Gustave Doré: The Magic Illustrations of Charles Perrault’s Contes de Fées

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Gustave Doré: The Magic Illustrations of Charles Perrault’s Contes de Fées

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Renée Crown University Honors Program at Syracuse University

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and Renée Crown University Honors
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Honors Capstone Project in Art History

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Abstract:  

Gustave Doré: artist, creator, dreamer. In 1862, Doré illustrated “Les Contes de Perrault,” an anthology of fairy tales by Charles Perrault including familiar stories like *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *Puss in Boots*. Doré’s intricate engravings accompanying each story include picturesque landscapes, expansive forests, and grand cathedrals. In his time, Doré did not feel appreciated or understood by his contemporaries in France and he therefore reverted to the spaces of his childhood for inspiration. Returning to the multi-layered landscapes of the forest and the Gothic cathedral, he re-discovered the sublime and grotesque, enfolding them in turn into his illustrations for Perrault’s stories.
Executive Summary:

In 2013, I discovered the illustrations of Gustave Doré in the Special Collections Research Center of Bird Library. In 1862, a version of “Les Contes de Perrault,” (Tales by Perrault) was published with illustrations by Doré. This anthology of stories by Charles Perrault, sometimes referred to simply as “Contes de Fées” (Fairy Stories), included familiar stories like Little Red Riding Hood, Sleeping Beauty, and Puss in Boots. His intricate engravings accompanying each story caught my attention and I realized the exciting potential they held. I also have several personal ties to this subject. Children’s books have always been an important part of my life; in high school I created a program called Books Are Food for Thought that provides books to children who receive free or reduced cost meals. Studying in Strasbourg, France last semester also provided me with a personal connection. Doré lived in Strasbourg as a child, and the city’s Gothic architecture and dense forests inspired his drawings and etchings throughout his life. While in Strasbourg, I had the chance to meet with the Curator of the Museum of Modern Art in Strasbourg, Marie-Jeanne Geyer, and visit the site where Doré was born.

After researching extensively in Syracuse University’s Special Collections and main Library, I drew upon my own experiences in Strasbourg, and traveled to The Barbara Elleman Research Library and the library at Mount Holyoke College where I contextualized the work of Doré by looking at other fairy tale illustrations. In June and July, 2014, I traveled to Amherst, Massachusetts for an internship at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. This internship gave me the opportunity to not only continue researching on the topic of Doré, but also to plan and execute an exhibition on the topic for the museum’s reading library space. Entitled Once Upon A Time: An Exploration of Gustave Doré in the Modern Fairy Tale, the exhibition is still
on view as I write this thesis. Once I had completed the internship, I traveled to Ottawa in
August to study a retrospective exhibition on Doré organized by the Musée D’Orsay, for which I
corresponded with the Curator at the National Gallery of Canada, Erika Dolphin. The following
chapters include many of these scholarly and personal sources, and culminate in my own
retrospective on the illustrations of Perrault by Doré.

Chapter One explores the forest as a multi-layered landscape of escape, danger, and
transformation. Forests are often used as the settings for fairy tales due to the immense range of
reactions their thresholds evoke. In Perrault’s fairy tales and Doré’s illustrations, the forest
begins takes on deeper meanings and becomes more than just a geographical site. Especially in
the early nineteenth century, at a time when industrialization was being equated with progress,
shrinking natural environments preoccupied writers and artists who were deeply concerned about
the destruction of nature in the wake of rapid modernization. Industrial development also
prompted a surge in the popularity of classic fairytales that were often remembered fondly as an
essential part of childhood. Not surprisingly, the industrial revolution triggered a nostalgic return
to the forest and the fairy tale – both were also essential in the works of Gustave Doré.

“Gothic Romance,” the title of Chapter Two, is all about the influence of two main
artistic styles: Gothic Architecture, and Romanticism. One of the greatest examples of Gothic
Architecture, a style associated with the Middle Ages, sits in Gustave Doré’s hometown of
Strasbourg—the famous Cathedral of our Lady of Strasbourg built between 1015 and 1439.
Gothic Architecture also draws on simplified natural forms such as flowers, branches, and trees,
which returns us to the forest as a multi-layered landscape. The influence of the Strasbourg
Cathedral and Gothic Architecture can be seen in both Doré’s illustrations and paintings where
organic forms, countless castles, linearity, and intricate detailing prevail.
In Chapter Three, I examine the links between Doré and the magical world of Walt Disney. Many of the classic Disney animated films pay tribute to Charles Perrault for their original story lines, and through this connection we also see many parallels between film animation and Doré’s illustrations. The text concentrates on two Disney films: *Cinderella* (1950) and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). Both films include significant motifs that are explored in other chapters of the paper, such as Gothic architecture and the forest as landscape. Central figures such as fairies, animals, and the fairy godmother are also explored.

Chapter Four focuses on the links between modern day children’s books and children’s literature of the past, emphasizing the significant role Doré’s illustrations have played in the evolution of the genre of children’s literature over the past century. In addition to one of the first important fairy tale illustrators, Doré also is recognized as one of the founding fathers of the comic strip. His work as a caricaturist as a teenager proved extremely influential, both in terms of his own career and the development of the cartoon genre as a whole. Modern illustrators like Uri Shulevitz, Fred Marcellino, Edward Gorey, and Maurice Sendak all focus on themes that can be linked to or compared with the work of Doré. All have created quintessential picture books in which the forest acts as a primary setting, and where animals and people interact quite frequently, and where fanciful and humorous monsters abound.

My Capstone Project fills a significant gap in art historical analyses of children’s book illustration. The lack of scholarship on Doré’s illustrations for Perrault’s stories suggests that Doré’s identity as a children’s book illustrator has been neglected, or at the very least, taken for granted. Though they are often the most recognizable of his works, Doré’s illustrations are often left out of biographies and timelines in order to make room for his more “important” illustrations for scholarly literature such as Dante and Milton’s books. I believe, however, that Doré’s
children’s book illustrations for Perrault’s fairy tales have played a role just as important as his other more “scholarly” images, and as such, the long lasting legacy of his children’s book illustrations, deserves more attention. To illustrate this, the recent retrospective exhibition on Doré at the Musee D’Orsay and the National Gallery of Canada used Doré’s Puss in Boots picture as the main image for all the accompanying publicity and marketing campaigns.

However, the exhibit itself focused very little on the illustrations themselves. When asked why this was, Erika Dolphin, the Curator of the National Gallery of Canada said, “The image of Puss in Boots was used even though we had few illustrations from Perrault in the exhibition, because it is an image that would be familiar to the public in North America.”¹ Familiarity, in this case, edged out the other, more scholarly works that many have deemed more important in the past. However, Doré’s illustrations for Perrault fairy tales are some of the most influential in his oeuvre, and should be treated as such. Children’s book illustration has long been regarded as less than, or not truly art worthy of scholarly attention. But it is in fact the opposite. Children’s book illustration can and should be given its rightful place in the annals of art history, especially since it is one of the first types of art that we encounter as children, playing an influential role during the most impressionable years of growing into adulthood.

¹ Erika Dolphin, e-mail message to author, August, 28, 2014.
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I also would like to thank all of my professors here at Syracuse University for sharing their expertise and knowledge in their respective fields. I would especially like to thank Professor Matilde Mateo of the Art History Department for her counsel in regards to my chapter on the Gothic.

Thank you also to my parents, Mary and Craig Breed. Thank you for always being there to listen to my ideas, for taking me to Ottawa to research, and for being constant sources of inspiration and support.
Introduction:

Gustave Doré was one of the most influential, imaginative, and prolific artists in nineteenth-century Europe. An accomplished sculptor, wood engraver, as well as painter, today, he is most well-known for his engravings. Doré was born in Strasbourg, France, a small village close to the eastern border where France meets Germany in a region called Alsace. It has a long and turbulent history of being traded back and forth between the two countries in different conflicts, so its culture is distinctly unique, with foods, architecture, and an accent that is strictly Alsatian. Growing up in Strasbourg, Doré was a child prodigy. He had his first illustration published in a newspaper at age fifteen, and his rise to fame swiftly followed. As he became a more public figure, he was asked to illustrate some of the most celebrated volumes in history such as the Bible, *Don Quixote*, and Edgar Allen Poe’s *The Raven*.

Doré’s celebrity also spread to other countries; his illustrations for the English Bible led to his fame in England. He had a major exhibition in London in 1866, and his growing popularity led to the creation of the Doré gallery on New Bond Street, a gallery completely dedicated to his artwork. One of his other most notable projects concerning the English was his work with Blanchard Jerrold on *London: A Pilgrimage* (1872). Doré created one hundred and eighty illustrations for this work that detailed the lives of the citizens of London, employing a sense of extreme realism that left his viewers haunted by scenes of poverty and filth, which were extremely controversial for his critics. During his lifetime, he went onto illustrate hundreds of books including John Milton’s *Paradise Lost, The Divine Comedy*, and the book that I will focus on in this study, Charles Perrault’s *Contes de Fées* (Fairy Tales).

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Gustave Doré’s own childhood, in Strasbourg, was one of the most influential periods of his life, as children are often extremely impressionable and constantly effected by their surroundings. As a result, hometown can be glimpsed in the majority of Doré’s works, and especially in his illustrations for Perrault. His interest in Gothic architecture and forest imagery are both particularly indebted to his upbringing in Alsace, as the grandeur of the medieval cathedral of Strasbourg, and the drama and folklore of the Black Forest were both readily present in his young mind. These subjects are also very important within the broader context of the fairy tale genre and children’s book illustrations. Doré’s influence can still be seen in books, films, and in the media.

In my first chapter, I will return to the landscapes of Doré’s childhood embodied by the forest whose verdant cover spread across the nearby mountains. Well into the eighteenth century, landscape painting ranked lower than history paintings, genre paintings, and even portraits. Around 1770, this genre began to gain more acceptance, in part because in countries like Great Britain, the Industrial Revolution had ushered in a heightened awareness of a lost countryside, a land swept up in radical changes in political ideologies and societal structures. Using coal instead of wood as a main energy source, inventing machines that could churn out mass-produced commodities, and harnessing the power of steam, were all part and parcel of a new way of life made possible by the Industrial Revolution. The effects of technological innovations from this time were vast and had a direct impact on a population shift to cities leading to crowding as well as air and noise pollution from the machines.

As people flocked to the urban areas in search of work, so did their prevalent beliefs and ideas, especially concerning the countryside. English painters of the time, like John Laporte, even attempted to depict the harsh realities of the Industrial Revolution, painting smoke filled
skies, and depleted plots of farmland next to palpable signs of a burgeoning modern industry. In France, many artists also turned to landscape painting as its popularity increased. Forest spaces, such as the forest of Fontainebleau just to the south of Paris, attracted artists, and the Barbizon school, a group of artists named for their location near Fontainebleau and interest in the forest, flourished. However, artists did not only turn to Fontainebleau, some returned to the landscapes of their childhood. Influential French artist Gustave Courbet turned to scenes of nature native to his hometown, the French province of Jura.

A few decades later, the Impressionists also turned to nature. The first Impressionist exhibition in 1874, at a time when Gustave Doré was still alive, featured work by artists like Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. The Impressionists popularized painting “en plein air,” or outdoor painting. Through this lens, I explore Doré’s forest as a multi-layered landscape of escape, danger, and transformation. Instead of looking forward during this time of great change and invention, Doré instead chose to look back – at the folklore that came before, which was deeply rooted in the notion that the forest was a primeval space, a refuge from the expanding mechanization of life.

The second chapter will focus primarily on the influence of Gothic architecture, so vividly represented by yet another place with which the artist was intimately familiar—the famous Strasbourg cathedral that can be traced back to the thirteenth century. By the time Doré enfolded Gothic architecture into his work; the medieval style was enjoying an extended revival throughout Europe. For instance, in 1747 in England, Horace Walpole bought and subsequently

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transformed a manor called Strawberry Hill into a “medieval fantasy.”9 He used architects to convert his mansion with Gothic style turrets and pointed arches, and even the interior was remodeled with classic period pieces of furniture. The house became something of a tourist attraction further stimulated by Walpole’s publication of *The Castle of Otranto* (1765), considered the first Gothic novel. The creation of Strawberry Hill and this new literary genre ushered in a period of fascination with the Middle Ages and the Gothic that lasted into the nineteenth century in England. A similar resurgence was also taking place in France.

In 1853, Napoleon III ordered a complete renovation of the city of Paris, led by Baron Georges Haussmann.10 Referred to as the “Haussmannization” of Paris, this transformation included widening streets, creating wealthy apartment buildings, and ultimately destroying many ancient Renaissance and medieval style structures in favor of gilded baroque style architecture.11 However, at the same time, Gothic Revival architects like Viollet-le-Duc were working to restore important Gothic monuments, like the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris.12 Le-Duc’s restoration project and writings on the subject, combined with the publication of Victor Hugo’s *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in 1837, effectively helped renew public interest in the Gothic in France.13 Because Doré spent time both in London and Paris during his career, the Gothic revival style in both architecture and literature made an unavoidable impression on the illustrator.

The Gothic style of architecture originated in France in the 12th century, and drew heavily from the forest and natural landscapes as sources for its distinguishing characteristics which

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included the pointed arch, ribbed vaulting, and an emphasis on height and verticality. Many of the most famous cathedrals in the western world are built in either the Gothic or the Neo-Gothic styles, and the influence of these styles can be seen in many other structures as well in different parts of the former French and British empires in the world. What interests me here, is how Doré engaged with the architecture of Strasbourg Cathedral in his illustrations for Perrault’s tales, while also paying attention to the local folklore that surrounded the cathedral, with which he was clearly familiar as a native of the city.

Doré and Disney is the title of the third chapter in which I examine the connections and relationships between two creative masterminds who left a lasting legacy with their visual contributions. Walt Disney, one of the most famous individuals in American history, is the man behind the famed animated Disney movies such as *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (1938), *Pinocchio* (1940), and *Bambi* (1942). He was renowned as a “20th Century Aesop,” a “modern Merlin,” a “Father Goose,” and “one of the most creative geniuses in entertainment history,” in his 1966 New York Times obituary. Doré is also now recognized as an illustrating genius, though he was not as appreciated as Disney during his own time. It is also recorded that the Disney Studio Library had a number of copies of works with Doré illustrations, and many Disney artists were familiar with his work.

For my chapter, I have chosen to focus on the two films based on the original Perrault stories, *Cinderella* (1950), and *Sleeping Beauty* (1959). Here, I continue to explore the forest and Gothic architecture, two integral motifs that are essential for most fairy tales, including the

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Disney versions. Here, I go a step further and examine how Disney emphasizes the grotesque, an aesthetic that is also integral to Gothic architecture. In particular, the grotesque is embodied by the monstrous gargoyles that line the edges of the Strasbourg Cathedral’s junctions. Not only do these show up in Doré’s illustrations, Disney also used these grotesque characters to counterbalance the composed beauty of the pristine princesses who were often the chief protagonists of the fairy tales. The legacies of both Doré and Disney, whether viewed in a positive or negative light, still live on to this day.

The final chapter is concerned with exploring the lasting legacy of Gustave Doré: his impact on the modern children’s book. Though many may not recognize the name of Doré at first glance, names like Edward Gorey and Maurice Sendak might immediately draw to mind the iconic illustrations of childhood. In addition to being recognized as one of the first important fairy tale illustrators, Doré also is widely regarded as one of the founding fathers of the comic strip. His work as a caricaturist as a teenager proved extremely influential, both in terms of his own career and the development of the cartoon genre as a whole. Modern illustrators like Uri Shulevitz, Fred Marcellino, Edward Gorey, and Maurice Sendak all focus on themes that can be linked to the work of Doré. All have created quintessential picture books: where the forest acts as a primary setting, where animals and people interact quite frequently, and where fanciful and humorous monsters abound.

Even though Doré’s Perrault illustrations were not his most famous works, they would influence children’s book illustrators, film directors, and other art producers long after his death. His childhood in the city of Strasbourg and the stories that were told to him there ultimately made a great impression on him. In turn, his illustrations for Perrault went on to have a great impact on the children and adults who read them. The picturesque landscape, expansive forests,
and grand cathedral all contributed to his imagination and passion for the artworks he created. Despite his prolific output and superb artistry, Doré felt unappreciated and misunderstood in France. Even so, he reverted to the spaces of his childhood for his inspiration, to the dense, multi-layered landscapes of the forest and the Gothic cathedral where he discovered the sublime and grotesque in new and exciting ways that he in turn, rendered accessible to children through his illustrations.

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17 Blanche Roosevelt mentions numerous times how isolated and unappreciated Doré felt, especially in his home country of France: “Remember that when he raged about other artists receiving such large sums for their work, it was never the remuneration he cared about, but the grievance that he was not properly appreciated; a grievance which perpetually haunted his walking and sleeping thoughts,” 172, “Doré should have known how to bear his disappointment calmly. He was so highly gifted that he should have been above wondering or caring whether or not the eyes of the world were fixed upon him. On the contrary, he not only worried himself in secret, but allowed his country to see that its non-appreciation affected him seriously,” 325. Blanche Roosevelt, *Life and Reminiscences of Gustave Doré*, (New York: Cassell & Company, 1885).
Chapter 1: Into the Woods

Venturing into a forest can evoke a sense of freedom, serenity, and self-discovery. It can also produce panic, worry, and paralyzing fear. This tremendous range of reactions is one reason why forests are often used as the settings for fairy tales like the seventeenth-century French author Charles Perrault’s *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* (Little Red Riding Hood, originally published in 1697), *La Belle au bois dormant* (Sleeping Beauty, 1697), and *Le petit Poucet* (Hop-o’-my-thumb, 1697). In Perrault’s fairy tales, all of them illustrated by Gustave Doré, the forest is more than just a place. It is a catalyst, a place of mystery and danger, and even a home away from home. Many nineteenth-century French artists, such as Gustave Doré, Gustave Courbet, and Theodore Rousseau focused on these different dimensions of the forest and turned to local landscapes of the Black Forest, and the forests of Fontainebleau and the Puits-Noir Valley.

In this chapter I explore Doré’s forest as a multi-layered landscape of escape, danger, and transformation. At a time when industrialization was being equated with progress, shrinking natural environments became of greater importance to certain artists, philosophers, and writers. As the nineteenth-century French author Guy de Maupassant observes about the appeal of nature, “everything in nature seemed to him created with an absolute and admirable logic…The dawns were always made to rejoice you on waking, the days to ripen the harvest, the rains to water them, the evenings to prepare for sleeping, and the nights dark for sleep.”

18 Here de Maupassant attempts to reconcile the man-made concept of time and the organic processes of the natural world, reasoning that both can exist in harmony with one another. Another artificial construct, the development of industry (mirrored by technical innovations like the railway system) also prompted a surge in the popularity of classic fairytales. These timeless stories were often

remembered fondly as an essential part of childhood, a “nostalgic refuge”\textsuperscript{19} from the burgeoning hold of mechanization ushered in by the Industrial Revolution. At times of uncertainty and change, we as humans tend to return to places and things that feel familiar, such as the stories we were read as children. So it seems did Gustave Doré.

I begin with \textit{Deer in a Pine Forest}, painted by Doré in 1865, in which the artist represents the forest as a place of escape, a sanctuary from the destruction caused by technology and industry (fig. 1.1). The ghostly outlines of several deer hover in the midst of a darkened wood and the tall stately pine trees are reminiscent of Doré’s native Alsatian forests. The scene is completely untouched by the human hand: there are no footprints, no built structures, and no human figures. The deer in the painting can be seen as personifying fear and danger; they are the hunted and never the hunter. They also pause, attentive. Doré has captured a moment of anticipation: the stillness of the deer reflects a split second of awareness. Similar to the wolf hunting Little Red Riding Hood deep in the forest, the deer are aware that something or someone may be hunting them. From the sixteenth century to the French Revolution, the practice of hunting was associated with nobility, but by the time Doré painted this picture, the forest was newly opened for all classes to explore.\textsuperscript{20} As more people ventured to the forest to hunt for food, profit, and leisure, interactions between humans and animals became more frequent. With this development, moments like the one portrayed by Doré can be read as an indication of another time – before the forest became more accessible and before the onslaught of human intervention.

A strong contrast between light and dark leads the viewer’s eye towards the center of the canvas, where the deer stop in their tracks, alert. They are illuminated by ethereal sunbeams that silhouette the darkened tree trunks. The unearthly, concentrated light evokes sunbeams streaming

\textsuperscript{19} Mary Clark Hillard, \textit{Spellbound: the fairy tale and the Victorians} (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2014), 3.

through a stained glass window in a church. The tall and solid shapes of the trees also suggest the architectural form of the steeples of Gothic Cathedrals. As I explore in chapter two, Gothic Cathedrals were especially important in Doré’s oeuvre due to the iconic landmark of the Gothic Cathedral in his hometown of Strasbourg, France. In addition, by placing these spiritual motifs within the context of nature, Doré demonstrates how the forest, like the interior of a church, can be associated with silence, solitude, and escape.

Doré’s own relationship with the forest can be traced back to the Black Forest where he would often take hikes with his father while growing up in Strasbourg. Paul Lacroix, an acquaintance of Doré, recalled the artist’s love of the outdoors, “I think I have climbed every one of them [mountains], he said, and as to the pine-forests, I know that I lived half my time in them. Oh, how beautiful it all was! The good it has done me is beyond expression. I made no sketches, but just roamed about from morning till night, thoroughly enjoying my idleness.” Recorded shortly after a trip in Switzerland, the recollection also lets us into the world of unfettered exploration in a seemingly limitless landscape.

The serene and undisturbed nature of a forest can be a contrast to the man-made landscape of a city. To many, hiking and taking nature walks is a relaxing time to get away from urban spaces. Gustave Doré was no exception. As his biographer Blanche Roosevelt observed that Doré “loved the mountain of St. Odile, the somber ranges of the Black Forest and the aroma of the stately old pine trees. His father took him along on many long trips of inspection and Gustave learned to know the people and the old stories of the land.” As an adult, the artist continued to take frequent hiking trips into the mountain-scapes of Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland. Not surprisingly, he was particularly drawn to forested and mountainous scenes, often

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portraying them in watercolor and oil paint. He also included forest imagery in his illustrations, rarely using interiors as settings.

Doré’s *Stream in the Mountains at Dusk*, painted in the mid-19th century, is deeply rooted in the surprising encounters that exploration can produce (fig. 1.2). Drawing upon his own frequent trips into the forested hills and mountains of the French countryside, Doré was inspired by the scenic views he encountered. Doré said of one hiking trip, “I promise you M. Lacroix, that every mountain, river, tree, stick, and stone I saw is engraven indelibly on my heart.”23 This is reflected in the details of *Stream in the Mountains*: tiny pebbles, broken branches, and rotting tree trunks litter the foreground. These elements and intimate perspective draw the viewer into the scene, as well as produce a tactile experience. One can almost feel the different textures of the crumbling earth, the coarse boulders, and the rushing water. These precise natural elements suggest that Doré was attempting to share his personal, nostalgic experience with viewers.

Instead of providing the audience with a distant, idealized surface, Doré aims to engage with the observer and their imagination, ultimately including the viewer in the scene.24 Just as the forest provided Doré with a place of refuge, the painting provides spectators an outlet to escape from their everyday lives.

Because Doré’s sets *Stream in the Mountains* at dusk, he draws our attention to the connection between nature and temporality. Temporality can be understood as the state of existing within or having some relationship with time. We as humans have created a system of temporality using clocks and calendars, essentially structuring this natural process for our own benefit. The passing of time is organic, the turning of day to night and night to day will continue repetitively whether or not we say so. This cyclical nature of time is an important concept,

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especially for artists. Paintings, though static, often hold reminders of the passing of life. Natural elements that relate to mortality such as skulls, bones, or dead flowers were used by artists to remind us that everything has an ending, and artists often grappled with the idea of transience in relation to time. Since cycles prove that everything is constantly in flux, a single moment is fleeting. Not surprisingly, artists like Doré often suggested fleeting moments in their works, paying respect to an instant that will never be repeated.

Such a preoccupation with temporality also underscored contemporary reflections on modernity exemplified by the transformation of late nineteenth-century Paris into a thoroughly modern metropolis. Though the forest is often categorized as the inverse of the modern, man-made world, there are certain parallels between the forest and the city. One can wander through a dense thicket of trees or through an enclosed alleyway with buildings rising on either side in much the same manner. This was the parallel made by the eminent writer Charles Baudelaire in 1863 when describing the “flâneur,” an urban gentleman who roams the boulevards of Paris designed by Baron Haussmann. In his musings about “modern life,” Baudelaire draws attention to the street as the place where modernity and leisure intersect, and to the flâneur as the quintessential explorer: “The crowd is his element, as the air is that of birds and water for fishes…To be away from home and yet to feel oneself everywhere at home.”

Much like how Gustave Doré enjoyed his idleness hiking and roaming the forests, the flâneur too enjoyed rambling through the landscape, but his landscape was the modern metropolis of Paris.

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25 These symbolic elements were often used in seventeenth century Dutch still-life painting. They were referred to as “vanitas,” the Latin word meaning “vanity,” and used to refer to the transience of life and insignificance of earthly life and material goods. One of the first examples of vanitas is Vanitas Still Life by Dutch painter Jacques de Gheyn (1565-1629) in 1603. In Vanitas Still Life, De Gheyn depicts a frontward facing skull situated in a niche. Hanneke Grootenboer, The Rhetoric of Perspective: Realism and Illusionism in Seventeenth Century Dutch Still-Life Painting, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 138-139.
27 See quote by Blanche Roosevelt, Page 18.
contrast to other city inhabitants, who were active and had little time to pause and reflect, the flâneur had time to contemplate the bustling crowds of people around him and the implements of modern technology. The flâneur was a unique figure. Aware of the fleeting moment, and constant passing of time, he was the one to recognize that modernity was not ever-lasting, and the world around him was constantly in flux.

Gustave Caillebotte’s *On the Pont de L’Europe* (1876-77, fig 1.3) accentuates the very concepts of time and modernity that Baudelaire had discussed, by highlighting the mobility of the flâneur in Paris. The painting depicts a man in a suit and top hat, paused on a modern bridge. His back is turned to us, and his gaze is directed at the hazy outline of a railway station in the distance where a white puff of steam jetting out into the cloudy sky hints at the presence of the train, an engineering marvel, which had changed the pace of life in the city and the country. The hefty, interlocking steel beams of the bridge mimic the arrangement of train tracks, both in their material and style. The man embodies Baudelaire’s flâneur perfectly, a man of wealth who has the time to meditate on this modern structure. Caillebotte has manipulated time in this image; it is both a representation of a fleeting moment and eternity. Though passersby seem to move out of the frame in a rush, the man has paused for an unknown amount of time. An individual who seeks to understand this concept of modernity, according to Baudelaire through his wanderings he attempts to “distill the eternal from the transitory.”28 Comparing this image with Doré’s *Deer in a Pine Forest*, the flâneur, like the deer, appears surrounded by the signs and symbols of the landscape to which he belong; whereas the deer is surrounded by dense woodland, the Parisian gentleman participates in a different jungle of sorts—the modern metropolis.

Returning to temporality in Doré’s *Stream in the Mountains at Dusk*, the artist draws our attention to a time in the late evening when the sun has completely disappeared from the horizon.

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Dusk demarcates the time of day when a landscape is transformed with elongated shadows, and alludes to the onset of the night. Because night can symbolize death, uncertainty, and danger, the choice of dusk promotes a general mood of unease and mystery. This time of day also suggests the inherent fragility in nature: the truth that everything living must eventually die. However, though darkness comes at the end of each day, the dawn always follows soon after. Just as the days continue in their cyclical pattern, so does nature. As trees die, their remains make way for new generations of flora and fauna. Flowers only blossom for a short amount of time; yet they return year after year. Though Doré’s *Stream in the Mountains at Dusk* may seem ominous at first glance, it concerns only a period of transition. Though darkness and death are a part of life, light always returns. Nature persists and so does the artist’s desire to explore the depths of the forest.

While Doré was looking to the forest for inspiration, another more famous group of artists also focused on the cyclical patterns of nature in a forest. These artists belonged to the “Barbizon School,” named for their geographic location in Barbizon, France. Barbizon was located on the edge of a vast forest called the forest of Fontainebleau, a favorite subject for many of the painters of the school. Théodore Rousseau was one of the most influential painters of the Barbizon school, and over a period of approximately twenty years painted *The Forest in Winter at Sunset* (1845-67) an image that depicts a crowd of scraggly trees against a menacing red-orange sky (fig.1.4). Rousseau was not focused on portraying an idealized landscape here; instead he was intrigued by the temporal aspects of nature such as the fleeting moment and the cyclical aspect of nature. Just as Doré touched on life and death in *Stream in the Mountains*, Rousseau also focuses on these themes by presenting a group of trees in varying stages of growth and decay. He also used swift brushstrokes, a range of textures, and delicate detail to draw the
viewer into the work and create a sensory experience. Again similar to *Stream in the Mountains*, Rousseau’s work reflects his personal time spent in and experiencing the forest. He felt so strongly about the positive effects of the woodland on health and wellbeing that he even was considered an early conservationist who endeavored to save the forest of Fontainebleau from destruction. ²⁹

Rousseau’s heartfelt connection with the landscape of Fontainebleau can be compared to Doré’s association with the Black Forest. Both spent an influential portion of their lives experiencing and exploring these forest settings, and both sought to express a sense of nostalgia with their paintings. For Doré, most of his childhood was spent exploring the Black Forest: “He could detect the trail of the venomous adder; the rounded summits of the Ballon of Gubewiller, the Hobenech, and the Ballon d’Alsace were familiar to him, as well as every mountain path and crevice, every running brook and fertile valley in the district.” ³⁰ Rousseau did not grow up near the forest of Fontainebleau, but came to know the setting as an adult. To his biographer he stated his sentiments on the discovery of the forest, “J’entendais aussi les voix des arbres…les surprises de leurs mouvements, leurs variétés de forms et jusqu’à leur singularité d’attraction vers la lumière m’avaient tout d’un coup un révélé le langage des forets. Tout ce mode de flore vivait en muets dont je devinais les signes dont je découvrais les passions ; je voulais les converser avec eux et pouvoir me dire, par cet autre langage de peinture, que j’avais mis le doigt sur le secret de leur grandeur. (I also heard the voices of the trees…The surprises of their movements, their variety of forms, and their singular attraction toward the light suddenly revealed to me the language of the forest. This entire world of flora lived as mutes whose signs I divined and whose

passions I discovered.)” Here, Rousseau personifies the woodlands around him in order to describe his personal, sensory experience. The trees, flora, and fauna, spoke to him through their shapes and details.

In terms of the schools of thought popular at this time, Doré seems to also have been following in the footsteps of the influential eighteenth-century French philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) who advocated a return to nature to escape the pressures of society. In 1782, Rousseau published *The Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, in which he described nature untouched by human hands as a quiet and meditative place. Divided into ten “walks,” each walk included anecdotes from his personal life such as frequent rambles through the countryside. These walks helped him to think, and to return to nature’s healing properties. “There is something about walking that animates and activates my ideas…The pleasant sights of the countryside, the unfolding scene, the good air, a good appetite, the sense of well-being that returns as I walk.” The forest was often associated with a healthful escape at this time. For all its measures of progress and prosperity, the Industrial Revolution had caused a rise in air and water pollution. Rousseau and his followers recognized the need to breathe fresh air and used the forest as a nourishing setting: both in terms of mind and body. The theme of breathing is repeated in Rousseau’s texts frequently, emphasizing the pure and uncluttered side of the forest. In another of his “walks,” he states, “I cannot set foot in the street without finding myself

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33 Ideas such as these spilled over into the world of painting as well, with artists like Sir Joseph Wright of Derby. He embodies these ideas in portraits of sitters like Sir Brooke Boothby in 1781, a friend of Rousseau who commissioned Wright of Derby to paint him in a way that would demonstrate Rousseau’s philosophies (fig. 1.5). As a result, Sir Boothby is shown reclining on the middle of the forest floor, surrounded by landscape scenery and holding a volume with the name “Rousseau” on the spine. An unusual format for a portrait, the image depicts the aristocratic sitter at harmony with nature and in a state of contemplation, both essential ideas for Rousseau. “Sir Brooke Boothby,” Tate Museum, last modified November 2000, accessed Jan 16, 2015, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/wright-sir-brooke-boothby-n04132
surrounded by distressing things; I quickly hurry off to the countryside; as soon as I see the
greenery, I begin to breathe.”34

Doré’s enthusiasm and talent for a variety of artistic techniques was evident in his
extensive oeuvre. He yearned to be seen primarily as a painter, but the public were most
enamored with his dramatic illustrations.35 The effects of this can be seen in many of his
paintings, dark forests and majestic mountain ranges that often resembled the theatrical literary
settings that appeared in his illustrations. Similarly, artist Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840)
was famous for his ability to imbue landscape paintings with allegorical meaning. Friedrich was
an artist associated with the beginnings of the Romantic Movement in Germany, a movement
that started long before Gustave Doré was even born. However, like Doré, Friedrich often
portrayed forests and landscapes, placed emphasis on the expression of emotions, and often
included only a single figure in his compositions. Both Friedrich and Doré were also able to
convey a story through their use of landscapes. In Doré’s 1876 illustration for the story of Le
Petit Poucet, the main character, a small boy sits in a small clearing, in the midst of an
overwhelming landscape (fig. 1.6). Doré manages to take a single sentence from Perrault and use
it to create a total scene: “Il se leva de bon matin, et alla au bord d'un ruisseau, où il emplit ses
POCHES de petits cailloux blancs, et ensuite revint à la maison (He woke early that morning, and
got to the bank of a river, where he filled his pockets with small white pebbles, and then
returned to his house).”36 The figure is facing the viewer, though his face is hardly visible, the
focus of our attention is instead drawn to the engulfing forest imagery that surrounds him. The
forest is dark and mysterious, and the twisting array of trees and plants evoke the power of

34 Rousseau, Reveries, 156.
D’Orsay, 2014), 7.
36 Charles Perrault, Les contes de Perrault (Paris, J. Hetzel, 1876), 3. (Translation is mine)
nature. Friedrich’s *Chasseur in the Forest* (1813-1814) portrays a similar scene: a single figure surrounded by colossal trees (fig. 1.7). The picture, though at first glance seems to be implying a triumphant defeat, also leaves the viewer with a sense of loneliness and despair. Because this was painted in the year of the defeat of Napoleon, one interpretation is that the figure represents a French soldier, and the immense forest the strength of Germany. Both Doré and Friedrich’s images tell the viewer a complex story, leaving room for interpretation, but focusing attention on feelings of a kind of lonely solitude.

Both Doré and Friedrich’s forest compositions suggest that this is the turning point at which the forest becomes and unfamiliar and even dangerous place. It is a contrast to the bleak man-made world for certain, but to some this can be unsettling, as the landscape is unfamiliar and strange. It is a place where we are often alone, unprotected and vulnerable. In the illustration for *Le Petit Poucet* the sheer density of the forest behind the boy promotes this idea. When lost in a forest, all the trees begin to look the same and the ability to recognize one’s location is completely negated. Though the boy attempts to collect stones to create a trail, the impenetrable cluster of vegetation behind him indicates the impossibility of navigation.

Doré also refers to a different kind of danger in his illustrations of Perrault. Besides the forest as an isolated setting where one can lose one’s bearings, the forest is also a landscape that shelters animals. In short, it can be a terrifying place of peril. The forest as an unknown entity appealed to poets and artists from the Romantic era, for it evoked emotions such as terror, fear, and shock that appealed to their aesthetic viewpoints. Romantic portrayals of landscapes focused on enormous mountains, soaring treetops, and desolate deserts in order to provoke these emotions. Doré painted several landscapes that were directly related to the Romantic Movement,

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focusing on swift applications of paint, dizzying heights, and the personification of non-human elements. For example, Doré’s *Paysage Romantique* (Romantic Landscape, 1883) currently in the collection of the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Strasbourg shows a grove of gnarled and decaying trees are painted with thick, emotive brushstrokes (fig. 1.8). This landscape shares elements with Theodore Rousseau’s *The Forest in Winter at Sunset,* which also depicts a grouping of gnarled trees. In Doré’s composition, the finger-like roots seem to reach out and attempt to grab the viewer, all curved lines and swirling atmosphere, creating a feeling of uncertainty and foreboding. Here Doré has also limited his color palette, a harsh mixture of browns and grays that breaks away from even the barest hint of a realistic view, thus inviting the viewer to contemplate a landscape of the imagination, an aesthetic approach that frequently permeates the artist’s illustrations.

Doré’s artistic techniques in his illustration for *Le Petit Poucet* and his *Paysage Romantique* model the different kinds of danger that come into play when discussing the forest. In the “*Le Petit Poucet*” illustration, Doré’s medium and style make the forest overwhelming but clearly defined. The trees in the foreground, middle-ground, and background are all clearly visible and highly detailed. There is also a clear central element, the little boy, for the viewer’s eye to settle on. There is a sense of quiet and of somewhat lonely isolation. Contrastingly, in Doré’s *Paysage Romantique,* the blurriness of the paint and the collapsing of space make the forest seem in an overall state of distress. There is no defined foreground and background, and the jumble of trees makes it hard for the viewer’s eye to land on any one centralized location. In this sense, the forest itself embodies a frenzied and confused sense of danger; its capacity to isolate is treacherous for those who venture in to its depths.
When illustrating Perrault, Doré uses the forest as a landscape capable of producing
danger in his 1876 illustration for *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* (Little Red Riding Hood) the wolf
and little Red Riding Hood are set in the middle of a deep forest, as the story details (fig. 1.9).
However, Doré uses the forest as a tool to reveal the differences between the two characters. A
strong tree trunk is depicted next to the wolf, demonstrating his power, strength, and ability to
instill fear. His back is towards us, causing the viewer to be brought into the picture plane, as we
place ourselves in his position. Depicted next to little Red Riding Hood, is a tangle of bramble
and brush. The curving chaos of plant life indicates the frenzied sense of danger and fear that one
feels when approached by a predatory animal. Doré also collapses the perspective in the
engraving, and zooms in on the interaction between the two characters, heightening the sense of
imminent danger in the scene. As compared to the illustration for *Le Petit Poucet*, in which we
observe the scene from a somewhat distant vantage point, this intimate angle communicates the
menace of the bloodthirsty wolf.

One may experience the danger and fear associated with the forest when venturing inside,
but the forest can also be a place of transformation and discovery. The forest’s isolating depths
often open up spaces for quiet personal reflection and contemplation, which can result in a
change or action. Taking this idea a step further, when portrayed in fairy tales, the forest is
frequently a magical place to journey through. The characters must travel through a haunted,
enchanted, or treacherous forest to accomplish a goal. The forest may be the home of an
aggressive inhabitant or filled with threatening plant life, but the challenge always transforms the
individual in a positive way. Perrault’s *La Belle Au Bois Dormant* (Sleeping Beauty) is one
example that immediately comes to mind. Seen from this perspective, the forest is an agent of
transformation and thus shored up in fairy tales as a magical landscape.
The story of *La Belle Au Bois Dormant* (Sleeping Beauty), in which the forest is treated as both a transformative space and a place for transformation is especially important. In one of Doré’s 1876 illustrations for Sleeping Beauty we see the prince traveling through an archway made of trees (fig. 1.10). He is in the middle of his journey to the castle to rescue the sleeping princess, and the shadowed trees are used to frame a glowing glimpse of the castle. This contrast between light and dark shows the forest as a perilous and forbidding landscape, while the trail before the prince lights up and shows him the safe way through. The tall trees dwarf the small figure of the prince, just like many of Doré’s landscape paintings in which the immensity of nature dwarfs any figures, and his back is facing us, again allowing the viewer to enter the painting through the main character. In Perrault’s version of the infamous tale, the forest actually parts as the prince makes his way towards the castle. Again Doré chooses a rapid moment of movement, commenting on the transience of time. The forest conceals the princess and her castle, but also opens up for the prince to pass through. Passing through this enchanted space represents his personal journey and quest to find his true love.

At a time when other artists were rendering technology as an essential part of the modern landscape, Doré chose to portray landscapes barely touched by the implements of industry. Like artists of the Romantic Movement and the Barbizon school, his forest landscapes were raw and organic, as well as focused on nostalgia for the past. In *Mont Sainte-Odile avec mur païen* (Mount Saint Odile with pagan wall, 1883) Doré portrays a brightly lit forested mountain in the hills of Alsace (fig. 1.11). A large castle-like structure sits atop the mount, and in the foreground rows of large stones make up the ruins of a wall. The structure is most likely based on the Mont Saint-Odile Abbey, an ancient structure that has been rebuilt many times in many different centuries. Doré highlights the contours of the elongated trees in orange and red hues. This is
perhaps a testament to the detailed and line-based nature of his engraved illustrations, an attempt to bring the world of drawing into the realm of painting.

The pagan wall included in this composition demarcates an ancient structure, and therefore the primeval forest landscape. Instead of looking to the present and future, as many artists of the time did by depicting the industrial landscape, Doré takes the opposite approach in portraying the very ancient past. Compared to Doré’s *Mont Sainte-Odile*, Vincent Van Gogh’s *Landscape with a Carriage and a Train*, painted only a few years later in 1890 presents a much more modern panorama (fig. 1.12). Human interventions in nature are evident in the plowed fields, paved roads, and the passing train. Represented in Van Gogh’s signature post-Impressionist style, the bold brushstrokes of the billowing cloud of steam parallel the bulbous outlines of only a few trees in the background. Doré represents the forest as a landscape of the primeval, a place for introspection and reflection where one can connect with the fundamental forces of nature. In contrast, Van Gogh uses the forest as a meditation on human progress and contemporary life.

Both the forest landscape as portrayed in painting and the classic fairytale have developed and changed over time. Just as Doré concentrated on the primeval landscape in *Mont Sainte-Odile avec mur païen*, the fairytale is also based on ancient traditions: folklore. Folklore can be defined as a traditional type of storytelling that existed in France before the seventeenth century. These stories were based on the lives of people, included real lessons, and were passed on through word of mouth. It wasn’t until the seventeenth century when Perrault and other writers began to write these types of stories down on paper did the “fairytale” develop. “The adaption of folk material, an act of symbolic appropriation, was a recodification of the [folklore] material to make it suitable for the discursive requirements of French court society…The
morality and ethics of a male-dominated Christian civil order had to become part and parcel of the literary fairy tale." Morals, ethics, homogeneity, and Christian values had to be added to these stories in order for them to transform into a literary tradition. Doré, however, attempts to re-introduce the ideas of folklore in his forest portrayals. He incorporates pagan identities in *Sainte-Odile avec mur païen*, rarely portrays elements of the modern landscape, and ultimately reverts to the forest as a place of nostalgic refuge for himself and his readers.

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Chapter 2: Gothic Romance

The forest was of the utmost importance in Doré’s oeuvre. As I explore in my previous chapter, Doré depicts the forest as a landscape of refuge from modern society, a place of nostalgia that transcends time and space while also anchoring human aspirations and anxiety. Gothic architecture, which originated in Europe in the Middle Ages, also had its roots in the forest. In the eighteenth century, it was commonly held that the characteristic Gothic pointed arch was in fact derived from the interlocking form of two bending branches. In addition, many architects and philosophers have compared the grand cathedral vaults to forest elements. Erwin von Steinbech (1244-1318), the architect behind the great Strasbourg Cathedral, described the structure of a Gothic cathedral as parallel to that of a great tree, “Diversify the enormous walls; you should so build towards heaven that they rise like a sublimely towering, wide-spreading tree of God which, with its thousand branches, millions of twigs and leaves more numerous than the sands of the sea, proclaims to the surrounding country the glory of its master, The Lord.” The influence of the soaring, intricate cathedrals of the Gothic style, their associations with the natural world, and especially the Strasbourg Cathedral in Doré’s hometown, can be seen in many of Doré’s illustrations.

In this chapter I will explore the Gothic in several of its manifestations as they relate to the world of Doré. The Gothic castle or cathedral often functioned in the same way as the forest in Doré’s illustrations, a multi-layered motif with ties to the folklore and religion of the ancient past. The Gothic was also a style of literature that became popular in the early 19th century, with

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I thank Professor Matilde Mateo in the department of art and music histories, Syracuse University, for her help with writing this chapter.
a focus on ghosts and horror the link between this genre and the illustrations of Doré becomes readily apparent. Just as the Gothic novel increased in popularity there was a surge of interest in the theories of the sublime. An important aesthetic category, discussed artists and philosophers from the eighteenth century onwards, the sublime denoted the relative powerlessness in the face of limitlessness, and is presented both in the words of the Gothic novelists and the images by Doré. Finally, the graphic quality of Gothic architecture influenced Doré in its most basic forms, its inclusion of detail and its emphasis on linearity.

In Strasbourg, where Doré spent a portion of his childhood, the cathedral is one of the most well-known tourist attractions (fig. 2.1). With one imposing spire standing over four hundred feet tall, flying buttresses, and sculpted pointed arches, it is one of the most renowned examples of Gothic architecture in Europe, finished in the year 1439. The house where Doré grew up on Rue des Ecrivains was located just a few streets away from the cathedral, so Doré was undoubtedly familiar with the Cathedral’s graceful curves and with the grand plaza beneath the shadow of its imposing structure. According to Doré’s biographer Blanche Roosevelt, the artist was enamored with the cathedral. The legend behind its creation was one of his favorite stories, which went something like this: the architect Erwin von Steinbech was given the job of designing the cathedral, but was worried about taking on such a large project. He shared his concerns with his young daughter, who wept and prayed that God would find a way to help him, falling asleep amidst her tears. While she was sleeping an angel appeared, giving her the divine inspiration to draw up plans for the cathedral. Her father then built the cathedral from these supernatural plans and it was so beautiful that all the citizens of Strasbourg believed that the hand of God was involved.41

This local legend was probably one of the first stories that Doré heard as a child, and according to Roosevelt, it left a deep impression, prompting him to visit the cathedral frequently, in search of traces of Steinbech and his daughter.\(^42\) Doré also depicted a scene from the story of the cathedral in one of his early drawings, as evidence to his fascination (fig. 2.2). This print made from one of his early drawings entitled *L’inspiré*, (Inspiration) depicts Steinbach high up on one of the cathedral’s walls. He has a chisel in his hands, perhaps carving one of the intricate sculptural details that run along the façade. He looks down at a collection of angels that have gathered around him, who seem to be inspecting his work and conversing with each other, their large, delicate wings shoring them up in mid-air. The architecture is strongly reminiscent of that of the Strasbourg cathedral (fig. 2.3) again indicating that Doré was intimately familiar with this local landmark and with the folklore and legends attached to it.

In the print of *L’inspiré* and in the detailing of the Strasbourg Cathedral, one pattern appears repeatedly. The quatrefoil is a flower-like design made up of four arched cusps, sometimes referred to as *Quatre-feuille*, a French phrase which literally translates to “four leaves.”\(^43\) often used in the ornamentation of Gothic Cathedrals, especially in the tracery of stained glass windows. Just as the pointed Gothic arch could refer to the branches of two trees, each branch bending towards the other, this decorative motif is a simplified version of a natural element, in this case the flower. German writer Johann Wolfgang van Goethe (1749-1832) praised the beauty of the Strasbourg Cathedral for these parallels with the natural, “Just as in the eternal works of nature, everything is perfectly formed down to the meanest thread, and all contributing purposefully to the whole.”\(^44\) In the bottom right hand corner of *L’inspiré*, there are

two prominent quatrefoil patterns that exactly match the quatrefoil stained glass windows on the side of the great cathedral. This shape is repeated both in Doré’s drawing, and in the tracery of the cathedral. In addition, the spire on the left hand side of Doré’s drawing is almost an exact replica of the spiny, delicate towers of the Strasbourg Cathedral. Though his drawing is not an exact replica of the famed cathedral, it is clear that he used it as a source of inspiration.

The relationship between Gothic architecture and nature is complex in its supposed origins. According to Paul Crossley in his article on “natural architecture,” the origin of the natural Gothic was actually a response to the threat of Italian Renaissance architecture. German architects of the 15th and 16th centuries wanted to maintain the respectability of their craft, and so attempted to return to their roots in order to compete with their Italian counterparts. “By rendering ribs as branches, German builders may have deliberately invoked Vitruvius’s idea that architecture began with the construction of wooden huts, and Tacitus’s reports that Germans of his day worshipped gods in grove forests.” By using their past to validate their use of the Gothic, German architects linked their religious past to the landscape of the forest. In this way the Gothic cathedral can also be seen as a nostalgic refuge, a place where the ancient past and the natural come together in one space. Some architects took this concept to its furthest extent, using tracery and ribs that fully resembled branches with sprouting leaves and buds (fig. 2.4). Though the architects used natural elements and their historical justifications to compete with the influx of classical Renaissance architecture, the cathedral space consequentially became a space of folklore and ancient legend. By basing Gothic architectural theories on the words of ancient writers, German architects essentially brought the forest into the cathedral, a move that was not


46 Vitruvius and Tacitus were both authors active in the Roman Empire. Robert Bork, “How the ‘Story Deficit’ doomed Gothic Architecture,” in Architecture, Liturgy, and Identity, Edited by Zoe Opacic and Achim Timmerman (Brepols), 323.
lost on Gustave Doré. Doré embraces the motifs of the forest and the Gothic, plays with their connections, and even introduces the pagan identity into some of his paintings and illustrations. For example, *Sainte-Odile avec mur païen* (fig. 1.10), in which Doré presents both the forest and Gothic architecture as primeval places of quiet reflection.

The soaring nature of the Gothic Cathedral was also tied to another natural landscape: the mountain. As mountain ranges slope and curve at different levels, their pointed tops protruding beyond the horizon line, so do the pointed towers and turrets of a Gothic cathedral. Mountains were also symbols of power and faith, as their monumental reach thought of as closer to the heavens. This possibly originated from religious texts. One scholar claims that the description of the holy city of New Jerusalem from John’s *Revelation* was the model for most architecture in the Middle Ages, and the Gothic Cathedral specifically was modelled on the mountain and city center. In addition to the religious connotations, the size and vast upward expansion of the Gothic cathedrals physically mirrored the greatness of the mountain landscape. As far as the interior, the experience of entering the Gothic cathedral could be compared to entering a mountain’s cave. The high cavernous ceilings that echo with each footstep and the dim, candle-lit interiors resemble the dark and resonating stone walls of a naturally formed cavity in the earth. This again relates the Cathedral to nature, in this case the mountain landscape in its form, but also in terms of experience. As previously discussed, artists sought to use art to provide their viewers with a sensory experience through technique and subject matter. This idea can also be applied to architecture, and particularly Gothic architecture. With its strong connection to the natural through curved arches, quatrefoil patterns, and mountainous structures, the sensory

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experience of walking into a Gothic cathedral can be equated with walking through a passage in
the forest.

It is important to note, that though many comparisons have been made between the
natural world and the Gothic style, the Gothic can also be associated with the urban environment.
The tall, overwhelming towers and turrets that are often related to natural elements like trees or
mountains can also be seen as parallels to the monumental mansions and shops that lined the
streets of Paris during the lifetime of Doré. Around 1853, when the “Haussmanization” of Paris
was underway, along with the reconstruction of Paris came grand magasins, grand department
stores that were essentially cathedrals to consumerism. As T. J. Clark has observed, instead of
small shops run by families, these structures housed luxurious stores with mass produced
products and were hated by many.48 These new urban centers stood in sharp contrast to historic
structures like the Gothic cathedral of Notre Dame, which the architect Eugène Viollet-le-Duc
had restored even while the medieval fabric of Paris was being destroyed to make way for
Haussmann’s designs.49 With the old (Notre Dame) and the new (the grand magasin) defining an
emerging “modern” Paris, the Gothic became emblematic of national pride while drawing
attention to the new cathedrals of consumption, the grand magasins that now defined the
cityscape.

I would now like to turn to how Doré enfolded the Gothic into the overall aesthetic
framework of his illustrations, as well as in the details of his compositions. For example, his
illustration for the story of Peau d’âne (Donkey Skin) depicts a princess fleeing from a castle in
the middle of the night (fig. 2.5). Silhouetted behind the figure, with the moon as the sole light
source in a cloudy night sky, the castle looms atop a hill. Even though we can only discern its

University Press, 1984), 55.
49 Chu, Nineteenth-Century Art, 270.
basic shapes, its outlines are unmistakably Gothic or Gothic-inspired. The building has four
groups of pointed, spiny towers, an overwhelming and soaring façade, and is dramatized by
small slits of light streaming out of a few windows. Elevated and monumental, it creates an
overwhelming atmosphere of peril. Vines and greenery appear to emanate from its pulsating
form; curving tendrils of brush seem to follow the maiden’s feet in hot pursuit. The swirling
clouds in the night sky are reminiscent of this enlivened underbrush. The central form is the
castle, the point from which everything else radiates. The Gothic and the natural yet again are
combined as one, connected, motif, that bring about a lively sensory experience reflecting the
turmoil of the tale.

Key to Doré’s images is the sublime, an aesthetic rooted in emotions such as fear, awe,
and horror triggered in the face of the vast unknowable. First explored in Edmund Burke’s treaty
*Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and The Beautiful* (1757), the
sublime was linked to visual pleasure created by something that provokes emotion in the face of
eternity or infinity, two things that we as humans cannot grasp and therefore find intimidating.50
Doré often evoked the sublime in his paintings and illustrations, in characters and details that
terrify, or in structures that remind us of our smallness in the face of the void. In *Peau d’âne* for
instance, the castle does not just remind us of a mountain, but accentuates the relative
powerlessness of humankind when faced with adversity. The princess fearfully looks over her
shoulder, as if to register the idea that we, like her, can never escape what we are running away
from, for it will always find us. Portrayed only in silhouetted form, the castle is a huge black
mass, and its indefinite nature is exactly what makes it so terrifying. A mysterious complex, it is,
however, the seat of power, and represents the princess’s father, the king. He holds ultimate

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50 Edmund Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and The Beautiful* (London: J.
Dodsley, 1757), 105.
control over his daughter, especially as he asks for her hand in marriage after the death of the queen. As the princess flees, her facial impression implies her worries of being caught and impending doom. This fear, the fear of death, is especially important when it comes to the sublime. According to Burke, “And indeed the ideas of pain, and above all of death, are so very affecting, that whilst we remain in the presence of whatever is supposed to have the power of inflicting either, it is impossible to be perfectly free from terror.”\(^5\) As Doré incorporates both the sublime and the sensory experience, we as the viewer undoubtedly share the princess’s sense of terror when looking at this illustration.

The sublime is also a prominent theme in the Gothic novel, a trend in literature that flourished between the years of 1764 and 1820.\(^5\) Authors like Horace Walpole (The Castle of Otranto, 1765) and Mary Shelley (Frankenstein, 1818), were the pioneers of this genre that focused on motifs such as the castle, the supernatural, and sublime provocations of emotion such as fear and horror. “Terror dependent on suspense or dread is the *modus operandi* of the novels of Walpole and Radcliffe. *The Castle of Otranto* holds the reader’s attention through dread of a series of terrible possibilities.”\(^5\) Through this lens, the sublime in *The Castle of Otranto* functions in the same way as it does in Doré’s *Peau d’âne*, but holds the reader in suspense and encourages an emotional response with words rather than with visual effects. The Gothic novel thrived well into the nineteenth century, and Gustave Doré was more than likely affected by its longstanding tradition of castles with secret passageways and dusty dungeons.

Gothic architecture is known for its almost overwhelming emphasis on detail. For example, the sculpture surrounding the entryway to the Strasbourg Cathedral (see fig. 2.6) includes a vast number of carved figures, with an intricate tympanum depicting different scenes

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\(^5\) Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 111.


of Christ’s crucifixion. Almost every inch of space is covered with sculpture, in the form of religious figures or design details. All parts of the whole must be analyzed in order to read the story of the cathedral, each small structural detail playing a role in the grandeur and history of the doorway. According to Dora Nussey, details and symbols were an essential part of the Gothic vocabulary and even a “detail of apparent insignificance may hide symbolic meaning.”\(^54\) In the Middle Ages, many people especially of the lower classes were illiterate. Therefore, art, the language of pictures, was an important way information was spread. Symbols were an extremely important part of medieval art-making because it is through such visual signage that people understood stories, especially religious stories. One example of this is how saints were portrayed with certain attributes, an object that represented who they were or what happened in their life. Others were recognized based on their physical characteristics. For example, Nussey explains that Saint Peter must always be represented with curly hair and a short beard.\(^55\) Such iconographic details helped onlookers understand what or who was being depicted.

Details and symbols are also extremely important in the work of Doré. For example, his now iconic illustration of Puss in Boots accentuates features that the viewer might not recognize at first glance (fig. 2.7). Similar to the intricate ornamentation of the cathedral door, every detail in this image plays a role in the understanding of the scene as a whole. Puss, as the main character, dons several pieces of clothing such as his boots and hat that are integral to his image and literary character. An interesting detail that Doré has decided to include is a cape, the neck of which is made up of the heads of birds and mice. This startling and completely unique element reveals a darker side to Puss in Boots that many artists have not portrayed, and also indicates Puss’s cunning and intelligence as a cat.


One detail that is often discussed in reference to Gothic architecture is its defined linearity of design. Lines in all forms are extremely important in the Gothic style, and can be seen in the distinct ribbed vaults of Gothic cathedral interiors, the delicate tracery of glass windows, and the overall verticality of the structure. The interior of the Strasbourg Cathedral perfectly illustrates this concept (fig.2.8). This photograph shows the central nave, the clearly ribbed vaulted ceiling, and the large stone pillars that line each side. The entire immense structure is focused on the unique interplay between the perpendicular and curving lines. The gilded edges of the vaulting heighten the drama of the high ceilings, and the narrow nave forces the viewer’s eye towards the central altar. The linearity of Gothic architecture also provided architects with a “certain sense of architectural rhythm, a certain way of dividing and accentuating constructed forms in space.”

In comparison, Doré’s engravings are entirely composed of line. Though this was in part due to his choice of medium, his mastery of drawing and familiarity with the technique of engraving is evident in his crisp graphic contours, intricate textures, and subtle changes in shade. For example, in his *Puss in Boots* illustration, a majority of the elements are outlined. Like the ribbed vaults of the Strasbourg Cathedral, these outlines intensify the drama of the illustration, divide certain sections, and the darker outlines draw the viewer’s eye. However, even though Doré uses defined outlines, the image does not seem flat. His unique combination of lines brings out the three dimensional nature of the image and Puss becomes a living, breathing feline. Just as Gothic architecture depends on the interplay of lines to find its “architectural rhythm,” Doré’s illustrations depend on linearity for their vibrancy and energy.

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A single monument or place of our childhood can have an enormous effect on the rest of our lives, much like the story and illustrations of our favorite children’s book. In the story of Doré, this monument was the Strasbourg Cathedral.

There was not a gargoyle or pinnacle that was not known to him, not a painted window that he had not looked at a hundred times. Every statue of saint or martyr was an old friend to him. His family and comrades remarked this excessive love for the cathedral, and supposed it to be merely a boy’s fondness for something which he was in the habit of seeing daily. But, later on, more importance was attached to the predilection in question, and Doré’s family had cause many a time to think of it.57

This influence of this grand structure can be seen in his illustrations in numerous ways. It was more than just a place that Doré loved as a child; it was an obsession that can be seen even in the smallest details of his many engravings.

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57 Roosevelt, Life and Reminiscences, 16.
Chapter Three: Doré and Disney

This chapter will explore several motifs that appear in both the work of Gustave Doré and in the world of Disney. Because many of the Disney animated films are based on the classic stories by Charles Perrault, there are definite connections between the characters, settings, and styles used in the movies and in Doré’s illustrations. I will focus on two films that take us back to Charles Perrault’s fairy tales and Doré’s illustrations: first, the classic Disney retelling of Cinderella (1950), and second, Disney’s version of Sleeping Beauty (1959). I have chosen to focus on these two examples because they are they only two Disney films that are based on the original stories of Charles Perrault. Because Doré illustrated Perrault’s stories, there is an indirect connection between Doré’s illustrations and the animations of Disney. Further establishing the relationship between the two parties, it is documented that the Disney Studio Library had a number of copies of works with Doré illustrations, and many Disney artists were familiar with his work. Doré has also been cited as a visual resource for other Disney films such as Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs (1938), Fantasia (1940), and even The Rescuers Down Under (1990).

In this chapter, I explore several themes that connect the work of Gustave Doré and Walt Disney. Though these two prominent figures lived a century apart, their vast influence and reach on the cultures of many different countries is comparable. In relation to both Doré and Disney’s bodies of work, I will focus on the grotesque, the castle as a source of masculine power, and the prevalence of fairies in the magical landscape. Through the mediums of film animation and

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wood engraving, both men tapped into the world of the fantastical: the domain of grotesque and unseemly creatures, of startling fortresses that sit high on hill tops, and the flittering wings of fairies as they dust the countryside with magic.

Disney’s *Cinderella* was released on February 15th, 1950, grossing $4 million dollars in its initial release.60 Charles Perrault first published the story of *Cendrillon* three centuries earlier in 1697. The story details a young girl forced to live among the cinders because of her evil stepmother and stepsisters, who then turns into a princess for a night with the help of her fairy godmother. As one of Disney’s first major motion pictures based on a fairy tale, the film was very successful. Although it was not visually extravagant, the movie elicited a strong emotional response from viewers.61 Several of the scenes were quite upsetting, especially for younger audiences, including the scene in which Cinderella’s dress is destroyed by her stepsisters and when her glass slipper is dropped and smashed on the ground. Doré also seeks to provoke an emotional response from viewers of his illustrations, similarly incorporating upsetting and sometimes even disturbing scenes. This connection can be further amplified through Disney’s “gang of wanderers, outsiders, and post-European misfits,”62 that made up his animation team, including artists Wolfgang Reitherman and Milt Kahl. Disney encouraged his group of animators to get inspiration from everywhere around them. A few members of the group were of European descent, Reitherman was born in Munich, Germany, and others were simply interested in great European illustrators – including Doré and Honoré Daumier.63 Many comparisons can be made, as both Doré and Disney focused on interactions between humans and animals, archetypal characters, and the forest as a threshold.

61 Maltin, *The Disney Films*, 96.
63 Lane, “Wonderful World,” 71.
In Disney’s *Cinderella*, there are several important characters that are in fact, animals. In contrast to Perrault’s original story, where animals are present but not personified, Cinderella’s animal associates in the household include Jaq and Gus – two mice, various bluebirds, Bruno the dog, and Lucifer the cat. The opening scene of the movie introduces us to all of these individuals, and we notice that while some of them speak, others do not. However, Cinderella speaks to all of them as if they were humans, validating them as characters. Throughout the movie, the antics of the animals provide comedic relief from the intensity of the central story line, though they do play key roles in several acts. At the end of the movie when Cinderella is locked in her room by her stepmother, Jaq and Gus steal the key so she may escape. Cinderella then has the opportunity to try on the glass slipper and reunite with her Prince Charming. The animals are largely the cause of this happy ending, and so prove to play essential roles in the story.

In Doré’s illustrations, animals also play key roles – with a cat drawing our attention to Cinderella trying on her glass slipper (fig.3.1), an image that also bring to mind Doré’s illustrations for *Puss in Boots* (Puss is often shown in a position of power and dominance over his master.) The cat stands directly in the foreground, in front of Cinderella, with its back to the viewer and tail held straight in the air. An important detail of the engraving, the cat and its gaze directs the viewer to the leitmotif of the scene: Cinderella’s dainty foot as it glides effortlessly into the slipper. In addition, we as the viewer identify with the cat, as its back is turned to us and it is slightly away from the main action of the group. Doré deploys the animal to encourage the viewer to engage with the illustration, and even become part of the image itself. Furthermore the cat provides a direct link between Doré and Disney. Just as this unknown cat plays a large part in Doré’s illustration, Lucifer the Cat plays a large part in the Disney adaptation.

64 In Doré’s illustrations for *Little Red Riding Hood*, the wolf is always shown in relation to Little Red, and their interactions are the main focus of the viewer’s attention. However, even in stories that do not hinge on animal characters, Doré often included animals.
Lucifer is the cat belonging to Cinderella’s stepmother; he is a fat, black, spoiled feline who wreaks havoc on the house trying to catch Cinderella’s allies, the mice (fig. 3.2). Lucifer is only loyal to Cinderella’s stepmother, Lady Tremaine, and plays the role of her minion, companion, and an accompaniment to her villainy. Lucifer, a name that refers to the devil, indicates his evil nature in the film, a scheming, greedy character that only acts to sabotage and trick. Instead of facilitating the scene like Doré’s cat, he works to hinder a “happily ever after” ending. In one of the final scenes of the film, as the mice are attempting to bring the key to Cinderella who is locked in a tower, he continuously attempts to catch Jaq and Gus. He gets in the way of Cinderella escaping the tower to find her prince, though eventually he is thwarted by Bruno the dog. In contrast, Doré’s cat is not a malevolent or devious creature, and is shown in a position of happiness. The cat moves forward, towards the figures, and holds her tail straight up in the air as a sign of her contentment and friendliness towards the other individuals. Even though the cat’s face and expression are not in view, his body suggests an overall pleasant and approachable manner.

Doré, well-known for his early work in caricature and cartoon, produced many distinctive characters for his Perrault illustrations. Particularly in Cinderella, he included a cast of unseemly characters with bulbous faces, peering eyes, and extravagant costumes. In the glass slipper scene, a brightly lit Cinderella is completely surrounded by figures – each one meticulously detailed, even if they are completely hidden by shadows (fig. 3.1). The first figure I would like to focus on is the man standing in the background on the far right, who stands upright with a somewhat bored expression on his face; he wears oversized round glasses, an exaggerated pointed collar, and a cloak of some kind. His head is rather unusual in its shape and size, and his large mustache curls at the ends in an embellished manner. There are certain similarities between
this figure and the Grand Duke in Disney’s *Cinderella* (fig. 3.3). The Duke also boasts the same pear-shaped head, exaggerated mustache, and in this case one round monocle as his distinguishing features, and he wears oversized epaulets instead of the massive pointed collar, much to the same effect. Even though the Grand Duke and Doré’s gentleman are minor characters, usually pushed to the edge of the picture plane and the movie screen, they both are present in this very important scene. Their peculiar appearances act as a balance to the pale and composed beauty of Cinderella.

There is something else that connects Doré’s characters with Disney’s Grand Duke: both can be read through the lens of the grotesque. The grotesque can be defined as the opposite of classical aesthetic beauty; it is all that is fantastic, monstrous and bizarre.65 Frances Connelly also defines the grotesque as combinations that unite “unlike things in order to challenge established realities or construct new ones.”66 By combining rather unseemly facial features and attire, Doré’s characters create their own reality. As the opposite of what we think of as conventional standards of beauty in human features, they construct a different world, the world of narrative. However, the beautiful figure of Cinderella is just as important in Doré’s image. She is familiar in her characteristics, all pale skin and delicate features. She sets the standard of what is attractive in the picture, and the grotesque figures could not exist in their form without her inclusion. As a parallel example, Connelly brings up the example of so-called “primitive” African art or Indian art.

For example, representations of a Nkisi from Congo or a Ganesha from India were neither intended nor defined as grotesques *until* they crossed into the European cultural sphere. As they were drawn into the peripheries of European art and aesthetics in the nineteenth century, these images were repeatedly described

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as monstrous and grotesque because of their perceived deformation of European rules of representation.⁶⁷

Following this pattern, Cinderella acts as parallel to the rules of European representation, while the outlandish characters surrounding her would be equivalent to the “Nkisi from Congo or a Ganesha from India.” These artifacts only were considered grotesques because of their reading through the standards of European representation, just as Doré’s characters are misshapen only in relation to Cinderella. Moreover, Disney’s Grand Duke acts in a similar manner, a bumbling gentleman who acts as a grotesque in relation to the blonde beauty of Cinderella.

The fairy godmother is another character that plays an essential role in Perrault’s Cinderella story. She arrives when all hope is lost and acts as a major catalyst of positive change by providing Cinderella with a way to get to the ball. Both Doré and Disney portray the fairy godmother as an elderly, plump woman. Doré’s fairy godmother is depicted with a bonnet and round glasses, a ruffled collar and apron as attire (fig. 3.4). Disney romanticizes the fairy godmother image quite a bit, for though Disney’s fairy godmother has white hair, she does not have wrinkles, glasses, or other signs of age, and she wears a periwinkle robe adorned with a maroon bow (fig. 3.5). Though they are different, both godmothers evoke a friendly, approachable grandmother archetype, as the antithesis to the evil stepmother.

As I have discussed in my first chapter, the forest was integral to Doré’s oeuvre. Nature and the forest also play a viable role in the Cinderella movie. The scene begins: Cinderella has just had her dress and dreams of going to the ball destroyed by her stepsisters. Distraught, she hurries outside, past the gates, and into what is presumably the house’s courtyard (fig. 3.6). Though we know she has not gone far, the setting is completely transformed, and almost resembles the clearing of a forest. The only visible manmade element is a stone pool and

⁶⁷ Connelly, Modern Art and The Grotesque, 5.
sculpture, while the rest of the scene is made up of looming shadowed trees. To enhance the sorrowful mood, a weeping willow shades the background, and branches and leaves scatter the ground as if just knocked off by a powerful storm. The cloudy night sky is reduced by enclosing billowing brush, enhancing the ominous tone. The overall temperament of the scene, lighting technique, and attention to nature relates back to Doré’s many forest portrayals both in paintings and prints.

One of the most important moments in the Cinderella story is when Cinderella flees the royal ball at midnight, leaving her slipper behind for the prince to find. Doré does not illustrate this exact scene, but a different scene in the French classic story *Donkey Skin*, has a surprisingly similar composition (fig. 2.5). The princess is dwarfed by a large staircase and the looming silhouette of the castle in the background. In the Disney version, Cinderella escapes via the grand staircase, a huge stairway covered in red fabric. She is dwarfed, but this time by the sheer magnitude of the castle’s architectural features (fig. 3.7). Another visual parallel, both compositions also include a column at the end of the staircase with a large decorative urn. In the Disney film still the urn is in the foreground, almost blocking our view of Cinderella and again making her seem small and the castle seem large. In Doré’s illustration the urn is directly behind the princess, but indeed repeats this same notion, the gendered idea that both women are powerless in the face of their situation – the castle and architectural elements symbolizing the power of the crown; specifically masculine power.

The castle acts as a multifaceted space in the fairy tale. It sometimes hides and protects, like in the story of *Sleeping Beauty*, but it can also be a menacing and dangerous place, like in the French story of *Donkey Skin*. The castle also represents power in many forms. As the place where royalty resides, historically castles have been fortified places of safety but also displays of
wealth and power. The bigger and more elaborate the castle, the more intimidating it would be to threatening invaders. The tall turrets of the castle can also be related to masculine power specifically, due to their phallic form. Throughout history, building higher and higher has been the ultimate goal, the ultimate assertion of pride and power.\textsuperscript{68} In \textit{Cinderella}, the castle is a representation of the masculine power in the film, both the king and the prince, and also as acts as a symbol for Cinderella’s only aspiration. It is shown in the beginning of the film during Cinderella’s opening number, “A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes.” The castle foreshadows that Cinderella’s only hope of fulfilling her dreams is to marry a man of royal birth. She even refers to the castle as a “he” when she says “even he orders me around,”\textsuperscript{69} in reference to the booming clock at the castle waking her up in the morning.

Nine years later after \textit{Cinderella}, Disney released the film \textit{Sleeping Beauty} (1959). Again the film gave credit to Perrault as the original creator of the story, though this time it was based on an adaptation by Erdman Penner. The film grossed $5.3 million dollar in its initial release, but was the most expensive film that Disney had made up unto this point.\textsuperscript{70} Like \textit{Cinderella}, the film was notoriously emotive, its characters truly lifelike in their appearances and sentiments. According to Walt Disney there were many similarities between \textit{Sleeping Beauty} and \textit{Cinderella}, “It was tough, because it had many of the elements we had already used in Snow White and Cinderella. You’ve got to give the creators new things to work with so they’ll be able to keep their enthusiasm up.”\textsuperscript{71}

The story lines are parallel in that both center on a young girl, in this case she is already a princess. She is enchanted to prick her finger on a spindle until her true love’s first kiss. The

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Cinderella}, directed by Clyde Geronimi, (1950; Hollywood, CA: Walt Disney Animations,) VHS.
\textsuperscript{70} Maltin, \textit{The Disney Films}, 155.
\textsuperscript{71} Walt Disney quoted in Maltin, \textit{The Disney Films}, 155.
story has its roots in Italian fairy tales with Italian poet Giambattisa Basile’s *Sole, Luna y Talia* (1634), but Perrault changes a few things. In Basile’s version, Sleeping Beauty was put in a coma, but Perrault changes it to an enchanted sleep created by fairies. Perrault is also the first to put the whole castle to sleep, not just the character of Sleeping Beauty.\(^{72}\) Both of these changes are reflected in Doré’s illustrations and the Disney adaptation of Perrault’s story. Both Doré and Disney also focus on the motifs of illumination, fairies, and the Gothic. I will now turn to how Doré represented Sleeping Beauty’s enchanted sleep induced within an enchanted castle.

Doré is well known for his dramatic lighting techniques that have in retrospect been hailed as cinematic.\(^{73}\) He would take the sun’s rays or the flickering light from a candle, and transform it into something much more powerful, like a spotlight on a stage. In Doré’s illustration, the prince has happened upon his sleeping princess (fig.3.8). Light from an unknown source enters from the right side of the picture frame and illuminates the slumbering beauty; the diagonal rays of light direct the viewer’s eye to the center of the image and the figures. The beams of light, probably coming from a window nearby, are paradoxically both natural and artificial in substance. Though they come from the natural source of the sun, Doré manipulates them to be his tool, his spotlight for emphasizing Sleeping Beauty’s enchanted sleep – indeed their ambiguity, enhances the magical atmosphere of the scene at hand. The prince faces away from us, and is almost completely in shadow, becoming a silhouette, while the princess seems to sparkle and shimmer in an orb of iridescent light. Correspondingly, Disney uses a similar technique when visualizing the sleeping princess (fig. 3.9). In this scene, Maleficent, the villainous fairy, is cursing the princess, and a dream-like sequence predicts her fate. We see only the silhouette of the princess asleep in bed, while an unknown, somewhat magical light source

\(^{72}\) Hillard, *Spellbound*, 80.  
\(^{73}\) Kaenel, “A Short Biography,” 310.
appears from the top right corner in a diagonal. These ethereal slanting rays of light recall Doré’s illustration both in their shape, dimension, and purpose.

The tale of *Sleeping Beauty* introduces the figure of the fairy, an essential part of European fairy tales and folklore. Magical creatures, fairies range in size and temperament. In the early nineteenth century, fairy paintings were also a popular genre, especially in Great Britain. Artists like Joseph Noel Paton pioneered this type of painting, with a special emphasis on Shakespearean drama. It is likely that Doré was familiar with Paton’s work because of his close connections to Britain. In 1867, the Doré Gallery opened in London at 35 New Bond Street, where the artist’s works were exhibited until 1892. During this time period, Doré split his time between London and Paris. This time period was seminal in London as it was part of the Victorian Era, which started when Queen Victoria ascended the throne in 1837. The Victorian Era was a period of great change, as the Industrial Revolution changed the social and economic climate drastically. The gap widened between the rich and poor, illustrated by William Blanchard Jerrold’s *London: A Pilgrimage*, with illustrations by Doré. The growing class divisions were emphasized in Doré’s engravings: the extreme wealth in well-to-do neighborhoods as well as the tremendous poverty in the slums.

As the Industrial Revolution re-arranged social divisions, another class emerged: the middle class. A class that ushered in cultural changes in Victorian England, the middle class was responsible for a dramatic increase in the popularity of literature, including popular novels, fiction, and even fairy tales. In Mary Clark Hillard’s study on the impact of the fairy tale on Victorian culture, Hillard explains the newfound popularity of this literary genre: “Nations and groups passing through period of rapid change collect folk narratives with a greater urgency,

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74 Chu, *Nineteenth-Century European Art*, 327.
75 Kaenel, “A Short Biography,” 310.
believing that it will disappear forever in the face of newer knowledge.”76 The fairy tale gained acceptance as the Industrial Revolution brought about great changes in familiar structures such as class divisions, means of production, and means of transportation. This return to the fairy tale, combined with the popularity of fairy paintings undoubtedly affected Doré in his time.

In 1881, Doré painted *Fairy Land*, a fantastical canvas that includes magical beings (fig. 3.10). The painting is related to both the genres of fairy-painting and the fairy tale, as he seems to have meshed the realm of illustration and painting into one canvas. Against the orange-yellow sky of a rising sun, we see the faint outline of a Gothic castle, and the silhouette of a horse and rider. The rider has stopped on the bank of a river, and looks towards the viewer and the fairies interspersed with the branches of the tree in the foreground. As one looks more closely, more and more fairies and magical beings appear. In the bottom left-hand corner small creatures ride on frogs, while others play musical instruments in the tree branches. The figures become ghostly as they retreat into the foreground, prompting the viewer to question if they are even there at all. Is magic real? Does the rider of the horse see what we see? The importance of the fairy-painting trend can be seen in Doré’s oeuvre. Fairies are also integral to Walt Disney’s films, especially in the movie *Sleeping Beauty*.

The three main fairies in *Sleeping Beauty*, which remain nameless in the Perrault version of the tale, are named Flora, Fauna, and Merryweather in the Disney adaptation. Interestingly, all of these names relate to the natural world and the forest. Flora refers to the plants of a particular region; Fauna draws our attention to the animal inhabitants of a particular region; Merryweather invokes a healthy climate. The three fairies are present throughout the entire movie, even at some of the most important scenes like when the prince wakes the princess from her sleep. They play an essential role in the action, and again provide comedic relief. Flora, Fauna, and

76 Hillard, *Spellbound*, 3.
Merryweather’s magic allows them to change sizes: from the size of the other characters in the film, to tiny enough to fit in a jewelry box. We also see this playful approach to scale in Doré’s *Fairy Land*, with figure-sized fairies juxtaposed with miniature beings.

Doré’s interest in scale in *Fairy Land* demonstrates the power of his imagination and his reflections on the fantastical. By portraying beings in an array of different sizes, Doré encourages his viewer to look closely at the canvas. He also brings in an element of surprise, once the viewer becomes intimate with the painting; there are small details that one might not notice from far away. In this way, Doré engages the viewer and urges us to join him in the realm of fantasy. His application technique inspires a similar reaction; the softness of his brush strokes present a hazy effect that covers the majority of the canvas. This slightly blurred and obscured view yet again encourage the viewer to engage with the painting on a more intimate level, and enter the land of the fairies, a land that Doré has painstakingly created for us.

The last element I would like to discuss here is Doré’s approach to Gothic architecture, for Gothic buildings are also very popular in Disney’s adaptations of *Cinderella* and *Sleeping Beauty*. As I have analyzed in my second chapter, Gothic architecture was extremely important in Doré’s life. Doré grew up within walking distance of the Strasbourg Cathedral and was no doubt familiar with the Gothic wonders of other European cities including London, where he spent a great deal of time. Not surprisingly, Gothic buildings were often romanticized in his illustrations as powerful settings. Similarly, Disney also drew from the romantic associations with Gothic castles as dark, brooding spaces with monumental stone walls and hidden passages. In *Cinderella*, the prince’s castle is a huge, towering structure, with turrets and pointed towers galore. The castle is almost always seen from a distance to emphasize its massive size, and at night it becomes a glowing, blue accumulation of spires, with only a few slits for windows (fig.
3.11). It recalls the threatening towers of Doré’s castle in Donkey Skin (fig. 2.5). Both have a looming, almost magical presence that seems almost larger than life. In *Sleeping Beauty*, the castle is seen not only from the outside, but also the interior (fig. 3.12). When Maleficent, the evil fairy character, enters the castle, the internal structure of the building is emphasized in order to stage and accentuate her sweeping entrance. A rapid flash of the ceiling shows it be extremely related to the Gothic cathedral structure, a vaulted ceiling with pointed arches and detailed lattice work. Just as the outward appearance of the castle can represent the inherent supremacy of the masculine identity, the interior also provides a backdrop for the chivalrous tale of *Sleeping Beauty*, in which the prince is ultimately saved by a man.

The many critiques of Walt Disney’s empire argue that many of his films replace the intellectual qualities behind the original stories, and instead focus on the emotional response of the viewer and the ultimate “happy ending.”"77 Ironically, this is also the quality that has made Disney’s films so popular, especially for parents who want to bestow this optimistic outlook on life to their children. Though Perrault’s original stories do not always end on a positive note, other aspects of his tales are kept intact in the Disney versions. With the addition of Doré’s illustrations, these connections only develop further. Meant to entertain, engage, and sometimes frighten, the visual competencies of Doré and Disney are parallel in their fundamental goals.

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Chapter Four: The Modern Picture Book

Today, children’s books are thought of as an essential part of childhood. Flashes of colorful images and memorized sequences of words make up some of the first memories we have as toddlers. Whether it’s the lovable beasts of Maurice Sendak’s *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963), the rhythmic verses of Sandra Boyton’s *Moo Baa La La La* (1982), or the peculiar personalities in Edward Gorey’s *The Gashlycrumb Tinies* (1963), everyone has a particular book that impacted them as a child. However, the tradition of children’s literature is a rather recent development. French author Charles Perrault, who penned the fairy tales later illustrated by Doré, as well as Gustave Doré himself, played a large role in the development of this now significant genre. In some instances, there are direct, documented connections between Gustave Doré’s illustrations and those of modern day children’s book illustrations. In other cases, there are only possible connections based on my personal observations. The goal of the chapter as a whole is to explore certain motifs and techniques that appear repeatedly in both the work of Doré as well as some of the most significant children’s books of the modern day, and the overlaps between the two categories. As such, I approach this chapter as a comparative study, to situate Doré within a broader framework of illustrated children’s literature.

Before the time of Perrault, literature for children was focused primarily on the development of children into adults. Written texts focused on important societal constructs such as manners, rules, and morals. Folklore and fairytales were mostly oral traditions, passed down from generation to generation, both for the amusement of adults and children. In seventeenth-century France, the French court transformed legends and folklore into desirable paradigms of sociability. It became fashionable to hold salons at which the ladies and gentlemen of the court

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would exchange these stories, again orally. Charles Perrault is recognized as one of the first to take this growing trend and develop a literary tradition, writing down these “contes de fées,” which when literally translated to English means “fairy stories.”

Perrault’s famous *Histoires ou contes du temps passé*, was published in 1697 when he was in his late sixties. His stories were based on previous folk motifs, and were intended for enjoyment as well as to illustrate the correct behaviors of a member of society. In doing so, Perrault combined an oral folklore tradition meant for entertainment with the preceding children’s literature concerned with rules and morals, stating plainly, “They [the readers of the tales] have noticed that these trifles [the tales] were not mere trifles, that they contained a useful moral, and that the playful narrative surrounding them had been chosen only to allow the stories to penetrate the mind more pleasantly and in such a manner to instruct and amuse at the same time.”

Though these stories were meant to act as social guides, they were not originally intended for child readers when they were created by Perrault. Instead, he was more concerned with “demonstrating how French folklore could be adapted to the tastes of high French culture and used as a new genre of art within the French civilizing process.”

However, after a century after they were originally published, these stories became more than just a tool of the French courts, and slowly gained popularity among a wider audience. The fairy tale gained acceptance during the nineteenth century: the brothers Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm published their compilation of folk tales between 1812 and 1820, and readership began to increase to include both children and adults. Similarly, Doré’s illustrations were probably

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82 Chu, *Nineteenth-Century European Art*, 311.
intended for all ages to enjoy, and his detailed and emotive works suggest that he intended to amuse, terrify, and interact with his audiences.

According to H. Nichols B. Clark, a leading scholar on the history of children’s book illustration, Gustave Doré’s illustrations for Perrault also had a major impact on the art and literature of the modern day.

Gustave Doré’s impact on American illustration in the 20th century warrants serious study. A cursory investigation reveals several major artists admired this major 19th-century figure. Edward Hopper, in his early career as an illustrator, acknowledged Doré’s importance, and they shared an interest in isolation whether framed in light (Hopper) or the penumbra (Doré). In more recent times, Maurice Sendak (that master thief) turned to Doré's 'Puss in Boots' for one of his own Rosie's poses. 'Puss' also informed certain episodes in Fred Marcellino's Caldecott Honor interpretation. Finally, Uri Shulevitz, one of the acknowledged masters of the genre, points to his debt to Doré in his illustrations for "Lilith's Cave," (1988) while citing him frequently in his gold-standard textbook on the subject, "Writing with Pictures" (1985). The spectrum is broad and varied-clearly Doré emerges as a significant presence in the world of illustration.83

Artists like Tomi Ungerer, Fred Marcellino, Edward Gorey, and Maurice Sendak all focus on themes that can be linked to the work of Doré. Fairytale motifs that both Doré and twentieth-century illustrators frequently present the forest as a primary and emotive setting where animals and people interact, where Gothic architecture looms ahead, and where fanciful and humorous monsters abound.

As I have explored in chapter one, Gustave Doré focused on the multi-faceted landscape of the forest in many of his paintings and illustrations. He had the innate ability to make a forest seem like a dark and foreboding place just by manipulating the lines of the trees. In his illustration for Le Petit Poucet, for instance, the branches and roots of the trees resemble hands, curving outward towards the procession of boys as they make their way through the arcade trees (fig. 4.1). The farthest point in the background turns into blackness, a gaping black hole of

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83 H. Nichols B. Clark, Founding Director of the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, e-mail message to author, March 12, 2015.
nothingness, the unknown. Lorenzo Mattotti, an Italian illustrator and graphic artist used a similar approach for his 2014 retelling of *Hansel and Gretel*. Mattotti’s swift and curving lines of varying thicknesses create an unfamiliar and mysterious atmosphere, parallel to that created by Doré (fig. 4.2). In these black and white images, Mattotti concentrates on the pulsating energy of the forest, the trees and shadows overlapping and completely overwhelming the tiny shadow-like figures. The animated and monochromatic composition almost presents the viewer with a visual puzzle: an eye-spy game in order to spot the human elements. As Booklist observes, “Mattotti masterfully and subtly uses negative space so each image isn’t immediately noticeable, like the most menacing game of hide-and-seek, and the abrupt oscillation between the clean, white pages of words and the silent, chilling dusky pictures is striking.”

Mattotti’s illustrations also bring into play the vivid and striking qualities of a graphic novel. His sweeping brush strokes using just black ink and small vignette details can be read as related to the graphic novel style. This style can also be seen in the work of Gustave Doré, often considered one of the founders of the modern-day comic book. At the age of 16, Doré began his career doing professional caricatures and illustrations while simultaneously finishing his studies. His first employer was Charles Philipon, a French illustrator, journalist, and caricaturist. Their 1848 contract stated that he would guarantee Doré with at least one cartoon each week for his satirical *Journal Pour Rire* (Newspaper for Laughs). Doré did not find the work fulfilling, stating “The school of caricature was not much to my taste, and although during four or five years I produced drawings innumerable, it was simply because the only publisher who accepted my work had but one exclusive specialty of publication. The specialty was caricature; the

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The Journal Pour Rire was Philipon’s second satirical journal. It was aimed at a less-educated and less politically motivated class, typically including a variety of humorous comics and stories.88

Doré, though not content with his current career path as a caricaturist, learned many stylistic techniques from his “innumerable drawings.” These included reducing shading, line, and contour, as well as using visual “shortcuts.”89 After completing illustrations at the Journal Pour Rire, Doré went on to publish full-length albums in the cartoon style that told a complete story, such as Dés-agréments d’un voyage d’agrément (Disagreements of a Pleasure Trip, 1851). He continued to use caricature in his illustrations for Perrault, placing strong emphasis on contours, using lines and shading so effectively that a single stroke tells a story, and zooming in and out to focus on different scenes and characters. Mattotti also draws from the graphic novel, using striking contours and strokes for each of his Hansel and Gretel illustrations.

Tomi Ungerer (1931- ) is a children’s book artist that shares much in common with Gustave Doré, including a hometown. Ungerer was also born in Strasbourg, France, and is well-known for his children’s book illustration, as well as his caricatures and political cartoons. Ungerer now has a museum dedicated to his artwork located in Strasbourg, Musée de Tomi Ungerer et Centre Internationale de l’illustration (Tomi Ungerer Museum and International Center of Illustration). According to Thérèse Willer, the curator at this museum, Ungerer is in some ways the successor of Doré, “Avec l’influence anglo-saxonne en plus: il en a la fantaisie, la productivité, mais aussi le ‘Witz’”90 (With more of an Anglo-Saxon influence, he has fantasy, productivity, but also the “Witz”). According to Willer, both Doré and Ungerer were masters of

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87 Roosevelt, Life and Reminiscences, 63.
88 Kunzle, “Caricature and Comic Strip,” 42.
89 Kunzle, “Caricature and Comic Strip,” 51.
the imaginary and emerging innovators in their field. Their stylistic similarities can be seen in their respective illustrations for *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Doré’s illustrations for the story of *Le Petit Chaperon Rouge* (Little Red Riding Hood) have become iconic in the realm of fairytale illustration. One of the most recognized images from this particular story is that of the little girl alone with the wolf in the woods (fig. 1.8). They stand in close proximity to one another, almost at the same height. The wolf’s body folds menacingly around the girl, his shadow falling on to the front of her apron. Doré’s wolf is made up of a range of tones, but he is ultimately a contrast to the girl’s pale white skin. Together, the curves of their bodies make up a yin and yang: dark and light comes together to show the dualistic quality of the natural world. The wolf presents the viewer with the evil, dark side of life, while the girl represents all that is innocent and good. Though the wolf is not facing the viewer, the two characters seem to be making intense eye contact. Doré once again offers the viewer the thrill of anticipation by focusing on a fleeting moment in time.

Doré’s iconic image of *Little Red Riding Hood* shares several similarities with Tomi Ungerer’s *Little Red Riding Hood* illustration. In his 1974 anthology of children’s stories, Ungerer presents his version of the fairy tale (fig. 4.3). Here we see that Ungerer has taken Doré’s tree branches and roots to the next level and has actually personified one of the trees in the background, with clearly defined facial features formed out of tree hollows and branches. The wolf character is anthropomorphized further and now wears an extravagant purple outfit and is double the size of the human figure. He continues to face the viewer, but still focuses all of his attention on the little girl. The addition of the animated tree and again the dark black background conveys an uneasy atmosphere, and introduces a supernatural element. The empty, black holes that make up the face of the tree are reminiscent of ghostly manifestations. In Ungerer’s
illustration the paranormal, animal, and human realms have been combined in one visually
dramatic composition.

Another of Perrault’s classic stories that focuses the interactions between humans and
animals is Le Chat Botté (Puss in Boots). The story begins, “Un meunier ne laisse pour tous
biens, à trois enfants qu’il avait, que son moulin, son âne, et son chat (There was a miller whose
only inheritance to his three sons was his mill, his donkey, and his cat.)”\(^91\) In typical Doré
fashion, the illustrations for this story are succinct, wonderfully detailed, and filled with emotion.
One of the most iconic images is the illustration of Puss shouting for help as his master “drowns”
(fig. 2.7). Puss is portrayed with tall fringed boots, a wide belt, a flowing cape, and even a
feathered hat. With his arms lifted and his mouth open, one can almost hear the cries for
assistance, while his master looks on, confused, in the background. All of the attention is placed
on Puss, who is placed in the foreground and therefore looks to be much bigger in size than his
master. His pose is both alert and powerful, he controls the scene completely both in his posture
and manner of dress.

Illustrator Fred Marcellino (1939-2001) portrays the same scene in which Puss calls for
help in his 1991 version Puss in Boots, a Caldecott Honor book (fig 4.4). Puss holds his arms
outstretched, his mouth open mid-yell, very similar to Doré’s image. Slightly altering the
composition, however, we now see just the master’s toes in the foreground. Marcellino uses this
perspective so that the viewer is drawn into the picture frame; the master’s toes become our toes.
Again, Puss is the master of the scene, the largest element that gains our focus. Both Doré and
Marcellino also use the forest as a backdrop to enhance the appearance of Puss. In Marcellino’s
illustration, Puss stands atop the slanting branch of a tree. The diagonal lines of Puss’s
outstretched arms and tail mimic the sloping tree branches behind him. In Doré’s image, Puss

\(^{91\text{ Perrault, Les Contes de Perrault, 3. (Translation is mine)}}\)
stands in a similar position, but this time on an inclined river bank, a tree’s warped branches fan out behind him in a peacock-esque display of dominance. The overall effect behind this scene is one of power and deception. Puss is the master of trickery, as he convinces the King passing by that his master is a nobleman. Both Doré and Marcellino realize that the forest is the ideal place for tricks and deceit, the natural cover it provides is perfect for hiding things. Consequently, they use the forest as the backdrop for this event in the story, both to visually enhance the figure of Puss and to create an aura that reeks of the drama of deception.

Just as the forest often plays a role in fairy tales due to its multi-layered meanings, the Gothic castle also appears repeatedly, as explored in chapter two. Doré’s illustration for the story of Peau d'Âne, (Donkey Skin) a tale of a King that seeks to marry his own daughter, illustrates this concept perfectly. In a detailed night scene that shows the princess fleeing, a threatening castle structure is silhouetted behind her, with the moon as the sole light source in a cloudy night sky (fig. 2.5). Even though we can only discern the basic shapes of the castle behind her, the silhouette points to the influence of Gothic architecture. The castle looms in the distance, with pointed towers and illuminated windows. The darkness of the scene and the sharp turrets enhance the sense of danger associated with escaping the castle walls.

Corresponding to Doré, illustrator and author Edward Gorey (1925-2000) was also fascinated with the Gothic, more specifically with the Gothic of Victorian England. Gorey illustrated a number of dark and gloomy children’s books such as The Gashlycrumb Tinies (1963), Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats (1939), and Donald has a Difficulty (1970). Gorey was known for his eccentric characters and classic textured ink drawings that often resembled the images created by nineteenth-century engraving techniques. When asked about his artistic inspirations in a 1977 interview he stated, “Mostly what it is, is nineteenth-century wood and
steel engraved illustration – you know, not by anyone in particular. Well Doré I’ve always liked a lot, but I wasn’t particularly conscious of Doré as one particular artist until long after my own style was set.”92 Gorey went on to say in a later interview that if he had discovered Doré sooner, he would have settled on his distinctive style much earlier in his career.93 One reason that Gorey might have been aware of Doré, was Doré’s connection to England. Doré spent an extensive amount of time traveling and working in London as an artist between 1867 and 1892.94

As an example of Doré and Gorey’s related styles I turn to the cover illustration for The House with a Clock in Its Walls (1973, fig. 4.5). The silhouette of a castle-like mansion, sits upon a hill, lit from the inside. Gorey uses only black, white, and purple, as the color palette of the scene, emphasizing the importance of contour and contrast. The image closely resembles Doré’s Donkey Skin illustration, as both incorporate a silhouetted, Gothic-influenced structure with pointed towers and brightly lit windows. Gorey also uses the forest as a motif in his illustration, in The House with a Clock in Its Walls, the majority of the image is taken over by the dark silhouette of unidentifiable plant life. Similarly, in Doré’s image a variety of plant forms also appear: curving vines of brush seem to take over the stair case behind the figure, marshland plants crowd the path in front of her and a giant vessel containing a plant with jagged leaves marks directly above her. Both illustrations bring up the interplay between the themes of the forest and the Gothic. In Doré’s image, creeping vines and plants seem to emanate from the castle. In Gorey’s image, the castle and plant life become one form, as their silhouettes are connected and continuous.

Gorey’s continuous outline can be understood as a powerful threshold. The shadowy profile of the house and nearby greenery can be read as the threshold between two different worlds, the world of narrative and the “real” world. Literally behind the darkened silhouette of this cover lie pages of story, the world of narrative. We, as readers and viewers, must open this book to discover what lies beyond, therefore crossing the threshold Gorey has created in his design. In order to create this, he has used both the forest and the Gothic as two combined entities. Both are motifs that are often used to conceal, the forest’s arching trees can be used as cover in the night, and the Gothic castle is often filled with twisting and turning secret passageways. Gorey has manipulated this capacity to deceive, embodied by the forest and the castle, to his advantage: producing a doorway through which his readers must enter. Doré also plays with this concept in his illustrations. In Donkey Skin, the princess is seen fleeing the shadow of a castle, the world of the narrative, and entering the reader’s space, the real world.

Doré’s Donkey Skin illustration can also be seen as an important influence for the French director Jean Cocteau and his 1946 film version of La Belle et La Bête (Beauty and the Beast). Doré’s illustrations in general provided inspiration for Cocteau’s fantastical settings of castles and ornate interiors, and the illustration for Donkey Skin can be seen directly in the film. This screen shot almost directly mirrors what we observe in Doré’s work: the overall darkness of the scene, the potted plant on the railing of the staircase, and even the shadows on the stairs and light source exactly match the engraving by Doré (fig. 4.6).

The director of photography for La Belle et La Bête, Henri Alekan, drew inspiration from Doré’s engravings, specifically from the “distribution of light, with its gleams, its shadows, its penumbras, its balance of light and dark.”95 Because Doré’s technique of wood engraving was

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produced in black and white prints, his work has often provided inspiration for the makers of black and white films. Wood engraving is a very specific technique that Doré used that comprised of a drawing made directly on a wooden block. An engraver would then take the wooden block and carve the design, leaving the uncut, raised parts of the wood to adhere to the ink when pressed upon it. This technique was used extensively in the realm of publishing, as illustrated blocks and typeface could be used at once to create an image and text simultaneously. The wood engraving technique produces a unique product that is highly detailed, with a wide range of lights and darks if executed properly. For the majority of Doré’s illustrations, he drew directly on the wooden blocks used for engravings, and requested only the finest wood to draw upon. It was the engraving technique that produced the richness of hues that Alekan was inspired by, but it was through the skilled hand of Doré that the many simple black and white lines came alive and became light, shadow, gleam, and penumbra.

This distinct style of black and white film can also be linked to film noir, loosely defined as the films made between 1940 and 1959. La Belle et La Bête, produced in France in 1946, falls into this category. Though many associate the genre of crime thrillers with the term film noir, the period includes a diverse array of genres including detective thrillers, gangster films, Gothic Romances, and horror films. In terms of visual effects, film noir is most often associated with deep shadows and chiaroscuro, asymmetrical compositions, and unconventional camera angles. Doré’s engravings, with their intense shadows and cinematic spotlights, were an obvious

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*96 “A technique of engraving in wood that is related to the woodcut, although very distinct in character. Its principal feature is identical, namely that the lines or marks cut away will not print, the ink adhering only to the raised, uncut parts of the wooden block. However, whereas the woodcut designer works with a broad tool to gouge out large chunks around the lines that are to be printed, the wood engraver works with a burin and other tools common to engraving, working positively to create delicate white lines.” Richard Godfrey, "Wood engraving," *The Oxford Companion to Western Art, Oxford Art Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed March 27, 2015, http://www.oxfordartonline.com.article/opr/t118/e2799.*

*97 Blanche Roosevelt, *Life and Reminiscences*, 180.*

*98 Andrew Spicer, ed., *European Film Noir* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 2.*

*99 Spicer, *European Film Noir*, 2.*
inspiration for Cocteau and other film makers considered part of the film noir genre. More specific to France, French film noir was more concerned with atmosphere: setting, characters, and overall mood – instead of intense bouts of action.\textsuperscript{100} This was certainly true for Cocteau’s \textit{La Belle et La Bête}, which focused on lavish costuming, elaborate backdrops, and highly developed characters. Doré’s engravings for Perrault also placed great emphasis on the setting, such as the forest, contained a great deal of detail, and focused on the fleeting moment instead of the moment of action.

Imagination and fantasy were an important aspect of Cocteau’s \textit{La Belle et La Bête}, and they were equally important for Doré. His early start in caricature and cartoon drawings helped him to develop wonderfully detailed characters, especially creatures, demons, and monsters. In Perrault’s story “La Barbe Bleu” (Bluebeard), the main character is a monstrous nobleman who kills his wives. When portraying Bluebeard himself, Doré depicts a monster, but also takes into account his younger audience. From this image it is obvious to the viewer that Bluebeard is the quintessential villain (fig. 4.7). Bluebeard towers over his innocent new bride, his body twice the size of hers, and his eyes glare menacingly. Although his figure is frightening, Doré adds humor in his manner of dress and facial characteristics. An elaborate feathered hat, curled mustache and bulging cartoon-like eyes make him almost comical, hopefully calming child readers.

Twentieth-century illustrator Maurice Sendak (1928-2012) employs a similar approach. Maurice Sendak published \textit{Where the Wild Things Are} in 1963, a timeless masterpiece in children’s literature (fig 4.8). The story features a boy named Max who travels to the place where the wild things are. The wild things consist of monsters that are “simultaneously threatening and

\textsuperscript{100} Ginette Vincendeau, \textquotedblleft French film noir,	extquotedblright in \textit{European Film Noir} (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 7.
adorable,” according to Tony Kushner.101 A PBS documentary on the subject also commented, “His oddly grotesque characters seemed strangely inviting in their imperfections.” Sendak’s wild things have large bulging eyes, bulbous noses, and menacing poses similar to Doré’s Bluebeard, and in the same sense they are equally threatening and humorous. Sendak also uses line and contouring to bring the characters to life. According to Uri Shulevitz (1935- ), a contemporary children’s book illustrator, Sendak introduced him to Doré’s illustrations for the History of Holy Russia (1854), and there are definite parallels between Doré’s and Sendak’s classical artistic styles. 103

Through this examination, one can see the impact that Doré’s illustrations for Perrault’s stories have had on some of the greatest and most well-known authors and illustrators of our time. To illustrate the importance of children’s books, I borrow again from H. Nichols B. Clark, “As young children, we are visually literate well before we can read, so images are the first storytellers we encounter. In a picture book, each turn of the page is a change of scene, and a story is told without a single word in print. Indeed, before the alphabet even comes into play, pictures are the first language we learn.”104 For these reasons, we need to come to realize the importance of children’s book art. The impact that a single image in a children’s book to a child is enormous, and can become something that is carried with us into adulthood. It is for reasons like these that one can begin to comprehend the vital significance of Doré’s contributions.

103 Uri Shulevitz, e-mail message to author, March 18, 2015.
Conclusion:

The main goal of this Capstone project was simple: to examine Gustave Doré's artistic legacy as a children’s book illustrator, and the impact of that legacy on children's literature that followed in the wake of Doré's prolific contributions to the exquisite visual world of fairy tales. A fairly unexplored topic, Doré's artistic legacy has attracted very little scholarly attention. Even less explored are the connections between Doré’s illustrations and the modern picture book. As such, my Capstone Project is a broad but in-depth overview of Doré's illustrations for fairy tales that are widely recognized as iconic children’s stories. It also coaxes the reader to recognize and appreciate the enormous impact of his illustrations on the films of Walt Disney. The links between children’s fairy tales and the world of cinema is yet another topic that deserves more scholarly attention. While I examine these themes through an art historical lens, the accompanying miniature exhibition, Once Upon A Time: An Exploration of Gustave Doré in the Modern Fairy Tale, at the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art in Amherst, Massachusetts, a show that I curated, focuses solely on the topic of Doré’s legacy in the context of modern picture books.

Two important themes manifested themselves while writing this thesis, the sublime and the grotesque, two long established aesthetic categories and paradigms that also underscored Doré's paintings and illustrations. I briefly outlined both in this project and explain their relationships with a few of the works by Doré, but due to the parameters of this assignment I only scratched the surface of what could be studied in greater depth. In order to fully understand Doré’s legacy, both the grotesque and the sublime need to be investigated further, in relation to his entire artistic oeuvre, not just his illustrations for Charles Perrault’s fairy tales. I hope that this undergraduate level project will lead to further inquiries by scholars in the field who are as captivated by Gustave Doré’s imaginative and skillfully rendered pictures. Sadly, during his own
lifetime, Doré felt isolated and unappreciated by his fellow countrymen. Perhaps it is time to amend that by giving him his rightful place among the great painters and illustrations in the history of European art. This thesis is but a small but hopeful step in that direction.


Figure 1.1
Figure 1.2
Gustave Doré. *Stream in the Mountains at Dusk*. Oil on Canvas. mid 19th c. Detroit Institute of Arts.
Figure 1.3
Figure 1.4
Figure 1.5
Sir Wright of Derby. *Sir Brooke Boothby*. Oil on Canvas. 1781. Tate.
Figure 1.6
Figure 1.7
Caspar David Friedrich. *Chasseur in the Forest*. Oil on Canvas. ca. 1813.
Figure 1.8
Strasbourg Museum of Modern Art
Figure 1.9
Figure 1.10
Figure 1.11
Figure 1.12
Vincent Van Gogh. *Landscape with a Carriage and Train*. Oil on Canvas. 1890. Pushkin Museum
Figure 2.1
Figure 2.2
Figure 2.3
Erwin Von Steinbech. Detail, Cathédrale Notre Dame de Strasbourg. Strasbourg, France. 1015-1439.
Figure 2.4.
Figure 2.5
Figure 2.6
Erwin Von Steinbech. Detail, Cathédrale Notre Dame de Strasbourg. Strasbourg, France. 1015-1439.
Figure 2.7
Figure 2.8
Figure 3.1
Figure 3.2
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Figure 3.4
Figure 3.5
Figure 3.6
Figure 3.7
Figure 3.8
Figure 3.9
Figure 3.10  
Figure 3.11  
Figure 3.12
Figure 4.1
Figure 4.2
Figure 4.3
Figure 4.4
Fred Marcellino. “While he was swimming, the King passed by and Puss shouted with all his might ‘Help! Help! The Marquis of Carabas is drowning!’” Source: Fred Marcellino, Puss in Boots, New York: Square Fish, 1990.
Figure 4.5
Figure 4.6
Figure 4.7
Figure 4.8