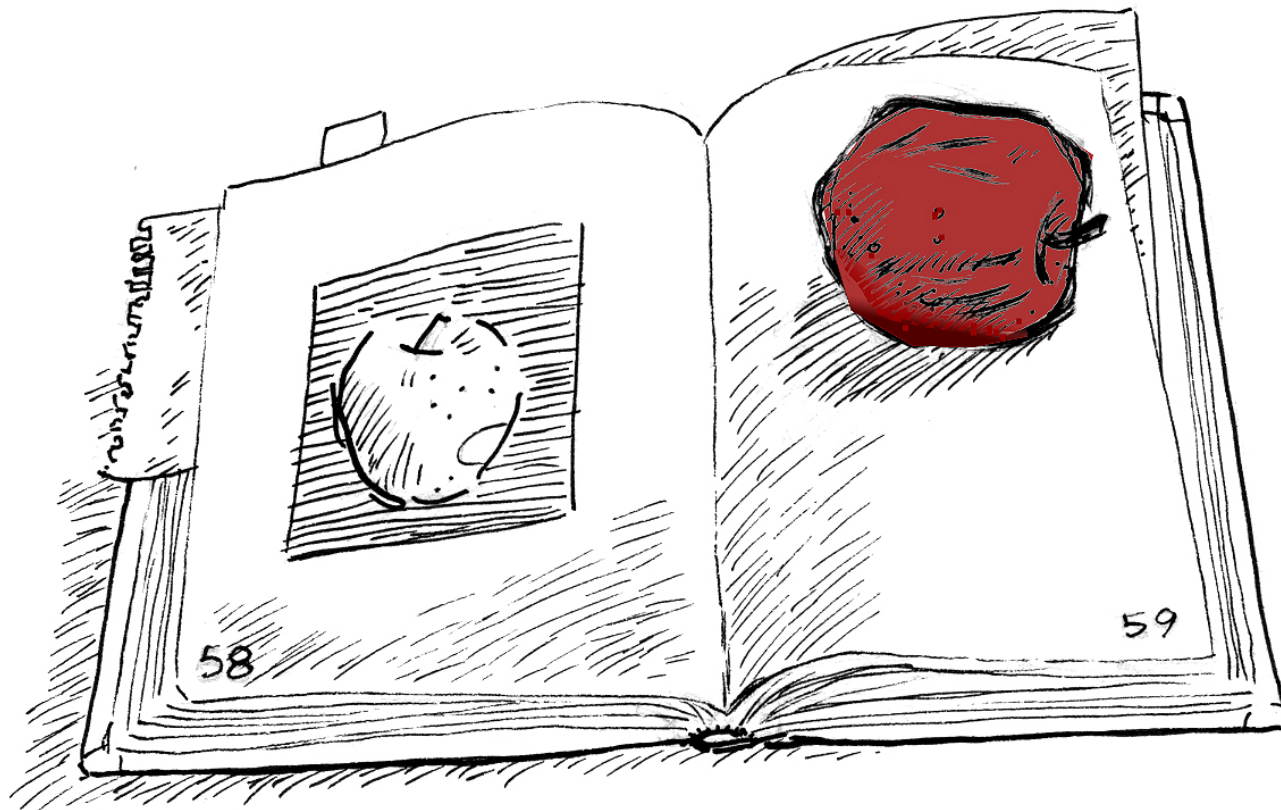


Gothic Movement



Brief Overview

Gothic themes include sub-genres:

- Gothic Romance
- Gothic Horror
- Gothic Horror Romance
- American Gothic genre
- American Southern Gothic
- Female Gothic
- Modern Gothic



For all of these categories, certain requirements must be met:

- melodramatic tones
- sense of heightened drama
- psychological extremes
- use of extreme dominant/submissive personalities
- situations of murder, violence, physical confrontations

Gothic Landscapes

Gothic settings are crucial to the development of:

- mood of story
- atmosphere, tone, and plot-lines
- characterizations of key figures
- the protagonist's desires
- the protagonist's psychological condition

This multi-functional image even symbolizes the inevitable decay of:

- society as a whole or of a community's traditions and values
- society's infrastructures and historical progressions

Gothic Landscapes

The house in Poe's classic "The Fall of the House of Usher" symbolizes:

- the Usher family
- the Usher family's values and philosophies
- Roderick's mental breakdown and swings of emotion
- Roderick's physical weaknesses
- Roderick's possible addictions
- the European ideals of the time

plus acts as a character onto itself

Typical Gothic Characters

arch villains, tyrants, bandits, pirates, mercenaries

rapists, murderers

maniacs, madwomen, madmen

persecuted maidens

magicians, sorcerers, witches, warlocks

vampires, werewolves, banshees, mummies

monsters, demons, ghosts

moody, obsessive heroes with family curses, family secrets

Female Gothic

- sub-genre of Gothic
- explores themes of entrapment of women within traditional domestic settings such as the kitchen, bedroom, or garden
- explores the notions of the subjection of female figures to a patriarchal authority
- these of course enable an expansion of symbolism from one focal character to the full female gender
- strong example: “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman

Southern Gothic

- follows the traditional Gothic pattern:
 - > melodramatic
 - > over-emotional characters
 - > set in ruins, dilapidation
- set in the Southern United States
- psychological breakdown of a central figure
- landscape in turn becomes a symbol for:
 - > the Old Southern values, antebellum attitudes
 - > promotion of slave trade
 - > the failure of the Old South in the Civil War
 - > the failed recovery of the South, after the Civil War
- strong example: “A Rose for Emily” by William Faulkner