GOTHIC

The Gothic atmosphere - gloomy and mysterious - and the themes - the double, life in death, the inner journey - supplied materials for:

• **Popular literature**: detective stories and thrillers, noirs and horrors, science fiction and fantasy and even westerns.

• **High literature**: analysis of the soul.

**Characters** like mummies, vampires, ghosts and zombies are but projections of man’s fears of the unknown and of the self.
The very beginning

Saxon period:
  Beowulf (anonymous): the fight of a warrior against monsters

Middle Ages:
  Ballad forms: unlucky loves, mysterious death in a gloomy and upsetting atmosphere – cap 1

Renaissance:
  W. Shakespeare’s tragedies about sad loves, human frailties and sins, use of supernatural elements (ghosts, witches, visions)
Beowulf

Anglo-Saxon heroic epic poem written by an anonymous Anglo-Saxon poet (8th - the early 11th century) Set in Scandinavia, the hero, Beowulf, fights against a monster Grendel, Grendel's mother, and an unnamed dragon. In the final battle, Beowulf is fatally wounded. It is a poem about honour, faithfulness and motherly love.


film: Beowulf, 2007 Robert Zemeckis,
Middle Ages: 
the ballad

A **ballad** is a narrative set to music characteristic of British and Irish popular poetry and song from the later medieval period until the 19th century.

The first forms were usually dialogues and the main theme was death.

**Geordie**: Geordie is going to be hanged for a crime and his wife goes to appeal for his life → **songs**

**Lord Randall**: Lord Randall reveals he has been poisoned by his sweetheart. It is an Anglo-Scottish border ballad, in a dialogue form.

**Romantics** revitalized the form and the Victorian **O. Wilde** wrote *The Ballad of Reading Goal* about the years he spent in prison.
Shakespeare and the Gothic share collective anxieties concerning themes of identity, marriage, and the role of women.

Shakespeare showed in his works a predilection for spectres, graveyards, the paraphernalia of death, moving statues, magical transformations, and the emphasis on the ‘non-rational’ as a category of human experience among others.

Works:

- Romeo and Juliet (1594-96)
- A Midsummer Night’s Dream (1595)
- The Merchant of Venice (1596-97)
- Hamlet (1600-2)
- Othello (1603)
- Macbeth (1605-8)
- King Lear (1605-6)
**Hamlet**: 1948, by Sir Laurence Olivier; 1990 by Franco Zeffirelli; 1996 by Kenneth Branagh

**Macbeth**: 1971, by Roman Polansky; 2006, by Geoffrey Wright

**The Tempest**: 1979, by Derek Jarman; 2010, by Julie Taymor

**Othello**: 1952, by Orson Wells; 1995, by Oliver Parker

**Romeo and Juliet**: 1936, by George Cukor; 1968, by Franco Zeffirelli, and 1996, Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet*

**The Merchant of Venice**: 2004 by Michael Radford.

Shakespeare in paintings

E. Delacroix
*Othello* (1849)

H. Fuseli
*Three Witches* (1783)

H. Fuseli
*Titania and Bottom* (1790)

J. W. Waterhouse
*Miranda and the Tempest* (1916)

J. E. Millais
*Ophelia* (1852)

E. Delacroix
*Othello* (1849)
1700 - the beginning:
Pre-romantic and Romantic writers

**Pre-Romantic poets:**
Th. Gray, McPherson; W. Blake

**Pre-Romantic novelists:**
H. Walpole, A. Radcliff

**Romantic poets:**
S.T. Coleridge; P.B. Shelley;
Lord G. Byron, J. Keats.

**Romantic Novelists:**
W. Scott, J. Austen, M. Shelley

**American Romantics:**
E. A. Poe; N. Hawthorne; H. Melville

**historical and literary features:**
• American War of independence (1775–1783)
• French Revolution (1789-99)
• Industrial Revolution (beginning of 18° century)
• Reaction against the rationality of the Augustan Age or Enlightenment
1700

The Gothic Novel starts as a reaction against the rationalism of the Augustan Age (Rise of the Novel) and is based on a pleasing sort of terror and of extreme emotion (sublime).

It introduced the themes of the reflection about death and life, the double, the supernatural and the relationship between man and after-life.
Horace Walpole (1717 – 1797) is thought to be the creator of this genre with his 1764 novel *The Castle of Otranto*.

*The Castle of Otranto* (1764) typical elements of gothic fiction: horror, romance, melodrama, and supernatural themes. It blends medieval romances and modern books. The initial idea was supplied by a dream: the owner of the *Castle of Otranto*, Manfred, wants more male heirs and forces his frail fifteen-year-old son Conrad into an engagement with a girl named Isabella. On the day of the wedding, a huge helmet falls atop Conrad…
Ann Radcliffe
(1764–1823)

- Woman pioneer of the Gothic Novel.

- The Mysteries of Udolpho: set in a gloomy castle, it follows Emily St. Aubert’s misadventures due to the machinations of an Italian villain.
- Romantic and vivid descriptions of landscapes and long travel scenes
- Gothic use of the supernatural.

- She inspired → Jane Austen
Mary Shelley
(1797 – 1851)

In 1816, she spent a summer together with her future husband - the second Generation Romantic poet Percy Bisshe Shelly - Lord Byron and John Polidory (The Vampire, 1919), an Italian surgeon, near Geneva, Switzerland. Here Mary conceived the idea for her novel *Frankenstein*.

*Frankenstein or the Modern Prometeus* (1818)
- the power of science: manipulation of nature, creation of man, ethical dispute about science and its limits.
- the different, the alien, the outcast
- the double: scientist and his creature
- forerunner of science fiction
**films**

*Frankenstein*: 90 movies, 16 TV-movies, 11 videos and 27 TV series

*Frankenstein* (1910, black and white, silent), by J. Searle Dawley

*Frankenstein* (1931) and *The Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) by James Whale with Boris Karloff who will be Frankenstein in many adaptations.

*Frankenstein* (1994), directed by Kenneth Branagh starring Robert De Niro

*Young Frankenstein* (1974, script by Gene Wilder), Mel Brooks black and white parody movie about Dr. Frankenstein’s grandson

*The Addams Family*, (1960s), a TV series where Frankenstein appears as Lurch, a clumsy, groaning Frankenstein’s monster-like butler.
Pre-Romantic poetry  
(end of 18th century)

The Graveyard Poets wrote poems characterized by gloomy meditations on mortality, often set in graveyards.


**James Macpherson** (1736 –1796), Scottish poet known as the "translator" of the *Ossian cycle* of Scots Gaelic poems, based on Oisín, a character from Irish mythology

→ Edgar Lee Master

JMW TURNER 1775-1851
THE CHANCEL AND CROSSING OF TINTERN ABBEY (1794)
William Turner
(1775-1851)

- landscape as important as history painting.
- particular light.
- atmosphere: rain, storms, vapours
JOHN CONSTABLE
(1776 - 1837)

- landscapes of rural England
- abbeys and castles in isolated areas
Henry Fuseli (Johann Heinrich Füssli; 1741 –1825) British Painter, and writer on art, of Swiss origin.

He favoured the supernatural subjects

*The Nightmare* (1781)
William Blake (1757 – 1827)

- mixed reality of contemporary world with the spiritual world and exalted art as a creative vision

Works:
- *Song of Innocence* (1789)
- *Songs of Experience* (1794)
Historical features:
- American War of independence (1775–1783)
- French Revolution (1789-99)
- Industrial Revolution (beginning of 18° century)

Romantic Period

The *Lyrical ballads* (1798),
- Emphasis on imagination and emotion
- Concern with subjective and particular
- Interest in medieval subjects
- Attraction for far away countries, for the supernatural and the sublime

John Constable
(1776 – 1837)
*Didham Valley*
Romantic Poets

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 –1834) with his friend William Wordsworth, wrote the *Lyrical Ballads*, manifesto of the English Romantic Movement.

*The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* is about the events experienced by a mariner who has returned from a long sea voyage.

*Kubla Khan* was composed one night after he experienced an opium influenced dream after reading a work describing the Tartar king Kublai Khan.

→ *Iron Maiden* – song
Northanger Abbey  
(1818)

Novel by Jane Austen which mocks the Gothic genre

Catherine Morland tries to live in the same atmosphere of Ann Radcliff’s heroine of the The Mystery of Udolpho always expecting to face Gothic horrors and fantastical mystery.

Works
- Sense and Sensibility (1811)
- Pride and Prejudice (1813)
- Mansfield Park (1814)
- Emma (1815)
- Northanger Abbey (1817)
- Persuasion (1817)

Clear illustration of the society  
Ironical tone, biting social commentary

films:
- Northanger Abbey, BBC miniseries (1987)  
- Northanger Abbey (2007), TV movie
Sir Walter Scott  
(1771 -1832 )

- His works refer to the past especially of England and Scotland
- The main theme is the Journey of young man towards adult age
- History made by masses not by great protagonists.

**Works** (about 90 novels) :
- *Rob Roy* (1818): Scottish clans
- *Ivanhoe* (1819-20): crusades and clash between Saxons and Normans; reference to Robin Hood.
- *Waverly* (1814): tradition and cultures of Scotland
- *Richard I or The Talisman* (1825): Crusades in the Holy Land

**films:**
*Ivanhoe*: 1913 by Herbert Brenon; 1952 by Richard Thorne and 1985 by Douglas Camfield
Second Generation

Lord George Gordon Noel Byron (1788 –1824)

- He fought against the Ottoman Empire in the Greek war of Independence where he died for fever.
- His life was characterized by aristocratic excesses, debts, love affairs, and self-imposed exile.
- At J. Polidori’s castle was together with P. B. and Mary Shelley on the night of Frankenstein's birth.

Works:
- Poem: She Walks in Beauty (1919)
- Long Poems: Harold’s Pilgrimage (1819); Don Juan (1824);
- The Corsair

(1814 → Giuseppe Verdi’s Il corsaro, Hector Berlioz’s; Le Corsaire and Marius Petipa’s ballet Le Corsaire)
Second generation: Percy Bisshe Shelley

**P. B. Shelley** (1792-1822)

Shelley's life was characterized by unconventional and uncompromising idealism. Married to Mary Shelley

**Poems:** *Ozymandias, Ode to the West Wind*

**Plays:** *The Cenci* (1819) and *Prometheus Unbound* (1820)

**Gothic novels:** *Zastrozzi* (1810) and *St. Irvyne* (1811)

**Short works** *The Assassins* (1814), *The Coliseum* (1817) and *The Mass* (1817)

**John Keats** (1795 –1821):

wrote odes rich in sensual imagery

→ Aestheticism

**Ode on a Grecian Urn** (1819):

• staticity of art which never changes (the picture on the urn are motionless)

• Death: the subject is an urn and the second scene is sacrifice

• Importance of beauty
Washington Irving
(1783 –1859)
essayist, biographer and historian best known for his short stories like Rip Van Winkle
and → The Legend of Sleepy Hollow: set circa 1790 is based on the German folktale of the Headless Horseman, the ghost of a Hessian Trooper whose had been cut off by a cannonball during the American War of Independence, and who rides on the scene of the battle looking for his head.

film: Sleepy Hollow (1999) by Tim Burton

The Headless Horseman Pursuing Ichabod Crane (1858) by John Quidor
Edgar Allan Poe
1809 – 1849

- Short stories: to keep the reader’s attention alive
- Main themes: loneliness, fear of unknown, double and the link between life, death and art.
- No place, no names: universality of what he tells.

Works:
- *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840)
- *Tales of Mystery and Imagination* (1876)

- → 1900, 2000 (detective and horror stories)

Inventor of the →**detective-fiction** genre and of the emerging genre of →**science fiction**
N. Hawthorne (1804 –1864)

Born in Salem, Massachusetts
His ancestors include a judge during the Salem Witch Trials.

His writing centers on New England, and feature moral allegories with a Puritan inspiration as the themes focus on evil and sin of humanity, and his works often have moral messages and deep psychological complexity. His fiction works have been defined dark romantic.

Works:

- **Young Goodman Brown** (1835) a symbolic short story set in 17th century Puritan New England during the witch trials
- **The Scarlet Letter** (1850), set in 17th century Puritan Boston, is about Hester Prynne, who conceives daughter during an adulterous affair and spends her life in repentance and dignity.
- **The House of the Seven Gables** (1851) about a gloomy New England mansion, haunted from its foundation by fraudulent businesses, accusations of witchcraft, and sudden death.

Herman Melville
(1819 - 1891)

- **Moby-Dick** *(1851)*, also known as **The Whale** is about the adventures of the wandering sailor Ishmael and his voyage on the whaleship Pequod, commanded by Captain Ahab who is seeking a specific Moby Dick, a white whale that had already destroyed Ahab's boat and bit off his leg. The whale stands for the Human quest for truth and the unknown hidden in everyone.

  **film:** **Moby Dick** *(1956)* by John Huston, script by Ray Bradbury.

  → Life of pirates
Victorian Gothic

NOVELISTS:
• Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*
• Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* → Daphen Du Maurier’s *Rebecca*;
  → Caribbean novels: Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea,*
• C. Dickens: *Bleak House*
• Willie Collins’s *The Moonstone,* *The Woman in White* (detective story)
• Robert Louis Stevenson’s *The Strange Story of Doctor Jeckyll and Mr Hyde*
• Bram Stocker’s *Dracula; The Jewel of the Seven Star*
• Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s *Sherlock Holmes; The Ring of Thor*
• Th. Hardy: *Tess, Far from the Madding Crowd*
• Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*
• Lewis Carroll: *Alice in Wonderland and through the Mirror*
• Henry James: *The Turn of the Screw*

POETS:
• R. Browning
• Pre-Raphaelites
Emily Jane Brontë
(1818 –1848)
second eldest of the three surviving Brontë sisters, between Charlotte and Anne.
→pen name: Ellis Bell.

📖 *Wuthering Heights* (1947): the story of a passion in the Highland moors
Double: love and hatred (revenge); childhood and social life; life and death; instinct and rationality

**films:** 1939 directed by William Wyler; 1970 by Robert Fuest; 2011 directed by Andrea Arnold
Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855)

- Novelist and poet, the eldest of the three Brontë sisters

📖 *Jane Eyre* (pen name Currer Bell): an orphan girl gets a job as a teacher and finds her love.

- gothic, mystery
- psychological introspection, education
- New role of woman (independence)

Dafne Du Maurier:
- → *Rebecca* (1938)
- → *Jean Rhys* (1890–1979): *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), prequel of *Jane Eyre* about Mr Rochester’s mad wife, set in the Caribbeans and

films: 1944 directed by Robert Stevenson; 1996 directed by Franco Zeffirelli; 2011 directed by Cary Joji Fukunaga
Many of her novels and short stories are set in Cornwall, whose wild, stormy weather inspired her imagination.

- **Jamaica Inn** (1936), a historical tale of smugglers.
- **Rebecca** (1938), about a young and timid heroine whose strangely behaving husband, seems still to live in the memory of his last wife.
- **Frenchman's Creek** (1941), a pirate romance
- **The Birds** (1953), a tense tale of nature turning on humanity
- **The House on the Strand** (1969): a science fiction novel about the ability to mentally travel back in time and experience historical events at first hand.
- **Don't Look Now**, (1971), a short story set in Venice, involving a psychic old lady, a man with the sixth sense, and a murderous dwarf.

**Movie:** 1973 by Nicholas Roeg.

**films:**
*Jamaican Inn, Rebecca* (1940) and *The Birds were* made into movie by Alfred Hitchcock.
MOVIES

*Wuthering Heights*: 1939 by William Wyler; 1992 by Peter Kosminsky

*Jane Eyre*: 1996 by Franco Zeffirelli; 1997 TV film; 2011 by Cary Fukunaga

*Rebecca*: 1940 psychological/dramatic thriller by Alfred Hitchcock
He was a painter of English life, denounced the social evils with a fluent style and the use of symbolism, pathos and powerful imagines (metaphors)

**CHARLES DICKENS**

(1812-1870)

Popular in English literature for his characters and for his irony.

He wrote a number of shorter ghostly pieces, many of which share the social and humanitarian concerns of his novels like a *Christmas Carol* (1843)

**MOVIES:**
Many adaptations
The last one in 2009 by Robert Zemeckis

He was a painter of English life, denounced the social evils with a fluent style and the use of symbolism, pathos and powerful imagines (metaphors)
Wilkie Collins
(1824 –1889)

*The Woman in White* (1859), *The Moonstone* (1868),
T. S. Eliot wrote the the detective novel was “a genre invented by Collins and not by Poe”

→E. A. Poe; Sir A. Conan Doyle ;

**The Moonstone:**
- features that will be followed by other detective story writers: the English country house, the "inside job", a famous, professional investigator, and the amateur detective, detective enquiries, false suspects, the "least likely suspect", the reconstruction of the crime and the final twist in the plot.
- "multi-narration" method: story told by a series of narratives.
- depiction of opium addiction, a problem Collins knew personally (Collins suffered from paranoid delusions and said he was accompanied by a doppelganger he dubbed "Ghost Wilkie").

**films:** *The Moonstone* by Reginald Barker (1934); BBC adaptation for TV in 1972, and in 1996.
Victorian poetry

Robert Browning (1812–1889) poet and playwright

**Dramatic monologues**: unconscious revelation of inner emotions.

**My Last Duchess** (1842): about Alfonso II d'Este, the fifth Duke of Ferrara (1533–1598)’s murder of his wife, 14-year-old daughter of Cosimo I de' Medici, Lucrezia.
Mid Victorian Period

revival of Romanticism
sense of uneasiness
return to nature

Charles Robert Darwin
(1809 –1882), naturalist
❖ all species of life
descends from common ancestors
❖ evolution results from natural selection.

Crisis → new ideas, disillusion
Double: instinct/rationality
Search in and fear for the unknown

John Ruskin (1919-1901)
❖ Gothic architecture → against utilitarianism
❖ beauty of hand made products against the use of machines

📖 The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849)
📖 The Stones of Venice (1853)

📖 On the Origin of Species (1859)
Thomas Hardy
(1840-1928)

British writer and poet. 
**Themes:** contrast between the ideal life and the real life and the relationship between man and Nature.

**Works:**
- *Far From The Madding Crowd* (1874) 
- *Tess Of The D'Urbevilles* (1891) 
- *Jude The Obscure* (1895)

**MOVIES:**
*Tess*, 1979, by Roman Polanski
Novel: **Picture of Dorian Gray** → double, unconscious, sense of sins.
Still Victorian → moralism, integrity and coherence

- **The ballad of the Reading Gaol** about his years in prison
- **De Profundis**, poem written while in prison to his lover Alfred Douglas


**Oscar Wilde** (1854 – 1900)

Cult of art and beauty (Aestheticism)
Different from Huysmann and D’Annunzio → he did not isolate himself, but was successful and popular
Different from French poets: morality, lack of realism
Influenced by W. Pater
Robert Louis Stevenson
(1818-1887)

- double personality of man
- inspired by C. Darwin
- duplicity of soul and society
- primitive nature
- escape to further lands

Scottish novelist, poet, essayist and travel writer.

- *Treasure Island* (1883)
  - Further notes 4: sea life, pirates
- *The Body Snatcher* (1884)
- *Kidnapped* (1886)
- *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886)
  - Further notes cap 8 noir, science fiction
- *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889)
Treasure Island: many adaptation, included 1950 by Byron Haskin and 1972, by Orson Welles

Dr Jeckyll and Mr Hyde: 1941, by Victor Fleming; 2002, by Maurice Phillips

Mary Reilly, 1996, by Stephen Frear with about the Irish servant to Jekyll, based on the novel Mary Reilly by Valerie Martin.

Burke and Hare, the bodysnatchers : John Landis’ 2010 movie
Abraham “Bram” Stoker
(Ireland, 1847 –1912)

Works

- Dracula, Gothic novel (1897), the most famous vampire who kills for love
- The Jewel of Seven Stars (1903), the rebirth of a mummy

films: Dracula (1931) by Tod Browning starring Bela Lugosi; 1992, F.F Coppola
VAMPIRES SOURCES: J. Polidori’s *The Vampire*; B. Stocker’s *Dracula*,

→ Anne Rice’s *Interview with the Vampire* (1973, MOVIE: *The Vampire Chronicles* 1994, by Neil Jordan);

→ Stephanie Meyer’s *Twilight Saga* (see → Fantasy)

MUMMIES SOURCES: → *Some Words with a Mummy* by E. A. Poe; *The Ring of Thor*, by C. Doyle; *The Jewel of the Sevn Stars* by B. Stoker

Elizabeth Peters (Barbara, nom de plume drawn from the names of her two children. 1927): *Amelia Peabody* series.

Rudyard Kipling  
(1865 –1936)  

- born India, Nobel Prize in Literature (1907, first English writer)  
- prophet of British imperialism (G. Orwell).  

WORKS:  
- The Man who wanted to be King short story  
- The Jungle Book (1894, a collection of stories)  
- Kim (1901)  
- At the end of the passage (1890) → J. Conrad’s Heart of Darkness  


Edgar Rice Burroughs (1875 –1950) → Tarzan
Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

(1859 – 1930)

Scottish physician, ship's doctor and writer, creator of the detective Sherlock Holmes and of Professor Challenger. Christian spiritualist

Main works:

- **A Study in Scarlet (1887)**, first of Sherlock Holmes stories
- **The Lost World (1912)**, Professor Challenger in a primitive world → Jurassic Park, Avatar
- **The Green Flag and Other Stories of War and Sport (1900)**, about pirates → Pirates of the Caribbean (W. Disney's Movie) (further notes, section 4)

A brilliant consulting detective", famous for his astute logical reasoning, his ability to take almost any disguise, and his forensic science skills

He appears in 56 short stories

The first, **A Study in Scarlet**, was published in 1887. All but four stories are narrated by Holmes's friend and biographer, Dr. John H. Watson

**SOURCES:**

detective
August DUPIN by E. A Poe
The most famous interpreter of Sherlock Holmes is Basil Rathbone who, together with Nigel Bruce as Watson, starred 14 movies between 1939 and 1946.

**Sherlock Holmes**, 1922, by Albert Parker


*Young Sherlock Holmes*, 1985 by Barry Levinson,


*The Hound of the Baskervilles*, 2002 by David Attwood.


*The Lost World*, 2005 by Leigh Scott

→ Agatha Christie; detective stories, noirs

→ *Jurassic Park*, 1993, by Steven Spielberg, from Michael Crichton and the *Lost World* 1997

→ *Avatar*, 2009, movie by James Cameron
Agatha Christie
(1890-1976)

Hercule Poirot: spokesman for the human rational faculty, he has a companion, Captain Hastings, who tells his adventures. There is also an ineffectual police Inspector Japp.

→ Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes

→ NOIR, DETECTIVE STORIES, THRILLER, WHODONIT
Lewis Carroll
(Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, 1832–1898)

- writer, mathematician, logician, Anglican deacon and photographer.
- noted for his facility at word play, logic, and fantasy (nonsense)

Works

- **Novels**: Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass,
- **Poems**: The Hunting of the Snark; Jabberwocky

films:
- W. Disney’s Alice in Wonderland (animated film, 1951), T. Buton’s Alice in Wonderland (2210)
Joseph Conrad  
(1857 – 1924)

• Precursor of modernism → decay of English empire and analysis of human soul  
• Anti-heroic characters

Works:
- The Nigger of Narcissus (1897)  
- Nostromo (1904),  
- The Secret Agent (1907),  
- The Duel (1908),  
- Victory (1915),

Heart of Darkness (1899): a journey on the Congo river to rescue Kurtz, an ivory trader who has faced the unknown → Apocalypse Now (F. F. Coppola, 1979) further notes cap. 7
The Pre-Raphaelites

Seen as the first avant-garde movement in art, they created a distinct name for their form of art, and published a periodical, The Germ, to promote their ideas.

Their main themes were nature, the Bible, Shakespeare and the contrast between life and death.

Cap 6

*The Lady of Shalott* (1888)
By John William Waterhouse

*The Lady of Shalott* by Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892). Is based on a Arthurian subject and tells about a woman who let her die for her love to Sir Lancelotted.
The English critic D. Punter → a Gothic novel of the XX century: “The whole story moves in a miasma of uncertainty.” The ghosts assume values of symbols: “the tendency of the children to develop private world of their own. Their growing awareness of sexual and emotional life, their perpetually threatening independence and adulthood.

The Turn of the Screw (1898)
The story starts with some friends telling ghost stories on Christmas Eve. One of the stories is about a governess at a country house plagued by supernatural visitors → sexual and psychological ambiguities as only the young governess sees the ghosts of the previous governess and her lover.

The English critic D. Punter → a Gothic novel of the XX century: “The whole story moves in a miasma of uncertainty.” The ghosts assume values of symbols: “the tendency of the children to develop private world of their own. Their growing awareness of sexual and emotional life, their perpetually threatening independence and adulthood.

film: TV 1859, by John Frankenheimer
The Age of Anxiety

Mass slaughters and atrocities (World Wars, Russian revolution and Spanish Civil War) → consciousness of modern man collapse of values

title of Wystan Hugh Auden’s poem;

Historical background

Art:
Psychoanalysis (Sigmund Freud) → stream of Consciousness technique (William James); fictional and chronological time (Henry Bergson) and interior monologue (free expression of feelings and ideas)
American-born poet, British citizen at 39, playwright, and literary critic, Nobel Prize (1948)

- The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock (1910-1915) interior monologue (→R. Browning); Protagonist: intellectual, mask or dramatis persona; references to everyday banality and modern discoveries (cinema)

- The Waste Land (The Criterion, 1922), despair over the sterility of modern life.
  - Disillusionment of the post-war generation; incommunicability and impossibility to love →quotations from different writers and languages
  - Shifts of time and places, abrupt changes of speaker
  - London described as a town of ghosts (Unreal city, The Burial of the dead, sec. 1); loneliness and ruin; Thames depicted as a rotten river.

- American Imagism (Ezra Pound, Amy Lowell)
William Butler Yeats

(1865 – 1939) Irish poet and dramatist

Irish Literary Revival (with Lady Gregory founded the Abbey theatre)
Nobel Prize in 1923

Features
- First: ancient Irish traditions
- After 1900: powerful, physical and realistic
- Reflective and philosophical contents
- Rich poetic idiom

Works
- *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1921): *The second coming*: theory of history diagram two conic gyres, one inside the other (1921: apocalyptic moment)
- *The Tower* (1928): metaphorical journey of a man (vision of eternal life and conception of paradise.)
- *Sailing to Byzantium; Leda and the Swan*
Anti-Utopian or Dystopian Novels

**utopia** → from the Greek not place: ideal community with a perfect socio-politico-legal system. Name given by →
**Sir Thomas More’s** Utopia (1516) : fictional island in the Atlantic Ocean; ideal place realistically impossible

**dystopia** (or anti-utopia) → Ancient Greek: bad place: futuristic society degraded into a repressive and controlled state, with a technology going "too far", pretending to be utopian.

- J. Swift’s *Gulliver’s Travels*
- G. Orwell’s 1984 *Animal farm*
- A Huxley’s *Brave New World*
- W. Golding’s *Lord of the Flies*
Jonathan Swift

(1667 – 1745)

Irish satirist, essayist, political pamphleteer, poet. Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin.

Works:

📖 *Gulliver's Travels*  
(1726, anti-utopia) a satire on human nature and a parody of the travellers' tales literary sub-genre

📖 *A Modest Proposal* (1729, suggestion given to rich people about how to cook poor children)

films: 1996 TV series by Charles Sturridge; movie by Rob Letterman, 2010
1984 (1948)

Dystopian novel about the totalitarian regime of a socialist Party:
• world of perpetual war, constant government surveillance, and public mind control.
• individual subordinated to the masses, the Party manipulates and controls humanity.

Plot: Winston Smith works in the Ministry of Truth (Minitrue, in Newspeak): he revises historical records to render the Party omniscient and always correct,

He tries to rebel against Big Brother, and is arrested, tortured, and converted.

New terms and concepts: Big Brother, doublethink, thoughtcrime, Newspeak, Memory hole.

film: 1984, by Michael Radford
Aldous Huxley
(1894 –1963)

humanist and pacifist, interested in spiritual subjects (parapsychology and philosophical mysticism).

published short stories, poetry, travel writing, and film stories

Works:

- *Crome Yellow* (1921)
- *Brave New World* (1932) anticipates developments in reproductive technology and sleep-learning
- *Brave New World Revisited* (essay, 1958)
- *Island* (1962)
- *The Doors of Perception* (1954)

film: by Leslie Libman, Larry Williams, 1998

→ Drama: *The Devils of Loudun* → *The Devils* by John Whiting (*Theatre of Cruelty*)
→ Scripts: Pride and Prejudice (1940); Jane Eyre (1944)
William Golding
(1911-1993)

*Lord of the Flies* (1954) about a group of British schoolboys stuck on a deserted island who try to govern themselves, with disastrous results.

**film:** 1963, by Peter Brook; 1990, by Harry Hook

John Burgess Wilson
(Anthony Burgess, 1917 –1993)

*A Clockwork Orange* (1962) → technique used to obstacle the main character's free will. The subject's emotional responses to violence is connected to a negative stimulation in the form of nausea caused by an emetic medicine..

**film** by **Stanley Kubrick** (1971).
Science Fiction

- inventions and innovations
- political revolutions changed the social and the economical situation.
- new philosophies put under discussion old ideas and rooted beliefs
- Need to escape the problem that everyday life
  - need of new heroes
- lethal nuclear weapons becomes realistic

The cinema started being interested in the science fiction world. First film of this genre → documentary movie *Destination Moon* (1950)
Features: negativity of machinery and mad scientist that endangers people and nature.

20th century

*Destination Moon*, Ring Pichel, 1950
Herbert George Wells
(1866 –1946)
(web cap 7, vol 3)

Together with Jules Verne, and Hugo Gernsback is referred to as "The Father of Science Fiction".

→ E. A. Poe

**The Island of Doctor Moreau** (1896): about experiments on animals and human beings and the dispute on vivisection

**The Invisible Man** (1897): a scientist makes experiments to be invisible on himself, but then suffers from mental instability

**The War of the Worlds** (1898): the conflict between mankind and an alien race told by an unnamed narrator in a London invaded by Martians
American author and professor of biochemistry best known for his works of science fiction and for his popular science books.


*Bicentennial Man* (1999) by Chris Columbus from the novel *The Positronic Man*  

Among his works: *Foundation Series*, the *Galactic Empire series* and the *Robot series*

Isaac Asimov  
(1920 – 1992)

Three Laws of Robotic:  
• A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.  
• A robot must obey any orders given to it by human beings, except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.  
• A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Law.
Mainly known for her *Imagist poems*, she also wrote narrative poems which narrates the trouble of the mind, the mental disturbs of suffering souls in which the *dramatis personae* are air, clouds, trees, houses, streets, and such like things.

One of them *Number 3 on the docket* is about a woman who kills her husband and burns the house and then tells everything to the police.
Tennessee WILLIAMS
(1911-1983)

WORKS:
• *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) about the clash between a very elegant, talkative woman with a terrible past and her rough brother-in-law
  *film*: 1951, by Elia Kazan
• *A Rose Tattoo* (1950), set in the U.S. South, with characters, who are Italian-Americans with Sicilian roots
  *film*: 1955 by Daniel Mann
• *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1955), about the decline and the degeneracy of a Southern family
  *film*: 1958, by Richard Brooks *Suddenly Last Summer* (1958), deals with perversities and cruelties; 1959, by Joseph L. Mankiewicz

His characters are usually unbalanced women abused by violent and rough men (the villains)
Francis Scott Fitzgerald  
(1896-1940)

Psychological novels about the duplicity and the struggle of the soul

- **The Great Gatsby** (1925), set New York City in the 1920s, is about a passionate and destructive love.  
**MOVIES:** Four film editions of the novel were made since the silent one of 1926, the most famous in 1974 by Jack Clayton and the last one for TV.
- **Tender is the Night** (1934) about a brilliant psychiatrist, and his love for a beautiful mental patient.
  
**film:** 1962, by Henry King; 2012 by Baz Luhrmann
Edgar Lee Masters
(1868 - 1950)

The Graveyard poetry of the 20th century

*Spoon River Anthology* (1915), collection of short free-form poems (244) the epitaphs of dead citizens, delivered by the dead themselves. They collectively describe the life of the small fictional town of Spoon River, named after the real Spoon River that ran near Masters’ home town. Spoon River was Masters’ revenge on small-town hypocrisy and narrow-mindedness.

*SONG* by De André
Eugene O'NEILL
(1888-1953)

(Charlie Chaplin’s father in law )
His plays depict an oppressive, dehumanizing society, and his characters wander haunted by pathos, futility and frustration.

film:
*Long Day's Journey Into Night*
1962, by Sidney Lumet

*Mourning Becomes Electra* (1931), adaptation of the Greek theme of the *Oresteia,*
*Long Day's Journey Into Night* (1956) about family members inexorably confronting one another’s mistakes and failures.
The birth of the cinema

Britain introduced the cinema as a public spectacle in February 1896, two months after the first public exhibition of films in Paris by the Lumière Brothers.

The crime story, the most typical cultural tradition of Britain, was also exploited by the British cinema industry. Its central figure was Alfred Hitchcock (1899-1980).

After the world war 2 the properly British production turned to the Gothic genre, so dear to British popular culture. The Curse of Frankenstein (1957) and Dracula (1958) by Terence Fisher (1904-1980) began a cycle of horror films, which won the acclaim of audiences all over the world.

In Hollywood John Huston (1906-1987), John Ford (1894-1973), and David Lean (1908-1991) produced, among the others, western films, which represented the need to know the American historical roots.
The villain of the Western Novels and movies saves the heroine, the frail and lonely girl, but they usually do not get married and he goes back to his solitary life. They are Gothic novel set in the New World on the western border.

Science Fiction (mainly movies) like Star Wars reproduces the same cliché in future periods and/or on other planets, where the villain is the alien.

Dark Film Directors


- **John Landis** (1950 -): Thriller (1983); The Blues Brothers (1980); An American Werewolf in London (1981); Burke & Hare (2010)
BATMAN


films:
Batman (1989), and Batman Returns (1992), by Tim Burton,
Batman Begins (2005) by Christopher Nolan
Pirates: The Pirates of the Caribbean: monsters, gloomy atmosphere, witches, curses
DETECTIVE STORIES – NOIRS

**J. DEAVER**: American author *The Bone Collector* (1997, made into a film by Phillip Noyce in 1999)


**KATHY REICHS** (1950-): American *BONES*, TV movies, known for her fictional heroine in her novels, Temperance "Tempe" Brennan, a forensic anthropologist like her


**Joe R. Lansdale** (1951 - ) American author of many genres, including Western, horror, science fiction, mystery, and suspense. He has also written for comics as well as Batman: The Animated Series. Famous for the couple "Hap and Leonard"
Stephen Edwin King (1947 - )

American writer of horror, suspense, science fiction and fantasy fiction


**films:** most of them have been made into movies
Fantasy (cap 8)


**FANTASY**

**Angela Carter** (1940-1992): *The Bloody Chamber and Other Stories* (1979) is a sort of revision of Little Red Riding Hood or Little Red Cap, a famous fairy tale about a young girl and a big bad wolf. “The Werewolves”

**film:** *The Company of Wolves*, 1984, by Neil Jordan


**film:** *The Golden Compass* by Chris Weitz in 2007.

Films – H. G. WELLS

Le voyage dans la Lune, 1902 - Georges Méliès

The First Men in the Moon, 1919 - Bruce Gordon e J.L.V. Leigh

Island of Lost Souls, 1932 - Erle C. Kenton

The Invisible Man, 1933 - James Whale

The Man Who Could Work Miracles, 1936 - Lothar Mendes

Things to Come, 1936 - di William Cameron Menzies

The passionate Friends, 1949 - David Lean

The War of the Worlds, 1953 - Byron Haskin

The Time Machine, 1960 - George Pal

First Men in the Moon, 1964 - Nathan Juran

The Island of Dr. Moreau, 1977 - Don Taylor

The Island of Dr. Moreau, 1996 - John Frankenheimer

The Time Machine, 2002 - Simon Wells

War of the Worlds, 2005 - Steven Spielberg
Robert Knox (1791–1862) Scottish surgeon, anatomist and zoologist. Most popular lecturer in anatomy in Edinburgh, he studied human bodies and took photos of the inner part analyzing corpses. Probably involved in Burke and Hare body-snatching case.

film: Burke and Hare
By J. Landis (2011)
Freely inspired by R. L. Stevenson's The Body Snatcher (1884)