

Question: How does G.E. Graven's novel *Grotesque, A Gothic Epic* compare and contrast against other contemporary gothic works?

G.E. Graven's *Grotesque, A Gothic Epic* stands out among contemporary gothic works for its fusion of medieval epic scope, heavy theological/apocryphal research, and a highly visual, illustrated format, while still sharing familiar genre concerns with monstrosity, marginalization, and apocalypse. It reads less like intimate psychological horror and more like a historically grounded dark epic that uses a single "grotesque" hero to bridge human, angelic, and demonic realms.

[zyrosite +2](#)

Setting and scope

- *Grotesque* is set in late-Middle Ages Europe, against the Black Death, the French-English conflicts, and the Great Papal Schism, giving it an overtly historical and geopolitical canvas. Many contemporary gothics favor either present-day or loosely historical settings with a narrower, often domestic scale. [gothicnove1](#)
- The novel frames itself explicitly as an epic journey through castles, monasteries, battlefields, and plague-ravaged landscapes, aligning more with medieval romance and biblical war
- The novel frames itself explicitly as an epic journey through castles, monasteries, battlefields, and plague-ravaged landscapes, aligning more with medieval romance and biblical war narratives than with the claustrophobic houses or small towns common in modern gothic horror. [dn790001.archive +1](#)

The grotesque hero vs. contemporary protagonists

- Lazarus Gogu, a winged boy and abbey squire, embodies the grotesque body as both object of horror and locus of moral and spiritual struggle, echoing classical gothic figures like Frankenstein's creature or Quasimodo but in an explicitly angelic-demonic genealogy. Contemporary gothics often center psychologically damaged but physically ordinary protagonists, with monstrosity externalized in settings, ghosts, or social systems. [zyrosite +2](#)
- Graven's treatment of the grotesque elicits simultaneous empathy and revulsion, using Lazarus's "fallen-angel" body to explore faith, sin, and redemption, whereas many recent works use the grotesque more metaphorically (e.g., trauma, queerness, social decay) than as a literal hybrid of heaven and hell. [thegothiclibrary +1](#)

Theology, apocrypha, and cosmic stakes

- The book draws heavily on biblical and apocryphal sources—Genesis 6, 1 Enoch, the Book of Giants, Jubilees, Revelation, and related traditions of Nephilim, fallen angels, and prophetic war—making its supernatural system explicitly theological instead of vaguely occult or folkloric. Contemporary gothic fiction often blends eclectic mythologies or leaves the supernatural ambiguous rather than tying it tightly to specific religious texts. [gothicnove1](#)
- Its narrative stakes are framed as preventing a medieval Armageddon triggered by fallen angels' designs to escape Hades, giving the plot a cosmic-war scale; most contemporary gothics favor localized hauntings, family curses, ecological collapse, or societal rot rather than a full eschatological confrontation. [gothicnaturejournal +2](#)

Aesthetic form and medium

- *Grotesque* is presented as a fully illustrated online novel, branded as “the world’s first and largest fully illustrated free online gothic novel,” which foregrounds visual grotesquerie—gargoyles, chimeras, and hybrid bodies—in a way closer to illuminated manuscripts or graphic novels than prose-only fiction. Contemporary gothic novels are rarely built from the ground up as large-scale, illustration-rich web projects. [gothicnove1](#)
- The work’s dedication to Edgar Allan Poe and deliberate engagement with “grotesque” as a visual and literary category situates it self-consciously within gothic history, whereas many current works take a more intertextual, postmodern approach without such direct homage to a single canonical figure. [thegothiclibrary +1](#)

Psychological interiority vs. spiritual journey

- Graven describes *Grotesque* as a journey through the inner self driven by overwhelming outside forces, emphasizing spiritual testing, faith under siege, and ultimate redemption as central arcs. A large portion of recent gothic emphasizes psychological breakdown, unreliable perception, and secular trauma more than explicit spiritual warfare. [gothicnove1 +1](#)
- The novel uses its epic quest structure—Lazarus struggling to stay alive, remain faithful, and avert apocalypse—to externalize inner conflict through battles with demons, angels, and hostile churchmen, whereas contemporary gothics often reverse this, using minimal outward action to mirror inward disintegration. [zyrosite +2](#)

Question: How does Grotesque use the grotesque body compared to other modern Gothics ?

Grotesque uses the grotesque body as a literal, theologically charged hybrid that anchors both worldbuilding and ethics, whereas many modern gothics deploy grotesque corporeality more as metaphor for psychology, identity, or social critique. It therefore treats the monstrous body less as a symbol to be decoded and more as an active site where human, angelic, and demonic histories are materially fused. [diva-portal +1](#)

Grotesque body as metaphysical hybrid

- Lazarus's winged, "fallen-angel" body is an ontological hybrid: human flesh visibly marked by angelic/demonic ancestry, so that the grotesque form is evidence in a cosmological argument about Nephilim, fall, and redemption. [zyrosite](#)
- In many contemporary gothics, grotesque bodies tend to stand in for psychic trauma, queerness, disability, or social abjection; the monstrous form points back to human institutions rather than to a literal war between heaven, hell, and earth. [unisapressjournals +1](#)

From metaphor of deviance to instrument of salvation

- Grotesque largely refuses to treat the deformed body as merely deviant or expendable; Lazarus's corporeal difference is precisely what makes him capable of mediating between realms and averting apocalypse. [zyrosite](#)
- Modern gothics often emphasize the grotesque body as a figure of abjection, scandal, or queer resistance—challenging the “normal” body and its politics—without necessarily granting it such a central salvific or cosmological function. [diva-portal +1](#)

Visual and epic emphasis versus intimate horror

- The novel repeatedly foregrounds the visual strangeness of wings, scars, and hybrid anatomy in a fully illustrated, epic narrative that echoes illuminated manuscripts and medieval spectacle. [zyrosite](#)
- By contrast, contemporary gothic treatments of the grotesque body frequently rely on graphic but intimate description—body horror, mutilation, eroticized violence—to destabilize the reader's sense of decorum and expose social anxieties, rather than to stage vast angelic–demonic conflicts. [atmostfear-entertainment +1](#)

Boundary-crossing vs. dissolution

- In Grotesque, the grotesque body marks a threshold: Lazarus stands at the border of human and inhuman, sacred and profane, and the story is about whether that boundary can be reconciled rather than erased. [zyrosite](#)
- Modern gothics influenced by theorists like Bakhtin often treat grotesque bodies as sites where boundaries simply dissolve—inside turned outside, self merged with world—producing a carnivalized or abject corporeality that questions whether any stable norm exists at all.

