

Gothic and Supernatural Motifs



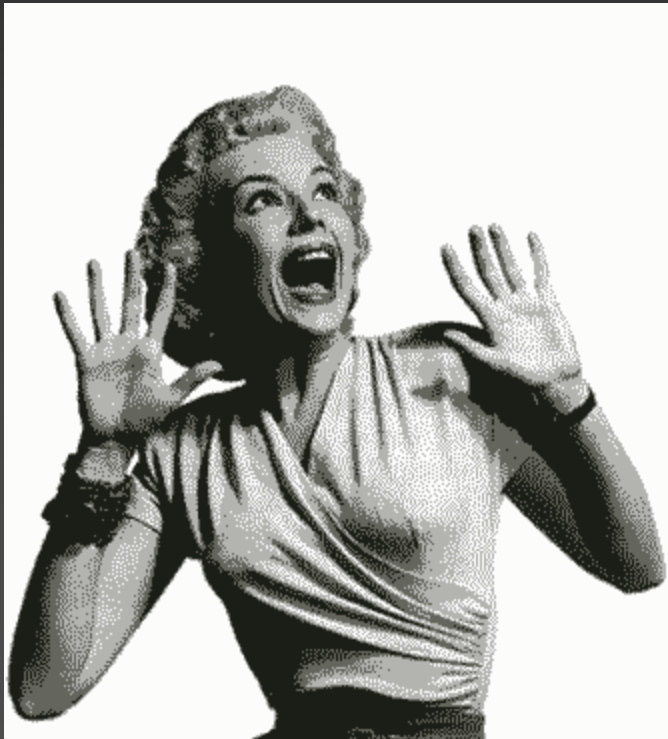


It's called "Gothic" because gothic-style settings—like castles, mansions, and monasteries—served well as backdrops for such dark literature.



THE RUN-DOWN...

- Genre deals with emotional extremes and very dark themes; it examines our deepest, darkest fears—both real and imaginary.

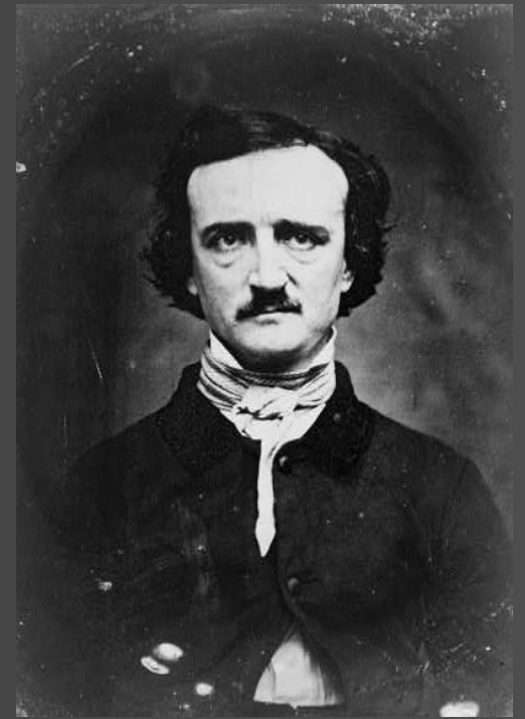


- Gothic lit often incorporates supernatural elements, demons, and apparitions.
- Meant to terrorize the reader—but also draw them in

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS

- Victim is helpless against his torturer
 - Torturer has immense power, sometimes supernatural
 - Victim is often trapped by impenetrable walls—physical or psychological
 - Atmosphere of mystery, darkness, oppressiveness
 - Mysterious disappearances and reappearances
 - Melodramatically violent and psychologically abnormal
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FAMOUS (to some) AUTHORS



- Horace Walpole's novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is considered to be the first gothic novel
- Mary Shelley—*Frankenstein*
- Edgar Allen Poe
- Bram Stoker—*Dracula*



1) The Doppelganger

- “Evil Twin”
- A second self or alternate identity
- Suggests humans have a double nature



2) The Faust Motif: Forbidden Knowledge or Power

- Hero attempts to control supernatural powers
- Ambition leads to fall

Dr. Faustus makes a deal with the Devil



3) Monster/ Satanic Hero/ Fallen Man

- Fallen Hero becomes a Monster
- Or, confronts a monster who is his double
- Like Satan, he defies the rules of God's universe

Frankenstein's Monster

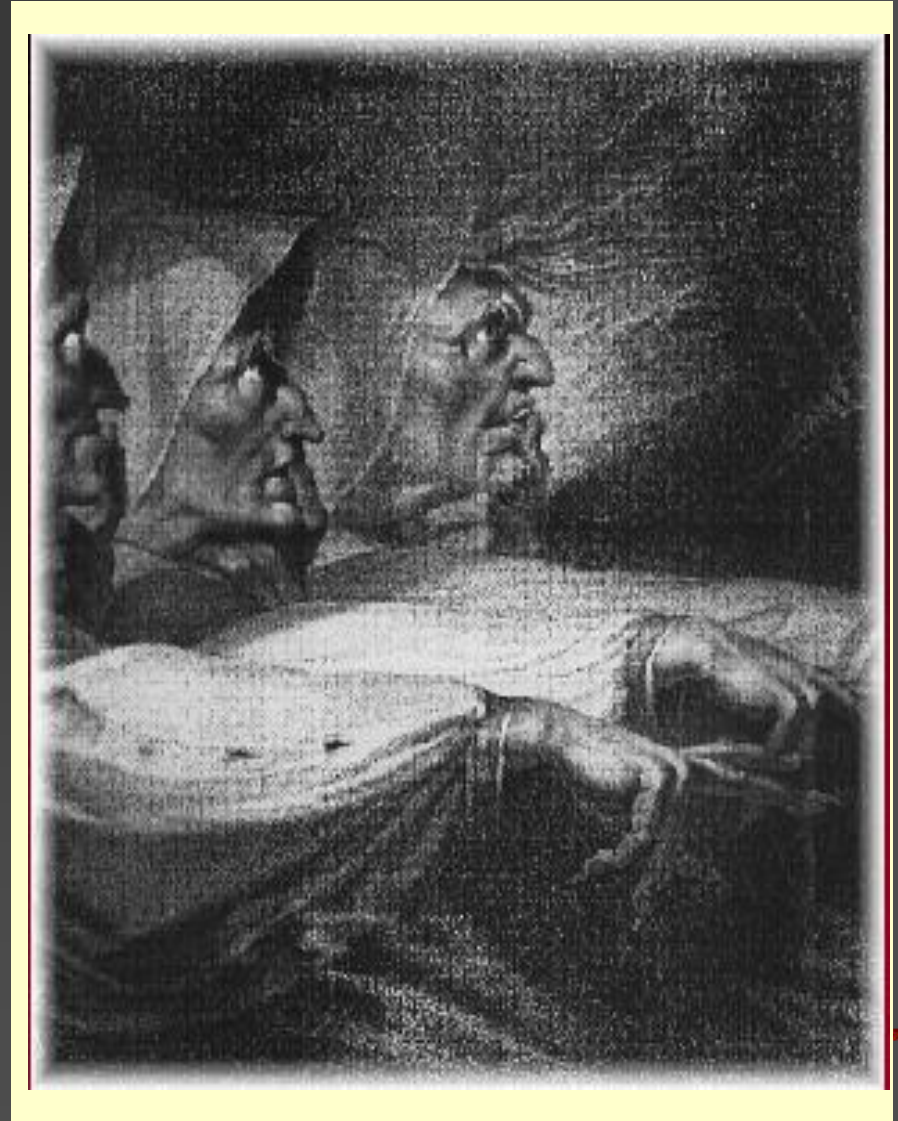


4) Demons/ Devils/ Witches/ Angels

- Represent conflicting forces in the human soul
- Hero may be tempted by evil spirits
- Or, redeemed by good spirits

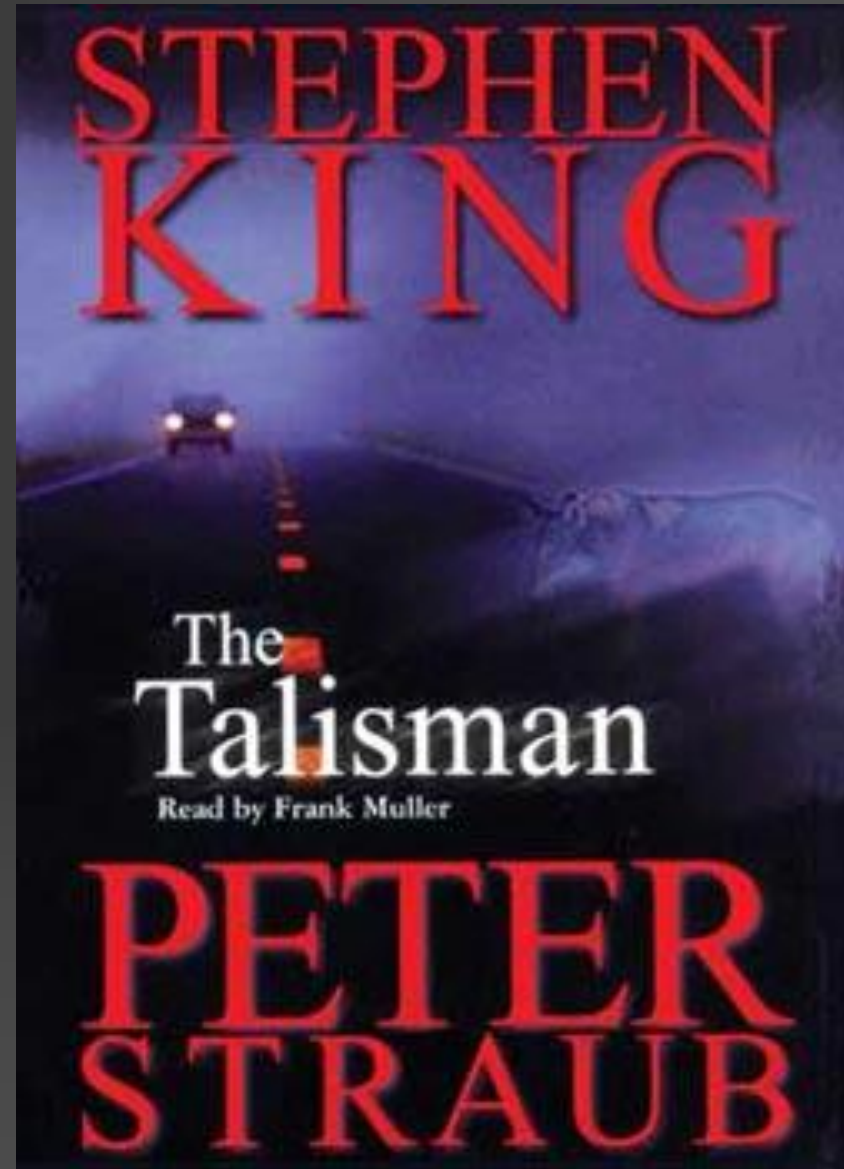


The Three Weird Sisters
in Macbeth



5) Magic Talismans

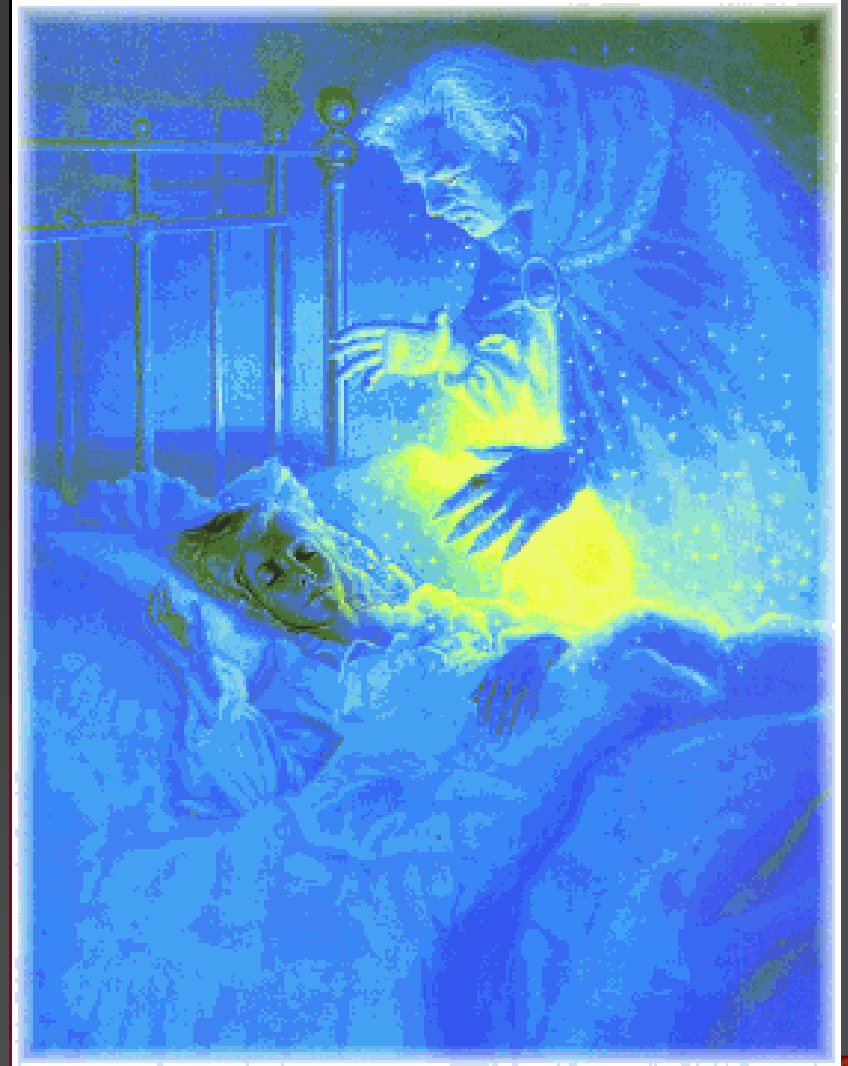
- Symbolize supernatural forces in the hero's personality



6) Dreams / Visions

- Reveal hidden truths of the unconscious mind

Dracula visits his victim
as she sleeps



7) Signs / Omens

- Reveal intention of cosmic forces
- Often represent psychological or spiritual conflict



8) Graveyards / Churches / Ruins

- Suggest human confrontation with infinite forces

Whitby churchyard
from Dracula



9) Haunted Castle or House

- Reflects Hero's Psychological character



10) Madness

- Reflects realities beyond rational comprehension
- Mad characters speak truths we wish to deny

The mad man compels
passers-by to listen



11) Blood

- Symbolizes paradox of human condition
- Represents life/death, guilt/innocence

The Vampire's Feast Thwarted

