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Psychology in Gothic Literature

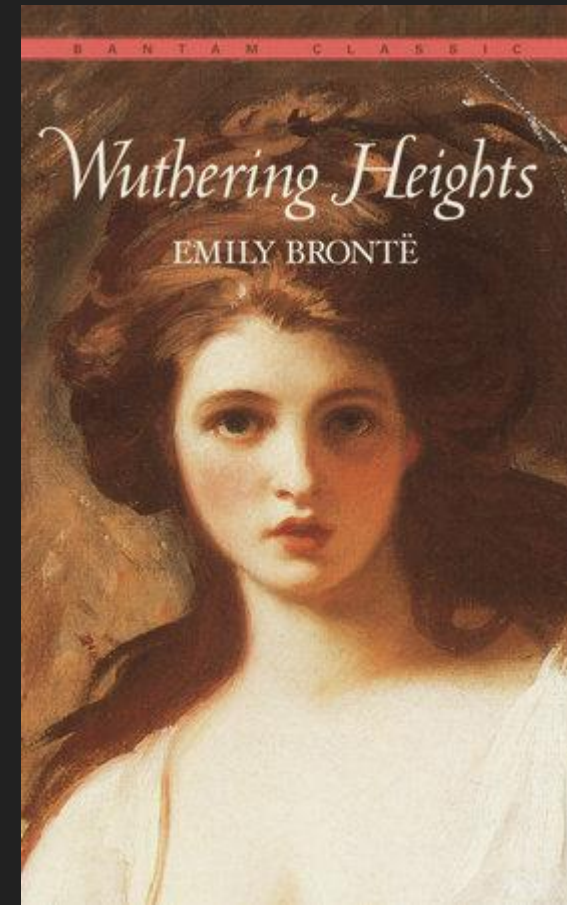
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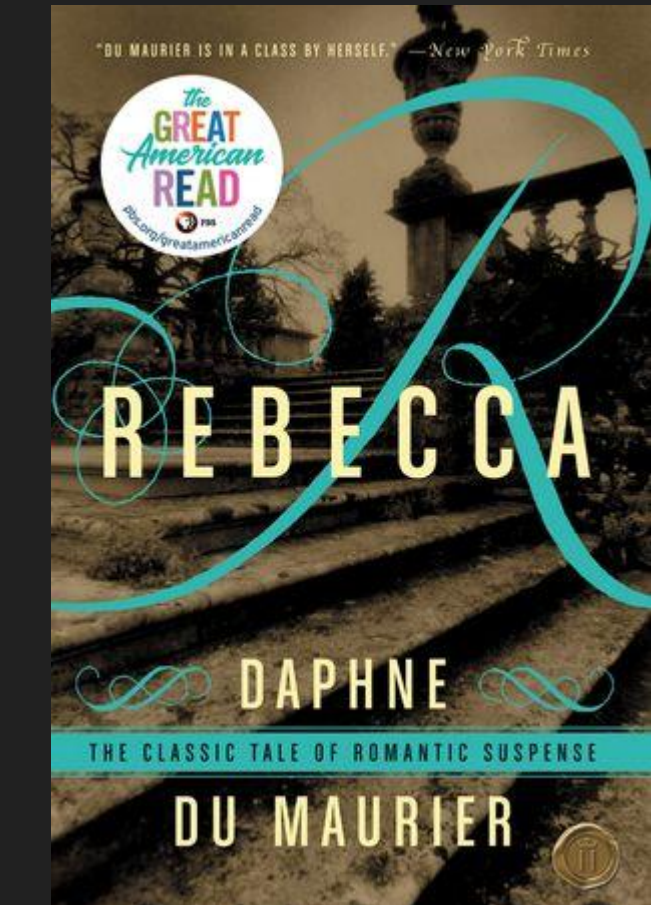
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Psychology in Gothic Literature

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Wuthering Heights

Tells the story of a man named Heathcliff who is adopted by the Earnshaw family at the Wuthering Heights manor and develops feelings for his half sister Catherine. She ultimately betrays him when she chooses to marry someone who was more wealthy. This led to an obsessive revenge plot to take over Catherine's family and punish them for her actions.

Rebecca

Tells the story of a young unnamed woman who marries a widower named Maxim De Winter in Monte Carlo and return to his estate. Things take a turn as Mrs. De Winter learns more about Maxim's dead wife, Rebecca, which leads her down a path of obsession and despair.

Thesis Statement

Gothic Literature such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* help analyze the mental health effects of victims and their struggle to overcome their abuser.

Similarities

- Both novels utilize the setting to invoke ominous and foreboding emotions.
- The novels utilize the secretive nature of certain characters in order to play with the emotions of the main characters in the story
- Both literary works detail the manipulative actions used to control the main characters

Differences

- Emily Bronte was inspired by real places and the popularity of the Gothic era at the time while Daphne Maurier was inspired by the events in her life
- Emily focuses on the obsessions of a man while Daphne focuses on the obsessions of a woman.
- Emily interprets that the victim can start over and mend a broken past while Daphne interprets that the abuse changes the victim forever.

Conclusion

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* feature abusive tactics such as belittlement, control, and gaslighting which ultimately takes a mental toll toward the main characters which is noted by using the environment to express their mental thoughts. Although many people are able to overcome the abuse and start off on a clean slate similarly to *Wuthering Heights*, abuse can also be traumatizing and can linger in a person's thoughts for an eternity like in *Rebecca*. In the end, more research on the ways men cope with abuse in comparison to women, as some of the male characters in the story seem to have dealt with the same abuse that Young Catherine and Mrs. De Winter endured.

Catherine Vs. Rebecca

- Catherine controls Heathcliff because of his obsession to Catherine while Rebecca has control over Mrs. De Winter because of her insecurities.
- Catherine has cruel tendencies toward Heathcliff, but is mostly nice while Rebecca was nice on the outside but had an evil personality that only Maxim and Mrs. Danvers knew
- Catherine and Rebecca's spirit are metaphors for the secrets that lie hidden in the manors/Estate

Young Catherine Vs. Mrs. De Winter

- Young Catherine is like her mother Catherine whereas Mrs. De winter is the polar opposite of Rebecca
- Young Catherine and Mrs. De Winter are headstrong and learn from the mistakes made by others
- Mrs. De Winter has many insecurities that allow the housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers, to take power over her and the estate while young Catherine's arrogance led to her being overtaken
- Young Catherine overcame the abuse because of how much she reminded Heathcliff of her mom and Mrs. De Winter overcame abuse because she found out the ugly truth about Rebecca

Works Cited

Bronte, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. 1847, New York Bantam Dell, October 2003.
Maurier Daphne. *Rebecca*. HarperCollins, 2006.