



The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)

Nick Groom

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The Gothic is wildly diverse. It can refer to ecclesiastical architecture, supernatural fiction, cult horror films, and a distinctive style of rock music. It has influenced political theorists and social reformers, as well as Victorian home décor and contemporary fashion. Nick Groom shows how the Gothic has come to encompass so many meanings by telling the story of the Gothic from the ancient tribe who sacked Rome to the alternative subculture of the present day.

This unique Very Short Introduction reveals that the Gothic has predominantly been a way of understanding and responding to the past. Time after time, the Gothic has been invoked in order to reveal what lies behind conventional history. It is a way of disclosing secrets, whether in the constitutional politics of seventeenth-century England or the racial politics of the United States. While contexts change, the Gothic perpetually regards the past with fascination, both yearning and horrified. It reminds us that neither societies nor individuals can escape the consequences of their actions.

The anatomy of the Gothic is richly complex and perversely contradictory, and so the thirteen chapters here range deliberately widely. This is the first time that the entire story of the Gothic has been written as a continuous history: from the historians of late antiquity to the gardens of Georgian England, from the mediaeval cult of the macabre to German Expressionist cinema, from Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy to American consumer society, from folk ballads to vampires, from the past to the present.

ABOUT THE SERIES: The Very Short Introductions series from Oxford University Press contains hundreds of titles in almost every subject area. These pocket-sized books are the perfect way to get ahead in a new subject quickly. Our expert authors combine facts, analysis, perspective, new ideas, and enthusiasm to make interesting and challenging topics highly readable.

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