Chapter – 2

GOTHIC LITERATURE

2.1 Gothicism : Meaning, Origin and Scope:

What is Gothic? This question cannot be answered in a sentence. It is an art, lifestyle and a certain sensibility. The word ‘gothic’ can be defined in three ways. Firstly ‘a building such as a cathedral that has a style of architecture that is distinguished by all pillars, high vaulted ceiling and pointed arches.’ Secondly ‘Gothic’ is used to describe stories in which strange, mysterious and adventurous happen in dark and lonely places such as the ruins of a castle.’ Lastly the Gothic is ‘a style of printing or writing in which the letters are very ornate.’

The word Gothic is an architectural term. The style is best known for the pointed arch that was the feature of Gothic churches. Gothic architecture was prevalent in Western Europe between the 12th and 16th centuries.

Gothic literature has little to do with Gothic architecture. The word Gothic literature refers to a mode of fiction dealing with supernatural or horrifying events. However Gothic literature is concerned with the supernatural and not all Gothic literature is horrifying. Rather the term Gothic as applied to literature refers to a kind of atmosphere or aesthetics that while it is hard to define, may be understood at an instinctive level, in a way similar to that in which Japanese terms such as ‘wabi’ and ‘sabi” are difficult to define, but are immediately evocative to someone with cultural background.
The Gothic is termed in the dictionary with crudity. This definition coincides with gothic literature. Gothic literature explores the aggression between what we fear and what we lust. The setting of these Gothic stories were usually in some kind of castle or old building that showed human decay and created an atmosphere of mystery and suspense. Supernatural and unexplainable events are crucial to the plot of a Gothic story. Often they act as the backbone of plot and many of the circumstances and coincidences rest upon them. After reading John Goldsworthy’s *Piece* and Bram Stokers *Dracula*, it is known that the setting the idea in a supernatural and explainable way is crucial.

The Gothic literature dealing with demons and abnormal states of mind is not a phenomenon of only medievalism and romanticism, modernism and perversion, death and destruction resulting from political and social aberrations; the fantasy is also a part of the Gothic. According to contemporary American writer Joyce Carole Oates, who is clubbed together with Edgar Allan Poe as a Gothic writer, “Gothicism, whatever it is, is not a literary tradition so much as a fairly realistic assessment of modern life.”¹ One of the key points in Gothicism is the idea that something is either extremely grotesque to the point of being ugly or that the idea so widely unaccepted that it is proclaimed as a sin against either humanity or the church. This statement separates man and God and indicates the fallen state of man. The dark Gothic style surrounds death. Sometimes, the Gothic is anti-human or anti-social.

The word ‘Goth’ and ‘Gothic’ described the Germanic tribes (eg. Goths, Visigoths or Ostrogoths) who sacked Rome and ravaged the rest of Europe in 3rd, 4th and 5th centuries. From this source, the word Gothic came
to mean barbarous. By the 18th century in England, the Gothic had become synonymous with the Middle Ages, a period which was in disfavor because it was perceived as unenlightened and chaotic. The word Gothic first recorded in 1611 in a reference to the language of the Goths was extended in sense in several ways, meaning Germanic, medieval, barbarous and also an architectural style that was not Greek or Roman. Horace Walpole applied the word Gothic in his novel *The Castle of Otranto: a Gothic Story* (1765). From this novel filled with scenes of terror and gloom in a medieval setting descended a literary genre still popular today. The title of the novel gives us a clue to some of the essential elements of Gothic literature. The key word is ‘castle.’ Those ancient buildings may be viewed as symbolic of the unique atmosphere of Gothic literature; the writing style of gothic novel is as heavy as castle masonry and as gloomy as the maze-like corridors of such a medieval building.

However, Gothic literature was said to be born in 1764. It originated in the 18th century, flourished in the 19th century and continues to thrive even today. In literature especially in Gothicism the setting is greatly influential. It not only evokes the atmosphere of horror and dread, but also portrays the deterioration of its world. The decaying, ruined scenery implies that at one time the abbey, castle, or landscape was something treasured and appreciated. Now all that lasts is the decaying shell of a once thriving dwelling. The Gothic hero becomes a sort of archetype as we find that there is a pattern to their characterization. There is always the protagonist, usually isolated either voluntarily or involuntarily. Then there is the villain who is the epitome of evil, either by his own fall from grace or by some implicit malevolence. Setting in a castle the action takes place in and around an old
castle, sometimes seemingly abandoned, sometimes occupied. The castle often contains secret passages, trapdoors, secret rooms, dark or hidden staircases, and possibly ruined sections. The castle may be near or connected to caves, which lend their own haunting flavor with their branching, claustrophobia and mystery.

An atmosphere of mystery and suspense is one of the Gothic elements. The work is pervaded by a threatening feeling, a fear enhanced by the unknown. Often the plot itself is built around a mystery, such as unknown parentage, a disappearance or some other inexplicable element. An ancient prophecy is connected with the castle or its inhabitants. The prophecy is usually obscure, partial or confusing. “What could it mean?” in modern examples, this may amount to merely a legend. Omens, portents, visions are Gothic elements. A character may have a disturbing dream vision or some phenomenon maybe seen as a portent of coming events. For example, if the statue of the lord of the manor fails over, it may portend his death. In modern fiction a character might see something and think that it was a dream. This might be thought of as an imitation vision.

Supernatural or otherwise inexplicable events are the Gothic elements of literature. Dramatic, amazing events occur, such as ghosts or giants walking or inanimate objects coming to life. In some works the events are ultimately given a natural explanation, while in others, the events are truly supernatural. High, even overwrought emotion that is the narration may be highly sentimental and the characters are often overcome by anger, sorrow, surprise and especially terror. Characters suffer from raw nerves and a feeling of impending doom. Crying and emotional speeches are frequent. Bloodletting and blood drinking differ from the act of cutting oneself. The
motivations might be the same, but the desired ends can be different. Blood drinking can be solitary between two people or in a group whereas cutting oneself is almost always solitary. The main difference between the two is that the focus is more on the blood than the pain with drinking. Blood has historically been a powerful symbol in literature signifying both life and death. The vampire imitation symbolizes the blood letting. Vampires were once represented as demons and creatures of the devil in folklore. They were surrounded by superstitions concerning garlic, holy water and crosses. The vampire is no longer the murderous demon, but a symbol of what humanity wishes it could be fearless, immortal, indulgent and powerful. Teenagers especially tend to find the vampiric symbol attractive when they feel very powerless, restricted, uncertain and anxious. This category consists of people who find pleasure in imitating the vampire lifestyle. Some take it fairly seriously indeed. They do not kill to get blood, but they will drink from themselves or any willing donors using controlled cutting techniques. Curiosity and experimentation represents blood letting. It makes people to see what it tastes like, how it feels, how blood flows, what it looks like. The killers, religious cults, fanatics are some people that are extremists who practice blood-letting and blood drinking for entirely different motivations than all of the aforementioned categories. These groups might kill a human or animal to get blood. They might drink it out of a glass. They may offer bloodshed as a religious offering and sacrifice. They may drink or let blood as part of a ceremonial ritual. These extremists often believe that blood is a powerful agent that it can help gain immortality. They use it to worship deity. Blood letting or drinking may rarely also be a motivation for murder.
Depression and sadness is an abnormality that must be suppressed or cured. Adolescence is a time of depression for many individuals. Yet those individuals may feel pressure from family, friends or teachers to be perfect. These young people may feel incredible pain, but do now show it for fear of being derided as if they are abnormal. Depression is one emotion that typifies Goth best. Gothic is an exaggerated personification. While Goths are capable of feeling extreme sadness, they are also capable of experiencing great joy. Most are able to maintain balance in their lives. Women are threatened by a powerful, impulsive, tyrannical male. One or more male characters have the power, as king, lord of the manor, father or guardian to demand that one or more of the female characters do something intolerable. The woman may be commanded to marry someone she does not love or commit a crime. The metonymy of gloom and horror are the Gothic elements of literature. Metonymy is a subtype of metaphor, in which something is used to stand for something else like sorrow. Some metonymies for “doom and gloom” all suggest some element of mystery, danger or the supernatural. For example, howling wind, blowing rain, doors grating on rusty hinges, eerie sounds, footsteps approaching, clanking chains, lights in abandoned rooms, gusts of winds blowing out lights, doors suddenly slamming shut, characters trapped in a room, ruins of buildings and crazed laughter.

Death fixation is one of the most stereotypes. Surrounding Goth is the subculture’s fixation on death. Much of the symbolism and the look seem to connote as the very least an interest in the topic. The depth of this interest would vary with each individual, as always. In general, Goths are an exaggeration of the darker side of the human psyche. They represent
outwardly the thought that linger in the back of everyone’s mind. Goths tend to make their feelings about a little more open than the rest of the world. Death in literature, in life and in religion has always been a monumental driving force in many of humanities. All of humanity is fixed on death in a more subtle way. Gothic represents acceptance of the inevitability of death and the existence of the darker sides of life.

2.2 The History of Gothic Literature:

Most of the settings chosen in Gothic tales tended to be in the eastern half of Europe, because the eastern part of Europe was unknown to most of the people living in Western Europe. This is a matter of remoteness due to the fact that the people had little information about Eastern Europe or the fear of the unknown. The Western Europe was civilized.

The word Gothic existed long before it became a genre term. In origin, it is a race term. The Gothic tribes had homelands in Germany and the Scandinavia. The Goths invaded central and southern Europe and made attacks on Rome and Greece, the seats of civilization. Indeed, the ‘Goth’ and ‘Gothic’ have become synonymous with barbarism. Italians blamed the Goths for destroying Roman Empire; and they called their art style of this period ‘Gothic’ by which they meant barbaric. Of course, this was a black and white view and during the Middle Ages much beautiful art was made. Indeed, this is a part from European Renaissance today.

Gothic as an ethnic and a cultural concept, of course, originates in Europe and the manuals of European history tell us that Gothic settlement developed from the east to the south and west.
Literary works in the sixteenth century England were rarely if ever created in isolation from other currents in the social and cultural world. We have no way of knowing to what extent, if at all this dream of literary power was ever realized in the world. Many sixteenth century writers such as Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare, brooded on the magical transforming power of art. This power could be associated with civility and virtue, as Sidney claims but it could also have the demonic qualities manifested by the pleasing words of Spenser’s enchanter Archimago or by the incantations of Marlowe’s Doctor Faustus. It is significant that Marlowe’s great play was written at a time in which the possibility of sorcery was not merely a theatrical fantasy but a widely shared fear, a fear upon which the state could act-as the case Doctor Faustus vividly shows with horrendous ferocity.

The earlier seventeenth century and especially the period of the English Revolution (1640-60) was a time, an intense ferment in all areas of life, religion, science, politics, domestic relations, culture. Yet this frontispiece also registers some of the tensions, conflicts and redefinitions evident in the literature of the period. Spenser’s Faerie Queen itself the great seventeenth century heroic poem, and Paradise Lost treat the Fall of Man and its tragic consequences. With its roots in Romanticism, antiquarianism and the primacy of the imagination the Gothic genre originated in the 18th century flourished in the 19th century and continued to thrive today.

The following is a survey of the English and European Gothic fiction.
2.3 Gothicism in Various Literatures:

The origin of Gothic literature is traced into various aspects like culture, history and artistic precedents. Gothic elements are found in ancient folklore such as demon lover, cannibal, bridegroom, devil and assorted demons. The Gothic began in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Gothic tradition developed in the Romantic literature. These works depicted religion and discouraged superstition by providing evidence of the existence of good spirit, angels and divine manifestation by ridiculing delusions and naïve credulity. When Gothic movement began, these elements were present in the literature and folklore prior to the mid-eighteenth century. It was the political, social and theological landscape of eighteenth century Europe that served as an impetus for the movement. Writers composed Gothic narratives during this period largely in response to anxiety over the change in social and political structure brought about by such events as the French Revolution, the secular based government rapidly changing the nature of everyday world by scientific advance and industrial development rather than by folklore and fantasy. The Gothic works depicted fears about what might happen, what could go wrong and what could be lost by continuing along the path of political, social and theological changes as well as reflecting the desire to return to the time of fantasy and belief in supernatural intervention that characterized the Middle Ages. In some cases Gothic narratives were used to depict horrors that existed in the old social and political order - the evils of an unequal intolerant society. In Gothic narratives, writers were able to both express the anxiety generated by this upheaval and to increase society’s appreciation and desire for change and progress.
The Gothic tradition in literature was contributed by the great Romantic poets Percy Bysshe Shelley, Lord Byron, John Keats and Samuel Taylor Coleridge. Writers like William Godwin, Mary Shelley and others are most closely associated with Gothic tradition. The Gothic tradition influenced French authors including Gaston Leroux and Russian authors including Fyodor Dostoevsky and Anton Chekhov. Since its inception the gothic genre in literature has undergone numerous changes and adaptations but its essential role as a means of depicting humanity’s deepest, darkest fears and otherwise unspeakable evil was both real and imagined.

The English writers are credited to have founded the Gothic novel. Scottish writers such as James Hogg contributed heavily to the genre and many English language works were influenced by German literary traditions, particularly the works of such writers as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and E.T.A. Hoffmann. Sir Walter Scott’s works reflect German and Gothic sensibility. Horace Walpole, Ann Radcliff, Mary Shelley, Maturin and Lewis wrote the finest Gothic novels. Charles Brokenden Brown, Edgar Allan Poe, and James Fenimore Cooper and some of the most notable authors developed what becomes the American Gothic tradition.

**English Literature:**

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593) was a great playwright. His play *Doctor Faustus* (1604) is a tragedy in blank verse. Dr. Faustus is weary of scientific study and turns to magic. He promises a devil that he will give him twenty four years of life if his desires are fulfilled. The bad angel Lucifer shows him the pleasures of seven deadly sins. Next Faustus invokes the ghost of Helen of Troy. In this story we find Gothic elements like
supernaturalism, angels, ghosts and at the end of the story, Faustus’s tragic life explained. The climax of the play is Faustus’s monologue anticipating the terror that awaits him in his last hour of life. One scene reads thus: “See where Christ’s blood streams in the firmament! One drop would save soul, half a drop. Ah My Christ! and his descent into hell.”

Samuel Richardson (1689-1761) was a great novelist. *Clarissa* (1748) is his masterpiece. It tells the tragic story of a heroine, whose quest for virtue is continually thwarted by her family. Her family forces her to marry a rich but highly uncultured man Roger Solmes. So she escapes with Lovelace, but she remains Lovelace’s prisoner for many months. She refuses to marry him and he rapes her. However, Lovelace’s action backfires and Clarissa is even more adamant on not marrying a vile and corrupt individual like Lovelace. Eventually, Clarissa manages to escape from the brothel, but becomes dangerously ill due to the mental duress she has been under for so many months at the hands of “the vile Lovelace.” Clarissa is sheltered by the kind but poor Smiths and during her sickness she gains another worshipper—John Belford, another libertine who happens to be Lovelace’s friend. Belford is amazed at the way Clarissa handles her approaching death and laments over what Lovelace has done. In one of the many letters sent to Lovelace he writes that “if the divine Clarissa asks me to slit thy throat, Lovelace, I shall do it in an instance.” Eventually, surrounded by strangers and Col. Morden, Clarissa dies in the full consciousness of her own virtue, and trusting in a better life after death. Belford becomes the individual who manages Clarissa’s will and ensures that all her articles and money go into the hands of the individuals she desires should receive them after death.
Horace Walpole (1717-1797) is considered the outstanding chronicler of his era. He is widely recognized as one of England’s first art historians, and an influential revivalist of Gothic literature. His work *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) pioneered the introduction of supernaturalism and mystery into the romance and is thus considered as the first Gothic novel. *The Castle of Otranto* under a mixture of impulses illustrates the movement of the Gothic away from antiquarianism into as yet uncharted psychological territories.

Richard Hurd (1720-1808) wrote *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762). “It provides critical justification for the literature of the Middle Ages and the use of romance material in modern poetry by insisting that the chivalry, manners and Gothic superstitions are more poetic than those of the Greek heroic age.” Richard Hurd spoke favorably of Gothic poetry as well as medieval chivalry and architecture, all of which had long been held in contempt by the literati.

William Godwin (1756-1836) is remembered for his contribution to the Gothic literary tradition. His best novel *Things As They Are: or The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794) is a didactic tale about the evil of government that borrows heavily from the popular Gothic fiction of the day. His novel tells the story of Caleb Williams, a man persecuted by his employer, Ferdinando Falkland, and jailed for a crime he did not commit. Williams’ troubles begin when he learns that Falkland once committed murder. When he confesses his discovery he gets swept up in a series of events over which he has no control, as Falkland frames him for a capital crime. Falkland is an important prototype of the seemingly benevolent but cruel and morally bankrupt Gothic villain, a dual personality that
foreshadows Robert Luis Stevenson’s *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The account of Caleb’s imprisonment and exile is a calculated indictment of the horrors of the British criminal justice.

William Blake (1757-1827) in his works like *Songs of Experience* used the ideas of God and death along with several thoughts on the failure of love and imagination. He wrote them through the Gothic style of darkness and bitter despair that is usually born of contempt for people or society itself.

William Beckford (1760-1844) is remembered for his novel *Vathek* (1787), which is consistently hailed as a seminal contribution to the genre called Romance. Beckford wrote initially in French, revised and expanded the work. An evil caliph Vethak travels to the underworld domain ruled by Eblis, a satanic figure. There, Vathek seeks forbidden wisdom, only to face eternal damnation in the Palace of Subterranean Fire. Beckford based many of his characters upon historical figures and provided a wealth of oriental detail, including descriptions of eastern customs, plant and animal life. He intended to add to this story four episodic tales narrated by sufferers in the Palace of Subterranean Fire. It is said, “The novel’s structure, themes and symbolism place *Vathek* firmly in the tradition of Gothic fiction. *Vathek* proper, obviously inspired by the *Arabian Nights*, recounts the Caliph Vethak’s adventures with evil and final punishments.”\(^4\) *Vethek* is sometimes whimsical, sometimes grotesque, and is written for the most part with an ironic touch.

Joanna Baillie (1762-1851) is a Scottish poet, playwright, editor and critic. Many of Baillie’s tragedies are Gothic works. Her one famous book is
Count Basil where De Monfort centers on a love triangle devoid of romantic intentions which lead to a murder, while Orra tells the tale of a young, independent heiress who refuses to wed and ultimately is driven mad by a fake haunting designed to trick her into marriage. The characters in Count Basil struggle to reconcile their desire for love and honor. Her work Witchcraft (1836) focuses on three women identified as witches, one of whom narrowly escapes being burned at the stake. The critics point to Baillie’s use of the Gothic to critique the morals and values of her time, especially with regard to traditional views of women. Baillie’s plays Count Basil and De Monfort in particular, portray the tension wrought by upheaval in aristocratic society and the threat such upheavals posed to traditional gender roles.

Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) is considered one of the most important writers of the English Gothic tradition. She transformed the Gothic novel from a mere vehicle for the depiction of terror into an instrument for exploring the psychology of fear and suspense. With Radcliffe, Gothic fiction became a craze. Her enormous popularity was associated with a number of innovations. Her importance is further acknowledged by the fun Jane Austen pokes at the delicious terror of Udolpho in Northanger Abbey. Radcliffé’s best known novel The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794), ranks as one of the chief examples of the Gothic genre. This novel contains all of the classic Gothic elements including a haunted castle, a troubled heroine, a mysterious and menacing male figure, and hidden secrets of the past. Claire Buck writes, “Radcliffé interweaves concentration on the picturesque, mystery and feeling, following the fashion set by Horace Walpole.”5 She was acknowledged by critics of her time as the queen of the Gothic novel
and she was also considered a pioneer of the Romantic Movement. Radcliffe is a key figure in the Gothic tradition that freed the collective English literary imagination from conventional and rational constraints and ushered in English Romanticism.

James Hogg (1770-1835) is a Scottish poet, novelist and short story writer. He wrote *The Private Memories and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824) which during his life had been dismissed as an obtuse satire on Christian fanaticism. Featuring Gothic and supernatural elements, including a schizophrenic narrator and a psychological double-devil figure, as well as proto modern narrative complexity the work has been rediscovered by modern critics who have come to view it as a masterpiece of prose fiction. The supernatural folk traditions represent Hogg’s best achievements and also provide the most interest for modern readers. *The Barber of Duncow* (1813), one of his best ghost stories, tells how a spirit reveals to a new bride her husband’s profligate past. After the wife disappears, her husband’s ghost with throat nearly severed leads villagers to her corpse and when the husband touches the body, it begins to bleed profusely. We find in his work psychological complexity and deep ironic and ambivalent element.

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832) is a Scottish novelist, short story writer and poet. He gave attention to Gothic qualities in his fiction. Scott urged his readers to distinguish *Waverley* (1814) and the subsequent series of Waverley novels from tales of Gothic horror. These works nevertheless exhibit numerous affinities to the Gothic literary mode. The mysterious workings of fate and the supernatural often depict violent clashes between romantic and modern sensibilities. Scott’s fiction which makes broad use of
historical and frequently medieval settings alludes to the mysterious. It is routinely cited for its substantial exploration of these and other Gothic themes and devices. *The Pirate* (1822) set in the remote Orkney Islands in 1700 details a struggle between two half brothers. *St. Ronan’s Well* (1824) depicted a brutal rivalry between half brothers. *Castle Dangerous* (1832) concerned with the excesses of the late chivalric code. While many of the Waverley novels provide hints of the supernatural, Scott generally relegated his literary depiction of the inexplicable and other worldly to his short fiction. *Chronicles of the Canon Gate* (1827) includes two darkly pessimistic short stories. The first of this called ‘The Highland Widow’ is a tale. The passing of the old Scottish way of life in the death of a widow’s son is apparently caused by the supernatural power of a fatal curse. In the second story, “The Two Drovers” misunderstanding coupled with the strange and tragic workings of fate leads to the murder of an English cattle man by a Scottish Drover and eventually to the Highlanders execution for his crime. *The Keepsake For 1829* (1829) includes Scott’s ghost story ‘The Tapestried Chamber’ and the tale of sorcery ‘My Aunt Margaret’s Mirror,’ featuring a magical mirror that allows gazes to witness important events as they transpire miles away. Alexander Sanders thinks that Scott is still famous for his historical fiction. He writes, “Scott’s novels, an epoch making phenomenon in their own time, retain more of their original esteem.”

Matthew Lewis Gregory (1775-1818) is a pivotal figure in the history of Gothic novel. He may have been inspired by Ann Radcliffe. It is said, “If Ann Radcliffe is the epitome of ‘female Gothic’, Lewis is the pattern of masculine form.” Lewis’s novel *The Monk* (1796) is a notorious eighteenth century novel of horror. He created genteel novels of suspense.
Lewis emphasized the graphic and the sensational. The Monk’s blend of overt sexuality and terror created a scandal in England. His talent showed him as an innovative writer of prose and poetry. He contributed to the Gothic literary tradition as well as the development of the English Romantic movement. *The Monk* proved so controversial in order to retain his position.

In this novel, Ambrosio is a protagonist, who is a monk. He is a well respected figure in medieval Madrid. Rosario meets Ambrosio and reveals that he is actually a woman named Matilda de Villanges, whose love for Ambrosio has led her to disguise herself in order to be nearer to him. The two consummate a sexual relationship, though Ambrosio later feels remorse and disgust for his actions. After his interlude with Matilda, while visiting the nearby convent of St.Clave, Ambrosio discovers that Agnes, a nun, desires to elope with her lover, Don Raymond de las Cisternas. The monk discloses this information to mother St.Agatha, prioress of the convent, which punishes Agnes by imprisoning her in a dungeon beneath the convent.

Later, Ambrosio travels to the house of the ailing Donna Elvira Dalfa and falls in love with her young daughter Antonia. With the aid of Matilda and her knowledge of black magic, the monk summons a demon so that he might violate the girl. Ambrosio returns to Donna Evilvira’s house, kills her and abducts Antonia, now unconscious through the action of magical potion. In the meantime, Agnes’s brother Lorenzo accuses Mother St.Agatha of murdering his sister and wins a warrant for his arrest. An angry mob forms in response to the accusation, and the crowd razes the convent, murdering the prioress and many innocent nuns. Amid the chaos Leronzo enters the convent grounds in search of his sister. When he finds her she is close to death and clutching the decaying body of her dead child. Hearing the screams of a young girl nearby, Lorenzo discovers Antonia’s ravished and
stabbed body and observes her attacker Ambrosio, as he flees; later he notifies the Inquisition for Ambrosio’s crimes. Ordered to be burned at the stake, Ambrosio, at the urgings of Matilda, makes a pact with Satan, exchanging his soul for freedom. The devil appears and saves him from the flames of the Inquisition, only to reveal that in killing Donna Elvira and raping Antonia, he has murdered his own mother and committed incest with his sister. The story ends as the monk’s forfeit soul is cast into hell. *The Monk* departs somewhat from that of the traditional Gothic novel, while it favors the evocation of grotesque horror rather than the rendering of a sentimental theme of justice based upon divine providence. Lewis’s novel nevertheless presents a critique of human vice and explores the conflict between religion and human sexuality.

Charles Maturin (1780-1824) is remembered primarily for his novel *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) which is considered among the finest examples of Gothic fiction in English. He is known for his complicated revenge plot, supernatural phenomena and use of landscape to create atmosphere of horror and suspense. It is strongly reminiscent of the Gothic novels by Radcliffe and Lewis. *Melmoth the Wanderer* tells the story of a seventeenth century scholar who sells his soul to the devil in exchange for a prolonged life. The critics praised the novel for its graphic description of horror and suffering.

Jane Austen’s (1795-1817) *Northanger Abbey* (1818) is her only work to be widely studied as part of the Gothic literary tradition. The novel is in part a burlesque of the Gothic and sentimental fiction that was popular in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. *Northanger Abbey* follows the
maturation of Catherine Morland, a naive eighteen-year-old ignorant of the
working of English society.

Mary Shelley (1797-1851) is best known for her novel Frankenstein; or the Modern Prometheus (1818) which has transcended the Gothic and horror genres and is now recognized as a work of philosophical and psychological resonance. Shelley created a powerful metaphor for the modern age; indeed, the Frankenstein myth, which has been adapted to stage, film and television has pervaded modern culture. In addition to Frankenstein, Shelley’s literary works include several novels that were moderately successful when published but are little-known today. Students of the Gothic, supernatural horror and science fiction novel have adopted Frankenstein as a venerable forebear and have approached it from a historical point of view. In Frankenstein, superstition and science, Gothic magic and rational enquiry undergo a spectacular fusion. “It is a Gothic tale of terror informed by the contemporary philosophical debate.”

Charles Dickens (1812-1870) is an English novelist and social thinker. He wrote a ghost story A Christmas Carol (1843). Some of the characters are grotesques. Dickens loved the style of eighteenth century Gothic romance. He was a late contributor to the development of Gothic literature. However, he played a major role in establishing the Christmas ghost story as an institution. Novels by Dickens that owe a debt to the Gothic tradition include The Old Curiosity Shop (1841), Bleak House (1853), Little Dorrit (1857) Great Expectations (1861), Mutual Friend(1865), and The Mystery of Edwin Drood (1870). These novels contain Gothic elements within their humorous, picaresque structure, employing melodrama, hyperbole and horror to drive home their themes. The Mystery of Edwin Drood’s prime
suspect is John Jasper, uncle of the missing Edwin, who frequents opium dens and conceals a secret passion beneath his seeming respectability. This plot is Gothic.

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, (1814-1873) is an Irish novelist, short story writer and poet. Le Fanu is a major figure among Victorian authors of Gothic and supernatural fiction. His novels and short stories are descriptions of physical settings, powerful evocation of foreboding and dread and convincing use of supernatural elements. Le Fanu’s works are admired for their insightful characterization and skilled use of narrative. His first collection of short stories *Ghost Stories and Tales of Mystery* (1851) and *The Purcell Papers* show his supernatural and psychological interests. The five longer stories in the later collection *In a Glass Darkly* (1872) are widely acknowledged as his best work in the genre.

Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855) is the author of vivid skillfully constructed novels. She created female characters who broke the traditional, nineteenth century fictional stereotype of a woman as submissive and dependent, beautiful but ignorant. Her works, depicting the struggles and minor victories of every day life, are considered early examples of literary realism. *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* (1853) have been discussed as a part of the Gothic literary tradition and contain elements of mystery, heightened passions and the supernatural.

Emily Bronte (1818-1848) is considered an important yet elusive figure in the nineteenth century English literature. In *Wuthering Heights* (1847) Bronte incorporated the horror and mystery of a Gothic novel the remote setting and passionate characters of a Romantic novel, and the social
criticism of a Victorian novel. This story of extraordinary love and revenge brought her recognition. In *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte chronicles the attachment between Heathcliff, a rough orphan taken in by the Earnshaw family of Wuthering Heights, and the family’s daughter Catherine. The two characters are joined by a spiritual bond of preternatural strength, yet Catherine elects to marry her more refined neighbor Edgar Linton of Thrushcross Grange. Ultimately, this decision leads to Catherine’s madness and death and prompts Heathcliff to take revenge upon both the Lintons and the Earnshaws. Heathcliff eventually dies, consoled by the thought of uniting with Catherine’s spirit and the novel ends with the suggestion that Hareton Earnshaw, the last descendant of the Earnshaw family, will marry Catherine’s daughter, Catherine Linton and abandon Wuthering Heights for Thrushcross Grange. Today the novel is known for its “Gothic and romantic elements. It has become one of the most popular and widely acclaimed of all Victorian novels.”

Willkie Collins (1824-1889) was a novelist, short story writer and playwright. Collins is remembered as a principle founder of English detective fiction. Collins has been called the father of English detective fiction. His novels are known for intrigue and suspense. Collins began to receive recognition for his innovations in the detective genre for his unconventional representation of female characters. His first novel *Antonina* was imitative and historical. Collins’s use of the Gothic recast history in this tale. It focuses on the siege of patriarchal Rome by a Gothic army.

Bram Stoker (1847-1912) is best known as the author of *Dracula* (1897). It is one of the most famous horror stories of all time and a work frequently cited as a culminating example of the late-Victorian Gothic
fiction. Stoker wrote adventure novel, romances, works of horror and numerous pieces of short fiction. Stoker composed *Dracula* as an epistolary novel comprised of journal entries, letters, newspaper clippings; ships log book and phonograph recordings. The story begins with the journey of a young English solicitor, Janathan Harker. He is sent to Transilvania to counsel a wealthy client Count Dracula. During his two month stay at Dracula’s castle, Harker becomes disconcerted by Dracula’s odd appearance, eccentricities and predatory behavior. After some investigation, he discovers that Dracula sleeps in a coffin in a crypt beneath the castle during the day and spends his nights stealing babies from the nearby town. Harker manages to escape the castle and returns to England where he is reunited with his fiancée Mina Murray. Strange events in London, including the arrival of a Russian schooner containing fifty boxes of earth and mysterious death of Mina’s acquaintance Lucy Westenra, suggest that Dracula has followed Harker back to England. Harker engages the help of Lucy’s former doctor, Von Helsing, when she reemerges as a vampire. Together with several assistants the men locate the undead Lucy and destroy her. Then it becomes clear that Mina is the victim. Discovering that he has fled London, they track him and kill him. As Dracula’s body disintegrates, Mina is saved. *Dracula* is a straightforward horror novel. Jean-Jacques Lecercle in his essay “The Kitten’s Nose: Dracula and Witchcraft,” comments that the novel is a “Greimassain account, involving a two-tier analysis.” This is in terms of narrative techniques.

Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894) is a best known Scottish novelist and short story writer. He is best known for his outstanding work of supernatural horror *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886).
His famous stories of piracy and horror have placed him at the forefront of writers of romance. His fiction is still considered seminal to the late 19th century development of adventure romance and Gothic literature. *The Merry Men and Other Tales and Fables* (1887), *Island Nights Entertainments* (1893), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), and *Weir of Hermiston* (1896) examine moral dilemmas presented in an atmosphere imbued with mystery and horror.

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) is one of the foremost figures of late nineteenth century decadence, a movement whose members espoused the doctrine of “art for art’s sake” by seeking to subordinate moral, political, social concerns in art to matters of aesthetic value. Wilde’s novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) is typically considered one of the pictures of defining literary works of the Decadent movement.

Joseph Conrad (1857-1924) is a writer of the best known novel *Heart of Darkness* (1899). It is surprising to find Conrad employing such traditional Gothic techniques to create an atmosphere of imminent terror. However a short story like *The Inn of the Two Witches* (1915) provides a clear revelation of Conrad’s acquaintance with and understanding of Gothicism in its most basic form. In this tale Conrad charts the story of Edgar Byrne and his search for young seaman, Tom Corbin, who has disappeared in mysterious circumstance. Significantly setting his action in a remote region of the early nineteenth century Spain, Conrad readily adopts a number of Gothic conventions aimed at creating a mood of initial terror. A sense of brooding oppression is achieved by Conrad’s references to the “wild, gloomy sky” and the “rank,” “stony” and dreary” nature of the surrounding landscape.”

As Edgar Byrne’s search intensifies the Gothic
atmosphere correspondingly. Stumbling on a remote hamlet, Conrad’s narrative notes that it is “hidden in a fold in the ground,” in spot which seemed the most lonely corner of the earth and as if accursed in its uninhabited barrenness”¹² In such passages Conrad’s language, with its heavy adjectival stress, is ideally suited to the Gothic form, which by definition demands linguistic intensification or exaggeration. Michael Joslin observes, “In characteristic Gothic fashion, Conrad’s landscape has become “a Grotesque vision of hell.”¹³

Conrad’s opening narrative sequence in ‘The Inn of the Two Witches’ (1915) follows well-established Gothic formulas designed to create a mood of initial error. In Heart of Darkness (1899), for example, one critic refers to the “powerful impact of the setting” with its “aura of nightmarish …gloom,”¹⁴ and adds significantly that its effect is as “startling as any created in a recognized Gothic novel. Conrad’s stress on the reverberating darkness, the almost evil animation of the trees, is strikingly Gothic in its whole conception. Furthermore in this passage, it is significant to point to what Ian Watt calls Conrad’s characteristic “inflation of language.”¹⁵ His lavish imagery so typical in his descriptions of Africa and the tropics creates an immediate sense of apprehension, and plays a major role in evoking a mood of fear and terror. ‘Conrad’s Sea’ becomes as strangely mysterious and as powerfully moving as the awesome castles and the sublime mountains of the conventional terror novel.

Conrad’s Heart of Darkness is a narrative, with other two stories. The story begins with a western character Marlow meeting at the trading post and the central stations are only in extracting ivory and do not notice the suffering of the native workers. Marlow is sent upriver to rescue Kurtz, an
agent, now seriously ill. His depravity is signaled by the human heads which decorate the posts outside the hut. Marlow retains a paradoxical admiration for Kurtz, whose death bed cry- ‘The horror! The Horror!- intimates a kind of desperate self knowledge.

Dinesen Isak (1885-1962) is best known for his work *Seven Gothic Tales* (1934). Isak explored such themes as the lives and values of aristocrats, the nature of fate and destiny, the artist and the place of women in society. Her works defy easy categorization, though she incorporated elements of Gothic and horror as well as humor in her stories.

**European Literature:**

Gothic fiction is equally rich in the other European literatures like the German and French. A few Gothic writers like Goethe, Hoffmann and Hugo are mentioned in the following pages.

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe (1749-1832) was a German poet, novelist, playwright and short story writer. He was a shaping force in the major German literary movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. His drama *Faust* is considered one of the greatest works of nineteenth century Romanticism. His work containing Gothic elements is his two parts retelling of the classic legend of *Faust*, the scholar who gives himself to Mephistopheles, or the devil, a chance to claim his soul in exchange for unlimited knowledge and eternal life. *Faust* as a play lacks almost totally the sadistic terror that was the visible hallmark of the Gothic. Christopher Marlow wrote his play on the same theme and his *Faustus* is more popular than Goethe’s.
Hoffmann E. T. A. (1776-1822) (Ernst Theodor Wilthelm Hoffmann Amadeus) was a German novelist and short story writer. An artist Hoffmann is best known as a writer of bizarre and fantastic fiction. Drawing on English Gothic romance, Italian comedy, the psychology of the abnormal and occult, he created a world in which everyday life is infused with the supernatural. Hoffmann himself considered ‘Der goldene Topf’ in which the supernatural enters the poet’s every day life, as his best piece of writing. Additional stories in the Gothic tradition include Die Automate (1814), a two part tale containing a ghost story and a mystery centering on an automation or robot, and Die Abentue der Silvester-Nacht (1814, “A New Year’s Eve Adventure”) in which two characters in two different settings represent polarities of the same personality. Both stories contain supernatural elements.

Victor Hugo (1802-1885) was a French poet, novelist and playwright. He wrote Claude Gueux (1834), a documentary short story about a real life murderer who had been executed in France, in 1834. Les Miserable (1862) is a novel about social misery and injustice as early as the 1830’s.

American Literature:

During the period of 1765 American colonists had created a body of writing which the modern literary historian finds by no means negligible. There was no conscious demand for a national literature. The United States was made to feel that a great literature was essential to the proof of a nation’s greatness. The first writers to be colonized as American classics were Irving, Cooper and Bryant.
The difficulty was that while the new land supplied the writer with rich and untouched materials, it gives him no technique for handling them. The author had to learn from the European writers how to treat these materials and he was thus bound to seem unoriginal. Eventually of course, America would produce original writers like Poe, Whitman, Henry James, Mark Twain, Hemingway, Faulkner and Nathaniel Hawthorne, who would be valued by European writers and critics for their contributions to aesthetic theory and literary technique.

Gradually the European Gothic was exported to America. It was in the 18th century when writers and philosophers wondered, for the first time, about the pleasurable effect of horror. There was a growing taste for ruins and melancholy terror for graveyard poetry and for wild and desolated scenery. The influential forms were public mode as the satire and the moral essay. They dealt with everyday experience of men and women in society and they addressed the reader with easy confidence. It was a polite art whose ideals were clarity, precision, order and harmony. The surprising fact that the Age of Reason, of balance, common sense could produce an imaginative type of literature, such as the gothic, a literature of exaggeration and violence. It is not so surprising once we have had a look at its history two wars for colonial territories with Queen Anne, the Seven Years Wars with George III and the French revolution and the subsequent threat of the guillotine. Literature within the limits of reason is going to be replaced by a literature of exaggeration and strong emotions. The fad for sentiment and psychological states produced a lot of biographers and the taste for the exotic produced a massive bulk of books of travels. The gothic novel was a product of the times.
Edmund Burke was an Irish but sympathetic towards American colonies. He defines the concept as: “Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible or is conversant about terrible objects, or operated in a manner analogous to terror is a source of the sublime, that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.” Burke speaks of the delight arising from scenes of distress, of terrible joy from the contemplation of such objects as the silent night, the distant howling wilderness, the dark wood and hanging precipice. This is connected with the feelings of the 18th century travelers and with the poets of the so called graveyard poetry, then in fashion. The American Novel is the guilt of the revolutionary haunted by the paternal past which he has been striving to destroy and the fear that possession of the gothic motivates its tone.

The vain of Gothic romances runs with the current of the domestic and sentimental novel. The sentimental reveals the power of redemption and the Gothic is the portrait of the power of darkness of damnation. Gothic fiction attacks the institutions which might inhibit the freedom of the individual. Corruption, greediness, lust are always projected in aristocrats or priests. And all the symbols of authority, secular or ecclesiastic, are in ruins: monasteries, churches, abbeys, castles, mansions, towers, ramparts. An age that had killed kings and bishops was still afraid of the past, the dead could keep on causing harm. Those are the ghost of the Gothic fiction. These Gothic romances were not an analysis of contemporary manners, but a vehicle for the irrationality of experience. Gothic fiction was entrusted the task of conveying the impulses of the psyche whose earlier practitioners could not find yet a satisfactory literary expression. The Gothic literature
had turned to the night side of the life, more appropriate to the horrors bred by the Age of Reason. But Gothic literature in England was soon overcome by the Romantic movement and then by the novels of manners by Jane Austen and in the Victorian Age by Dickens, Thackeray, Wilde and Hardy and many other novelists. Gothic fiction was soon forgotten. However what was just a fad in England was taken by an incipient American literature and developed, becoming soon a mode of expression and a common point of view among the most important American writers.

At first sight it is really difficult to adapt a kind of fiction involved with the past and history to a country that did not have any of these. The haunted castles and ruined abbeys had sense in the European Gothic. They were symbols for particular body of attitudes towards the past. But in America all this was quite improbable. How could they be social status of the hero or villain be transplanted, and aristocrats, the monks, the servants of the Inquisition? How could they be convincingly introduced in the classless American scene? How a country with so many future possibilities could be concerned with the past? America had not the gloom, the mysterious element, and the decadence on which European writers fed. Hawthorne, in the preface of the *The Marble Faun* refers to the “poverty of materials in America by elaborating a catalogue of missing items like no shadow, no mystery, no picturesque and gloomy wrong, nor anything but a commonplace prosperity.” This makes the task of the writer of romances specially difficult. However, there are only ten years between the publication of the novels by Radcliffe and Lewis and the first American Gothic romances. American writers chose Gothic romance instead of other genres such as the
sentimental novel. This could be explained by an account of common features existing between Gothic literature and the historical in America.

If the essence of the Gothic hero is his lust for experience, that is exactly the foundation of America. Both the Gothic hero and the earlier men of America are men on the run, who flayed away from institution and civilization to find a world of menaces. The Gothic hero is a rebel and he challenges the rules and attacks institutions. He is therefore the enemy of heaven. The very act by which America was established is a gesture of defiance. But this breach of the primal taboo of breaking through the limits produced a sense of guilt and anxiety, the guilt of breakthrough, whose punishment was spiritual isolation. If the Gothic in England offered conventions to embody a violent past, it will also fit America. Although American past was recent, it did not lack violence and bloodshed, the slaughter of the Indians, the revolutionary war and slavery. Through the Gothic modes the obsessive concerns of American life could find expression. Puritanism favored an allegorical habit of mind that suited the symbolist nature of Gothic romances and provided with a solid basis the problem of evil and damnation. Faust, the typical damned hero, is the protagonist of gothic fiction. The struggle between the absolute good and the absolute evil finds a suitable literary embodiment in the Gothic fiction when it is made of language of static signs of tragedy in a vacuum.

Gothic fiction provided the American writers not with a fiction in the novel form, but with romance. It was not likely that novels of manners found in America favorable conditions since America did not have yet a fully developed complex society. In romance, experience has less to do with human beings as social creatures than as individuals. In romance there is no
firm sense of social arena. Romance and Gothic fictions apart from the analytic mode of the novel, there is in them an explained element a mystery in the alteration of character. Such writers as Cooper, William Gilmore Simms and Hawthorne believed that romance was the form of fiction called for by American conditions. Romance provided Hawthorne with that “neutral territory between the real world and fairyland where the actual and the imaginary my meet.”

The American characters are victims of their own weakness or obsessions. American literature used Gothic conventions to invest with horror the vision of a chaotic and lost world, as a means of expressing such deep issue of American history as the guilt of the revolutionist, the relationship with the Indian and the Negro and with the nature. Darkness is proclaimed the realm of literature on the basis that freedom is damnation. The environment is always a trap for the characters. The relationship between the characters is founded on misconceptions the revolt or traditional fixed concepts, the role of the hero, the behavior of institutions and nature. It is the revolt of identity, of faith, of objects, of reliance on the characters’ view. There the American dream turns into the Faustian nightmare.

The British fiction influenced the American fiction so naturally that American fiction resembles the European fiction. This also applies to the American Gothic fiction. Generally Charles Brockden Brown (1771-1810) is remembered as the first American novelist and he is a key figure in the tradition of Gothic for some of his novels like *Edgar Huntly* (1799), *Wieland Part I* (1798), *Part II* (1801), *Ormond* (1799) and *Merwin*. He was responsible for “Americanizing” the Gothic. It means his Gothic novels deal with horror and supernatural elements with a peculiar American flavor,
replacing the expected tropes of European Gothic with American images, including the frontier caves and cliffs. He located the sources of terror and retained a Gothic mood of emotional and psychological extremity. Brown’s novel *Weiland* is widely considered the first Gothic novel in America and it is a tale of illusion, confusion and irrational human behavior. It is written in epistolary form. It draws on the traditions of both Gothic and sentimental novel, often considered convoluted and episodic, though highly imaginative. It includes combustion, mass murder, suicide, seduction, insanity and ventriloquism. *Weiland* is about an archetypal heroine Clara Weiland whose peaceful life with her brother Theodore hears the voice command him to kill his wife and children, which he does. He is about to murder his sister and the man she loves. But shockingly, he was not responsible for the voice that commanded Theodore to murder his family. *Weiland* has been seen variously as a cautionary tale on the dangers of religious fervor, an indictment of Puritanism and self referential allegory of the writing process itself. Brown’s next novel *Edgar Huntly* deals with the problems of human’s inability to trust his sense perception. The narrator follows Sleepwalking Huntly, whom he suspects is his best friend’s murderer, through labyrinthine frontier. His journey symbolizes the moral dilemma at the core of the novel; whether criminology can begin to fathom a mind in nightmarish conflict. *Ormond* deals with Brown’s ideas regarding necessity of educational equality for women. The villainous Ormond terrorized Constantina Dudley after having had her killed, holding her captive and threatening to rape her. But she defeats him by sibling him. In *Arthur Meruyn*, the story has been interpreted as Brown’s argument for civic responsibility toward the impoverished, the ill and downtrodden.
Washington Irving (1783-1859) explored a number of literary styles and genres in writing with many of his best known stories incorporating elements like Gothic literature. Such stories were written in a humorous, lighthearted tone; and they reveal the author’s interest in mystery, horror and the supernatural. Most modern critics classify Irving as one of the greatest American writers, responsible for establishing an American style of writing, especially in the short story genre. His short stories like “The Adventure of the German Student” have received attention for their unique handling of the supernatural and the Gothic.

One of the acknowledged masters of American fiction is Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864). His works reflect his dark vision of human nature. He portrays Puritanism as an expression of humanity’s potential for cruelty, obsession and intolerance. His strange hunting tales of guilt, isolation and death betray depths of human psychology and moral responsibility. His highly allegorical works use of Gothic conventions to explore questions about human actions and their consequence and effect of sin on the human psyche. Gothic elements found in his novels The Scarlet Letter (1850) and The Marble Faun (1860). These works are highly symbolic, challenging moral fantasies. In his novel The Scarlet Letter, the Gothic elements and devices abound, which treat cruel and unusual punishment of an adulteress. In The Scarlet Letter, He set the standard for psychological realism for generations of writers. Hawthorne explored the historical, social, theological and emotional ramifications of sin, concealment and guilt. He used Gothicism as a vehicle to investigate the dark side of human soul, not terrifying readers but horrifying them with clinical depiction of the inner workings of his characters’ minds. In the words of Spiller, “In his exposition
of these complicated problems Hawthorne frankly employed fiction to study psychic case histories; in him, as already hinted, was a tough, cold streak, tempting him outside the personal relationships of his characters into indefatigable analyses of these specimens of moral experience. It is true that this semi scientific study sometimes chills the characters themselves, even in the richly human *Scarlet Letter.*”

Edgar Allan Poe’s (1809-1849) status as a major figure in the world literature is primarily based on his highly acclaimed short stories, poems and critical theories. Poe made himself known not only as a superlative author of poetry and fiction but also as a literary critic whose level of imagination and insight had hither to be unapproached in American literature. In poetry this single effect must arise the readers’ sense of beauty, an ideal that Poe is closely associated with; in prose the effect should be one revelatory of some truth as in a tale of ratiocination or works evoking terror, or passion or horror. Poe’s stories *The Black Cat* (1843), *The Cask of Amontillado* (1846) and *The Tell Tale Heart* (1843) are often told by a first person narrator, and through this device, he probes the workings of a character’s psyche. This technique foreshadows the psychological explorations of Fyodor Dostoevsky and the school of psychological realism. In his Gothic tales Poe employed an essentially symbolic almost allegorical method which gives such work as *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1839), *The Masque of the Red Death* (1842), and *Ligeia* (1838) an enigmatic quality that accounts for their enduring interest and also links them with the symbolical works of Hawthorne and Melville. A tale of sickness, madness, incest and the danger of unrestrained creativity, *The Fall of the House of Usher* is among Poe’s most popular and critically examined horror story. This story has a
psychological element and ambiguous events including symbolism that have given rise to many critical readings. Poe used the term ‘arabesque’ to describe the ornate descriptive prose in this and other stories. The story is also one of the several of Poe’s which utilize as a central character the Decadent Aristocrat. This mad, often artistic noble heir took the place of the traditional Gothic villain in tales portraying the sublime hostility of existence itself rather than the evil embodied by individuals. In addition to The Fall of the House of Usher such characters appear in his stories like Metzengerstein (1840), Berenice (1840), Ligeia (1838), The Oval Portrait (1842) and The Masque of the Red Death (1842). Central to the setting in many of these stories is a large ominous castle. A second group of Poe’s tales centre, in obsessive detail, on the horror and misery wrought by a guilty conscience. These included The Black Cat, The Tell-Tale Heart and William Wilson. While the stories Hop-Frog: Or the Eight Chained Organg- Outrages (1849), The Pit and the Pendulum (1843) and The Cask of Amontillado do not take a guilty conscience as their starting point. They share the same paranoid intensity demonstrated in these tales. Poe’s poem The Raven (1845), exhibits elements of tales in both groups identified above. Poe completed only one novel and it was written in the Gothic tradition. Poe’s The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (1838), the story of an ill-fated sea voyage has captured the attention of generations of readers with its action packed-plot, imaginative use of symbol and myth, depiction of cannibalism and numerous unusual occurrences.

Herman Melville (1819-1891) is best known for Moby Dick, a whale hunting yarn that reaches into the dark Gothic depths of the psyche. He is not ordinarily categorized as a Gothic writer and his relationship to the
literary tradition has nevertheless been identified by numerous contemporary scholars who paint to the frequently adapted use of Gothic. We find his exploitation of isolated shipboard settings for the purpose of evoking psychological terror. These works have been a recent appreciation of Gothic features in Melville’s novels. By the middle of the 20th century Moby Dick was considered one of America’s greatest novels and widely acclaimed as a work of genius. Melville elevated Moby Dick to the status of a national epic. This work has been a recent appreciation of Gothic features. His adopted Gothic fictional techniques evoke a mood of preternatural terror to the shipboard. Moby Dick is informed by Gothic themes, conventions and characterization. Melville uses the seagoing pequod as a surrogate for the archetypal hunted castle setting of Gothic fiction.

Ambrose Bierce (1842-1914) is a well-known short story writer. His story The Damned Thing (1898) focuses on how the human race takes its views of nature for granted and how there are things in the natural world. The human eye cannot see or the human ear cannot hear. It presents a number of Gothic elements throughout. Some of the Gothic elements include revealing what culture does not want to tell or admit and spreading social anxieties. The story proceeds to entries written in Margan’s dairy.

Henry James (1843-1916), best known for his realistic fiction, wrote a number of ghost stories including a couple of the more important works in the tradition. At the turn of the century, James took the psychological ghost story to a new height as it focuses not on external specters but on the perceiving consciousness. James probed social and psychological concerns such as artistic role of society, both need for the aesthetic and moral life. James’s best known Gothic novel is The Turn of the Screw (1898); and the
ghost stories are *The Ghostly Rental* (1876) and *The Jolly Corner* (1908). *The Turn of the Screw* is considered a landmark in Gothic tradition. By common consent, it is a tale of supernatural horror. It is framed with a speaker, Douglas, who produces a manuscript by a governess who had been infatuated with her employer. She is confronted by a pair of ghost that she suspects is corrupting the two young children in her charge. The apparitions are those of Peter Quint, a man formerly employed in the household, and Miss Jessel, a previous governess. As the suspicions deepen, the new governess confronts each of the children; concerning their collusion with ghost during each confrontation. One of the specters appears to the governess, bringing the action to a crisis. The girl Flora denies having seen the wraiths and apparently hysterical, is sent to her uncle in London. The boy, Miles dies in the arms of governess during the culmination of a psychic battle between the governess and the ghost of Peter Quint. In this story, James once again leaves the nature and reality of the supernatural and the story has been read variously as a horrifying ghost story and a penetrating psychological study of an emotionally unstable woman whose visions of ghost are mere hallucinations.

Perkins Gilmans Charlotte (1860-1935) was a short story writer. He wrote *The Yellow Wallpaper* (1892). This is considered his best work of short fiction. The story is about a young mother’s mental deterioration. The unnamed protagonist of the story is advised on medical theories of the time to abstain from any and all physical activity and intellectual stimulation. She is suffering from post-partum depression. She is not allowed to read, write and even see her new born baby.
Edith Wharton (1862-1932) is an important American writer. She is best known as a novelist of manners whose fiction depicts the aristocratic society in the United States at the beginning of twentieth century. Her short stories reflect her concern for the status of woman in society as well as for the moral decay. Aside from her numerous supernatural stories collected as *Ghost* in 1937, Wharton’s writings eschew over Gothic machinery, while many nevertheless evoke the pervasive and elemental sense of foreboding and psychological terror typically associated with the genre. Her *Ethan Frome* is notable for enveloping atmosphere of decay, and gloom and it reflects several of the Gothic themes that she explored more fully in her short stories.

Gertrude Atherton (1857-1948) is an American novelist and short story writer. He wrote a Gothic story *The Striding Place* (1896). It follows Weigal, who is part of a hunting party in England and goes out later to walk and think. His best friend has disappeared couple of days earlier and while Weigal is almost sure that it is a prank. He is still nervous. He goes down to the river and follows the path through the woods at night. And his terror and fear are explained in this story. Sherwood Anderson (1876-1941) is a short story writer. *Death in the Woods* is a Gothic story written by him. The story is the narrator’s fictionalized account for her life and death, focusing on one fateful trip into a town. *The Outsider* (1921) is a short story about horror, written by H. P. Craft (1890-1937). Here a mysterious man has been living alone to discover that he is actually dead and the castle is his grave. The story combines horror, fantasy and Gothic fiction to create a truly nightmarish atmosphere, containing themes of loneliness.
William Faulkner (1893-1962) is a pre-eminent figure in the twentieth century American literature. Faulkner created a profound and complex body of work that examines exploitation and corruption in the American South. His use of bizarre, grotesque and violent imagery, melodrama and sensationalism to depict the corruption and decay of the region makes him one of the earliest practitioners of the sub-genre known as southern Gothic literature. Faulkner’s works that are especially well known for their Gothic qualities, include the novels Sanctuary (1931), Light in August (1932), Absalom, Absalom! (1936), As I Lay Dying (1930) and the short story A Rose for Emily (1930). They combine burlesque and dark humors with realism and elements of the horrific and macabre to caricature a society that is unable to break from its past and look to the future. Faulkner employs Gothicism then as a search in social critique using it to paint a picture of a culture in ruins, populated by grotesque and living ghosts who refuse to recognize their alienation. As I Lay Dying charts the journey of a poor family to bury their mother, Addie Bundren in Jefferson. Faulkner’s acclaimed horror story A Rose for Emily is considered an exemplary work of Southern Gothic fiction.

Russian Literature:

The ‘Occult’ (a term often interchanged with ‘esoteric’) according Bernice Rosenthal may be said encompassing the occult sciences (alchemy, astrology and magic), the Kabbala and the post-Renaissance doctrine of Rosicrucian’s spiritualism, theosophy and Anthroposophy. One offshoot of this was the concept of a living nature which may be related to Naturphilosophie and the ‘cosmic pantheism’ of Schillings. There was a considerable vague for the occult in late nineteenth century Russia but the
eighteenth century influx of freemasonry and esoteric elements within the Romantic movements were also important. In addition to the concept of dvoemirje, Russia had the phenomenon of dvoeverie (dual faiths), the coexistence or blending of paganism with Orthodox Christianity. However, it is primarily what Rosenthal calls the ‘Practicle Side’ of the Occult – the attempt to enlist invisible or supernatural forces, divine or diabolic, to attain health, wealth, love and other personal goals that really brings into convergence with Gothic.

On the psychological side, the accentuation may fall on character analyses or on a crisis of identity often introducing the Doppelganger which in its turn may resolve itself into a supernatural or a psychological elements of dream and fantasy. Greater concentration on setting may define ‘historical Gothic’ or if contemporaneous ‘society or social Gothic.’ Other emphases again, may lead to lead to ‘horror’ or ‘criminal Gothic.’ The idea of the ‘carnival world of the Gothic’ prompts consideration of Gothic in terms of the theories of Mikhail Bakhtin. A yet further sub-division is identifiable as ‘artistic Gothic’ in which Gothic elements are involved with or subordinated to them from art or music bringing into play artistic works or figures, painting, musical composers or works like animation of images or statues. In all such cases, some elements of the basic or classic Gothic ingredients need to be present, for the term ‘Gothic’ to remain justifiable. Beyond these widely attested categories of the European Gothic tale, vestigial Gothic traces are to be found throughout what is considered mainstream realist European fiction over the whole of the nineteenth century leading towards a subsequent Neo-Gothic revival in the main coincidental with symbolism and fin de siecle Decadence.
European elements were, then an important factor throughout the evolution of English Gothic. French too was the language of composition of manuscript found in Saragossa an extraordinary framed compilation of stories reflecting the darker side of a burgeoning European Romanticism written between 1797 and 1815 by the Polymath Polish nobleman Jan Potocki. Alexander Bestuzhev wrote three horror tales that contain elements of Russian folklore and were influenced by the Gothic works of Walter Scott and Ann Radcliff. His tales of Caucasus are filled with authentic details on the history and cultures of the region, including information on the dialects of the area, which he quickly mastered on various ethnic customs and modes of welfare.

Pushkin, Lermontove and Gogal are represented as minor figures of Russian prose. V. E. Vatsure is the leading Russian commentator on the gothic. Russian Gothic can be said to drive from an amalgam of European influence on English Gothic novel, the tales of Hoffmann, the French Fantastigue and Frenetigue traditions and the various schools of European idealism. Pushkin is considered the founder of modern Russian literature. In his novel, we find the theme of good versus evil. His novel The Queen of Sheba is perceived as a supernatural tale evinced by the presence of the magic cards, a winking corpse and countess’s ghost. Nikolai Gogal’s novel Dead Soul is a satire. His stories often interweave pathos and mockery.

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was a Russian writer widely regarded as among the greatest. Tolstoy is one of the giants of Russian literature. His masterpieces War and Peace (1812) and Anna Karenina represent in their scope, breadth and vivid depiction of nineteenth century Russian life and attitudes. War and Peace shows the influence of the Gothic evocation of its
battle scenes: suffering, injury, terrible situations and death. The novel explores theory of history and in particular the insignificance of individuals such as Napoleon and Alexander. Tolstoy did not consider *War and Peace* to be a novel. This view becomes less surprising if one considered that Tolstoy was a novelist of the realist school who considered the novel to be a framework for the examination of social and political issues in nineteenth century life. A large portion of *War and Peace* focuses on war, which is associated in our minds with clear-headed strategy and sensible reasoning. Tolstoy constantly emphasizes the irrational motives for human behavior in both peace and war. Wisdom is linked not to reason but to an acceptance of how mysterious our actions can be even to ourselves. General Kutuzov emerges as a great leader not because he develops a logical plan and then demands that everyone follow it, but rather because he is willing to adapt to the flow of events and think on his feet. He revises his plan as each stage turns out to be vastly different from what was expected. Similarly irrational actions include Nicholas’s sudden decision to wed Marry after previous resolving to go back to Sonya and Natasha’s surprising marriage to Pierre. Yet almost all the irrational actions we see in the novel turn out successfully in accordance with instincts in human life that, for Tolstoy lie far deeper than our reasoning minds.

Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881): Russian Gothicism as a term has not until recently enjoyed a great deal of currency in critical studies of Russian literature. The word ‘Gothic’ is commonly used in connection with, for an instance, certain early works by Russian novelist, journalist and short story writer Fyodor Dostoevsky or to a lesser extent of his later and more famous novels, which may be recognized as including Gothic elements.
During the more depressing stretches of which even Romanticism and Dostoevsky were dirty words and critical energies were certainly not to be expended on the Gothic. Furthermore the burgeoning of interest in Gothic as a literary style even in the West is still comparatively recent. Dostoevsky’s psychological penetration into the human soul had a profound influence on the 20th century novel. Gothicism plays an important role in Dostoevsky’s fictional world; it is not initially evoked through narrative accounts of bizarre or exotic locations. Landscape, in the traditional sense, plays virtually no part in Dostoevsky’s fiction. Descriptions of the natural world are noticeably absent in his writing. It is said, “Dostoevsky is a writer of the city and his landscapes are predominantly urban and human. The novels Crime and Punishment (1866) and The Idiot (1869) are fantastic. In many senses he highlights the Gothic identity. The St. Petersbug of Crime and Punishment is the ideal Gothic backdrop for Raskolnikov’s horrific murders of the pawnbroker and her sister.”

The St. Petersburg of The Idiot (1869) similarly highlights the Gothic aspects of Dostoevsky’s art.

Nikolay Karamzin (1766-1826) was a Russian short story writer. His original stories include Poor Liza (1792) and Natalia the Boyar’s Daughter (1792). Both introduce Russian readers to sentimentalism, and Karamzin was hailed as ‘a Russian Sterne.’ His The Island of Bornholm is one of the best known Gothic short stories of Russian literature. Alexandr Bestuzhev (1797-1837) was Russian writer and Decembrist. His works are published under the pseudonyms ‘Cossack Marlinsky’ and ‘Alexandr Bestuzhev Marlinsky.’ His popularity waned after the middle of the nineteenth century. His work was briefly revived in his own country in the middle of the twentieth century but has been largely forgotten elsewhere in the world.
Vladimir Fyodorovich Odoevsky (1803-1869) was a prominent Russian philosopher, writer and critic. His short stories *The Last Suicide* and *The Town with No Name* are interlaced with philosophic conversations redolent of the French encyclopedists.

Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852) was a Russian novelist and dramatist. He wrote the novel *Dead Souls* (1842) which is a satire about serfdom and bureaucratic inequities in which he hoped to castigate abuses and guide his countrymen through laughter. Pushkin’s death produced a strong impression on Gogol. After the triumph of *Dead Souls*, Gogol came to be regarded by his contemporaries as a great satirist who lampooned the unseemly sides of Imperial Russia. Little did they know that first part represented the *Inferno*, the second part was to depict the gradual purification and transformation of the rogue Chichikov under the influence of various publicans. The main characteristic of Gogol’s writing is his impressionist vision of the reality and of the peoples. He saw the outer world romantically metamorphosed a singular gift particularly evident from the fantastic spatial transformations in his Gothic stories, *A Terrible Vengeance* and *A Bewitched Place*.

Mikhail Yuryevich Lermontov (1814-1841) a Russian Romantic writer, poet and painter sometimes called ‘the poet of the Caucasus’ was the most important Russian poet after Alexander Pushkin. His poetic development was unusual. His earliest poems are in the pornographic, in the extreme with elements of sadism. Lermontov’s best known poem, *The Demon* (1841) is about an angel who falls in love with a mortal woman. It reflected the poet’s self-image as a demonic creature.
Anton Chekhov (1860-1940) is considered to be one of the greatest short story writers in the world of literature. Chekhov found literary expression for the hell of Sakhalin in his long short story “The Murder,” the last section of which is set on Sakhalin, where the murderer Yokov loads coal in the night, longing for home.

Even an anthology entitled *Russian Nineteenth Century Gothic Tales* compiled by Valentin Korovin and published by Ruduga in Moscow in 1984 seems to have acquired that title for its English language edition by chance. The range of stories included extends from Antoni Pogorelskii and Orest Somove in the 1820’s to Vladimir Odoevski’s *The Living Corpse* in 1844. Pushkin, Lermontove and Gogol are represented as well as a number of minor figures of Russian prose. The blurb to this collection, which has no general introduction, refers to enchanting flights of the imagination, vivid imagery borrowed from folk tale and legend, grotesque fantasy and utopian dreams of a distant happy future. While all this may be in common with western definitions of the Gothic, we may prefer to stress alternative feature, old castles, hapless maidens, wicked and grasping relatives and mysteries. V. E. Vatsuro, the leading Russian commentator on the ‘Gothic’ nominates “‘Gothic heroes’ conflict and basic motifs and technique of mystery as the basic props of the Gothic narrative, with the castle and incest, for instance, as important subsidiary motifs.”22 It is said, “A certain input from folklore and such further native medieval ingredients as chronicles and saints lives apart, Russian Gothic can be said to drive from an amalgam of European influence -- the English Gothic novel, the tales of Hoffmann, the French Fanttique and Frenetigue traditions and the various schools of European idealist and esoteric thought.”23
Other Literatures:

The Gothic fiction elsewhere in the world is rich enough for our understanding and appreciation. But the problem is that, much of that is not available in English or any other major world languages. Secondly, it is not studied properly in those smaller languages. The Gothic literature is rich, apart from European countries, in Asia, Africa and rest of the world. For example, the Gothic fiction in Indian and Chinese languages is rich enough; but the same aforesaid problems.

The following is an account of the Gothic fiction in Australia.

Australian literature began soon after the settlement of the country by Europeans. Common themes include indigenous and settler identity, alienation, exile and relationship to place but it is a varied and contested area. Australia has a rich tradition of tales of horror and the supernatural dating back to the mid-1800s. James Doig, editor of Australian Gothic Anthology spoke to articulate about his quest to unearth classic Australian horror. One theme in Australian Gothic tales is about a child lost in the bush and falling prey to some supernatural manifestation, symbolic, perhaps of European colonists naively blundering into a harsh unforgiving landscape and suffering the consequences. The best known of these is probably Rosa Praed’s ‘The Bunyip’ which has been anthologized many times and still retains an authentic haunting quality. There are also haunted house stories though in an Australian setting. Many of the early tales were set in the bush or the outback rather than cities. There was an alien otherworldly quality about the back of beyond that fired the imaginations of settlers and writers alike. Australia was a frontier society and the bush more so than the city,
was a dangerous place. On the other hand, modern tales of terror are more often set in the cities. The embodiment of evil has changed serial killers, mass murderers, child murderers, homicidal lovers, that sort of thing. And evil lurks within them. The themes are more universal than regional. Tasmanian Gothic is an artistic genre. Although it deals with the themes of horror and the uncanny, it differs from the European horror tradition rooted in medieval imagery, crumbling mansions and ancient rituals. Frederick Sinnett, writing in 1856, considered Gothic romanticism inappropriate to Australian literature precisely because the colony lacked the requisite antiquity. For many, however the very landscape of Australia was Gothic. A unique creature of Australian legend is the bunyip. It is also called a ‘devil, debil-debil.’ Descriptions vary widely but have many common features. For example, in “Ironbark,” Bill meets the Bunyip. The creature is described as about ten feet long with a body like a Murray cod with gleaming golden yellow scales flippers like a crocodile and the head of a man. His hair was coarse and long like a horse’s mane. The creatures lurk in water holes, swamps, creeks and similar areas. They give off a blood curdling cry when they devour any creature that ventures too close to their home. Another common feature of Australian horror fiction is the cry of ‘coo-ee.’ It is a call used in the bush but it often appears in fiction as an eerie cry announcing death or warning against it. The cry is such a cultural icon that one writer William Sylvester Walker used “Coo-ee” as his pseudonym.

Earlier popular works tended to be of the ripping yarn variety telling tales of daring-to-do against the new frontier of the Australian outback. Writers such as Rolf Boldrewood, Marcus Clarke and Joseph Furphy embodied these stirring ideals in their tales and particularly the latter tried
accurately to record the vernacular language of the common Australian. These novelists gave valuable insights into the penal colonies which helped from the country and also the early rural settlements. Australia’s first novel *Quintus Servington* (1830–31), written by the convicted English forger Henry Savery (1791–1842), was a thinly disguised autobiography designed to demonstrate how his fictional equivalent was different from the general convict population. Those darker aspects of his existence are therefore subdued, and the text is somehow less Gothic in nature than Savery’s own life. Not so Anna Maria Bunn’s (1808–99) *The Guardian: A Tale by an Australian* (1838), the first novel printed and published in mainland Australia and the first by a woman. Though a Gothic romance, *The Guardian* manages to display impatience with this aspect of the story, so that it shifts into a range of modes, from the epistolary tale to the Comedy of Manners. Indeed, Bunn seems to hold the not uncommon view that the Gothic is somehow beneath contempt and frivolous, so that she is careful to justify its use as reflecting the immorality of her characters and their situation. Ironically, the novel is set in Ireland and Britain and refers frequently to Australia only to condemn it. Australia is a land to which graceless and incompetent individuals are exiled. As one character laments, “All lost characters are found there.” *The Guardian* is the first of a series of dark romances which make use of a Gothic sensibility, to speak, directly or indirectly, about the Australian landscape. Numerous Gothic romances emerged to fill a demanding interest in such texts, many derivatives and flawed others quite successful in their execution. Some worthy of note include British-born Mary Theresa Vidal’s (1815–69) *Bengala* (1860) and the delightfully Gothic *Outlaw and Lawmaker* (1893) written by the prolific, Australian-born Rosa Praed (1851–1935). Undoubtedly one of the oddest of
these numerous texts and one of the most offensive concerning matters of race is Edward Sorensen’s *The Squatter’s Ward* (1919) which perhaps most literally transposes the stock conventions of the Gothic tale into the Australian landscape to include a home with trap-doors and underground chambers where the master and his black servant dine. Poised on the borderline of old and new worlds, such novels suggest much about the struggle early colonial writers faced in finding a local and useful mode of expression to speak their place. They also reveal the prejudices which framed the way many colonists saw the new world. The Gothic, however, may well have played a part in the process which reversed such views.

For Marcus Clarke (1846–81), the Gothic was a way to invest Australia with a living history, by turning to detailed research on transportation and convict conditions, stories of cannibalism and rape, betrayal and suffering, as a way to frame his story of hardship and redemption enacted in an Australian landscape (as he does, for example, in his best-known work *His Natural Life*, 1870). Even before this, Clarke had described Australia in terms which invoke a Gothic sensibility.

However, these writers were given their contribution to Gothic literature. Their work depicts Gothicism in various ways. They used Gothicism in supernatural elements, mystery, suspense horror, detective, cathedral and many others.
References:


