

Britain, Slavery and Gothic Fiction

Aims

- **Understand** what Britain's Empire has to do with Slavery
- **Think about** how fiction represents our past
- **Analyse** how “gothic” writing brings neglected history to life

What is Empire?

- **Imperialism** - a policy of extending your rule over foreign countries
- **Colonialism** - practice of gaining control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically.
- “Red on the map”



THE WORLD
1897
The British Possessions are
coloured Red.

A R C T I C

O C E A N

A R C T I C O C E A N

Beaufort Sea

Greenland Sea

Alaska

DOMINION OF CANADA

NORTH AMERICA

UNITED STATES

A F R I C A

INDIAN OCEAN

P A C I F I C

SOUTH AMERICA

O C E A N

O C E A N

O C E A N

A U S T R A L I A

N E W Z E A L A N D

Grant Land

Victoria Inlet

Hall Land

Peabody B.

Prudhoe L.

Ellesmere I.

Parry Islands

Banks I.

C. Bathurst

Pt. Barrow

Alaska Pen.

Q. Charlotte

Vancouver I.

San Francisco

Honolulu

Sandwich I.

Fanning I.

Christmas I.

Malden I.

Starbuck I.

Marquesas I.

Low Is.

Tahiti

Society I.

Hervey

Pitcairn I.

Easter I.

S. Devon

Baffin Bay

Melville Sound

Fr. Albert Land

Gr. Slave L.

Gr. Bear I.

Hudson Bay

Gr. Slave L.

Winnipeg

Superior

L. Michigan

Sacramento

Mexico

Guatemala

Panama

Galapagos I.

Quito

Callao

Lima

Valparaiso

Santiago

Valdivia

S. Devon

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Santiago

Valdivia

Spitzbergen

C. Bismark

Jan. Mayen

Lofoden I.

Trondhjem

Shetland I.

Orkney I.

Edinburg

Dublin

Channel I.

Isles

London

Paris

Vienna

Constantinople

Carro

Ascension I.

S. Helena

Walvisch

Orange R.

Cape Town

Cape Colony

Gough I.

Spitzbergen

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Historical Investigation

- What does Empire have to do with slavery?
- What did the slave trade bring to Britain?
- Why did slavery still exist in the colonies after it had been abolished in Britain?

<https://play.kahoot.it/#/k/c291d778-e611-48a5-bb96-755cbae50ca9>

Historical Sources

In pairs look at the source you have been given

- What does it tell you about Britain's role in the slave trade?
- What does it tell you about 'imperial' attitudes towards slavery and enslaved peoples?
- Does it tell you anything about what Britain gained from the slave trade?
- Do you learn anything about opposition to the slave trade?

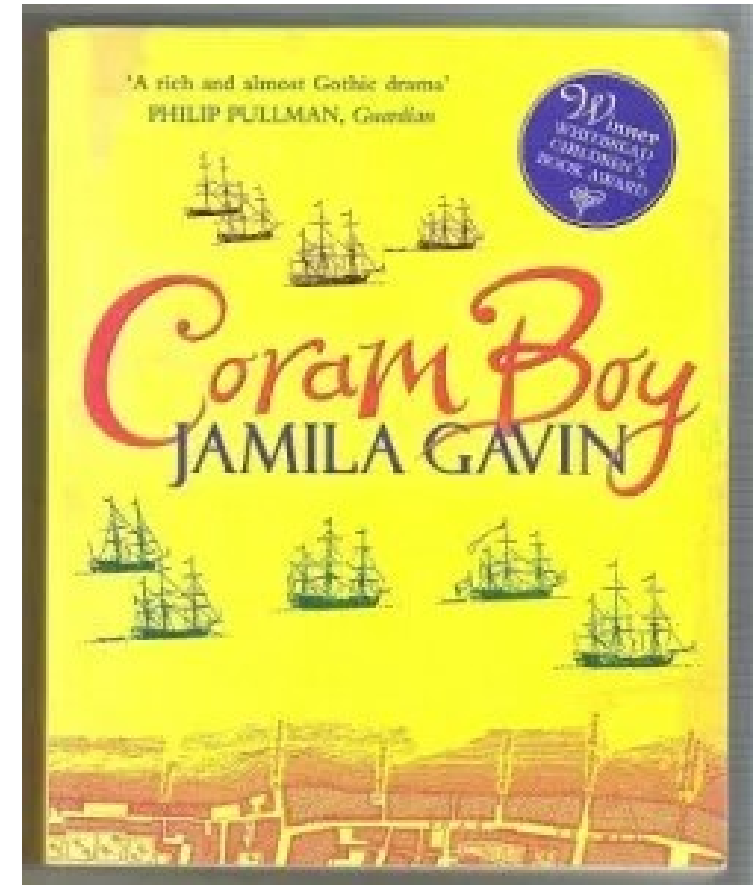
Be prepared to share your findings with the class

What is Gothic?

- **Some Gothic tropes:**
 - ghosts and hauntings
 - Body horror and violence
 - villainy
- **The “Gothic effect” (Chris Baldick):**
 - “a fearful sense of inheritance in time”
 - “a claustrophobic sense of enclosure in space”
 - “descent into disintegration”
- **Gothic as a process (Robert Mighall):**
 - Eras, institutions, places, and people are “Gothicized”
 - “That which is Gothicized depends on history and the stories it needs to tell itself”

Coram Boy - Summary

- Set in eighteenth-century Britain
- The novel's main villain is a wealthy slave trader who profits from selling orphan children overseas - from his London dock
- One of the protagonists (Toby) is the child of a slave and ward of a charity orphanage
- The novel reminds readers that the wealth of the United Kingdom is in imperial trade and slavery.



Close Reading – Group Activity

- How has Jamila Gavin represented the links between Empire, London, trade and slavery?
- Can you identify Gothic elements or Gothic language/ imagery?
- What is the role of “gothic” in this passage - how does it bring the past to life?

Discuss the extract as a group and prepare some key findings to share with the rest of the class.

What do you think?

- What does Empire have to do with Slavery?
- Why is it important to tell these stories about Britain's past?
- How does Gothic help us understand this part of Britain's history?