

Gothic Literature as an Outlet to Support Emotional Development

By: Isabella Silveira



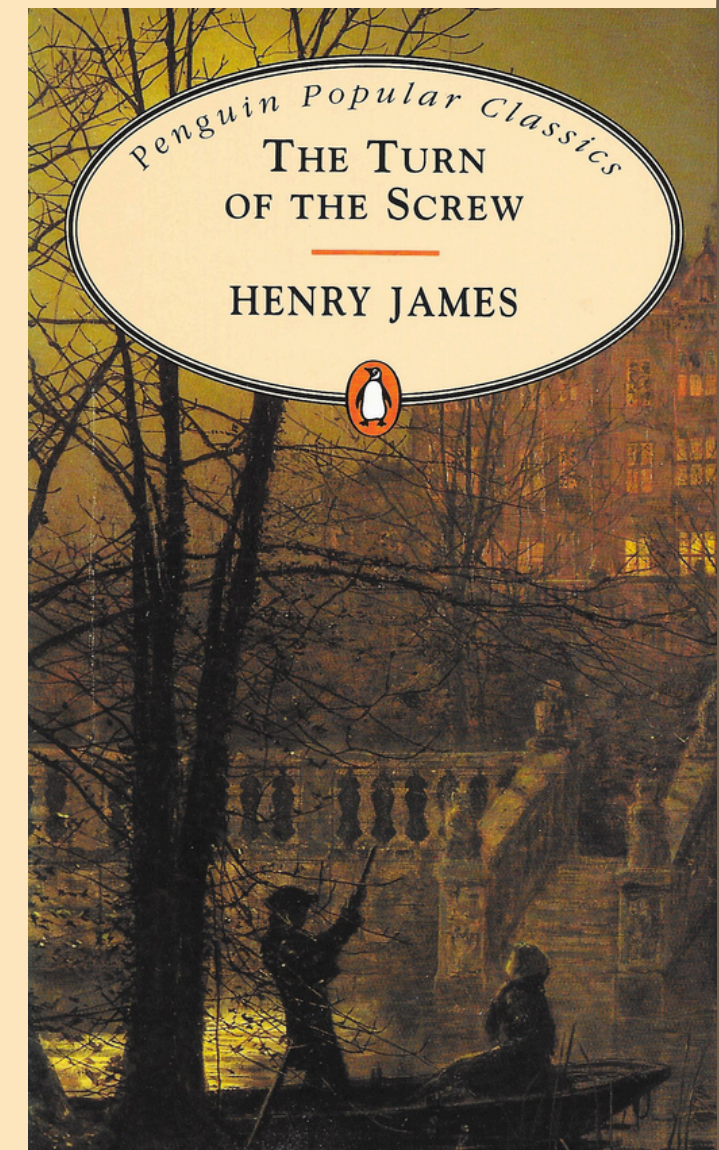


Why Gothic Lit?

- Offers students an opportunity to explore complex emotions, develop critical thinking skills, and strengthen emotional resilience through engaging works
- Address universal human experiences like fear, grief, and uncertainty, which are feelings that are found in abundance among our adolescents.
- Gives students the ability to process their own internal struggles in a safe and constructive environment.

Turn of the Screw by Henry James

The Turn of the Screw by Henry James is a novella about a young governess who is hired to care for two children, Flora and Miles, at a secluded estate. She becomes convinced that the children are being haunted by the ghosts of their former governess and a servant, both of whom died under mysterious circumstances. As the governess tries to protect the children from these apparitions, the line between reality and madness blurs, leaving readers uncertain about the true nature of the haunting.



“The Raven” by Edgar Allen Poe

Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Raven” tells of a grieving narrator visited by a mysterious raven that repeatedly utters “Nevermore.” The bird’s responses drive him to despair as he questions it about his lost love, Lenore, and the afterlife, leaving him consumed by sorrow and madness.

From the American Review for February.

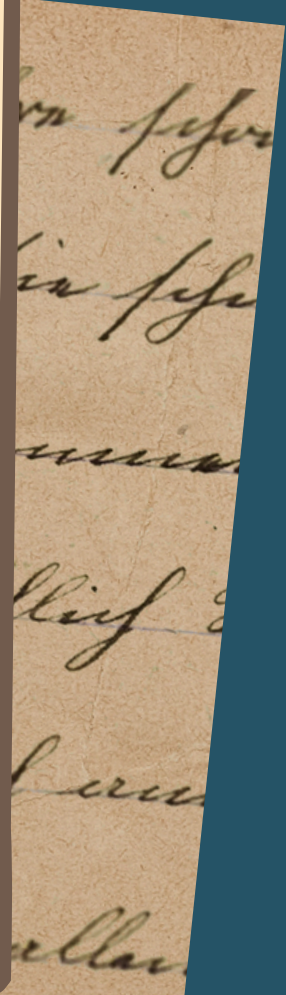
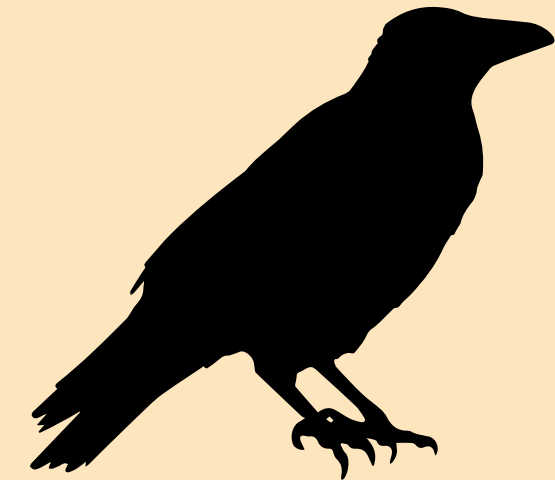
THE RAVEN.
BY EDGAR A. POE.

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore,
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one greatly rapping, tapping at my chamber door,
“Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—
Only this, and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor,
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had tried to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled with me fantastic terrors never felt before;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating
“Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—
That is it and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide the door;
Darkness there and nothing more.



How does the text help students?

I.

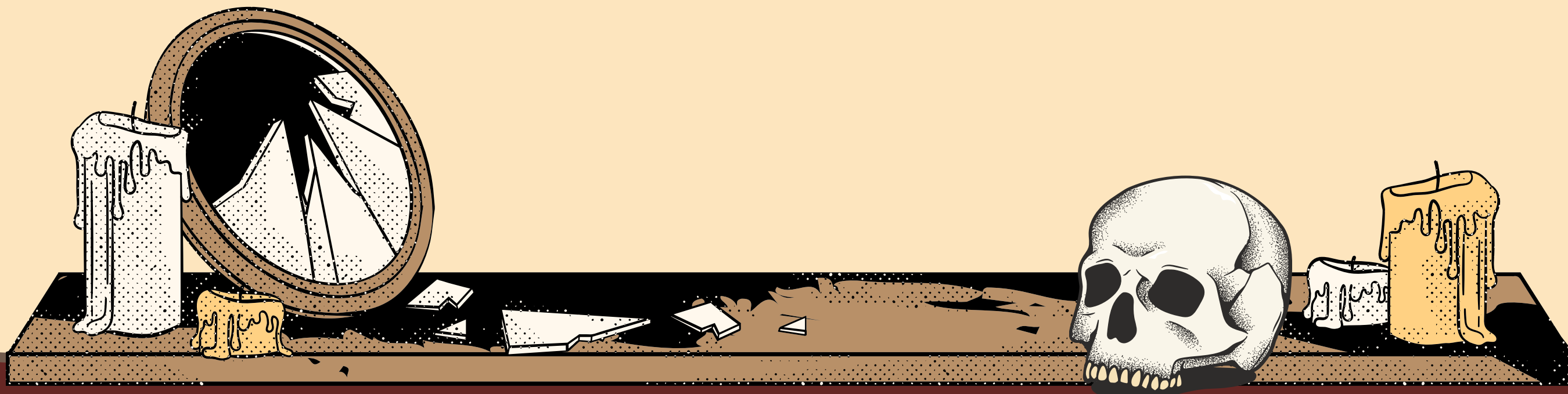
Both texts are particularly effective in dealing with the emotional and psychological struggles that many teenagers face. In *The Turn of the Screw*, the governess's doubts and fears mirror feelings of uncertainty and anxiety. Students can connect with her struggles while discussing her reliability as a narrator.

I.

Poe's "The Raven" discusses feelings such as deep sorrow and loss, giving students a poetic lens through which they can understand and deal with the concepts of grief and death. These stories encourage students to reflect on their own emotions and develop empathy by understanding the struggles of others.

I.

Along with this Gothic literature may help students in strengthening their creative thinking skills. Analyzing the genre's symbolism, unreliable narrators, and ambiguous endings can challenge students to think critically and look at texts from multiple perspectives.



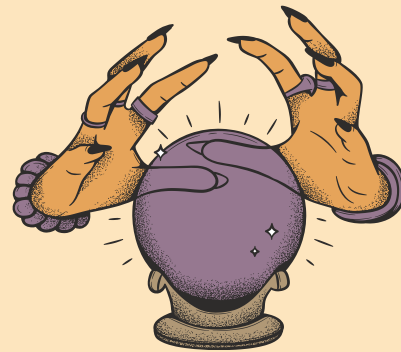
How would I Introduce the Text?

1.



Discuss
importance of
gothic lit

2.



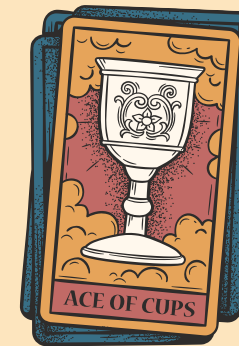
Play useful
video to help
visualize

3.



Discuss Gothic
works students
know

4.



Begin private
journaling

Working Through the Text

1. Read exciting excerpt from novel and poem.
2. Discussion on what students believe until that point in the novel.
3. Class debates on governess being a reliable narrator?
4. Analysis of poem including imagery and repetition/other literary devices.
5. Close reading/Annotating



Beyond the Text

I. *Speak* by Laurie Halse Anderson

Both novels center around fear, isolation, and confronting inner demons. Both characters face an overwhelming fear of not being believed, and both struggle with the weight of unspoken truths.

2. *Coraline* by Neil Gaiman

Both characters must confront terrifying forces that challenge their perception of reality and grow in the process. The stories highlight personal growth through fear, as the governess battles the ghosts and Coraline faces the Other Mother, ultimately reclaiming control over their situations.

3. *We Were Here* by Matt de la Pena

Both characters feel isolated and unable to communicate their experiences, deepening their confusion. Both stories center on characters confronting their inner turmoil and seeking truth despite uncertainty.

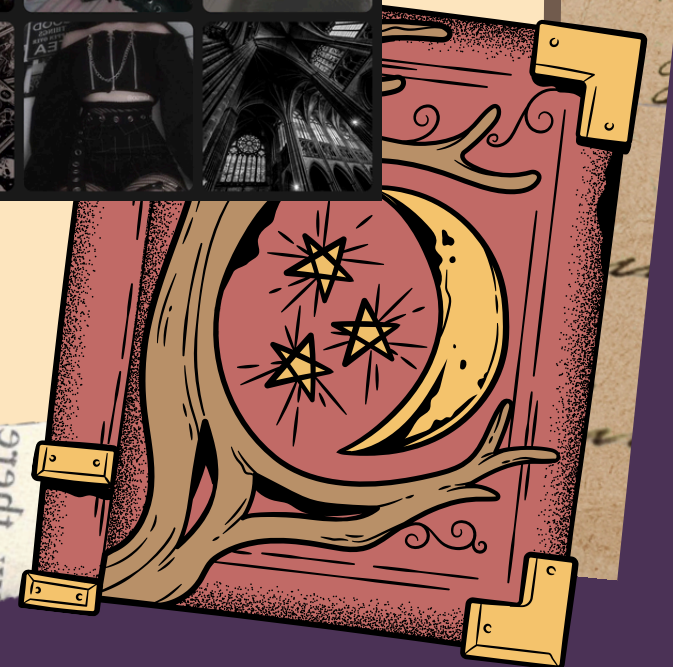
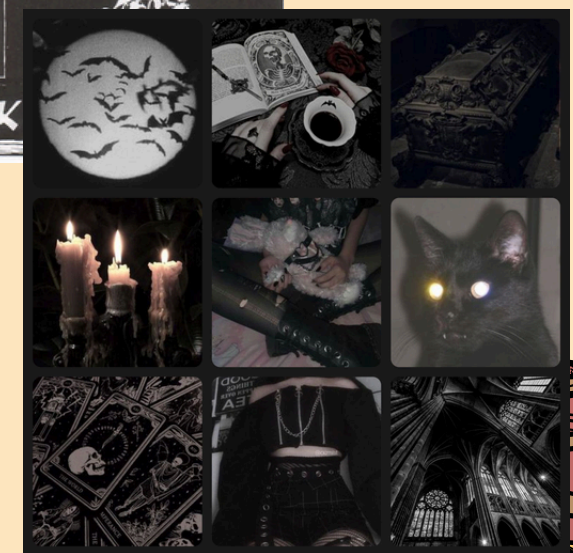
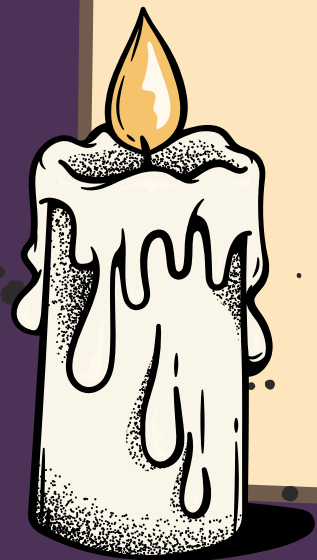
Concluding the unit

- Write an essay that ties together the themes of fear, isolation, and self-discovery explored in *The Turn of the Screw*.
- Encourage students to reflect on how these texts portray emotional struggles and the ways in which the characters confront their inner fears.
- Connect the Gothic elements such as the supernatural, unreliable narrators, and psychological tension, with their own experiences of navigating difficult emotions.



Continuing....

Creative project such as writing their own Gothic inspired short stories or poems, creating a mood board or a comic to illustrate key scenes, or acting out pivotal moments from the texts.



How does it connect to Eng112b texts?

1.



2.



3.

