

Motifs in Gothic Fiction

The term *Gothic* was originally applied to a tribe of Germanic barbarians during the dark ages and their now-extinct language, but eventually historians used it to refer to the gloomy and impressive style of medieval architecture common in Europe—hence “Gothic Castle” or “Gothic Architecture.” Later, the term became associated with ghost stories and horror novels because they often featured medieval buildings and ruins (castles, cathedrals, etc.) and with things “wild, bloody, and barbarous of long ago” as J. A. Cuddon puts it in his Dictionary of Literary Terms (381).

As it is applied to fiction, the label *gothic* may have come about because Horace Walpole, one of the first gothic writers, wrote his works in a faux medieval castle. The best known early example is Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*.

Instructions: Use the middle column below to take detailed notes on each of the motifs explained in the video. After the video, we will talk about a couple of examples for the third column. Then, you will work with a partner to complete the rest.

Motif	Description	Where do we see this in <i>Frankenstein</i> ?
<i>Place & time</i>		
<i>Power</i>		

<i>Sexual power</i>		
<i>The uncanny</i>		
<i>The sublime</i>		
<i>Crisis</i>		
<i>Supernatural & real</i>		

