



# THE SYMBOLISM OF WINDOWS IN ENGLISH FICTION: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

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## **Abstract:**

This article explores how windows are used as symbols in English literature. Windows appear in many novels, and they are not just parts of buildings. They are symbols of freedom, dreams, and also of being trapped. I noticed this while reading many books, and it made me think a lot. When characters stand near windows, they often feel deep emotions. In this personal article, I reflect on five famous English novels: *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*, *To the Lighthouse*, *A Room with a View*, and *The Yellow Wallpaper*. In these works, windows help us understand the characters better. They show us who is dreaming, who is suffering, and who wants to break free. I try to explain this idea in simple English, with my own thoughts as a reader who feels deeply connected to these stories.

**Keywords:** windows, literature, English fiction, freedom, confinement, symbolism

## **Introduction:**

Since my childhood, I always loved sitting near windows. When I was bored or sad, I looked outside. I imagined other places, other lives. Later, when I began reading English novels, I saw many characters also sitting near windows, looking out, or thinking. I felt a connection. That's how I started thinking about the meaning of windows in literature.

A window is not just a thing made of glass. It lets us see the world, but we cannot always go into that world. In books, windows are often used to show this feeling. A window becomes a symbol of hope, of sadness, of wishing for something more.

In this paper, I will talk about how windows are used as symbols in five major novels. These are: *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, *To the Lighthouse* by Virginia Woolf, *A Room with a View* by E.M. Forster, and *The Yellow Wallpaper* by Charlotte Perkins Gilman. These stories come from different times and styles, but they all use windows in deep ways. I will share my reflections on each novel. My thoughts are not in big, academic language. I just want to show how something simple like a window can carry a big meaning.

## **1. Wuthering Heights: Between the Living and the Dead**

In *Wuthering Heights*, the window appears in one of the most famous scenes. Mr. Lockwood, the guest at the house, is sleeping in a cold room. Suddenly, he dreams that a ghostly hand comes through the window. It is Catherine, calling from the outside. Her ghost wants to come in.

This moment is very scary, but it also makes me feel sad. Catherine is dead, but her spirit is not free. The window is between her and the living world. She cannot come in.

Windows in this novel show the wildness of nature. The wind and storm outside are always strong. The people in the house try to shut the windows to keep nature out. But still, it finds a way in. I feel that Catherine's love for Heathcliff is like the storm—it cannot be stopped.

Later in the novel, Heathcliff also talks to the window. After Catherine dies, he opens the window so that her spirit can visit. It shows how strong their love was, even after death.

To me, the window in *Wuthering Heights* is more than just glass. It is where love, death, and nature meet.

## **2. Jane Eyre: Windows of Growth and Freedom**

*Jane Eyre* is full of windows. As a child, Jane is locked in the red-room, a dark and scary place. The only light comes from a window. But she cannot reach it. She looks at it and feels sad. It shows how she is trapped in a world where she has no power.

When she goes to Lowood school, she sometimes sits near the window and dreams. She wants a better life. This window becomes a symbol of hope.

As Jane grows older, she becomes stronger. At *Thornfield*, she again looks out of windows. She watches the garden, the road, the sky. She thinks about her life, her choices.

One day, she says, "I desired liberty." She means freedom. The window shows what she cannot yet have. But she keeps dreaming.

Before she leaves *Thornfield*, she again stands by a window. She feels torn between love and truth. She wants to stay with Mr. Rochester, but she also wants to keep her self-respect. The window shows the two worlds: one inside, one outside.

I feel Jane's journey is shown in the windows she looks through. From being a child with no choice to a woman who makes her own choices.

## **3. To the Lighthouse: Light, Silence, and Time**

Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* is full of thoughts and feelings. It is not a story with a lot of action. But the small details are powerful.

In this novel, the house by the sea has big windows. The sea, the sky, and the light are always changing. Mrs. Ramsay, the mother, often sits near the window. She is quiet, but her thoughts are full of life.

There is one scene where she looks at her children playing outside. The light comes through the window. She feels peace but also sadness. The light makes her think about time. She knows everything changes.

Later, the house becomes empty. The windows are dirty. The light is gone. It shows how time has passed. But when the family returns, they clean the windows. The light comes back. This small act feels very big to me.

In *To the Lighthouse*, windows are about memory, time, and love. They do not speak, but they show how people feel.

I also love how Woolf uses the window to describe small moments. A woman looking out, a man reading near the light. These small things show the big feelings of life.

#### **4. A Room with a View: Seeing Clearly, Feeling Free**

The title of this book already tells us something important: *A Room with a View*. Lucy, the main character, begins her trip in Italy. She is given a room with no view. An older man offers to exchange rooms with her. She accepts. This small change is the start of her new thinking.

When Lucy looks out the window and sees the beauty of Florence, something inside her starts to wake up. She begins to think differently about life, love, and freedom.

Later, when she goes back to England, her room has no view again. It feels dark and cold. Her fiancé, Cecil, is proper but not exciting. He does not open windows. He likes closed spaces.

George, the man who truly understands her, is different. When he is around, windows are open. The wind blows in. The light shines.

This made me think: windows in this novel are about the mind. A room with a view is not just a better place—it is a better way of thinking.

I feel that when Lucy chooses George, she also chooses to open the window of her heart.

#### **5. The Yellow Wallpaper: Window as a Prison and a Hope**

This short story by Charlotte Perkins Gilman is very sad. It is about a woman who is sick, and her husband keeps her locked in a room. He thinks it will help her. But it makes her worse.

The wallpaper in the room is yellow and ugly. The woman starts to see strange shapes in it. She feels that a woman is trapped behind it.

There is a window in the room. From there, she can see the garden and the road. She wants to go out, but she is not allowed.

As time passes, she loses her mind. She believes she must free the woman behind the wallpaper. She tears it down.

The window in this story shows freedom, but also how close it is and still out of reach. I feel very sad reading this.

The story also shows how women were treated. The window is there, but the rules keep her from going out. The outside world is near, but she is locked in.

The window becomes painful. It shows what she cannot have.

#### **Conclusion:**

Windows are small things, but in stories, they become big symbols. They do not talk, but they say a lot. In these five novels, windows show us who is dreaming, who is trapped, and who is ready to change.

In *Wuthering Heights*, windows connect life and death. In *Jane Eyre*, they show a girl growing up. In *To the Lighthouse*, they are full of light and time. In *A Room with a View*, they help a woman find herself. In *The Yellow Wallpaper*, they show pain and lost freedom.

I think we all have windows in our lives. Some are real, some are in our minds. When we look through them, we see the world, and sometimes we see ourselves.

This article is not just about books. It is also about us—about how we feel, dream, and live. I hope others see how much meaning there is in a small thing like a window.

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