mythology, magic, and medieval history to produce a complex and compelling fantasy universe. Loyalty, honor, treachery, and the repercussions of pursuing power at all costs are common themes throughout the plots. *Game of Thrones* attracted a lot of attention for its expensive production values, which included intricate set designs, elaborate costuming, and breathtaking visual effects. Throughout its run, it won numerous honors and nominations, became a worldwide phenomenon, and inspired a variety of hypotheses and arguments among its devotees. The pace and handling of some plotlines in the last season, however, drew conflicting responses from viewers and critics. The show has a vast ensemble cast that includes actors that brought the complicated characters to life, including Emilia Clarke, Kit Harington, Lena Headey, Peter Dinklage, and many more. The television fantasy drama *Game of Thrones* is renowned for its examination of power dynamics, nuanced relationships, and surprising narrative.

Game of Thrones is a genre-defying series that seamlessly blends elements of fantasy, political drama, medieval history, character study, action, adventure, intrigue, mystery, tragedy,

and moral ambiguity. Its ability to fuse these genres has contributed to its widespread appeal and cultural impact. The series is characterized by its intricate plot twists, unexpected betrayals, and hidden agendas. Mysteries surrounding characters' true identities, hidden lineages, and the origins of certain magical elements add an air of suspense and intrigue. *Game of Thrones* is known for its willingness to subvert traditional storytelling expectations. Major characters meet tragic fates, and moral ambiguity pervades the choices characters make. This element of unpredictability contributes to the show's darker and more mature tone. It also introduces audiences to a world filled with magic, dragons, supernatural creatures, and mystical forces. The existence of White Walkers, dire wolves, and various magical elements contributes to the fantastical nature of the show.

Game of Thrones, both the book series, *A Song of Ice and Fire* by George R.R. Martin and the television adaptation, contain several elements that can be considered gothic. Gothic literature is noted for its emphasis on the macabre, enigmatic, and supernatural; it frequently uses locations like castles, prehistoric ruins, and gloomy woodlands, as well as themes of death, decay, and psychological dread. *Game of Thrones* includes several gothic aspects while being predominantly a fantasy series. The spectator is taken into the realm of Westeros, where current cultural concerns and fears may be analyzed, and is filled with themes of Gothic horror, including ominous power struggles, horrific torture, graphic brutality, and an imminent cataclysmic event. It is well-known for its complicated political intrigue, intriguing characters, and epic conflicts.

The drama depicts the battles of noble families for control of the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros and the Iron Throne. The Starks, Lannisters, Baratheon's, and Targaryens are among the prominent families. The story is marked by political intrigue, alliances, betrayals, and battles.

As characters vie for control, a supernatural threat looms in the form of White Walkers, ancient beings capable of raising the dead. Key characters include Eddard Stark, Tyrion Lannister, Jon Snow, Daenerys Targaryen, and Arya Stark. The play examines issues of authority, allegiance, honor, and the hazy boundaries between good and evil. Character development, plot developments, and revelations occur throughout eight seasons. The Iron Throne war's settlement and the series' ultimate struggle with the White Walkers mark the series' conclusion. These complex characters, terrible deaths, and epic narratives helped *Game of Thrones* establish itself as a cultural phenomenon with a huge international fan base.

It is significant to highlight that the foundation of the series is the unpredictable nature of power relations. Unexpected occurrences can alter the balance of power as alliances change, personalities progress and decline, and alliances rise and dissolve. The idea of which house is the most powerful can alter during *Game of Thrones*, as alliances change, individuals ascend and descend, and events take place. Nevertheless, a few families stand out as being exceptionally strong and prominent at certain stages in the series.

For a large portion of the story, House Lannister enjoys great authority because of their enormous money, strategic cunning, and control over important positions. Through their claim to the Iron Throne, Joffrey, Tommen, and Myrcella Baratheon are in charge. The Lannisters have a great deal of influence because of Tywin Lannister's political savvy and their capacity for situational manipulation. House Stark's devotion, integrity, and enduring ties to the North are what gives them their power. They remain a strong family in their own right because of their sovereignty over Winterfell and their role as the Wardens of the North. However, as a result of political unrest, many Stark family members are dispersed or dead, which reduces their authority. Daenerys Targaryen from the House Targaryen, as she assembles a devoted army composed of

the Unsullied, Dothraki, and her three dragons, Daenerys Targaryen's claim to the Iron Throne grows more and more compelling. The power dynamic has significantly changed as a result of her eventual arrival in Westeros. House Baratheon occupies the Iron Throne at the start of the book, and Robert was the King. But as a result of internal strife and outside pressure, the Baratheon family's influence weakens. The wealthy and resourceful House Tyrell is in charge of the productive Reach. In the early seasons, their dominance is strengthened through their political scheming and alliances with wealthy houses like the Lannisters. While first less noticeable, House Greyjoy's possession of the Iron Islands provides them a distinct naval advantage that becomes important as the series goes on. These are some of the most important families throughout the seasons of the series *Game of Thrones*. Each of these families in *Game of Thrones* represents gothic themes in its unique way, giving depth and horror to the main story of power, treachery, and survival.

The story of the Lannisters is characterized by moral ambiguity and dualism, a key gothic element. While Cersei's fall into paranoia and violence reflects psychological anguish, the complex ties between Cersei and Jaime suggest forbidden love. The Lannisters' thirst for power and manipulation, intertwined with their family secrets, mirror the intrigue and complex motives often found in gothic narratives. The ancient home of the Stark family, Winterfell, is a castle with crypts that echo the horrific and represent gothic features. As a sign of impending death and gloom, the curse "Winter is coming" ("Winter is coming". 11:46) looms over them. Winterfell's mysterious past and undiscovered tunnels contribute to the atmosphere, while the dire wolves and the Stark children's relationship with them give the place an otherworldly, supernatural feel. The Targaryens' association with fire and dragons conjures up a feeling of gothic fantasy. Their family has a frightening history of insanity and power conflicts, similar to the sinister legacies of

gothic stories. Layers of mystery and mysticism are added by the Targaryen family's quest for prophecies and destiny, which is intertwined with their connection to the supernatural. The Baratheon's quest for power and use of magical components also echo gothic themes in the story. The Lightbringer sword that Stannis Baratheon has and his friendship with Melisandre, a Red Priestess, alludes to cursed things and sinister rituals. The internal strife of the Baratheons and the attacks on their authority add to the turmoil and uncertainty. The harsh, solitary existence of the iron born the Greyjoys is portrayed in a gothic manner. The gloomy and lonely scenery of the Iron Islands echoes the Gothic focus on solitude and foreboding. The harsh essence of the Greyjoys is revealed through their relentless and vicious quest for power, which is evocative of the dark motivations frequently discussed in gothic fiction. "What is Dead May Never Die" ("Home" 43:14) is the Ironborn phrase used commonly in the series.

Martell's ferocious and vindictive character fits with gothic emotional intensity. Their thirst for vengeance and justice, especially Oberyn Martell's drive for vengeance against the Lannisters, represent the deep emotions and dramatic confrontations typical of gothic stories. The political relationships and scheming of House Tyrell form a reflection of the gothic motif of deceit and manipulation. The Tyrells' desire for dominance and their ties to other aristocratic families add to the uneasy and tense mood that frequently permeates gothic novels. Through their cruel attitudes and means of torture, such as the flaying of their foes, the Boltons represent the Gothic. Their emphasis on brutality, domination, and psychological torture adds to the ominous, ominous atmosphere that is evocative of gothic figures with monster characteristics. According to their unique interpretations, each of these families in *Game of Thrones* embraces gothic characteristics, bringing depth and gloom to the show's main story of power, treachery, and survival.

The series is set in a medieval-like world with vast castles, ancient crypts, and shadowy forests. With their imposing buildings, secret corridors, and sinister secrets, the Red Keep in King's Landing and Winterfell are outstanding examples of Gothic architecture. There are supernatural themes in *Game of Thrones*, however, they are not as prevalent as in conventional gothic fiction. The scary and fantastical are present in the White Walkers, reanimated corpses, and dragons. Another gothic element can be seen in the curses and prophecies in the series. A sense of foreboding and destiny is added by the House Stark curse ("Winter is coming") and prophecies surrounding Azor Ahai and the prophecy on the prince who was promised will be the savior who will beat the darkness. Many characters in the series have morally ambiguous traits and hidden agendas, echoing the gothic fascination with the duality of human nature. There are characters who frequently meet terrible and unforeseen deaths in the story, which features death as a permanent presence. A classic example of a surprising and horrible incident is the Red Wedding, where the Stark family members are brutally killed. The show is filled with locations that are haunting and isolated. The Wall, the Night's Watch fortresses that line it, and the creepy Dragonstone Castle are all examples of remote and barren places that add to the gothic ambiance. The characters often have hidden pasts and secrets, and uncovering these secrets can have dire consequences. The Tower of Joy and Jon Snow's true parentage are examples of this trope. Madness and psychological horror are combined to contribute to the gothic elements. Aerys Targaryen, the Mad King, and Cersei Lannister all display signs of lunacy, which adds to the psychological horror elements. Political and societal upheaval in Westeros reflects the volatility and discomfort frequently seen in gothic fiction. The forbidden love is portrayed through the characters like Jon Snow and Daenerys Targaryen's romantic relationship, which carries an

element of taboo due to their potential familial ties, adding a layer of forbidden love akin to gothic romance themes.

In the screenplay of the series *Game of Thrones* the depiction of each setting and atmosphere is described and it gives the exact feeling of the scenes. This line from the scene description of the pilot script of *Game of Thrones* describes the setting of the scene.

“Moonlight shines down on the clearing, the ashes of the firepit, the snow-covered lean-to. If there were corpses on the ground before, they’re gone now. The three riders enter the camp. Their horses seem spooked, as if they smell a predator nearby.” (“Pilot Script” 2).

The television adaptation of the *Game of Thrones* has a visual style that often employs moody lighting, shadowy shots, and a dark color palette, creating an atmosphere of tension and mystery. Scenes set at night, in candlelit chambers, or the midst of stormy weather enhance the gothic mood. The scenery in Westeros and Essos adds to the gloomy ambiance. The surroundings, which range from lush woods to dark wastelands, frequently highlight seclusion and an otherworldly aspect. The show's rich history and culture, which includes tales of historic wars, prophecies, and folklore, add to the feeling of the paranormal and the unknown. Elements of the weird and mystical are introduced through the appearance of supernatural beings like White Walkers, the Three-Eyed Raven, and dragons, which are consistent with gothic themes.

There is a scene where the old Three-Eyed Raven and Brandon Stark meets, and the old Raven hints at the supernatural and mystical elements of Bran's journey, including his ability to see through time and space by telling to Bran that, “You will never walk again, but you will fly.” (“The Children” 40:15). Then there is the character Melisandre also known as The Red Women often speaks in cryptic and ominous terms, adding to the supernatural and mysterious elements in the series. She often says the dialogue “The night is dark and full of terrors” (“The North

Remembers” 24:52). Most of her dialogues highlights the mysticism and supernatural elements associated with Melisandre’s character. Jacqen H’ghar another mysterious character from the series usually greets by saying “Valar Morghulis” (“Valar Morghulis” 38:51) which means ‘All men must die’; this saying is from the ‘Faceless Men’ of Bravos and it embodies the theme of mortality and the inevitability of death, a recurring theme in Gothic literature.

Game of Thrones expertly incorporates a network of gothic aspects into its complex story, enhancing the show with a tense, mysterious atmosphere. The drama conjures a setting that is reminiscent of gothic literature thanks to its frightening castles, paranormal powers, and tormented history of prominent families. The morally grey personalities of the Lannisters, the otherworldly links of the Targaryens, the desolation of the Greyjoys, and the mysterious Winterfell of House Stark all invoke the classic gothic tropes. These components give the narrative a spooky atmosphere while also reflecting the genre's interest in hidden information, curses, and psychological research. To create a distinctively compelling story that resonates with the enduring fascination of the macabre, *Game of Thrones* walks a narrow line between fantasy and gothic horror.

Chapter-4

Gothic Architecture in *Game of Thrones*

Gothic architecture is a form of architecture that first appeared in Western Europe in the 12th century, namely, during the late Middle Ages. Its popularity peaked between the 13th and 15th centuries. It is distinguished by a variety of distinctive architectural elements and design ideas that were avant-garde in their day. The word "Gothic" was first applied negatively to this style by Renaissance historians, who associated it with the "barbaric" barbarians who overran the Roman Empire. But through time, it evolved to stand for a distinct and significant architectural trend. Although it had an impact on secular buildings as well, gothic architecture was largely utilized to build cathedrals, churches, and other religious structures.

Over time, the style progressively changed and gave rise to other regional varieties, including German, English, and French Gothic. Chartres Cathedral in France, Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, and Canterbury Cathedral in England are notable examples of Gothic architecture. The Renaissance and other architectural trends gradually replaced the style, but its heritage still serves as a source of inspiration for designers and architects today.

The term Gothic architecture in literature often refers to the usage of locations and architectural features that are associated with the Gothic architectural style in narrative, especially in works of Gothic fiction. This phrase is used metaphorically to refer to the mood- and theme-setting environments that are atmospheric, enigmatic, and frequently unsettling in a tale. Dark, emotional, and mystical themes are common in the Gothic literary genre, which first appeared in the 18th century and then gained popularity in the 19th century. The majesty and intricacy of authentic Gothic buildings are often reflected in its elaborate and crumbling environs. The building serves as a metaphor for many psychological and emotional states,

enhancing the mood. Gothic literature often describes locations with characteristics reminiscent of Gothic architecture, such as imposing buildings, elaborate designs, and ominous interiors.

Gothic literature frequently mentions the following characteristics of gothic architecture; the horror scenes frequently take place in beautiful, but decaying buildings that evoke a sense of fear and mystery. The mystery is enhanced with secret chambers, hidden corridors, and abandoned wings. The interior is also dark and shadowy, the usage of interiors that are gloomy, candlelit, with lengthy halls, hidden nooks, and echoing footfall increases the tension and sense of the unknown. Tall towers and turrets are frequently employed to highlight the protagonists' fragility and to create a sense of seclusion. The atmosphere of the narrative is aided by detailed descriptions of the architecture, which include rich decorations, exquisite carvings, and ancient meanings. To emphasize the heroes' frailty and to create a sense of solitude, tall towers and turrets are commonly used. Detailed descriptions of the architecture, which includes lavish decorations, magnificent carvings, and ancient meanings, help to create the mood of the story.

Frankenstein by Mary Shelley, *Dracula* by Bram Stoker, and other works by Edgar Allan Poe, such as *The Fall of the House of Usher* and *The Tell-Tale Heart*, are notable examples of Gothic literature that heavily include Gothic architecture in their settings. In conclusion, "Gothic architecture" refers to the use of architectural components and locations influenced by the Gothic architectural style to provide gloomy, spooky, and sometimes supernatural settings that support the themes and mood of Gothic fiction.

In movies and television shows, gothic architecture is a fascinating visual component that enhances storyline, mood, and atmosphere. Its pointed arches, flying buttresses, and minute embellishments, whether historically true or imaginative, take viewers to historical eras, fantasy realms, and haunting worlds. The fantasy and horror genres use it to create the setting for strange

tales and scary plots, while period plays use it to lend authenticity and grandeur. While deteriorating structures represent degradation and internal difficulties, the homes and famous monuments of characters reveal their personalities and cultural importance. Dark and dramatic Gothic architecture's dark and dramatic aesthetics improve the cinematic experience by providing a visual language that speaks of history, emotion, and mystery. Examples include gloomy mansions and frightening castles.

In order to create aesthetically stunning and evocative locations that inspire a feeling of mystery, drama, and historical depth, gothic architecture is frequently employed in television shows and films. In visual media, the use of gothic architecture may strengthen the narrative, highlight themes, and add to the production's mood. In period dramas and historical movies, Gothic architecture may be shown with an emphasis on veracity. The spectator is taken to a particular era by the building, which also evokes the grandeur of the past. Gothic architecture is frequently employed to create mystical or otherworldly environments in fantasy and supernatural genres. The mythical aspect of the plot is established through castles, cathedrals, and enigmatic ruins with Gothic features.

Gothic architecture is often used as a setting in horror and thriller films to evoke a spooky, disturbing mood. The narrative's suspense and tension are heightened using dimly lit interiors, intricate stairs, and secret tunnels. Gothic architecture may serve as a character's defining characteristic or a window into their innermost thoughts. A character who is sombre may dwell in a gloomy Gothic mansion, whereas a character who is more upbeat may reside in a fun Gothic-inspired environment. Gothic architecture may serve as a metaphor for several ideas or feelings. For instance, a deteriorating Gothic building may represent deterioration or the difficulties of the protagonist. The storyline may include iconic Gothic landmarks, such as

cathedrals or castles, to emphasize their historical or cultural significance. The aesthetic complexity and richness of Gothic architecture may be employed to evoke a certain feeling, such as awe, sorrow, amazement, or dread. Gothic architecture's dramatic lines, arches, and soaring spaces may improve the aesthetic appeal of a scene and add to the production's overall aesthetics.

Gothic architecture has been used in many television shows and motion pictures, including *Penny Dreadful*, which is a TV show that combines a variety of literary classics with Gothic architecture in a Victorian London backdrop to create a sinister and eerie mood. *Sleepy Hollow* is a television series that updates Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* with contemporary locations and paranormal aspects. Guillermo del Toro's *Crimson Peak* is renowned for its opulent and unsettling Gothic home, which serves as a key component of the horror in the narrative. The Gothic-styled haunting home that is featured in the spooky and suspenseful movie *The Others* adds to the mood. *The Haunting of Hill House* is a Netflix series that employs a big Gothic-style estate to build the mood for its terrifying story. Overall, Gothic architecture in films and television shows is a strong visual storytelling technique that adds depth, ambience, and emotional resonance to a variety of genres and stories.

The term Gothic architecture in the context of *Game of Thrones* refers to the visual aesthetic and design aspects utilised in the set designs and filming locations to create a medieval and fantasy-inspired universe. While *Game of Thrones* mostly takes inspiration from historical and fantastical sources, such as medieval Europe and George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* novel series, some of the show's architectural design aspects have a Gothic influence.

The realm of *Game of Thrones* is known for its complex and varied settings, which each add to the show's rich tapestry. These locales range from imposing castles and historic towns to wide landscapes and eerie woodlands, with each place playing a crucial part in how the story

develops. The main setting is the huge city of King's Landing, which serves as the capital of the Seven Kingdoms, is the site of many political intrigues and power conflicts. The Iron Throne located in the Red Keep, has Gothic-style architecture, and is the monarch's seat of authority.

The northern environment of Winterfell, the ancient house of House Stark, stands in sharp contrast to the southern ones. Godswood, the courtyard, and its high stone walls all convey the harshness of the North. The scene description on Winterfell might give the exact atmosphere of the setting.

Winterfell, the stronghold and ancestral home of House Stark, is an ancient and austere place. Many acres lie within its two concentric granite walls; its keeps and towers stretch toward the gray skies above. A RAVEN flies into view, heading toward the stronghold with a small parchment scroll dangling from its leg. We follow the black bird as it glides over the Winterfell walls, banks over the main courtyard, and comes to rest on the windowsill of... ("Pilot Script" 22)

The Night's Watch guard Castle Black, a castle along the Wall that protects the realm from dangers beyond. The vast Wall divides the Seven Kingdoms from the untamed territories beyond. It is also known as Castle Black.

Dragonstone is a stunning island castle that serves as the home of House Targaryen. It is renowned for its stone buildings, cliffside scenery, and Gothic-styled architecture. The Eyrie is the home of House Arryn and is perched on a mountain. The Moon Door, pointed spires, and hazardous placement all draw attention to the place's exclusion and sensation of height.

Meereen is a city in Essos that is well-known for having the Great Pyramid. The city's varied people, architecture, and culture are important aspects in Daenerys Targaryen's voyage. On the other hand, Qarth, known as the "Greatest City that Ever Was or Will Be," is a posh and

unique metropolis in Essos with lavish architecture and various cultural influences. Braavo, A city constructed on a lagoon, is home to the towering Titan of Braavos and has a variety of architectural styles and cultural influences as a result of its function as a meeting place for the Free Cities. The vast, frozen landscapes, ancient forests, and the enigmatic Three-Eyed Raven's lair are features of the northern wilderness beyond the Wall. Harrenhal: A huge fortress in ruins, with its sinister aura and terrible past add to its unsettling atmosphere.

The southernmost area of Westeros is called Dorne, and it is known for its sun-drenched landscapes, distinctive architectural styles, and distinctive cultural customs. The Dothraki Sea is a large meadow in Essos that the nomadic Dothraki people inhabit. It is noted for its expansive vistas and absence of permanent constructions.

In *Game of Thrones*, Gothic architecture is a component that is weaved into the show's broad world-building and artistic storytelling. While the series largely takes its inspiration from a variety of historical and imaginative sources, it also integrates architectural features that resemble the qualities of Gothic design to heighten the medieval and fantastical mood.

The capital of the Seven Kingdoms, King's Landing, is characterized by a range of architectural styles. With its pointed arches, tall spires, and exquisite detailing, Gothic architecture is often linked with the Red Keep, which serves as the center of authority. The Red Keep's grandness and symbolism, as well as its aesthetic design of the outside and internal rooms, the Iron Throne's prominence in the realm add to the atmosphere of political intrigue and power conflicts in the play. A more practical and functional architectural style characterizes Winterfell, the ancestral home of House Stark, which reflects the harsh northern environment. Winterfell's huge walls, watchtowers, and courtyards have some medieval and fortress-like features even if they are not blatantly Gothic. The practical, fortress-like architecture of

Winterfell represents the principles of House Stark. In sharp contrast to the glory of King's Landing, its imposing fortifications and utilitarian architecture serve as a symbol of the North's tenacity and will. The Wall and Castle Black both include features of imposing fortress design, even though they are not overtly gothic. Castle Black is staffed by the Night's Watch. The sheer size of The Wall and Castle Black's crenellated walls add to the show's medieval feel. The Wall, with its cold length and intimidating height, represents the line separating the civilized world from the perils beyond. The Night's Watch guards at Castle Black stand for service and sacrifice, and the forbidding design of the fortress reflects the challenging circumstances that await its defenders. The architecture of Dragonstone, the ancient home of House Targaryen, has harsh, towering stone buildings and steep cliffs that recall the ominous and aesthetic appearance sometimes associated with Gothic castles. With its angular towers and fortress-like look, the island's castle mimics the Gothic style's focus on height and grandeur while also reflecting the imposing presence of the Targaryen bloodline. The Gothic-styled parts of the island castle depict the Targaryen dragons' strength and control over Westeros, while the citadel's intimidating, desolate exterior symbolizes their exile and coming return. The Eyrie's castle design, in especially its Moon Door and sharp, towering spires, emphasizes the impression of isolation and elevation frequently found in Gothic architecture. It is perched atop a mountain peak. The Eyrie's architectural components support the show's fanciful and dramatic world-building, even though they are not an exact replica of genuine Gothic buildings. The Eyrie's isolation is the Eyrie's position on a mountain peak alludes to its seclusion and separation from the world below. Its pointed spires and Moon Door project a feeling of peril and dread, mirroring the mayhem and intrigue that frequently take place inside its confines. The city of Meereen, which is in the eastern part of Essos, exhibits a fusion of architectural styles. Its Great Pyramid has stepped

strata that are suggestive of ziggurats and ancient Egyptian architecture, but not being entirely Gothic. To give Meereen a distinctive visual identity, the show's adaptation combines several cultural and historical elements. Pyramid in Meereen Even if it is not exactly Gothic, the Great Pyramid of Meereen symbolizes the hierarchical and intricate social structure of the local way of life. The pyramid begins to represent Daenerys' attempts to end tyranny as she confronts the current situation. The city of Braavos is renowned for its multicultural and varied influences, which are shown in the city's architecture. Although not precisely gothic, the city's characteristic canals and bridges and the towering Titan of Braavos provide the impression of grandeur and exclusivity. Although not Gothic, this statue guards the city's gate and represents Braavos' status as a bulwark of freedom and a place of sanctuary. Its imposing appearance typifies the city's tenacity and resistance. Harrenhal, a massive castle in ruins, has architecture that, although being older and more damaged, exhibits the magnificent size and dramatic presence frequently found in Gothic architecture. The towering remains of Harrenhal's towers and walls give the area a timeless, historic feel that adds to its gloomy, spooky ambiance. The deterioration is represented through the remains of Harrenhal both literally and figuratively. Its enormous size and tragic past serve as a metaphor for the futility of power and the long-lasting effects of ambition.

In short, the series may not explicitly use historical and architectural symbolism, but the usage of various architectural designs elevates and enhances the storyline. They serve as visual metaphors that support the concepts, characters, and relationships that define the *Game of Thrones* universe. Since these features of Gothic Architecture binds and connects the settings and characters together, *Game of Thrones* can be classified as a Gothic work.

Chapter-5

Conclusion

The television show *Game of Thrones* is based on George R.R. Martin's *A Song of Ice and Fire* novel series. David Benioff and D.B. Weiss, also known as D&D, are the creators of the programme. The HBO series has eight seasons in total, with the first season premiering in 2011. *Game of Thrones* is a colossal fantasy television show that masterfully combines complex political intrigue, extensive warfare, and fantastical aspects in a rich medieval-inspired backdrop. The Seven Kingdoms of Westeros are ruled by the noble families as they fiercely compete for the possession of the coveted Iron Throne, which is set against the backdrop of the continents of Westeros and Essos. The series dives into the brutal power battles among these noble families. The story is set in a world where magic, mythological animals, and otherworldly powers and where the seasons can last for years. The show also features magic, dragons, and an impending danger from beings from another world called White Walkers. There are many different noble families in the Seven Kingdoms of Westeros, each with its unique lands, histories, and goals. Different civilizations and communities of Essos, a large and culturally varied landmass across the Narrow Sea, provide a parallel storyline that weaves with events in Westeros.

The series gained a sizable fan base and became a cultural phenomenon as it went on. It was praised for the quality of its production, the plot progression, and the characters. Critics and viewers had differing opinions about the last season, particularly the last few episodes. Many people were disappointed with the series' ending because they thought the pacing and character arcs were rushed.

The showrunners received advice from *A Song of Ice and Fire* author George R.R. Martin in the early seasons, although the book series was not finished before the programme came up

with the source material. Due to the showrunners needing to create their conclusion for the plot, the series started to deviate from the books in later seasons. Despite conflicting views on the show's conclusion, *Game of Thrones* is still regarded as a pivotal moment in television history and has had a long-lasting influence on society. The same fictitious realm has inspired spin-offs and prequel projects.

A wide variety of characters, each with their motives and storylines, may be found throughout the series. The Stark family, which consists of Ned Stark and his kids (Arya, Sansa, Robb, Bran, and Jon Snow; was portrayed by Maisie Williams, Sophie Turner, Richard Madden, and Kit Harington), the Lannister family (Cersei, Jaime, and Tyrion; which was portrayed by Lena Headey, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau and Peter Dinklage), and Daenerys Targaryen, (who was played by Emilia Clarke) the only survivor of a deposed dynasty, are some of the main characters.

The story's central theme is political intrigue, and the main conflict is driven by the desire for power. A complicated dance of allegiances and betrayals results in the formation, manipulation, and dissolution of alliances. Characters travel through a dangerous landscape where even personal friendships can develop into dangerous alliances, making loyalty a valuable and rare resource. The Iron Throne, a representation of power and dominance situated in King's Landing, the series' focal point, lies at the center of everything that happens. The throne is now viewed as the ultimate goal, fueling the aspirations of various individuals and households as they ardently strive to take the seat of authority. The show goes beyond traditional historical narratives, thanks to the integration of fantasy elements with the political drama. The ominous menace posed by the White Walkers, mysterious, ancient entities who lurk beyond the Wall in

the Icy North, brings otherworldly horror, and emphasises the relevance of human strife fought against an approaching cataclysmic force.

With the release of its eighth season in 2019, *Game of Thrones* came to an end. The last season of the show received mixed reviews from both fans and critics, even though praise for its storyline and production standards continued to pour in. The character arcs' speed and resolves have been criticized by some fans, which has led to heated debates regarding the show's finale. Despite the divisiveness of its conclusion, *Game of Thrones* has unquestionably had a profound impact on world popular culture. Long after the final episode aired, its characters, sayings, and famous scenes have transcended television and become timeless touchstones that appeal to viewers.

It is challenging to categorize *Game of Thrones* as a Gothic work even though it has certain Gothic aspects. This is because the show is an intricate combination of many different genres and influences. The drama differs from conventional Gothic literature because of its epic scope, political intrigue, complicated characters, and examination of power relationships. It is more appropriate to think of *Game of Thrones* as an original fantasy drama that incorporates elements from several storytelling traditions to construct its distinct fictional universe. The series has certain Gothic elements, but it also strongly borrows from other genres, historical themes, and fantasy literature. It is challenging to classify the programme under a particular literary tradition because of its richness and multidimensional character.

The gloomy settings of *Game of Thrones* are one area where it displays Gothic themes. With its pointed arches and commanding presence, the Red Keep in King's Landing and Dragonstone's austere and ominous architecture evoke the spooky and enigmatic atmosphere that is a defining characteristic of Gothic literature. The Eyrie, positioned high above a mountain,

evokes the sense of loneliness and dread sometimes present in Gothic settings. The gloomy, somber tone of the play is influenced by these visual cues, which are evocative of the setting in Gothic works.

In addition, the series incorporates paranormal components like White Walkers and dragons, which are in line with the eerie and spooky themes frequently seen in Gothic literature. Despite not being the main subject of the story, these components give the narrative a sense of mystery and the unknown, which adds to the fantastical elements of the program. Themes in *Game of Thrones* that deal with treachery, moral ambiguity, and power conflicts are in tune with the emotional ferocity and intricate character relationships that the Gothic narrative is known for. The show's investigation of enigmatic disclosures, hidden histories, and ancient prophecies is also evocative of Gothic literature, where characters frequently learn secrets that have a big influence on the plot. The intricate fusion of genres and influences in *Game of Thrones* goes beyond the Gothic subgenre. Its epic scope, political intrigue, large cast of characters, and investigation of power relations set it apart from other Gothic works. The series is better categorized as a distinctive fantasy drama that pulls inspiration from numerous storytelling traditions to create its fictional realm. Even if it may have some aesthetic and thematic similarities to Gothic literature, it eventually goes above the confines of the genre to tell a compelling and complex tale all on its own.

Although *Game of Thrones* includes several components that fit the Gothic genre, it is not commonly categorized as a Gothic literary work. The storyline of the show draws from a wide range of genres, including character-driven drama, fantasy, and drama with a medieval history backdrop. The general plot and concepts of the film go beyond the boundaries of the

Gothic genre, even though it does have architectural and atmospheric components that are Gothic-inspired.

The term Gothic literary work usually refers to stories that place a strong emphasis on mystery, emotion, and the paranormal, and frequently have unsettling surroundings. Even though *Game of Thrones* does have some of these components, it also goes in-depth on topics of political power, complicated familial dynamics, and the ethical challenges of leadership. The epic scope, wide range of characters, and complex political backdrop all add to the story's distinctive personality. In addition, *Game of Thrones* is sometimes regarded as falling more into the categories of political drama and fantasy because of its extensive world-building, complex plotting, and emphasis on nuanced relationships and conflicts. While certain locations, like the Red Keep and Dragonstone, do have Gothic-style architectural elements, the overall plot of the program is not rigidly constrained by the thematic tropes of classic Gothic literature.

In conclusion, *Game of Thrones* is best characterized as a fantasy drama with political intrigue, character-driven narrative, and aspects of epic fantasy, and it does have certain characteristics that fit the Gothic genre. It is a unique tale that pulls from a wide variety of storytelling traditions due to the fusion of several genres and influences.

The show's atmospheric settings include the Red Keep in King's Landing, the unsettling remains of Harrenhal, and the solitary Eyrie perched atop a mountain. These locations all convey a feeling of mystery and dread. These locations showcase the Gothic tradition's focus on evoking a spooky mood. *Game of Thrones* incorporates supernatural components like dragons and White Walkers while being rooted in a medieval society that is largely believable. These imaginative animals fit perfectly with the weird and paranormal qualities frequently present in Gothic fiction. Power conflicts, treachery, and the hazy boundary between heroism and villainy are just a few of

the dark and morally complicated topics that the series explores. The emotionally charged and ethically gray character of Gothic literature is in line with these ideas. Characters commonly struggle with mysterious pasts, long-buried secrets, and surprising disclosures that form the basis of their stories. The emphasis on revealing hidden mysteries in the Gothic heritage is mirrored by this sense of discovery and the revealing of dark realities.

The show's ability to generate a spooky and tense environment is in keeping with the Gothic genre's typical tone. Unease is produced by the interplay of suspense, peril, and supernatural components. Many characters in *Game of Thrones* deal with psychological isolation, which frequently results in lunacy. These themes form a reflection of the psychological and emotional solitude that Gothic literature typically explores.

Many literary theorists and critics have studied the Gothic genre to understand its themes, traits, and cultural relevance. The complexity of Gothic literature and its influence on literature and culture have been better-understood thanks to the work of these academics. It was a literary subgenre that first appeared in the late 18th century and peaked in the 19th, the Gothic genre is also known as Gothic fiction or Gothic literature. It is distinguished by a particular collection of themes, situations, and narrative components that conjure up a tense, ominous, and unsettling mood. The combination of horror, romance, and psychological upheaval is frequently explored in this genre.

Edgar Allan Poe's short stories, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and works by Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis are a few notable examples of Gothic literature. The Gothic subgenre generally examines the most sinister sides of human nature, the uncanny, and the enigmatic, producing stories that have a profound emotional and psychological effect on readers. The concept of Gothic literature as a dynamic and developing genre that deals with a

range of subjects, from the paranormal to psychology, from gender to cultural critique, has been influenced by several thinkers, including those mentioned above. Their viewpoints have contributed to the study of Gothic literature and still shape how the genre is viewed and valued today.

The elaborate storyline and world-building of *Game of Thrones* may be examined as a work that combines Gothic characteristics. The show has evocative locales like the Red Keep, Dragonstone, and the Eyrie, which convey a feeling of mystery and dread similar to the architectural aesthetics of Gothic literature even if it is not a strictly typical example of the Gothic genre. White Walkers and other supernatural aspects provide an unsettling depth, and the show's focus on mystery, secrets, and buried pasts adds to the feeling of tension and discovery typical of Gothic narrative. The show's ability to engulf the audience in an eerie environment, ethically complicated characters, emotional intensity, and psychological struggle all coincide with the emotional depth frequently addressed in the genre. The symbolism and visual imagery connected to different Houses, as well as themes of seclusion, forbidden passions, and the discovery of old prophecies, further resonate with Gothic ideas. Hence, *Game of Thrones* though a genre-blending epic, derives its depth and complexity by the incorporation of Gothic aspects.

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