

The Gothic Tradition in Literature Paper #2
Visual Culture, the Gothic, and the Novel
Due Tuesday 29 March IN CLASS AT THE START OF CLASS

Learning Outcomes: This paper asks you to do the following:

- Discover appropriate (i.e., documented & identified) images related to the Gothic (and to each other) through online research.
- Interpret images through close reading and careful study of the image and any identifying information provided.
- Evaluate the images and associated text(s) in appropriate historical and literary context.
- Draw conclusions about the images and about the Gothic.
- Construct an argument about the Gothic using the images as evidence.
- Demonstrate ability to write clearly and with appropriate citation of sources.

This paper is NOT a standard paper that you've likely written for other courses. I'm hoping that you'll find this variation to be interesting and engaging. Here are the steps you should take as you develop this paper:

1. Identify 3 images – note, these would be largely historical images – that you think provide insight into, context for, or connection with one (or more) of the texts we've read so far. You could choose three images related to one text; you could choose three images related to three different texts; or, you could choose three images where each one is related to one or more of our course texts. One way to approach this might be to think of what might make a good cover image for one of our books, or what illustrations would you like to see, or what images would help you understand specific details of the story or of the contemporary setting of the story.

I recommend (though do not require) that you check with me about your images to make sure you're on the right track. E-mail me at any time with a link to your image, and I will get back to you as soon as possible. It would be wise to e-mail me with at least one of your images at least one week in advance so that you know you can feel confident in your paper. What kinds of images can you use? SO MANY! Here are a few examples:

- Cover images of any of our novels (from any time period)
- Illustrations that appear now (or have appeared in the past) of any edition of our novels
- Images from film adaptations of any of our novels
- Portraits of any of our authors, or of our authors' homes, families, etc.
- Paintings, illustrations, drawings, or photographs of any of the locations (real or imagined) that serve as settings at any point in any of our novels
- Paintings, illustrations, drawings, or photographs of historical events related to the Gothic or one of our novels

I will have a list of useful websites on the course webpage that should provide you with some jumping off points for finding images. Google image searches may be helpful, but you might also try some archives and collections that are focused on our various themes, novels, and authors. Academic websites (.edu), museums, and libraries will (generally) be better sources than random sites, since these kinds of sites tend to be more diligent about citations and sources. An

image totally removed from its context (source, date, artist, etc.) will not be helpful. If you don't know when or where your image was made, you won't be able to write a strong paper. I recommend that you find an image from a site that tells you at least a bare minimum of information about the image in a reliable (and/or otherwise verifiable) fashion. Wikipedia **can** be a good place to seek information, as they do require citations; however, quality varies widely across different entries, so be aware of what you're reading and the source. You'd be wise to find more than one copy of your image (use the google reverse image search feature!) to find more than one source that can provide you with citation information for your images, and verify the accuracy of the information. If two sites have wildly different citations for what appears to be the same image, you might want to dig deeper and make sure you're using the correct information!

2. Write a paper discussing the three images you've selected. **IMPORTANT:** You should be writing a **PAPER**, not just answering a series of questions. You should have an introduction and a conclusion, and point (thesis) to make about your images. You **do not** need to print color (or B&W) reproductions of the images, although you may if you wish to do so (or if it helps you). I can and will refer to the online versions. You should aim for an absolute minimum of 4 pages and a maximum of 8. Those pages should be double-spaced, in a normal (12-point) font. That page count does NOT include the images or a list of works cited. Some students like to include copies of the images with their paper, either as separate pages at the end, or embedded within the text. You can do this if you like, but it is NOT required.

The body of your paper (the individual paragraphs in the middle) will focus on specifics of the images and your interpretations of those images. As you develop those, you should see something emerge – a consistency or an inconsistency, a connection or a disconnection, among the different images and your interpretations of them. You might start this paper with a question, possibly one that looks like one of these:

- “What do the settings of Gothic novels look like in illustrated editions?”
- “How was villain X portrayed in early illustrations?”
- “How has character Y been portrayed in film?”
- “What do these three different cover images for novel X have in common?”
- “What insights do images of Gothic architecture tell us about Gothic novels?”
- “What do portraits of author Y tell us about her popularity?”
- “What features are consistent in paintings of X Gothic theme?”
- “What do historical images of [women/men/children] suggest about [gender/race/class] in the time period when novel X was popular?”

Those are great QUESTIONS....remember, in your paper, you are working to figure out an answer. (And you don't have to answer one of those – you can come up with your own question!) Your thesis statement should present an answer to the question you've developed through your inquiry and research into images. The questions I've posed here are just meant to get you thinking, not limit you. There are lots of different ways to start this paper. You might start with a question that you really want to answer, or you might browse a bunch of images and see what that prompts. You might choose a book that you love (or hate) or a character (or character type) that you want to learn more about. You could focus on setting, time period, author background, publication history, or just about anything that you can connect to the novel.

Below you will find a listing of all the information that you should include for *each* image. You should NOT reproduce these headings; your paper should read like an essay, not a list of answers to questions. You do not have to present these items in the order they appear here; however, all of the items listed below MUST appear in your paper somewhere. You should organize your paper in a way that makes sense to you and for your specific selection of images. Your responses should be developed paragraphs, written in formal prose. You may (and should!) use "I," particularly when you're talking about how you found the document.

- a. **Provide basic identifying information about the image:** Title of the image (or if no title, a brief identifying title); date of the image; type of image (photograph, drawing, painting, map etc.); source of the image (name of site or archive where you found it).
- b. **Describe and discuss the image:** Provide a description/summary of the image. This includes a description/discussion of colors, forms, relative size, and any other observable details. You might also address questions about the kind of image and its reproduction. For instance, was there damage to the image (the original or the reproduction)? Is it realistic and documentary, or imagined and fantastic? If there is text within the image, you would definitely note that, and you might quote some of it. Be detailed and specific in your observations – this could take a couple of paragraphs, depending on the image.
- c. **Image Significance/Value:** Discuss why you think this image is significant, interesting, important, useful, curious or otherwise valuable. Some questions that might help with this (note: you do not have to necessarily answer all of these): Why did you choose it? What does it help us understand about this novel, this period, this time, or this place? How does it expand or even change your perspective on the history of this time period? You might think of this as a place to make a case for this image to be included in our study for the class. You could also include questions that this image raises for you (whether about the time period, the image itself, or the text you're connecting it with).
- d. **Image's Connection to the Course:** You should make connections with some of the themes and texts we've studied in class, and with specific readings assignments from the course. *For each of your three images, you should have at least one specific quote (properly cited) from one of our course texts.* (That's a total of 3 quotes – they could be all from one text or from three different texts). This is where you explain how the image is related to a text in the course, and how it can help us understand the text in some way. This section may go on for a few paragraphs, depending on how many connections you see with the course readings.

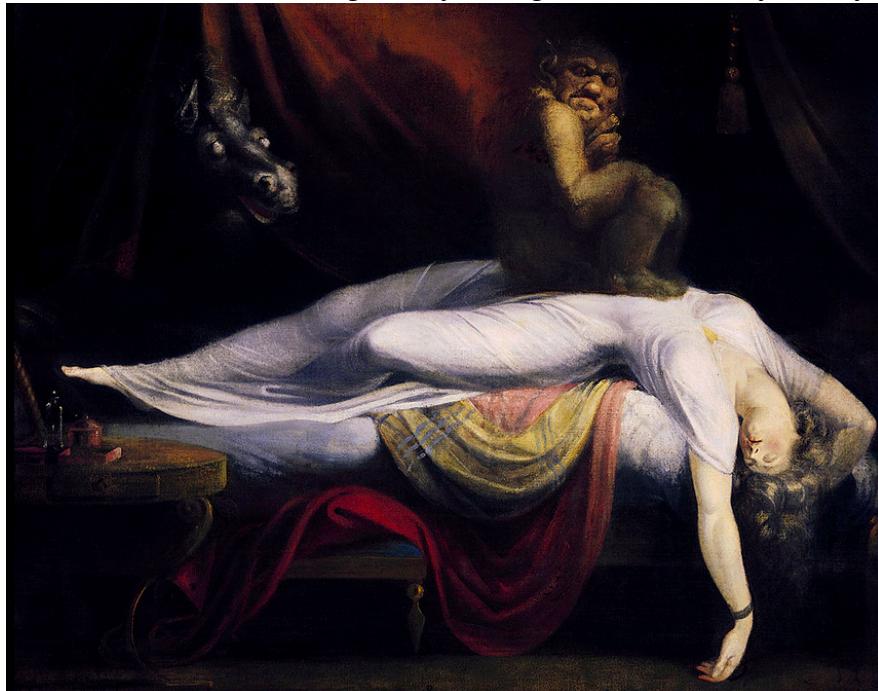
Don't forget that you need an **introduction (with a THESIS statement!) and a conclusion**. For these parts, think about how these images or these texts are related. For instance, did you choose three images of stereotypically Gothic villains? Or perhaps three images of Gothic castles or settings? Or three portraits of authors of our texts? Why/how are the images connected to each other? How do these three images work together (or perhaps against each other) in helping us understand the course material?

3. You must e-mail me a list of links to your images by 5pm on Monday, March 28th so that I can prepare for class discussion. This is **not** an e-mail requesting approval for your images; this is just a list of links so that I can share the links in class on Tuesday. You are welcome (and encouraged) to send your links earlier than this.

4. On the day the paper is due, you must have your paper in class, and you must be prepared to share your paper and discuss your images in class. I will bring up the images on the projector, and we will have a chance to discuss the significance of the images and how they help us understand (and expand our understanding of) the novels and the course topic.

The best papers are the result of multiple drafts and considerable revision. I encourage you to start seeking your images (and asking questions!) immediately. I also encourage you to visit the Writing Center (on the 3rd floor of O'Leary) for assistance, and to work with peers to review and revise your paper as you develop it.

As a warm-up, let's take a look at an image that you might use in a variety of ways:



The Nightmare by Henry Fuseli (1741 – 1825)
Oil painting, 1781

What might you say about this image? What features are notable? What story is being told? How are light and shade used? What details stand out to you? You will probably want to look at a version of this in full, glorious color, like you'll find here: <http://www.dia.org/object-info/f222b80e-c3ba-4dd0-a705-4b14cb4f5ad6.aspx>

A few added details for context:

- Henry Fuseli was Swiss, but lived much of his life in England, and was involved in the Wollstonecraft-Godwin literary/intellectual/artistic circle in the 1780s and 90s.
- Fuseli (who was married) and Mary Wollstonecraft (mother of Mary Shelley, author of Frankenstein) were romantically involved at some point(s) during 1788 – 1790 (historians disagree on for how long and to what degree).
- This image shows up as the cover for a couple of different Gothic novels.