

Gothic:
An Immersive Exhibition about the History of Horror Fiction
through the use of Digital Media and Audio Visual Technology

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Abstract of Thesis

Gothic: An Immersive Exhibition about the History of Horror Fiction through the use of Digital Media and Audio Visual Technology

Gothic, proposes an exhibition about the influence of Gothic literature on contemporary horror fiction. This history exhibition seeks to teach individuals about Gothic literature's influence on modern horror fiction through the use of immersive environments and audio visual technology, to help enhance the exhibition experience, and to reinforce the exhibition's message. This thesis uses exhibition design as the medium to explore the use of audio visual technology and digital media to create effective learning environments, specifically in exhibitions and museums.

Designed with the potential to be a traveling exhibition, the first location of the exhibition will be at the New Church, in Holland. Although the exhibition is designed to be enjoyed by people of all ages, and backgrounds, the exhibition is specifically targeted towards horror fiction fans, and those individuals ages 20-54 who may already be familiar with the topic.

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Introduction

Horror fiction is familiar to many, whether in movies, literature, or other forms of popular media today. Although perhaps concealed in different stories and characters, Gothic literature is considered to be the antecedent to the contemporary horror fiction that we are familiar with today¹. These stories dealing with monsters and dungeons, bring up subjects that may otherwise be taboo in our society². Filled with grotesque characters who, although often times highly unpleasant and unlikable, defy society's social mores and confront our very own moral compass³. These tales provide us with a window into society's fears and anxieties within specific respective cultural and historical moments⁴. This exhibition will bring forth the connections between gothic literature and contemporary horror fiction, and invite visitors to make connections between the past and the present. This history exhibition will not be text heavy, but will rather rely on visuals and immersive experiences to highlight certain characters and to explain the historical influences that have shaped these stories. It will use audio visuals and digital media to create immersive environments by bringing the motifs, characters and stories to life.

Visitors will explore the roots behind the stories and tales that surround us in our daily lives in movies and books, and will question the cultural significance horror fiction that is popular today. In the process, this exhibition will also highlight the importance of storytelling. Using gothic literature as the lens, this exhibition will explore the cultural

¹Hillard, Tom. Deep into the Darkness Peering: An essay on Gothic Nature. *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, Volume 16, Pages 685–695, Issue 4 (2009). <https://doi.org/10.1093/isle/isp090>

²Hillard, Tom. Deep into the Darkness Peering.

³Hillard, Tom. Deep into the Darkness Peering.

⁴Hillard, Tom. Deep into the Darkness Peering.

significance of horror fiction by taking a look at the historical, and psychological elements used in Gothic literature. Visitors of this exhibition will have a basic understanding of Gothic literature's influence on modern times and will understand that Gothic literature shapes the presentation of horror fiction today.

Overview - Exhibition Topic

“The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown.”- HP Lovecraft

Throughout the history of humankind, morbid curiosity has been a prevalent part of the psyche. Chilling myths and tales were told as a means of entertainment and as a way to provide answers to the unknown and the otherwise unexplainable. Yet even as our resources and understanding of the world improved, our desire to experience the thrilling sensation of a chilling story has persevered. One of the primary sources of this fear and danger found in these stories is nature itself, and transcribed into these stories are the anxieties and fears that are etched into our existence throughout history⁵. Our fascination with these stories and tales have managed to cross the boundaries of geography and time, indicative perhaps of a universal fear in the human unconscious⁶. Aside from this universal fear evident in these stories, historicists also believe that these stories were

⁵ Hillard, Tom. *Deep into the Darkness Peering*.

⁶ Cannon Schmitt. "A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction: Mapping History's Nightmares, and: Gothic Radicalism: Literature, Philosophy, and Psychoanalysis in the Nineteenth Century, and: Victorian Gothic: Literary and Cultural Manifestations in the Nineteenth Century (review)." *Victorian Studies* 44, no. 3 (2002): 543-547. <https://muse.jhu.edu/> (accessed December 3, 2018).

created in direct response to their environment, and that specific historical circumstances shaped these fictional characters and representations⁷. This makes the stories valuable and meaningful in that they provide us with a look into the cultural subconscious, highlighting in the process the power of the story by reflecting the values of the real world through its continuous confrontation of society's values⁸.

Since the emergence of the Gothic novel in 1764, it has allowed us to take a look into the internal struggles of the western culture⁹. The Gothic novel, with its dark passages, eerie settings, castles, ghosts, and monsters, offers a look into the strange, repressed and unconscious side of humanity¹⁰. And although it has gone through drastic changes, the themes, and conventions of the earliest gothic novels are very much alive in our movies, and literature today in what we know of as horror fiction¹¹. Essentially, the characters and motifs from the gothic novel are being constantly rewritten and reshaped today¹². Gothic literature is considered to be the predecessor to the modern horror fiction that we are familiar with today, and hidden beneath today's characters are their very own historically and culturally significant meanings¹³.

⁷ Punter, David. *The Gothic Condition terror, history and the psyche*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016.

⁸ Hillard, Tom.

⁹ Botting, Fred. *Essays and studies - The Gothic*. Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001.

¹⁰ Sá, Daniel Serravalle De, and Anelise R. Corseuil. "Gothic Literature - Cross Mapping the Gothic. A Journal of English Language, Literatures in English and Cultural Studies. August 26, 2012. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5007/2175-8026.2012n62p11>.

¹¹ Botting, Fred

¹² Punter, David. *The Gothic Condition terror, history and the psyche*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016.

¹³ Punter, David.

Due to Gothic literature's obsession with fears of all types, it provides a useful lens for understanding the cultural subconscious¹⁴. Horror fiction is therefore a culturally constructed personification of society's fears and anxieties as it attempts to answer questions about the unknown and unexplainable¹⁵. This exhibition will use Gothic literature as the lens to explore the cultural significance of horror fiction, and will take a look into the role that horror plays in the human experience. This exhibition does not attempt to answer the many questions that this genre imposes, but rather exalts the influence of gothic literature on the shaping of horror fiction today and seeks to inspire visitors to draw connections between current and previous trends throughout history.

Since this exhibition deals with the cultural significance of horror fiction on western society, it will thus be a history exhibition. In order to draw connections between the characters and motifs used in the stories and the historical influences, the exhibition will be set up in chronological and thematic order. This exhibition invites visitors to embark on a journey through the history of horror fiction starting with the first Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, where they will get to discover the influence of gothic literature on contemporary horror fiction. And in the process, they will gain a basic understanding of the influence of gothic literature on the presentation of horror fiction today. By experiencing this exhibition, visitors will understand the relevance of gothic literature on current times, and the different historical influences that may have shaped certain characters and stories.

¹⁴ Ellis, Markman. *The History of Gothic Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

¹⁵ Kilgour, Maggie. *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London: Routledge, 2006.

The visitors will understand the relevance of gothic literature on western culture, and they will learn about the different historical and psychological reasons behind the emergence of certain common motifs and characters. Visitors will compare and contrast the characters and question the significance of our modern horror fiction, and in the process draw connections between the past characters and motifs, and the current ones.

Content Outline

In order to provide visitors with a concise narrative experience of the transition between gothic literature to contemporary horror fiction, the exhibition will be organized in chronological order from the genesis of Gothic literature to modern times. There will be content areas designated to each section and some areas will be specifically set up for certain characters and motifs related to the appropriate time period. It will incorporate specific examples of certain historical influences that shaped the characters and motifs throughout history as seen in these tales to encourage visitors to draw connections between the different times and characters.

Aside from the introductory area, the exhibition will be separated into three other primary content areas; The Emergence, Victorian Gothic, and Horror Fiction Today. Although the exhibition will be in chronological order, the different content areas will be set up in such a way so as to allow visitors to explore it from current times to the 18th century, or vice versa. Multiple bubble plans were proposed but final option was chosen due to the topic's historical timeline, and because it was ultimately the best way to allow visitors to draw connections between the different characters, time periods, and historical influences. The different content areas would give visitors the ability to exit and enter some of the sections if they didn't want to stick to the liner path.

Upon entering the exhibition, the first section would introduce visitors to the topic and familiarize them with the experience, so as to acclimate them to the setup and stimuli. This section will include brief information about Gothic literature and the definition of horror fiction. The gothic novel, which is considered to be defined as a novel containing elements of fiction, horror, death, gloom and romance, in conjunction with romantic elements as well; nature, individuality and high emotion ¹⁶. This area would not be highly content based, so as not to overwhelm the visitors and to avoid detracting from the experience.

The second section of the exhibition is the Emergence section where visitors would learn about the origins of Gothic fiction. The content will focus on the 18th Century in England, which was when the first Gothic novel was first published. The *Castle of Otranto*, published in 1764, is considered to be the first Gothic novel. It is essentially regarded as the catalyst for the popularization of the gothic novel and is responsible for the horror fiction that we are familiar with today. This section will include information about a few other popular novels, such as *Mysteries of Udolpho*, and *The Monk*. The Gothic novel movement arose in England, and it is now believed that it was directly influenced by the French Revolution¹⁷. Due to England's geographical proximity to France, people in England were affected by the French Revolution, and these authors were expressing their anxieties and fears in these stories¹⁸. Surrounded by violence and

¹⁶Kilgour, Maggie. *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*. London: Routledge, 2006.

¹⁷Ellis, Markman. *The History of Gothic Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

¹⁸Sá, Daniel Serravalle De, and Anelise R. Corseuil. "Gothic Literature - Cross Mapping the Gothic. A Journal of English Language, Literatures in English and Cultural Studies. August 26, 2012. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5007/2175-8026.2012n62p11>.

uncertainty, English writers began to focus on the violence, and change in the human condition¹⁹. The parallels drawn in this section will primarily be between the elements of terror, violence, and sexual rapacity in the gothic novels and the French Revolution²⁰. Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is an example of a Gothic novel that exemplified women's questioning of women's role in society, as well as a response to the Enlightenment period²¹. The content areas in this section will have minimal amounts of text in order avoid being overwhelming, but will include information throughout.

Touching on the Industrial Revolution and the after effects of the French Revolution, the third section of the exhibition is the Victorian Gothic section, which focuses mainly on the 19th century. The Victorian Gothic period was a time when the ghost story and the supernatural gained popularity in the Gothic novel²². This section will also draw a connection between the Industrial Revolution and the economic instability that it instigated, as well as the feelings of anxiety that it brought on²³. During this period, it became common for horror and monsters to be an internalized thing, found within ourselves, illustrating the idea of madness and confusion. Edgar Allen Poe, and a few other influential writers will be mentioned in this section. *Dracula*, *the Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll*, and a few other novels will be introduced as well. This section will present

¹⁹ Punter, David. *The Gothic Condition terror, history and the psyche*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016.

²⁰ Paulson, Ronald. "Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution." *ELH*48, no. 3 (1981): 532-54. doi:10.2307/2872912.

²¹ Punter, David. *The Gothic Condition terror, history and the psyche*.

²² Riquelme, John Paul. "Introduction: Toward a History of Gothic and Modernism: Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 46, no. 3 (2000): 585-605. doi:10.1353/mfs.2000.0055.

²³ Ellis, Markman. *The History of Gothic Fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007.

visitors to the most famous vampire; Dracula, as the primary example to convey the Victorian Gothic anxieties.

The Horror Fiction Today section will include information about writers and movies of the 20th and 21st century. Since the primary topic is literature, it would focus on prominent modern and contemporary writers, such as HP Lovecraft, Stephen King, Anne Rice, and Peter Straub. Due to the rise of popular media in today's society, it is important to include information and examples of characters in movies and TV shows as well. This section would be separated into two subsections; modern and contemporary horror fiction. Parallels will be made between characters that we are familiar with today and those in the earliest gothic novels, such as the clown "IT", and comparing it to Edgar Allan Poe's character, the Hop Frog²⁴. Other characters included will be Stephanie Meyer's adaptation of the vampire, and even the infamous American Psycho as compared to Dracula in their similar portrayal of sanity and its self-serving delusion²⁵.

Topic Precedents

There has been a recent exhibition about the history of gothic literature that also touched on the connection between the Gothic novel and contemporary horror fiction. This exhibition was the Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination exhibition that took place at the British Library²⁶. Exhibited in 2014, the exhibition explored Gothic

²⁴ Riquelme, John Paul. "Introduction: Toward a History of Gothic and Modernism: Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 46, no. 3 (2000): 585-605. doi:10.1353/mfs.2000.0055.

²⁵ Riquelme, John Paul. "Introduction: Toward a History of Gothic and Modernism: Dark Modernity from Bram Stoker to Samuel Beckett." *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 46, no. 3 (2000): 585-605. doi:10.1353/mfs.2000.0055.

²⁶ The British Library. "Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination." *The British Library*, The British Library, 28 Feb. 2017, www.bl.uk/.

literature's roots in the British culture and essentially celebrated 250 years since the publication of the first Gothic novel. The exhibition similarly started the exhibition from the year 1764, since the emergence of the first Gothic novel, and showed a few of the contemporary horror fiction books and authors that are popular today. This exhibition also presented the information in chronological order, and was immersive through its use of architectural gothic motifs and gothic design elements.

Although this exhibition also introduced visitors to contemporary horror fiction and some of the current prominent writers and popular movies, it only presented a few, therefore stressing less importance on the relationship between the gothic novels and contemporary horror fiction, which is something that Gothic does aspire to do. The exhibition was also artifact heavy, and used a lot of text as well, which are things that this exhibition wants to avoid. Gothic will similarly incorporate dramatic lighting and dark colors to create the eerie atmosphere, and use gothic architectural motifs throughout.

Another exhibition that also deals with horror fiction, is Kirk Hammetts' "It's Alive: Classic Horror and Sci-Fi Art" exhibition, which is currently being held at the Peabody²⁷. This exhibition focuses on telling the story of horror fiction from the 20th century using posters from 20th century cinema, and also uses memorabilia such as guitars and props previously used in popular horror films. The exhibition also had specific sections that focus on certain types of monsters and themes as seen in the 20th century cinema, such as; the undead, women and power, zombies, mad science, and classic tales. Gothic will similarly create specific rooms or sections for certain characters

²⁷ "It's Alive! Classic Horror and Sci-Fi Art from the Kirk Hammett..." Pem.org. Accessed November 8th, 2017. <https://www.pem.org/exhibitions/its-alive-classic-horror-and-sci-fi-art-from-the-kirk-hammett-collection>.

and themes.

It's Alive: Classic Horror and Sci-Fi Art deals with the horror fiction genre, even though it focuses in on the 20th century cinema art. It also chooses specific monsters or beasts in order to exemplify or illustrate the different themes. Gothic will incorporate that into the exhibition as well, in order to highlight certain motifs and anxieties relevant to a specific time period.

Held at the Museum of Pop Culture in Seattle, "Scared to Death: The Thrill of Horror Film" is another popular exhibition that deals with horror fiction²⁸. Once again, this exhibition also focuses on horror fiction through cinema in the 20th and 21st Century. The exhibition invites visitors to explore monsters seen in cinema based on popular films that include Friday the 13th, the Walking Dead, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, Bride of Frankenstein, and other iconic movies. The exhibition was highly artifact based, and included a lot of text, which is something Gothic seeks to avoid. The exhibition also set up the gallery to create the sensations associated with cinematic terror, and Gothic will similarly attempt to create the sensations associated with each specific century of horror fiction. This exhibition also created innovative ways to present the text panels. As opposed to relying on the standard text panel, the text was integrated into specific types of motifs and immersive environments.

²⁸ "Scared to Death." Scared to Death: The Thrill of Horror Film. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <https://www.mopop.org/exhibits/upcoming-exhibits/scared-to-death/>.

Overview-Audience

Target Audience

This exhibition will be primarily targeted towards horror fiction fans, specifically those between the ages 20-54. Those who are horror fiction fans in this case include individuals who are already familiar with horror fiction but who may otherwise not be familiar with gothic literature's influence on modern horror fiction, and also those who are already familiar with gothic literature as well. As of 2008, it was estimated that 32.5% of the US adult population prefer reading mystery novels, making it the most popular book genre, and 21.2 % of the population preferred reading thrillers which also falls in the horror fiction category²⁹. Although no prior knowledge or understanding on the subject matter is required in order to understand and enjoy the exhibition, those individuals who are already familiar with horror fiction would naturally be attracted to this exhibition. They can in the process gain a deeper understanding of gothic literature, and this exhibition can thus contribute to a richer and deeper appreciation of the current horror media that they are already familiar with³⁰. Those individuals who enjoy reading gothic novels also fall in this category as well.

This exhibition seeks to raise awareness about the cultural significance of gothic literature, and to expose gothic literature's influence on the horror fiction that we are

²⁹ Pew Research Center. "Book Readers in the U.S. by Age 2016 | Statistic." Statista. September 2016. Accessed November 17, 2017. <https://www.statista.com/statistics/249787/book-reading-population-in-the-us-by-age/>.

³⁰ Potter, Franz J. "National University Faculty Interview: Gothic Literature's Influences on Modern Horror Trends." Faculty Interview: Gothic Literature's Influences on Modern Horror Trends | National University. October 21, 2016. Accessed November 5, 2017. <https://www.nu.edu/News/gothic-literatures-influences-on-modern-horror-trends.html>.

familiar with today. These individuals would naturally be attracted to the exhibition and should therefore be considered the primary target audience, those who are fans of current horror media would be able to walk out of the exhibition learning something new.

A horror fiction fan includes adults who enjoy watching horror movies, or those who indulge in reading horror fiction, as well as those who read horror fiction including gothic literature. Currently, there has been a rise in the horror movie industry, due to millennial's indulgence in the genre. It is estimated that individuals between the ages of 35 and 44 are 23% more likely to indulge in the horror movie genre (US)³¹. Millennials are also the most avid readers, making up 80% of the reading population in the US, and those between the ages of 30-50 make up around 70% of the reading population³². It is therefore likely that those adults are already exposed to the genre therefore contribute to a large majority of the people who prefer horror movies over any other genre, making up 47%³³.

Targeting the exhibition towards adults would also allow for less restrictions on the topic and experience. Most importantly, the exhibition would expose those individuals who already spend a considerable amount of time on horror fiction to a novel element about the subject matter. They make up a large number of the individuals who

³¹ Potter, Franz J. "National University Faculty Interview: Gothic Literature's Influences on Modern Horror Trends." Faculty Interview: Gothic Literature's Influences on Modern Horror Trends | National University. October 21, 2016. Accessed November 7, 2017.

<https://www.nu.edu/News/gothic-literatures-influences-on-modern-horror-trends.html>
³² Pew Research Center. "Book Readers in the U.S. by Age 2016 | Statistic." Statista. September 2016. Accessed November 17, 2017.

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/249787/book-reading-population-in-the-us-by-age/>
³³ Buder, Emily. "This Infographic Reveals the Truth About Millennial Moviegoing." No Film School. June 22, 2016. Accessed December 10, 2017.
<http://nofilmschool.com/2016/06/movie-theater-millennial-statistics-movio>

allow for horror fiction to remain a relevant and successful genre in the modern society, and should thus also be considered as the primary target audience.

The exhibition will target horror fiction fans but will break down the audience into four different types of potential visitors; the horror genre fan, the literary scholars, the media and pop culture scholar, and the local or tourist who may be unfamiliar with the topic altogether.

1) Fans- Horror genre fans/ readers and horror movie lovers

Typically, horror movie lovers are also avid readers and would be attracted to the subject matter. The exhibition will touch on current horror fiction writers such as Stephen King, and other writers that they will be familiar with, as well as some popular characters seen in today's movies and shows. These individuals, although familiar with the contemporary horror fiction genre, would probably not be aware of Gothic literatures influence on present horror fiction. The primary goal for this target audience is to understand the connection between the past and the present.

2) Literary Scholars

Since the exhibition would reference gothic literature and its influence on modern horror fiction, the exhibition will focus on different types of literature throughout the ages, and would thus appeal to literary scholars. These individuals would be familiar with gothic literature, and would most likely be aware of Gothic literature's influence on the presentation of horror fiction today, but they would most likely enjoy seeing certain artifacts and perhaps see new connections between the characters throughout the ages.

3) Media and pop culture scholars

This specific target audience would enter the exhibition already aware of Gothic literature's influence on modern media and pop culture would be attracted to the exhibition due to the novelty of it, and most likely due to some of the experiences as well. They would also like to see if their assumptions and prior knowledge was correct, and would enjoy experiencing the exhibition with a critical eye.

4) The local / Tourist

Although the visitor in this demographic might be either a tourist or an Amsterdam resident, the primary attraction to this exhibition for them would most likely be due to its central location and topic. They would either enter the exhibition by chance, or simply due to curiosity about the topic. These individuals would leave the exhibition learning about gothic literature's influence on contemporary horror fiction, and would walk out of the exhibition with an entirely new perspective.

Horror fiction fans definition and relevance to exhibition topic

Gothic literature is essentially the antecedent to the modern horror fiction that we are familiar with today³⁴. The horror fiction genre referenced is thus considered to include gothic literature, horror movies, and modern horror fiction books; all of which include mystery, thriller, crime subgenres, and horror graphic novels³⁵. This exhibition will bring forth the connections between gothic literature and modern horror fiction, and most importantly, it will bring to light society's fears and anxieties as evident in these horror fiction tales. The exhibition seeks to bring awareness of the influence of gothic

³⁴ Potter, Franz J. "National University Faculty Interview: Gothic Literature's Influences on Modern Horror Trends." Faculty Interview: Gothic Literature's Influences on Modern Horror Trends | National University. October 21, 2016. Accessed November 14, 2017. <https://www.nu.edu/News/gothic-literatures-influences-on-modern-horror-trends.html>.

³⁵ Potter, Franz

literature on contemporary horror fiction, and it therefore is of critical importance to target those individuals who are spending a significant amount of time enjoying horror movies and other horror fiction media.

While designing for this exhibition, one of the primary challenges is to convey the rather dark and somewhat heavy information while keeping the audience engaged and interested. Because it is a history exhibition it does include a large amount of content, but in order to keep individuals engaged and stimulated, the information will be presented in an immersive and playful manner, instead of just through text. Using visuals and technology that this demographic is also familiar with will help bring a recognizable element to the exhibition as well, aside from serving as a means of conveying the information.

Overview-Site

Location

The exhibition will take place at the New Church in Amsterdam, Holland. With over 200,000 visitors per year, the New Church is one of the most popular museums in Amsterdam, and has had an increasing number of visitors since 2014 due to its successful temporary exhibitions ³⁶. The New Church hosts temporary exhibitions about cultures and inspiring historical figures in both the English and Dutch languages ³⁷. Although

³⁶ AmsTips. "Top 10 Amsterdam Museums (by Visitor Numbers)." Amsterdam Tips. October 21, 2016. Accessed November 13, 2017. <http://www.amsterdamtips.com/news/top-10-amsterdam-museums>.

³⁷ World Population Review. "Amsterdam Population 2017." Amsterdam Population 2017 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs). October 20, 2017. Accessed November 17, 2017. <http://worldpopulationreview.com/world-cities/amsterdam-population/>.

primarily known for its popular exhibitions about art, photography, and cultures, the New Church also hosts cultural events and official gatherings, attracting large audiences of varying cultures and backgrounds. Located in Dam Square, the center of the city, the New Church is considered to be one of the most popular exhibition venues in the Netherlands, attracting a large diverse audience ³⁸.

Naturally, the initial goal was to find an exhibition venue in the United States and some of the potential venues included popular museums and event spaces in the United States. Other places that were looked into were the British Library, Strawberry Hill House, and other site specific spaces. Yet as the search continued, it became clear that the exhibition could have the ability to also be exhibited in different places around the world due to the topic's relevance. The topic of the exhibition deals with the entire western culture, not just the United States. Gothic literature has now begun to be studied academically and is increasingly becoming popular due to its cultural significance, including in Holland.

The New Church attracts an international and diverse audience, has a central location with this city, and this exhibition is compatible with its overall mission. This exhibition seeks to raise awareness and to reach a global and international audience and should therefore not be restricted to geographical lines and boundaries, but rather seek to embrace the opportunity for different locations to host this exhibition around the world. This exhibition has the ability to be a traveling exhibition, and this location is a great fit

³⁸ World Population Review. "Amsterdam Population 2017." Amsterdam Population 2017 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs). October 20, 2017. Accessed November 17, 2017.

for this exhibition. The location in Amsterdam allows for a large audience diversity that is already part of the institution's established audience. The New Church thus serves as an ideal location for this exhibition, and introduces the exhibition's ability and potential to be held in different institutions and countries.

Created the 15th Century, since the Middle Ages the New Church served as a space for worship, and as a burial site for important Dutch naval heroes ³⁹. The name "New Church" derives from the fact that it was created Due to the rapid growth of the population, and Amsterdam's need of a second place of worship became the reason to build the New Church⁴⁰. The church also has undergone multiple changes, and during the reformation it was transformed into a Protestant church⁴¹. The church survived multiple fires and was then rebuilt in a Gothic architecture style in the 19th century. It also went through additional renovation that led to neo-Gothic architectural details as well. This gothic design goes with the gothic literature topic of the exhibition and is therefore a great fit for the exhibition.

The site is ideal for the exhibition due to its relevance to the exhibition topic. A large portion of the stories in the gothic novels took place in gothic buildings, and abandoned places, thus making the building itself in direct dialogue with the topic. The repurposed nature of the building also goes hand in hand with the content of the exhibition by tying in the old with the new; a relationship that this exhibition will continuously use both overtly and covertly. The gothic novels also had a particular

³⁹ De Nieuwe Kerk. "De Nieuwe Kerk." De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <https://www.nieuwekerk.nl/en/de-nieuwe-kerk/>.

⁴⁰ De Nieuwe Kerk. "De Nieuwe Kerk." De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <https://www.nieuwekerk.nl/en/de-nieuwe-kerk/>.

⁴¹ De Nieuwe Kerk. "De Nieuwe Kerk."

interest in religion and explored religion in the stories, mostly by questioning the role of religion in education and critiqued many aspects of religion in society. This then creates a relationship between the gothic novel's quest to explore religion and question religion by creating an exhibition inside of a place of worship.

Site Challenges

The New Church is a historical landmark and there are therefore a set of restrictions that have to be taken into account when designing the exhibition. But there have been several exhibitions and experimental art installations that have taken place at the New Church that indicate that there is room, legally and spatially, to design a wide assortment of set ups. This includes the possibility to design architectural structures and to create a completely new infrastructure for the exhibition.

The architecture also introduces multiple challenges that have to be considered as part of the design process. Due to the content of the exhibition, its focus on history and the contemporary, the exhibition will take advantage of the contrast between the modern technology and materials that will be used and the old architecture. For this reason, the exhibition does not want to hide the architecture, or disrupt it, but rather will aim to enhance and to play off the existing architecture. In order to achieve this, certain architectural elements will have to play a relatively large role in the design process to ensure a fluid relationship between the architecture and the exhibition.

Although the space is large enough to welcome a variety of designs, it also introduces a set of other architectural challenges. The large open space, although interrupted with arched columns and a few historical landmarks like tombs, is free of any partitions or rooms. This means that the exhibition will have to create its own

infrastructure through the use of architectural structures and partitions. The high ceilings also play into that part, in that the exhibition will need to design accordingly, both for sound purposes and aesthetic reasons. And lastly, the church has a multitude of glass stained windows that fill the space with natural light which make the lighting unpredictable.

Site Precedents

The New Church in Amsterdam has held several multimedia exhibitions in the past about different cultures and figures all around the world, as well as experimental art installations. This indicates that this exhibition would be welcome not just due to the content but also due to the flexibility of the use of the space.

One of the exhibitions held at the New Church in 2011 focused on Judaism, and created a variety of architectural structures throughout the space with specific content areas⁴². Visitors could walk into these structures that were full of artifacts and content. These black structures were created to guide the visitors throughout the exhibition, and to create a unified ambience and experience. The exhibition also utilized projections, monitors and different types of media to enhance the experience. This exhibition used the structures in a similar manner, and it exemplifies the flexibility that the space allows.

Seeking to inform the public about different cultures around the world, The New Church has also held a few exhibitions about the American culture, including American public figures such as Marilyn Monroe, Martin Luther King and specific aspects of the American culture. In 2012, the New Church had an exhibition called “The American

⁴² De Nieuwe Kerk. "De Nieuwe Kerk." De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <https://www.nieuwekerk.nl/en/de-nieuwe-kerk/>.

Indian”, that focused on the artistic and cultural traditions of American Indians⁴³. The Church was split into two different sections where one side portrayed the different stereotypes that the western culture had created, and the other side of the church showed the authentic traditions held by the North American Indians. The exhibitions used large images and structures that mimicked the space in order to create a more intimate experience. Large images were hung from the ceiling in order to block some of the light coming in from the windows, and certain architectural structures were also created to control the traffic flow and to enhance the experience. The primary takeaway from this precedent is that the New Church welcomes exhibitions about other cultures and is rather flexible about the use of the space.

A contemporary artist called Krijn de Koning created a site specific art installation at the New Church in 2010. This installation was made of wood and took over the entirety of the space. A completely new elevated floor or platform was created, so as to guide the visitors up some stairs that would then take them to the main platform of the installation. The elevated platform provided visitors with a completely different view of the space and also invited them to go into specific structures on their way down. This immersive installation exemplifies the flexibility of the space, and offers potential ideas for the exhibition. Certain architectural structures will be added to the space to the exhibition, in order to elevate the experience both literally and figuratively.

⁴³ "Work." American Indians. Accessed November 10, 2017.
<http://www.tinker.nl/en/work/american-indians>.

Interpretive Plan

The exhibition will introduce visitors to Gothic literature's influence on horror fiction and will inspire visitors to reflect about today's horror fiction. Visitors will ultimately learn that Gothic literature shapes the presentation of horror fiction today, and they will have a basic understanding of the historical influences that have shaped the characters and motifs throughout history. Although there are specific messages and key details that will be voiced throughout the exhibition, the overarching message will be for visitors to feel inspired and in awe of Gothic literature and horror fiction. Most importantly, visitors will draw connections between the past and the present in order to come up with their own conclusions.

The primary target audience for this exhibition are individuals who are familiar with horror fiction, but who may otherwise not be aware of Gothic literature's influence on the stories that they enjoy. Visitors will get to explore the history of horror fiction in an immersive manner. In order to teach visitors about the different historical and psychological reasons behind the emergence of a few popular or important motifs, stock characters, and monsters will be brought to life.

Visitors will learn about Gothic literature and its cultural significance through audiovisuals and immersive environments. This use of digital media and interactives will serve as a tool to enhance the experiences and to minimize the amount of text that typically accompanies a history exhibition. Digital interactives and immersive environments will invite visitors to understand Gothic literature and enable them to compare and draw connections to modern times, and experience certain emotions that are

common in Gothic literature. Visitors will also have the ability to choose to experience the exhibition through audio, or text.

Interpretive goals:

1. Visitors will *learn* about the different historical and psychological reasons behind the emergence of certain characters and stories.
2. Visitors will *understand* the influence of gothic literature on contemporary horror fiction
3. Visitors will be in *awe* and wonder about the gothic imagination
4. Visitors will *reflect* on the cultural significance of horror fiction

Interpretive strategy:

1. By bringing the prominent motifs, stock characters, and monsters from Gothic literature to life, the exhibition will take visitors on a journey to learn about the different motifs and characters
2. The last section will show the morphing of the Gothic motif into modern times, by including characters and motifs in movies and literature, such as Stephen King, and Chainsaw Massacre. (Highlighting the idea that characters and ideas today have been recycled from the Gothic motifs- and changed due to our current anxieties and fears)
3. Include multisensory immersive environments that will simulate certain atmospheres and motifs used in Gothic fiction.

Design Strategy

Design Goals

The exhibition will use gothic motifs throughout the entire exhibition in order to create the narrative device to guide the visitors from one century to the next. The first section will use motifs that will be true to the 18th Century Gothic motifs, inspired by a specific story from that time period. The same will be done to the other content areas, to portray the different time periods and motifs to the visitors and reinforce the message. The motifs will vary depending on each section and century, but certain motifs will remain constant throughout the entirety of the exhibition, such as the colors, and the rooms/modules/content areas in order to convey a cohesive message and to allow the visitors to know what to anticipate.

Throughout the exhibition, there will be a combination between the new and the old, through the existing architecture, the use of gothic motifs and the modern technology. There will thus be a prevalent dichotomy between the old architecture, gothic motifs, and the contemporary horror fiction and modern technology. This dichotomy speaks true to the overarching topic of the exhibition, in which a strong relationship between the history of Gothic literature exists today. The content will be set up in a chronological manner due to the historical nature of the exhibition, but also in order to enhance this experience.

The colors used in the exhibition will be red, black, and gray and will transition into a lighter tone of gray as the visitor moves into the contemporary horror fiction in accordance to the themes and stories used in each section. Black and gray will serve as the primary colors due to their dramatic nature, and their correspondence to the gothic

elements.

In order to engage the visitors and provide them with a meaningful experience, the design goals of this exhibition are to create elements of surprise, adventure, and play. The notion of surprise and delight will be used as well, so as to continuously remind them of the similar emotions that are experienced in the stories, and to keep them engaged and delighted. Due to the dark nature of the exhibition, it is important to create a sense of play and adventure, in order to instill a sense of lighthearted tone into their experience.

One of the main design tools used in the exhibition will be Audio Visual and multimedia technology in order to provide the most effective learning environments. Aside from serving as a means of enhancing the monsters, and stories, this technology will serve as a way to create a history exhibition that will not be text heavy, but rather have minimal amounts of text to convey the information. This will be based on several studies that specify that when only audio and graphics are used simultaneously, information retention is significantly higher than when only text is used⁴⁴.

Specific content areas will contain most of the information, and transition phases will invite visitors to continue on to the next section and time period. These transitional phases will include information as well in order to connect one content area to the other, but will primarily serve as a means for visitors to experience specific emotions and physiological changes that are specific to certain stories. This will allow visitors to both experience these emotions physically and to learn about them visually as well. It's important to note that this does not seek to provoke fear or extreme emotions, but rather

⁴⁴ Oblinger, Diana. "Boomers & Gen-Xers Millennials." *Understanding the New Students*, July/August 2003, 1-11.

to focus on sensations and subliminal messages. Taking direct inspiration from certain stories and messages taken from the stories, is it possible to manipulate certain areas so as to create a colder room, to imply the presence of a ghost? Can visitors feel the sense of wonder as they see the terrifying nature around them?

Narrative Device

The Gothic Sublime

Although known for its role in the Romantic period, the concept of the sublime played a vital role in Gothic literature as well. The overcoming sensation that nature is far more powerful than human beings essentially got assigned to the Gothic novel as a way of conveying the stories. It was developed in these stories as a way of questioning human's place in the world⁴⁵. The Gothic novel even got assigned a term of its own; Gothic sublimity. The sense of delightful and confusing experiences played a key role in Gothic fiction, and this element will be used throughout the entire exhibition to convey the information in an experiential way. The sublime will serve as the emotional pinnacle points of the exhibition. These emotional pinnacle points will most likely be based off a specific Gothic novel, thus becoming the emotional journey of the exhibition.

This narrative device will contribute to the surprise and delight engagement strategies that will be used in the exhibition, and will also add to the discovery and adventure elements as well. It will ensure that the overarching idea about the gothic novel is conveyed, especially by highlighting elements of beauty of the stories and characters. Although the visitor may not be aware that this element will be the skeleton of

⁴⁵ Punter, David. *The Gothic Condition terror, history and the psyche*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016.

the exhibition, the visitor will nonetheless understand the premise of the gothic novel through the experience.

Gothic Novel Story

As previously mentioned, the Gothic novel will also be used as a narrative device. Going hand in hand with the Gothic Sublime narrative device, the different emotions and emotional peaks used in a gothic novel will be the backbone of the exhibition as well. The visitors will experience the emotions that would be present in a Gothic novel story throughout the entire exhibition. The Gothic novel will be used to shape the visitor's emotional journey through the exhibition. In a sense, the visitor will be a part of their own story in this exhibition, and will learn the premise of the gothic novel through the experience.

Fabric

Masks, veils, and disguises were a common theme in the gothic novel. The imagery of the veil was used in the Gothic novels as visual imagery as well as a literary metaphor. The veil will be used throughout the exhibition to exude the sense of eeriness and ethereal quality that the exhibition seeks to convey, and in the process will also reveal and conceal throughout the exhibition. Radcliffe was one of the first ones to use the veil in the Gothic novel, where the veil both concealed and revealed and served as a way of transmitting certain things, and in this case it will be used to convey certain messages to the visitors.

The fabric will be used in a variety of ways depending on the section and type of information it is seeking to convey. Aside from providing playful elements of discovery and discomfort, it will also create a consistent look to the exhibition. In this case, the

narrative device will be both overt and covert due to the fact that although physically present, the visitor might not associate the black fabric with the black veil. The meaning of the fabric will be revealed, but it is not necessary for visitors to know that the black veil played a vital role in the Gothic novel for them to enjoy this element.

Architectural Structures

Due to large open space of the building, it will be necessary to create specific architectural structures to create an intimate experience. Because the ceilings are so high, there is a complication with the amount of echo that this would produce, so these architectural structures will not just contain information, but also ensure that sound is also contained in specific areas. The shape of the structures will depend on the section, but they will all be connected to one another, from section to section, and will more or less cultivate an . But the structures, as everything else in the exhibition, will not disrupt the architecture, but rather be a balanced addition. It will ultimately dress the space, in this case the New Church, for a contemporary Gothic event.

Narrative Experience

Exterior/Entrance

The large banners and advertisements outside of the building will invite the visitors to take a step into the exhibition. Scattered throughout the Dam Square, a variety of advertisements will be placed in order to guide visitors towards the exhibition and to provide a taste of what is taking place inside of the New Church. At night, a projection of some of the most well-known characters from the stories will be alternated to cover some of the surfaces of the building. In addition, the building will be lit at night in such a way so as to mimic the architecture and will create a visual relationship between the old

architecture and the modern and contemporary elements of the exhibition. Visitors will be intrigued by the playful ghostly figures and advertisements hanging from the building and will be led towards the entrance of the exhibition, where visitors will enter the exhibition through the New Church's main entrance.

Introduction Area

Upon entering the exhibition, visitors will encounter the first section that will introduce them to the overall theme, topic, and feel of the exhibition. As visitors make their way into the space, the entrance area will provide visitors with information about the exhibition and in case of heavy traffic flow or congestion in the area due to long waiting periods. An augmented reality feature will keep visitors engaged and informed in this area, and will provide them with information about the content of the exhibition, and will also allow visitors to learn how to use the augmented reality feature in the exhibition. This is also the first part where visitors will be able to choose a character to accompany and guide them throughout the exhibition.

At first sight, visitors will be encompassed by the dark and ethereal screens that will be placed throughout the space. As the visitors enter the exhibition, they will be struck by the initial surprising lack of light in comparison to the world outside of the New Church. The large introductory panels will guide them towards the next section. Bold and hard to miss lettering will inform them of what is to come, and will set the stage, as these will be used consistently from section to section throughout the entirety of the exhibition.

Portals/Transitional Moments

As visitors are led towards the first content section of the exhibition, they will first stumble upon one of the portals or transitional areas of the exhibition. These areas

will serve as a means to introduce visitors to the content of the upcoming areas and as a way to engage visitors differently, to allow them to pause in between the content area sections. The information that will be presented to the visitor in these areas will be done in a subliminal manner, and a covert manner and thus the visitor might not be completely aware that they are learning about a specific theme or story until after the experience, or after they have entered the content areas of the exhibition. As mentioned before, these areas will be the emotional pinnacle points of the exhibition, and will rely more on conveying an idea through an experience, as opposed to a written or didactic manner.

One of the first portals that leads visitors to the first content section will take elements from the first gothic novel and sprinkle them throughout this section. Referred to as a portal due to its transition to a specific time period, this one will transport visitors to the 18th century, when the first gothic novel was published. The portal will be set up to mimic a labyrinth, although in a very subtle manner, which is an element that plays a role in the first gothic novel. As visitors make their way through this portal, they will be surrounded by beautiful and large works of gothic landscapes that will gradually become specific scenes and landscapes from the “Castle of Otranto”, which was the first gothic novel. When visitors approach the content area, right before they enter, the area will mimic another scene from the novel and the room will become dark and quiet, so as to disorient them and surprise them, just like in the book.

The second portal will introduce the idea of a ghost to the visitors by allowing them to experience the sensation of feeling a ghost in the room, an element that was popularized in the stories in 19th century. By playing and manipulating with the sound, light, and room temperature, the portal will simulate the experience of seeing a ghost, and

of feeling a ghost in the room. Once visitors have experienced this area, they will then read about the element of the ghost in the stories in the upcoming section, and will understand the relevance and connection between the two.

Content areas

The content areas designated to each section will consistently be set up consistently similar from section to section, so as to allow visitors to predict what the stimuli will be like and to ensure that visitors know what to expect in each section. These areas will include the majority of the didactic information and will draw connections between the characters and historical influences that shaped the characters and motifs throughout history. Audio visuals and interactives will invite visitors to learn about these stories, and the content areas will also allow visitors to focus on the information they are learning about.

Lounge/Communal area

The lounge and communal area will be taking place in the center of the space, and will be accessible and at the end of the journey and at the beginning. This area will include interactives that will draw connections between contemporary and early gothic elements. This is a space where visitors can interact with their friends and interact with other visitors as well as relax. It will also have a virtual reality area, where visitors will be able to “enter” a gothic landscape or gothic novel story. A fun, engaging, and thrilling experience will allow visitors to use this area to contemplate and reflect about their experience before, and after the exhibition.

Conclusion

Gothic explores the role of horror fiction in the western culture, and stresses the relationship between Gothic literature and contemporary horror fiction. Gothic literature has begun to become a primary source for cultural studies around the world due to its historical and cultural significance. The stories that so delightfully and frightfully tell society's fears and anxieties are relevant in that they can help us further understand our history and ourselves. Gothic: Horror Fiction Through the Ages will rely primarily on immersive environments and multimedia technology to relay its information and exalt the importance of storytelling. This technology will be used to enhance the experiences and to present the information in an engaging manner that will provoke thought and contemplation about the meaning of horror fiction.

Research

Gothic literature and its cultural significance as a topic required me to rely on multiple sources for the completion of this paper. Due to the vastness of the topic, several books and scholarly articles offered different but equally vital pieces of information that were critical to the construction of the story of the exhibition. For this reason, multiple sources played an important role in researching this topic.

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Appendix

Appendix I: Site

With over 176 different nationalities, Amsterdam is considered to be one of the most diverse cities in the world in terms of nationality ⁴⁶. Amsterdam's current population is 1,108,000 and has been predicted to continue increasing ⁴⁷. The main contributor to the accelerated growth in Amsterdam is due to the foreign and domestic inflow, highlighting the population's exposure to different things ⁴⁸. The city is densely populated, and this wide range of nationalities and large urban population allows for the wide audience reach that the exhibition is trying to reach.

It has a population density of 4,908 people per square kilometer, and as of 2016, and has had a population of 813,562 in the city limits, but has an estimated 1.1 million in the urban areas⁴⁹. The majority of the population residing in Amsterdam are between the ages 25-34, making up 20.2% of the population ⁵⁰. The second largest demographic in Amsterdam are those between ages 35-44, making up 14.9 % of the population, and those ranging from ages 45-54 are an estimated 13.7% of the population, while 10.4 are

⁴⁶ De Nieuwe Kerk. "De Nieuwe Kerk." De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <https://www.nieuwekerk.nl/en/de-nieuwe-kerk/>.

⁴⁷ De Nieuwe Kerk. "De Nieuwe Kerk." De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <https://www.nieuwekerk.nl/en/de-nieuwe-kerk/>.

⁴⁸ De Nieuwe Kerk. "De Nieuwe Kerk." De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam. Accessed November 5th, 2017. <https://www.nieuwekerk.nl/en/de-nieuwe-kerk/>.

⁴⁹ Urbistat. "Maps, Analysis and Statistics about the Resident Population." Age Classes by Gender Municipality of AMSTERDAM, Old-age Index and Average Age of Residents. 2015. Accessed November 17, 2017. <https://ugeo.urbistat.com/AdminStat/en/nl/demografia/eta/amsterdam/23055764/4>

⁵⁰ Urbistat. "Maps, Analysis and Statistics about the Resident Population." <https://ugeo.urbistat.com/AdminStat/en/nl/demografia/eta/amsterdam/23055764/4>

between ages 18-24⁵¹. This indicates that the city has the desired target audience for the exhibition, reaching adults between ages 18-54 and is therefore a fitting location for the exhibition.

Appendix II: Site Spatial Considerations

Spatial Considerations

As previously discussed, the architecture of the building is a challenge due to numerous architectural components. Due to the historic nature of the space, it is highly unlikely that anything could truly be demolished or removed. But fortunately, the New Church does have a lot of flexibility in terms of what can be added to the space. Aside from the legal restrictions that are part of a historical landmark, there are also specific elements that were taken into consideration during the design process of this exhibition. The most critical architectural elements in this building that would most likely affect the design of the exhibition were the windows, open space, columns, and sound.

Windows

The church has a vast amount of beautiful glass stained windows that brighten the space. The windows are an unpredictable source of light that could become problematic to the exhibition, considering that the exhibition aims to have dramatic lighting to go along with the content. These windows will either be covered or have to be manipulated to become a part of the exhibition itself, meaning that either way they will be carefully considered.

⁵¹ Urbistat. "Maps, Analysis and Statistics about the Resident Population."

Open space

The space itself is essentially one large room full of columns and high ceilings. Although this allows room for a variety of designs, it also means that the exhibition will have to carefully create partitions, and architectural structures in order to create a sense of unity and intimacy. These will have to be carefully designed in order to create a balanced relationship between the architecture, content, and the exhibition as a whole.

Columns

As seen in Figure 13, columns are distributed throughout the space which present their own set of challenges. These columns will have to play a large role into the design of the architectural structures in order to ensure that they are contributing to the experience and design as opposed to creating a disruption. These will also need to be taken into consideration to ensure the traffic flow is not interrupted.

Sound

Due to the openness of the space and the high ceilings, the sounds resonate throughout the space. This will need to be closely considered in order to control the amount of sound desired for each section and experience. The architectural structures previously mentioned will also be designed to help tackle this problem.

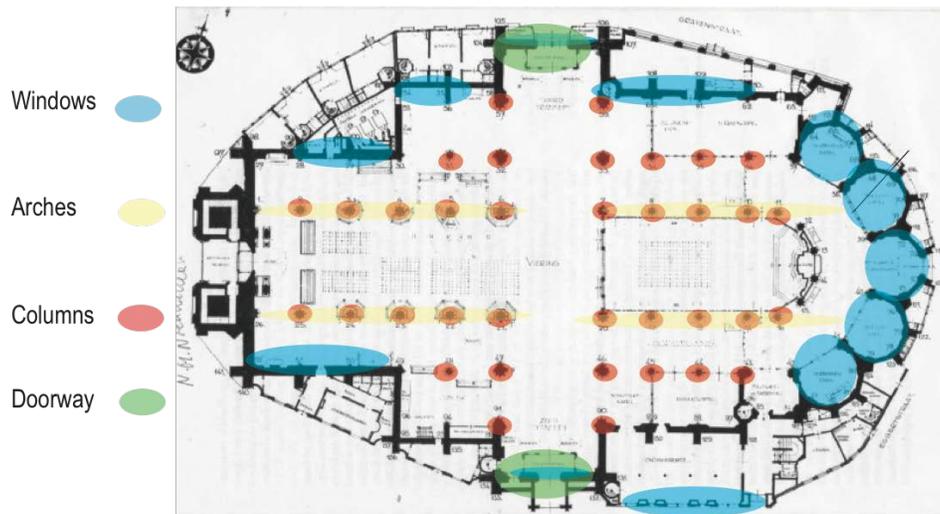


Figure 1, Site Analysis Floor Map

Appendix IV: Preliminary Design Documentation

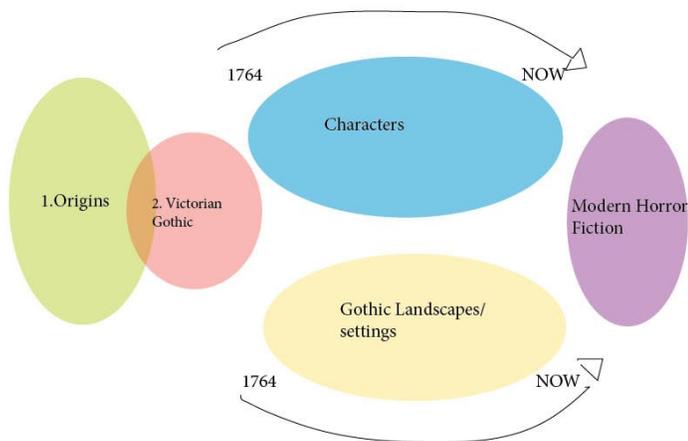


Figure 2, Bubble plan iteration 1

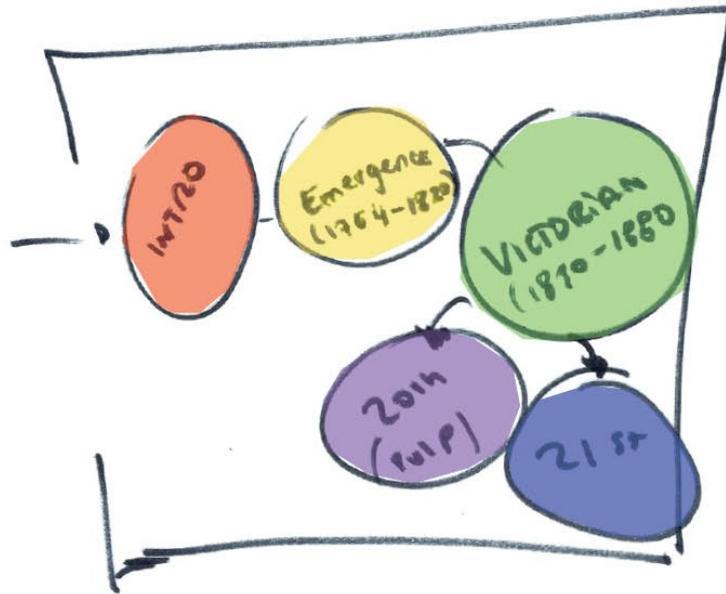


Figure 3. Bubble plan iteration 2

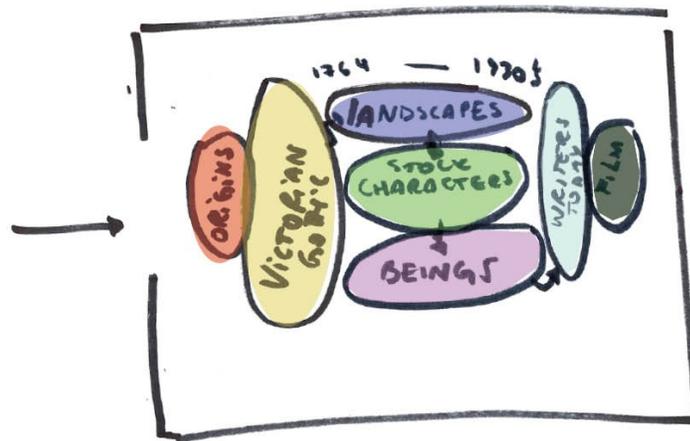


Figure 4, Bubble plan iteration 3

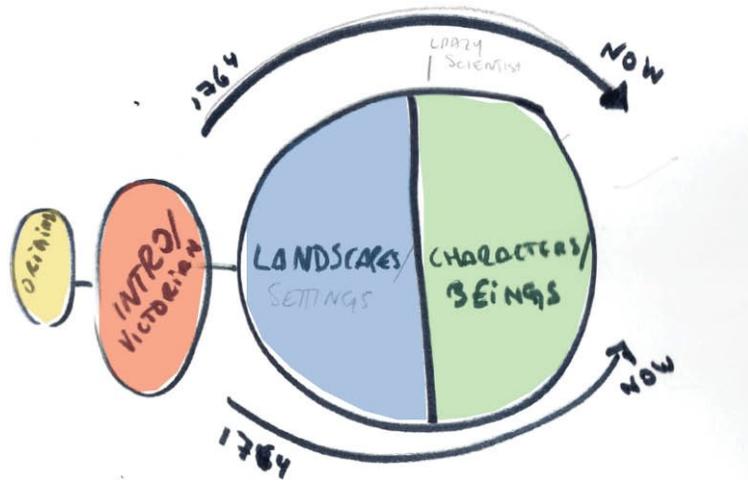


Figure 5, Bubble plan iteration 4

Images

Figure 1. Site Analysis Floor Map. Drawn by Tatiana Neumann

Figure 2. Bubble plan iteration 1. Drawn by Tatiana Neumann

Figure 3. Bubble plan iteration 2. Drawn by Tatiana Neumann

Figure 4. Bubble plan iteration 3. Drawn by Tatiana Neumann

Figure 5. Bubble plan iteration 4. Drawn by Tatiana Neumann