**Gothicism**

Gothic literature is intimately associated with the Gothic Revival architecture of the same era. In a way similar to the Gothic revivalists' rejection of the clarity and rationalism of the neoclassical style of the Enlightened Establishment, the literary Gothic embodies an appreciation of the joys of extreme emotion, the thrills of fearfulness and awe inherent in the sublime, and a quest for atmosphere.

The ruins of Gothic buildings gave rise to multiple linked emotions by representing the inevitable decay and collapse of human creations — thus the urge to add fake ruins as eyecatchers in English landscape parks. English Gothic writers often associated medieval buildings with what they saw as a dark and terrifying period, characterized by harsh laws enforced by torture, and with mysterious, fantastic, and superstitious rituals. In literature such Anti-Catholicism had a European dimension featuring Roman Catholic institutions such as the Inquisition (in southern European countries such as Italy and Spain).

Just as elements of Gothic architecture were borrowed during the Gothic Revival period in architecture, ideas about the Gothic period and Gothic period architecture were often used by Gothic novelists. Architecture itself played a role in the naming of Gothic novels, with many titles referring to castles or other common Gothic buildings. This naming was followed up with many Gothic novels often set in Gothic buildings, with the action taking place in castles, abbeys, convents and monasteries, many of them in ruins, evoking “feelings of fear, surprise, confinement”. This setting of the novel, a castle or religious building, often one fallen into disrepair, was an essential element of the Gothic novel. Placing a story in a Gothic building served several purposes. It drew on feelings of awe, it implied the story was set in the past, it gave an impression of isolation or being cut off from the rest of the world and it drew on the religious associations of the Gothic style. This trend of using Gothic architecture began with the *Castle of Otranto* and was to become a major element of the genre from that point forward.

Besides using Gothic architecture as a setting, with the aim of eliciting certain associations from the reader, there was an equally close association between the use of setting and the storylines of Gothic novels, with the architecture often serving as a mirror for the characters and the plot lines of the story. The buildings in the *Castle of Otranto*, for example, are riddled with underground tunnels, which the characters use to move back and forth in secret. This secret movement mirrors one of the plots of the story, specifically the secrets surrounding Manfred’s possession of the castle and how it came into his family. The setting of the novel in a Gothic castle was meant to imply not only a story set in the past but one shrouded in darkness.