THE GOTHIC IN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

The Creation of the Adolescent in Crossover Fiction

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
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February 2016

ABSTRACT

This thesis traces the literary course of gothic narrative elements as they appear within children's fiction, beginning from the late eighteenth century and concluding at the close of the nineteenth century. The thesis presents evidence and potentialities for children's appropriation of gothic fiction written for adults, and links them to the contemporaneous development of gothic devices in fiction written for children. These are argued to reflect a single phenomenon: The burgeoning relevance, literary and social, of the adolescent, in whom gothic and children's fictions find a natural point of crossover. This thesis contextualises critical negativity towards the gothic and particularly to potential adolescent audiences, highlighting how contentious and therefore radical their relationship was. Nonetheless, the thesis introduces two hitherto obscure examples of early gothic children's fiction from the end of the eighteenth century which provide initial evidence of this trend, alongside readings of parodic representations of adolescent gothic consumption. This is developed in an analysis of twelve early nineteenth-century gothic bluebooks, examples of short, cheap gothic fiction, for their relevance and, more significantly, accessibility to potential adolescent readers. This point suggests mechanisms by which the very means used to acquire fiction can foster the development of the adolescent social unit. The adolescent, or maturing child, is then considered as a specifically literary figure, with the character-type's role, both in major canonical works of fiction and more esoteric texts aimed at narrower and often younger audiences, scrutinised for continuing gothic resonance particular to their immature age and experience. The conclusion of this reading of literary and social history for evidence of the joint occurrence and significance of gothic and adolescence produces a theory regarding gothic fiction's significance to the understanding and acceptance of the adolescent in society, and the success of the seemingly unlikely partnership of the gothic in children's fiction.

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INTRODUCTION

Dark Ages

'*If this* air *of the* miraculous *is excused, the reader will find nothing else unworthy of his perusal.*'
--Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764)[1]

The gothic and children's literature are, at first glance, not the most likely literary partners. The average modern-day impressions of the gothic have as their points of reference brooding nineteenth-century castles, the bloodthirsty figure of Count Dracula, dark deeds done by night – not on its own merits the most obvious reading material for innocent, impressionable children. And yet, when perusing the children's section of a high street bookshop, or the library of a voracious reader of twenty-first century children's fiction, the titles that appear owe much to this seemingly unlikely relationship. J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* heptalogy, chiefly set in a haunted and magical castle which, though a sanctuary from the evil undead sorcerer Voldemort, has its own threats and mysteries; Lemony Snicket's *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, in which the ill-starred Baudelaire orphans are marked for murder so that the fiendish Count Olaf can usurp their bountiful inheritance; R.L. Stine's innumerable *Goosebumps* novellas, which number ghosts, vampires, and castles among the hundreds of other horrors that his countless child protagonists encounter: It is perhaps unsurprising that these books have had their inclusion in children's libraries challenged or even banned, that young readers might be prevented from reading them.[2] Yet these and countless other supernatural and historical mysteries have not been prevented by the thumbprint of the gothic from filling numberless children's shelves; indeed, collectively the three series named above number nearly a billion books in print.[3] Writers continue to evoke gothic impressions and

[1] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), p. 6.
[2] American Library Association, 'Top 100 Banned/Challenged Books: 2000-2009' <http://www.ala.org/bbooks/top-100-bannedchallenged-books-2000-2009> [accessed 13 October 2014]; Chris Zammarelli, 'If You're Good, You're Not Necessarily Rewarded', Bookslut.com, July 2004 <http://www.bookslut.com/banned_bookslut/2004_07_002813.php> [accessed 13 October 2014].
[3] Comprising 450 million *Harry Potter* titles, 60 million *A Series of Unfortunate Events* titles, and 350 million *Goosebumps* titles: TIME Staff, 'Because It's His Birthday: Harry Potter, By The Numbers', TIME.com, 31 July 2013 <http://entertainment.time.com/2013/07/31/because-its-his-birthday-harry-potter-by-the-numbers/> [accessed 13 October 2014]; Sally Lodge, 'Lemony Snicket Sneaks Back With 'File Under: 13 Suspicious Incidents'', PublishersWeekly.com, 17 October 2013 <http://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-book-news/article/59596-lemony-snicket-sneaks-back-with-file-under-13.html> [accessed 13 October 2014]; Scholastic, 'Goosebumps™ Television Series Arrives on iTunes across Canada, the UK and Australia', Scholastic.com, 27 May 2014 <http://mediaroom.scholastic.com/press-

parallels in their children's literature, and children continue to respond positively. Any number of research questions might be posed as to why this is, and how great a factor it represents in literary success for children's authors. But rather than seeking explanations in the present, this thesis concerns itself with the past: The literary history of the relationship between the gothic and children's literature, its point of origin, and the development of its success. The crucial question is: How did this link originate and evolve, and what is its true source of success?

Tracing the origins of the gothic in children's literature demands a long bibliographical journey, for more examples emerge the farther back one treads. In the mid-twentieth century, Enid Blyton's *Famous Five* and other child mystery-solvers spent their time in ruins and secret passageways uncovering buried secrets whilst being menaced by foreign villains in clear tests of their independence and maturity; the turn of the century finds Jules Verne, whose thrilling adventure stories, as will be discussed, both crossed into gothic territory and were serialised for younger audiences.[4] The gothic margins of children's literature, and how the growing child negotiates the space between the two, are inhabited and addressed throughout the nineteenth century by writers as prominent as Charles Dickens and as understudied as Nicholas Wiseman, in forms as respectable as the novel and as disreputable as the chapbook, reaching to even the late eighteenth century. It seems, therefore, that the roots of the gothic in children's literature must be shared with the roots of gothic literature itself. This may seem incredible, in an age in which children's literature scarcely existed and both children and literature were subject to intense social scrutiny – but analysis of those social conditions, of popular gothic literature, and of hitherto-obscure children's fiction, reveals a figure of prime significance to the modern literary market, but whose presence in the long nineteenth century has received less attention: The adolescent.

Fiction reflects the culture that created it, but also, especially at its most popular, shapes that culture. This thesis argues that the authors of early gothic works saw in adolescence something suited to their fiction, and that same fiction made adolescents see the same potential within themselves. The broad period of the adolescent's rise to cultural definition coincides with that of the gothic's literary ascendance, and thus of that genre's refinement of

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release/goosebumps-television-series-arrives-itunes-across-canada-uk-and-australia> [accessed 13 October 2014].

[4] Andrew Nash, 'Jules Verne: Boys Own Paper / Boys Own Annual' in The Jules Verne Collecting Resource Page <http://www.julesverne.ca/jvboysown.html> [accessed 3 March 2014].

the adolescent as a character of fiction. Arguably, the adolescent is the perfect audience for popular fiction: Old enough to understand any concept presented to them, and yet endlessly regenerating itself as one generation grows into adulthood and a succeeding one grows from childhood. The gothic mode can be recycled and resold to an adolescent audience perpetually – and has been, from both an even superficial glance at present-day bookshop fare and this thesis's closer scrutiny of pre-twentieth-century work. And yet this is not to forget that much of this work is, either strictly speaking or in addition to its adolescent status, children's literature – even taking into account that clearly demarcated literature for adolescents is a comparatively recent invention, and that such literature would previously have been apportioned either to children or to adults, as is implied in the paradoxical age-group assigned to adolescent-level literature, that of the 'young adult.' Accounting for the adolescent reader is one thing; the child reader, another, and this begets the fundamental question of this thesis: What does it signify if the gothic is found in children's literature? That the darkest of fictions appears in pages destined for the most shielded audience must be a paradox which demands both substantiation and resolution.

This thesis contends that this question is answered by the gothic, in fact, bridging the gap between the child and the adult through the role of the fictive adolescent, and formulating within and even outside of its pages the model to be copied by the young reader who yearns for a maturity they do not yet possess; that such a model, too, is what authors of such figures were themselves copying. Proving this case requires a long chronology, but one which will reveal and explore a culture in which the genre of the gothic became linked, not intentionally but with gradual inevitability, to children's literature – and which was achieved through the bridging of the adult and child reader by way of an adolescent audience that in this period first emerged. The darker shades of the gothic were, by apparent serendipity, to simultaneously embrace in its narratives and readership the adolescent as it was newly-formed as a cultural being, a developmental stage that was not simply a small adult or a large child. The distinction is crucial. Margarita Georgieva, in *The Gothic Child*, has convincingly established the child as a central tenet of the gothic narrative – but her text hints at a potential of the child unrealised in her analysis. For she writes, 'the child is the only character we find in a state of constant becoming', which, owing to the nature of gothic narratives, 'is triggered by trial after trial. The vast gothic experiment that is built around the child intends to show

the outcome of this process.'[5] And yet in tracing the 'experiment' upon the child that has its outcome in the adult, Georgieva omits the adolescent entirely, or rather conflates it with childhood. This conclusion is insufficient, to both the gothic text itself and to the period of its construction. This thesis argues instead that it is the adolescent who takes precedence; indeed, that the period of the changing child, particularly the child under trial, is when the child becomes the adolescent, and thus finally it is the adolescent who becomes the adult.

How to characterise the adolescent has always been a vexed question of culture, but the adolescent's gothic awareness is hinted at even in early literary accounts, for though its separate existence from childhood and adulthood seems to defy articulation, its sensibility cannot be ignored. This thesis opens on the cusp of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and as Alan Richardson observes, 'as the eighteenth century advances, one finds an increasing number of incidental descriptions of childhood', anticipating a period when commentators and artists were coming to reflect with increased subtlety upon their own childhood.[6] For many, it was an era where increasing quality of life, increasing prosperity, and the foundation of a comfortable middle class gave children a more extended period of dependence and development in the home – but what retrospectively emerged was not just childhood psychology, but a darker sequel which contemplated with negativity the world that it was becoming exposed to. 'Heaven lies about us in our infancy', wrote William Wordsworth, the future Poet Laureate, in an 1804 poem later entitled 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood', but 'Shades of the prison-house begin to close / Upon the growing boy.'[7] Wordsworth contrasts a light, airy, and sacred childhood with a dark, claustrophobic, very mortal successor, a fallen state. Peter Coveney diagnoses the entire poem as suffering from an emotion of 'regretful loss' for an idealised childhood, with all afterwards necessarily portrayed in bleaker tones.[8] A similar representation of childhood's journey from light into dark is found in the poet John Keats's reflections in an 1818 letter: 'I compare human life to a large mansion of Many Apartments,' he writes, describing each stage of life as one such apartment in succession; childhood's 'Chamber of Maiden-Thought' is, like Wordsworth's Heaven, filled at first with 'light' and 'pleasant wonders' – and yet concludes in 'sharpening one's vision into the heart and nature of Man--of

[5] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 68.
[6] Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 10.
[7] William Wordsworth, 'Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood' (1804), lines 67-69.
[8] Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood* (Penguin, 1967), p. 80.

convincing one's nerves that the World is full of Misery and Heartbreak, Pain, Sickness and oppression'. This attunement to the world's sufferings brings about its own 'shades of the prison-house': The chamber 'becomes gradually darken'd and at the same time on all sides of it many doors are set open--but all dark--all leading to dark passages'.[9] Keats's is a great unacknowledged image of the gothic – imprisonment in the labyrinthine dark. It could be derived from nowhere but a gothic novel, though the genre was scarcely older than himself – surely no coincidence. The childhoods of Wordsworth and Keats were both in this same turn-of-the-century period, of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century – a period where literature reflected and responded to adolescent malaise with the gothic, a literature of little else but imprisonment in the labyrinthine dark. The lurid shades of the gothic had their place in children's hearts, while the 'shades of the prison-house' earned the sympathy of adolescents. This twinning of genre and audience was a winning combination, and this link persisted over centuries, to its most overt in literature for children and young adults written today – but its roots are found in the eighteenth century, where the gothic first scandalised, where the child first read, and where the adolescent emerged in the meeting of the two.

It naturally bears clarifying, before any analysis takes place, under what definitions of its primary subjects this thesis is operating – another problematic characterisation. The gothic and children's literature are nebulous entities; it is one thing to talk of them, another to define them. The gothic is particularly difficult to delineate, having different referents in different disciplines and different times. Michael Gamer has argued that 'as gothic no longer is what it once was, we must stop trying to define it as having a static identity', but by confining it to a particular temporal and spatial locus, some ambiguity can be averted.[10] Here the referent for 'gothic' is the literary genre most popular and distinguishable in the late eighteenth century, where its foetal interactions with children's literature emerge. This very name, 'gothic,' is also contentious, but is ultimately the most credible term. E.J. Clery has highlighted a number of contemporary terms for the gothic employed in 1797: ''modern Romance'; 'the *terrible* school'; 'the Terrorist System of Novel Writing'; 'Terrorist Novel Writing'; 'the *hobgoblin-romance*''.[11] The latter four are unpropitious as negative value judgements, but are also the categorisations of external critics, without internal support from gothic texts themselves.

[9] John Keats, letter of May 3rd 1818 to John Hamilton Reynolds, in *Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends*, ed. by Sidney Colvin (1925) (via Project Gutenberg).
[10] Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic* (Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 9-10.
[11] E.J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 1762-1800* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 148.

'Romance' is more favourable in this respect, as a large number of gothic works presented themselves on their title pages under the category of romance, but that has its own long history and traditions, highlighted in particular in the contemporary essay *The Progress of Romance* written by Clara Reeve, herself a gothic novelist, in 1785. 'Gothic' as a term has relevance for recurring throughout the work it now denotes. Horace Walpole's early gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Reeve's own imitation *The Old English Baron* (1778, but originally published in 1777 as *The Champion of Virtue*) both used the subtitle 'A Gothic Story', early usage with a particular historical referent. According to Clery, 'Gothic' signified to contemporary readers 'a long period of barbarism, superstition, and anarchy dimly stretching from the fifth century AD', and, more vaguely, 'anything obsolete, old-fashioned, or outlandish'.[12] The association with superstition was particularly significant, as contemporary attitudes to the supernatural, it will be shown, rendered it problematic for readers and reviewers, though as Nick Groom discusses in 'Gothic Antiquity: From the Sack of Rome to *The Castle of Otranto*' it was also an inextricable part of the Goth legend, 'early associations of the Goths with fear and horror, carnage and the supernatural tend[ing] to eclipse their social and political achievements.'[13] Indeed, that same ancient period was being reclaimed by a contending cultural movement as the seat of noble values, and gothic novels can be found embracing either side of a centuries-long dispute over whether the Gothic was 'a rude and benighted medieval past, at once Catholic, feudal and tyrannous', or 'an original, British political system of liberty and enlightenment.'[14] Exemplary of this is Richard Hurd's 1762 championing of the 'remarkable' institution of 'Gothic Chivalry' as an 'immediate' product of the 'Feudal Constitution' in his treatise *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* – and knowing that *The Castle of Otranto* would be published only two years later as 'A Gothic Story' renders as prescient Hurd's question that, 'may there not be something in the Gothic Romance peculiarly suited to the views of a genius and to the ends of poetry?'[15] Gothic stories certainly found this unity of barbarism and chivalry in the feudal era highly convenient for the storytelling purposes, suggesting a continuity with the 'Gothic Romance' that was simply an ancient story preserved; however, 'gothic' as denoting a purely feudal setting was not universally adhered to, and in succeeding examples with progressively later

[12] E.J. Clery, 'The genesis of Gothic fiction' in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, ed. by Jerrold E. Hogle (Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 21.
[13] Nick Groom, 'Gothic Antiquity: From the Sack of Rome to *The Castle of Otranto*' in Dale Townshend, ed., *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination* (The British Library, 2014), p. 41.
[14] Dale Townshend, 'Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination' in *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination*, p. 29.
[15] Richard Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), p. 4.

historical settings, the term was commonly used to denote specifically the narrative's central castles and ruins as objects of gothic antiquity.[16] James Watt has pointed out that 'Only a small number of romances after *Otranto* actually characterized themselves as 'Gothic' works', and the qualifier was 'most commonly used after 1800, and by tales or short stories', a prima facie lacklustre usage which in actuality suggests an increasing contemporary association of the term with the genre at its commercial peak.[17] The 'gothic' denominator is therefore not simply the accepted term today but also, in some measure, in its own time.

Michael Gamer's criticism of the 'gothic' genre as an anachronism does not extend simply to its naming, however, but even its generic formulation, arguing that 'readers in the 1790s considered it neither exclusively a kind of fiction nor even necessarily a narrative mode.'[18] But genre is retrospective, not prospective; no writer can predict if they might be imitated, or how extensively, and the identification of genre cannot begin until after a substantial body of texts has been produced that share certain commonalities. These commonalities are usually encoded as tropes, or stock literary devices, and the gothic is noted as a particularly trope-led genre, the point even being taken as a given in much academic literature, one explained rather than sustained. Diane Long Hoeveler refers to the genre's 'fixation on formula' and describes it as 'a site of endless iteration', fixing the gothic as an obsessive series of reworkings of a standard model, in which originality must be crowded out by ritual;[19] Franz Potter, however, assesses this process as 'a sign of activity rather than stagnation, decay and decadence' by means of being a 'continual interaction between the author and reader'[20] – by taking familiar material, and reworking and reinventing it, the reader's assumptions were continually challenged, and variation within a formula created true surprise by redirecting established events. William St. Clair merely considers this an aspect of a new, mechanised form of commercialisation; that the gothic was 'predictable', 'uniform', and 'mutually substitutable', like items on a production line, meant that they could be ''consumed' week after week like bottles of wine'.[21] Conversely, James Raven has proposed that not cynicism but innocence is

[16] Cf. Anonymous, *Montrose, or The Gothic Ruin* (1799).
[17] James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 2, 160.
[18] Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, p. 3.
[19] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780-1820* (Ohio State University Press, 2010), p. 6.
[20] Franz Potter, 'Haunted Castles and Zombies: Adapting the Gothic' in *The Gothic Imagination* (May 2009) <http://www.gothic.stir.ac.uk/guestblog/haunted-castles-and-zombies-adapting-the-gothic/> [accessed 24 January 2013].
[21] William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 31.

responsible for gothic derivativity, with 'contemporary uncertainty about how much reuse of material was acceptable', in this early period in the history of copyright law, meaning that 'many writers [were] not consciously intending to deceive' in simply meeting market demand.[22] The artistry of gothic formulism, and thus of gothic itself, is widely questioned, but the reality is less in dispute. Nor is this a retrospective academicism; letters of the time by the gothic's detractors mercilessly parodied repetitions between novels, with one famous example, a 1797 letter denominated 'Terrorist Novel Writing', reducing the form to a 'recipe' approach: '*Take*—An old castle, half of it ruinous. A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones. Three murdered bodies, quite fresh', and so on.[23] Their interpretation may vary, but tropes are an inextricable part of the gothic's identity, especially in their formative period. The conception of the gothic which includes such tropes is a defining one. Despite gothic's parodies, the creative breadth and proliferation of the genre makes it difficult to identify truly universal generic features, although the castle or castle-like edifice is the most common factor and centrepiece; Eino Railo's study in *The Haunted Castle*, as its title indicates, elevates the castle to a position of such significance that 'were it eliminated the whole fabric of romance would be bereft of its foundation', which wide reading of the genre tends to confirm.[24] The genre more broadly constitutes a family resemblance category, in which each entry draws many (but not all) elements from a much wider shared pool in which all participate; a well-stocked gothic library would see many ideas repeated frequently, but not ubiquitously. Gary Kelly questions whether such a definition does not undermine the gothic's status as a genre, dismissing it as 'not so much a coherent and authentic genre as an ensemble of themes and formal elements which could be taken over and adapted in whole or part by other novelists and writers and by artists in other media', but such an argument could easily apply to other acknowledged genres outside of the scope of this thesis, and it is hard to dispute that samples from the 'ensemble' do tend to appear in multiple instances;[25] regardless, the genre at this point is sufficiently widely acknowledged that its tenuous articulation cannot unmake it. Evidently, then, any general rule on what the gothic absolutely constitutes must be as flexible as the genre it describes, and for the purposes of this thesis it suffices that a gothic story combines any subjects one might expect to find in or around a

[22] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age' in *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, Vol. I (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 22.
[23] Anonymous, 'Terrorist Novel Writing' (1797).
[24] Eino Railo, *The Haunted Castle* (George Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1927), p. 7.
[25] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830* (Longman, 1987), p. 49.

gothic castle with a general atmosphere of menace and terror; this is what readers of the late eighteenth century would have expected to read when presented with a novel later described as 'gothic.'

The ambiguity of the gothic is partnered with that of the term 'children's literature,' one centring on the definition not of literature, but of the child; a historically problematic subject, and a challenging one. It would be unwise to overprescribe this fluid, variable stage of life. Texts such as Matthew Grenby's 2011 volume *The Child Reader 1700-1840* are not wrong in avoiding the issue of definition entirely.[26] It is important here, however, to immediately note the inclusion of adolescence; the relationship between the gothic and a mixed child-adolescent market which cannot be fully disentangled is crucial to this thesis. A description put forward by Jack Zipes in his forewords to the Routledge *Children's Literature and Culture* series, proposing that the 'broadest sense of the word *children*' may denote 'the period of childhood up through adolescence', is therefore appropriate when referring to children's literature.[27] This thesis will speak of children and adolescents separately where appropriate, specifically regarding younger children or older adolescents; however, compounding adolescence and childhood is necessary partly as a reflection of historical practice. The border between the two is highly variable and reading practices between them naturally exhibit far more crossover than that between children and adults, and as such, whether authors – contemporary or modern – wrote for or differently for adolescents as opposed to children (or adults) is difficult to answer. Although contemporary definitions of adolescence did exist, the term seems to have been of esoteric consideration, largely absent from the fiction of the age – but such definitions nonetheless existed. A 1785 edition of Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language*, the nearest contemporary to Dr. Johnson's recent death and the coming of the popular gothic, defines 'adolescence' as 'The age succeeding childhood, and succeeded by puberty; more largely, that part of life in which the body has not yet reached its full perfection.'[28] The definition is a physiological one rather than a cultural one, with little room to deduce appropriate reading choices. Although distinguished from 'puberty', the difference between the two is vague; the same dictionary defines 'puberty' as 'The time of life in which the two sexes begin first to be acquainted', a

[26] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840* (Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[27] Jack Zipes, 'Series Editor's Foreword' in Penny Brown, *A Critical History of French Children's Literature, Volume One: 1600-1830* (Routledge, 2008), p. xi.
[28] Samuel Johnson, *A Dictionary of the English Language* (1785), Vol. I (pages unnumbered). Note that these definitions are unchanged from those of the first edition of 1755.

cultural definition fruitfully reflected in the romantic subplots and sexual dynamics of the gothic, the protagonists of many of which were arguably adolescent. Helpfully, an accompanying example provides a guideline age: 'That the women are menstruent, and the men *pubescent* at the year of twice seven, is accounted a punctual truth.'[29] The exact ages of gothic protagonists are rarely given, but it is reasonable to suggest that, while none are likely to be younger than fourteen, many are that age or a little older. Curiously, the example seems more cogent to the dictionary's definition of 'adolescence,' much as the modern definition of adolescence combines physical and cultural changes into a broader outline, that being 'The period following the onset of puberty during which a young person develops from a child into an adult';[30] in respect to these factors, it seems reasonable therefore to compound the two, puberty and adolescence, into adolescence alone even in a contemporary consideration. Whether authors responded to adolescent audiences with adolescent characters, or vice-versa, can never truly or universally be answered, but purely on definitional terms it is possible to draw connections between the gothic and an adolescent audience – though the fact of their adolescence will almost always be a retrospective categorisation.

Nonetheless, as the contention is that adolescence has a distinct presence in the period, regardless of how poorly-understood, then all signs of that presence should be rooted out, to judge just what that understanding was. Before returning to the definition of children's literature, then, it is necessary to dwell a little longer on the subject of adolescence, particularly within the eighteenth century, in which this thesis is founded. Recurring to Dr. Johnson's definitions above, although contemporary use, literary or otherwise, of the words 'adolescence' and 'puberty' is sparse, research into their employment in periodical writing before the year 1800 also suggests that Dr. Johnson's definitions might fruitfully be exchanged in relation to their examples. 'Puberty', though the more common term of the two, often lays particular emphasis on corporeal changes, or those psychic alterations driven by the physical. For example, the anonymous essay 'On the progressive growth of man, and transformation of animals', written in 1790, describes the changes of puberty as being that 'the muscles swell, their interstices are filled with fat, the parts bear a proper proportion to each other, and man may now be considered as a perfect animal' – a clearly physiological analysis. As is common in contemporary descriptions of youth, no age is given for the actual onset of puberty, though the author helpfully concludes it so late as 'the age of twenty-five or

[29] Ibid., Vol. II.
[30] 'Adolescence, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, December 2011) [accessed 3 December 2015].

thirty'.[31] More intriguing is the same author's suggestion that 'When advancing towards puberty' – in other words, very much before puberty, and therefore within Dr. Johnson's definition of adolescence – 'dispositions and desires suffer a gradual mutation. New instincts are unfolded'; this appears to be a coded reference to sexual awakening.[32] Henry Home's earlier 1781 article 'Instructions Preparatory to the Married State' uses similar terms, but situates the awakening within puberty, explaining that 'Puberty, when new appetites and desires spring up, is the most critical time for education', and more explicitly advising that 'the animal appetite be retarded as long as possible in both sexes'.[33] Once again, no ages are suggested. So there is some disagreement within the texts of the period as to where the exact boundaries of puberty, let alone adolescence, fall; the previously-cited anonymous author, in fact, goes on to express his pre-pubescent subjects as experiencing the following: 'a sense of propriety begins to be perceived. They [pre-pubescents, or adolescents] despise their former occupations and amusements; and different species of objects solicit and obtain their attention. Their powers of reflection are now considerably augmented: and both sexes acquire a modesty and a shyness with regard to each other.'[34] This is mental or cultural development, relating to the social interaction of male and female pre-pubescents who according to Dr. Johnson must by extension be adolescents, and fits squarely within Dr. Johnson's definition of 'puberty' as relating to the first associations of the two sexes whilst striking the modern reader as obviously descriptive of adolescent psychology.

Having found, then, some confusion surrounding contemporary use of the word 'puberty', it bears asking whether contemporary use of 'adolescence' is similarly confused, or whether it sheds any light. As noted, contemporary use is sparse, though what use there is suggests the term was at least widely-recognised. At its simplest, it appears as a sequel to childhood, with one anonymous review citing a particular poetry collection of 1799 as an educational aid of sufficient merit 'that children, and even adolescents, should commit these verses to memory'.[35] Curiously, multiple instances associate adolescence with rebellious behaviour of a distinctly juvenile bent; for instance, one anonymous essayist, in a 1771 article entitled

[31] Anonymous, 'On the progressive growth of man, and transformation of animals' in *Walker's Hibernian Magazine, or Compendium of Entertaining Knowledge* (October 1790), p. 312.
[32] Ibid., pp. 312-313.
[33] Henry Home (Lord Kames, or Lord Kaim), 'Instructions Preparatory to the Married State' in *London Magazine, or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, ed. by Edward Kimber, Vol. 50 (September 1781), p. 416.
[34] Anonymous, 'On the progressive growth of man, and transformation of animals', p. 313.
[35] Anonymous, Art. VII [review of Lady Manners, *Review of Poetry, ancient and modern*] in *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal*, ed. by Ralph Griffiths, Vol. 30 (December 1799), p. 391.

'Reflections upon the probability of adults being seduced in most seminaries at home before they are transplanted into the wide scenes of immorality and debauchery abroad', characterises adolescence as 'prone to exert its levity in a diversified course of ludicrous tricks and wild pranks.' This is immediately followed by a discussion on puberty which, productively, concludes with the suggestion that 'In regard to boarding schools for young ladies […] I apprehend no danger or inconvenience of committing them […] till they have entered their twelfth year, at the expiration of which, their parents ought to be solicitous about their innocence, virtue, reputation, and happiness.'[36] This implication of a burgeoning risk of sexual independence is the only instance of an age being provided in the entire article, and suggests contemporary acceptance of female puberty, at least, as beginning around age thirteen, roughly in accordance with Dr. Johnson – although how to read this in relation to adolescence is less clear. A 1781 profile of the recently-deceased French monarch Louis XV declares that, on 'entering into the age of adolescence,' he was 'between sixteen and seventeen years of age'; it is unclear if this is being characterised as normal or an example of the 'tardy progress of nature in him,' as experiencing 'calmness of those passions, which are so active at that age in most individuals of strong constitutions', appearing to situate the earlier-described sexual awakening of the young within a late adolescence rather than an early puberty.[37] In short, it may be said that this sample of contemporary usage indicates considerable vagueness in the period as to what ages adolescence and puberty were experienced at, and even which properties are to be counted as which. The properties themselves, though, are better agreed-upon: Sexual awakening, independent or rebellious behaviour, the development of self-consciousness and the maturation of attitude. This appears to vindicate the suggestion above that this thesis should conflate puberty and adolescence into the shorthand more recognisable to the modern reader, that of adolescence, whilst also indicating that, where adolescence is sought for in literature, the same approach should be taken as for the gothic – that of not confining the search to too narrow a set of characteristics.

Bearing in mind the disclarity and broadness surrounding the early terms employed to describe adolescence, it is as well to look in places where these terms are not used, but where their descriptors may arise – that being in other texts describing youth of various ages. As

[36] Anonymous, 'Reflections upon the probability of adults being seduced in most seminaries at home before they are transplanted into the wide scenes of immorality and debauchery abroad.' in *The Town and Country Magazine, Or, Universal Repository of Knowledge, Instruction, and Entertainment* Iss. 3 (January 1771), p. 32.
[37] Anonymous, 'The Character of Lewis XV. and his Favourite Cardinal Fleuri.' in *The Weekly Miscellany; or, Instructive Entertainer*, Vol. 16, Iss. 416 (September 1781), p. 593.

will be discussed, educational theories and ideas about childhood development were of popular interest during the eighteenth century, with Alan Richardson noting an early crossover between interest in theory and interest in fiction; 'Many of the children's authors who began publishing in the 1780s […] Barbauld, Maria Edgeworth […] Wollstonecraft […] were actively involved in education as theorists or teachers, and frequently both.'[38] Barbauld and Wollstonecraft will appear later in this thesis, while Edgeworth and others of her contemporaries will be examined here to determine whether and how they address adolescence in their educational work. In actuality, Maria Edgeworth's *Practical Education*, itself a collaborative work, is a relatively late entry to the field of children's education, succeeding notable works by Jean-Jacques Rousseau – whose work had its greatest impact on gothic fiction, and as such is discussed in the thesis proper – and, more relevantly here, Hannah More and Catharine Macaulay.

Like the gothic, this is a field where female writers were unusually prominent, and often, as is the case with Hannah More's 1777 text *Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies*, particularly concerned with proper female education, a highly deficient field at the time. More, who would later pioneer the extensive *Cheap Repository Tract* series to reform the moral education of the poor, is here concerned with reforming female propriety, arguing against a system of false delicacy in society which demanded a young woman's 'piety is to be anxiously concealed, and her knowledge affectedly disavowed, lest the former should draw on her the appellation of an enthusiast, or the latter that of a pedant.'[39] In common with other writers in the period, it is difficult to delineate advice or observations on particular ages from her text, but, as the previous quotation indicates, the common theme is that her anxiety is particularly reserved for young women newly-introduced to public events and general socialising, rather than being directed at home life; advice such as 'In company, young ladies would do well before they speak, to reflect, if what they are going to say may not distress some worthy person present,' is clearly not applicable to family circles.[40] As such, much of More's text concerns individuals in their mid-to-late teenage years, who would be expected to be stepping out of adolescence and into adulthood – but this is clearly not so simple a process, if More has to clearly remind them to think carefully before they speak, to avoid the temptation to offend, and to restrain themselves 'Where great sprightliness is the

[38] Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832*, p. 127.
[39] Hannah More, *Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies* (1777) (via Project Gutenberg), p. 38.
[40] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

natural bent of the temper'.[41] More draws a clear line between youthful energy and precipitousness, and mature reflection, and this is also carried in her terminology: 'young ladies', 'a young female', 'a young woman', instances of the adjective 'young' paired with a mature or ageless noun, generally denote a person presently mingling with wider society, while 'girls' are often evidently physically mature but mentally immature;[42] it is a 'sentimental girl' who 'very rarely entertains any doubt of her personal beauty', 'girls' who 'should endeavour to habituate themselves to a custom of observing, thinking, and reasoning'.[43] Although she never uses the term 'adolescence,' More's work indicates a process of female development which may produce a woman old enough to participate in society but not yet mature enough to go without advice on conduct – a girl indistinguishable from a young lady on sight alone. More's work shows an awareness of adolescence in acknowledging that there is an occupied space between the child and the adult.

Catharine Macaulay outlined a more tailored set of principles in her 1790 text *Letters on Education*. Unlike More's work, one passage does outline specific ages that hint at an understanding of the complex mental development around the period of adolescence. For instance, she outlines that 'the first ten or twelve years of life', very directly, should be devoted to physical fitness and other useful habits rather than to any form of learning which would risk 'burthening the mind with ideas which it cannot well comprehend.' This credits only the mind older than ten or twelve, which in modern terms would be recognised as the pubescent period, with capabilities distinct from those of younger children; indeed, Macaulay goes further in proposing that the child of this age should be raised 'without the use of books, which I would seldom introduce, but with the view of amusement.'[44] It is only after reaching the age of ten or twelve that Macaulay is willing to educate the growing child with factual material, such as grammar, language, and history, perhaps with a consideration that the wider world has little to do with a child any younger than ten or twelve; from then on, however, the course she sets out indicates that she regards the child as ready to learn about the world, though not to participate it. Macaulay outlines one further stratification that is even more telling, insisting that 'At the age of sixteen, and not before, the pupil may commence a course of moral lectures'.[45] This reveals another layer to her complex picture of the developing

[41] Ibid., p. 56.
[42] Ibid., pp. 38, 48-49, p. 79.
[43] Ibid., pp. 56, 83.
[44] Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education* (1790) (Woodstock Books, 1994), p. 128.
[45] Ibid., p. 130.

child; children of ten or twelve are prepared to learn objective facts about the world, while children of sixteen are prepared to learn about abstract, subjective debates that relate to the deepest parts of human conduct. Macaulay's educational plan for young people of what we would recognise as adolescent age groups acknowledges their difference from younger children by only steadily and carefully informing them, at gradually older ages, of the nature of the wider world. As will be seen later, in the discussion of actual gothic novels, this educational plan is echoed in negative form in the disillusioning sufferings of gothic protagonists, in a fashion therefore suggestive of an adolescent process of growing understanding.

To return at last to Maria Edgeworth and her 1798 text *Practical Education*, which though widely attributed to and largely written by her was authored in collaboration with her father, late step-mother, and other associates of the family, is to consider a very late text which in the train of educational theory, some of which theories the large Edgeworth family had actually attempted to put into practice. Theirs was the most experienced and reliable text of the ones cited, founded on direct observation, and often cited examples, of childhood activity. As in other texts of the period, of course, it exhibits considerable linguistic uncertainty as to where the boundary between childhood and adulthood lies, describing on one page 'a young man of fifteen or sixteen' whilst another has a passage which includes the age of fifteen under the definition of 'children', and not as a definite upper limit.[46] But the subsequent appearance of 'a well educated young person […] at the age of seventeen or eighteen' suggests that perhaps fifteen is an age of particular ambiguity, as indeed is indicated by previous texts.[47] The Edgeworths themselves acknowledge that fifteen is a difficult age – and that it is as different from adulthood, as childhood is different from being fifteen: 'children […] at eight years old long to be fifteen, or at fifteen to be one and twenty'.[48] Although the text often more clearly acknowledges the differing capabilities, attitudes, and indeed expectations of differing ages of child, caution must still be exercised. It is tempting to project modern conceptions of adolescence into Richard Edgeworth's characterisation of the child who 'hears he is no longer a child […] his pride would make him despise every thing that is childish, but no change has been brought to the inward man, and his old tastes and new ambition are in direct

[46] Maria Edgeworth, Richard Edgeworth, et al., *Practical Education* (1798), pp. 355, 171.
[47] Ibid., p. 376-377.
[48] Ibid., p. 512.

opposition';[49] indeed, there is a clear resemblance to the passages previously quoted from 'On the progressive growth of man, and transformation of animals'. Yet the following page clarifies Edgeworth's intent in a way which unseats this particular interpretation: 'A new era in his life now commences. […] the boy is four years old, and he must learn to read.'[50] There is no adolescent here, only an apt reminder that adolescence exists in an awkward collocation of multiple factors. Nonetheless, there are only a limited number of ways to read passages clearly descriptive of older childhood, such as one warning to 'watch the moments when dangerous prejudices and tastes begin to be formed […] perceive how the slight conversations of acquaintance operate upon the ever open ear of childhood', in advance of the highly suggestive period 'when the age of passion approaches, and approaches, as it usually does, in storms and tempest'.[51] Although it is impossible to be certain that this is a characterisation of adolescent rebellion, following childhood suggestibility, it bears remembering that contemporary readers would have been equally free to read it as they saw fit. But however one reads the Edgeworths, there is no question of their awareness that to be a young person is different from being a child, when they produce such recognisable characterisations as follows: 'All vivacious young people are fond of wit; we do not mean children, for they do not understand it'.[52]

This concludes a brief review of the position of adolescence in non-literary texts of the period, which bears out the earlier assertion that the term itself is 'of esoteric consideration' – but whether by such a name or not, there was widespread understanding of the existence of an interstitial period between childhood and adulthood with its own temperament and requirements. This thesis will go on to contend that the fiction of the age draws this out – ultimately paving the way for a wider awareness of what is now more clearly delineated as adolescence, though as demonstrated, calling it so in the context of the eighteenth century is not quite an anachronism. In the absence of overt delineation in the late eighteenth century itself, however, literature for adolescents was bracketed either among that for adults, or that for children – bringing this discussion back to the problem of children's literature, and how best to classify it. For it is also true that collectivising and defining 'children's literature' is inadequate to the reality that it simply describes an audience and as such can include any book, with no other conditions. Taken literally, children's literature is any literature read by

[49] Ibid., p. 37.
[50] Ibid., p. 38.
[51] Ibid., p. 152.
[52] Ibid., pp. 215-216.

children – and this includes works written originally for adults. Grenby has even highlighted the fact that 'until the middle of the nineteenth century, children's literature reached only a small section of the population, and many infants proceeded from their hornbooks, psalters, primers, testaments and so on straight to adult literature', a system in which the idea of a literature exclusively for children is redundant, wholly displaced.[53] For such reasons, Grenby has argued that a distinction between children's and adult literature might even be 'anachronistic,' on the grounds that 'Publishers often made no such discrimination' between children's and adult literature, and while 'often' should not be confused with 'mostly,' it is true that the distinction must largely be purely nominal.[54] Of course, even external packaging of literature is highly flexible; F.J.H. Darton regards, for instance, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Robinson Crusoe* as children's literature, 'the three most famous wares' in the eighteenth-century children's book market; 'It would be stupid to let any definition crowd them out, especially as editions of them have always been prepared specially for children.'[55] Darton's claim is contentious in that 'children's literature' is implicitly mutually exclusive with 'adult literature,' where the likes of *Robinson Crusoe* are clearly read by both; conversely, there can exist a division between children's literature as that read by children and children's literature as that to which adults would introduce them. Additionally, in other works there is the same problem of child-adolescent distinction – simple stories and educational works for young children are likely to differ from works written for older children, which approach the complex and dark narratives of the gothic, and much children's fiction sits uncomfortably between the two. James Raven, in his introduction to *A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, agrees that 'There is no satisfactory solution to these boundary disputes' regarding children's literature, in reference to which he states that, as the discussion of age categories above would lead one to expect, often 'the novel for children is apparently designed for adolescents and young people'[56] – a claim relevant to the contentious audience range of some of the works examined in this thesis. The unclear age range of 'children's literature' is a natural reflection of the unclear age range of children, and it must be little surprise to find works bracketed with it that resemble more the gothic novels supposedly aimed at adults; for the same reason, though, it should be clear that adult literature may be of as much interest to 'children' as nominal

[53] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Gothic and the Child Reader, 1764-1850', in Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend, *The Gothic World* (Routledge, 2014), p. 246.
[54] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, pp. 97-98.
[55] Frederick Joseph Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 8.
[56] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 24.

'children's literature.' For that reason, this thesis's use of 'children's literature' as a term will often reflect the intention of the category, but the thesis as a whole, in analysing children's and adolescents' reading and especially its links to the gothic, must include works apparently written for adults – as it will become clear that the intended or assumed audience is rarely the exclusive audience. The instability of the 'children's literature' category is every reason why children's reading should be analysed flexibly, without segregating it from the reading of older audiences. It is the bridging of the gap between the two in the form of appropriation by children of adult works that will be seen to account for the initial overlap between the genres of the gothic and children's literature. That these terms have such ill-defined boundaries perhaps contributes to their crossover potential – they cannot be stated to exclude each other.

To make such declarations is simple, but an actual example of crossover of gothic-status literature between adults and children may better demonstrate the point, and what follows is an example derived from one of the most iconic works of what might be called the gothic canon, illustrating the slippery, subjective margins of the fields trodden herein. Matthew Lewis's gothic novel of 1796, *The Monk*, was, as will be seen, considered infamously child-unfriendly for its use of murder, incest, and Biblical expurgation, for which reason it is one of the best-known examples of the genre.[57] Samuel Taylor Coleridge's excoriating review of the book cautioned that 'the Monk is a romance, which if a parent saw in the hands of a son or daughter, he might reasonably turn pale.'[58] Given this, one would not guess that the text could be based on a story for children. But Lewis himself attested that 'The first idea of this romance was suggested by the story of the *Santon Barsisa*, related in The Guardian'[59] – Emma McEvoy's notes in *The Monk* suggest that *The Guardian* was widely admired and that attributing the story to this source would provide 'an air of respectability'[60] – and indeed 'Santon Barsisa' not only shares close narrative links with *The Monk*, but was also presented repeatedly and without apparent controversy as being suitable, even designed, for a younger audience.

The plot of 'Santon Barsisa', a short story of only a few pages, is as follows: A king sent his sick daughter to a reputable and authentic holy man, the Santon Barsisa, to be healed, upon which visit this holy man, acting on the temptations of a devil, raped and murdered her and

[57] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (Oxford University Press, 2008; first published 1796).
[58] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, review of *The Monk* in *The Critical Review*, Vol. 19 (February 1797), pp. 194-200.
[59] Matthew Lewis, Advertisement in *The Monk*.
[60] Emma McEvoy, Explanatory Notes in *The Monk* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 444.

buried her body in his cave. The duplicitous devil notified the authorities of this act, at which point the Santon was arrested and scheduled to be hanged; the devil promised an escape if the Santon would worship him, but betrayed the man's trust, and the holy man was executed. That this plot is played out in not dissimilar form in *The Monk* is reasonably evident; without wishing to summarise the more accessible title, the Santon is analogous to Ambrosio, the princess to Antonia, and the devil to Matilda and Lucifer. There is little need to dwell on this aspect. Considerably more interesting and relevant is the publication history of 'Santon Barsisa' that eventually led Lewis to encounter it, and the way that publication history is indisputably tied to an audience of children.

'Santon Barsisa' was published at least six times in the eighteenth century, with the following sources identified: *Turkish Tales* (1708); *The Guardian* (1713); *Thirty-Six Curious Histories, Fables, and Allegories* (circa 1752); *The Pleasing Instructor* (1756); *The New Polite Instructor* (1771); and a collected edition of *The Guardian* again (circa 1793).[61] *Turkish Tales* claims, on its title page, that its stories were 'Written Originally in the *Turkish* Language by *Chec Zade*', though it is more directly a translation of Pétis de la Croix's 1707 text *Contes Turcs*, with the volume's preface attributing its translations to 'Mr. Petis Library.'[62] In the absence of earlier examples or evidence to dispute this provenance, it seems reasonable to accept *Turkish Tales* as the first English-language appearance of 'Santon Barsisa'. The 1713 *Guardian*, in its frame to the story, directly sources it to *Turkish Tales*: 'calling in at my Bookseller's […] the *Turkish Tales* happened to lie in my way; upon opening of that amusing Author, I happened to dip upon a short Tale, which gave me a great many serious Reflections.'[63] Notably, though Lewis's source of *The Guardian* accredits 'Santon Barsisa' to *Turkish Tales*, his own advertisement did not, an 'omission' of French influence which Angela Wright considers an 'undoubtedly calculated' reaction 'in the context of another war which pitted the English against the French' during 1796.[64] *Thirty-Six Curious Histories, Fables, and Allegories* does not offer a specific source for 'Santon Barsisa', but its title page declares that its texts are 'Taken from the *Spectator* and *Guardian*', and as such the latter was

[61] Anonymous, *Turkish Tales* (1708) (original French: Pétis de la Croix, *Contes Turcs* (1706)); Isaac Bickerstaff (Richard Steele), 'The History of Santon Barsisa' in *The Guardian*, Iss. CXLVIII (August 31 1713); Anonymous, *Thirty-Six Curious Histories, Fables, and Allegories* (circa 1752); Anonymous, *The Pleasing Instructor* (1756); Anonymous, *The New Polite Instructor* (1771); Isaac Bickerstaff (Richard Steele), *The Guardian* (collected edition circa 1793).
[62] *Turkish Tales* (1708), title page, Preface, p. 1 [pages unnumbered].
[63] *The Guardian* (Monday, August 31, 1713; Issue CXLVIII), p. 1 [pages unnumbered].
[64] Angela Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764-1820* (Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 124.

presumably its source.[65] *The Pleasing Instructor*'s contents page also sources 'Santon Barsisa' as from 'Guard.', *The Guardian*.[66] *The New Polite Instructor* names no source; however, it seems probable that *The New Polite Instructor* is an updated and adapted version of *The Pleasing Instructor*, judging in part by the way they share numerous stories (with *The Pleasing Instructor* attributing sources, and *The New Polite Instructor* not) and by the clear parallels, to be analysed shortly, between their respective full titles:

> *The Pleasing Instructor: or, Entertaining Moralist. Consisting of Select Essays, Relations, Visions and Allegories, collected from the most Eminent English Authors. To which are prefixed, New Thoughts on Education. Designed for the Use of Schools, as well as the Closet; with a View to form the rising Minds of the Youth of both Sexes to Virtue, and destroy in the Bud, those Vices and Frailties, which Mankind, and Youth in particular, are addicted to.*
>
> *The New Polite Instructor: or, Universal Moralist. Consisting of Select Essays, Tales, Fables, Visions and Allegories, for the Entertainment and Instruction of Young Minds. Selected from the most eminent Authors.*

Finally, the 1793 *Guardian* is a collected edition, and thus presumably uses its own 1713 edition as its source for 'Santon Barsisa' (since it employs the same preface); this collected edition was probably M. G. Lewis's source, having been published roughly three years before *The Monk*, whilst all previous sources were published before Lewis's birth, the 1713 *Guardian* being particularly unlikely to have survived some eighty years.

As will be discussed, the intellectual climate of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries forbade and excoriated the provision of horrid and supernatural stories to young people, so it may seem contentious to state that each issuing of 'Santon Barsisa' positions it as being suitable for the improvement of specifically young minds: It is a story in which a venerated holy man commits rape and murder at the instruction of a devil. While the finer stratification of age groups within the general category of the 'young' would today see this tale thought acceptable for young adults, the lack of such subtlety in contemporary considerations of youth, in which individuals were children from their infancy to their teenage years, suggests that this story was effectively being recommended for even the youngest children. A slight mitigation is that the story's most violent acts take place in the abstract; the rape and murder are not described, merely stated to have occurred. Nonetheless, an understanding of the story

[65] *Thirty-Six Curious Histories, Fables, and Allegories* (circa 1752), title page.
[66] Contents in *The Pleasing Instructor* (1756), p. 2 [pages unnumbered].

requires an understanding of what these acts constitute; these are graphic sins to expose a child to, even through fiction. It is impossible, of course, to reconstruct perfectly the original context; perhaps the use of education to excuse the violence of such stories was both commonplace and acceptable, or perhaps children possessed a greater understanding of sinful and violent acts than a modern reader might expect. Still, the contrast between the reaction to Lewis's *The Monk* and the universal representation of 'Santon Barsisa' as suitable for the young is striking. It is worth considering in detail the evidence that each text presents the story as being so suited.

The original *Turkish Tales* declares in its preface that its tales were authored by 'Chec Zade, *Tutor to* Amurath *the Second*', Chec Zade having '*so contriv'd 'em as to instruct his Pupil, at the same time that they serv'd to divert him; as may easily be gather'd from the Moral couched in 'em*', and thus their principal aim was '*to render Virtue amiable, and Vice odious.*'[67] By positioning these tales as an educational instrument – one using a subsequently commonplace method of rendering this education more appealing to children by means of being entertaining as well – there is a clear implication that the same purpose holds true for contemporary readers, and hence the relevance of reissuing the tales at all. In other words, it is implicit in the context given that the *Turkish Tales* are suitable reading, even educational reading, for a young child – not that, ostensibly, any other kind of reading existed for children or indeed anyone, although in practice many tales were largely for the purposes of amusement and were appropriated by children on those grounds. From the English-language debut of 'Santon Barsisa', therefore, it was presented as having a moral and educational purpose that made it appropriate reading matter for the young.

The Guardian's reissue of 'Santon Barsisa' in 1713 made some minor changes, most significantly including a brief introduction to the story and an epigraph derived from Ovid, translated thus: '*'Tis good to learn ev'n from an enemy.*'[68] The use of 'learn' is suggestive here of an educational text; the introduction itself does not mention children, but does emphasise the instructive power of the tale. Reflecting on the apophthegm that 'there are few, if any books, out of which a man of learning may not extract something for his use,' the editor, Richard Steele (pseudonymously, Isaac Bickerstaff) claims that *The History of Santon Barsisa* 'may as probably divert and instruct a great many persons of plain and virtuous

[67] Preface in *Turkish Tales*, pp. 1-2 [pages unnumbered].
[68] *The Guardian* (1713), p. 1 [pages unnumbered].

minds', and moreover, 'the moral to be drawn from it is entirely Christian, and is so very obvious, that I shall leave to every reader the pleasure of picking it out for himself.'[69] Once again there is an emphasis on the text's educational properties, and the fact that the text is useful for 'a great many persons of plain […] minds' and has a moral that is 'so very obvious' suggests that narrative complexity is no obstacle to its presentation to the young for their education, as well as the adult – but also once again, any directive that the text might be suitable for young people is implicit if present at all.

Thirty-Six Curious Histories, Fables, and Allegories; Taken from the Spectator and the Guardian; Peculiarly Adapted to Form young Minds to a Love of Virtue, and an Abhorrence of Vice was published in 1752, although it may have appeared in earlier years, given the note on the title page that it is '*The Third Edition: to which is added a Dedication to Parents and Instructors of Youth, on the Importance of an early, virtuous Education*'.[70] This edition features no preface, introduction, or moral to the story of 'Santon Barsisa' itself; however, the title of the collection clearly indicates its designated audience of children, the '*young Minds*' who are to be '*Formed*', or rather, educated. There is no doubt that the stories are advocated as having educational merit. In addition, as indicated, there is a dedication on the subject of education; entitled '*To Parents, And such as have the Education of Youth*,' it declares that 'A Principal Point in Education is to begin Early,' a point which it emphasises repeatedly.[71] Although the dedication draws no explicit connection between its principle and the story, this clearly indicates that 'Santon Barsisa' has the potential to instruct even the youngest minds, without any warning against its subject matter. But the instruction is not to be direct; it is rather to be stealthy. The stories are to be 'made very useful, by insensibly leading the Reader to a love of the Virtues of some, and an Abhorrence of the Vices of others.'[72] In other words, and not dissimilarly to *Turkish Tales* itself, the educational process is to be unconscious; the stories themselves are to appear merely entertaining. Evidently overt moralising to children was out of favour at this particular period – or alternatively, this is a thin justification for providing entertaining stories which are not, in fact, especially improving.

The same can be said for *The Pleasing Instructor* or *The New Polite Instructor* – which use an identical version of the text, including the major addition of a moral, and as such will be

[69] Ibid.
[70] *Thirty-Six Curious Histories, Fables, and Allegories*, title page.
[71] Dedication in *Thirty-Six Curious Histories, Fables, and Allegories*, p. 1 [pages unnumbered].
[72] Ibid., p. 2 [pages unnumbered].

considered as a single instance. The emphasis on instruction is foregrounded in these publications' very titles – '*Instructor*'. The earlier '*Pleasing*' *Instructor* seems to be following the line of *Turkish Tales* in compounding education with entertainment; the '*New Polite*' *Instructor*, on the other hand, may have adapted to changing tastes in adopting a more serious tone. Of the full titles (which appear above), once again the earlier of the pair highlights amusement and use in its designation as '*Entertaining Moralist*,' the more pleasurable aspect of which is omitted in the later '*Universal Moralist*'. *The Pleasing Instructor* includes thoughts on '*Education*', openly identifies itself as suitable for both school and home, and outlines its aim of inculcating virtue and eradicating vice – just like the *Turkish Tales*. *The New Polite Instructor* omits any threat of vice, however, and merely restricts itself to '*Entertainment and Instruction*' for the young – resurrecting the entertaining aspect, but burying it in the lengthy subtitle. In both cases there is an open statement that the publication is useful and indeed made for the younger reader, and should be an improving influence; therefore, 'Santon Barsisa' must fall under this category of improving literature.

The preface in *The Pleasing Instructor* follows the same message; the collection's use of '*Eastern Stories* […] *will, it is to be hoped, recommend it to Young Minds, whose Attentions are thereby particularly engaged, and by the assistance of which* Morality *steals insensibly into their good Graces, and makes a more lasting Impression*'.[73] Once again, the tactic is of morality by stealth, hiding it within an entertaining tale which is the more natural reading matter of the younger mind. '[…] *the Pleasure and Instruction of Youth has been principally considered in the following Collection*', the preface goes on to say.[74] There is no attempt to disguise the paratexts as being for children; the volume is firmly for parental mediation. It goes on to include an essay entitled '*Thoughts on Education, By Way Of Introduction*', as if to labour the point. There is no way of interpreting this volume's inclusion of 'Santon Barsisa' as being anything but a claim that the story is suitable for children, entertaining to children, and educational for children. Similarly, *The New Polite Instructor* opens with an '*Introduction, On The Importance Of Education*', which recycles the points of its predecessor, those being that its 'moral and entertaining *Fables* and *Stories*' function 'by pleasingly and insensibly leading the Reader to a *Love of Virtue* and *Abhorrence of Vice*,

[73] Preface in *The Pleasing Instructor*, pp. 1-2 [pages unnumbered].
[74] Ibid., p. 2 [pages unnumbered].

from some exemplary *Moral*.'[75] Morality, once again, is spread as if through stealth, rather than through overt instruction.

Both *Instructor*s extend the title of the story thus: '*The History of Santon Barsisa; shewing the fatal Effects of encouraging bad Thoughts*.'[76] A moral to the story is thus foregrounded before the story even begins, guarding it against accusations of gratuity, or abandonment partway through in shock at its gruesome plotline. But a more extensive moral is outlined at the end:

> From this may be inferred, that evil thoughts will sometimes start up even in the best [of] minds, which when checked as soon as noticed, can never be deemed criminal, but ought to be carefully stifled in *Embrio*, as the first incitements to sin; for vice naturally begets vice, and the least digression from virtue is frequently succeeded by such a train of evils, as leads on imperceptibly to certain ruin.[77]

The traditional stratagem of scaring children into obedience is thus employed, reiterating the moral allegorised in the narrative. By sandwiching 'Santon Barsisa' between two moral messages, the *Instructor*s allay concerns about the story's content by making explicit its instructional purpose, one most applicable to children, who need both the caution and the reassurance of a lesson which an adult would likely have already learnt firsthand (or already dismissed).

The repeated publication of this text, its promotion in an educational and child-friendly context, and the fact that these attracted no controversy, raise the clear question of why *The Monk*, on the other hand, spawned such outrage. Evidently literary standards had changed since the last explicitly child-friendly recommendation of the text in *The New Polite Instructor* in 1771; more significant, though, is that 'Santon Barsisa' was simply too ephemeral – too short, never noteworthy, published without fanfare in esoteric sources – to attract much attention, in contrast to the wildly popular *The Monk*, the public attacks on which would only have drawn it more attention and sales. Nonetheless, the following chapters will show the story to be no anomaly in what it presented to children.

[75] Introduction in *The New Polite Instructor*, p. iv.
[76] *The Pleasing Instructor*, p. 203; *The New Polite Instructor*, p. 263.
[77] *The Pleasing Instructor*, p. 206; *The New Polite Instructor*, p. 267.

That a bibliography of appropriation, iteration, and derivation between audiences is situated in the eighteenth century is no surprise. Children's literature, like the gothic, is rooted in this century, when British literary culture first recognised childhood as a significant developmental phase. However, as established, children's literature was not confined to literature written for children; there is evidence of younger readerships of gothic novels, though many authors would have dreamt of no such thing, and perhaps this is accounted for, at least superficially, by such novels' use of romantic narratives – and obliviousness to any need to patronise their audience, for they were not, at least ostensibly, writing for children. But write for children they did – and Chapter One shows how this could be the case, in considering the late eighteenth century's recommended reading for children but more prominently emphasising representations of explicitly unrecommended reading, using famous satires on the gothic to illuminate the reality of their adolescent readership. In reconstructing how and why the gothic became a genre consumed by children, significant examples of the now exceedingly obscure few novels which catered to and celebrated this unauthorised indulgence are also consulted, and these two arms of literature, together with analysis of the canonical gothic's preoccupation with youth and upbringing, result in a proposition that the gothic novel was a narration of specifically adolescent responsibilities and concerns which facilitated the realisation of the adolescent as an intermediate state between childhood and adulthood.

Chapter Two plays a key role in tracing the dispersal of gothic tropes into children's fiction, for which purpose gothic must be considered in all literary forms, which exceeded that of the novel alone – for the way adolescents in particular were reading gothic was changing as the nineteenth century dawned. Chapter One unearths strong anecdotal evidence of adolescents reading gothic novels, which contained narrative elements suitable to encourage a younger reader to identify with the protagonists. Against the critical grain, the authors of this era took to such fiction in their younger days and openly avowed their admiration: The twenty-three-year-old Jane Austen declared in a 1798 letter that '*our* family […] are great Novel-readers & not ashamed of being so',[78] while the sixteen-year-old Percy Bysshe Shelley wrote to a publisher in 1809 to request that, having been 'indulging my favourite propensity in writing', they would 'publish a Romance' that he was writing, a gothic novel issued the following year

[78] Jane Austen, 14. To Cassandra Austen (Tuesday 18 – Wednesday 19 December 1798), *Jane Austen's Letters*, ed. by Deirdre Le Faye (Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 26.

as *Zastrozzi*.[79] But less well-documented is another form of gothic reading marginalised by the literary establishment, regarded as subliterary, and revealed in only a few contemporary hints, because it was a form little acknowledged by anyone of the period in critical writing – a form operating beneath the attention of reviewers, with its ephemerality prejudicing responses to and recollections of it towards generalisation and omission. The consequence of this is that these few contemporary observations have been repeated in critical literature again and again. This is not wholly to be regretted, however, as the most oft-repeated observation, made of the young Shelley by Thomas Medwin in his 1847 biography *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, is of the utmost relevance to this study:

> He was very fond of reading, and greedily devoured all the books which were brought to school after the holidays; these were mostly *blue* books. Who does not know what blue books mean? but if there should be anyone ignorant enough not to know what those dear darling volumes, so designated from their covers, contain, be it known, that they are or were to be bought for sixpence, and embodied stories of haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages—a most exciting and interesting sort of food for boys' minds […][80]

Bluebooks were a specifically gothic variation of the chapbook – cheap booklets of predominantly poor-quality fiction, chiefly marketed to the lower classes but of natural appeal to anyone of restricted income, including schoolboys like Shelley and Medwin – though the latter implies that they were more widely known. In the early nineteenth century, bluebooks formed a growing and ultimately quite large library of reputedly ephemeral gothic fiction, the abundance of which is explained by its simplicity of production: Only a story a fraction of a novel's length could be contained within a bluebook's pages, and the scant profits made from sales discouraged works of ambition. Bluebook stories exhibit the same iterative characteristics as the gothic novel, but often magnified: It was not uncommon for bluebooks to abridge, openly or under a disguised name, the plot of a full-length gothic novel, or even to comprise a self-contained excerpt unaltered from a longer work. For being derivative, cheap, and transient – for the low production values of the bluebook naturally meant it was both easily damaged and considered unworthy of preservation – the critical mainstream has largely treated bluebooks as scarcely worth notice, but the question of readership grants them obvious relevance to this study. Chapter Two will support critical

[79] Percy Bysshe Shelley, To Longman and Company (May 7 1809), *The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Roger Ingpen, Vol. VIII (Ernest Benn Limited, 1965), p. 4.
[80] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1847) (Oxford University Press, 1913), p. 24.

assumptions of a youthful audience for the bluebook market with an analysis of bluebooks narratives to suggest how they suited this emergent reading audience, but proposes also that equally important is the publishing and purchasing context of bluebooks, which fostered adolescence by reshaping dependent child readers into independent adult participants in the marketplace, acquiring fiction on their own terms rather than relying on parental provision.

As literature departs from the early nineteenth century, any application of the term 'gothic' requires further justification. As discussed, the very existence of the 'gothic' as a genre is tenuous and to a degree subjective, being a term rarely self-applied by the literature it denotes, and while the romances or terror-literature of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century would later be known to critics as Gothic literature, for subsequent fiction Jarlath Killeen points out that 'the very application of the term 'Gothic' to Victorian literature is controversial.'[81] The most conservative approaches to the gothic segregate it chronologically as well as generically, so that only works written within a particular historical period – broadly speaking, the 1790-1830 period covered by Chapters One and Two – qualify. After this period, in discussing the major trends of Victorian literature one is likely to speak instead of realist fiction, which is self-explanatory, and sensation fiction, contemporary melodramas of criminal conspiracy. Nonetheless, it is to be remembered that 'All time frames in literary history are permeable and the gothic genre did not pass away overnight', in Georgieva's words.[82] Literature, certainly, is no field of overnight changes – the necessarily slow pace of writing and publication ensure it – and although the 'gothic' designation may be an artificial one, it would be crude to suggest that its existence could be abbreviated so simply. Avril Horner suggests a continuum between old and new trends, such that 'from the 1840s onwards' the gothic is reworked 'as an aspect of the sensation novel and realist fiction.'[83] Sensation fiction's relevance being obvious, it is not difficult to see the roots of realism in later gothic stories closer to contemporary times and places, and which partake as much of the ostensibly plausible sentimental novel or novel of manners as of the romance of other times. While gothic bluebooks and tales were comfortable with their foreign climes and historical settings, for many authors the impetus was to write for the present day and to expose (or fabricate) the terrors of modern life – more or less the manifesto for socially

[81] Jarlath Killeen, *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1825-1914* (University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 1.
[82] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child*, p. xii.
[83] Avril Horner, 'Victorian Gothic and National Identity: Cross-Channel 'Mysteries'' in Andrew Smith and William Hughes, eds., *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion* (Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 108-123.

conscious realism and sensation fiction alike. Such is the suggestion of Alexandra Warwick in writing on the gothic of the 1820s to the 1880s, that it 'becomes less visible in its conventional forms, but appears again, not so obviously and not separated by a clear generic boundary, with its tropes now embedded in the most contemporary forms of fictional and material expression.'[84] If the gothic's rise to fame was a journey from eclectic unconventionality to moribund convention, its fall follows in reverse.

All of which is to suggest that 'gothic,' per se, does not so much vanish in the nineteenth century as become subsumed into other forms and traditions – but this still suggests a vanishing of, at least, its roots and integrity. Such a perspective is not universal, however; there is cause to argue that gothic survives in forms recognisably gothic, rather than its qualities becoming absorbed by another generic label for simple homage and allusion. As this implies, it is not necessary to rename or wholly redefine the gothic for a new era. Having done so once, this thesis must continue to define a gothic story as one which 'combines any subjects one might expect to find in or around a gothic castle with a general atmosphere of menace and terror', for as Groom has warned, 'stretching [gothic] into an umbrella term' means that it 'risks being emptied or nullified as a meaningful term'.[85] It bears mentioning that this thesis makes no claims to an exclusive or correct definition of the gothic; it is simply a definition being employed for this context. Killeen is right to criticise the practice of ''purifying' the genre, by ring-fencing it through a strict definition and then evicting texts which fail to comply.[86] Gothic is a retrospective and artificial categorisation, and therefore necessarily subjective; the best practice may be to select single, close definitions for a specific purpose, while respecting the existence of other definitions for alternative methodologies and ends. As such, even in a less prolific literary landscape for the gothic, this thesis stands by its definition – one led by narrative tropes in combination with stylistic atmosphere – as remaining relevant to nineteenth-century literature, just as it remains relevant to the development of the adolescent subject.

Nonetheless, in respect of the gothic formula's dilution, Chapter Three broadens both its literary and historical perspective, moving past Chapter One's formulation of historical context and Chapter Two's examination of a specific form to consider developments in

[84] Alexandra Warwick, 'Gothic, 1820-1880' in *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination*, p. 99.
[85] Nick Groom, *Gothic: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2012), Preface (pages unnumbered in electronic edition).
[86] Jarlath Killeen, *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1825-1914*, p. 3.

gothic children's literature across the continuing nineteenth century, embracing early and later years, and authors both famous and obscure. It is not appropriate to survey a wider body of literature or a single textual form as a whole here; such generalisations are neither possible nor reasonable. Instead, Chapter Three is primarily structured around four case studies of significant examples of nineteenth-century gothic – specifically, those where that gothic bears particular significance to adolescence. This demonstration of the breadth of gothic possibilities in the century comes with a concomitant preference for generic and temporal distinction rather than prima facie proximity. To help distinguish multiple modes of gothic, Chapter Three has for this reason been divided into two Parts. Part I examines two canon-tier novels representing a binary division between gothic possibilities – the female and the rural, the male and the urban – but which are linked by their debt to the bildungsroman narrative form and their integration of the child's experience, a major theme of the nineteenth-century novel, into narratives of gothic event; these serve as maturing experiences that progress the protagonists through a state of disillusioning adolescence and finally into reasoning adulthood. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (1861) represent the organic evolution of the gothic novel into nascent literary fiction, where the study of character and society are of equal significance as melodramatic incident. Conversely, the two case studies in Part II have a greater focus on specifically gothic and children's literary texts, at the expense of the status of the universally-known classic. One title is heavily gothic-accented, recontextualising gothic tropes and formula into an alternative setting but utilising the genre as an allegory to develop its own unique theme, and finding in its gothicism a resonance with the reading adolescent; such is Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman's *Fabiola* (1854). The second title, George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872), is one of the few works of overt, intended children's literature in this thesis, a novel not consumed by children and adolescents on a cross-reading basis but as the primary audience, all while holding a gothic affinity and plot structure which demands a maturing experience similar to adolescence. Part II also briefly considers other locations of gothic background, youth representation and adolescent readership in the later nineteenth-century fiction market, including penny dreadfuls, short stories by Ellen Wood, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Sheridan Le Fanu, and a final transitional work of both classic and modern gothic and crossover readership, a largely unknown novel somewhat atypical of the work of its author Jules Verne. At issue is the lasting impression made by the gothic upon nineteenth-century authors, and whether they in turn passed the gothic on to their readers; ultimately, whether we find a pattern of the gothic endangerment of youth being consumed by youth.

Collectively, the material analysed in this thesis represents a diverse sample of gothic-influenced and child-inclusive fiction from the beginning to the end of the long nineteenth century. Exploring the earliest flourishings of both gothic and children's fiction produces fresh insights that can be found only when reflecting on both together, and the existence of the gothic in early children's fiction, and the status of early gothic as children's fiction, will emerge from this material. Furthermore, the possibilities created by this unity will shed light on literary culture's formation of the adolescent, concluding in formulating a theory on the relationship between these fictions and adolescence. These hitherto-marginal forms of late-eighteenth and nineteenth-century fiction are easily neglected in the grand scheme of literary history, when rivalled by the vaunted form of the nineteenth-century novel and the birth of literary fiction; this thesis argues instead that children's and gothic fiction are both interesting on their own merits and relevant to the nature of the world's most popular fiction in the present day – gothic fiction aimed towards an adolescent audience.

'*I would select such books as were proper to be put into the hands of youth* […] *and prevent their taking these amusements clandestinely, for how, in an age like this, cou'd I flatter myself I cou'd prevent them?*'
--Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance* (1785)[87]

[87] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance* (1785), Vol. II, p. 84.

CHAPTER ONE

Blurring the Boundaries

1760-1800

'"Come, my lads and lasses, sit ye down—well now for it, but what must this story be about?"
A castle, cried some, and a ghost, cried others—'
--James Parkinson, *Dangerous Sports* (1800)[88]

Sunk in the obscurity of the earliest children's fiction is *Dangerous Sports*, an educational novel by James Parkinson published in 1800. '*Dedicated to Parents and Schoolmasters*' and '*Addressed To Children*', it came with the clear and explicit aim of '*Warning them against wanton, careless, or mischievous Exposure to Situations, from which alarming Injuries so often proceed.*'[89] The plot concerns the injurious scrapes youngsters might get into, and how to avoid them – but a third of the way through the novel is '*The ghost chapter*', featuring, the chapter synopsis hesitantly relays, '*mysteries and shrieks, and—faintings, and—a ghost, more terrible than ever yet appeared to mortal eyes.*'[90] In a manifestation quite disconnected from advice on not opening windows hastily or the proper handling of spinning-tops, 'a figure entered, covered with blood from head to foot, heart-rending anguish was depicted on its countenance and its hands, from which blood flowed in streams, were confined with large and bulky chains'.[91] In fact, the tale this ersatz spectre unfolds involves falling through the floor in a neighbouring ruin and into a tub of black puddings, a circumstance no less humorous for its improbability.[92] This apparently gratuitous scene of horror is coloured by an extraordinary digression from the narrating author. 'Radcliffe', 'Lewis', 'Godwin', 'on your heads and shoulders must be placed the blame of this wonderful and terrific tale,' he declares, referring to Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, and William Godwin, three authors of gothic novels whose famous works in the 1790s just preceded *Dangerous Sports*; 'for who now dare write? for who now will read aught but what is filled with crashing and shrieking, and bones and tombs, and aerial beings, such as mortal eyes never yet saw.'[93]

[88] James Parkinson, *Dangerous Sports* (1800), p. 117.
[89] James Parkinson, *Dangerous Sports*, title page.
[90] Ibid., p. 57.
[91] Ibid., p. 66.
[92] Ibid., p. 68.
[93] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

Parkinson's suggestion that he was obliged to include a gory supernatural scene for marketing purposes is probably only ironically condemnatory; the parody is written with obvious relish. But his justification paints a surprising picture of the literary market and children's reading culture, compounded by a subsequent imagined dialogue between author and reader: '"what you have had a peep in the novel your sister was so buried in reading? […] why so anxiously delighted with what you are now reading?" "Because it is so shocking, Sir."'[94] A shocking novel, appropriated by a young reader from their sister – an audience, not just of youth, with a taste for the sinister and supernatural – a blood-soaked 'ghost' in a children's book of practical safety advice: *Dangerous Sports* accepts as a normality the cultural intersection between children's reading and gothic literature. To understand the depth and significance of this normality, though, its origins must be explored.

As the Introduction notes, gothic literature is rooted in a period where children were subject to greater understanding and scrutiny, and consequently, literary provision. While childhood was probably acknowledged as such before, Penny Brown observes that 'After 1750, the recognition of the needs and interests of children of different age ranges, and a concern with supplying suitable reading material… resulted in new initiatives on the part of publishers and authors that were to shape the development of children's literature'.[95] The foundation of the children's literature market indicates fresh concern with the construction of then-indeterminate childhood, the better to safeguard the nation's future – or profit from a new demographic. This cultural shift can be partly attributed to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, although he may equally be a symptom of changing times rather than a cause. His essay-novel *Émile, or Education*, published in 1762, raised awareness of the child's growth into adulthood as a continuous, evolutionary process, and probably inspired debate simply by taking a strong position on children's education.[96] Rousseau advocated the influence of nurture over nature, analogising that 'Plants are fashioned by cultivation, man by education', and recommended careful and consistent education for children, reasoning that 'education comes to us from nature, from men, or from things… If their teaching conflicts, the scholar is ill-educated and will never be at peace with himself'.[97] The childhood state in *Emile* seems to last until the age

[94] Ibid., pp. 64-65.
[95] Penny Brown, *A Critical History of French Children's Literature, Volume One: 1600-1830* (Routledge, 2008), p. 98.
[96] The original French edition uses the accented *É*, but the cited translation does not; all subsequent references will follow the cited edition.
[97] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or Education*, trans. by Barbara Foxley (J.M. Dent & Sons, 1914; original French, 1762), p. 6.

of fifteen and beyond, a lengthy period to monitor; hence, perhaps, the incipience of children's books, answering not children's interest in reading but parents' need to occupy them appropriately. Rousseau himself scorned childhood reading, recommending only a single book: *Robinson Crusoe*. As noted, although written for adults this was a bestseller of the eighteenth-century children's market and beyond, perhaps for the reason Rousseau outlines: Namely, that it 'supplies the best treatise on an education according to nature'[98] – possibly better formulated as saying that it satisfies a childhood fantasy of independence without the interference of adult guardians. However, Rousseau's cause to recommend the novel as an adult is, as ever, not necessarily confluent with children's cause for enjoying it; children's reading has always been dominated by an appetite for fictional, thrilling narratives, with educational improvement not necessarily uppermost. Marina Warner repeats Jorge Luis Borges's maxim that 'all great literature becomes children's literature; he was thinking of the *Odyssey*, *Don Quixote*, *Gulliver's Travels* and *Robinson Crusoe*', and in her reading, this is because such stories 'place the audience in the position of a child, at the mercy of the future, of life and its plots' – and yet capable of maturing to dominate those doubly-defined 'plots'.[99] These stories enact an idealised, fantastic vision of the child's growth through adolescence into adulthood. Such reading tastes were the perfect conditions for children's later enjoyment of the gothic.

Naturally, though, there were many earlier books written for and read by children – categories which do not entirely overlap; as Grenby has pointed out, 'Some authors and publishers announced the age range of their target audience, but whether real readers actually complied with these recommendations is open to question', as compliance with such prescriptions has, anecdotally, always been lax at best.[100] The given age-ranges of children's fiction in this period are not to be imagined as particularly precise: '*Addressed to Children*' is the extent of *Dangerous Sports*'s regulation, and likewise many others.[101] Age-range and target audience must usually be inferred from text and distribution, which includes factors such as price and means of acquisition, but as will be shown, if such non-textual considerations can be dismissed, or children's access to books made easier, the potential audience widens considerably – text alone is more accessible on any level than authors and publishers might have appreciated. Conversely, perhaps they appreciated textual accessibility

[98] Ibid., p. 147.
[99] Marina Warner, *Stranger Magic: Charmed States & the 'Arabian Nights'* (Chatto & Windus, 2011), p. 11.
[100] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, p. 37.
[101] James Parkinson, *Dangerous Sports*, title page.

all too well, and were deeply worried by it. The propriety of fiction was hotly debated in this period, as Raven summarises: 'almost all commentators agreed that literature must offer either truth or utility and that the danger of the novel was that it might offer neither.'[102] The danger of corruption by literary entertainment was, on Rousseauian grounds, all the more potent when it threatened children, as will be discussed later in the chapter. Perhaps this is why Rousseau condemned reading as 'the curse of childhood' – but he had to acknowledge that 'it is almost the only occupation you can find for children.'[103] Writers were determined to exploit reading without it being a 'curse', and their works for children reflected exactly such concerns for proper upbringing. Coveney notes that 'the literature actually written for children at the time… frequently [had] a moralizing quality',[104] and Penny Brown agrees that 'Young readers became the object of an intense campaign of intellectual and moral indoctrination… There was no differentiation, in many respects, between the instructional and recreational aspects of reading.'[105] This may partially account for the popularity of *Robinson Crusoe*, which had not been written to instruct children but to instruct generally. Its didactic agenda of showing the efforts of labour alone on a desert island effectively situates it in a fantasy landscape relative to readers' environs, while its forthright Christianity was typical of novels for adults; as such its character was quite different from the average book written for children, rather than incidentally read by them. Gothic novels had the same advantages, as adventurous stories of suspense in non-contemporary and thus effectively fantastic settings, in which moral didacticism only infrequently imposed upon the narrative.

Nonetheless, gothic authors were also involved in the didactic, prescriptive endeavour, for suspicion of children's reading did not diminish after *Emile*. In her *The Progress of Romance* of 1785, Clara Reeve cautioned against indiscriminate reading, but, in the face of children's freedoms and ingenuity, had to admit 'how, in an age like this, cou'd I flatter myself I cou'd prevent them?' She suggested instead actively selecting 'such books as were proper to be put into the hands of youth' and indeed concluded with a gendered list of such texts.[106] James Watt argues that Ann Radcliffe's hugely popular gothic works were 'outwardly concerned with the education of their heroines (and readers)', a significant statement given that Radcliffe's works, though not undeviating nor undifferentiated, provided the formula for

[102] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 18.
[103] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or Education*, p. 80.
[104] Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood*, p. 49.
[105] Penny Brown, *A Critical History of French Children's Literature, Volume One*, p. 98.
[106] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance* (1785), Vol. II, pp. 84, 101-104.

much gothic writing, a typical scenario involving a young heroine left parentless, stranded in an extensive and ruinous gothic building, and menaced by a sinister masculine oppressor.[107] Radcliffe expounded on the nature of youth in her first novel in 1789, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, writing that 'young imagination heightens every scene' – acknowledging that young people literally see the world differently. She attributes to young people an innate charitability – a 'warm heart' that 'expands to all around it' – suggesting that youths have greater empathy than adults. She also proposes that young people are more optimistic – or naïve: 'The happy benevolence of our feelings prompts us to believe that every body is good'.[108] This affirmation of youthful innocence is in concert with Rousseau's 'incontrovertible rule': 'the first impulses of nature are always right; there is no original sin in the human heart'.[109] Alison Milbank suggests that Radcliffe ultimately commits to this perspective as genuine in writing narratives which 'take the form of unveilings and revelations of secret truths': The triumph of truth and justice over falsehood implies, in her reading, that 'the Good is the objectively real'.[110] It is this essentially philanthropic view of human nature and of childhood that underpins the politics of the gothic: For all practical purposes, the young heroes are absolutely good, while their aging persecutors are absolutely evil. Even in later gothic novels featuring villainous protagonists, the dichotomy of total good and total evil, with the former predominantly the younger, is preserved. There are, of course, subtleties according to the individual; in Radcliffe's own oeuvre, the love interest of *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* Valancourt, spends much of the narrative imprisoned for gambling debts, while the text's villain, Count Montoni, risks his life on several occasions to rescue the heroine from rival kidnappers.[111] Male heroes often have moral deficiencies, while villains are usually corrupted by poor teaching, as will be examined shortly. But the reader is never left in any doubt as to who is the narrative's hero, and who the villain. If black-hearted villains seem inconsistent with the philanthropy of Radcliffe and writers like her, it must be recalled that they frequently and generously allow deathbed repentance scenes for their narratives' villains; a magnanimous example is the Marquis de Montalt, of Radcliffe's 1791 *The Romance of the Forest,* who consumes poison to escape earthly judgement, then spends his final hours upon 'all the atonement that remained for him', including providing 'a full

[107] James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, p. 106.
[108] Ann Radcliffe, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), p. 4.
[109] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or Education*, p. 56.
[110] Alison Milbank, 'Ways of seeing in Ann Radcliffe's early fiction: *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) and *A Sicilian Romance* (1790)', in Dale Townshend and Angela Wright, eds., *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism, and the Gothic* (Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 97.
[111] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) (Oxford World's Classics 2008), pp. 652, 266-267, 349.

confession of his guilt', and establishing the novel's heroine 'beyond dispute in the rights of her birth; and also bequeathed her a considerable legacy.'[112] The Marquis is thus spared a horrible death, resolves all past injustices, and is the ultimate instrument of the heroine coming into her fortune, and his example is not uncommon.

The uncorrupted child-hero is the main moral instrument in gothic narratives, and the most useful prism through which to view this theme is a later novel than most in this chapter, thus forming a reflection on the genre's history, and its author's: Ann Radcliffe's final novel, *Gaston de Blondeville*, written in 1802 but published only posthumously in 1826, in which she wrote 'the prompt feelings of youth [give] shape and colour and consequence to small circumstances, wrought into visions of their own imagination […] which would be dim and cold and contracted, as their sun should decline.'[113] While the use of 'imagination' in both her earliest and latest texts, along with 'believe' and 'visions', are positive and arguably Christian expressions of what Mark Akenside called *The Pleasures of Imagination,*[114] it anticipates, as Watt notes, that the protagonists 'are all disabused of their illusions about 'the world'' on their gothic journey[115] – but also signifies the faith in human nature that is their strength. Radcliffe, with a continuing eye on the attention given to children's education, adds in *Gaston de Blondeville* 'Woe to him, who would have set before their eyes the severe form of experience, and have reduced the gaieties of their boundless hope to the many checquered scene of real existence!'[116] This is a possible coded warning to other gothic authors and enthusiasts who might provide children with corrupting literary influences; in the years between Radcliffe's mid-1790s publishing height and the 1802 composition of *Gaston de Blondeville*, the genre's popularity had produced works of radical violence, sexuality, and cynicism which were targeted by public opprobrium, particularly, as will be seen, Matthew Lewis's 1796 novel *The Monk*. Radcliffe's own fiction employed events of moral collapse, but if they are justified where others were not, it is by their optimistic conclusions, which Glennis Byron characterises as 'fairy-tale endings', in which 'passions and superstitious fears are ultimately rejected […] excess is controlled, and desire is regulated […] moral systems are restored'[117] – the latter being the most important factor in assuring readers, perhaps

[112] Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) (Oxford World's Classics 2009), p. 353.
[113] Ann Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondeville* (H.C. Carey and I. Lea 1826), Vol. II, p. 129.
[114] Mark Akenside, *The Pleasures of Imagination* (1744).
[115] James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, p. 106.
[116] Ann Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondeville*, Vol. II, p. 129.
[117] Glennis Byron, ''As one dead': Romeo and Juliet in the 'Twilight' zone' in John Drakakis and Dale Townshend, eds., *Gothic Shakespeares* (Routledge, 2008), pp. 167-185.

against probability but never propriety, that moral rectitude must always triumph over moral weakness, and order over anarchy. If the optimism of Radcliffe's endings goes too far, her contention was that it was unsafe or irresponsible to do otherwise.

Radcliffe's warning against artificial disillusionment of youth is based, like Rousseau's theory, on an interpretation of a naturalised upbringing which the guardian's duty is to enforce. This dualistically passive and active role for a human educator is to uphold life's natural order: 'We may watch and regulate—to do this is our duty […] gradually we may prepare the mind for the great truths, that time will cast over the thousand hues of hope and joyance'.[118] The 'duty' to 'regulate', it must be remembered, was taken very seriously by the period's authors; the problem is diagnosing at what point depictions of crime and punishment become indulgent and corrupting rather than useful and healthy. Even James Parkinson's hyper-regulatory educational novel, *Dangerous Sports*, concerns itself less with the spiritual and philanthropic as it does catalogues of incidents resulting in 'the bones of the legs broken', 'the loss of a limb or life', 'the back bone […] actually broken', 'breaking the skull', 'destroying the eye', and similar lurid corporeal fates.[119] In many gothic fictions, no line could be drawn between instruction and entertainment, but Radcliffe, like Rousseau, presented idealised visions of education. A particular vision of natural upbringing recurs in the gothic – that of the child raised in seclusion and simplicity, often in rural surroundings, wholly innocent of the sins of society. Emily St. Aubert of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is the prototypical example (though all of her heroines were cut from similar cloth). Raised by her parents in 'scenes of simple nature,' her father 'cultivated her understanding with the most scrupulous care', a potential horticultural metaphor participating in a late eighteenth-century trend of botanical imagery in writing on women.[120] Sam George highlights a plausible origin for this link between botanical metaphors and women's education in Mary Wollstonecraft's tract of two years before, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, which George attests practiced 'substituting images of enlightened growth for those of luxuriant decay in order to demonstrate society's neglect of women's educational potential'.[121] Wollstonecraft's approach to women's schooling may have influenced Radcliffe's depiction of Emily's education; for instance, she is permitted to learn the arts

[118] Ann Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondeville*, Vol. II, pp. 129-130.
[119] James Parkinson, *Dangerous Sports*, pp. 71-73.
[120] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, pp. 1, 6.
[121] Sam George, *Botany, sexuality and women's writing 1760-1830: From modest shoot to forward plant* (Manchester University Press, 2007), p. 25; Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792).

'only because they were congenial to her taste', and therefore not for any social function.[122] Emily's upbringing is presented as a Rousseauian negotiation between natural inclinations, permitted to develop where they are useful or safe, and the necessity of a strong character, 'that can alone counterbalance the passions, and bear us, as far as is compatible with our nature, above the reach of circumstances.'[123] That this must be 'compatible with our nature' is key; Emily's natural character is not suppressed or manipulated but given ways to 'counterbalance' one impulse with another.

Emily's upbringing is replete with pleasures, dismissive of social fashions, and considerate of future responsibilities – an example widely imitated in gothic fiction. Regina Maria Roche's *Clermont* included a near-imitation of Emily's education, in the eponymous Clermont's 'cultivating the mind of his daughter' in 'remote obscurity',[124] two gothic texts among others Georgieva points to as 'all about fathers whose chief employment is teaching their daughters in a countryside setting using a model inspired by a combination of Lockean and Rousseauvian ideas';[125] education is not the exclusive preserve of fatherhood, however, for it is under a surrogate mother and her confessor that Laurette, the heroine of Eleanor Sleath's *The Orphan of the Rhine*, experiences 'the unfolding of each infant virtue' in a 'castle […] mouldering into ruins' and 'separated by nature from the habitable world'.[126] Gothic authors were quick to observe that the execution of such secluded upbringings could be achieved perfectly in the characteristic settings of gothic narratives, such isolated and unpopulous places as convents and abandoned castles. The importance of education is further emphasised in frequent contrasting of the virtues of a solitary, naturalised upbringing with the upbringing of the story's villains, who are presented as having been overindulged in childhood, forming insatiable and vicious temperaments. Emily St. Aubert's childhood is paralleled by that of Laurentini di Udolpho, a key character and villain in the novel's backstory; 'the weakness of her principles and the strength of her passions', characteristics which lead her to seduce Emily's uncle and orchestrate her aunt's murder, are attributed to her parents having 'indulged her with weakness, and reprehended her with violence', with the latter strictness receiving particular criticism for leading Laurentini to be 'exasperated by their vehemence,

[122] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 3.
[123] Ibid., p. 5.
[124] Regina Maria Roche, *Clermont* (1798), Vol. I, pp. 1-2.
[125] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). p. 79.
[126] Eleanor Sleath, *The Orphan of the Rhine* (1798) (via Project Gutenberg), Vol. I, Chapter Eight, Chapter Four (pages unnumbered).

instead of being corrected by their wisdom'.[127] But although Georgieva insists on gothic novels as 'a true-to-life experiment about children turning to good and children turning to evil, about the freedom to choose and the impossibility to act when fate imposes its due', villains, whether for narrative convenience or a reassuring division between good and evil, are as often simply bad rather than poorly-educated, whereas it was much easier for narratives to dwell on the protagonist's upbringing.[128] Positive examples, such as Emily's, are therefore more common than negative ones. Roche and Sleath's novels were published in 1798, at a gap of four years since *Udolpho* in 1794, suggesting that this Radcliffean character type was popularised and widely adopted. The gothic constructs this model of education as ideal, and evidently readers agreed, although of course few could have been themselves so raised; nonetheless, the presentation of heroines as virtuous and desirable for their education and lack of self-consciousness may have constituted a model for young people to imitate. The gothic was, ultimately, not a genre to shy away from didacticism and moralising; indeed, Clery argues that 'Moral messages would be useless if not joined to compelling narratives that stirred the emotions of the reader', proposing that moral education actively demands the assistance of genres such as the gothic.[129]

Of course, there were many purely educational non-narrative texts – Clara Reeve's list of suitable children's books included such titles as *A Little Spelling-Book for Children* and *History of England—Question and Answer*.[130] Fiction, though, is this study's primary concern. As noted, eighteenth-century children's books tended to be at least ostensibly instructive; as with the gothic, one can always dispute the extent to which a foregrounded moral really drives a text or inculcates itself in the reader. But certainly, as the editors of *The Gothic in Children's Literature* point out, 'Children were expected to covet books that seasoned sound instruction with the tame delights that came from light whimsy'.[131] Their example comes from Wollstonecraft's suitably didactically-titled *Original Stories from Real Life: with Conversations Calculated to Regulate the Affections and Form the Mind to Truth and Goodness*; that children were to 'covet' such sanitised books implies either a docile childhood culture, or naiveté of that culture. To some extent, though, this was no different from the literature written for adults at the time, which was also expected to foreground a

[127] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, pp.655-656.
[128] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child*, pp. 39-40.
[129] E.J. Clery, 'The genesis of Gothic fiction', p. 23.
[130] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, Vol. II, pp. 102-103.
[131] Anna Jackson, Karen Coats, Roderick McGillis, 'Introduction' in *The Gothic in Children's Literature* (Routledge, 2008), p. 2.

moral or improving message. Peter Garside suggests that, conversely, such 'moral writing' for adults 'not infrequently overlaps at this period' with children's literature, with the latter an assimilation of an adult form rather than the source.[132] There is much cross-pollination here. Perhaps the only difference between children's and adults' texts is that children's literature might conceivably feature morals new to its audience, whereas it is doubtful that any improving messages in fiction would be unfamiliar to adult readers. This is probably the reason why some texts scarcely extended themselves in this respect: Walpole's preface to *The Castle of Otranto*, his very early gothic novel of 1764, identifies its message as being that '*the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation*'; in the guise of translator, Walpole declares that he 'could wish [the author] had grounded his plan on a more useful moral than this'.[133] Ironically, considering his condemnation of his own moral, this is by some way 'the most prevalent theme in Gothic fiction', to quote David Punter;[134] as suggested above, 'truth or utility' do not necessarily walk hand-in-hand with a thrilling narrative.[135] Although literature was obliged to employ 'truth or utility', the practicality and even integrity of what truth and utility they include is readily open to question and satire. Grenby explains that, in this period, 'children's literature was very largely marketed on the basis of its power to improve the socio-economic prospects of the reader, and to teach commercial values such as thrift, industry' – in other words, to teach that improvement is tied to the earning of money, an avaricious mentality that is scarcely moral at all. Towards the close of the century, however, and the period of the popular gothic, 'Moral tales had domestic settings and affluent characters […] they became increasingly dedicated to educating readers in moral virtue'.[136] Confluence with the more compassionate, morally refined gothic of writers such as Ann Radcliffe is easily detected – a confluence in content which might indicate also a confluence in readership.

If a new cultural agenda called for increased care in children's upbringing, it might have been difficult for authors to get away with crafting unimproving children's literature for one simple reason: Parental mediation. Grenby states that 'Adult supervision of children's reading was almost universally recommended throughout the [1700-1840] period', a recommendation

[132] Peter Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era: Consolidation and Dispersal' in *The English Novel 1770-1829*, Vol. II, p. 35.
[133] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, p. 7.
[134] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror, Volume 1: The Gothic Tradition* (Longman, 1996), p. 46.
[135] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 18
[136] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Early British Children's Books: Towards an Understan.ding of their Users and Usage'.

therefore presumably commonly adhered to, at least within their capacity to practice it.[137] Not just the cause but effect of this is reflected in children's literature itself, for Penny Brown has observed that, for many children's works, 'the authors seem to have written them with the dual audience of child and adult parent or tutor in mind, aware that it was adults who purchased the books and read them to and with their children.'[138] In theory, children would have their reading diet dictated and monitored by parents and other educators – who would be unlikely to approve any shocking narratives, though with the corollary that unutterably dull children's books may also have been filtered out. Joint reading ideally requires joint enjoyment – a positive sign for the crossover appeal of gothic novels. This ideal of parental mediation is merely theoretical: James Parkinson's *Dangerous Sports* provides a counter-example, not only reminding readers that shocking novels can be borrowed, with or without consent, from older family members, but also depicting an apparently typical social milieu in which young children roam far from their home entirely unattended. Tellingly, the plot is constructed not to advocate that parents watch their children like hawks. Instead, it advocates that youths should be furnished with practical, memorable safety advice, doubtless such as *Dangerous Sports* itself. Parkinson may have been simply commercially minded, but many were the novels which, in Raven's words, 'wished to intervene to curtail excesses or introduce to adolescents of good families the voice of mature responsibility';[139] Parkinson may have truly and accurately believed that parents in 1800 simply did not have time to monitor their children constantly – which potentially suggests that children could acquire dangerous novels as easily as bruises and fractures, and with no more concern from their parents at this pastime.

Grenby's review of children's diaries from the mid-to-late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries leads him to conclude that 'some, older, children were using circulating libraries' to acquire books, and while Grenby questions the complete reliability of their accounts – they are 'not necessarily representative of all children' – the existence of circulating libraries to make literature accessible to low-income consumers favours also the child reader, a matter further discussed in the following chapter.[140] If Parkinson was writing for children who wandered unsupervised far from home, there is much reason to believe that his references to

[137] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, p. 242.
[138] Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 12.
[139] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 112.
[140] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Adults Only? Children and Children's Books in British Circulating Libraries, 1748-1848' in *Book History*, Vol. 5, Iss. 1 (John Hopkins University Press, 2002), p. 24.

the gothic reflected his audience's tastes rather than entirely his own; children are, anecdotally, fairly indiscriminate in their reading, and suitable reading or children's literature were simply what they could get – and in many circumstances, the gothic was it. Certainly, the decidedly popular fare stocked by circulating libraries points again to a means of introducing this ostensibly unsuitable literature to child readers: 'those children who had to borrow their books were drawn to the gothic, perhaps an inevitable consequence of the libraries' stock.'[141] The circulating library appears prominently in several children's self-documented records of their reading in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century – many of which have been collected by the Open University's UK Reading Experience Database. The journal of Joseph Hunter, during the period of his childhood spent in Sheffield as an apprentice cutler, documents his use of a local circulating library, Lindley's, to obtain numerous gothic novels without apparent difficulty: On returning Walpole's 'the "Castle of Otranto" to the Library' in June of 1798, he reflected that 'It is one of the most entertaining novels I ever read', while his acquisition of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in August of that year comes with a note revealing it was his 'a second reading' of the novel, on which 'it loses half its intrest [sic]'; he had read Radcliffe's *The Italian* even earlier, in March 1797, hot on the heels of the book's actual publication, and declared that she was 'the best writer in her way of anybody I heard of.'[142] Hunter's birth in 1783 identifies him as fourteen and fifteen during the period in question. Christopher Thomson, in his 1847 *Autobiography of an Artisan*, recalls that for three years between 1813 and 1816 he 'continued a regular subscriber to the circulating library', though having been born in December 1799 he would have been between only thirteen and seventeen years old. Regularly staying up late to read, one evening 'I read Lewis's "Monk"', with effects which would turn the head of any moral guardian: 'On rising from my seat to go to bed, I was so impressed with dungeon [sic] horror, that I took the candle and stole up stairs, not daring to look either right or left, lest some Lady Angela should plunge a dagger into me!'[143] The authors cited reinforce the idea that circulating libraries were a particularly good point of access for the most popular titles, with Matthew Lewis's 1796 gothic novel *The Monk* particularly commonly-recorded; the journals of both

[141] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, p. 116.
[142] Joseph Hunter, entries for 2nd June, 13th August 1798, 27th March 1797, *Journal of Joseph Hunter 1797-1799* (British Library), via UK Reading Experience Database <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=10812>, <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=10838>, <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=2548> [accessed 14 December 2015].
[143] Christopher Thomson, *Autiobiography of an Artisan* (1847), p. 67, via UK Reading Experience Database <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=8170> [accessed 14 December 2015].

the seventeen-year-old Mary Shelley (Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin, at the time) and her sixteen-year-old stepsister Claire Clairmont both document their reading of *The Monk* on the 22nd of September 1814, Mary reading 'all evening' and Clairmont, like Thomson, 'Sit[ting] up till one reading the Monk.'[144] Plainly, many younger people encountered no obstacle, in either their circumstances or their tastes, to reading the gothic.

But as far as didactic children's books are concerned, Brown claims that many authors of such books 'also wrote texts for adults in a similar vein',[145] and Grenby goes further in declaring there to be 'substantial crossover' between children's and adult literature.[146] Little wonder, then, that audiences crossed over, if there was a close resemblance between the works written for each. Brown constructs a generic example as focussing on 'a child who is seen as an imperfect creature needing to be trained and socialised, who receives moral, social and factual instruction and is exposed to experience under the watchful eye of an apparently omniscient adult mentor, usually a tutor or parent figure'[147] – a pattern with its roots in *Emile*, perhaps, which this summary matches exactly. *Emile*'s influence was such that it would certainly have been imitated in later literature by those who followed Rousseau's agenda. The gothic novels which open on the protagonist's childhood and education as discussed above similarly participate in this convention. Brown indicates that 'the reader is in this way instructed together with the fictional child' through the principle of audience identification; books for particular audiences tend to feature protagonists who match that audience's age and gender, to encourage the reader to envisage themselves in the protagonist's position – 'a potentially powerful tool for the educator.'[148] Grenby agrees that 'authors, illustrators, and publishers' alike 'strove extremely hard to provide texts in which the child reader could recognise him or herself', by 'placing children at the centre of narrative, having the action focalised through a child.'[149] The easiest way to create investment in a text for a person is to literally bring them into it, to make the narrative feel relevant to their experience – and, for children, to acknowledge their awareness of their self-importance as individuals. It is not

[144] Mary Shelley, *The Journals of Mary Shelley*, ed. by Paula R. Feldman (1995), Vol. 1, p. 28, via UK Reading Experience Database <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=8857> [accessed 14 December 2015]; Claire Clairmont, *The Journals of Claire Clairmont*, ed. by Marion Kingston Stocking (1968), p. 45, via UK Reading Experience Database <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=15183> [accessed 14 December 2015].
[145] Penny Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 12.
[146] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Adults Only? Children and Children's Books in British Circulating Libraries, 1748-1848', p. 20.
[147] Penny Brown, *The Captured World*, p. 13.
[148] Ibid., pp. 13, 98.
[149] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, p. 21.

entirely necessary; readers can see an idealised self even in quite different characters, as discussed above in relation to *Robinson Crusoe*, a book not written for children but popular with them precisely for its attractively independent adult protagonist; James Raven proposes that readers may 'identify—possibly quite fictitiously—with that implied readership' for fantasies of self-construction.[150] But such conventions dovetailed into the gothic's preoccupation with young people's vicissitudes; while it is not strictly necessary for children to identify with gothic protagonists in order to enjoy such works, it is a clear facilitator to empathy (or at the very least no barrier) that these protagonists were often young men and women not much older than themselves – and, as Michael Hancher has pointed out, 'children usually like to imagine themselves as older, not younger.'[151] A familiar (or underdeveloped) protagonist is easy for readers to project themselves onto, while unfamiliar situations form a catalyst for the imagination, providing a thrill that the reader would never encounter on their own.

Alternatively, among the fictional narratives written for or simply generally given to children were collections of Eastern tales, supposedly sourced from such exotic locations as Arabia, Persia, and Turkey, which were implicitly presented as suitable for children upon their introduction to Europe in the early eighteenth century. Not coincidentally, they can also be seen as paving the way for gothic fiction, in their deployment of exotic settings, supernatural incident, and frequently duplicitous claims of foreign or ancient authorship. Though they lack an emphasis upon fear, Hoeveler agrees that they 'began what we now recognize as the "orientalising" tendencies in the gothic'; moreover, they helped to construct the audience for subsequent gothic material. Consider, for instance, the archetypal *Arabian Nights' Entertainment* – 'favorite childhood reading', according to Hoeveler, of such figures of the gothic periphery, all appearing in this study, as 'Wordsworth, Coleridge, […] Percy Shelley, and later […] the Brontës'.[152] *Arabian Nights* was, Grenby claims, a stalwart of circulating libraries, where it was 'difficult to tell whether these found their way into the libraries because of their appeal to children or to adults.'[153] The true audience of much literature becomes increasingly elusive the more closely it is investigated. But regarding children's interest, the text had been, in a sense, adapted for younger audiences; Antoine Galland, whose

[150] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 100.
[151] Michael Hancher, 'Alice's Audiences', in *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. by James Holt McGavran Jr. (University of Georgia Press, 2009), p. 199.
[152] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs*, p. 201.
[153] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Adults Only? Children and Children's Books in British Circulating Libraries, 1748-1848', p. 21.

French translation of 1704-12 introduced the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment* to Europe, 'expurgated the eroticism that heightens many passages in the original tales', rendering it less objectionable to polite society and thus, indirectly, to children.[154] Another example is *Turkish Tales*, noted in the Introduction as a 1708 translation of Pétis de la Croix's 1707 text *Contes Turcs*, itself a rival to the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*. The didactic purpose resurfaces here, the text claiming to have been written by 'Chec Zade', tutor to the young 'Amurath the Second' – a claim which would be difficult to prove, but which allowed the book's French source to be conveniently obscured – such tales supposedly having been 'so contriv'd as to instruct his Pupil, at the same time as they serv'd to divert him', with the ultimate didactic purpose of rendering 'Virtue amiable, and Vice odious'.[155] Over the course of the century, similar texts would be appropriated and repackaged in collections more overtly intended for children, such as the aforementioned *The Pleasing Instructor: or, Entertaining Moralist* in 1756, the title page of which declares itself to be 'Designed for the Use of SCHOOLS, as well as the CLOSET; with a View to form the rising Minds of the Youth of both Sexes to Virtue'[156] – later revised and reissued in 1771 under the more sober title of *The New Polite Instructor: or, Universal Moralist*, still claiming to be 'For the Entertainment and Instruction of Younger Minds.'[157] Once again, these show an increasing awareness that children were eager to read exciting narratives which, if they were didactic at all (which is doubtful), concealed it behind an interesting story – further setting the stage for gothic and children's literature's crossover.

Adults were not obliged to sympathise. Clara Reeve had little time for such texts; in 1785 she targeted *The Pleasing Instructor* and similar compilations as 'shameful impositions upon the public', and although she praised the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, she derided *Turkish Tales* as among 'a swarm of imitations,' mostly 'of the French manufactory'.[158] As described above, it was convenient to obscure a French provenance; as Raven has noted, 'France was an enduring source of anxiety.'[159] Reeve's was a significant claim due to widespread Francophobia in Britain, arising from the two nations' historical antagonism and particularly their direct confrontation in the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763; France had openly aligned

[154] Marina Warner, *Stranger Magic*, p. 16.
[155] Anonymous, 'Preface' in *Turkish Tales* (1708), unnumbered pp. 1-2, and Pétis de la Croix, *Contes Turcs* (1707).
[156] *The Pleasing Instructor* (1756), title page.
[157] *The New Polite Instructor* (1771), title page.
[158] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, Vol. II, pp. 47, 58.
[159] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 59.

itself with the United States against Britain as recently as the American Revolutionary War of 1775-1783. Given this, citing a French origin as innately degrading would also elevate Reeve's patriotic status, though Raven thought such claims an 'easy opinion of critics, unwilling to contemplate domestic origins for worthless or dangerous novels'[160] – this criticism was also used to obscure British flaws. Gothic novels were often slightly more ambivalent about France, and their condemnation of the corruption of the decadent urban elite – exemplified in Radcliffe's writing 'This young man has never been at Paris' as a compliment from her French protagonists[161] – is the natural extension of their celebration of pastoral seclusion. Reeve's own reading list for children recommended a number of works which, like the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, were of French origin but supposedly drew on ancient stories, including *Telemachus* and *Travels of Cyrus*, narratives of the youthful educational journeys of two mythic or ancient figures[162] – whose ilk were further constructing the conditions which would see children read the gothic.

Reeve also engaged with the practice of introducing works written for adults to an audience of children; the popular example of *Robinson Crusoe* she treated with caution, claiming that it could be put 'too soon' into the hands of children, but she praised it for the reason cited repeatedly above: That it would 'under the disguise of fiction, warm the heart with the love of virtue'. One of her characters even admits to thinking of *Robinson Crusoe* 'as a book for children only', indicating the transformation it had undergone in the public consciousness.[163] But her reading list also cites Samuel Richardson's works under the heading '*Books for Young Ladies*', and Reeve's authorial mouthpiece in *The Progress of Romance* declares that she 'should want no other criterion of a *good* or a *bad* heart, than the manner in which a young person was affected by reading *Pamela*.'[164] Such praise is interesting, given that Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*, written in 1740, presages many of the features of the Radcliffean gothic in its narrative of an innocent young girl imprisoned and subject to attempted seduction by a scheming nobleman; Clery has noted of the period that 'Some of the most successful works contained episodes that would not be out of place in Gothic fiction.'[165] Unlike gothic fiction, however, *Pamela* took place in a contemporary setting, and therefore had claims to realism and relevance which were important to a society that insisted

[160] Ibid.
[161] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 41.
[162] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, Vol. II, p. 104.
[163] Ibid., Vol. I, p. 126.
[164] Ibid., Vol. II, pp. 103-104; Vol. I, p. 135.
[165] E.J. Clery, 'The genesis of Gothic fiction', p. 23.

'whatsoever contradicts my Sense, / I hate to see, and never can believe';[166] some gothic novels also used contemporary settings, but they suffered from guilt by association with the wider genre. Reeve's comments on *Pamela* cannot be legitimately interpreted as approbation for future trends in fiction – but her own *The Old English Baron*, published some years earlier in 1778, bears a resemblance to the subsequent novels of Radcliffe in its situation of eighteenth-century manners in a medieval setting. Reeve's words indicate that there was social acceptance of gothic tropes in fiction given to children under certain conditions – again, to quote Clery, 'Moral messages would be useless if not joined to compelling narratives that stirred the emotions of the reader'.[167] Reeve herself participated, if unconsciously, in the process of formulating the gothic genre and tailoring it towards an audience of contemporary youth.

Obviously, it did not go unnoticed that children were reading books not intended for them. It was a trend which met with multiple reactions. As shown above, figures from across the second half of the eighteenth century, including Rousseau in 1764 and Reeve over two decades later in 1785, were happy to recommend books for adults to an audience of young people – albeit only those books they believed would lead to the moral improvement demanded by their educational programs. *Robinson Crusoe* was, for Rousseau, an exception rather than a rule, and Clara Reeve expressed distrust of 'books of a gloomy tendency,' which she claimed were responsible for 'much harm in this country, and especially to young minds';[168] she recommended instead the conventional didactic method of using fiction as a 'disguise' to provide 'examples of virtue rewarded, and vice punished'.[169] In the 1790s, the increasing controversy of 'terrorist' fictions created notably antagonistic viewpoints: The claim by the writer of the satirical 'The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing' that his daughters 'would read [romances] whether I pleased or not',[170] suggesting an unacceptable breakdown in patriarchal discipline, was one; another, Samuel Taylor Coleridge's more emphatic warning in his review of Matthew Lewis's aforementioned 1796 novel that 'the Monk is a romance, which if a parent saw in the hands of a son or daughter, he might reasonably turn

[166] Horace, *Ars Poetica*, trans. by Wentworth Dillon, 4th Earl of Roscommon (1709; original Latin, circa 15 BCE), in E.J. Clery and Robert Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook 1700-1820* (Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 175.
[167] E.J. Clery, 'The genesis of Gothic fiction', p. 23.
[168] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, Vol. II, p. 25.
[169] Ibid., Vol. II, p. 41.
[170] Anonymous, 'The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing' in *Monthly Magazine*, 4, 21 (August 1797), pp. 102-104.

pale' – indeed, that it was 'a *mormo* for children, a poison for youth'.[171] This articulates the dark side of the 'books as education' argument – that as books might educate properly, incautious or ill-chosen books might corrupt a young person's understanding, inculcating lax morals or unrealistic views of life, destroying their future prospects almost as effectively as a literal poison. Commentators of the eighteenth century were only happy for children to read the books recommended by adults, and denounced independent choice for the worst of what a child might discover.

However, these injunctions reveal the normality of children's reading of gothic literature in the act of forbidding it. Some warnings go further and represent problematic children's reading within parodic gothic literature, fuelling the genre they ostensibly warn against. It is unlikely that the moral guardians of the literary world would inveigh in such numbers against a non-existent or ephemeral phenomenon – notwithstanding the entirely possible effect that young people would, perversely and yet understandably, hear such warnings and immediately become highly curious about the reading matter thought so unsuitable for them. As has been noted above, there were numerous general dictums against reading, but several are more specific to the gothic, or directly refer to it among a broader proscription. Long before the gothic took its most recognised form in the late eighteenth century, the mere telling of supernatural stories to children was attacked since as much as a century beforehand. John Locke, alluded to earlier in the same breath as Rousseau, preceded the latter's work on education with his own *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* by some seventy years, his text being published in 1693 – and yet it was hugely influential on eighteenth-century child-rearing; Geoffrey Summerfield unambiguously announces it, 'For three-quarters of a century', as 'the most influential English book on child-rearing: in effect, *the* book.'[172] The theories Locke set were followed, indeed openly referenced, by teachers and educational authors including those discussed in the Introduction – to little credit for supernatural fiction, for what Locke brought to it was an injunction: 'always whilst he is young, be sure to preserve his tender mind from all impressions and notions of spirits and goblins, or any fearful apprehensions in the dark.'[173] Indeed, this broad warning against all things supernatural also manages to encompass theoretically rational tales of terror, should they only

[171] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, review of *The Monk* in *The Critical Review*, Vol. 19 (February 1797), p. 197.
[172] Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason: Children's Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (University of Georgia Press, 1985), p. 2.
[173] John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693), via Wikisource <https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Some_Thoughts_Concerning_Education> [accessed 29 September 2015], Part IX, Section 138.

be set at night or in a lightless chamber, ruling out even those gothic tales in which the only ghost to be found is a hapless child plunged into a tub of black puddings. Locke's warnings also have class implications for the gothic's perhaps most traditional vector, in Dale Townshend's words 'the Old Wife's orally transmitted tales of supernatural activity',[174] for Locke warned that it was, in fact, the 'indiscretion of servants' and their reckless discipline through which children were most commonly threatened by the supernatural: 'whose usual method is to awe children, and keep them in subjection, by telling them of raw-head and bloody-bones, and such other names as carry with them the ideas of something terrible and hurtful, which they have reason to be afraid of when alone, especially in the dark.'[175] While class prejudice undoubtedly played a role, Locke's opposition to the supernatural was informed by his educational approach, which was comparable to the *tabula rasa*, the blank slate principle later adhered to by Rousseau. Locke wrote that 'of all the men we meet with, nine parts of ten are what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education' – adding, in the obligatory metaphorical turn of Rousseau's 'Plants are fashioned by cultivation, man by education'[176] and indeed the concept of the *tabula rasa* itself, that 'there 'tis, as in the fountains of some rivers, where a gentle application of the hand turns the flexible waters in channels, that make them take quite contrary courses'.[177] In the case of the supernatural, its tales set the rivers of the mind into twisted and dangerous channels from which there is no escaping: 'Such bug-bear thoughts once got into the tender minds of children, and being set on with a strong impression from the dread that accompanies such apprehensions, sink deep, and fasten themselves so as not easily, if ever, to be got out again'.[178] The supernatural is compared to the fangs of a monster, sinking deep and not to be shaken off; it makes a strong negative impression upon the blank slate, and the effects are, inevitably, seen in adulthood – and here Locke cites anecdotal evidence rather than just theory:

> I have had those complain to me, when men, who had been thus used when young; that though their reason corrected the wrong ideas they had taken in, and they were satisfied that there was no cause to fear invisible beings more in the dark than in the light, yet that these notions were apt still upon any occasion to start up first in their prepossessed fancies, and not to be removed without some pains.[179]

[174] Dale Townshend, 'The Haunted Nursery: 1764-1830' in *The Gothic in Children's Literature* (Routledge, 2008), p. 17.
[175] John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Part IX, Section 138.
[176] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile, or Education*, p. 6.
[177] John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Part I, Section 1.
[178] Ibid., Part IX, Section 138.
[179] Ibid.

Servants falsely school the young in the terrors of the supernatural, and those irrational and unreal terrors continue to affect the adult, to haunt them, long after childhood. The triple concerns of class prejudice, education moulding the adult, and suspicion of supernatural fiction unite in one theory, to recur over and over through cautionary writings across the eighteenth century, up to and beyond the gothic itself.

And yet before further educational theorists had had much opportunity to reiterate Locke's ideas, anecdotal evidence relates adolescents actually enjoying such tales of terror – a fact seemingly more horrifying to the responsible adult than the tales themselves. As early as 1711, the influential essayist Joseph Addison wrote of overhearing a group of young women exchanging fireside ghost stories – a scenario which Devendra Varma notes is 'conducive to the romances of shudders, which again encouraged the creation of Gothic romance' in later times, pointing again to a potential young audience for the gothic.[180] Addison's response to the event was to describe how 'the Imaginations of the whole Assembly were manifestly crazed, and I am sure will be the worse for it as long as they live.'[181] In fairness, the criticism is less hyperbolic in recollecting, as Varma points out, that 'Obviously people believed in the supernatural more then than now', so Addison may be right to perceive dangers in overconsumption of frightening material by the gullible.[182] This also, however, demonstrates the historical entrenchment of suspicion against supernatural fiction, within which much gothic fiction is included. Although Railo points out that gothic stories are 'not "ghost-stories" in the general acceptance of the term', partly because a great many gothic novels were constructed according to the principles of the 'explained supernatural' – in which apparently supernatural occurrences transpire to be fraudulent or mistaken – the events in gothic fiction are written as if genuinely supernatural and invoke all the thrills and fears of a supernatural scene.[183] That it is not Addison, the elder voice of reason, but the young audience risking their sensitive minds anticipates later developments in educational theory under which childhood experiences significantly impact upon the adult self and psychology; examples relating this to supernatural fiction are to be found across the history of children's literature. To look forward over a century later, Thomas Medwin reported of his friend Percy Bysshe Shelley's youth that, after reading gothic novels, 'he was subject to strange, and sometimes frightful dreams, and was haunted by apparitions that bore all the semblance of

[180] Devendra P. Varma, *The Gothic Flame* (Scarecrow Press, 1987), p. 27.
[181] Joseph Addison, 'No. 12 (Wednesday 14 March 1711)' in *The Spectator* (1711), in *Gothic Documents*, p. 15.
[182] Devendra P. Varma, *The Gothic Flame*, p. 27.
[183] Eino Railo, *The Haunted Castle*, p. 71.

reality'.[184] Similar anecdotes are rife up to and including modern times. The reading of supernatural fiction, it is proposed, does not merely cause a momentary craze but lifelong corruption – and cautionary voices of the eighteenth century took this threat very seriously.

Addison's early warnings against relating supernatural fiction to the young were neither unusual nor unremembered, and principled stands against any unrealistic fiction were echoed throughout the eighteenth century. In 1750, Samuel Johnson, another man of letters, wrote that unrealistic fiction constituted 'lectures of conduct, and introductions into life' to 'the young, the ignorant, and the idle', who are 'easily susceptible of impressions', 'easily following the current of fancy', and 'open to every false suggestion'[185] – in other words, to the young and ignorant, novels are seen as representations of real life, and the readers act in accordance with their example. Dr. Johnson's critique emerged most distinctly in late gothic parody, as will be shown, but the theme became newly relevant in 1764, the year of *The Castle of Otranto*, which might be called the earliest gothic novel. *Otranto* is relevant to Dr. Johnson's criticism in that it was part of a significant trend of fiction in the period which engaged in the pretence of literal truth, claiming its manuscript to have been 'found in the library of an ancient catholic family in the north of England […] it must have been [written] between 1095, the aera of the first crusade, and 1243, the date of the last'.[186] Whether Walpole's work was a joke or hoax – that is, whether he intended its veracity to be taken seriously or otherwise, which is disputed – concern over readers trusting the accuracy of fiction was legitimate. Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century authors 'regularly over-stretched claims of authenticity, especially in constructing historical fiction', Raven agrees, and since 'historical fiction' here stands for fiction set in past eras, the gothic is therefore both an obvious and accurate culprit, with 'the miraculously recovered manuscript' a favoured canard.[187] 1764 was also, of course, when the theme of fiction's suitability for children was taken up by Rousseau; to return specifically to supernatural fiction's role in this debate, John and Anna Laetitia Aikin (subsequently Anna Laetitia Barbauld), writing after *Otranto* in 1773, go further in undermining the idea that children are entertained by such stories at all; when children are 'chained by the ears, and fascinated by curiosity' upon hearing ghost stories, 'we' – that is, regulators of children's reading – 'are not […] to imagine that they are in a state of enjoyment', no matter how interested the description paints them as being. The

[184] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1847) (Oxford University Press, 1913), p. 27.
[185] Samuel Johnson, 'No. 4' in *The Rambler* (1750), in *Gothic Documents*, pp. 176-177.
[186] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, p. 5.
[187] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 29.

Aikins present being 'chained' as a traumatic experience, the child-audience paralysed with fear, like a 'poor bird which is dropping into the mouth of the rattlesnake.'[188]

Approaching nearer to the time of Ann Radcliffe, Catharine Macaulay, whose brand of education was visited in the Introduction to this thesis, included in her 1790 text *Letters on Education* her own comment on the supernatural in children's entertainment. Her plainest statement contradicts the feelings of the Aikins on children's reception of the supernatural, and it is perhaps surprising to see her openly avowing their intense enjoyment of it: 'ghosts and hobgoblins, giants and dwarfs; sorcerers and witches […] have afforded such constant delight to children and their attendants, that parents, to induce habits of reading, have in general indulged their offspring with lectures so well calculated to gratify a childish imagination.'[189] The positive presentation of the supernatural here is curious, considering the Aikins' disavowal of children's enjoyment of it, and Locke's own position that the supernatural was a tool of 'servants, whose usual method is to awe children, and keep them in subjection, by telling them of raw-head and bloody-bones' – to frighten them into obedience.[190] But, as Alan Richardson has pointed out in relation to this complaint, 'A tale can as likely be told (or published) for a repressive as for an imaginatively liberating effect.'[191] Even the appearance of instant gratification conceals, as ever, a long-term impact so obvious as to need no overt explanation, for Macaulay declares that 'What were the baneful effects, which raising commotions in the tender brains of young children produced, I shall not in this place notice' – save to draw attention to them as 'baneful effects', of course.[192] Drawing a historical analogy to how 'Sorcery, witchcraft, omens, and dreadful apparitions, for many ages hung like a black cloud over the imagination both of the warrior and the determined coward; and the mind, bewildered in the dark mist of error, found every thing to apprehend both in its present and future state', Macaulay clearly suggests that the effect of the supernatural in producing fear in the human mind affects not only the adult state but the state of future generations in the course of history.[193] With the supernatural roundly condemned for seemingly anyone, there can be little optimism for its chances in the opinion

[188] John and Anna Laetitia Aikin, 'On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror; with Sir Bertrand, A Fragment' in *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* (1773), in *Gothic Documents*, p. 129.
[189] Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education* (1790) (Woodstock Books, 1994), p. 52.
[190] John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, Part IX, Section 138.
[191] Richardson, Alan, 'Wordsworth, Fairy Tales, and the Politics of Children's Reading', in *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, p. 47.
[192] Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education* (1790) (Woodstock Books, 1994), p. 52.
[193] Ibid., p. 70.

of one who declared that 'the task of amusing the fancy of children, has in general fallen into the hands of persons contemptible both in their judgement and abilities', adding that she 'would in general reprobate almost every composition, written in the last century for the user of nurseries';[194] Macaulay's open contempt for both texts and writers for children perhaps raises questions for how any adult, including herself, managed to grow up unharmed. The answer, seemingly, is that they did not, for Macaulay produces her own anecdotal evidence practically identical to, and almost certainly influenced by, Locke's account of the confidences placed in him by male contemporaries: 'Many men, who are not remarkable for their timidity, have confessed to me, that they have never so thoroughly gotten over those impressions which have been made on them in infancy, as to possess themselves with equal ease in the dark, as in the light'.[195] Even some eighty years after Locke's warnings in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, grown men are still afraid of the dark: To Macaulay, this is unacceptable, though she openly praises her obvious influence in explaining that 'Locke, and other writers of reputation, have enlightened men's minds on this part of education; but the progress of improvement has been slow.'[196] It was not simply in the matter of the supernatural that Macaulay followed Locke, however, for as Summerfield has observed, 'It is for servants that Locke reserves his most severe mistrust and disapproval'[197] – and it is in the proper, Lockean segregation of the classes that Macaulay finds hope of progress: 'Never suffer your offspring to be from under the eye of the tutor, or the governess; never let them converse with servants'.[198] This begins to take on the semblance of a pattern, especially if one follows Grenby's lead in joining it with Addison's caution around fireside tales and declaring that, 'The culture of the supernatural of which so many eighteenth-century writers for and about children complained was distinctively oral and plebeian.'[199]

Class anxieties are as equally evident as disapproval of the supernatural, and joined with them, in the Edgeworths' *Practical Education*, the next major text on the raising of a child once again revisited from its initial appearance in the Introduction. In a direct invocation of Townshend's 'Old Wife's orally transmitted tales of supernatural activity',[200] Maria

[194] Ibid., pp. 51, 52.
[195] Ibid., pp. 71-72.
[196] Ibid., p. 70.
[197] Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason*, p. 9.
[198] Catharine Macaulay, *Letters on Education*, p. 72.
[199] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Gothic and the Child Reader, 1764-1850', in Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend, *The Gothic World* (Routledge, 2014), p. 245.
[200] Dale Townshend, 'The Haunted Nursery: 1764-1830', p. 17.

Edgeworth cautions that 'No prudent mother will ever imitate this eloquent village matron, or will she permit any beldame in the nursery to conjure up these sublime shapes, and to quell the hearts of her children with these grateful terrors.'[201] This is a reminder that such texts were, of course, for the education of the parents as much as they were about the education of the child. But Edgeworth's dismissal of the supernatural is curiously ambivalent; it is unclear if her description of the elderly storyteller as 'eloquent' is intended as ironic or sincere. Caution is implied in her characterisation of the supernatural form as 'sublime', however, for she goes on to note that 'a taste for the sublime we should be cautious in cultivating', noting that its 'grand sources' of 'Obscurity and terror' – which she does not condemn on their own merits – are too easily undercut, too easily diminished; 'analyse the feeling, examine accurately the object which creates the emotion, and you dissipate the illusion, you annihilate the pleasure.'[202] This is, however, an admission of the pleasures of the sublime, and by extension of terror. It may be, she suggests, a superficial pleasure, but a pleasure nonetheless. Edgeworth is, though, unambiguous in warning against employing this pleasure in children's entertainment, on the grounds that 'early associations which we perhaps have formed of terror, with the ideas of apparitions, and winding sheets, and sable shrowds, should be unknown to children. The silent solemn hour of midnight should not to them be an hour of terror';[203] in short, it appears that Edgeworth regards the terror of sublime as too easily bound up with the generic materials of the gothic, of death, ghosts, and midnight – all of which are, notably, irrational fears and therefore contrary to Edgeworth's rational scheme. But while Edgeworth declares the supernatural 'imprudent in education', her explanation that 'early propensity to superstitious terrors, and that temporary suspension of the reasoning faculties […] are often essential to our taste for the sublime' again seems to legitimise the taste itself; just not in children.[204] In this regard, it is notable that an earlier chapter of *Practical Education* draws a comparison to 'the limbs of the giant appear[ing] unexpectedly at different periods, and in different parts of the Castle of Otranto' – a clearly familiar and completely non-judgemental reference to Walpole's inaugural gothic novel.[205] A reading of her caution against supernatural fiction as reluctant would account for her ambiguities, and it follows, too, that if the rationalist distaste for the supernatural really was inseparable from its 'oral and plebeian' associations, then the respectable novel from the upper-class novelist may be a

[201] Maria Edgeworth, Richard Edgeworth, et al., *Practical Education* (1798), p. 612.
[202] Ibid., p. 611.
[203] Ibid., pp. 611-612.
[204] Ibid., p. 611.
[205] Ibid., p. 190.

different matter entirely; Grenby is not wrong to recall that 'the Gothic was a literary (or at least artistic) tradition and, at least initially, and at least at the top end of the market, it held a high cultural value.'[206] In this regard it is worth noting that Maria Edgeworth was among 'an influential group of secular rationalists' who 'supported themselves by producing stories that offered children practical moral advice about learning to do good and get ahead in the world'; Edgeworth was herself a writer.[207] More than that; as Grenby suggests, she may have been a gothic writer, for her stories 'contain much that might be considered Gothic.'[208] She had published a collection of children's stories entitled *The Parent's Assistant* in 1796, again contemporaneous with many noted gothic texts, most closely Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*; and as she expanded the text in further editions, it is noticeable that among the otherwise accessibly English and middle-class stories there began to emerge texts such as 'The Orphans', about a group of orphans living in the ruins of an Irish castle who subsequently discover (but do not directly benefit from) a treasure trove, and 'The Little Merchants,' an Italian tale involving a murderous gang of robbers who raid aristocratic villas in the wake of the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. The substance of neither tale would be out-of-place in any number of gothic novels. Censuring of the supernatural for children did not always mean censuring the gothic, nor indeed the censuring of it for adults either. Such ambiguities in the authoritarian stance on gothic left gaps through which it could reach children, whether in the approved children's novel such as *Dangerous Sports* or through the appropriation of an adult family member's reading.

Nonetheless, it must be admitted that not just gothic fiction but its supernatural roots were under sustained and widespread attack. Such criticisms of the effects of supernatural or terrific literature are probably what led Ann Radcliffe to formulate, in an essay written in 1803 in response to the gothic's continuing popularity, a distinction between 'terror', which 'expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a higher degree of life', and 'horror', which 'contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them.'[209] Radcliffe's implicit point is that terror is the tool of the responsible artist like herself, but (as the accusations of *Dangerous Sports* demonstrate) gothic was tarred with the brush of horror authors like Matthew Lewis; while terror was improving mental fortitude, horror had a corrosive effect that genuinely damaged

[206] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Gothic and the Child Reader, 1764-1850', p. 245.
[207] James Holt McGavran, Jr., 'Introduction', in *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, p. 5.
[208] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Gothic and the Child Reader, 1764-1850', p. 247.
[209] Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' in *The New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 16, Iss. 61 (January 1826), p. 150.

people. Whether or not Radcliffe's self-defence was entirely legitimate or applicable is debateable, but in the specific example of Radcliffe and Lewis, it is true that his *The Monk* is more explicitly violent and sexual than Radcliffe's oeuvre, and particularly less defensive of its female characters; no woman is ever raped or murdered in all of Radcliffe's oeuvre, and thus is contestably more wholesome than *The Monk*, which alone provides multiple instances of each. Montague Summers agrees that 'Mrs. Radcliffe and Lewis differ very widely from one another'; 'so entirely opposite are their several methods of approach and treatment' that any resemblance is 'extremely superficial'.[210] This is where the gothic's status as a genre of tropes comes in; Radcliffe and Lewis deal in similar material, but in quite opposite ways. However, even if one agrees with Coleridge that *The Monk* is 'a poison for youth', lines are harder to draw elsewhere;[211] the same construction of the gothic as an interpretation of tropes that allows Radcliffe and Lewis to be separated also has the result that 'easily […] do the two kinds, the terror-Gothic and the sentimental-Gothic, blend', with Summers, a great reader and bibliographer of gothic, declaring it 'often impossible to consign any particular fiction to the one category.'[212]

Gothic fiction is not easily divided between any spurious 'good for children' and 'bad for children' demarcation. These warnings were seemingly necessitated by an apparent truism that children were the primary audience for not just supernatural but all fantastic stories – and thus gothic stories – and enjoyed them where a wiser adult would see their absurdities. This idea is implicit in a review of Ann Radcliffe's first novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, published in 1789, which dismissively characterises the text as one that 'can be little relished but by the young and unformed mind'[213] – unformed signifying untaught, unable to distinguish reality from fantasy, and therefore capable of 'relishing' impossible nonsense. Hugh Murray, in his post-Radcliffe 1805 text *Morality of Fiction*, was more explicit: Before Radcliffe's time, he claims the pleasures of horror were 'confined chiefly to the nursery.' It is unlikely that Murray approved of horror even in this context, as he denounces it as not 'of a very improving nature,' since it 'tends rather to weaken the mind, and make it liable to superstitious apprehensions.'[214] Supernatural fiction as a form for children was unambiguously acknowledged – and rejected. Hence the need for critiques of

[210] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel* (Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 233.
[211] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, review of *The Monk* in *The Critical Review*, p. 197.
[212] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, p. 30.
[213] Anonymous, Art. 32 [review of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*] in *The Monthly Review*, ed. by Ralph Griffiths, Vol. 81 (December 1789), p. 563.
[214] Hugh Murray, *Morality of Fiction* (1805), p. 127.

children's reading of gothic fiction: It allegedly corrupts their expectations of reality, their morals, even their health. Murray's criticisms are continuous with earlier attacks on the genre. Contemporaneously with Coleridge's 1797 condemnation of *The Monk* as 'a poison for youth', 'which if a parent saw in the hands of a son or daughter, he might reasonably turn pale',[215] the aforementioned 'Terrorist Novel Writing' letter – the originator, with 'The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing', of the 'terrorist' gothic label – declared that a 'modern' novel 'carries the young reader's imagination into such a confusion of terrors, as must be hurtful';[216] the very ghost of Addison's warnings eighty-six years earlier. Evidently this criticism retained relevance to have such longevity; parental concern for children's reading never had reason to vanish.

Against such criticism of children's reading, it is important to remember that there was nonetheless sanitised and sanctioned children's literature available. Eighteenth-century children's fiction did not wholly comprise antiquated analogues of spooky campfire tales, nor of shocking novels lifted from oblivious parents and siblings, nor of ambivalent gothic-allusive texts such as *Dangerous Sports*. As previously indicated, contemporary children's literature was more properly supposed to constitute 'books that seasoned sound instruction with the tame delights that came from light whimsy'.[217] Other critics more strenuously emphasise the humourless rigidity of children's texts, with Coveney classing them as 'moralizing books';[218] Darton explains that 'that neither writers nor readers expected anything but didacticism' and declares, perhaps unrealistically given what has been discussed of *Dangerous Sports* so far, 'Naughtiness aforethought, the enjoyment of mischief or even soulless levity, would have been utterly shocking to any normal child before about 1840.'[219] So much for light whimsy, then, and for *Dangerous Sports*, which is rife with children's pranks and gaiety. Darton's assessment is perhaps wide of the mark, but not too far. Against this backdrop of contention over bad and good children's fiction alike, it is worthwhile, for the purposes of comparison, to consult what good, wholesome children's literature was supposed to look like, exemplified in one of the most popular and famous contemporary children's titles; reflecting on its proliferation a hundred years since publication, Charles Welsh declared in an introduction to one edition that 'few nursery books have had a wider

[215] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, review of *The Monk* in *The Critical Review*, p. 197.
[216] Anonymous, 'Terrorist Novel Writing'.
[217] Anna Jackson, Karen Coats, Roderick McGillis, 'Introduction' in *The Gothic in Children's Literature*, p. 2.
[218] Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood*, p. 49.
[219] F. J. H. Darton, *Children's Books in England*, p. 147.

circulation […] The number of editions that have been published both in England and America is legion', though he also rightly stated that 'the name […] is still familiar to the ears of English children, though the book itself may be unknown'.[220] This book, of such fame that its name has quite outlived its reputation as an actual book, is *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, first published (and possibly written, although authorship is disputed) by John Newbery, noted publisher of children's fiction, in 1764. The proximity of this publication to previously noted dates is unlikely to be entirely coincidental; the same year were Rousseau's invocations against children's reading, and the release of *The Castle of Otranto*. *Goody Two-Shoes*, serendipitously or otherwise, is set in opposition to both recent precedents. Firstly, the book presents itself as a safe and inoffensive moral fable, promising to share 'The Means by which [Goody Two-Shoes] acquired her Learning and Wisdom, and in consequence thereof her Estate', and claiming to be aimed towards children '*Who from a State of Rags and Care / And having Shoes but half a Pair; / Their Fortune and their Fame would fix, / And gallop in a Coach and Six*'[221] – in short, what Alan Richardson describes as 'the typical Newbery scenario […] the achievement of worldly success through deferred gratification and habits of industry';[222] once again, the virtuosity of early children's fiction was distinctly avaricious, though broadly accepted in its time. There is no suggestion of anything unwholesome, particularly in the inclusion of a simple poem, designed to appeal to a child's love of uncomplicated rhythm and an adult's admiration of poetry. Secondly, in contrast to *The Castle of Otranto* and countless unauthorised ghost stories related by firesides or nurses, the text features no ghost or any other supernatural being: Dale Townshend proposes that, in a direct inversion of *Otranto*'s unabashed use of a ghost, *Goody Two-Shoes* 'expelled [the supernatural] from the realms of respectable literature for children' entirely, setting a more rational trend in fiction which commentators would doubtless approve of.[223] *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, then, is seen as establishing a trend very much its own, lying outside the practices of its immediate literary contemporaries.

All of which is quite unconscious, as the plot of *Goody Two-Shoes* betrays no such ambition. A simple moral tale, the plot follows the provincial, domestic life of its heroine, who despite the title and possible appropriation of the extant Goody Two-Shoes nickname is swiftly

[220] Charles Welsh, 'Introduction' in Anonymous, *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* (J. Newbery, 1764) (1881 facsimile of 1766 edition used) (via Project Gutenberg).
[221] Anonymous, *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, title page.
[222] Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 110.
[223] Dale Townshend, 'The Haunted Nursery: 1764-1830', p. 16.

renamed Margery Meanwell, and from thereon is usually so named.[224] Across a series of short chapters, she is orphaned, learns to read, becomes a teacher, and, notwithstanding various incidents, is married and lives happily until her death. This all seems quite unexceptionable, and yet there are several points which unsettle the interpretation of *Goody Two-Shoes* as merely harmless and improving. One is the surprising and immediate intrusion of political elements into the story. This begins in the Editor's Introduction, which at first appears to be part of the main story, since it opens with the necessary background information that '*Two Shoes* was not her real Name […] her Father's Name was *Meanwell* […] for many Years a considerable Farmer in the Parish where *Margery* was born', and introduces the story's avaricious and vengeful antagonists, Farmer Graspall and the landowner Sir Timothy Gripe.[225] This is reasonably conventional so far, but the narrative immediately segues into a detailed explanation of Gripe's tenant farming arrangements, and how he exploits his wealth and position to illegally transfer Mr. Meanwell's land to Graspall for simple economic expedience, thinking it 'less Trouble to write one Receipt for his Rent than twelve'. Over the course of several dense paragraphs, the narrator takes aim at cronyism – 'to what Purpose are Complaints, when brought against a Man, who can hunt, drink, and smoak with the Lord of the Manor, who is also the Justice of Peace?' – at the complexity of the British constitution – 'our Laws are so obscure, and so multiplied, that an Abridgment of them cannot be contained in fifty Volumes in Folio?' – and at abuse of landowner rights – 'this Man's Overthrow gave him the sole Dominion of the Poor, whom he depressed and abused in a Manner too horrible to mention.' Margery Meanwell, to say nothing of Goody Two-Shoes, is mentioned only in passing. The intricacies of this lengthy political rant, with its justices of the peace, legal wrangling, and human exploitation severe enough to be self-censored, all seem quite irrelevant to the story of Goody Two-Shoes, and certainly to an audience of young children, assembled by the premise of the rags-to-riches tale of a quaintly-named folk character. Furthermore, the very inappropriateness of this material is directly acknowledged in the narrative. As also occurs in *Dangerous Sports*, an imagined reader, though in this case one much older, interrupts the narrative to harangue John Newbery personally for his digression: 'Do you intend this for Children, Mr. NEWBERY?' Extraordinarily, this is clearly the voice of the co-reading parent, taking issue with the very suitability for children of a subsequently famous children's book. The Editor – who, notably,

[224] 'Why, what then, Goody Two-Shoes, why what if it be?': Charles Cotton, *A Voyage to Ireland in Burlesque* (1670), in Thomas Campbell, *Specimens of the British Poets*, Vol. IV (1819), p. 307.
[225] Anonymous, *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, Introduction (pages unnumbered; subsequent references in paragraph all to same chapter).

takes time to defer the blame from Newbery, explaining 'This may come from another Hand' – offers the sophistical metafictional excuse that 'This is not the Book, Sir, mentioned in the Title, but the Introduction to that Book', and as such has an entirely different audience: 'Children of six Feet high'. The morality of *Goody Two-Shoes* is overtly explained as not just for children but for adults also, supporting the dual-reading argument that children's books were as much for shared reading with adults as for younger people – but that the book anticipates criticism severe enough to be directly addressed renders tenuous the idea that the emergent children's gothic was opposed by a counterpoint market of simple, unobjectionable children's literature.

Another point which, if it did not tarnish the book's reputation contemporaneously, appears more cynical today, is the insertion into the text of advertisements promoting Newbery's interests. Consider the following example, from only the second sentence of the story proper: '[Mr. Meanwell] was forced from his Family, and seized with a violent Fever in a Place where Dr. *James's* Powder was not to be had, and where he died miserably.'[226] Dr. James's Fever Powder was a popular contemporary medicament used to treat fevers, though both its composition and effects were disputed; [227] but Newbery 'made a fortune out of [this] rather dubious patent medicine' and held exclusive sales rights to the powder, and his children's books were evidently one outlet he used to market the substance.[228] The desired outcome of this statement is quite clear; the author intends that the suggestible child, upon witnessing the slightest outbreak of illness in their family, is sure to plead for the acquisition of the powder, for fear of following the example of Goody Two-Shoes in being orphaned and cast into immediate penury. This exploitation of the child as second-hand marketer is an underhanded tactic compounded by the dubious efficacy of the powder itself; while there can be no suggestion that Newbery knew the substance to be either ineffective or outright harmful, there is considerable irony in subsequent citations of the powder's use as a factor in the death of Oliver Goldsmith[229] – one of the suspected authors of *Goody Two-Shoes*.[230] A further example of such advertising is a narratorial promise that the life of Tom Two-Shoes,

[226] Ibid., Chap. I.
[227] Daniel Glaser, 'Investigating the composition of Dr. James's Fever Powder' in Trailblazing, The Royal Society <http://trailblazing.royalsociety.org/commentary.aspx?action=printCommentary&eventId=100> [accessed 11 August 2014]; text in second image, Advertisement, states 'These powders are sold only by J. Newbery'.
[228] Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason*, p. 84.
[229] Anonymous, *The Life of Dr. Oliver Goldsmith* (1774), p. 14.
[230] Charles Welsh, 'Introduction' in *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*.

Margery/Goody's brother, 'we shall acquaint the Reader of, in the History of his Life and Adventures, which will soon be published', a claim made in the story's second and penultimate chapters.[231] Although less ethically contestable, this particular advertisement is still ill-advised, not least in that no such book was ever published by either Newbery or his publishing house (merely an anecdote is excerpted in *Goody Two-Shoes*'s endpages). Contemporary readers' opinions of in-text advertising may have differed considerably to those of modern readers – but there is much reason to consider it an error of judgement in this context, nor by any means standard practice in contemporary fiction, including the gothic.

In addition, while Townshend cites *Goody Two-Shoes* as part of a rational trend that had as its result that 'culturally approved forms of children's literature became everything that the Gothic is not',[232] Grenby disagrees, declaring that 'the claim is an overstatement, and does not tell quite the whole story.'[233] Purely in the context of *Little Goody Two-Shoes*, although Dale Townshend is correct to note that 'the spectre—or, more accurately, the mere ghost of a ghost—was expelled', if not entirely 'from the realms of respectable literature for children', the book's approach to the supernatural is not so simple as this statement would suggest.[234] Suspicion of supernatural activity is still leaned upon to generate incident, rather than situating the plot among characters as rational as the world they live in. Thus Chap. VI, '*How the whole Parish was frighted*', immediately introduces the theme of mortality, in presenting for the reader's attention the lavish funeral of one Lady Ducklington, which the narrator highlights as a wasteful example of 'the Vanity of the Dead.'[235] The reader is well-prepared for a morbid tale of the influence of the grave, and is not to be disappointed by succeeding events: That night, 'the Bells were heard to jingle in the Steeple, which frightened the People prodigiously, who all thought it was Lady *Ducklington*'s Ghost dancing among the Bell-ropes.' The immediate and unambiguous explanation reached by the majority is that of spectral activity, with no opposition or alternative yet aired. The atmosphere is undermined by the use of words like 'jingle' and 'dancing,' which connote frivolity more than haunting, but the reader is neither presented with nor asked to deduce an alternative explanation. Much they may be forgiven for crediting the phantasmal interpretation, as the villagers proceed to

[231] Anonymous, *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, Part I, Chap. I, and Part II, Chap. VI (pages unnumbered).
[232] Dale Townshend, 'The Haunted Nursery: 1764-1830', p. 21.
[233] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Gothic and the Child Reader, 1764-1850', p. 243.
[234] Dale Townshend, 'The Haunted Nursery: 1764-1830', p. 16.
[235] Anonymous, *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*, Part I, Chap. I (pages unnumbered; subsequent references in paragraph all to same chapter unless noted otherwise).

discuss their own ideas and even experiences with ghosts: One fears that the poltergeist should 'frighten me out of my Wits', and another proposes that he might 'be eat up by the Ghost'. A ghost's terrible aspects and the fatal consequences of encountering one are unabashedly exhibited, and an authoritative anecdote is related of a local ghost-sighting, though the chapter once again descends into jollity by describing this ghost as 'in the shape of a Windmill', wearing the traditional 'white Sheet' and the less traditional 'Jack Boots on, and had a Gun by its Side instead of a Sword.' At this juncture, both the local rector and the author decide that too much time has been spent validating the existence of ghosts, and the church is promptly opened for investigation. The narrator asks 'what Sort of a Ghost do ye think appeared?' – presumably a rhetorical question, but after such preparation, it is unclear whether the reader is intended to be imagining a rational explanation or some horrid spectre. Naturally, though, a respectable work of children's fiction cannot indulge in the latter, and the canny reader who has observed that the story's title character has not yet appeared in this chapter is doubtless unsurprised when the ghost transpires to be Goody Two-Shoes, ringing the bell for attention after having been locked in the church overnight. The figure of a ghost is dismissed, certainly – but not before belief in ghosts has been presented as both popular and credible, a tactic also applied in a subsequent chapter to a malicious rumour that Margery is a witch. This allegation actually goes to trial, providing further opportunity for the author to inveigh against the improprietous didacticism of those who 'stuff Children's Heads with Stories of Ghosts, Faries, Witches, and such Nonsense when they are young'[236] – in a book which features a dog forewarning Goody of her school's roof collapsing, which 'miraculous Deliverance' the author excuses by attributing it to 'Divine Will'.[237] Religion also was a vehicle to excuse incidents which would otherwise have every appearance of the supernatural, but in retrospect this appears hypocritical. Furthermore, while the conclusion to the ghost chapter may not validate supernatural fiction, it absolutely validates and constitutes an early example of the explained supernatural, later to become a common device of the gothic. The implicit message in the writing of *Goody Two-Shoes* is that, so long as a rational (or religious) conclusion is provided, an author may include any amount of apparent supernatural activity – and indeed, following the ghost incident the author repeats the same trick in the very next chapter. The author's subsequent 'Reflection', or moral, that 'the Tales of *Ghosts, Witches,* and *Fairies*, are the Frolicks of a distempered Brain' rings hollow,

[236] Ibid., Part II, Chap. VI (pages unnumbered).
[237] Ibid., Part II, Chap. III (pages unnumbered).

considering that the author has effectively just told such a tale;[238] *Goody Two-Shoes* may not validate the existence of ghosts in reality, but it absolutely justifies their use in fiction, barring the comparatively minor point that their effects, while real, have a rational cause.

Such is a work of popular, approved children's fiction, from a publisher renowned for his popular, approved children's fiction: A book containing political screeds, advertisements for potentially lethal medicines, and a manner of supernatural plot device that would be embraced by gothic fiction. With hindsight, it is clear that this was a decidedly imperfect entry into what was at the time a market yet to find its feet – but, particularly regarding the explained supernatural, the example of *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* shows that approved forms of children's fiction were neither necessarily so perfect as might be supposed, nor so different to their gothic competitors. It is pertinent, then, to return to a specifically gothic competitor in the children's literature market. By 1800, *Goody Two-Shoes* had been in print long enough to have become a classic and for its first readers to have become adults and authors, while the gothic was far enough into its first flaring to have firmly established its classics, its Radcliffe-Lewis style dichotomy, and the perennial scepticisms of critics, and for these establishment positions to mingle in the mind of one author to create an unabashed, unapologetic parody.

James Parkinson's *Dangerous Sports*, quoted at the beginning of the chapter, shows that novels acknowledged and represented the popularity of the gothic and similar fictions among children. *Dangerous Sports* accepted implicitly that children read popular gothic fictions in directly referring to three gothic authors notable in the year 1800, even departing from its narrative entirely in the ghost chapter's aforementioned digression where the author debates with an imagined reader who has 'had a peep in the novel [their] sister was so buried in reading'. The reader is shown to be an enthusiastic consumer of horror literature, for, when asked 'what did you hope to find in there?' the reader promptly replies 'Something shocking, Sir' – and proceeds to read on 'Because it is so shocking.' The imagined reader is probably not new to such literature, however, as they demonstrate familiarity with its tropes; upon being asked, with regards to the actual narrative of *Dangerous Sports*, 'what do you expect to come in at the door we have just opened?'[239] – from which numerous groans have just issued,

[238] Ibid., Part I, Chap. VII (pages unnumbered).
[239] James Parkinson, *Dangerous Sports*, pp. 64-65.

and which the reader is informed leads to vaults beneath an old castle[240] – the reader replies, 'Well, to be sure, Sir' – that is, without a doubt – 'a ghost.' A sense of obligation to meet this demand is palpable on the author's part, as he replies 'Well, then you shall not be disappointed' – and, bracing the reader by stating 'I shiver as I write […] [from] sheer fright at my own writing', reveals the blood-soaked, horrible, and thoroughly explained supernatural being previously discussed.[241] This is a direct restaging of *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes*'s ghost chapter, which also placed the reader before a door behind which was a supposed ghost, and asked the reader directly what they expected to emerge; Parkinson knew his children's fiction as well as his gothic, and made sure to balance both – or more probably, parody both, directing his scene as a comedy on gothic absurdity and on humourless rationalism. But it is not far-fetched to frame this also as an allegory for the author's response to a market which demands ghosts and shocks, staged as a literal conversation with a reader so desperate for such material as to stealthily appropriate it from family members.

A similar scenario is revisited later in *Dangerous Sports*. Old Millson, sagacious friend and minder to a group of middle-class children (of age unspecified, save for one (presumably representative) eleven-year-old),[242] sits down to tell his charges a story, and asks what it should be about. 'A castle, cried some, and a ghost, cried others'[243] – reflecting the popularity of the subjects of the book's earlier ghost chapter, and a not unworthy definition of the average gothic novel, indicating the children's controversial reading preferences. Millson replies 'there's no doing without these now-a-days, but yet its [*sic*] time they were out of fashion' – apparently defying and commenting on a market oversaturated with gothic stories by 1800. This sheds some light on Parkinson's earlier farcical contextualisation of gothic imagery – such tropes could no longer be read in isolation, and recalled any number of previous instances, which arguably lose their power once familiar, and instead resemble the punchline of a well-worn joke, not a shock but an expectation. Millson's defiance extends only so far, though, for he proposes an equally fantastic alternative: 'What say you to a MONSTER.'[244] The children are predictably enthusiastic. Millson is guilty of slight false advertising here; the monster is simply a metaphor for any mischievous child who injures

[240] Ibid., pp. 62-63.
[241] Ibid., p. 65.
[242] Ibid., p. 35.
[243] Ibid., p. 117.
[244] Ibid., p. 118.

himself and others. But *Dangerous Sports*'s ghost was a boy, too, and indeed many ghosts of the gothic were merely men hidden in monk's habits or secret passages, so perhaps this simply lifts the veil of nominal supernaturalism in popular gothic texts. For *Dangerous Sports* is obviously a text which knew its own market, or at least, its own influences, since it brazenly declares, of its ghost chapter, that 'the blame of this wonderful and terrific tale' is on 'Radcliffe, whose enchanting pages have so bewitched the public taste, that every press now teems with mystery and horror.—Lewis, who hast fixed our admiration on bloodless, bleeding ghosts, and who hast created mysteries not to be unravelled, even by thyself, without the aid of magic art; and Godwin, who, in thy love of mighty truth, has just raised from his ashes an immortal mortal'.[245] Parkinson betrays the avidity of his own gothic reading in alluding to specific figures of Lewis and Godwin's narratives; the latter's 'immortal mortal' refers to *St. Leon*, published only the preceding year, and very much 'just' raised up. Parkinson's satire arguably misreads his subject in representing the gothic as solely comprising gory horror propped up by elaborate ploys; despite this, the ghost chapter's transition from the terror of suspense and suggestion to the horror of revelation owes to Radcliffe and Lewis's styles. Consistent with the chapter's superficial supernaturalism and the digression's supernatural awareness, the three authors are figured as literal sorcerers working magic on the literary market and on reality itself; this is particularly evident in the references to Lewis and Godwin, whose works included authentic supernaturalism as opposed to Radcliffe's contemporary explained supernatural. The impossibility of Lewis and Godwin's ideas is perhaps alluded to in Parkinson's description of their iconic 'bloodless, bleeding ghosts' and 'immortal mortal', a reflection on how the public celebrate such oxymorons. This is an enduring idea in gothic commentary; linking popularity with impossibility mirrors the Aikins' 1773 essay *On Romances*, in which love of the unreal is a 'paradox of the heart' – but also an inspiration, which is how Parkinson relates to these authors.[246]

But more important than how Parkinson presented these authors is where he presented them: In a children's cautionary novel. The references are clearly ironically judgemental at most, given Parkinson's own staging of a gory ghost scene; he was not cautioning his readers against these authors. Therefore, either Parkinson expected his readers to recognise these

[245] Ibid., pp. 63-64 – refers to Ann Radcliffe's oeuvre, Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), and William Godwin's *St. Leon* (1799).
[246] John and Anna Laetitia Aikin, 'On Romances' in *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose* (1773) <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/barbauldessays.html> [accessed 3rd April 2012].

allusions, which would constitute evidence of children's voracious reading of varied gothic texts including the most recent (or at least of Parkinson's belief in such a well-read audience) – or Parkinson was *introducing* these authors to his readers, effectively advertising them, which would be a bold decision, given the critical disapprobation of such texts being presented to young people. It seems, however, that Parkinson's judgemental tone won favour from one quarter: That of the reviewers. Perhaps deceived by Parkinson's ostensible satire on gothic – or, not inconceivably, because the perennially busy reviewers did not have time to read the entirety of a children's book – not one of the admittedly few reviews recorded for *Dangerous Sports* questions the book's choice of audience; the worst rebuke is *The European Magazine and London Review*'s admission, which though very true is unlikely to have stung, that 'Probability is little attended to in the narrative'.[247] Contrary to what might be expected, *The Critical Review* is genuinely flattering, declaring that 'we do not know of any work so well adapted to [children's] capacity, and conveying at the same time so much instruction in so entertaining a manner', displaying a wise understanding of children's tastes which, while consistent with the familiar tactic of disguising education as entertainment, is unhampered by any suggestion that children's books are forbidden to be fun.[248] *The Monthly Visitor, and Pocket Companion* completes the critical reception of *Dangerous Sports* as wholly opposed to that of the gothic: 'Indeed, parents and tutors are in duty bound to put so engaging a piece into the hands of the rising generation.'[249] To positively urge regulators to place *Dangerous Sports* in children's hands is the surest sign that Parkinson's novel successfully evaded the condemnation of poisoning youth of which Coleridge warned. Nonetheless, it carries an infectious enthusiasm for the gothic that might well have spread to its young readers.

A text better-known than *Dangerous Sports* which combines a socially realistic presentation of gothic reading with parodic elements is Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*. The novel was begun as early as 1797, at the height of the gothic's popularity and in almost immediate response to the genuine gothic titles alluded to in its narrative, but ultimately missed the gothic zeitgeist, selling to a publisher only in 1803 and lying unpublished until as late as 1817.[250] Linda Hutcheon proposes that 'very successful works' are more parodied than

[247] Anonymous, Review of *Dangerous Sports* in *The European Magazine and London Review*, Vol. 37 (June 1800), p. 461.
[248] Anonymous, Art. 42 [review of *Dangerous Sports*] in *The Critical Review*, Vol. 31 (February 1801), p. 228.
[249] Anonymous, Review of *Dangerous Sports* in *The Monthly Visitor, and Pocket Companion*, Vol. 10 (June 1800), p. 204.
[250] Brian Reeve, 'Jane Austen's Works' in 'Extra Material' in *Northanger Abbey* (Oneworld Classics 2010), p. 210; Vivien Jones, 'Chronology' in Jane Austen, *Persuasion* (Oxford University Press, 2008), p. xlv.

genuinely poor ones, suggesting that Austen's target was fashionable rather than personal.[251] Indeed, the narrative represents the reading of gothic fiction as a normal communal activity between young people. The protagonist, Catherine Morland, at the age of seventeen is depicted as reading *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and being recommended *The Italian* (1797), both by Ann Radcliffe.[252] Her active speculation on the developing plot of the former shows Austen's clear familiarity with the story: 'I am got to the black veil […] What can it be? But do not tell me – I would not be told upon any account. I know it must be a skeleton, I am sure it is Laurentina's skeleton.'[253] Radcliffe's novels were roughly contemporary for the time when *Northanger Abbey* was written; had the novel been published sooner, such discussion would have been both familiar and relevant to a contemporary reader. It is a discussion, moreover, equally familiar to modern readers of popular twenty-first century novels – eagerly speculative, invested in the plot, but desirous of avoiding foreknowledge of twists and revelations; this adds an impression of authenticity to the text regardless of its age.

Catherine is subsequently recommended a series of books 'of the same kind', which she accepts on the condition that 'they are all horrid', suggesting – albeit with parody's brutal honesty – that it is the sinister and melodramatic aesthetic that makes these books appealing. The novels in question, '*Castle of Wolfenbach*, *Clermont*, *Mysterious Warnings*, *Necromancer of the Black Forest*, *Midnight Bell*, *Orphan of the Rhine* and *Horrid Mysteries*', are all real;[254] this passage probably highlights novels which were already popular, but also acts to recommend them to an audience of Catherine's age. The parodic elements of *Northanger Abbey* suggest that the recommendations partly mock the number of 'horrid' texts available; certain of the titles, particularly *Horrid Mysteries*, are so ludicrous that they were once thought to be Austen's inventions – but the novel merely mentions them in passing, suggesting that they do not merit detailed criticism (the titles themselves are only paraphrased). The sequence, then, forms a humorous but non-judgmental comment on a literary fad – a comment which would have been a non-sequitur without a basis in reality, and as such this selection of novels and the age of their readers would be constructed as a reasonably accurate picture of its part of the late 1790s reading community. Parental approval

[251] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody* (Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1985), p. 76.
[252] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817) (Oneworld Classics 2010), pp. 7, 22-23.
[253] Ibid., pp. 22-23.
[254] Ibid., p. 23; Eliza Parsons, *Castle of Wolfenbach* (1783); Regina Maria Roche, *Clermont* (1798); Eliza Parsons, *The Mysterious Warning* (1796); Karl Friedrich Kahlert, *The Necromancer: or the Tale of the Black Forest* (1794); Francis Lathom, *The Midnight Bell* (1798); Eleanor Sleath, *The Orphan of the Rhine* (1798); Karl Grosse, *Horrid Mysteries* [*Der Genius*], trans. by Peter Will (1796; original German, circa 1790).

of this course of reading is, tellingly, a subject entirely avoided. Both *Northanger Abbey* and *Dangerous Sports* suggest that the influence of parental regulation could be overestimated relative to older children, adolescents and teenagers, or perhaps that parents were considerably less critical of reading choices than the periodicals' reviewers.

There is another, less obvious aspect to the parody of *Northanger Abbey* – one relatively underplayed in Austen's social realist milieu but exaggerated to greater comic effect in a novel published earlier but written later, 1813's *The Heroine* by Eaton Stannard Barrett. They play out a long-standing criticism of novels, voiced above by Dr. Johnson: That 'to the young, the ignorant, and the idle, […] they serve as lectures of conduct, and introductions into life. They are the entertainment of minds unfurnished with ideas, and therefore easily susceptible of impressions'[255] – meaning, as suggested previously, that young readers have difficulty distinguishing between fiction and reality. Austen and Barrett play out this critique to the letter, albeit with varying verisimilitude, their heroines acting as though real life corresponds with the romances and horrid novels they read in such numbers, and concentrating on circumstances which seem to corroborate this belief. Thus Catherine Morland, invited to stay with the amiable Tilneys, is most excited to learn their home's name and nature: 'Northanger Abbey! These were thrilling words'[256] – apparently more thrilling than the prospect of her friends' company, swept aside by fantasies of the eponymous building: 'Its long, damp passages, its narrow cells and ruined chapel, were to be within her daily reach, and she could not entirely subdue the hope of some traditional legends, some awful memorials of an injured and ill-fated nun.'[257] Even the reader risks being swept away by gothic expectations, for as Gary Kelly remarks, 'the more 'trash of the circulating library' one has read, the more easily one is fooled by Austen, at the same time the better equipped one is to read Austen's novel correctly';[258] a reader familiar with clichéd gothic conventions is more likely to recognise Austen's invocations of them and to then make assumptions about forthcoming events based on those references – and would be deceived in doing so, for this is, of course, a parody. Naturally, Catherine's recitation of a typical gothic description is at odds with mundane reality, in which 'she doubted, as she looked around the room, whether anything within her observation, would have given her the consciousness' of being in an abbey, and betrays her unrealistic valuation of a ruinous abbey's gothic aesthetic above

[255] Samuel Johnson, 'No. 4' in *The Rambler*, pp. 176-177.
[256] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 97.
[257] Ibid., p. 99.
[258] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830*, p. 18.

practical living accommodation by imagining how she 'could have raved at the hand which had swept away what must have been beyond the value of all the rest, but for the purposes of mere domestic economy'.[259] In a true gothic novel suspense gives way to horror, but in *Northanger Abbey* suspense gives way to disappointment, precisely because horror was expected. Most famous is Catherine's attempt, convinced that 'Mrs Tilney yet lived, shut up for causes unknown, and receiving from the pitiless hands of her husband a nightly supply of coarse food', to set forth to visit 'the mysterious apartments' where her friends' mother died, only to be forcefully and necessarily disillusioned by her obvious romantic interest, Henry Tilney: 'you had formed a surmise of such horror as I have hardly words to… […] What have you been judging from?'[260] Although aged seventeen, the upper edge of adolescence and certainly beyond childhood, Catherine's framing of relations between adults in gothic terms is presented as an immaturity, signifying that she is not yet an adult.

Barrett's more credulous heroine does not let plausibility get in the way of a good fantasy. Cherry Wilkinson, who shortly renames herself 'Cherubina de Willoughby', finds little difficulty in announcing herself to her father as 'An illustrious heiress […] snatched from her parents in her infancy;—snatched by thee, vile agent of the diabolical conspiracy!'[261] Various antagonists play along with her delusions for their own amusement, amending discrepancies in their façade by referring to the example of fiction: 'Sure your ladyship has often read of blood upon floors, and daggers, that looked as fresh as a daisy, at the end of centuries' – 'your Ladyship must remember reading of other cobwebbed harps, which required no tuning-hammer, after lying whole ages untweedled.'[262] But the most striking example of Cherry's faith in fictional realities is her failure to interrogate an offer, late in the story, to be introduced to 'old Sir Charles Grandison, and his lady, Miss Harriet Byron, that was;—old Mr. Mortimer Delville, and his lady, Miss Cecilia, that was;—and old Lord Mortimer, and his lady, Miss Amanda, that was'[263] – the entirely fictional protagonists of the sentimental novels *The History of Sir Charles Grandison* by Samuel Richardson, *Cecilia* by Frances Burney, and *The Children of the Abbey* by Regina Maria Roche (which is, additionally, a gothic text by a gothic author). Cherry is unquestioning, merely 'astonished' that they are 'all alive and

[259] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, pp. 114, 131.
[260] Ibid., pp. 134, 135, 141.
[261] Eaton Stannard Barrett, *The Heroine* (1814), Vol. I, pp. 56, 40.
[262] Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 171-172.
[263] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 179.

well';[264] indeed, she anticipates that 'No longer drawing from books alone, I might now copy from the very originals', and notes without irony – although the line is clearly for the reader's amusement – that their 'biographers […] have such admirable information, as even to tell the thoughts of people, when not a soul is near'.[265] Cherry is not convinced of her errors until discovering the company privately mocking her, culminating in the damning verdict that 'Those romances have turned her brain inside out.'[266] Although both Catherine Morland and Cherry Wilkinson eventually awaken to their senses courtesy of, broadly speaking, a clergyman's intervention, for Catherine this takes the form of a friend's words, while Cherry requires religious ministration after falling into a 'violent fever of a nervous nature'.[267]

Of course, Cherry's story is highly absurd, with few pretensions of realism, though Barrett's plot complicates any simple denunciation of Cherry as the dupe of romance as she is legitimately kidnapped, seduced, and tricked by confederations of rogues who exploit her suggestibility. But the very genre of parody further unsettles any interpretation. A novel such as Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, published a mere year after *Northanger Abbey* finally emerged, offers an unambivalent critique of unrestricted childhood reading in rooting the title character's wild experiments in his youthful consumption of the 'exploded' and 'chimerical' theories of the alchemists Agrippa and Paracelsus[268] – perhaps even his fondness for 'chimeras of boundless grandeur' over what he dismisses as 'realities of little worth' owe something to his friend Henry Clerval's enthusiasm for 'books of chivalry and romance', which affection was shared by having his childhood circle 'act plays composed by him out of these favourite books, the principal characters of which were Orlando, Robin Hood, Amadis, and St George.'[269] In other words, Victor Frankenstein is also seduced into impossible heroism by his romantic reading. But a question that can never be put to *Frankenstein* must be asked of *Northanger Abbey* and *The Heroine* owing to their enthusiastic style: Were they parodying the effect of novel-reading on young women, or parodying critical supposition of such effects? Given that the authors were themselves, of course, novelists, and took clear relish in their exaggerated gothic descriptions, they probably enjoyed the texts they parodied. Hutcheon agrees that parody can be 'a playful, genial mockery of codifiable forms',[270] and

[264] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 180.
[265] Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 191, 194.
[266] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 217.
[267] Ibid., Vol. III, p. 248.
[268] Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley, *Frankenstein: 1818 text* (Oxford World's Classics 2008), p. 23.
[269] Ibid., pp. 30, 21.
[270] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 15.

Horner and Zlosnik point to Barrett's 'verbal *brio*' as showing partiality to his subject.[271] Although the protagonists are improbably gullible, Catherine Morland is, despite her faults, too likeable to effectively caution against young people's reading, while Horner and Zlosnik argue that Cherry Wilkinson's absurdist portrayal is indicative not simply of a 'reactionary text' but 'fantasies of social transformation'.[272] What these parodies constitute is evidence of cultural talking-points; young people's reading of gothic novels, adult and critical disapproval of their so doing, and a satirical backlash against that same disapproval. In an authorial digression in *Northanger Abbey*, Austen mounts a particularly strenuous defence of novels, 'in which the greatest powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusions of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language.'[273] The surest place for such an argument is in parody, an innately metatextual form which pays overt homage in its narrative and structure to established works; Austen's defence is as much of her characters and their reading as it is of novels more broadly.

The reason that such parodies were so effective was precisely because the reading audience bore a close resemblance to the stories' protagonists. Of course, there were many older and male readers of gothic fiction; Austen's own letters mention her father 'reading the "Midnight Bell," which he has got from the library'.[274] But young females comprise the majority of gothic protagonists, and certainly are the more popular projected audience in gothic commentary – perhaps because the gothic inherits a great deal from the sentimental tradition of literature, which was equally widely caricaturised and criticised for its role in young women's reading. Much like Locke's proscription of supernatural reading for children, warnings against sentimental reading for young women were by way of being a critical tradition, with voices contemporary with Locke standing against it: As early as 1687, the didactic writer François Fénelon decried 'young women' who 'read, with avidity, every book which flatters their vanity […] they fill their minds with visionary notions, by accustoming themselves to the splendid sentiments of heroes of romance, and hence are rendered unfit for

[271] Avril Horner, Sue Zlosnik, 'Dead Funny: Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine* as Comic Gothic' in *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* 5 (Nov 2000) <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/encap/journals/corvey/articles/cc05_n02.html> [accessed 24 April 2012].
[272] Ibid.
[273] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 21.
[274] Jane Austen, letter of October 24th 1798 to Cassandra Austen, in *The Letters of Jane Austen*, ed. by Sarah Chauncey Woolsey (1908) (via Project Gutenberg).

the common intercourse of society'.[275] Fénelon's statement was originally written in French but translated into English in 1707 and still in circulation a hundred years later, perhaps unsurprisingly, as it might easily have appeared as a piece of gothic criticism; the complaint is essentially identical to Samuel Johnson's subsequent 1750 argument against the fiction he derided as 'lectures of conduct, and introductions into life' to 'the young, the ignorant, and the idle', who are 'easily susceptible of impressions'; where fiction is careless, the reader's understanding of reality is distorted – an especially dangerous state of affairs for young women.[276] Numerous writers took up the pen on similar themes, nearly all directing their strictures exclusively at young women, and the danger posed to their future happiness. The writer John Gregory composed his *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* in 1761 with the idea that his daughters would continue to receive his advice after his imminently-anticipated death; and though this did not in fact transpire until 1773, the plan was very much in the spirit of contemporary despair in writers such as Fordyce in 1766 for 'those young women […] that have no wise parents or faithful tutors to direct them in relation to the books which are, or which are not, fit for them to read!'[277] Gregory himself claimed to be 'at the greatest loss what to advise you in regard to books',[278] but he rose to the task in specifically cautioning his daughters to, should they value their marriageability, 'shun, as you would do the most fatal poison, all that species of reading and conversation which warms the imagination, which engages and softens the heart, and raises the taste above the level of common life' – unless they were willing to 'support the prospect of the many inconveniences attending the state of an old maid', in which situation they could 'indulge […] in that kind of sentimental reading and conversation which is most correspondent to your feelings', safe in the knowledge that it could harm nobody's future prospects.[279] Vivien Jones regards 'warnings against romantic fiction in […] Gregory' and similar writers as 'oddly redundant given their own implicit narratives of triumphant female virtue', and it is notable that, however thrilling gothic and sentimental texts may have been, there were few which did not advocate a strict sense of feminine morality, which perhaps represented a reaction against their many detractors.[280] Nonetheless, the moral argument was lost before it began, and the hyperbolic 'fatal poison'

[275] François Fénelon (François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon), trans. by T.F. Dibdin, *Treatise on the Education of Daughters* (1805; original French, 1687; first English translation, 1707), in *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*, ed. by Vivien Jones (Routledge, 1990), p. 104.
[276] Samuel Johnson, 'No. 4' in *The Rambler* (1750), in *Gothic Documents*, pp. 176-177.
[277] Fordyce, James, *Sermons to Young Women* (1766), in *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*, p. 178.
[278] John Gregory, *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1761) (1808 edition), p. 61.
[279] Ibid., p. 126-127.
[280] Vivien Jones, ed., *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity*, p. 16.

narrative of Gregory remained the dominant one, subsequently to be recalled in Coleridge's condemnation of *The Monk* as 'a *mormo* for children, a poison for youth'.[281] Educational writers, including those previously discussed, were as alarmed by the sentimental reading of young women as the supernatural reading of children. Hannah More's 1777 *Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies* on the one hand praised 'useful reading' as 'the safest remedy for dissipation' and on the other excoriated those '*young ladies* of a certain turn, who read *sentimental books*' and who 'had her head originally turned by pernicious reading';[282] by the time of *Practical Education* in 1798, such principles almost went without saying, with Maria Edgeworth's remarks on the point opening with a wish to go 'Without repeating here what has been said in many other places', and later broadly declaring that 'We know, from common experience, the effects which are produced upon the female mind by immoderate novel-reading.'[283] At last, gathering momentum with the increasing popularity of sentimentalism through the gothic, this school of thought entered the nineteenth century without the slightest softening of tone, with Elizabeth Hamilton's 1801 *Letters on Education* lambasting those texts which saw 'invention on the stretch to produce effects to which the causes assigned are totally inadequate; the laws of nature violated; the course of the passions misrepresented; the principles of morality set at defiance; and the whole mixed up with a jargon of sentiment, which is incomprehensible' – and expressing overt horror 'that such books are read, aye, *and none but such*, by numbers of young women, who hope in due time to become the mothers of hopeful families!'[284] Marriage and motherhood was at the centre of this century-spanning anxiety, and even those writers who decried the subordinate position of women implicitly saw them as good for nothing else; hence the excessive state of concern at anything which threatened the role of women – which ironically was exactly the same threat the gothic condemned. It fell, ironically, to *Northanger Abbey* and *The Heroine* to represent a moderating influence, with their positive and humorous portrayals of young women's reading – but such reading was distinctly associated with young women, and susceptibility to sentimental ideas at the expense of rational judgement was considered a problem unique to them.

[281] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, review of *The Monk*, p. 197.
[282] Hannah, *Essays on Various Subjects, Principally Designed for Young Ladies* (1777) (via Project Gutenberg), pp. 22, 78-79, 88.
[283] Maria Edgeworth, Richard Edgeworth, et al., *Practical Education*, pp. 296, 333.
[284] Elizabeth Hamilton, *Letters on the Elementary Principles of Education* (1801) (1803 edition), pp. 236-237.

So it is neither inaccurate nor, perhaps, unfair to propose in both the reading and writing of gothic a foregrounding of female experience over male – which is perhaps more due to male characters being also older characters. Henry Tilney of *Northanger Abbey*, for instance, is an unabashed reader of gothic, declaring 'I have read all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and most of them with great pleasure', but is also some years older than Catherine, at twenty-six to her eighteen;[285] it is no coincidence that Henry is the character who corrects Catherine's severest gothic delusions. A character who has little to learn makes a less compelling protagonist than one naïve and vulnerable, and so both serious and comic gothic fiction assign to elder characters roles other than that of the viewpoint protagonist. While many novels, gothic, educational and otherwise, exploited reader identification to gain the reader's empathy for the protagonists and their circumstances, criticisms and parodies of such work were effectively positing the reverse – that, rather than readers bringing their own sense of self to the text, they were taking the protagonists' sense of self and the idea of their situation out of the text and into reality. The adolescents of Austen and Barrett show their youth – or are implicated in a youth stereotype – by being just as gullible as Parkinson's ghost-tricked children. But such criticisms fail to record any genuine instances of books leading young readers astray; they simply recognise youthful reading of gothic novels as a phenomenon. Grenby has pointed out that 'Fictional and artistic representations of children's book use can be just as revealing as memoirs and journals purporting to present real reading';[286] reliability is debateable in either case, but the significance of parodic fiction is that, even if it cannot be evidence on objective fact, it can provide valuable evidence of interpretations of fact.

What critics failed to acknowledge was that gothic authors could also be concerned about the proper handling of children. As discussed above, authors frequently commented on children's education, and their characters are generally constructed as virtuous models of propriety, to be imitated in their morally forthright mentality rather than the adventures are forced upon them by circumstance. Radcliffe's urging to parents, guardians, and perhaps other authors to 'watch and regulate—to do this is our duty' is no abrogation of responsibility, but rather an affirmation, in the face of vocal criticism of fiction, of the storyteller as the reader's guardian.[287] Indeed, in some ways gothic novels could be 'lectures of conduct, and

[285] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, pp. 75, 182.
[286] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, pp. 15-16.
[287] Ann Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826), Vol. II, p. 129.

introductions into life' for readers[288] – not false ones but genuine attempts to be didactic, improving agents in the lives of youthful readers. *Dangerous Sports* is an atypical example, but *The Mysteries of Udolpho* lectured on conduct in its extended passages upon the inadvisability of 'sensibility.' Sensibility denotes a refined, over-affected sense of sympathy typical of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century fiction, defined by Barker-Benfield as signifying 'the receptivity of the senses' and 'a particular kind of consciousness […] that could be further sensitized in order to be more acutely responsive to signals from the outside environment and from inside the body'. He rightly locates this chiefly in a central trope of gothic fiction, 'the figure of "virtue in distress," the virtue a woman's, and her distress caused by a man.'[289] Though this dynamic is arguably a defining one of gothic fiction, rarely lacking in early gothic stories, Radcliffe has Emily's father undertake instead 'to strengthen her mind; to enure her to habits of self-command; to teach her to reject the first impulse of her feelings, and to look, with cool examination, upon the disappointments he sometimes threw in her way'; so crucial are these lessons that he devotes much of his deathbed speech to one, declaring that 'sensibility […] is a dangerous quality, which is continually extracting the excess of misery, or delight, from every surrounding circumstance […] we become the victims of our feelings, unless we can in some degree command them.'[290] This conduct advice is ironically identical to that advocated in the very didactic texts which condemned 'common novel-reading'; it seems quite unnecessary for figures such as Maria Edgeworth to caution that novel-readers risk addiction to 'continual great emotions to keep them in tolerable humour with themselves; they must have tears in their eyes, or they are apprehensive that their hearts are growing hard', when novels themselves furnished the same warnings.[291] Indeed, it is insufficient command of their feelings which often leads gothic villains to their diabolical actions.

If it is surprising that Emily is trained to become something other than the imagined gothic heroine, enduring with fortitude instead of despair and floods of tears the terrible events that repeatedly befall her, perhaps this is because Radcliffe was uncomfortable with the more melodramatic directions the genre steered in; it must be remembered that she would also lecture her fellow authors not to be responsible for having 'set before [children's] eyes the severe form of experience, and […] reduced the gaieties of their boundless hope to the many

[288] Samuel Johnson, 'No. 4' in *The Rambler*, p. 176.
[289] Barker-Benfield, Graham J., *The Culture of Sensibility* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. xviii.
[290] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, pp. 5, 79-80.
[291] Maria Edgeworth, Richard Edgeworth, et al., *Practical Education*, p. 297.

checquered scene of real existence!', but rather to 'watch and regulate'.[292] And much though *The Castle of Otranto*'s own author may have mocked its moral, there was usually a genuine attempt to conclude gothic novels with an important moral lesson, with *Udolpho* hoping, apparently sincerely, that 'useful may it be to have shewn, that, though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction upon the good, their power is transient and their punishment certain; and that innocence, though oppressed by injustice, shall, supported by patience, finally triumph over misfortune!'[293] This was a popular moral, though not always tempered with such subtlety; Clara Reeve's *The Old English Baron*, outlined above as a significant precursor to Radcliffe's work, concludes with more brevity than probability that its events constituted 'a striking lesson to posterity, of the over-ruling hand of Providence, and the certainty of RETRIBUTION.'[294] Of Radcliffe's successors, Matthew Lewis in *The Monk* chose to moralise less overtly by instead inflicting upon his villain an end yet more horrible than the villain had upon his heroine, with Lucifer himself arising to hurl the wicked Ambrosio from 'a dreadful height' onto 'The sharp point of a rock […] He rolled from precipice to precipice, till bruised and mangled He rested on the river's banks', where he is eaten alive by insects and eagles before finally expiring a week later.[295] Mary Anne Radcliffe, Ann Radcliffe's imitator and impostor, in her 1809 gothic novel *Manfroné; or, The One-Handed Monk* defied the logic of common sense and her own narrative to conclude with the announcement that 'To be good is to be happy!'[296] Radcliffe was not wrong to lecture. But, as Grenby notes, 'even if it could be ham-fisted, the Gothic *could* be didactic';[297] while the morality of gothic fiction was often of dubious use, it was nonetheless earnest.

Given Radcliffe's more rigorous morality, it is unsurprising to see her praised for it. There is evidence that Radcliffe was idiomatically known as 'Mother Radcliffe' for a period in the nineteenth century; the name appears in the letters of the painter Samuel Palmer and the poet John Keats[298] – possibly ironically in the latter, but this still demonstrates use. Today, the more common use of such a moniker would be to construct Radcliffe as 'the mother of the

[292] Ann Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondeville*, Vol. II, pp. 129-130.
[293] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 672.
[294] Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron* (1778; as *The Champion of Virtue*, 1777), p. 136.
[295] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), pp. 441-442.
[296] Mary Anne Radcliffe, *Manfroné; or, The One-Handed Monk* (1809) (Valancourt Books, 2007), p. 260.
[297] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Gothic and the Child Reader, 1764-1850', p. 251.
[298] John Keats, letter of February 14th 1819 to George and Georgiana Keats, in *Letters of John Keats to His Family and Friends*; A.H. Palmer, *The Life and Letters of Samuel Palmer, Painter and Etcher* (Seeley & Co., 1892).

Gothic novel', as Rictor Norton does in his 1999 biography.[299] But Thomas Talfourd, in his anonymous biography of Radcliffe for *Gaston de Blondeville*'s 1826 publication, set the contemporary tone in figuring her as mother to her characters, describing how 'The passions, the affections, the hopes of her character are essentially her's [*sic*]; born out of her own heart; figured from the tracings of her own brain'. He states that 'in the mere perusal of novels we lose our painful sense of the realities of "this unimaginable world," and delightedly participate in the sorrows, the joys, and the struggles of the persons'.[300] This is an acknowledgement of the effect of reader identification, by which readers might also feel themselves to be children of 'Mother Radcliffe' – and this would be most relevant and powerful to actual children, and young people in the unfamiliar territory of growing up. Indeed, this identification of author with parent is exploited by the subsequent and still-popular promotional device of the author performing public readings, often to audiences of children, resembling a familial storytelling.

However, cross-reading between audiences, literary allusions, and representations of young people's reading demonstrate only a foundation for the gothic in children's literature – not its presence. The works outlined do not constitute gothic literature definitively for youthful audiences, being either not gothic or not for children; even the parody of *Dangerous Sports* is, brevity notwithstanding, comparatively ambivalent upon gothic. Although the gothic's development into a predominantly children's literary trope may be gradual and played out over centuries, any discussion of the gothic in children's literature as an established historical presence must address whether there were any actual examples of gothic literature unambiguously intended as children's literature, at their period of initiation. Grenby has indeed noted an 'increasing absorption of traditionally adult forms into children's literature', presumably resulting from general notice being attracted by the voracious reading by children of all kinds of writing, creating a very literal children's literature in which all styles and forms written for adults could become children's analogues.[301] Logically any potential market of gothic literature for children, authorised or unauthorised, would eventually be exploited. There was indeed at least one such attempt.

[299] Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho* (Leicester University Press, 1999), p. 256.
[300] Thomas Talfourd, 'Life and Writings of Mrs. Radcliffe' in *Gaston de Blondeville* (1826), Vol. I, p. 6.
[301] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, p. 137.

The domestic saga for children as in *The History of Little Goody Two-Shoes* meets the mysterious gothic atmosphere as in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in *The Village Orphan*, written by an unnamed author in the late 1790s, not coincidentally contemporaneous with gothic literature achieving its highest popularity.[302] Subtitled, unambiguously, 'A Tale For Youth', its Advertisement describes a 'simple tale' aiming to 'cherish in the minds of youth, those natural principles of rectitude and benevolence, which powerfully tend to promote the best interests of society'[303] – the universal claim to didactic and moral improvement among children's books of the era. More contentious is its claimed ambition to enact its influence by 'examples arising from a natural unartificial developement of incidents, which every day occur in the walks of human life', for the book brings to the fore numerous gothic elements far from the unartificial or everyday.[304] 'Handsome Fanny', an orphan living with a benevolent and therefore doomed relative, is driven from her home by a rival's rumour that she is a witch[305] – an allegation perhaps borrowed from *Goody Two-Shoes*, though meeting considerably more success here. Fanny is fortuitously adopted by a middle-class couple who house her in a cottage only accessible through a secret passage in a cave – constructed, tellingly, by a former owner of a 'romantic turn of mind', in a *Heroine*-like justification of supposed reality by reference to fiction.[306] Less than halfway through the novel, the viewpoint switches to the local parson's son, William Seton, who decides to explore – by moonlight, naturally – a local 'gothic' ruin supposedly haunted by a bloodstained ghost, during which exploration his mind fills with 'as many romantic ideas as he could collect from the few romances he had read'.[307] He meets an old man living secretly inside the castle, who transpires to be Fanny's long-lost father. The story concludes happily with the inevitable marriage of Fanny and William. This 'Tale For Youth' bears the fairly obvious mark of gothic influence; the more improbable plot devices are borrowed directly from gothic fiction, lacking only a dastardly villain. Perhaps this omission defines it as for children rather than adults; instead of the visceral thrill of murderous bandits or lascivious aristocrats, Fanny's danger is the more plausible possibility of becoming a social pariah, and although few readers

[302] Anonymous, *The Village Orphan* (circa 1797). Note: The title page bears no date, and the publication year of 1797 is suggested by Eighteenth Century Collections Online. The review cited below, however, was written in 1801, suggesting a publication date some years later.
[303] Ibid., Advertisement.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid., pp. 2, 15.
[306] Ibid., p. 40.
[307] Ibid., pp. 68, 70, 75, 76.

were likely to be accused of witchcraft, social ostracism is a threat relevant and therefore instructive to its audience.

As gothic literature, this is quite sanitised. Nonetheless, *The Village Orphan* also exemplifies the power of the gothic in marketing, as the gothic plotline has little to do with either the book's beginning, title, or even stated aim. Conceivably the author decided that gothic elements would help the book's sales, or became enthused by romances while writing and changed the narrative's direction. Whether the former stratagem would succeed is difficult to determine; the sole review found for this work, from *The Critical Review*, graciously (or patronisingly) acknowledges it as 'prettily narrated' – but with a predictable caveat: 'we can by no means appreciate it as a tale for youth.' Perhaps surprisingly, the publication, as with *Dangerous Sports*, expresses no overt qualms about the novel's obvious gothic influences, again suggesting that present understanding of the gothic's critical reception is incomplete. Instead, the review tackles the novel's style and projected audience, describing the former as 'too elaborate […] for the class to whom it is immediately addressed'; fatally, it 'abounds in hard words'. These criticisms are not especially convincing; the vocabulary is in much the same class as *Dangerous Sports* and even parts of *Goody Two-Shoes*, and while the novel does not directly address its readers in the sometimes gregarious manner of those fictions, to call it 'elaborate' seems an exaggeration. Suggesting that the reviewer has simply employed a more exclusive definition of the word 'youth', one finding the novel inappropriate for those below perhaps ten years old, would not be unreasonable – but would also be untrue, as the reviewer states explicitly what age they think the text would be 'better adapted to': 'readers who have attained their twenty-fifth year'.[308] This seems quite extraordinary, not simply on the novel's own merits, but particularly when considering that readers below the age of twenty-five had for years been reading much more challenging novels; the younger characters of *Northanger Abbey* alone make a mockery of the figure. Either the reviewer held extremely unrealistic ideas about age-appropriate material – or was attempting to circumvent, surreptitiously, the possibility of introducing gothic material to children by recommending it to a much older audience, and, with unusual canniness, not choosing to advertise its gothic material. Unnatural secrecy aside, it must be recalled that a children's novel in a female tradition was highly problematic for conservative critics, with Grenby noting that 'opposition to children's use of novels was bound up with a much more general campaign against novel

[308] Anonymous, Art. 45 [review of *The Village Orphan*] in *The Critical Review*, Vol. 31 (April 1801), p. 469.

reading at any age, particularly by women.'[309] Viewed in this light, *The Village Orphan* is a more dangerous novel than *Goody Two-Shoes* or *Dangerous Sports*, as its use of gothic material is neither ironised nor questioned in any way; it caters directly to children with a softened but unabashed gothic narrative. One can see why a critic with those views described by Grenby would take issue with further extension of this popular form into the sphere of enthusiastic female and child audiences, and indeed, any contemporary repeats of the experiment are yet to be found.

In questioning the extent of *The Village Orphan*'s gothic sensibilities, it is not suggested that gothic texts were wholly unitary, dominated unilaterally by grim castles and malevolent noblemen. These tropes were their most common factors, but writers were contributing to an emergent, evolving, uncodified genre, from which variety must be more expected than unity; the devices of the castle and aristocrat alone are sufficiently open-ended to be recontextualised into nearly any fictitious time and place, creating a varied oeuvre. The gothic novels of Ann Radcliffe were genre-defining in that they were much-imitated: In their educational politics; their basic plot structure, of a young woman whose inheritance has been defrauded and whose person immured in a gloomy gothic structure; their recurring plot devices used to support said structure, including secret passages, malevolent aristocrats, comical servants, roving bandits, sinister Catholic institutions, the protagonist's parents and relatives secretly imprisoned or murdered before the story began – but these ideas did not have to be created by her. They were merely collocated by Radcliffe in a single oeuvre, and then collectively borrowed by successive authors. Additionally, gothic texts outside the scope of her influence were always a feature of a generic landscape in which *Dangerous Sports* could mention Radcliffe, Lewis, and Godwin in a single homage. Punter has complained that 'the hold of the early Gothic masters tended to stultify originality', and in many cases this was true, but such a point is insufficient given that this was exactly what the market demanded for some years, whilst also not being a complete picture (*Dangerous Sports*'s approach to the gothic was no less original for its lack of credibility).[310] Many gothic novels included elements which had little to do with the gothic, or rather the barbaric and superstitious, which in turn were themselves not confined to the gothic novel. The formulation of genre often elides the heterogeneity of the literary landscape, in which few books were truly unitarily composed of a single genre, although one genre might predominate

[309] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, p. 112.
[310] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror, Volume 1*, p. 114.

over the rest – for instance, a historical novel with gothic elements, or a gothic novel with sentimental elements. The latter formulation is so commonplace that some critics propose that the gothic and the sentimental are, in their period at least, inseparable, with Hoeveler asking 'Is gothic a debased form of the sentimental novel?' and Kelly affirming that 'When Sentimental tales and novels and novels of manners, sentiment, and emulation are set in distant times or climes they become 'Gothic romances''.[311] But this view too is limited, as Watt has noted the gothic's synthesis with numerous other genres or trends: Romance, history, folk-tales, the *Bildungsroman*.[312] Summers rightly indicates that the gothic is an obvious enlivening feature in observing that 'if served with Gothic sauce the domestic novel was generally considered far more appetizing fare.'[313] This generic breadth has the result that gothic had sources of appeal beyond itself – that it supported and was supported by other literary possibilities – which may be another cause of gothic's popularity, the unifying in each text of a series of attractive literary propositions. In this we see the roots of the continuing popularity of the gothic – as a series of broad, shared, compatible tropes which can be imported into nearly any story to frighten and thrill an empathetic reader. That many, even most, of these readers were younger people is continually evident.

The eighteenth century was, it has been shown, a time when children's reading began to receive much attention, with numerous writers providing recommendations of proper reading for the young, and, perhaps more importantly, condemnations of improper reading. Warnings of harmful effects on young people reading proto-gothic supernatural stories evolved into parodies showing gothic texts producing such effects; conversely, proto-gothic stories were also dismissed as suited only for the young, a claim fulfilled by the emergence of gothic tropes in a children's literature already geared towards thrilling and melodramatic narratives. As Grenby rightly notes, 'It is clear, in fact, that from the very origins of children's literature, young people were consuming the Gothic'.[314] These symptoms of an early blurring of the boundaries between children's literature and the gothic presage an eventual grander overlap, but this same crossover helped to develop a new social unit. The editors of *The Gothic in Children's Literature* suggest that 'the Gothic narrative […] had really belonged to children's

[311] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Riffs*, p. 36; Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830*, p. 43.
[312] James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, pp. 3, 4, 105.
[313] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, p. 13.
[314] Matthew Orville Grenby, 'Gothic and the Child Reader, 1764-1850', p. 252.

literature all along.'[315] However, it is arguable that the gothic instigated consciousness of a distinct developmental phase connecting childhood and adulthood – the adolescent, an audience which resolves the gothic's paradox of being too mature for children but too immature for adults. Gothic authors themselves may have been prescient enough to observe and appeal to this demographic, judging from the common usage as gothic protagonists of teenaged characters growing into adulthood.

Jack Zipes's shorthand of 'children' as referring to 'the period of childhood up through adolescence' reveals the cultural assumptions that increasingly led gothic to be linked with children's fiction more than adults'; adolescence is compounded with immaturity rather than maturity.[316] Contemporary children and adolescents were presented as equally credulous, differing only in that maturity was taught to children, but expected of adolescents; the gothic quest for maturity was therefore the child's quest, and would gravitate towards this interpretation, fostering the fantastic excesses which critics dismissed as childish. On one simple level, of course, Georgieva is correct to point out that 'Young age favours a maximal accumulation of adventures, incidents, events and influences'; to the ambitious novelist, the young protagonist is simply convenient.[317] But this underestimates the extent to which the adolescent developmental phase is attuned to the issues of sex, death, and persecution which permeate the gothic, subjects which have always been problematic for parents to address; this creates a point at which adolescent readers would naturally be interested in the gothic while their parents would not necessarily approve. It is evident that these subjects as combined in the gothic held an unparalleled thrill for audiences of adolescents and children, attracted not only by action and melodrama but even by the fact that parents and guardians disapproved of such reading. Under these conditions, the broadly-defined gothic would become an artefact not of adults' or purely adolescents' fiction, but of an equally broadly-defined children's fiction.

Such was the childhood of the gothic as children's fiction, a period of latent potential dimly recognised. But as awareness grew of the gothic's allure towards young people, warnings against the same would be matched by commercial interests eager to exploit a fresh audience – one with money in its pockets, and inexperienced, unrefined tastes as easily sated by the

[315] Anna Jackson, Karen Coats, Roderick McGillis, 'Introduction' in *The Gothic in Children's Literature*, p. 2.
[316] Jack Zipes, 'Series Editor's Foreword' in Penny Brown, *A Critical History of French Children's Literature, Volume One*, p. xi.
[317] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child*, p. 163.

lurid as the sophisticated. Although the gothic as seen in this chapter persisted in its form, Edith Birkhead rightly diagnoses an impending change in focus, and more gruesome tastes yet unfulfilled: 'Before the close of the century we may trace, in the conversations of Isabella Thorpe and Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*, symptoms of a longing for more poignant excitement.'[318]

'but are they all horrid, are you sure they are all horrid?'
--Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817)[319]

[318] Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror: A Study of Gothic Romance* (Constable & Company Ltd., 1921), p. 185.
[319] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 23.

CHAPTER TWO

Marginal Gothic For a Marginal Audience

1800-1830

'It was my intention to give my readers a detail of my sufferings and treatment, but my bookseller says that the printer must be paid, and paper is very dear, and that I have filled the limits he has prescribed'

--Anonymous, *The Bloody Hand, or, The Fatal Cup. A Tale of Horror!* (1800)[320]

For gothic tropes to disperse into children's fiction over time, there must be evidence over time of gothic in forms gradually more identifiable with or amenable to a children's fiction audience. Reading habits must have changed with time; therefore, forms outside the novel must be considered. This chapter describes the 1800 to 1830 period, in which archetypal gothic begins to slide into obscurity. By 1800, six years after the iconic *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, gothic fiction was both prolific and successful in the market – for nothing is out of fashion to those new to it, as would be a new generation of readers whose childhood reading perhaps created an early familiarity with the gothic.[321] However, gothic's enduring market presence led its critics to become increasingly articulate and vocal both in delineating and opposing the genre. The 'Terrorist' articles led the way in caricaturing the genre's formulaic narratives, and critics increasingly presented the gothic as a figure of fun, or a dead genre.[322] Although the gothic novel thrived in the 1790s under Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis, Thomas Mathias complained in only 1798, 'Shall nought but ghosts and trinkets be display'd, / Since Walpole ply'd the virtuoso's trade[?]', inaccurately presenting the genre as having swamped the market for the thirty years since *The Castle of Otranto*'s 1764 publication.[323] He also engaged with gothic supernaturalism on the polemic grounds least open to argument, that of patriotism, condemning the supernatural as a foreign absurdity: 'No German nonsense sways my English heart, / Unus'd at ghosts and rattling bones to start'.[324] This familiar criticism of supernatural fiction as something no upstanding person could entertain was

[320] Anonymous, *The Bloody Hand, or, The Fatal Cup. A Tale of Horror!* (1800) (Zittaw Press, 2012), p. 31.
[321] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835: Exhuming the Trade* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 42-43. Figure 3.1 and analysis thereof show that '1800-1810 were the most productive years for the gothic novel production'.
[322] Anonymous, 'Terrorist Novel Writing' (1797); Anonymous, 'The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing' in *Monthly Magazine*, 4, 21 (August 1797), pp. 102-104.
[323] Thomas Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, Part the Third (1796) (1797 edition used), p. 77.
[324] Ibid., Part the Fourth and Last, p. 13.

further articulated in a later 1800 commentary by 'Academicus' on the gothic's presence in theatre: 'even the mighty magician of *Udolpho, Aladdin* and the *Wonderful Lamp*, or the *Castle Spectre*, are very well in the nursery […] but are not to be endured by men of sense and judgment, or who have ceased to think or act *like* children.'[325] Academicus's comparison of *Udolpho* to *Aladdin*, a tale of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, is telling; like many gothic novels, the *Arabian Nights* was an early crossover title that appealed to both children and adults, as documented in Chapter One, and this highlights the ambiguity of the supernatural's proper sphere as a point of social contention. Mathias and Academicus's complaint reiterates the persistent idea, seen in Chapter One, that any hint of the supernatural should not be taken seriously by an adult mind – that an adult mind is incapable of taking them seriously. As Georgieva explains, 'Criticism of the romance-reading public brought adult readers down to the level of the child', but for Academicus, writing gothic is, implicitly, even worse than reading it, for to credit the power of gothic seriously is a juvenile thought, but to write it is a juvenile act, both in indulging the taste and inculcating it in others.[326] Juvenile literature should be limited to a juvenile sphere. Academicus continues by asking 'Cannot these inspired writers […] let the dead at peace?' – in gothic terms, accusing writers of disturbing a dead genre, exhausted of life and potential, and exploiting it for public attention. Academicus misrepresents the nature of continued gothic writing, however. The 'mighty magician of *Udolpho*,' Ann Radcliffe, had not even published for three years, and would not do so again in her lifetime[327] – and yet despite her retreat from the genre, there evidently was life in the gothic, or Academicus's complaint would be apropos of nothing. Academicus's satire is directed at both gothic practitioners and consumers, and shows Academicus's belief that gothic *should* be at an end, rather than actually being so; in reality, supply and demand continued unabated, both in novels and other media.

For the way many adolescents were reading was changing, as a new form of gothic extended its lure, achieving a reach as broad and successful as the gothic novel. As described in the Introduction, this is the gothic bluebook, a form marginalised by critics contemporary and modern, literally degraded by history owing to its ephemeral form, and generally an untapped object of study – but also a compelling source of insight as it relates to the period's

[325] Academicus, 'On the Absurdities of the Modern Stage' in *Monthly Mirror* (1800), in E.J. Clery and Robert Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook 1700-1820* (Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 199.
[326] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 44.
[327] Academicus, 'On the Absurdities of the Modern Stage', p. 199.

adolescent reading and gothic reading. A further repetition of Thomas Medwin's observations on Percy Bysshe Shelley's bluebook reading is surely excusable, as it has much to reveal:

> He was very fond of reading, and greedily devoured all the books which were brought to school after the holidays; these were mostly *blue* books. Who does not know what blue books mean? but if there should be anyone ignorant enough not to know what those dear darling volumes, so designated from their covers, contain, be it known, that they are or were to be bought for sixpence, and embodied stories of haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages—a most exciting and interesting sort of food for boys' minds […][328]

The gothic bluebook, as a physical artefact, was an evolution, arguably an appropriation, of the chapbook form, a thin booklet which William Watt's *Shilling Shockers of the Gothic School: A Study of Chapbook Gothic Romances* describes thus: 'They were about four by seven inches in size, and their closely printed pages were poorly stitched into a cover of flimsy blue paper. The stories varied in length from mere anecdotes to tales of thirty thousand words, but many of the publishers specialized in two definite lengths, dealing out thirty-six pages for sixpence and seventy-two for a shilling.'[329] Watt's description may be value-neutral, but terms such as 'poorly stitched' and 'flimsy' are indicative of the general critical attitude towards the form: It is common for bluebooks to be treated as beneath contempt, even beneath objectivity. That they are bad is a basic presupposition, and they are treated with as little respect as an idea as they were as objects; for this reason, few remain either documented or intact, as Montague Summers has outlined:

> […] the Gothic chapbook passed from hand to hand and was literally read to pieces. […] they would not have been for a moment deemed worthy of the bookshelf, or even of a cardboard cover. They were thrown out contemptuously; the babies crawling over the nursery floor were allowed to play with them for the sake of the pretty painted pictures, and little hands soon had them in scraps and tatters.[330]

This form has always been regarded as marginal, even when first issued, but this is no reason not to study it, particularly not when Medwin felt fit to ask 'Who does not know what blue books mean?', which in itself puts the lie to their supposed ephemerality.[331] It is true that later critics have written far more extensively on the bluebook than their original readers, and

[328] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley* (1847) (Oxford University Press, 1913), p. 24.
[329] William W. Watt, *Shilling Shockers of the Gothic School: A Study of Chapbook Gothic Romances* (Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 11.
[330] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel* (Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 85.
[331] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, p. 24.

rarely in complimentary fashion – but the subjective is to be set aside for now, to address the question of readership. What evidence can be found for adolescent reading of bluebooks will justify further examination of their contents.

Medwin's recollections yield a clutch of deductions. Regarding the reach of bluebooks, for instance, Medwin suggests his audience – an audience interested in a biography of Shelley, so presumably upper-class, well-educated, and with literary interests – should already know of bluebooks, when he asks 'Who does not know what bluebooks mean?' He may even have intended that everyone, and not simply his readers, was aware of bluebooks, which strikingly suggests that they were as essential a feature of the literary market as novels. This is intriguing, as Jeanie Watson has said of the bluebooks' predecessor, the chapbook, that 'Vital and flourishing as the chapbook tradition was […] it was, nonetheless, outside the mainstream of acceptable children's literature.'[332] But given that the context is that of Shelley and Medwin's school days, it is also reasonable to infer that he is not necessarily describing bluebooks as an attraction to his present audience, but rather as a widespread feature of recalled adolescence. This suggests a primary audience for bluebooks that included male adolescents – perhaps not mainstream children's literature as such, and surely not acceptable children's literature, but of no less importance. Medwin's implication of bluebooks' reach is useful evidence – but not entirely reliable, since he feels the need to immediately contextualise bluebooks despite his seeming certainty about their cultural currency. But this contextualisation is equally useful: Medwin produces the expected checklist of gothic tropes – 'haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages' – which he characterises as 'a most exciting and interesting sort of food for boys' minds'. The use of 'boys' certainly reinforces the above deductions regarding the suitability of bluebooks, and broader gothic, for a youthful audience – and perhaps is expected, since such 'exciting' and 'interesting' material was seldom to be found in approved, sanitised children's literature. But the bias here is peculiarly male; Medwin refers to boys only, and his gothic tropes revolve around the melodramatic elements of gothic – those connected, broadly speaking, to violent crime. At the risk of stereotyping the period, though the division is honoured here by bibliographer Peter Garside, exclusive emphasis on such tropes is the preserve more of the widely-acknowledged ''male' horror tradition of M. G. Lewis's *The Monk*', presumably written for a

[332] Jeanie Watson, '"The Raven: A Christmas Poem": Coleridge and the Fairy Tale Controversy', in *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. by James Holt McGavran Jr. (University of Georgia Press, 2009), p. 17.

like-minded male audience, as opposed to those in the 'essentially female tradition of Ann Radcliffe', which includes elements related to romance, or love, which are completely elided by Medwin.[333] This does not mean that love was absent, however – merely that it did not capture his attention or went unsought. But if his observation is broadly accurate, and he certainly implies familiarity with a great number of bluebooks, this would suggest that they were more committed to a male gothic milieu – that there was only a token romantic element, a marriage to be hastened to at the ending. This would be indicative of the popular success of this male tradition with a presumably male audience – or perhaps simply that the bluebook favours incident, with the happy ending promising little in this area.

For Medwin's assumptions may have been too specific, as critics write more broadly of the confines of a youthful audience for the bluebook, with several expressing certainty that young people of both genders read bluebooks. Grenby, in his *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, states that there is 'no doubt that, across the long eighteenth century, many children read romances […] chapbooks […] penny dreadfuls and shilling shockers' – bluebooks by nature, if not by name – 'even though these various forms of popular literature were usually intended primarily for adults.'[334] Of course, the point at stake is that such literature may have been amenable to children in the process of *becoming* adults – that is, adolescents. Summers also declares bluebooks to have been 'read and read on every side by schoolboys, by prentices, by servant-girls'.[335] Summers is not performing a careful breakdown of the audience, but he complicates Medwin's assumptions about bluebook audiences by prioritising a male audience without excluding a female one. In addition, his audience crosses class boundaries, although this does not challenge probability. Franz Potter notes that 'the fact that Shelley was receiving a formal education while enjoying bluebooks indicates that bluebooks attracted the rising reading class as well as educated readers.'[336] Although schoolboys were the more privileged of the three, their participation in the audience suggests that bluebooks should have been neither monetarily nor intellectually out of the reach of apprentices and servant-girls, although their limited funds may have required them to circulate bluebooks communally rather than own them individually. More noteworthy is the fact that Summers describes a broadly but solely youthful audience, an audience which shares a particular feature:

[333] Peter Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era: Consolidation and Dispersal', in Peter Garside, James Raven, Rainer Schöwerling, eds., *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, Vol. II (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 52.
[334] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 103.
[335] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, pp. 84-85.
[336] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, p. 70.

Burgeoning independence. Schoolboys, apprentices, and servant-girls were all individuals taking their first steps into a world of adulthood without their parents alongside them.[337] To revisit Medwin and Shelley, the former likewise recalls a sense of freedom in their schooldays, particularly regarding the acquisition of books, describing how, 'As there was no school library, we soon resorted, "under the rose," to a low circulating one in the town';[338] evidently not a sanctioned experience, but in accordance with Grenby's observation that 'those memoirs that record unregulated reading generally characterise it as transgressive'.[339] It seems unlikely that the parents of upper-class children, or indeed servants, would wish their children to spend their money on such ephemeral forms of disreputable fiction. However, Potter is right to point out that, despite such retrospective hypotheses, 'the actual readership of the bluebooks remains largely indefinable.'[340] But the argument here is not that adolescents made up the entirety of this audience – merely that they comprised part of it, and that theory remains sound. To use their independence to transgress their parents' wishes, partly just because it was possible – this approaches the typical adolescent experience, one which bluebooks, by inference and evidence, suited.

Accounts of bluebook reading may not suggest a universally male readership – but, as noted, they do prioritise a male readership, implying its dominance. The question of acquisition may explain this. Potter elaborates that, to acquire bluebooks, readers would require 'access to a circulating library and the money to procure them'; he also confidently asserts that bluebooks were 'available from street vendors.'[341] These sources have a common factor that would have influenced access demographics, one implicitly revealed by Medwin in noting how use of a circulating library was accomplished 'under the rose';[342] in other words, surreptitiously. It is clear that few would approve their presence at such a locale – whether as members of the upper classes, or as schoolboys – although doubtless the establishment's proprietor welcomed them as paying customers. These are sites of trade which are associated with less distinguished classes, and while lower-class consumers – like apprentices and servants – may have been within their milieu, they were likely unofficially prohibited for and by the upper class. But to certain parts of this class, that would be no object – schoolboys among them, or

[337] Samuel Richardson's eponymous Pamela (of *Pamela* (1740)) exemplifies the servant-girl who, rather than living with her parents, has specifically left home to work.
[338] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, p. 25.
[339] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, p. 211.
[340] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, p. 41.
[341] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, p. 70.
[342] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, p. 25.

anyone able to move freely and unmonitored through an urban setting. Alternatively, it might be easier to note one distinct group which could not move in such a way: Young women. Unlike young men, young women of the period were often educated in the home, if at all, and were typically obliged to move in company.

It is possible to overstate such factors – Catherine Morland of *Northanger Abbey* could probably have acquired bluebooks had she wanted to, and it almost seems an omission that Isabella Thorpe never introduces them, although the gothic novels of the day were clearly sufficient for Austen's parody. Earlier still, Clara Reeve's recommendations of children's reading came with the reflection that 'how, in an age like this, cou'd I flatter myself I cou'd prevent them?'[343] But for actual evidence of the reading of a middle-class young woman in the early nineteenth century we may consider the diaries of Elizabeth Firth, born in 1797, whose teenage years in the 1810s were spent in Yorkshire between her parents' home and a girls' boarding school.[344] Her collected diaries name dozens of texts read by her, with those consumed between 1812 and 1816 particularly relevant, these years conveniently corresponding almost exactly to her fifteenth to nineteenth birthdays.[345] Her diaries are self-recorded and probably unmonitored, judging from their being inscribed in the margins of small pocket-books; as such, it may be presumed to be reasonably honest.[346] The question, then, is what gothic reading she lists in her diary. The answer is practically none. The closest matches are the arguably post-gothic works of Walter Scott, including *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Rokeby*, read when Firth was fifteen and sixteen respectively, and Sophia Lee's arguably pre-gothic historical romance *The Recess*, when Firth was eighteen.[347] That her reading progresses from works of 1805 and 1813 to 1783 illustrates the average reader's anachronistic eclecticism in selecting their entertainment. Of course, it may be that Elizabeth Firth held no personal fondness for gothic works, but an examination of the circumstances of her reading of the three cited texts may shed light on the matter.

Firth's entries are extremely concise, doubtless due to the literally marginal nature of her diary, but some context may still be revealed. Here is the substance of her allusion to the earliest text mentioned above, in her entry for the 11th of February 1812: 'We finished

[343] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, Vol. II, p. 84.
[344] Sheffield, The University Library, MS 58 The Elizabeth Firth Manuscripts (1812-1857) (transcript provided by The University Library).
[345] Her birthday was on the 2nd of January.
[346] For instance, her 1812 diary is written inside *Crosby's Royal Fortune-telling Pocket Book, for the Year 1812*.
[347] Ibid., 11th February 1812, 3rd March 1813, 19th October 1815.

reading The Lay of the Last Minstrel'.[348] Details omitted are when the text was begun or even the reading's duration, merely its conclusion, so it is difficult to tell much about Firth's acquisition and pace of reading – but all that concerns this study is exhibited in the pronoun that begins the entry: 'We'. The reading was evidently a communal activity in the company of Firth's family, probably involving one or several family members reading the text aloud in an almost dramatic performance. The arrangement was not uncommon; Harriet Bowdler is merely the most effusive in suggesting, in the proximate year of 1807, that she could 'hardly imagine a more pleasant occupation […] than for a father to read […] to his family circle.'[349] This naturally demanded a text of unexceptionable content, whether to a child's ears or to a parent's estimation of their interests. It may be that more overtly gothic works – which rarely met with critical notice, let alone critical approval – were felt unsuitable by whoever selected the texts for the Firths' communal reading; the matter is not delved into. For the second work, Scott's *Rokeby* on the 3rd of March 1813, the circumstances are similar: 'My Governess read Rokeby in the evening'.[350] One presumes that Firth was not simply noting her governess's choice in reading matter, but rather that this was another communal reading effort, one led by Firth's governess. Even if the former were an accurate surmise, it would suggest that the text was not unsuitable to be identified to Firth by her governess; either way it is clear that the choice of reading matter here is being moderated by an adult authority. Finally, the reading circumstances of 19th of October 1815 mirror those of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*: 'We began reading The Resess' [*sic*]. Again, there is no reason to think this is anything other than communal family reading, whether aloud or otherwise, which requires the family's approval of the selected text. It is worth noting that there many instances of Firth apparently reading individually – for instance, 16th June 1814's entry reads 'I began of reading the pleasures of Hope', a widely-approved philosophical poem of 1799 by Thomas Campbell.[351] It may not be a coincidence that texts with gothic aspects were read not individually but communally, for in this fashion those potentially more dubious texts could be controlled and commented on while reading if Firth's governess or parents objected to their content, while Firth was permitted to read unobjectionable texts on her own. Firth's diaries highlight some of the issues facing the young woman as an independent reader: It would have been easy for parents or other guardians to prevent the acquisition of gothic texts, or to otherwise control access to them. If this is the case, it seems likely that the purchasing audience for bluebooks was

[348] Ibid., 11th February 1812.
[349] Harriet Bowdler (signed as Thomas Bowdler), 'Preface' in *The Family Shakespeare* (1818), p. ix.
[350] Sheffield, The University Library, MS 58 The Elizabeth Firth Manuscripts, 3rd March 1813.
[351] Ibid., 16th June 1814.

skewed towards males, and particularly those in urban areas, where booksellers could be found.

Even if contemporary, anecdotal evidence of the reading of bluebooks is slim – not just by adolescents, but by anyone – then the positions of Medwin and subsequent critics allow for it. But there is an inkling, in Watt's and Summers's writings, that the bluebook is regarded by them as an uninteresting object; others go further, integrating a negative value judgement on bluebooks with a disdain for later gothic that recalls Academicus. Writing in 1921, a century after the works she was describing, the critic Edith Birkhead argued that, 'Until the appearance in 1820 of Maturin's *Melmoth* […] the Gothic romance maintained a disreputable existence in the hands of those who looked upon fiction as a lucrative trade, not as an art.'[352] That she cites only a single exception underlines her dim view of decades of work in a genre increasingly written, according to her apparently unsubstantiated argument, for money rather than art – as if the two were irreconcilable.

But among the instantiations of this 'disreputable existence', it is bluebooks which are now of concern – a further example of trans-media gothic which rose to prominence in the early nineteenth century. Birkhead describes the innovation thus: 'Ingenious authors realised that it was possible to compress into the five pages of a short story as much sensation as was contained in the five volumes of a Gothic romance. For the brevity of the tales, which were issued in chapbooks, readers were compensated by gaudily coloured illustrations and by double-barrelled titles.'[353] Birkhead, like Academicus, is unable to resist misrepresenting the gothic, here through its forms – as few novels reached five volumes, bluebooks were considerably longer than five pages, and Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian, or the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1797) exemplifies the presence of the double-barrelled title in the 'reputable' gothic novel. Despite these opening shots in what will be shown as a widespread effort to distinguish, usually inaccurately, the practices of the bluebook from the novel, Birkhead also implicitly highlights an accurate feature of many bluebooks: That, rather than being original work (itself a nebulous concept, as will be discussed later), many were covert or overt abridgements of extant gothic novels – multiple volumes condensed into a fraction of the pages. It is important to note, however, that Birkhead's description is figurative; only

[352] Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror: A Study of Gothic Romance* (Constable & Company Ltd., 1921), p. 185.
[353] Ibid., pp. 185-186.

some bluebooks were abridgements, and those that were not made some attempt to tailor their plots to the limited available page span. These were short stories, not shortened stories.

Bluebooks were an alternative to gothic novels in terms of length, sometimes even a literal shorter version of a particular novel, although in other respects distinctions are controversial. It follows that, as with the gothic novel, there should be distinct potentialities for readerships of children and adolescents in the gothic bluebook. Such a speculative correlation is granted additional plausibility by a brief overview of the contemporary literary milieu. William St. Clair identifies two rising markets in the publishing industry of the 1810s: There is 'the rapid growth of what we might call chapbook gothic […] many of which appear to be abridged adaptations of Minerva Press titles which were coming out of copyright', and simultaneously, 'The children's book industry boomed.' Of course, correlation does not imply causation – but consider the features of the children's book industry St. Clair describes: 'We see new versions of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver's Travels* […] a proliferation of poetry anthologies […] abridgements and adaptations of histories and books of travel, of chapbook versions'.[354] The features of this booming market match up extremely closely with those of the bluebook market: Specialisation in abridging longer works for adults. Presumably, for bluebooks, this was to appeal to a separate audience to the market for multi-volume novels, but that the same technique was being used to create books for children suggests that the same applied to bluebooks. This invites a fuller investigation of the bluebook extension of gothic fiction as a potential form of children's fiction, and perhaps, as with novels, as a potential articulation of that audience into adolescence. Based on a representative sample of twelve bluebooks, near-evenly split between original and redacted plotlines, and with reference to critical surveyors of a considerably greater number, the merits of the gothic bluebook as a form best-suited to the adolescent market and what aspects of adolescent development it encouraged will be considered.

In truth, once a purely material definition has been passed, it is very difficult to unitarily define the content of the bluebook, as one should expect from a genre that exhibits such malleability. Birkhead characterises their content as 'sensation' even whilst acknowledging that they were merely shorter than gothic novels, implying there is little to uniquely identify

[354] William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 349.

the content.[355] However, Summers elaborates on the authorial remit: 'to cram into his limited space as many shocking mysterious and horrid incidents as possible. Accordingly he must at once rush *in medias res* and waste no time in explanation or descriptions'.[356] Watt describes how bluebooks 'were often obliged to bring hero and heroine to the grave or the altar with surprising suddenness',[357] and Frederick Frank sums up their plot construction as functioning by 'eliminating all moralism and by pushing the characters along a corridor of blood and bringing them either to the altar or the grave within the alloted thirty-six pages'.[358] It is the rapidity of the plot, despite being an inescapable demand of the form, that is highlighted for criticism and used as a distinguishing factor from novels, because it involved removing those elements that redeemed the gothic novel artistically – atmosphere, aesthetics, and often moralism as well. Although James Raven more generously allows that the writer's intention was not 'Lasting literary fame', but rather 'amusement, diversion, and fashion', this is a criticism that deserves to be questioned.[359]

Certainly those bluebooks which really were abridgements of longer gothic works had little space for incidents which did not directly facilitate the plot. One such example is the anonymously-authored *The Veiled Picture; or, The Mysteries of Gorgono, the Appennine Castle of Signor Androssi*[360] – an 1802 redaction of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.[361] In places the bluebook's text reads much like a detailed synopsis, whilst slower-paced descriptions borrow directly from the original text; the following randomly-selected examples, respectively from *The Veiled Picture* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* compare favourably: 'In consequence of the late discoveries, Emily was distinguished by the Count and his family as the heiress of the house of De Lormel; and received, if possible, greater attention than had yet been shewn her',[362] and 'After the late discoveries, Emily was distinguished at the chateau by the Count and his family, as a relative of the house of Villeroi,

[355] Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror*, p. 185.
[356] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, p. 83.
[357] William W. Watt, *Shilling Shockers of the Gothic School*, pp. 11-12.
[358] Frederick S. Frank, 'Gothic Gold: The Sadleir-Black Gothic Collection' in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, Vol. 26 (American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, 1998) <http://www2.lib.virginia.edu/small/collections/sadleir-black/gold.html> [accessed 16 June 2012].
[359] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', in Peter Garside, James Raven, Rainer Schöwerling, eds., *The English Novel 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles*, Vol. I (Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 16.
[360] Anonymous, *The Veiled Picture; or, The Mysteries of Gorgono, the Appennine Castle of Signor Androssi. A Romance of the Sixteenth Century* (1802) (Valancourt Books, 2006).
[361] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008).
[362] Anonymous, *The Veiled Picture*, p. 87.

and received, if possible, more friendly attention, than had yet been shewn her'.[363] The bluebook simplifies the legal implications of the revelation and its social interest to others by referring to Emily as an 'heiress' rather than merely 'a relative', but it is interesting to note that the register of the abridgement seems slightly higher than that of the original, considering the use of 'in consequence of' instead of 'after' – this suggests that the redactor consciously worked to high standards, showing that an abridgement may have its redeeming factors. As a redaction, however, *The Veiled Picture* is thinly-veiled, for although it alters the title of the original text and almost all of the characters' names, the preservation of the protagonist's name, the title's reference to the infamous plot device of the veiled picture, and the subtitle *The Mysteries of Gorgono* mirroring the title *The Mysteries of Udolpho* suggest that the bluebook was intended to be easily recognisable as a *Udolpho* redaction, and maintaining the high register of the text is an aspect of this. It is important to consider, therefore, that even in such a narratively rapid redaction, there is evidence of considerable artistry, not just in maintaining the tone but in tailoring to a particular audience and, most importantly, in compressing a densely-plotted four-volume novel down to the length of a bluebook – surely no mean feat.

But whether the qualification of rushed narration is broadly accurate is a different matter. There are numerous bluebooks, particularly by the prolific and largely original author Sarah Wilkinson, which make greater use of atmosphere and do not indulge in complicated plotting that requires narrative acceleration. Wilkinson's *Monkcliffe Abbey* (1805) dedicates numerous paragraphs to description and psychological insight, even finding time for a poem, which is admittedly a rarity in bluebooks.[364] The following descriptive passage illustrates this lenient pace:

> This part, which contained the monastic cells, led through the cloisters to an ancient chapel, which had not been used since the monks had left the abbey; there being one in the centre of the building that was used by the family for divine worship. The altar and ornaments of the chapel still remained, though mouldering to decay; adjoining was a vault in which the superiors had been interred; at the end was a small door that led through to the cemetery, or church yard – here the graves were unmarked by any

[363] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 664.
[364] Sarah Wilkinson, *Monkcliffe Abbey: A Tale of the Fifteenth Century. To which is added Lopez and Aranthe; or, The Suicide* (1805) (Zittaw Press, 2006) [also printed as *Monkcliffe Abbey; or, The History of Albert, Elwina, and Adeline* (1807)].

thing but the rising turf, shrubs and evergreens scattered, the yew tree, and the mountain ash.

On one side was a long and shady row of elms, at the end of which was a small enclosed space, with a monumental urn of Stephano Burnett de Monkcliffe first founder of the abbey, which he endowed with considerable gifts: – he retired many years after the first foundation, in grief for the loss of Rachelda, his wife, and became prior of the order. This part of the abbey was avoided by the domestics and neighbouring peasants, through superstitious awe, and gloomy imaginations of its being haunted.[365]

Of this passage, the only plot-critical elements are the first and last sentences; the descriptions of the chapel's dilapidated and overgrown state, and the abbey's history, serve no function to the plot. However, they do serve obvious atmospheric and thematic purposes. The description of the ruins creates a stronger impression of a place which is uncannily lonely, as a locale formerly well-populated and oft-used, which is strange to imagine empty and neglected; this creates a sense of eeriness, owing to a conflicting impression of a place as simultaneously seeming occupied and deserted, including by the viewer. The monastic order's history acts as foreshadowing, for the wife of the present-day lord of Monkcliffe Abbey dies on the following page, but also highlights the story's theme of romantic disappointment, as numerous prospective partnerships are broken during the narrative – a typical theme for Wilkinson, whose works exhibit artistic consistency. Unusually, the text is short enough that the bluebook requires supplementing with the separate *Lopez and Aranthe; or The Suicide* – another typically Wilkinsonian tragic romance which centres on the importance of chastity and the perils of seduction, rather than, and despite, the sensational and scandalous subject matter of its subtitle. One might argue, perhaps cynically, that the presence of extraneous description and an additional storyline are solely to fill out a too-flimsy plot, but one cannot apply a double standard and object to both compression and expansion. Regardless, the conclusion either way is that the hasty, artless plot is not a universal characteristic of the bluebook.

The same applies, not incidentally, to Montague Summers's suggestion that bluebooks tend to begin *in medias res* and avoid introductions. Judging from the reprinted bluebooks available today, only a few begin *in medias res*; of those that do, some such as C.F. Barrett's

[365] Ibid., p. 18.

The Black Castle; or the Spectre of the Forest (1801) clearly do so not to avoid employing space on exposition, but as a dramatic device to create suspense:

> The sun had just sunk in the oozy bed of the western ocean, and his departing rays still quivered on the distant mountains, when a solemn train of peasants entered the shady recesses of the forest of Agmant, (situated on the borders of the kingdom of Fez) chaunting (according to their custom every evening) a *requiem* to the memory of the murdered Ravia, to whom these honest rustics had raised a tomb in the centre of the forest.[366]

All of the mysterious points of this opening are explained during the narrative, with the textual arrangement employed to create a mystery to encourage readers to read on, rather than revealing all at the story's very beginning. In this particular example, however, the matter is not even in Barrett's hands, as his text is adapted from a play.[367] Occasionally, such subjectively-labelled bad practice may be traced to the source material, and not its redactor.

Franz Potter has identified a number of what he considers false critical assumptions about bluebooks: That they were 'a corrupted form'; 'without exception plagiarisms, abridgements, redactions and condensations'; 'written by hack writers who viewed fiction in monetary terms, not literary'; even that they existed 'merely for the 'perverted taste' of the degenerate and vulgar readers'.[368] These points, insofar as they reflect reasons to dismiss the bluebook as unworthy of critical attention, have now been complicated, if not disproven; the vague and subjective 'corrupted' attack being rightly laid aside, the literary quality of the bluebook is largely inherited from their novelistic predecessors, even in the numerous original titles, which plagiarised no more than novels themselves. Plagiarism in the modern sense is applied only problematically to early gothic fiction, for James Raven has argued that 'many writers [were] not consciously intending to deceive', being in fact subject to a 'contemporary uncertainty about how much reuse of material was acceptable'.[369] There is a question for any genre of how much use of established generic materials constitutes infringement upon another's work. To borrow tropes, or even one subplot of a novel's many, is not to borrow another novel wholesale; arguably it is to build a genre, not to commit an act of theft. To be

[366] C.F. Barrett, *The Black Castle; or the Spectre of the Forest. A Romance* (1801) (Zittaw Press, 2006), p. 1.
[367] 'A majority of Barrett's plots were directly taken from popular Gothic melodramas including *The Black Castle* […] which announces that it was 'founded on the spectacle of that name, performed at the Amphi-Theatre of Arts, with unbounded applause for nearly one hundred nights.'' Franz Potter, 'Introduction' in *The Black Castle*, p. 6.
[368] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, p. 38.
[369] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 22.

derivative is not a crime. Indeed, the example of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* is relevant, since it opens with a lengthy paragraph detailing the author's sources;[370] reflecting on this, *The Monthly Review*'s reviewer admits, 'This may be called plagiarism; yet it deserves some praise', and goes on to outline the philosophy that 'All invention is but new combination. To invent well is to combine the impressive.'[371] Such exactly was the case of the bluebook; one can object only to the finesse of their unoriginality, if one accepts that of *The Monk*. With this in mind, if the bluebook can now be considered 'legitimate,' if only for this particular study, then these points should be inflected towards asking how they serve an audience of young people. If the critical contentions over the status of bluebooks reveal anything for certain, it is that no easy arguments can be made regarding them. A closer examination of the content and context of bluebooks must be made, specifically with a proto-adolescent audience in mind. There are two chief potentialities: Narrative suitability, which addresses, as with gothic novels, how the narratives might be receptive to an adolescent mindset; and formal suitability, which concerns how the form of the bluebook might be accessible particularly by this young audience. The depth of these two arguments, and their interaction, requires considerable attention.

As discussed above, the case can certainly be made that adolescents read gothic bluebooks, and this leads into the question of why they would have done so. The suitability of the bluebook narrative to the adolescent mindset is here considered first – and the first consideration must be one of the first points to be addressed by any narrative: The nature of the protagonist. In gothic novels, youthful reader identification with the protagonists was encouraged by a prevalence of young and, usually, female heroes, of adolescent age or slightly older; they formed suitable role models in physical and social circumstances approximate enough to the reader's – that is, teenaged and upper-class – to encourage that reader to project their own emotions and responses onto that character, to associate with their position. How many novels ever attempted this deliberately is questionable, but it is reasonable that clichés about gothic readerships might catch the attention of later authors, of novels or bluebooks, who might have attempted a more direct appeal to their audience's interests. But, whether by accident or intent, the question remains: Did bluebooks provide the materials for reader identification among adolescents?

[370] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796) (fourth edition 1798) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), Advertisement, p. 6.
[371] Anonymous, review of *The Monk* in *The Monthly Review*, Vol. 23 (August 1797), p. 451.

As noted, bluebook content cannot be generalised; there was a wide range of narrative material available. But in this study's sample of bluebooks one may attempt to detect trends that either point towards or away from adolescent reader identification. It is notable that children per se – that is, pre-adolescents – are almost totally absent, even more so than in gothic novels. This is not particularly surprising; the themes of gothic narratives require moral awakening, sexual menace, new experience of independence, a general ability to make meaningful choices and to be recognised as an individual by an adult nemesis, and pre-adolescents are not suited to such requirements. Nonetheless, the bluebooks elide even the traditional opening survey of the protagonist's Rousseauian upbringing, favouring instead delineations of their character as the story begins, several examples of which will be cited later. It seems highly probable that they were sacrificed in favour of incident in the bluebook's limited page count, and characterisation usually renders the details of a character's upbringing redundant – but the absence of concern for the proper raising of children is notable, and perhaps suggests an audience not yet old enough to be lectured on such matters. More often, parentage is not connected to the themes of the story, but rather is a plot device, and murdered parents consequently litter the family trees of bluebook fiction. But to return to children themselves, there are only three examples of true children in the present bluebook sample. Donna Leonora of *The Wandering Spirit; or, Memoirs of the House of Morno* (1801) merits little attention; although pertinent, being 'about eight years of age' and 'a child of unequalled beauty', she is described second-hand and only appears in the narrative an unstated but evidently considerable number of years later, to be married.[372] A child character with better narrative presence, although not by much, is an infant in *The Horrible Revenge; or, The Assassin of the Solitary Castle* (1828), which is ascribed no name, only indirectly given an age (by being said to have been born 'two and a half years ago'), described almost entirely with genderless terms such as 'it' rather than gendered pronouns; and speaks only a single directly-quoted line: 'Water, water, mamma!'[373] From this it is deduced that the child's minimal age gives it minimal consequence, and indeed it swiftly dies in order to facilitate the development of other characters; this suggests that this particular child is not considered to be an active agent, merely a plot device. This approach is developed in the aforementioned *The Black Castle* by C.F. Barrett; an 'infant' boy, Muley, is mentioned

[372] Anonymous, *The Wandering Spirit; or, Memoirs of the House of Morno* (1801) (Zittaw Press, 2006), p. 11.
[373] Anonymous, *The Horrible Revenge; or, The Assassin of the Solitary Castle* (1828) (Zittaw Press, 2012), pp. 28, 37.

from early in the narrative, and although his age is also omitted, he is capable of service as a page and speech which is coherent, if childish, and sufficient to develop the plot by revealing backstory: 'I had a mammy once; but I know not what became of her. I was taken from her one night, and have never seen her since'.[374] Subsequently Muley is able to beg for the life of another character, and indeed, for his own – so successfully that one of the villain's henchmen is persuaded to protect him. Although Muley's infancy prevents him from being a particularly active or mobile character, and his movements are always another character's responsibility, his role is as something more than a plot device. This example of a relatively strong infant character is so rare, however, that it throws into sharper relief the different treatment accorded to adolescents and the overall rarity of child characters. Indeed, it is problematic to suggest that *The Horrible Revenge* and *The Black Castle* are particularly representative of bluebook narratives – the latter is a redaction of a stage play, while the former is an interpolated tale lifted almost verbatim from Eliza Parsons's 1796 novel *The Mysterious Warning*.[375] Even *The Wandering Spirit* is a redaction of Stephen Cullen's *The Haunted Priory; or, The Fortunes of the House of Rayo*.[376] They appear *as* bluebooks, but were not plotted *for* bluebooks, suggesting that the role of children in bluebooks was a marginal one, tending to be utilised only when the source material demanded it.

Bluebooks, then, tend to neglect children, and their inclusion in the sample owes something to other sources in each case – perhaps highlighting a lack of interest in children as a readership, for reasons speculated upon below. Moving to a higher age category produces rather different results. As noted above, for the demands of gothic narratives, adolescents are more suited than children, perhaps even most suited to themes of change and maturation, and hence gothic novels commonly revolve around young adult characters. This is prominently the case in the 'canonical' gothic works of Walpole, Reeve, Radcliffe, and Lewis, and any number of close Radcliffean imitations. The question, then, is whether bluebooks take this into consideration when composing their plots. The adolescent state is complicated in gothic texts by lacking cultural definitions for when children were capable of maturing into adults, so attentiveness to any teenage characters is necessary. However, even with this generous prerequisite, it is often difficult to identify even broadly adolescent characters in gothic, for as Georgieva encountered in her study of childhood in the gothic, 'Very few authors mention the

[374] C.F. Barrett, *The Black Castle*, pp. 13, 22.
[375] Franz Potter, 'Note On The Text' in *The Horrible Revenge*, p. 41.
[376] Franz Potter, 'Introduction' in *The Wandering Spirit* (Zittaw Press, 2006), p. 6.

exact ages of those they choose to call children' – or indeed of anyone, with the same terms being used for 'the unborn child, through early babyhood to adolescence and adulthood'.[377] Often the only clue is that a character is described, on introduction, as 'young,' requiring subjective deductions to be made of their age from circumstances. Of the bluebook sample, ages for young characters are omitted slightly more often than they are provided; this is chiefly attributable to the narrative construction of each bluebook, which usually centres around a single privileged viewpoint character who then encounters other unfamiliar individuals during their story. Character age is unlikely to be a known factor in the narrative unless they are given a biography upon introduction, whilst the protagonist's viewpoint can only provide a broader estimation of a newcomer's age. As suggested above, however, where the narrative makes no outright statement of age, context can suggest a possible broadly adolescent state. The opening of *The Veiled Picture* describes Emily d'Orville as 'Under her father's instruction,' and therefore still in a maturing state, if continuing education is required; later she is placed under fresh guardianship 'till she was of age', confirming she is not yet of adult status – but her age is not openly given, nor is she directly described as youthful.[378] Fortunately, such vagueness is actually propitious, as far as locating points of possible reader identification is concerned; the less detail applied to a character, the easier it is to project the self onto them. At the same time, if it is rarer as a reader to encounter a young character with any specified age, to encounter one the same age as oneself would be the more compelling experience for its rarity. Reader response is as important here as authorial intention, and readers had numerous opportunities to read gothic texts in a way personal to them.

Therefore both stratifications, detailed and vague, should be taken into account, even if it is impossible to say what each author meant, much less what each reader assumed, when a character is described as 'young.' It seems reasonable that readers below the age of twenty should perceive themselves as being both young and capable of involvement in an adventure of gothic proportions, even if older readers might not take their experiences seriously – which is suggested in the review of *The Village Orphan* cited in the previous chapter that decreed it 'better adapted to the class of novel readers who have attained their twenty-fifth year'.[379] Indeed, nearly all the sampled bluebooks feature primary characters who are either ascribed

[377] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child*, p. 3.
[378] Anonymous, *The Veiled Picture*, pp. 19, 31.
[379] Anonymous, Art. 45 [review of *The Village Orphan*] in *The Critical Review*, Vol. 31 (April 1801), p. 469.

an age between thirteen and twenty or whom one could reasonably so read, largely because whenever a protagonist's age is given, it is always a figure ending in '-teen,' excepting one text only: *The Black Castle*'s twin siblings Lamora and Samoustapha, who 'had attained [their] twentieth year' and thus remain on the youthful periphery.[380] It is not necessary to detail each of these examples, but those which could be most instructive, particularly in the interests of examining bluebook potentiality for a recognisably adolescent audience, are the youngest characters given age, for whom it is significant, circumstances of the plot notwithstanding, to assess how much agency and individuality the authors accord them. These youngest characters are the fourteen-year-old Don Carlos of *The Wandering Spirit; or, Memoirs of the House of Morno*, and the fifteen-year-old Elwina of *Monkcliffe Abbey: A Tale of the Fifteenth Century*.[381]

The Wandering Spirit is, as noted, a redaction of Stephen Cullen's *The Haunted Priory*, but it is noteworthy nonetheless that the redaction preserves the specificity of Carlos's age and considers his merits to be credible.[382] Indeed, these are his first-named features: 'Don Carlos, about fourteen years of age,—the noblest youth that lives.'[383] This is a propitious introduction for the character; if the text's redactor thought this implausible or problematic, they could have as easily changed the character's age as his name (Don Alphonso in the original – and in parts of the somewhat inconsistent redaction). To return to the text, Carlos is placed at the head of a very broad category, for assuming that 'youth' may also signify those older than fourteen, Carlos is permitted to excel his elders, too. This is high praise for a fourteen-year-old; one may contrast a subsequent statement that 'nor is there a youth of his age who can equal him', which is more neutral, as it compares only to other fourteen-year-olds.[384] Physically, Carlos is described as having a 'muscular, gigantic, and majestic appearance', which is contrasted with his immediate behaviour, in which he attends an old man with 'a mixture of respect and pity' and escorts the gentleman upon his arm to a more comfortable abode.[385] As a mere introduction, Carlos is already attributed every quality asked of a gothic protagonist – physical strength and attractiveness, and a respectful and sensitive personality. Even if the redactor only reiterates the details of an earlier work, the result nonetheless provides an exemplary figure to a male adolescent audience, or indeed idealised male features

[380] C.F. Barrett, *The Black Castle*, p. 19.
[381] Sarah Wilkinson, *Monkcliffe Abbey*.
[382] Franz Potter, 'Introduction' in *The Wandering Spirit*, p. 6.
[383] Anonymous, *The Wandering Spirit*, p. 11.
[384] Ibid.
[385] Ibid., p. 12.

to female adolescents. What follows for Carlos is an alternation between emphasis on his deference and on his strength; he 'employed the whole day in shewing his guest the gardens, woods, and castle,' and declines to try on a suit of armour despite desiring to do so because his father 'would suspect [him] of vanity, and there is nothing he hates so much' – though there is no doubting his capacity as he can 'run with the biggest boy you saw with [him] on [his] back; and he is twice as heavy as [the armour].' Carlos's characterisation as a gothic hero needs only an expression of sensibility, which occurs shortly as he is shown having 'wept with delight at the feelings of happiness in another.'[386] Though he seems utterly perfect, Carlos is not independent from his family and exists in an adolescent relation to them, under his father and subsequently the Baron de Morno's 'instruction and improvement', who within two years finds Carlos 'more than his equal'.[387] The sixteen-year-old Carlos is subsequently dispatched to court and spends an implied several years involved in 'various occasion of shewing his valour' before the true plot begins.[388] For the remainder of the story, Carlos may effectively be considered no longer an adolescent, for although his precise age is unclear, by the conclusion he is permitted to marry a girl six years his junior, and thus is presumably aged above twenty, taking him beyond even the most extended definition of the adolescent years.[389] As a fourteen-year-old, Carlos possesses everything he needs to be considered a true gothic protagonist, except age. He is not permitted to become a true hero until some years later, but the redactor shows no qualms about providing him with adult accomplishments, heroic potential, and status as a viewpoint character.

Sarah Wilkinson's *Monkcliffe Abbey* appears to be an original creation, and therefore the problem of authorial intention is less problematised, if it is relevant at all – rather than the characters borrowing features directly from another text, there is greater agency for the bluebook's author, and a more precise designation of the contents as being for the bluebook audience. Elwina of *Monkcliffe Abbey* is a year older than Carlos at his most adolescent, but at fifteen, may still reasonably be qualified as an adolescent, and is younger than the other bluebook protagonists save for Carlos; thus she is of interest as far as adolescent protagonists go. The female gothic protagonist has certain quite different qualities to the male protagonist. The gender assumptions of the period render physical strength inappropriate, as will be

[386] Ibid., pp. 12-13.
[387] Ibid., p. 21.
[388] Ibid., p. 22.
[389] Donna Leonora, who is thought to be his sister until the end of the story; as cited above, she was described as eight years old on the same page as Carlos is described as fourteen.

discussed later, and its counterpart is physical beauty, but a noble character and expressions of sensibility are no less prized. It is therefore unsurprising that Elwina is described in terms of her personality; her introduction mentions her 'mild blue eyes' only so that they can be said to 'cast around a look of benevolence and pity; while her hand bestowed the liberal boon to distressed innocence, and the virtuous poor'.[390] Several further lines develop Elwina's charitability, suggesting it to be her most important trait. Unusually, her physical appearance is almost totally omitted save for her eye colour, and even her age is only suggested by comparison to her elder sister, 'now seventeen; Elwina, two years younger'.[391] Avoiding physical description instead places total emphasis on her personality as opposed to her appearance, in contrast to her elder sister: 'fair as the lilly [*sic*], tall as the pine,' she 'moved with the majestic air of a goddess; but pride and ambition appeared on [her] brow'.[392] Wilkinson is noted for her 'awareness of herself as a woman author with women readers', which might be called an early literary feminism, for her texts usually concern the unjust status of women in relation to men; her elevation of one character's morality over another's beauty may express this, for it contrasts inner life and benevolent conduct with superficial enticements to male enjoyment.[393] This contrast is repeated throughout the text, in notes that, while Elwina and her mother attend charitable errands, Adeline 'remained in her own apartment, employed in some trivial pursuit, or the decoration of her person.'[394] The contrast between the two sisters exemplifies an oft-used trope of a dichotomy between two primary characters, one good and one not, and the vehicle of two sisters bears considerable resemblance to novels such as Ann Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1783). As in those, the narrative's attention is at times equivocal but eventually focusses on a single sibling: While Adeline, the elder sister, bears considerable significance, it is the younger Elwina who wins the narrative's approbation, and is rewarded with an enlarged role. Her character is subsequently developed in a direction an audience of [young women] would likely find accessible: 'love, overpowering love, had taken possession of her bosom, and she in secret, sigh'd for Albert; while the many little attentions he paid to her sister did not pass unperceived, and she mourned in secret her ill-fated attachment.'[395] Unrequited love, common in reality, is rarer in the gothic, and contributes to a rounded portrait of Elwina as a female adolescent who an age- and gender-appropriate audience could

[390] Sarah Wilkinson, *Monkcliffe Abbey*, p. 11.
[391] Ibid., p. 12.
[392] Ibid., p. 11.
[393] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, p. 11.
[394] Sarah Wilkinson, *Monkcliffe Abbey*, p. 17.
[395] Ibid.

easily empathise with. More cunningly, this character development also contributes to plot development, as it leads Elwina to 'wander along the unfrequented parts of the building, and sigh in secret,' where she subsequently makes a variety of discoveries which relate to the key mysteries of the story – not least in part due to a specifically female character trope, 'curiosity, that reigning passion of the female heart'.[396] Indeed, in the final analysis, Elwina is given full rights as a gothic heroine. She has a benevolent and sensitive personality, she solves the mysteries (if largely by accident), and even closes the narrative with marriage to her beloved Albert, whose affections naturally alter upon learning that Adeline has secretly married the duke of B——n. In addition, as a comparatively plausible adolescent character, Elwina would doubtless be attractive and empathetic to an audience of adolescents. Were one to take *Monkcliffe Abbey* as a representative product, it would seem that fifteen is by no means too young to be a gothic protagonist – for a female character.

For indeed it is notable that Carlos, although totally capable at age fourteen, required further years of age before the narrative placed him into the situation of a gothic hero. Male protagonists' ages in the present bluebook sample are scarce, but all save Carlos are independent agents no longer under their family's care. This has implications for gendered expectations of gothic protagonists – that male characters are expected to be capable of independent action, to go on adventures as they will and actively participate in events, whilst female characters are expected to be dependent, with narrative tension coming from their removal from protection; subject, in short, to the trope of 'virtue in distress', which Barker-Benfield describes as 'One of the best-known representations of the literature of sensibility […] the virtue a woman's, and her distress caused by a man.'[397] Female characters react to a cause, and male characters – good and bad – are that cause. This dichotomy requires male characters to be older for their activities to exhibit plausibility and legitimacy, whereas gothic heroines inspire greater sympathy the more vulnerable they are. There are exceptions, of course, but these exceptions can reinforce the trends of the dichotomy by presenting active female efforts as either transgressive or, mostly, doomed to failure. In the latter respect, every single attempt in the bluebooks by female protagonists to escape gothic imprisonment without masculine assistance fails, whether due to eventual recapture – as are the fates of Lamora of *The Black Castle* and Eugenia of *The Horrible Revenge* – or because they never even get past the walls of their prison, as happens to Julietta of Sarah Wilkinson's *Priory of*

[396] Ibid., pp. 18, 21.
[397] G.J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility* (University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. xviii.

St. Clair; or, Spectre of the Murdered Nun (1811), who is said to suffer 'repeated disappointments […] in her attempts to escape' from the Count de Valvé's castle, in what seems like a cruel perversion of the cautionary tale.[398]

Indeed, the narratives seem to equate failed escapes with transgression, aligning the story's course with the villain's interests, as each attempted escape meets not just with recapture but greater punishment. Returning to Julietta of *Priory of St. Clair*, in which the villainous Count de Valvé takes the role of protagonist, little could be worse for this young nun than for the Count 'to make her honour a sacrifice to his revenge', and 'frequently this wretched much to be pitied victim of lust and cruelty, was compelled to suffer a repetition of his detested embrace', but worse is to come.[399] Upon discovering Julietta 'in the act of making her escape' – not even beyond the castle walls – the 'enraged Count' 'drew a short poniard from his bosom' and 'aimed it at the heart of his victim; but it was not till he had given her repeated wounds, that the poor nun drew her last sigh'.[400] The author makes no compromises; Julietta lives an awful life, and in attempting to escape, suffers an awful death. Although de Valvé is 'haunted every midnight by the spectre of the murdered nun'[401] and 'expired penitent, but tormented with a dreadful gloom', with his example used to teach his son – and, implicitly, the reader – 'to subdue his passions, and keep them within the bounds due to decorum and society', that the faultless Julietta's sufferings exist merely to contrive a moral lesson for others seems unfair.[402]

In Barrett's *The Black Castle*, Lamora's escape is a co-operative effort between herself, the child Muley, and the spectre of Ravia, who indicates a secret passageway that exits the tyrant Asphar's castle. Lamora's escape is not entirely independent, but is female-instigated, and while Lamora and Muley's efforts are presented largely equally, common sense suggests a woman of twenty had more agency than an infant page. Therefore, it is a female escape which is subsequently foiled when Asphar's agents 'bore her off in triumph';[403] against male opposition, Lamora is totally passive and powerless. Moreover, that Ravia was murdered despite her apparent awareness of an escape route implies a similarly futile attempt on her

[398] Sarah Wilkinson, *Priory of St. Clair; or, Spectre of the Murdered Nun. A Gothic Tale* (1811) (Zittaw Press, 2004), p. 27.
[399] Ibid., pp. 25, 26.
[400] Ibid., pp. 28-29.
[401] Ibid., p. 34.
[402] Ibid., pp. 38.
[403] C.F. Barrett, *The Black Castle*, p. 24.

part. The narrative simply cannot sanction a woman's success as an active character, whereas male characters triumph repeatedly. Asphar is responsible for kidnapping at least two women and murdering one, on a par with most gothic villains, and two male characters must intervene to finally rescue Lamora, who 'found herself enclosed in the arms of a beloved brother' – a male-authorised prison can only be exchanged for another kind of male protection, it seems, even for a woman of twenty.[404] In this respect, Barrett's narrative is blandly conventional and prioritises the traditional male hero while relegating the heroine to the damsel role, forced to passively wait for rescue and not permitted to help herself.

The case of *The Horrible Revenge*'s Eugenia is little better, for her considerably more successful escape meets proportionally greater punishment, in a bluebook which literally conflates the narratorial voice with the antagonist's aims by making the villain the first-person narrator. By undisclosed means Eugenia escapes the home and undesired marriage of the narrator known only as the Baron, and eludes him for over four years, which she spends in a solitary castle in marriage with her beloved.[405] The Baron's vengeance, when he stumbles upon them, is indeed quite horrible. He 'burst in upon them with a pistol in each hand',[406] which he uses as leverage to immure them in 'two horrible dungeons', where he goes about 'fastening the chain in a secure manner round [their] legs and arms',[407] and, after stabbing their and his own servants, feeds the pair on 'bread and water'.[408] Like an Iago without any subtlety, the Baron's simple jealousy manifests in pointless cruelty in which his object is merely to 'preserve their lives that I might prolong their sufferings,' an aim ably fulfilled by the subsequent death of Eugenia's child, 'consum[ed] by fever', and her concomitant insanity which sees 'her reason […] disturbed'.[409] Eugenia suffers in this miserable state for 'eight years' before being freed by chance at the end of the bluebook.[410] It is difficult to know what message a young reader should take from such a story. Though the text itself is unaltered, the context of the tale is totally altered from its origins as an interpolated narrative in Eliza Parsons's *The Mysterious Warning*, for while equally awful in the original, it is foreshadowed and gradually introduced, while the characters involved are

[404] Ibid., p. 34.
[405] Anonymous, *The Horrible Revenge*, p. 22 – numerous events also occur before and after the given four-year period.
[406] Ibid., p. 29.
[407] Ibid., p. 31.
[408] Ibid., p. 34.
[409] Ibid., pp. 34, 37, 38.
[410] Ibid., p. 40.

more nuanced due to receiving additional development outside of the Baron's narrative. Probably the story was stripped from its moorings and republished as a bluebook due to its horrific content and suitable length, with no consideration of context or morality, but that it ties into a wider trend of female rebellion punished, even against tyranny, contextualises the narrative as part of a broader anxiety about female and especially young female independence, in which any horrible eventuality seems preferable to a woman acting without male approval.

Indeed, another work by Sarah Wilkinson, author of *Priory of St. Clair*, may shed light on the approved course of action for young females placed in distress by males. *The Subterraneous Passage; or, Gothic Cell* (1803) concerns Lady Emily de Cleve, 'now in her seventeenth year,' who has the misfortune to be carried off by banditti to a mysterious castle.[411] She takes her change in fortune fairly well, politely observing of her kidnapper, Monsieur Dubois, that 'she could not expect much civility now she was in his power', and although she freely explores the castle apparently unmonitored, removing all the books from a bookshelf to reveal a secret door and investigating a heavy trapdoor 'with incredible labour', she not once makes the slightest attempt to escape her imprisonment.[412] Indeed, despite Emily's captor being a leader of banditti at odds with the law, Wilkinson presents him as being an almost amiable kidnapper, who 'implored her to forgive his base conduct' and paid 'every kind attention'.[413] Although Dubois subsequently threatens a forced marriage, Emily merely 'retired to her own room, that she might the more freely indulge her sorrows',[414] and 'shrieked, and implored for mercy' at the marriage ceremony without any hint of physical resistance. But her most passive action of all is to accept her new situation without resistance; 'her hard fate had destined her his wife, and she resolved to perform the duty of that character as far as her feelings would admit.'[415] The result is that, where the likes of Julietta were brutally murdered, or Eugenia chained up in a dungeon for years, Emily has a relatively placid time and rarely even sees Dubois, and although she becomes pregnant with his child, the narrative never suggests that she has been mistreated. Eventually, Dubois is captured, 'fell into violent convulsions, and presently expired', and Emily's child 'sickened, and died'[416] –

[411] Sarah Wilkinson, *The Subterraneous Passage; or, Gothic Cell. A Romance* (1803) (Zittaw Press, 2004), p. 12.
[412] Ibid., p. 20.
[413] Ibid., p. 21.
[414] Ibid., p. 24.
[415] Ibid., p. 25.
[416] Ibid., pp. 36-37, 38.

conveniently erasing all physical ties between Emily and the villain, psychological ties passing without comment. At the story's close, she has married her childhood love interest; 'They were blessed with a lovely and numerous offspring, and the days of Emily were rewarded to the end of her life, with happiness that made amends for the sorrows of her youth.'[417] The message to young women is clear: Accept fate and you will be rewarded; resist, and try to take control of your life, and you will inevitably be punished horribly.

It is hard not to see bluebooks as a form of social conditioning in the face of numerous such examples of this message – and bluebooks specifically, for gothic novels usually protected 'virtue in distress' from such dreadful circumstances. But bluebooks were merely taking to extremes the same dichotomy seen in gothic novels, a 'double standard, alternately condoning and deprecating,' observed by Clery, who notes that they function by 'pointing on the one hand to the throne on which the heroine will be installed at the end of her trials, and on the other hand to the grave where one false step might, however undeservedly, lead her.'[418] In bluebooks, those false steps are signs of resistance, especially resistance not endorsed by a male. When so expressed, the allegory is not a subtle one. Female will is always to be sublimated to male will, no matter how diabolical, for an ultimate end of female self-reward, though it may be deferred for years. It is an affirmation of the principles of the period's patriarchal society, and not coincidentally, of the zealous Christianity it espoused. The fatalism of the trial-reward journey is an explicit moral explained only, and often, by recourse to religion: For instance, Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* concludes, '[…] those who do only THAT WHICH IS RIGHT, endure nothing in misfortune but a trial of their virtue, and from trials well endured derive the surest claim to the protection of heaven.'[419] The religious parallel is closely interwoven with the social: Sublimate one's will to the Holy Father's, and all of the trials you endure, even to death, will be rewarded in Heaven. Moreover, Heaven will often relieve the protagonist of the necessity of living with sin; Emily's child with Dubois dies, freeing her from all ties to the late villain, but this applies equally to male heroes' responsibilities. Alison Milbank observes, in relation to this same moral of Radcliffe's, that 'It is significant that the evil characters in Radcliffe's later novels are killed by the state or some aspect of their own evil, and not directly by the virtuous'; such a pattern continues in the bluebooks, in which convenient suicide is the villains' most

[417] Ibid., pp. 40-41.
[418] E.J. Clery, 'The Politics of the Gothic Heroine in the 1790s' in Martin, Philip W., and Jarvis, Robin, eds., *Reviewing Romanticism* (Macmillan, 1992), p. 73.
[419] Ann Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), p. 199.

frequent cause of death. Milbank proposes that 'Virtue, being the natural and communal vision of the good, cannot in the end be touched', and this resistance of virtue to sin extends also to the commission of sin; just as the heroines do not fall to any temptation they can possibly resist, so too are the heroes spared the necessity of taking a life.[420] The fidelity of the bluebook to the standards of the novel makes the inheritance of this moral inevitable; Wilkinson, though, is perhaps the most didactically direct gothic writer, throwing off the last subtlety of her frequent moralism and uniquely delivering a specific imperative relating to her protagonists in closing her 1803 bluebook *The Chateau de Montville*: 'Imitate their virtuous example.'[421] 'Or else,' is implicit.

Whether writers of the time, particularly female writers, were aware of the unconvincing structure of their narratives, detailing female suffering over and over again only to dispatch with female happiness in a closing summary, is unclear. Clery suggests as much, in concluding that 'in the final analysis Gothic enlightenment endorses the ideological patterns it has briefly exposed'.[422] Even for writers, there could be no defying a society in which they had to survive. To do otherwise risked the hostility and contempt of society at large, embodied in writers such as Thomas Mathias who condemned the '*unsexed* female writers [who] now instruct, or confuse us and themselves in the labyrinth of politicks'.[423] Mathias believes that women are incapable of proper political engagement without becoming 'confuse[d]', and that choosing to do so was in itself un-womanly, in attempting to imitate the preserve of men. Richard Polwhele furthered the criticism in his homage to Mathias, the 1798 poem *The Unsexed Females*, which brazenly named and shamed a series of female authors he particularly despised: 'See Wollstonecraft, whom no decorum checks, / Arise, the intrepid champion of her sex'; 'veteran BARBAULD caught the strain, / And deem'd her songs of Love, her Lyrics vain', 'charming SMITH resign'd her power to please, / Poetic feeling and poetic ease', and so on.[424] Polwhele's use of 'intrepid champion' is a particular rebuke to the figure of the active female, a role at odds with decorum and, seemingly, the 'power to please' that Polwhele prioritised as a woman's greatest asset, in declaring Anna Laetitia Barbauld and Charlotte Smith to have abandoned it, along with their literary talents,

[420] Alison Milbank, 'Ways of seeing in Ann Radcliffe's early fiction', p. 90.
[421] Sarah Wilkinson, *The Chateau de Montville; or, The Golden Cross. An Original Romance* (1803) (Zittaw Press, 2004), p. 43.
[422] E.J. Clery, 'The Politics of the Gothic Heroine in the 1790s', p. 81.
[423] Thomas Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, p. 194.
[424] Richard Polwhele, *The Unsex'd Females* (1798) <http://ota.ox.ac.uk/text/3251.html> [accessed 12 June 2013].

in supposedly adhering to Wollstonecraft's message. For Polwhele, a political woman is a repellent notion. Such responses are among the 'reasons ranging from genuine modesty to fear of public ridicule and the wrath of their families' cited by Raven for the anonymity commonplace among contemporary authors.[425] Hence a didactic message of conservative, conventional virtue and allegiance to the status quo was important for authors, and particularly authors like Wilkinson, whose status as a publicly avowed female author and particularly a publicly avowed female bluebook author would have placed her beyond the bounds of decorum. It is rare to see a bluebook that does attempt such moralising.

There is one outstanding example, though, of an active female bluebook protagonist, who nonetheless manages to fit into the patriarchal moral structures of gothic fiction. For perhaps the defining counter-example of the passive female heroine is the active female villain – a character type employed to full effect in *The Daemon of Venice* (1810), a redaction of Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya; or, The Moor* (1806), in which such a figure is, almost uniquely, the narrative's protagonist.[426] 'Arabella, at the age of sixteen, though beautiful and accomplished, was proud, vindictive, and cruel'.[427] She too undergoes a gothic imprisonment: Left by her mother in a strict relation's care, locked in her room and fed on bread and water, since 'pride must be brought down.' Arabella swiftly escapes, not through ingenuity or phantasmal favour but simple bribery, giving a servant a diamond ring, 'the value of which amounted to ten guineas,' for the disproportionate compensation of changing clothes with her to 'let her go through a door in the garden that led to a wood', no complex or convenient escape route.[428] One cannot precisely say that the narrative punishes Arabella for this, as she eventually perpetrates many far less sympathetic deeds before suffering any great injury, most notably murder and becoming a gothic jailer herself. Feeling 'hatred for her husband,' and lust for his brother Francisco, the mysterious Moor Abdallah provides her a poisoned cup of wine.[429] 'He gave it to the Countess, who trembled as she presented it to her husband';[430] Arabella is nervous only about the endeavour's success, rather than suffering any remorse. She later has Abdallah carry Francisco's lover Agnes off to a 'cavern' among 'steep rocks',

[425] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 41.
[426] Anonymous, *The Daemon of Venice. An Original Romance. Tegg's Edition* / *The Demon of Venice, A Romance. By A Lady* (1810), in Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya; or, The Moor: A Romance of the Fifteenth Century* (1806), ed. by Adriana Craciun (Broadview Press, 2006).
[427] Ibid., p. 279.
[428] Ibid., p. 287.
[429] Ibid., p. 291.
[430] Ibid., p. 292.

and by asking 'is there no fear of her escaping?', has Abdallah place a 'chain round her wrists', the imprisoning recalling other gothic texts with Agnes in the role of typical gothic protagonist, although the narrative focusses on Arabella and her tyrannical acts.[431] Indeed, Arabella's lack of conformity to accepted feminine behaviour is emphasised by her self-description as possessing a 'masculine face'[432] – causing the narrative to conform instead to the norm of virtue in distress, 'the virtue a woman's, and her distress caused by a man.'[433]

Although Abdallah facilitates Arabella's crimes, he is not solely responsible for each, and plays no role in Agnes's eventual murder, which is committed by Arabella with rarely-seen masculine violence: 'dragging her by the hair of her head up a higher part of the precipice,' Arabella 'stabbed her in the bosom'; 'Arabella then took up her body, and threw it down the rocks.'[434] At this point, Arabella's crimes are worse than those of many male gothic villains, although perhaps only because the narrative gives her the opportunity for success; possibly the exceptionality of an active, violent female villain encouraged Dacre to make her actions exceptional, to reinforce the point. It is curious, though, that both Agnes and Arabella – the gothic heroine, and the gothic villain – meet near-identical fates in this narrative, for eventually Abdallah abruptly reveals himself as 'the Demon of Venice,' who 'held [Arabella] tighter by the neck, and threw her headlong down the rock, accompanying her screams with loud and hideous roars of triumph. Thus the precipice was the grave of two, the innocent Agnes and the wicked Arabella.'[435] Equating the two seems unfair, as Agnes never commits an evil act, whilst Arabella perpetrates many; however, the final statement is no echo of Dacre's text but rather an original statement by the redactor, whose problematic comparison of Agnes and Arabella perhaps comments on their shared desires and defiance. The story's ending should be read in the light of its beginning, which cites Arabella's harsh personality as the 'consequence' of being spoilt by her parents, who 'would not suffer the fair faces of their dear children to be disfigured by tears or vexation'.[436] Add to this the effects of Abdallah's manipulation, as the facilitator of Arabella's crimes and the supplier of her gothic resources, and one can conclude that in her way Arabella is every bit the victim of circumstance as Agnes. The theme of parental example runs throughout the text, and, if it does not denominate the text as suitable for children, it at least reserves the force of its message for

[431] Ibid., p. 293.
[432] Ibid., p. 294.
[433] G. J. Barker-Benfield, *The Culture of Sensibility*, p. xviii.
[434] Anonymous, *The Daemon of Venice*, pp. 295-296.
[435] Ibid., p. 298.
[436] Ibid., p. 279.

those who are yet to raise children. Perhaps it quietly draws on the familiar argument underlying Chapter One's children's works, that educational messages are best disguised by the cover of interesting fiction – or merely provides token didacticism and moralising to superficially frame the text as having a purpose besides entertainment. One may be as cynical about the honesty of this purpose in approved children's fiction as in bluebooks. Nonetheless, this story of an actively pleasure-seeking woman, despite its explicit violence and sexuality leading one reviewer to declare that 'we never read a more odious and indecent performance', has entirely socially correct morality, as Arabella receives the ultimate punishment for striving for independence and fulfilment of her will.[437]

The case for reader identification in bluebooks is complicated by their greater potentiality for female identification with the more numerous female protagonists, despite the anecdotal and retrospective accounts cited above prioritising a male readership. It is probable that there were differing sources of appeal to different genders, with signs that the appeal to female readers was intended to be empathetic, while the appeal to male readers was instead aspirational. Contemporary culture largely forbade even adult women to be actively heroic, which as such is extremely rare in the gothic (the exclusion of villainy thus disbarring works such as *The Daemon of Venice*). Conversely, for even an adolescent boy to be trapped and, particularly, as helpless as a gothic heroine would have sat ill with the masculine norms of the period. Thus results the arrangement whereby, whilst the average gothic protagonist is an exemplary role model for their gender, male heroes are to be admired for their achievements, and female heroes sympathised with in their distress. Considering the dislocation between protagonist and reader demographics, reader identification should not be considered an absolute requirement, but rather one of many points of connection between audience and text.

But one must reflect on a further possibility: That, while reader identification alone tailored numerous texts towards female readers, the narrative tropes were more male-oriented. As discussed above, tropes linked to violent crime were broadly associated with a masculine reading and writing milieu. To draw a simplistic comparison, Ann Radcliffe's heroines inevitably conclude the story happily married and unmolested, whilst in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, the gothic damsel is not only not the protagonist but suffers rape and murder as opposed to harmless kidnap. Lewis's style is easily detectable in bluebooks, with *The*

[437] Anonymous, review of *Zofloya* in *Monthly Literary Recreations*, Iss. 1 (July 1806), in Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 262.

Daemon of Venice drawing almost openly on his work, its title drawn from his *The Bravo of Venice* (1805) and its plot ultimately inspired by *The Monk* (through its source text, Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*). Even in the sample bluebooks described above, quite often the near-adolescent female characters are not the protagonists, that role going instead to the villain of the story. *The Daemon of Venice*, as discussed, adheres to both of these points – featuring young women as both damsel and antagonistic protagonist – but clearer examples are found in the other texts. In *The Black Castle*, Lamora shares narrative focus with a number of characters, but the first introduced, the first viewpoint character of the text, and the first to soliloquise (presumably reflecting the text's theatrical source) is the overtly villainous Asphar, 'the terror of his vassals, hated by his neighbours, and the abhorrence of himself'.[438] Other prime candidates for gothic heroinism are not granted even partial protagonist status. In *Priory of St. Clair*, the text is almost entirely narrated from the third-person-limited perspective of the Count de Valvé, following the clear progression of his activities in intensity and evil, from merely being a 'remorseless seducer' to kidnap, rape, and murder, as described above;[439] Julietta is merely a secondary character and plot device. As previously related, the villain of *The Horrible Revenge* is the narrator himself, the Baron, a man who describes himself as 'possessed of equal pride, ambition, and desire of grandeur and magnificence'. His initial heroic endeavours as one who, upon being 'suddenly alarmed by quick and repeated shrieks', 'instantly rode to the side from whence the voice proceeded,'[440] rescuing Eugenia and her father from banditti, are totally subsumed by villainy motivated by Eugenia's rejection of his marriage suit, which he says 'augmented my love and inflamed my pride; passion and resentment were raised to their utmost pitch'; he 'swore she should be mine, whatever might be the consequences!'[441] This, in the natural course of frustrated love in the gothic, results in the series of murders and imprisonments he enacts later. While each of these bluebooks nonetheless features a young female, there is no disputing that the true protagonist of each is the male villain, who becomes steadily more corrupt as the story proceeds, often from already unsympathetic origins– notably, the 'masculine' Arabella of *The Daemon of Venice* undergoes the same character arc.[442] Feminine reader identification therefore vies for relevance with masculine protagonists and narratives. However, the

[438] C.F. Barrett, *The Black Castle*, p. 11.
[439] Sarah Wilkinson, *Priory of St. Clair*, p. 12.
[440] Anonymous, *The Horrible Revenge*, p. 5.
[441] Ibid., p. 10.
[442] Anonymous, *The Daemon of Venice*, p. 294.

narrative focus on male villain-protagonists' misdeeds also serves an obligatory role in the program of youthful reading, that of didacticism, specifically a moral lesson.

Given this, texts such as Wilkinson's *Priory of St. Clair* may require reassessment. Certainly it features a young woman to be pitied in her distress – but the protagonist, villainous though he may be, is male, and the bluebook is far more concerned with male conduct than female. Introducing the Count de Valvé, Wilkinson writes that he 'loved the fair sex, but not in the manner they deserved to be loved, for he regarded them merely as lovely beings created for no other purpose than to soothe the cares of men'.[443] This begins an essentially didactic passage, indicating the mistakenness of de Valvé's views by describing his patronising conception of women as what 'he regarded them' as being, evidently false as he has just been ascribed fallacious treatment of women: Loving them 'not in the manner they deserved'. The text clearly favours more respectful treatment of women, amounting perhaps simply to taking them seriously, and is equally clearly directed at young men, albeit those of an age to frequently interact with women; de Valvé 'ran on this career unchecked, till he had turned the twenty-fifth anniversary of his birth,' suggesting that this message should be assimilated far prior to this age. Nor does Wilkinson hide the inevitability of de Valvé's comeuppance; although he subsequently commits kidnap, rape, and murder, it is after only a description of his male chauvinism that Wilkinson describes how 'fate decreed a serious alteration in his affairs, and proved that vice seldom goes unpunished, even in this world.'[444] This dictates de Valvé's subsequent punishment as an ultimate consequence of his general misogyny rather than only his subsequent more serious abuse of a single woman. Notably, Wilkinson circumvents the issue of post-mortem divine justice, which presumably is reasonably easy for gothic villains to neglect to consider – indeed, many repent on their deathbed and thus avoid both earthly punishment and, by their repentance, divine punishment also. Instead, Wilkinson explicitly refers to such punishment as occurring 'even in this world', or rather, before death – and such is the fate that ultimately befalls de Valvé, who undergoes numerous mortal punishments. Foremost, he is 'haunted every midnight by the spectre of the murdered nun; though unseen by every other human eye'; the spectre's invisibility to others suggests it is actually a manifestation of his guilt projected by his own conscience, although the narrative drops no further hints to support this complex reading.[445] This haunting ultimately leads to de

[443] Sarah Wilkinson, *Priory of St. Clair*, p. 12.
[444] Ibid., p. 13.
[445] Ibid., p. 34.

Valvé's exposure, and although he is lucky enough to be merely banished on condition that he 'quitted Normandy within thirty-six hours after his liberation', he in fact departs his native country entirely and repents, with unusual patriotism from Wilkinson, in England, in 'a monastery of Black Cannons on the Suffolk Coast', where he 'did not survive but three years, and expired penitent, but tormented with a dreadful gloom'.[446]

Although young women in bluebooks tend to be the object of implicit lessons of conduct, the explicit morals are directed at male audiences; *Priory of St. Clair* is not unusual in both inflicting awful torments upon female characters and ensuring the actions of no male character go unpunished (unless they happen to be demons in disguise, for whom residence in Hell is presumably sufficient). To a certain extent, such bluebooks are directed towards a dual-gender audience, but if acquisition was challenging for female audiences, and the narratives themselves emphasise masculine relevance, they may be read as a predominantly male-oriented form, which must influence any interpretation of their content.

And it is content that is vital to understanding whether adolescents would have read and enjoyed bluebooks – whether they would, rather than whether they did, now being understood as the central question, objective evidence lacking. The question of narrative suitability implicitly addressed in the above readings must now become explicit. This chapter has exhibited some amount of bluebook content thus far, chiefly of its own sample, but the broader assessments of critics with access to different and wider collections are equally significant, particularly for assessing quality independent of tropes employed. To state merely that bluebooks are a form of gothic, and like Medwin to say that they 'embodied stories of haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages', is to draw no difference to gothic novels.[447] The question is whether the different form effected a true difference in content as it was presented. Arguments discussed above contended that the shortness of bluebooks was severely detrimental to quality, with both Watt and Frank commenting in almost identical words that bluebooks 'bring hero and heroine to the grave or the altar with surprising suddenness'[448] or 'to the altar or the grave within the alloted thirty-six pages'.[449] This chapter has since moderated and placed in a more reasonable context such claims; it is true that non-redacted bluebooks tend to have abbreviated or simplistic plots in relation to full

[446] Ibid., pp. 37, 38.
[447] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, p. 24.
[448] William W. Watt, *Shilling Shockers of the Gothic School*, pp. 11-12.
[449] Frederick S. Frank, 'Gothic Gold: The Sadleir-Black Gothic Collection'.

novels, and their written style often evokes the summary, doing away with long periods of time in a few lines, of which the line 'About three months after her marriage' occurring a paragraph after Emily's marriage in Wilkinson's *The Subterraneous Passage* is a reasonable example of such compression[450] – but the intent is to elide only what is uninteresting. Moreover, original gothic novels and their redactions were wont to do the same, such as the statement in the conclusion of *The Horrible Revenge* (and, therefore, Eliza Parsons's novel *The Mysterious Warning*) that it is 'eight years since' the previous pages.[451] The suddenness of characters' arrivals at altar or grave may equally apply to novels. The marriage of Carlos and Leonora in *The Wandering Spirit*, proposed arbitrarily in the penultimate paragraph in the following terms – '"Claudio is your son, Don Pinto, and Carlos is mine!" "And shall still be mine," said Pinto, "for he shall marry my daughter"'[452] – is just as rapid in Stephen Cullen's original *The Haunted Priory*; Count Montoni, the villain of Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, dies abruptly offstage, 'in a doubtful and mysterious manner, and not without suspicion of having been poisoned', thirteen chapters after his previous appearance, and these suspicious circumstances are never resolved.[453] In this regard, bluebooks are again often no worse than the novels they imitated and abridged – as one would expect from different forms of the same genre. Nor is there a sense of bluebook authors talking down to their audience, which one might expect in works cheaply commissioned for short-of-pocket members of the reading public. Again, a young person might find this appealing, compared to other works for their age group that could be far more patronising in tone. The adolescent desires to be treated as an adult, and a bluebook represents as reasonable an approximation of an adult's gothic novel experience as was available to those who could not afford the latter.

To criticise a short story for brevity alone is unreasonable, regardless of how well it employs its concise form. Perhaps the plotlines of the bluebooks were not always built for short texts, but the act of compressing them demands craft, and it seems improbable that younger readers would disavow bluebooks for rapid communication of a plot which, in a novel, might be too languorous. Less tenuous criticisms of the bluebook do not limit their opinions purely to the demands of the form, however, but extend to matters which bluebooks have more creative choice over. Edith Birkhead is suitably apposite in describing bluebooks as 'brief, blood-

[450] Sarah Wilkinson, *The Subterraneous Passage*, p. 25.
[451] Anonymous, *The Horrible Revenge*, p. 40.
[452] Anonymous, *The Wandering Spirit*, p. 38.
[453] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 569.

curdling romances', for that 'blood-curdling' aspect is to be found supposedly at fault.[454] Medwin's 'haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages'[455] are the backdrop to Frank's 'corridor of blood' and the ambassadors of a criticism that is a widespread presupposition: That the bluebook is a bloodthirsty species of gothic story, predisposed to violence and catharsis, its pages filled with a rapid sequence of horrid acts to thrill the blood.[456] This claim sits uncomfortably alongside the critical status of bluebooks as principally redaction-based narratives, and indeed as short, hurried productions. A bluebook's corridor of blood seems unlikely to rival for horror a gothic novel's, for while it may be argued that a bluebook can omit description and contemplation to move straight from one melodramatic sequence to another, the novel had more space not just to commit bloody acts, but to dwell on them. It is as easily argued that the bluebooks should be tamer productions due to their lack of room for event and close description of gory scenes.

With this in mind, in assessing the gruesomeness of the average bluebook it might be better to look past those texts from this study's sample which are redactions, which reading shows to be no worse than their point of origin.[457] *The Horrible Revenge*, for instance, is with difficulty criticised for its violence when it cribs verbatim from Eliza Parsons's novel, while *The Daemon of Venice* likewise follows *Zofloya*'s lead; the remaining redactions look tame by comparison, gauged by the number of corpses and murders which occur on the page. Having discarded the redactions for this assessment of force confined to the bluebook, there remain those bluebooks which are original creations (with the caveat that some may nonetheless be redactions for which the source remains undiscovered).[458] As five of these seven are the work of Sarah Wilkinson, it is reasonable to assume their consistency, and so only one will be considered in this analysis, following two individual anonymous works. Similar to previous readings, the framework for this overview will be to consider the number

[454] Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror*, p. 186.
[455] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, p. 24.
[456] Frederick S. Frank, 'Gothic Gold: The Sadleir-Black Gothic Collection'.
[457] Of the sample, the redactions are as follows: Anonymous, *The Daemon of Venice* (Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya*); Anonymous, *The Horrible Revenge* (Eliza Parsons, *The Mysterious Warning*); Anonymous, *The Veiled Picture* (Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*); Anonymous, *The Wandering Spirit* (Stephen Cullen, *The Haunted Priory*); C.F. Barrett, *The Black Castle* (drama of the same name by a Mr. Upton (see Franz Potter, 'Introduction', p. 6)). Note that this comprises just under half the sample.
[458] As follows: Anonymous, *The Black Forest; or, The Cavern of Death! A Gothic Romance* (1802) (Zittaw Press, 2004); Anonymous, *The Bloody Hand, or, The Fatal Cup. A Tale of Horror!*; Sarah Wilkinson, *The Chateau de Montville*; *The Subterraneous Passage*; *Monkcliffe Abbey*; *Priory of St. Clair*; *Albert of Werdendorff; or, The Midnight Embrace. A Romance From the German* (1812) (Zittaw Press, 2004). Note that *Albert of Werdendorff* is a broadly original and non-redacted adaptation of Matthew Lewis, 'Alonzo the Brave, and Fair Imogine' in *The Monk* (1796) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), pp. 313-316.

of violent or disgusting occurrences which take place upon the page itself, or in a sufficiently detailed second-hand retelling. This accords with Radcliffe's description of horror as opposed to terror, the latter constituting 'surmise' which 'expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life', whilst the former, 'certainty', 'contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them';[459] in other words, terror is implicit and encourages the imagination, whilst horror leaves nothing to the imagination and punishes the observant and curious mind with sights which can only be recoiled from.

The first text at issue is *The Black Forest; or, The Cavern of Death!* (1802), which promisingly dubs itself '*A Gothic Romance*', a surprising rarity among the largely retrospective category of the gothic. The tale is firmly in the tradition of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, concerning the exploits of a male hero, Sir Albert, who contends with supernatural forces (including dreaming of a 'Spectre, of a gigantic size,' surely derived from Walpole's novel);[460] without providing a plot summary, these forces are also ultimately benevolent, as *Otranto* dictates, rather than the malevolent supernatural forces of *The Monk* or *Zofloya*. The difference is significant, as while the latter pair emphasise horror and violence, *Otranto* is a tamer influence – charged with menace, certainly, but with little horror after its bathetic opening sequence, in which young Conrad is 'dashed to pieces, and almost buried under an enormous helmet,' and reduced to 'bleeding mangled remains'.[461] To identify *The Black Forest* as Walpolean rather than Lewisian or Radcliffean sums up its approach to horror: For instance, while a dream sequence includes an unspecific 'hideous Spectre' and a skeleton which commences 'waving in the air a bloody sword,' the dream disentangles these images from any fear of consequence, which moreover have a fantastical effect owing to a lack of rationalisation at that point in the narrative; as elements of a dream sequence, their appearance is almost arbitrary.[462] Some of these icons subsequently reappear in reality, in a sequence of fantastic events as Sir Albert explores the eponymous Cavern of Death; guided by 'a small red flame,' he discovers a 'little hillock,' and 'saw something glittering beneath the surface, and what were his emotions when he perceived the blade of a sword whose hilt was grasped by the cold hand of a skeleton!' His emotions are left to the reader's discretion, therefore, and a skeleton is an ambivalent horror motif, not specific of recent violence,

[459] Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry' in *The New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. 16, Iss. 61 (January 1826), p. 150.
[460] Anonymous, *The Black Forest*, p. 21.
[461] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, p. 19.
[462] Anonymous, *The Black Forest*, pp. 21, 22.

especially since this sword is no longer stained with blood. Slightly more graphic is immediately-following earthquake, which dislodges a boulder 'under which [Albert] perceived the mangled bodies of two men, whom its enormous weight had crushed' – another recollection of *Otranto*.[463] Shortly thereafter, the evil Baron of Dornheim describes the historical murder of Sir Albert's father – as a surprisingly bloodless affair: 'he long defended himself against his assassins' until 'overpowered by numbers, he fell'.[464] Curiously, this murder is censored and the body not described in detail, despite the Baron shortly after referring to the victim's spectre visiting him, 'at the still and solemn hour of midnight,' 'sometimes in silence pointing to his wounds, and waving his bloody sword'.[465] The violence of the text is subtly sanitised by transplanting its effects on important characters onto insubstantial illusions such as dreams or ghosts (which may themselves secretly be ghosts and dreams respectively, and thus are doubly ambiguous), with the bloody sword acting as a metonym for the victim's injuries (additionally, the sword's bloodstains are not the victim's but his assassins', further displacing the violence). Nonetheless, the novel climaxes upon a suitably bloody catharsis, as the murderous Baron, looking upon 'the pale and bloodstained features of his [late] son', is crazed by the bereavement, seizes the aforementioned sword, 'and plunging it into his own breast, sunk expiring on the body of his son'; grotesquely, his final act is 'drawing forth the weapon from the wound,' whereupon 'his life issued with it, in a stream of blood.'[466] *The Black Forest* offers numerous compromises upon its violence, often deferring or displacing it; the intent is perhaps not to upset readers of a sensitive disposition, and so by the climax of the novel such readers are more prepared for a considerably more gruesome climax; alternatively, the intent is to increase tension or horror as the text goes on, first touching lightly upon violence before offering more severe imagery. As a 'corridor of blood' the bluebook barely suffices, despite its evocative title, but it contains more graphic violence than its obvious influence, *The Castle of Otranto*, and does suggest an aim of balancing violence against romance.[467] It is easy to imagine a younger audience delighting in this colourful adventure story, which appeals to multiple tastes even in its flavour of horror –the horror of blood and flesh, and of skeletons and swords, emblems of violence which are artistically displaced from direct representations of injury.

[463] Ibid., p. 31.
[464] Ibid., p. 32.
[465] Ibid., p. 33.
[466] Ibid., p. 35.
[467] Frederick S. Frank, 'Gothic Gold: The Sadleir-Black Gothic Collection'.

The Bloody Hand, or, The Fatal Cup. A Tale of Horror! (1800) has a title designed to point to a gruesome and violent story, a suggestion eagerly upheld by Zittaw Press's 2012 reprint of the tale, which subtitles it '*A TALE OF PURE TERROR*' and features colourful cover art by illustrator J.Q. Hammer depicting a bloody-fingered hand reaching out from the yellowing and gap-toothed maw of an eyeless, grey-skinned corpse. No effort is spared, either for its original or subsequent publication, to present this as a truly horrible story replete with lashings of blood. On a surface level alone, the 2012 reissue would scarcely be considered suitable for young readers – an assessment young readers themselves might disagree with, as discussed later. It is surprising, therefore, to find that the text actually concerns social justice in both pre- and post-revolutionary France, which identifies the text as owing more to English propaganda than to any particular gothic text. Despite this, *The Bloody Hand* reads much like a redaction, skimming across multiple time periods and plotlines, not to mention highlighting, in its '*Fatal Cup*' subtitle, a plot device which appears once, is of little relevance to the story, and is in no way fatal. Conceivably the text compresses an as-yet undiscovered novel, but that is not strictly relevant. At issue is the text's level of horror, and how this might affect its reading by a young audience. The eponymous bloody hand, at least, does not disappoint. In rescuing a damsel from confinement, the Marquis de Beaufois is accosted by an antagonistic friar; 'he cut at the priest, and, with one blow, severed his HAND short at the wrist, which fell BLEEDING on the earth.'[468] (The text appears eager to justify its title; shortly previous is a similar capitalised reference to a 'SILVER CUP', but as noted, its role in the story is marginal.) This is a suitably violent attack, but further grisliness ensues as the friar, who 'writhed with agony', 'seized his dislocated member, and solemnly said, "By this BLOODY HAND, I appeal to the vengeance of heaven and earth on you and all your posterity; and I here swear, ever to pursue you 'till retribution has satiated my revenge"'.[469] The minor trope of the severed hand is here possibly sourced from a similar incident in John and Anna Letitia Aikin's 'Sir Bertrand, A Fragment', in which, upon being grasped by a 'dead cold hand', the eponymous protagonist ungenerously 'made a furious blow with his sword, and instantly a loud shriek pierced his ears, and the dead hand was left powerless in his';[470] Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, too, included the manifestation of a detached 'hand in armour as big, as big', which indeed inspired the narrative in a dream by the author.[471] *The Bloody Hand*,

[468] Anonymous, *The Bloody Hand*, p. 13.
[469] Ibid., pp. 13-14.
[470] John and Anna Laetitia Aikin, 'On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror; with Sir Bertrand, A Fragment', p. 131.
[471] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, p. 104; E.J. Clery, 'Introduction' in same, pp. vii-viii.

though, takes this opportunity to also invoke the ever-popular gothic trope of the evil monk, with suitably lacking adherence to proper religious conduct. The remainder of the text is equally lacking, in horror and violence, for which the protagonist's imprisonment in various unpleasant dungeons does not recompense. The chief horror of the story is that of tyrannical abuse of justice, which the author emphasises in italicised text: 'It would be useless to recount the privations I suffered in this prison, in which I remained some time *in close and solitary confinement, without being guilty of a single* crime, nor yet offence to any one, same and except joining in a little political conversation at the village inn.'[472] Certainly there is fear in this, but it cannot be called 'a corridor of blood';[473] there is no deployment of revolting corpses, and little enough threat of imminent violence to any person, particularly those the reader is encouraged to identify with. The text's second and final violent act has the same victim as the first, the evil friar St. Pierre, who is hoisted on his own petard of gothic villainy:

> The hoary-headed villain had been inspecting some cruelties, which were practised, namely the forcing an unhappy prisoner to swallow a poisonous mercurial preparation, which has the effect of causing derangement – the prisoner was obstinate in closing his teeth, and his myrmidons, by his order, knocked the teeth out of the left side of his mouth and forced him to take it, as I have seen done to horses. The man in his struggle emitted some of the liquid form [*sic*] his mouth into St. Pierre's eye, which brought on a speedy mortification, of which he died, uttering blasphemy and cursing all around him.[474]

St. Pierre seems more a concession to the demands of sensationalism in a text otherwise more concerned with adult politics, as propaganda celebrating the laws and institutions of England whilst condemning injustices practiced in France. The narrative would survive the St. Pierre character's removal, which illuminates how gothic this text truly is – and how necessary a gothic element may have been to attract the reading public's attention. Whether a young audience would have found the political angle of *The Bloody Hand* particularly interesting is questionable – but as Walpole and the Aikins realised, a dismembered hand, bloody or otherwise, is perhaps surprisingly adept at seizing the reader's attention. This highlights the multigeneric appeal of the gothic, which could cross over with numerous other literary forms – the propagandistic pamphlet, the adventure romance seen in *The Black Forest*, or the sentimental stories of Sarah Wilkinson. This was part of the mechanism which supported the

[472] Anonymous, *The Bloody Hand*, p. 27.
[473] Frederick S. Frank, 'Gothic Gold: The Sadleir-Black Gothic Collection'.
[474] Anonymous, *The Bloody Hand*, p. 31.

gothic, that of its popularity being the sum of its parts – such as the distinct traditions of the 'female' or 'terror' gothic with the 'male' or 'horror' gothic.

In transitioning to Wilkinson's bluebooks in this sample – comprising, including those discussed already, *The Chateau de Montville; or, The Golden Cross. An Original Romance* (1803); *The Subterraneous Passage; or, Gothic Cell. A Romance* (1803); *Monkcliffe Abbey: A Tale of the Fifteenth Century. To which is added Lopez and Aranthe; or, The Suicide* (1805); *Priory of St. Clair; or, Spectre of the Murdered Nun. A Gothic Tale* (1811); and *Albert of Werdendorff; or, The Midnight Embrace. A Romance From the German* (1812) – there is a temptation to read their content according to the gender of their author. It is a temptation to be resisted. Female authors are ultimately responsible for two thirds of the works in this study, for besides Sarah Wilkinson's five texts there are redactions adapted from Ann Radcliffe, Eliza Parsons, and Charlotte Dacre's novels, and these differ so wildly in tone as to suggest little gendered influence. It is impossible, moreover, to ascertain the genders of the anonymous authors or redactors responsible for half of the sample's titles – a conservative quantity, for Franz Potter's study of three hundred and fifty bluebooks found sixty-nine percent to be anonymous[475] – and indeed C.F. Barrett's initials might stand for a name of either gender. It is therefore conceivable, though improbable, that every single one of the bluebooks in this study was female-authored. While sociological factors point to possible gender prioritisation in the bluebook audience, authors must be considered as individuals rather than nebulous, stereotypical gender constructs, especially given that canny publishers would direct the creation of texts according to the readership of their bluebooks, not the authorship. This is a further consequence of the gothic's multiple facets – the publisher aiming to maximise their audience would likely produce examples of both Radcliffe- and Lewis-style gothic, but might also hasten to produce redactions or imitations of recent popular texts, having at a minimum the option of 'forc[ing] a sensational title on generically inappropriate materials.'[476] How much influence individual bluebook authors had on this process is unclear, but given the low status and reward of their labours, it was probably very little. Thus, a bluebook should be considered the product of neither a gender nor even a single person, for even discounting redactions, the apparent demands of the reading audience would have a significant influence on content.

[475] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, pp. 50, 52.
[476] Peter Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era: Consolidation and Dispersal', p. 52.

Nonetheless, the works of Sarah Wilkinson specifically are highly characteristic. Arguably her five bluebooks in the sample are, even on a superficial level, less sensational in their presentation than previously-named original bluebooks. Their titles include neither an extended emphasis on the grim nor even exclamation marks. There may, as highlighted above, be those titles allusive of death, as in *Spectre of the Murdered Nun* or the side-story *The Suicide*, but such titles are clearly more dispassionate than *The Cavern of Death!*, for example. Moreover, the titles often emphasise the oft-neglected love story, as in *Lopez and Aranthe* and *The Midnight Embrace*, but more significant is a focus on setting –*The Chateau de Montville, The Subterraneous Passage; or, Gothic Cell*, *Monkcliffe Abbey*, *Priory of St. Clair* – which adhere to Garside's observation that 'a number of keywords, including […] 'Castle', 'Monastery', 'Abbey', 'Cavern', almost invariably points towards a Gothic novel in the essentially female tradition of Ann Radcliffe'.[477] Significantly, though, these are often relatively domestic settings – chateaus, abbeys, priories. Absent are the inherently military or simply dangerous connotations of the castle or the cavern in this selection – and though the narratives may include them, they are not employed as a selling point, suggesting that the audience for Wilkinson's texts were either uninterested in or even deterred by such gloomy locales. Even the distinctly sinister overtones of a subterraneous passage or gothic cell are moderated by their limited scale. Purely on titling systems, these bluebooks portray themselves as less reliant on the high emotions of horror or even terror, and more upon the sentimental tradition.

Such impressions do not always reach the texts themselves. The representative Wilkinson bluebook to be examined here is *The Chateau de Montville*, a rough contemporary, having been published in 1803, with *The Black Forest* (1802) and *The Bloody Hand* (1800). Somewhat unusually for Wilkinson, this text does not shy from horror, but only of a mild degree. Dismissing sinister manifestations and unjust kidnappings, which are more the fruit of terror in suggesting a violent eventuality yet unrealised, mores specifically the bluebook does not shy simply from blood – 'the blood ran copiously from his wounds,' is the result of a battle between a villain and the hero's forces, and one may well imagine such scenes producing a literal corridor of blood.[478] Curiously, violence itself is elided or dealt with extremely briefly. For instance, Joanna, a servant, anecdotally relates an encounter with the then-Marquis de Montville in a dreadful state: 'his looks wild and disordered, his eyes darted

[477] Ibid.
[478] Sarah Wilkinson, *The Chateau de Montville*, p. 22.

fire, his sword was drawn, and covered with blood!' As in *The Black Forest*, violence is here displaced to an off-page event, which creates the suspense of mystery as well as terror in wondering what the Marquis has done – or will do, as he shortly 'seized [Joanna] rudely by [her] arm, and led, or rather dragged [her] into his closet' – but only for the purposes of swearing her to secrecy, it transpires.[479] Not dissimilar is a visionary sequence in which the gothic heroine, Laura, is escorted by a spectral figure to a hidden cell, 'where lay, extended in the dusty, a man elegantly clad, but covered with clotted gore!'[480] Again the violent act is unseen, and merely the bloody result is shown, and this itself through the distancing device of nested flashbacks. It later proves that these two circumstances are connected – the Marquis's bloody sword caused the fallen man's wound – but the relation of the violent incident is of extreme brevity: 'his base cousin […] treacherously stabbed him, and flung him in the cell.'[481] The narrative even demurs confirming that this individual is dead – a measure also taken regarding the fate of the story's villains, who pass into 'the hands of justice where they met their deserts.'[482] These brief and elusive relations of evident death are even evident on the very first page, in a murder that initiates the narrative – the former Marquis 'had been shot with an arrow as he walk'd on the ramparts of his castle, by the hand of an unknown ruffian.' While the 'late' Marquis is clearly killed in this 'fatal event', the narrative does not choose to say as much.[483] Indeed, only a single death actually occurs within the protagonist's vicinity, without being displaced by numerous retrospections: Fatima, mistress of the Dey of Algiers, who is involved in a side-plot at the bluebook's conclusion which has little to do with preceding events and was probably inserted to fill the page count. But Fatima's death is not a bloody one – rather, she swallows 'a deadly poison,' which causes her features to undergo 'a serious alteration, and evident marks of approaching dissolution appeared […] Nature gave her last struggle, and she expired.'[484] Fatima's comparatively non-violent death may be attributed to her sex, but given the general approach to violence in the narrative, it seems probable that the use of poison was to eliminate a gory scene. *The Chateau de Montville*, therefore, exhibits a paradoxical, perhaps hypocritical attitude to its narrations of horror: Blood and gore are permitted, but never in conjunction with death itself. This seems like a possible concession to delicacy, but it is hard to say if the text is rendered any less offensive to delicate minds.

[479] Ibid., p. 18.
[480] Ibid., p. 20.
[481] Ibid., p. 26.
[482] Ibid., p. 27.
[483] Ibid., p. 11.
[484] Ibid., p. 42.

There is much reason to conclude, therefore, that the 'corridor of blood' argument is a clear exaggeration.[485] It is possible that Frederick Frank was judging by milder standards, and that even the limited violence in the bluebooks presented above would have met with his objection; however, were this the case, a vast body of fiction of all genres would be subject to the same criticism. Limited violence is common in fiction due to the average storyline being based around conflict. Even children's books did not shy away from merely acknowledging that wounds and blood exist, as is aptly demonstrated in the previous chapter's examination of the 1800 novel *Dangerous Sports*, which had no qualms about being 'Addressed To Children' whilst featuring a person 'covered with blood from head to foot,' such that 'blood flowed in streams' from their hands.[486] That this was a hoax within the fiction does not alter the first impression of awful violence, which towards the end of the narrative is used authentically in a flashback, wherein a tiger attack leaves a man 'weltering in [his] blood'.[487] The violence in bluebooks seems scarcely more visceral than that in a novel actually advertised as being for children, which bluebooks were not. Indeed, a common trend within bluebook criticism is to overlook the fact that their flaws merely echo the novels they imitated. Rapidity of plot, arbitrary marriages, violence – all of these can and have been shown in gothic novels, which raises the question of why they should be objected to specifically in bluebooks and not the wider gothic genre. Angela Koch, basing her own conclusions on a much wider reading of novels and bluebooks alike, agrees that, far from the assessments of Birkhead, Frank, and Watt regarding the seriously devalued content of bluebooks, 'the contents of three-decker Gothics and bluebooks are more or less identical'.[488] This takes the point further than to say that bluebooks were no worse than novels – it appears that novels might be thought of as no better. This point leads logically to the conclusion that 'both modes of fiction' – that is, gothic bluebooks and gothic novels – 'must have aimed at similar expectations from their readership'.[489] This is to say, surely, that a youthful audience could enjoy the bluebook as much as the novel.

[485] Frederick S. Frank, 'Gothic Gold: The Sadleir-Black Gothic Collection'.
[486] James Parkinson, *Dangerous Sports* (1800), title page , p. 66.
[487] Ibid., p. 181.
[488] Angela Koch, 'Gothic Bluebooks in the Princely Library of Corvey and Beyond' in *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text*, Iss. 9 (December 2002)
<http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/encap/journals/corvey/articles/cc09_n01.html> [accessed 16 June 2012].
[489] Ibid.

In questioning the difference between bluebook and novel, Koch reminds the reader to be critical of the quality not just of bluebooks, but of novels as well, for she refers to the contents of 'lesser novels' as showing that 'the last aim of such Gothicism was to meet high aesthetic expectations on the part of a discriminating readership'.[490] It bears remembering that this was a popular and populist genre, of which its characteristic derivativity demonstrates the extent to which authors were capitalising on the success of previous works through imitation. Bluebooks were by no means the preserve of those with neither time nor talent to write a novel (indeed, Sarah Wilkinson wrote several); it is simply a form of the same genre directed at a different section of the market. Whilst Koch is willing to be dismissive about novels, lowering them, as it were, to the level of bluebooks, Alison Milbank by contrast elevates bluebooks to the level of novels, making the surprisingly unusual choice of praising them. She describes how 'The writing style, despite the popular nature of the market, is complex, dense and allusive', which suggests that the audience for bluebooks could be just as discerning as the audience for novels – as one might expect of upper-class schoolboys, and others who extended their interest to bluebooks from novels – and would be little disappointed, for Milbank's opinion is that 'these little books evoke all the terrors of the longer works, with a taut and effective style'.[491]

Indeed, the bluebook held some advantages over the novel in its very shortness; although the redactions had little choice but to compress lengthy and complex plots, unredacted plots could confine themselves to a shorter time period and tell the story as a single event, devoting their limited space to representing fewer incidents better – a result less challenging to the memory and understanding of a younger, uneducated reader than a convoluted novel plotline. Wilkinson's 1812 bluebook *Albert of Werdendorff*, a loose adaptation of Lewis's ballad 'Alonzo the Brave, and fair Imogine', is by nature a much simpler story than that of a novel but does not suffer for it, having few enough events to constitute a true short story, one which would with difficulty be written as a novel because its effect lies in its brevity.[492] Indeed, when considering redactions, it may be that what is lost through compression might be to the gain of a younger audience. In his reading of *The Midnight Assassin*, a bluebook redaction of Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*, Gary Kelly suggests that the process of paring down the story involved removing 'representations of subjectivity, of emotions and feelings, often at

[490] Ibid.
[491] Alison Milbank, 'Gothic Satires, Histories and Chapbooks' in *Adam Matthew Publications* <http://www.ampltd.co.uk/digital_guides/gothic_fiction/AlisonMilbank3.aspx> [accessed 3 October 2012].
[492] Franz Potter, 'Introduction' in *Albert of Werdendorff*, p. 7.

extremes'.[493] This study's bluebooks suggest that such was not always the case, with a certain amount of psychological reflection remaining, and Alison Milbank opines that bluebooks often have 'a more leisurely feel than one might expect', in which the 'pensive Radcliffean heroine has time still to "rouse her soul to transport, and her mind with grateful rapture to the stupendous cause of being" at the sight of sublime landscape'.[494] But certainly there is less capacity for this, whether in a shorter story or a compressed one, so clearly something is lost – or rather, something is added to the longer piece. There should be no assumption that representations of subjectivity, description, or other elements which do not develop the plot are automatically superior just for being longer; the longer or shorter form might each be the superior model for their particular longer or shorter narrative. While Kelly makes the perhaps dubious, difficult to prove argument that such elements were 'just what the middle-class reading public was interested in', he also concedes that 'Probably many novel-readers – and critics – during the heyday of Gothic romance could also skip the descriptions' and the like.[495] The bluebook form may simply have reflected common practice among novel readers – particularly readers with less free time, or shorter attention spans, or who preferred the 'most exciting and interesting' parts. Medwin did itemise the highlights of bluebooks as the 'stories of haunted castles, bandits, murderers, and other grim personages', without mentioning the psychological or landscape descriptions[496] – which in themselves are just as interchangeable as any other gothic trope, whilst having the disadvantage of not being necessary to understand the story. Readers, including young readers, are discerning enough to detect which parts of a story can be skipped without detriment to understanding the plot. Perhaps bluebooks simply made a virtue of a necessity, cutting what their audience did not need to make space for what they did.

One might ask where the bluebook's favour with youthful audiences would leave their enjoyment of novels. On the one hand, it must be emphasised that acquiring bluebooks would still challenge many young people, and so appropriating their elders' novels, or appealing to guardians as proxy purchasers for novels as a sophisticated and widely approved form, would indicate novels as a more physically accessible form of gothic than bluebooks, which could only be acquired in the street or circulating library. But on the other hand, were one to ask

[493] Gary Kelly, 'Introduction' in *Varieties of Female Gothic Volume 2: Street Gothic: Female Gothic Chapbooks* (Pickering & Chatto, 2002), p. xv.
[494] Alison Milbank, 'Gothic Satires, Histories and Chapbooks'.
[495] Gary Kelly, 'Introduction' in *Varieties of Female Gothic Volume 2*, pp. xv, xvii.
[496] Thomas Medwin, *The Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, p. 24.

what the bluebook did differently to the novel, one must also ask what the novel did differently to the bluebook, and in some cases the answer is: Very little. Most gothic novels were at least partially episodic in structure, moving their protagonists through a varied range of settings and situations, and one might compare this, in some cases, to the effect of a series of bluebooks. Evidently a good example of this is the aforementioned *The Mysterious Warning*, by Eliza Parsons – a novel not unreasonably described as a series of disjointed narratives with little relation to one another save a unifying protagonist who comes into contact with all, a distinct episodic structure which enabled one of its interpolated narratives to be entirely lifted, with only its ending altered slightly, and sold separately as the bluebook *The Horrible Revenge*. Critics of the time agreed; *The Critical Review* cited this as a recurrent problem with Parsons's work, writing that 'the principal narrative is frequently broken in upon by different stories', such that they 'have before had occasion to observe, that the novels of Mrs. Parsons would be more interesting, if her plans had more unity' – a unity lacking because the events of her narratives are poorly interconnected, resembling a series of adventures which might be separated into a series of bluebooks by simply renaming the protagonist each time. Perhaps Parsons's talents lay elsewhere; the reviewer notes that her stories are 'entertaining in themselves,' and one is tempted to conclude that, had it been a more respectable occupation, she might have been better writing bluebooks instead.[497] But what was the reviewers' loss may have been the readers' gain, especially young readers; '*Mysterious Warnings*' merits a conspicuous and famous mention among the gothic novels recommended among the teenage circle of Catherine Morland in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*.[498]

This approaches a subject touched upon numerous times thus far: That of specifically formal suitability, not narrative, of the bluebook for a specifically youthful audience. With little empirical evidence, speculation is a necessity, but rational deduction, and what peripheral evidence there is, proves positive. It would have been no surprise to contemporary publishers, who might even have anticipated it, that the bluebook could have had popularity among younger readers, because as F.J.H. Darton points out, their predecessor, the non-gothic chapbook of folk literature, was already 'a form rudely adapted for use by children'.[499] The form and formula were proven ones, and waited only for publishers to corner the market with

[497] Anonymous, review of *The Mysterious Warning* in *The Critical Review*, Vol. 16 (April 1796), p. 474.
[498] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817) (Oneworld Classics 2010), p. 23.
[499] Frederick Joseph Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 81.

the latest literature in vogue, and exactly the same audience would still be there – children awaiting a literature tailored to them. It seems readily apparent that the bluebook represents a less intimidating artefact than the gothic novel, being so vastly shorter; to an immature reader, this would suggest a much smaller investment of time and attention to reap the benefits of the story, and, if the desire was for excitement over portraits of psychology and landscape, bluebooks had, as it were, a greater proportion of wheat to be sorted from chaff. The infectious enthusiasm of bluebooks' titles, although not universally more exaggerated than those of novels, would certainly have encouraged an audience whose lives were strictured and without freedoms. Set *The Daemon of Venice* against *Zofloya*, or *The Horrible Revenge* against *The Mysterious Warning*, and it is easily-discerned which title provides immediate gratification rather than a persistent state of suspense preceding the kernel of the story. To be sure, acquisition of bluebooks presented obstacles, if it required acting in any manner surreptitiously, but for some it was probably easier to acquire bluebooks than novels. While many a young reader could access a point of purchase for fiction, which the experiences of Medwin and Shelley show to be no insurmountable obstacle, Angela Koch points out that 'these parts of the reading public […] could not afford the comparatively expensive three-decker novels', or indeed subscriptions to circulating libraries.[500] It is not to be forgotten that few gothic novels were simply a single volume; Raven points out that 'the distribution of the text over more than one volume, attempting to ensure, at standard pricing per volume, greater returns from retail and, for many, from library lending charges' was standard practice, resulting in gothic novels that had to be purchased or loaned as three, four, even five books, rather than a single one[501] – regardless of actual length, as a shorter book could simply be printed with larger type, wider spacing, and a hundred or more fewer pages per volume than some of the longest novels. Garside elaborates that exorbitant pricing was not necessarily unreasonable, since 'Between 1800 and 1814 […] costs for raw materials [were] being exacerbated in the case of books by the high prices charged for paper' – and yet 'even after the war prices for new novels continued to be pushed upwards'. In a literary marketplace that saw 'the most frequently charged retail price for a three-volume novel tripling […] in the later 1820s', it is little wonder that demand for cheaper versions of popular fiction arose, demand that was stoked and supplied.[502] Bluebooks were by no means gothic

[500] Angela Koch, 'Gothic Bluebooks in the Princely Library of Corvey and Beyond'.
[501] James Raven, 'Historical Introduction: The Novel Comes of Age', p. 38.
[502] Peter Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era: Consolidation and Dispersal', p. 93.

fiction's only 'lucrative trade', an accusation of profiteering that sits uneasily with the affordable cost of the form.[503]

Relative to novels, the cost of bluebooks was, obviously, less prohibitively expensive to someone without any earnings save pocket money. There is no suggestion, however, that bluebooks were in any position to undercut the novel market; the sheer difference in forms and respectability must have ensured quite different audiences. It is, however, worth highlighting that the publication dates of abridgements are often displaced by some years from their originators; as with price, the content of bluebooks may have filled a quite specific gap in the market, replacing longer texts that had gone out of print, or become too obscure. Although the popularity of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* suggests that it was hardly to have been out of reach for many years, *The Veiled Picture*, published in 1802, was hardly a direct competitor to the 1794 novel; *The Daemon of Venice*'s 1810 publication followed closer upon the heels of its 1806 original *Zofloya*, but the original was far more ephemeral than *Udolpho*. The most extreme case in this study is that of *The Horrible Revenge*, for while *The Mysterious Warning* was published in 1796, *The Horrible Revenge* did not appear until 1828, over thirty years later – a lifetime for many readers, and certainly for Parsons, who died in 1811. This is unlikely to be a testament to the enduring power of these texts, for the arbitrariness of the dates and titles chosen – in 1794, Stephen Cullen's *The Haunted Priory* must have been overshadowed by *Udolpho*, and yet seven years later, in 1801, *The Wandering Spirit* appeared – suggests instead that abridgement material was selected from what came to hand, or from scouring the shelves of circulating libraries for unknown titles. And the extent to which a child would have had access to the novelistic material is unclear; booksellers and librarians with a concern for reputability may have frowned upon child customers mingling with adults in search of more serious literature, but it is unlikely that establishments which sold bluebooks would have been so scrupulous, bluebooks being affordable to a young person where novels were not. Finally, for young people, there would have been considerable personal appeal to acquiring a bluebook for oneself; the experience would likely have been a novel one and probably an early example of independent activity. While novels could be appropriated from older family members in upper-class families, such a method obviously contains a significant element of chance, and a proportionally lesser element of choice – and this is excluding those probably not uncommon families who owned

[503] Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror*, p. 185.

no gothic novels, or none that a younger reader could get their hands on. Nonetheless, it is very likely that gothic's modish appeal would have seen it enter into conversation and inspire a young reader with a propensity to try it. In this light, bluebooks may be seen as even more exciting to the younger reader, who might well have set eyes upon a gothic novel, but probably not the exotic bluebook.

This is important as it directs children in the reading audience specifically towards an adolescent reading context. This is present to some extent in the idea of appropriating books from elders, an act likely to be implicitly or explicitly forbidden, but it is the ability to conduct oneself independently in acquiring bluebooks as an individual with one's own money that forms a gateway to adult practice. This harmonises with the more adolescent-specific content of gothic – which, in bluebooks as in novels, concerns younger characters crossing the threshold into adulthood by having to undertake similar individual action, acting without the assistance or consent of parental figures (because they are dead, disabled, or evil). Bluebooks may have featured limited psychological representation, but it remained present, whether in interludes between moments of high drama or in a didactic conclusion, introducing the reader to a more complex moral landscape and preparing them for its greater role in novels for adults. While this was not necessarily true of lower-class readers who could not hope and might not desire ever to possess full-length novels, for middle- and upper-class children the bluebook serves not just as entertainment but as a form of practice for purchasing and reading as an adult – asking them to buy a literary text themselves, if an ephemeral one in lower-class circumstances, and reading a dark tale of high drama and moral rectitude, if one that was short and exaggeratedly ghoulish. Given that the adolescent age is essentially preparatory for adulthood, it seems fitting that adolescents should have literature equally preparatory for more mature forms – or simply forms more suited to a mature mindset, with vastly increased length serving a subtler approach to character psychology and melodrama.

This theory of bluebooks as preparatory for more complex reading may demand testing, for which purpose reference can be made to other texts with similar adaptive strategies. While some critics deride the principle of redacting or compressing longer texts to create a version suitable for a different audience, it was, in fact, commonplace in this period to do so – particularly when adapting adult works to an audience of children. Several previously cited commentators on children's literature expressed approbation of the method, without evident limits. In *The Progress of Romance* Clara Reeve had suggested – probably hoping that an

enterprising reader would take up her idea – that the first two volumes of Rousseau's novel *Eloise* (*Julie, ou la nouvelle Héloïse*) 'could be abridged and altered, so as to render them consistent with the unexceptionable morals of the two last.'[504] Going further, Maria Edgeworth, in her *Practical Education*, despite praising Anna Laetitia Barbauld (*née* Aikin)'s *Lessons for Children* series as 'by far the best books of the kind', showed no restraint in finding even there opportunities to 'strike a pencil line across' and 'carefully obliterate' certain lines which 'might have been advantageously omitted', declaring in broad terms that 'Few books can safely be given to children without the previous use of the pen, the pencil, and the scissors.'[505] One gothic novel referred to the method directly, albeit with unpropitious results: Coleridge's greatest objection to *The Monk* was its inclusion of an edition of the Bible with 'all improper passages either altered or omitted', with the narrator commenting that the Bible 'frequently inculcates the first rudiments of vice […] the annals of a Brothel would scarcely furnish a greater choice of indecent expressions';[506] Coleridge declared 'The impiety of this falsehood can be equalled only by its impudence.'[507] This was clearly scandalous to the period's Christian majority, but it was not the principle of expurgation that offended Coleridge, merely the suggestion that the Bible might require it – and indeed Lewis expurgated *The Monk* itself of this passage in its 1798 fourth edition. However, in redacting gothic novels for bluebooks, it was not contentiously offensive passages that were removed; actually, these were probably selling points, as the popularity of *The Monk* and its imitations suggests. Indeed, *The Daemon of Venice* was redacted from *Zofloya*, a yet more scandalous version of *The Monk*, possessing, according to one reviewer, 'all the defects of that wild performance, but entirely destitute of all its beauties', such that, as quoted earlier, 'we never read a more odious and indecent performance'[508] – and yet its bluebook was merely shorter, rather than censored.

Following these hypothetical and fictional cases, there are numerous genuine examples of abridgement and expurgation for children at work – particularly as the children's literature industry, and therefore the market for child-friendly editions of adult texts, grew. As noted early on in the chapter, William St Clair's research finds that, after intellectual property rights loosened in 1774, there was 'an outpouring of abridgements of older texts' associated partly

[504] Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*, Vol. II, pp. 17-18.
[505] Maria Edgeworth, Richard Edgeworth, et al., *Practical Education* (1798), pp. 317, 319, 322
[506] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), pp. 259-260.
[507] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, review of *The Monk* in *The Critical Review*, Vol. 19 (February 1797), p. 198.
[508] Anonymous, review of *Zofloya* in *Monthly Literary Recreations*, p. 262.

with ‘the rapid growth of a new children’s book industry, which also drew on, anthologised, and abridged the out-of-copyright authors’.[509] That this presaged the period of the gothic’s success and the bluebook’s rise is likely no coincidence, and by the era of the latter, the process of adaptation had become something of an art, to the extent of some appropriations becoming almost complete rewritings; St Clair notes that, by the 1810s, new editions of perennial favourites *Robinson Crusoe* and *Gulliver’s Travels* were written ‘which take the stories far from the original.’[510] Parallels to the lines of influence and inspiration in the gothic are not improbable, and the gothic seems a likely formative influence on this literary landscape. But others, naturally, aimed to remain faithful to the texts they edited. Among these were two versions of Shakespeare’s plays, both issued in 1807, the midst of this study’s bluebook publication dates, and both produced by pairs of siblings – Harriet and Thomas Bowdler’s carefully-censored *The Family Shakespeare*, and Charles and Mary Lamb’s abridged *Tales from Shakespeare*; the role of siblings in compiling these texts highlights the importance of Shakespeare’s works as possessing, at least supposedly, family appeal. The full titles of these works foreground an awareness that the family demographic is one which Shakespeare’s original texts might not be culturally suited for: *The Family Shakespeare* is subtitled ‘in which nothing is added to the original text, but those words and expressions are omitted which cannot with propriety be read aloud in a family’, which is to say, which cannot be read aloud to children (and women);[511] *Tales from Shakespeare* adopts the more didactic ‘designed for the use of young persons’ – positioning itself not for all audiences but exclusively for the emergent children’s literature market.[512]

The texts include prefaces which further construct this youthful audience and explicate how Shakespeare has been tailored to them. The editor of *The Family Shakespeare*’s first edition, probably Harriet Bowdler, identifies ‘profaneness and obscenity’ in Shakespeare’s writings; as such, she aims ‘to render his plays unsullied’ by anything that ‘can give pain to the most chaste, or offence to the most religious of his readers.’ For example, she explains that ‘The most Sacred Word in our language [God] is omitted in several instances in which it appeared as a mere expletive; and it is changed into the word Heaven, in a still greater number’, with the idea of preventing Shakespeare’s example from spreading what Bowdler considered as

[509] William St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period*, pp. 74, 118.
[510] Ibid., p. 349.
[511] Harriet Bowdler and Thomas Bowdler, eds., *The Family Shakespeare* (1807, 1818).
[512] Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb, *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807).

improper language.[513] Whole lines were also altered or omitted, particularly those with sexual connotations; an example of an omission is Miranda's line in Act I, Scene II of *The Tempest*, 'Good wombs have borne bad sons', which both alludes to the act of procreation and develops (by refutation) an accusation of adultery against Miranda's grandmother. The preface generally elides children; an example of an intended audience for the text is 'a company of ladies', although child listeners are implied by the suggestion, cited earlier in the chapter, for 'a father to read one of Shakespeare's plays to his family circle'.[514] Only at the preface's close is the text recommended for 'the parent, the guardian, and the instructor of youth' to give to a pupil, for the purposes of the familiar refrain, 'instruction and pleasure'.[515] *The Family Shakespeare* tacitly distances itself from the possibility of constituting children's literature, instead highlighting its importance to a wider audience, and yet the importance of the text to children cannot be hidden entirely.

By contrast, the Lambs' *Tales from Shakespeare* but courts young audiences in its very first sentence: 'The following Tales are meant to be submitted to the young reader as an introduction to the study of Shakespear [*sic*].'[516] The phrase 'young readers' and the words 'young' and 'children' recur repeatedly in the preface, which is in some areas addressed to the young reader directly – suggesting, for instance, that if the tales 'prove delightful to any of you, my young readers, I hope will have no worse effect on you, than to make you wish yourselves a little older, that you may be allowed to read the Plays at full length'[517] – a suggestion with obvious implications for bluebooks. The Lambs' Tales are short narratives, wholly different in format from the plays they abridge; *The Tempest*, for example, begins, 'There was a certain island in the sea, the only inhabitants of which were an old man, whose name was Prospero, and his daughter Miranda, a very beautiful young lady.'[518] This simplistic form of exposition is often used in stories for children – although, naturally, there remains sufficient dialogue for the narrative to tend. The Lambs make clear that the Tales are no substitute for Shakespeare but rather are preparatory for reading the unabridged plays in later life; if the readers enjoy the tales, this must then encourage them to engage with the full texts. Didactic purposes are also proposed, but distanced, as another employment of the popular theory that children require amusement in their instruction. The Lambs first propose

[513] Harriet Bowdler, 'Preface' in *The Family Shakespeare*, p. ix.
[514] Ibid., p. x.
[515] Ibid., p. xi.
[516] Charles Lamb, Mary Lamb, 'Preface' in *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), p. iii.
[517] Ibid., p. viii.
[518] Charles Lamb, Mary Lamb, *The Tempest* in *Tales from Shakespeare*, p. 1.

that young men could help 'in explaining to their sisters' (typically less well-read) 'such parts as are hardest for them to understand', which also covertly requires the young male tutor to understand such sections;[519] they also close the Preface in describing the plays as 'enrichers', 'strengtheners', and 'a lesson' that can 'teach you courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity' – but this is what the 'true Plays' can be 'to you in older years', implying that the Tales are not quite so forthrightly educational.[520] The Lambs attempt to direct the text with a greater awareness of a child's desires, and as such *Tales from Shakespeare* is perhaps the truer example of a children's Shakespeare, with *The Family Shakespeare* being only incidentally so; this indicates the still tenuous status of children's literature in the period.

But *The Family Shakespeare* and *Tales From Shakespeare* are not particularly remarkable or independent in this regard; Darton argues that the Lambs' children's books 'inspired nothing, they showed no fresh point of view'.[521] As a criticism, this reveals the accuracy of the point above, that such redactive processes were commonplace; Grenby points out that, even in the field of Shakespearean redactions, the Lambs' and Bowdlers' 'are merely the most famous.'[522] Nonetheless, their work highlights how bluebooks were participating in literary trends that linked them to children's literature by association, but what cements that link is the question of what the Lambs and Bowdlers didn't redact, rather than what they did. As noted above, apparent sacrilege was censored in the Bowdlers' versions, and sexual references were erased or obscured in both, with whole characters altered considerably. The significant secondary character of Lucio from *Measure for Measure* vanishes permanently halfway through the Lambs' version of the play, which, owing to its character as a summary, just as easily entirely eliminates problematic minor characters such as Mistress Overdone; the Bowdlers' edited playscripts cannot wholly remove characters with such ease, but can remove almost all their dialogue. But an aspect of the Lambs' and Bowdlers' work which differs from their contemporaries and reflects upon the gothic is one notable device of Shakespeare's which they chose not to remove. As Dale Townshend comments of *The Family Shakespeare*, 'what makes this edition so different from the work of contemporary expurgators is the Bowdlers' refusal to subject Shakespeare's supernaturalism to any process

[519] Charles Lamb, Mary Lamb, 'Preface' in *Tales from Shakespeare*, p. vii.
[520] Ibid., p. ix.
[521] F.J.H. Darton, *Children's Books in England*, p. 190.
[522] Matthew Orville Grenby, *The Child Reader 1700-1840*, p. 119.

of revision, elision, or excision'.[523] The same is true of the Lambs' work; the supernatural survives untouched from the original. As discussed in Chapter One, much of the preceding century had witnessed debate on whether to permit children to be exposed to the supernatural, characterising the practice as unwholesome – and yet here were the Bowdlers and especially the Lambs, crafting works explicitly intended for children and which exhibited the supernatural in full. It is worth conceding that they did have one legitimising strategy: 'this could only be achieved through the employment of Shakespeare as its medium.'[524] The reputation of England's foremost dramatist was sufficiently monolithic as to safeguard those who drew their supernaturalism directly from his work, a stratagem avowed quite without shame by Horace Walpole in his inaugural gothic text, *The Castle of Otranto*, in which he declared that he had 'copied' Shakespeare and his aim was to 'shelter my own daring under the cannon of the brightest genius this country, at least, has produced'[525] – although Summerfield contends instead that 'the fact that Shakespeare's reputation […] was never seriously threatened' evinced a more supernatural-positive reality that 'the claims of fantasy, of a pre-rational, pre-decorous, pre-Christian world, continued to prove irresistible.'[526] But even should this stand, the Bowdlers and Lambs were still defying convention, if, as Townshend suggests above, their contemporaries edited Shakespeare's supernatural content. Shakespeare's works participated in many conventions of gothic literature, over a century before it first appeared – and under Shakespeare's banner were now being produced short, child-oriented tales of the supernatural, which might well be called gothic, and would have fitted the bluebook format if printed individually. This is a clear example of the same scale and genre of work as the bluebook being designed and designated specifically for an audience of children. The mere existence of the Lambs' and Bowdlers' work argues for the potential of bluebooks as a form that children could enjoy – or that publishers might anticipate as having such potential. If the Lambs' and Bowdlers' abridgements prepared child readers for Shakespeare's originals, it follows that bluebooks did the same for the fiction they imitate.

Having proposed this, it is relevant to briefly examine contemporary parallel forms of the bluebook to assess whether their alternative formal approach would possess similar capacity for a young audience, or whether they perform a different function. The major evolution of

[523] Dale Townshend, 'The Haunted Nursery: 1764-1830' in *The Gothic in Children's Literature*, ed. by Anna Jackson, Karen Coats, Roderick McGillis (Routledge, 2008), p. 31.
[524] Ibid., p. 30.
[525] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, pp. 11, 14.
[526] Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason: Children's Literature in the Eighteenth Century* (University of Georgia Press, 1985), p. xiv.

the bluebook is the gothic tale, collected in anthologies or printed individually in magazines, journals, and annuals – and tales were an evolution, as they succeeded and indeed displaced the bluebook in readers' purchasing habits, an alteration reinforced by publishers' assumptions that they would do so. If, as Birkhead suggests, 'It was probably the success of the chapbook that encouraged the editors of periodicals early in the nineteenth century to enliven their pages with sensational fiction', then bluebooks were a victim of their own success in this regard.[527] The numbers of bluebooks written suggests that the industry was a popular one; Franz Potter posits a published total of over a thousand.[528] Such success – and such a quantity of readily-available material – would create an impetus to remarket them back to their upper-class cultural origins. It is not that bluebook audience makeup was untenable; technological developments favoured a change in publication strategies: 'the mechanisation of the publishing industry […] facilitated the acceleration of magazines, serial stories and newspapers,' and 'simultaneously caused the failure of the Gothic bluebook market.'[529] Much though there may have been, as Garside points out, a 'conservative backlash against 'low' fiction' as the nineteenth century began, this pales into insignificance if the form simply became unprofitable to manufacture:[530] Potter's figures indicate that production of gothic bluebooks, and indeed of gothic novels, was overtaken by tales in the mid-1820s as the new form became the more profitable – and the more exploitable for its freshness. '90 per cent of all Gothic material published after 1821 in [Potter's] survey took the form of tales'.[531]

The dwindling of bluebook production was certainly because of their form, not their content, which identifiably persisted in new forms. Indeed, as Potter has recorded, 'Ann Lemoine, for instance, recycled single bluebooks not only in her *Tale-Tell Magazine* (1803-1805), but in special bluebook collections'.[532] If anything, bluebook-style tales replaced gothic novels owing to their continued reproduction in short rather than long forms. The ephemeral abridgements could be bulked up by printing them en masse in anthologies, practically reversing the course of the bluebook's development. Where bluebooks had originally been derived from long, multi-volume novels to create shorter and cheaper equivalents, once publishers in the 1820s began 'the move towards the three-decker (3-volume) novel as the standard for mainstream fiction', as observed by Garside, then bluebooks were restored to the

[527] Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror*, p. 186.
[528] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, p. 59.
[529] Ibid., p. 51.
[530] Peter Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era: Consolidation and Dispersal', p. 44.
[531] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, p. 96.
[532] Ibid., p. 82.

form of lengthy, multi-volume releases[533] – and therefore again a product for the privileged classes. Alternatively, magazine publishers could bolster their page-count with a suitably brief gothic tale, adding another source of proven appeal, although again, this placed the stories of bluebooks outside of their original price-range and appeal; indeed, the magazines were written with 'a fusion of genteel and professional values,' which often 'relied heavily for their fiction and poetry on readers' contributions', thus shutting out lower-class authors.[534] Readerships changed because technology changed, rather than publications changing because readerships changed.

The consequence of this, as suggested, was for bluebook narratives to become again something like the novel, and with this presentation in a form that was more authoritative and controllable, they regained a modicum of respect – or at the very least were substantial enough to gain reviews rather than simply being ignored, although this does not mean that reviews were positive. Matthew Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* collection was condemned by one reviewer as 'a very daring imposition on the public' for the sheer transparency of its monetising efforts, charging a guinea for 'two thin volumes, which might, and which ought, to have been comprised in one; and not a third of the contents will be found to be original composition.'[535] What this reveals, though, is that reviewers held anthologies to high standards as a form rather than dismissing them out of hand for their content. Even negative reviews can become positive publicity, however, if they describe features that appealed to readers even without satisfying reviewers.

All of which is but background to the question of whether younger readers would have enjoyed magazine gothic. Robert Mayo outlines the form as primarily 'of two kinds—the Gothic *tale* and the Gothic *fragment*', the distinction being that the former was a complete story, albeit probably abbreviated and liable to begin *in medias res*, while the latter was designed to resemble an excerpt from a considerably longer work.[536] A third form was the serial story – a continuous story written and published in shorter parts on an ideally regular basis until the work was complete at novel-length. The possibility of accessing both shorter gothic tales and longer stories in serials superficially appears to combine the best of both

[533] Peter Garside, 'The English Novel in the Romantic Era: Consolidation and Dispersal', p. 90.
[534] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830* (Longman, 1987), p. 2.
[535] Anonymous, Art. 16 [review of *Tales of Wonder*] in *The British Critic*, ed. by Robert Nares, Vol. 16 (December 1800), p. 681.
[536] Robert D. Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815* (Oxford University Press, 1962), p. 349.

worlds; in practice, it may have heralded the worst. For instance, tales could be even shorter than bluebooks, and a fragment, stirring emotion and building suspense without ultimately satisfying either, may not be fully appreciable to young readers, or indeed older ones, if they preferred a story to an experience. The issue of story length leads to a pair of problems that plagued serial fiction: Poor pacing and incompletion. In a field which, as noted, 'relied heavily […] on readers' contributions', amateur and unprofessional contributions are much to be expected.[537] Mayo records that 'most' writers of magazine gothic 'gave up the attempt' to 'complete [their] novel on episodic principles'.[538] Exemplary is the highly generically-titled *The Monks and the Robbers*, the title of which alone is clearly leaning on Lewis's *The Monk* and the German tradition of Friedrich Schiller's *Die Räuber*. Mayo describes how, after only three 'chapters', the tale ceased *in medias res* for over three years, before a volunteer took it up, but so languorously that it was only finally concluded after eleven years in total.[539] An adolescent, a child, would be an adult after this long; it is hard to conceive that many readers could have patiently followed it for the entire duration. To the credit of magazines, however, are signs of material within that was certainly of appeal to adolescent readers – for a time. Mayo reports that the *Lady's Monthly Museum* had to 'sharply curtail' its gothic fiction in the face of 'the shrill opposition of governesses and boarding-school mistresses,' alarmed at the effects on their students that such fiction was, they claimed, 'designed to' achieve – what those effects were scarcely matters, save that the contention was hypothetical only, a matter of the fiction's 'design' rather than its result.[540] As ever, if there was a form of gothic fiction which young people had access to, their regulators and moral guardians would do all they could to put an end to it.

Katherine D. Harris, in her collection of gothic stories from the literary annuals *The Forgotten Gothic*, argues that 'the conclusions to these short stories were often more appropriate for […] the young minds of the readers – they were disappointingly didactic or explained away through circumstance'.[541] This judgement may be unfair; the subversive taste among some children and more adolescents for narratives outside of their approved reading suggests that they did not hunger for didacticism, which could be found easily enough in the books they were instructed to read. Furthermore, dismissing the explained supernatural as a

[537] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period 1789-1830*, p. 2.
[538] Robert D. Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740-1815*, p. 350.
[539] Ibid., p. 319.
[540] Ibid., p. 350.
[541] Katherine D. Harris, *The Forgotten Gothic: Short Stories from the British Literary Annuals, 1823-1831* (Zittaw Press, 2012), p. xxxi.

design for young readers' minds contrasts uncomfortably with the historical association of children and supernatural fiction developed in Chapter One. *The Forgotten Gothic*'s accumulation of short stories from between 1823 and 1831 provides, moreover, in its sample of nearly a hundred tales, few that feature protagonists of defined or apparent childhood or teenage years, particularly once female love interests, typically secondary characters, are excluded. For a field of literature that adolescents might read, this seems unpropitious. This is not to say that adolescent readers could not have enjoyed magazine gothic; but it is harder to identify anything specifically suited to adolescents about the form. The age of the gothic story for adolescents was passing.

Although magazines and anthologies superficially resembled novels, they were, of course, very different – where some novels seemed like disparate collections of unrelated incidents, tales in anthologies were literally disconnected and could vary wildly in style and content, as did the bluebooks they sampled. Magazines exhibited a wide variety of fictional and non-fictional content. These forms held very different appeal, which would be received in different ways, which therefore would have had a distinct impact on gothic's reception among youthful audiences – for acquisition, and selection, would become considerably more difficult. Stories in magazines might be appealing to young people, but only if they could be found amidst the other material; in addition, the history of the magazine as an adult form might have prejudiced younger readers, and the gothic tales in magazines of the early 1800s were probably targeting the nostalgia of the former younger generation of the gothic's 1790s heyday. Not dissimilarly, voluminous collections of bluebooks presented intimidating tomes in which it was harder to locate material of direct personal appeal amidst the larger body of work, and which by their very quantity risked devaluing their material; nonetheless, whilst bluebooks were never ostensibly for children and so their collections were taken as adult material, the result may have resembled a children's storybook, recalling the popularity in the period of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainment*, a text with a similarly ambiguous dual-status, the 'passion of the Enlightenment' but the 'thousand trifles' and 'popular trash' of the Arabic world.[542] Nonetheless, children and adolescents would have had as much difficulty acquiring such texts as they would the formally similar gothic novels, and with the ease of acquiring such material fading, interest may have waned. If the popularity of tales for the adult audience was characterised by nostalgia for their younger days' reading, this displaced a new

[542] Marina Warner, *Stranger Magic: Charmed States & the* Arabian Nights (Chatto & Windus, 2011), pp. 431, 8.

generation of young gothic enthusiasts who were deprived of material – save where remnants of gothic could dissipate into approved children's forms. Gothic's reintegration into the establishment would have assisted in this, but it would have spelt the beginning of the end for the unitary gothic story, as opposed to that merely with gothic elements. This marks the close of one era for the gothic – although rumours of its death have been greatly exaggerated.

This chapter has reached a number of conclusions regarding bluebooks and their history with youthful audiences. Although earlier, more cynical analyses of the form argued that bluebooks were ephemeral piracies, to be considered neither as legitimate instances of gothic nor as a notable form in their own right, more open-minded consideration of the evidence available, both in contemporary reflections on bluebooks and of bluebooks themselves, points to a more interesting conclusion: Not only that gothic bluebooks were original and artistic, but that their form, far from being a simple abbreviation, had advantages and appeal upon its own terms – which must be what invites a youthful audience to enjoy them. The considerably shorter length of the bluebook when compared to the novel suited younger readers well – a truth adhered to in children's literature then and since, which taxes neither the memory nor the attention span so much as the novel, which demands a considerable investment of both even from the more developed, practiced adult reader. Beyond this, the bluebook was accessible to a burgeoning youth as a product to be purchased – something that could feasibly be bought with a child's allowance, with a place to buy found among haunts that would accept children. Indeed, this evidence of independent purchasing ability gives the lie to the 'child' categorisation, more so than the content of bluebooks, which though often bloodthirsty and violent could equally be sanitised and moralistic – not that this would have exactly deterred younger readers, either. Ages and circumstances may vary, but any young person capable of leaving their home, alone or with friends, to purchase books with their own money is an adolescent, in that they undertake the practices of the adult without having achieved their physical or mental maturity. That a bluebook would not be what a upper-class adult might have bought, nor a low circulating library or similarly dubious vendor be where an adult of increased means might have browsed, only highlights the necessity of the bluebook form, and illustrates what function it serves. The bluebook, as argued above, like other short fiction serves as practice for longer fiction – an introduction and preparation to the more complex and challenging works for adults alone. Taken in combination with the tropes of the gothic, which introduce the reader, in a sheltered and unreal space, to the adult facts of tyranny, terror, and death, it can be said that the bluebook is the perfect form of literature for

the burgeoning youth – for adolescence, likewise, serves as preparation and practice for the expectations and abilities of subsequent adulthood. The principle is the same as that of the Lambs, who hoped that *The Family Shakespeare* would 'make you wish yourselves a little older, that you may be allowed to read the Plays at full length';[543] Wordsworth acknowledged the same truth in *The Prelude*, in the 1805 version of which he dedicated the entire fifth book to reflections on his childhood reading – and where, Summerfield concludes, he 'affirms some of his cardinal beliefs, especially in respect of education through books'.[544] Here, Wordsworth reminisced of 'A precious treasure had I long possessed, / A little yellow, canvas-covered book, / A slender abstract of the Arabian tales', and how upon learning that this was but a redaction of a much larger whole, ''twas to me, in truth, / A promise scarcely earthly', such as to motivate conceiving the following scheme: 'With one not richer than myself, I made / A covenant that each should lay aside / The moneys he possessed, […] Till our joint savings had amassed enough / To make this book our own.'[545] Love of literature creates a desire not just to acquire more, but to reach a state wherein this is possible to achieve oneself, without dependence upon superior mediators such as adults and redacting authors; an education through books indeed. It is this role which the gothic bluebook plays – an initiator of adolescence, perhaps more so even than the gothic novel.

'The ill-judged maxims of some guardians, in depriving the youth entrusted to their care, of innocent recreations and amusements proper for their age, often brings on the very evil they wish to avoid'
--Sarah Wilkinson, *The Subterraneous Passage; or, Gothic Cell. A Romance* (1803)[546]

[543] Charles Lamb, Mary Lamb, 'Preface' in *Tales from Shakespeare* (1807), p. viii.
[544] Geoffrey Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason*, p. 269.
[545] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude* (1805) (identical, but one line advanced, in 1850), Book Five, lines 460-462, 467-473.
[546] Sarah Wilkinson, *The Subterraneous Passage*, p. 13.

CHAPTER THREE

A Genre and Audience without Boundaries

1830-1900

'Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own: shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive.'
--Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847)[547]

An 'ancient mansion', 'hoary and ruined', 'forms the subject of my tale', wrote Charlotte Brontë in late 1833 – fully aware that 'just such a place as from time immemorial has been selected by ghost-story-tellers as the theatre in which to exhibit the performances of their airy phantoms.'[548] By this period, Brontë was seventeen, and the gothic novel, in the highly ritualised form written by Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, and their many imitators, had largely ceased to exist, while the gothic bluebook had fallen in the wake of market and technological pressures – but the teenage productions of the likes of Brontë are signs of the gothic's continuing reach to young audiences. The ageing stalwarts of the gothic had left clear their traces upon the minds of successive generations of authors – and if the impetus to read the gothic had always fallen on an audience emerging out of childhood, it is little surprise that this same audience, where inclined to authorship, takes up the pen on gothic works themselves, carrying on the tradition in forms suited to their lives and times – and in so doing, maintain the link between the gothic and adolescence that their readership evinces.

The juvenile fiction, or juvenilia, of famed authors is exemplary of writing as a reflection of reading tastes, of the individual and of the period. If Charlotte Brontë wrote gothic fiction as a teenager, it is readily to be supposed that she read it, and was not alone in doing so – nor that it failed to carry through to her mature fiction. Juvenilia is thus a symbol of generic inheritance, the intermediary between the reception and production of literature. Unfortunately, just as the paltry documentation of young people's lives in the period makes readerships difficult to prove, the unpolished and thus (largely) unpublishable early writings of this age group are even less likely to ever see the light of day. One may speculate that some of the more derivative line of gothic fiction is, in fact, juvenilia – the classic example is

[547] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (1847) (Service & Paton, 1897 edition) (via Project Gutenberg), Chapter One.
[548] Charlotte Brontë, *Arthuriana* (1833) in *Juvenilia 1829-1835*, ed. by Juliet Barker (Penguin Classics 1996), p. 211.

Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Zastrozzi*, written in 1809 while 'prosecuting [his] studies […] at Eton' at the age of seventeen.[549] Earlier still, the first drafts of Jane Austen's gothic parody, *Northanger Abbey* – then *Susan* – were written in the author's early twenties in 1797-8.[550] Georgieva lists several further unusually young authors of gothic – Richard Sickelmore at eighteen, Francis Lathom at seventeen, with the youngest being the inarguably adolescent Porter sisters at a mere age twelve.[551] The gothic was clearly a fertile field for juvenilia. But such authoritatively attributable published works are generally absent, and so analysis is largely restricted only to the incredibly rare case of the novelist who not only kept their juvenile efforts rather than mislaying or destroying them, but who became celebrated enough for others to take interest in even their earliest writings. Charlotte Brontë's is such a case, and her juvenilia is, in Christine Alexander's words, 'steeped in the traditional Gothic', replete in such tropes as phantasmal appearances, kidnappings of aristocratic ingénues, and the explained supernatural.[552] The relevance of this gothicism is threefold: It appears in the emerging middle period of the nineteenth century, in the hands of an adolescent, and most importantly, in the hands of one who would become a significant and popular author. Brontë's juvenilia suggests that, in her adolescence, gothic retained some of its magnetism, if perhaps diminished by an awareness of its predictability, and it is natural to then ask whether this specific combination of the gothic and adolescence is reflected in her later and best-known work.

Juvenilia aside, this question should be asked more widely. Even if the earlier values and written style of the gothic might have fallen into anachronism, the genre's fundamental building blocks – its tropes, atmosphere, and generic conventions – still had power to influence and be transformed, for the genre to be reborn under new generations of writers. The history of the gothic has always been one of inscription, inspiration, and reiteration. The popular gothic of the late eighteenth century made adolescence a staple of its protagonists and readership alike; it is important then to ask how a post-gothic generation took up this theme, not as readers of a changing genre but as the authors of that change. Representation thus takes precedence over reception in this chapter, in questioning what the gothic became in the mid-

[549] Percy Bysshe Shelley, letter to Longman and Company (May 7, 1809) in *The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. by Roger Ingpen, Vol.s VIII-X (Ernest Benn Limited, 1965), p. 4.
[550] Brian Reeve, 'Jane Austen's Works' in 'Extra Material' in *Northanger Abbey* (Oneworld Classics 2010), p. 210.
[551] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 55.
[552] Christine Alexander, '"That Kingdom of Gloom": Charlotte Brontë, the Annuals, and the Gothic' in *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (University of California Press, Mar., 1993), p. 410.

nineteenth-century's period of rapid technological and social innovation, and crucially, whether adolescence retained its relevancy to the genre throughout a transformative period.

As the Introduction explores, nineteenth-century or Victorian gothic underwent a process of diversification – its original, highly restrictive generic markers dissolving, such that signs of the gothic could appear in all kinds of fiction without necessarily signalling a Radcliffe-style romance. Menace by lascivious aristocrats, escapades in gothic-era ruins, hauntings more often fake than real – these were no longer inextricably bound to one another, or quite so often seen at all. However, their influence was undeniable and these tropes left a palpable imprint upon their literary successors. As Franz Potter has noted, part of the appeal of the gothic was simply 'the familiarity of Gothic conventions'.[553] The repetition of these generic signifiers left an indelible mark upon generations of readers and writers, for whom to gesture towards even part of the gothic was to metonymically summon up the power of the genre as a whole – a shorthand for gargantuan and imposing autocratic terror. Hence, to an extent, the diversification of the gothic – the ability to detect it as 'ubiquitous.'[554] Works of nearly any subject could invoke the force and terror of the gothic by the power of suggestion alone. This is partly why it is controversial to identify the gothic in this period of literature – as Andrew Smith and William Hughes observe, it 'permeates Victorian culture in a complex way which evades any attempt to categorise it through the application of formal aesthetic criteria.'[555] The detection of the gothic in this literature partly depends upon the sway the gothic holds upon the individual reader – their knowledge of gothic and interest in detecting it. For this reason, Martin Willis is dismissive of 'finding the Gothic in numerous works of fiction more usually characterised as belonging to other modes or genres, and then claiming these as newly discovered examples of Gothic's tremendous reach and significance', because the sign of the gothic is not in and of itself meaningful.[556] Rather, it is the effect and function of gothic signs in a text that grants it value as gothic; 'it is not *where* the Gothic might be found that is important, but *why* it is found there, what it is employed to do, and under what conditions it achieves this.'[557] Thus gothic in the period is not just in a state of diversification, but of

[553] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835: Exhuming the Trade* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 10.
[554] Jarlath Killeen, *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1825-1914*, p. 3.
[555] Andrew Smith and William Hughes, 'Introduction: Locating the Victorian Gothic' in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, p. 2.
[556] Martin Willis, 'Victorian Realism and the Gothic: Objects of Terror Transformed' in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, p. 16.
[557] Ibid., p. 17.

individualisation – playing an original role in each text it appears within. It is no longer possible to reduce the genre down to broader arguments that categorise together large numbers of separate texts and literary forms; likewise, it is not possible to identify clear lines of evolution from text to text, as texts across the century were influenced not just by their contemporaries but by common, anachronic gothic roots. For this reason, it is inappropriate to survey a wider body of literature or a single textual form as a whole, as in Chapters One and Two; instead, Chapter Three comprises a series of case studies of significant examples of nineteenth-century gothic – specifically those where that gothic bears particular significance to the adolescent reader. This is intended to demonstrate the breadth of gothic possibilities in the century, with a concomitant preference for generic and temporal distinction rather than prima facie proximity.

Nineteenth-century gothic, however, is particularly problematic for this thesis simply as literature was increasingly eschewing the representation of adolescence. Such representation is a significant factor in textual appeal to an adolescent audience, owing to the principle of reader identification: As discussed in Chapter One, readers tend to prefer texts centred around characters they can identify with, usually on grounds of age, gender, and to a certain extent, class. Reader identification has been a feature of the reading audience and literary production for centuries, and evidence relating to gothic literature in Chapter One suggests that its primary audience was comprised of or constructed as a similar demographic to its protagonists – adolescent, female, and upper-class. It was also an audience which suffered increasing satire for its literary tastes. As early as 1795, *The Critical Review* declared, in a review of Francis Lathom's first gothic novel *The Castle of Ollada*, 'Surely the misses themselves must be tired of so many stories of ghosts, and murders';[558] later, novelistic satires such as Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine* (1813) and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) took up the theme. This was an audience catered to for so long with such easily-stereotyped literature that it had become a stereotype itself, and there is every possibility that authors began using other demographics of protagonist simply to avoid easy criticism from reviewers jaded by protagonists of the Radcliffean type.

It is also noticeable that, while the adolescent in gothic literature best supported themes of burgeoning independence and romantic love, authors were increasingly turning their attention

[558] Anonymous, review of *The Castle of Ollada* in *The Critical Review* (July 1795), p. 352, in Francis Lathom, *The Castle of Ollada* (1795) (Valancourt Press, 2006).

to and settling their themes around a separate figure, that of the child, rather than the adolescent. Peter Coveney describes the rise of the child in nineteenth-century literature as 'a literary phenomenon', ascending from 'comparative unimportance to become the focus of an unprecedented literary interest, and, in time, the central figure of an increasingly significant proportion of our literature.'[559] Authors paradoxically grew out of their interest in adolescence to focus on the younger child, and the adolescent was crowded out. Strictly speaking, as adolescence is so nebulous a category and indeed ill-recognised in the period, it is hard to objectively speak of its literary marginalisation. Yet there is a subtle trend, as will be seen in numerous texts discussed in this chapter, of the early teenage years of physical adolescence being omitted. A number of these works even take on the form of the *bildungsroman*, a novel charting the development of an individual from childhood to adulthood, with particular emphasis, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, on 'the formative years or spiritual education of one person'[560] – which in truth is not far removed from the gothic protagonist's journey, if one were to de-emphasise its foundational terror. Indeed, Georgieva has remarked that, when focussing on the developing child, 'all gothic novels can also be viewed as *Bildungsromans*.'[561] And yet, while their gothic predecessors would 'jump from infancy to childhood or directly from infancy to adolescence, leaving certain periods of time blank', the novels studied here choose to elide most of the teenage years with little if any pause for narrative or character development, suggesting a stark contrast to the implicit logic of gothic novels wherein nothing interesting happens to the protagonists outside of their adolescence.[562] Not coincidentally, the bildungsroman form also challenges assumptions about reader identification, owing to the protagonist occupying numerous age groups throughout the narrative – the protagonist is no longer simply constructed as a figure to be identified with, but is also the object of study, complicating the relationship between character and reader and becoming less appreciable to a younger audience that cannot reflect so far on their own history. Fortunately, the omission of adolescence is not universal, and two of the major works in this chapter will revisit the adolescent protagonist in the gothic world – but these texts will by their nature show the marginalisation of the adolescent subject. For the first part of this chapter, however, the texts studied are by no means marginal; the theme of gothic adolescence will be examined in two of the most significant and celebrated novels of

[559] Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood* (Penguin, 1967), pp. 35, 29.
[560] 'Bildungsroman, n.', *OED Online* (Oxford University Press, March 2014) [accessed 28 April 2014].
[561] Margarita Georgieva, *The Gothic Child*, p. 162.
[562] Ibid., p. 109.

the nineteenth-century canon, which were as much objects of note – and influence – when published as they are today.

These two texts take the bildungsroman form described above. As the term's German roots indicate, the bildungsroman was, similar to many gothic tenets, a cultural import from eighteenth-century German fiction, but bildungsroman are novels not of terror but of personal development, and, often, of social or personal realism – although of course the extent to which these texts embrace realism is certainly in question. Martin Willis has proposed the argument that realism is 'the ultimate expression of sophistication and complexity where all other genres are manipulated and transformed into the single generic category of the real. To find the Gothic in such a genre is impossible, for even when it is identified it is only as further evidence of realism itself.'[563] This somewhat self-defeating argument – that gothic can be found in realism, but only as an illusion, and therefore gothic cannot be found in realism – highlights, at least, that realism and gothic are not mutually exclusive; that gothic, especially as a subjective aspect of individual consciousness, can support realism as well as challenging it. And if adolescent ages are lacking in the form, it bears remembering that, in a bildungsroman, a representation of the development of an individual from childhood to adulthood cannot omit the threshold themes – burgeoning independence, exposure to the wider world, negotiating romantic love, and the journey from innocence to experience. The conceptual flexibility of adolescence has the effect that many of its themes could instead be transferred onto slightly younger or older characters, rather than being developed in the early or mid-teenage years.

A child's experiences affect their mentality as they grow through adolescence and into adulthood, and how that mentality develops the mature, realistic worldview of true adulthood is the focus of the coming texts. It was no coincidence that the life of the child was a subject of increasing interest in the nineteenth century. While Coveney concedes that 'in the major eighteenth-century novel, the child is absent', this changed in 'the generation of Blake and Wordsworth';[564] turn-of-the-century poems by these figures included William Wordsworth's 'Lucy' series, which idealised the youth and innocence of a deceased girl, while William Blake conversely eulogised in *Songs of Innocence and Experience* the sufferings of the working child in the industrial city. Such works codified the vulnerable child as a

[563] Martin Willis, 'Victorian Realism and the Gothic: Objects of Terror Transformed', p. 18.
[564] Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood*, p. 29.

romanticised figure, while also reflecting the romanticisation of death and suffering in contemporaneous gothic novels.[565] The integration of the child's experience into the gothic was the logical culmination of two preceding trends. Coveney has identified how, with 'the establishment of the nineteenth-century novel in the thirties, and more especially in the forties […] the child found another major vehicle'[566] – and this period leads into the 1847 publication of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, the subject of the first case study of Part I of this chapter. The novel opens as a bildungsroman before settling in as a narrative of an adolescent adult in a gothicised nineteenth-century world, and the experiences of the title character reflect an adolescent narrative of personal development, taking place in and supported by a representation of first a gothic realism and subsequently a scarcely modernised version of a classic gothic scenario. The second work is Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* (concluded and published in its completed form in 1861), a more complete bildungsroman which conversely to *Jane Eyre* plunges a child subject into a series of gothic episodes which accelerate his journey out of childhood and influence his adolescent naivety in a more socially realistic adulthood.

Verisimilitude, or rather realism, may be compellingly argued to be the reason that physical adolescence is abbreviated in these novels, and mental adolescence projected onto older characters. Previous gothic novels accounted for the youth of their protagonists by being set in earlier times, and indeed less realistic situations, so the overriding significance of the mid-teenage protagonist, the situations they involved themselves in, and the interest taken in them by much older figures was not so difficult to account for, but the social engagements of a mid-nineteenth-century protagonist demanded that they be of a more mature age if they were to be taken seriously as able to interact with wider society and, especially, the workplace. Conversely, the inarguably child-aged character could be legally and legitimately placed in gothic circumstances which demanded passivity and vulnerability to physical threat. The narratives of *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* require their protagonists to be either children or legal adults, and nowhere in-between, for their social positions in gothic scenarios to be credible. In the earlier gothic, such in-between characters were regarded as being upon the threshold of adulthood, often as legal minors – this was the power of these novels for the adolescent. But this ambiguous status became unambiguously more dichotomised. Whether

[565] William Wordsworth, 'Lucy poems': 'A slumber did my spirit seal', 'Strange fits of passion have I known', 'She dwelt among the untrodden ways', 'Three years she grew in sun and shower' (1800); 'I travelled among unknown men' (1807); William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience* (1794).
[566] Ibid., p. 91.

these interpretations are correct shall be seen in making a closer examination of the text and context of *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*.

Part I

In examining *Jane Eyre* as gothic fiction, the context of the gothic as it stood at the time of the novel's 1847 publication must be understood – and more specifically, as it stood in relation to the novel's author. The death of Charlotte Brontë's mother during her childhood and being raised by her father in a remote moorland village – to summarise the commonplaces of the Brontë biography – resemble the backstory of a gothic heroine, but where such a heroine was an only child nourished on no fiction save the classics, Brontë had the company both of an extended family of siblings and an aunt, and of some contemporary gothic fiction. Access to 'newspapers, periodicals, magazines and books which they were able to beg or borrow from friends and the nearest subscription and circulating libraries',[567] including *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, would have given them plentiful scope for gothic reading[568] – and by all accounts those opportunities were seized, for as Christine Alexander records, 'tales of terror were devoured not only by the young Brontës but also by their mother and aunt.'[569] Indeed, Brontë probably read and enjoyed Radcliffe herself, judging from a sequence in her later *Shirley* in which Radcliffe's *The Italian* is discussed in depth[570] – although *Blackwood's*, while described by Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick as also a vehicle for 'Gothic terror', differs in their reading from the gothic novel in its works' 'concise scope' and 'sharper and more explicit rendering of terror.'[571] Nonetheless, the consumption of all such material indicates an early propensity towards the gothic, and what Brontë read emerged in what she wrote. Her juvenile writings of the fictitious African lands of Glass Town and Angria – written in a form of collaboration with her siblings that might more accurately be termed competition, each alternately placing their own stamp upon the evolving canon – often make use of devices from the gothic romance, from the grim to the picturesque. Access to any juvenilia is a rare opportunity, and examining a few relevant examples is worthwhile before approaching Brontë's adult work.

A particularly evocative series of tales was written by Brontë at age fourteen – among the age-range of gothic protagonists, which may have stimulated her interest. Formally

[567] Juliet Barker, 'Introduction' in *Juvenilia 1829-1835*, p. vii.
[568] Christine Alexander, 'Introduction' in *Tales of Glass Town, Angria and Gondal: Selected Writings* (Oxford World's Classics, 2010), p. xvi.
[569] Christine Alexander, '"That Kingdom of Gloom"', p. 411.
[570] Charlotte Brontë, *Shirley* (T. Nelson & Sons) (via Project Gutenberg), p. 350.
[571] Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, 'Introduction' in *Tales of Terror From Blackwood's Magazine* (Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. vii, xv.

designated as chapters in *Tales of the Islanders*, a four-volume production written from mid-1829 to mid-1830, the second volume's third and fifth chapters and the third volume's first will be briefly discussed here. 'Chapter the Third' and the third volume's untitled opening chapter centre on the regular heroes of Brontë's juvenilia, the Duke of Wellington and his sons Charles Wellesley and Arthur, Marquis of Douro, and both chapters tell essentially the same story. Despite or perhaps because of the derivative outline, Brontë maintains an experimental, exploratory approach to the gothic form by opening the later story with a scene of political caricature, soon contrasted against subsequent events. The beginning of 'Chapter the Third' instead contextualises the domestic operations of the Wellingtons in relating that Arthur and Charles fail to return to the family home from a day's shooting expedition, despite having 'promised to return before 8 o'clock', with the family retainer sitting up waiting for them.[572] Bearing in mind the 'class implications' to definitions of childhood attested to by Penny Brown, in which 'young people of 16 or 18 from well-to-do families may still have been living dependent lives in the home', this indicates that Arthur and Charles, despite their real-world counterparts being in their mid-twenties at the time of writing, are figured as children or in an adolescent state of partial independence, living with their parents as a family unit and abiding by a curfew[573] – probably not dissimilarly to the Brontës themselves at the time. Their youth also renders them apt victims for gothic imprisonment. In both stories, their parents subsequently receive terrifying supernatural warnings: In 'Chapter the Third', Lady Wellesley reports witnessing 'the light [of] the taper turn blue & death like', a common contemporary report of the behaviour of flames in the presence of the supernatural, and under which conditions appear her sons 'all bloody and distorted', and the Duke of Wellington subsequently enters with a similar tale: He 'heard [my sons'] voices moaning and wailing around me & supplicating me to deliver them from the death they were about to die'.[574] The prophecies both employ a diversity of foreboding devices familiar to a supernatural gothic story, and it is interesting that Lady Wellesley only 'saw', while the Duke of Wellington 'heard' the hallucinations, the division between the visual and the auditory between them serving to give each warning a distinct character. The third volume story more concisely employs 'a letter written with blood & sealed with a seal on which was the motto "le message d'un revenant"', though happily this foretells only Arthur's doom.[575]

[572] Charlotte Brontë, *Tales of the Islanders* (1833) in *Juvenilia 1829-1835*, p. 21.
[573] Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England* (Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993), p. 10
[574] Charlotte Brontë, *Tales of the Islanders* in *Juvenilia 1829-1835*, p. 22.
[575] Ibid., pp. 31-32.

At this point in both stories, the four Brontë siblings, who fittingly serve as both narrators and deities of the fictitious world they have crafted, enter – providing a seamless transition from third-person to first-person narration in the case of 'Chapter the Third' – to assist Wellington as he embarks upon a heroic journey through gothic-influenced landscape scenes. A 'very wild barren plain' is reminiscent also of moorland features the Brontës may have encountered in their walks, but 'tall dark cypress & fir trees which swayed to & fro in the wind with a mournful sound like the moans of dying mortals' contain bleak and funereal imagery suggestive of overwhelming natural or supernatural powers, seemingly presaging a grim fate for Arthur and Charles;[576] 'ancient oak forests' and 'huge rocks rising perpendicularly to an immense height[;] a vast cataract rolling thunderously down the precipices' draw on paintings and engravings as much as the travel-writing elements of the gothic, though still part of the genre.[577] Shortly afterwards, the cave-prison of Wellington's son or sons appears, one of which is excitingly 'dimly lighted by a blue flame' and 'ornamented with human skulls & crossbones'.[578] Brontë commits wholeheartedly to her generic sampling, with an unwavering death-emphasis in the gothic, minute detail in her descriptions, even absurd and rambunctious comedy (to be discussed shortly); displays of knowledge which indicate care in her craft and a commitment to storytelling. Considering this, Brontë's conclusion is surprisingly abrupt, whether through creative exhaustion, disinterest in conclusions, or a mere shortage of paper and ink; 'Chapter the Third' concludes with the characters swiftly retrieved by a giant and spirited back home, and its counterpart is nearly as concise. The abrupt ending, which nonetheless restores the status quo of the opening, signals an emphasis on the importance of family and a desire for stability, with supernatural intrusions being frightening but ultimately harmless; there is no indication that Arthur and Charles were harmed during their mysterious imprisonments, though the closing lines in the later story simultaneously acknowledge and dismiss unresolved questions with the brief explanation that 'to all the questions put to the marquis respecting his sufferings while in that cave his invariable answer has been that they were indiscribable [*sic*].'[579] This again has recourse to the gothic tradition, part of the intensity of which involved claims that some experiences are inarticulable, but here the effect is, perhaps intentionally, bathetic. Brontë's early work has some of the boisterousness characteristic of both juvenilia and gothic imitation, and comic effects are rarely far away.

[576] Ibid., pp. 22, 23.
[577] Ibid., p. 36.
[578] Ibid., p. 37.
[579] Ibid.

Nonetheless, it is easy to imagine a fuller and better-written version of this storyline constituting a gothic bluebook or fragment; the sometimes arbitrary sequence of terrific supernatural devices is reminiscent of John and Anna Laetitia Aikin's 'Sir Bertrand, A Fragment.'[580]

The same multigeneric sampling is present in the third story examined here, *Tales of the Islanders*'s second volume's 'CHAPTER.THE.V.' It opens in the style of a fairy-tale, with 'four Inhabitants of fairy-land' – unmistakably the Brontës – begging leave of Shakespeare's fairy-monarchs Oberon and Titania to visit the mortal realms. This segues into another extended landscape scene of the sort widely used in gothic novels, with a 'vale in all its narrow windings among the high dark mountains which bordered it & the massive branching trees which grew in thick clumps casting a cool & agreeable shade', a description resembling the sublime-accentuating mountain descriptions of Radcliffe's *The Italian* as one possible literary source (although the image had become a cultural commonplace, and probably many stories and engravings were an influence).[581] A short way into the story, however, Brontë's experimentation with narration shows itself, as the preceding events become merely the frame narrative to a first-person recital of the history of a guest of the fairy quartet, which occupies the majority of the remaining story. Alongside the story's fairy-tale beginnings, so too is its genre relegated to the framing narrative, with the nested narrative becoming a religious and primarily gothic tale. Influenced by the controversial contemporary status of Catholics, common subjects of social prejudice who after years of cultural persecution had only received full legal emancipation in 1829 – a debate close to the Brontës both as family to a Church of England clergyman, and as a cause of the Duke of Wellington – the story concerns a young man who, having become 'convinced of the error of the creed I professed', Catholicism, converts to Protestantism. Catholic antagonism and tyranny was, of course, a major feature of the gothic, and this influences the story's unambiguously negative representation of the family's sinister Catholic confessor, 'a man of strange and unsociable habits' who evokes literary Catholic villains including Radcliffe's Schedoni and Friedrich Schiller's Armenian (of the 1787-89 serial *The Ghost-Seer*), and who reflects folkloric and literary anti-Catholic superstitions in having 'learnt the science of necromancy' in Catholic Europe and supposedly holding 'converse with the inhabitants of another world' (a slightly

[580] John and Anna Laetitia Aikin, 'On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror; with Sir Bertrand, A Fragment' in *Miscellaneous Pieces in Prose*.
[581] Charlotte Brontë, *Tales of the Islanders* in *Juvenilia 1829-1835*, p. 27.

hypocritical cause for concern, given that the storyteller is speaking to inhabitants of the fairy world).[582] This confessor undertakes all the manipulations of the gothic's archetypal evil monk, first 'constantly advancing arguments to induce me to recant' before undertaking a more elaborate scheme. After being invited to a midnight rendezvous by a 'whisper in my ear' from no discernible speaker, the narrator arrives on a 'wide barren heath' and encounters 'the dim form of a sacred abbey', both described at length in gothic terms – 'sombre', 'melancholy', 'silent', 'stately'.[583] Drawn to a 'tomb […] which I knew to be my grandfathers', illuminated by a 'supernatural light', the narrator is met by a 'tall white robed figure' who harangues the narrator for abandoning his heritage, 'the Ancient & holy Religion of your ancestors'. The scenery of the midnight abbey and tomb and device of the apparent ghost are drawn straight from the gothic, especially as it is implied that the manifestation is a sham; upon spying the confessor's presence, the narrator 'compr[e]hended the whole scheme', and declares that 'your wiles are discovered', suggesting that the scene is staged in a typical example of the explained supernatural in the gothic. Curiously, however, although the narrator apparently debunks the supernatural incident, he also denounces it as 'all necromancy', and the confessor subsequently performs magic; 'stamping with his foot a fire sprung out of the ground', and he bids the narrator to 'depart hence Vile heretic', caused him to 'immediately' appear near the dwelling of the fairy-protagonists.[584] The manifestation of the protagonist's ancestor as a ghost is seemingly dismissed, at least as a religious phenomenon, but genuine supernatural powers are confirmed to exist both in the confessor's magical powers and in the fairies' own – perhaps indicating a tension between Brontë's desire to write a tale of gothic supernatural duplicity and her embrace of a supernatural setting for her stories. Indeed, the desire to root this story in her regular canon is highlighted by a further complication of the narrative framing at the story's end, where it is revealed that both narratives are themselves nested, forming a 'Tale' 'related […] by the Marquis [of] Duro [*sic*] & lord C. Wellesley', connecting the otherwise discrete narrative to the familiar Wellesley family.[585]

Charlotte Brontë would go on to write further gothic stories among her juvenilia, as alluded to in this chapter's opening, and as she matured, some took on an extensiveness and competence that, minus the Angrian context, might have rendered them publishable. It is,

[582] Ibid., p. 28.
[583] Ibid., p. 29.
[584] Ibid., p. 30.
[585] Ibid.

however, these tales constructed in her earlier teenage years that are the most telling. Their relevance to Brontë's later writing is in highlighting the early gothic direction of her interests, but they also assuage any potential doubts about the continuing influence of the gothic over young minds in a period in which it was fading from wider popular culture – little surprise, as the younger audience would have neither the age nor the experience to become jaded and exhausted with any art form. The tropes still retained their currency among those with whom they could not have become a cliché – albeit evidently remodelled to the tastes of the individual and their environment, perhaps hence which the prevalence of barren heaths and caves over castles. Any analysis of Brontë's early writing, though, should point towards her later writing as much as her early reading. There are conclusions to be drawn about Brontë's characteristic style and particularly her handling of the gothic which may point towards the genre's representation in her later writings (for the purposes of this study, *Jane Eyre*). For instance, the adolescent Brontë as an author is clearly fond of the gothic – but without a wish to write it exclusively, which Christine Alexander identifies as a 'dual exploitation of Gothic and anti-Gothic'; the gothic mood is tempered and even undermined by its balancing alongside other genres.[586] This multigeneric approach also takes in political, religious, and more significantly fairy-tale and comic dimensions which co-exist in some tension with the gothic; the sometimes roisterous comedy scenes featuring the likes of the 'coxcomical' Earl Rosslyn, Lord Privy Seal in Wellington's Cabinet, 'occasionally casting a sidelong glance at his own dandy figure reflected in a magnificent mirror', or 'Mr Secretary Peel perched upon a treasury tripod', angering Wellington and being struck hard enough to cast him to 'the other end of the room in a twinkling', unsettle the gothic's assumptions of the seriousness of its characters and the threat of violence towards them, while the fairy-tale mode complicates the status of the supernatural and challenges the threat of the plot by providing easy resolutions.[587]

The overall impression of this early work is that Brontë is trying to tell multiple stories simultaneously, indulging all of her interests with less balance than one would expect in a mature work. Her early work's strong grounding in gothic comes with a desire to use it alongside other genres, reflecting the persistent multigenericity of broader gothic fiction which had always utilised subservient styles such as travel fiction and sentimentalism. A non-unitary generic focus even by a young amateur suggests that this was a recognised feature of

[586] Christine Alexander, '"That Kingdom of Gloom"', p. 428.
[587] Charlotte Brontë, *Tales of the Islanders* in *Juvenilia 1829-1835*, p. 31.

gothic – its complementary ability to exist alongside other genres as part of fuller, complex works. Unrelenting terror, perhaps, has little effect unless it does relent, creating tension with alternative styles – which may be true both of the genre's narrative formula and its comparative literary popularity, embracing new kinds of storytelling once its first principles were widely adopted. So it was with Brontë, whose gothic-influenced adolescent work is characterised by multigeneric narratives with multi-tiered framing that create multiple distinct phases to a story, and in which the supernatural holds an ambiguous status but usually plays a role in accelerating the climax. While retrospection risks encouraging selection bias, in reading these early stories with Brontë's later work in mind there is a compelling argument for seeing these influences as continuous with Brontë's more sophisticated work in *Jane Eyre*, creating a continuity between Brontë's early gothic influences and the subsequent effect of her own gothic.

Jane Eyre was published in 1847 – nearly two decades after Brontë's adolescent juvenilia. Brontë was in her thirties by this time, and the gothic, by the usual historical considerations, was no longer a factor in popular literature, with retrospective analyses of the genre all cutting short their chronology at least a decade beforehand. Franz Potter's *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835* closes off this period of distinctly gothic publishing at 1835 in its title; his documentation of publishing records highlights not just the transformation in the form of gothic publishing, in which '90 per cent of all Gothic material published after 1821 in [his] survey took the form of tales' (rather than novels or bluebooks), but also shows that, by 1835, gothic publications per year had diminished to a mere ten titles, all tales. The clear implication is that his survey concludes there because afterwards there is nothing left to survey.[588] Potter's analysis is, however, restricted to gothic works built on 'the familiarity of Gothic conventions, which lasted well into the 1830s'[589] – a valid but exclusionary interpretation which cannot take account of the generic diversifications analysed in this chapter. While *Jane Eyre* cannot be considered a gothic novel in the classic mode, there is every reason to approach it as an adaptation of the gothic; it has been seen how Brontë's adolescent literary aspirations responded to and formed around the gothic, and it remains only to show that she continued to approach her ideas through this medium – shedding new light on the interaction between the gothic and the adolescent in the process.

[588] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing 1800-1835*, p. 96.
[589] Ibid., p. 10.

It is to be remembered that *Jane Eyre* has two distinct phases – that of Jane as a child, and Jane as a young woman. A contemporaneous reviewer of the novel for *The Observer* evinced little interest in either, declaring that 'It may be supposed that the life of a child could afford no subject matter meet for relation, nor that the career of any young woman could be made interesting through upwards of a thousand pages'[590] – but the review was out of step with popular opinion on the former point, for the life of the child was a subject of increasing interest in the nineteenth century, as discussed above. Additionally, *The Observer*'s review is an inadequate reflection of the text, for in *Jane Eyre* both Jane's childhood and especially young adulthood are extremely eventful, many of the events of which derive their strength from a gothic heritage. As much as Brontë's heroine's journey into adulthood is driven by the gothic, so too is her passage out of childhood. In the book's opening pages, the child Jane expresses an unusual sensitivity to gothic imagery, which she derives from such a seemingly unlikely source as Thomas Bewick's *A History of British Birds*.[591] The 'haunts of sea-fowl' and 'the bleak shores' of the Arctic she communicates as dark and abandoned scenes of the gothic, impressions reinforced by evocative woodcuts of 'the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast', 'the quite solitary churchyard, with its inscribed headstone', sites of death visited in gothic literature, and in some cases, Brontë's own juvenilia. Meanwhile, the 'fiend pinning down the thief's pack behind him' and the 'black horned thing […] surveying […] a gallows' are 'object[s] of terror' reminiscent of the more supernatural aspect of the gothic; Jane 'passed over quickly' these spirits, and yet her narration of the woodcuts includes these two devils, but not a single bird, so it is very clear what has struck her imagination. Jane is very much a young gothic enthusiast of the kind described in previous chapters, and probably much like Brontë herself – entranced by the sublime possibilities of the 'dreary', the 'shadowy', the 'impressive'.[592]

Shortly following this is Jane's first actual gothic experience, her detention in the 'red-room' in the second chapter – a room 'chill', 'silent', and 'solemn', 'seldom slept in' (terms aptly reminiscent of the grave) owing to its 'secret' – the late master of the house, Jane's uncle, had died in that room, and ever since, 'a sense of dreary consecration had guarded it'.[593] These details invoke the gothic trope of the sealed wing, unused since the death of its master or mistress, and the then-modern setting of *Jane Eyre* denudes it only of some of its grandeur,

[590] Anonymous, review of *Jane Eyre* in *The Observer* (1st November 1847), p. 2.
[591] Thomas Bewick, *A History of British Birds* (1797, 1804, 1821).
[592] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Chapter I (pages unnumbered).
[593] Ibid., Chapter II (pages unnumbered; subsequent references in paragraph all to same chapter).

and not its essential qualities. Being imprisoned in this place moves Jane in two ways: Towards self-reflection, and towards a fear of the supernatural. Indeed, a literal self-reflection moves her first to the one, then to the other; a mirror reflects her as a 'strange little figure' with 'white face and arms' and 'glittering eyes of fear' which 'had the effect of a real spirit'. Forced to confront her own diminutive and liminal (almost ethereal) existence as one who might as well be dead for all the strength she possesses, especially while so imprisoned, Jane's thoughts turn to the existential, asking unanswered and unanswerable questions about the world's justice: 'Why was I always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, for ever condemned?' Jane is not in the position of many gothic protagonists of having led a charmed life prior to this gothic intrusion, but her impotent questioning suggests a new awareness that real life does not accord with the principles she otherwise believes in. This realisation summons a desire for transformation to a new state of existence – by either 'running away, or, if that could not be effected, never eating or drinking more, and letting myself die.' Either way, the gothic experience of the red room demands that Jane consider how to alter her life and her self – to be bold and embark upon new experiences. This gothic incident moves her from a child's mindset to that of an adolescent, or a child willing herself to be adolescent – to gain adolescence's, and thus adulthood's, advantages. But the gothic qualities of this scene do not just alter her mental resolve but precipitate a physical illness, a change in constitution that rewrites her lifestyle as well as her worldview. Construing a mysterious and seemingly heavenly 'light' which appears in the red-room, apparently marking her out by having 'glided up to the ceiling and quivered over my head', as a spectral 'herald of some coming vision from another world' – in truth a subtly-presented instance of the explained supernatural, which the adult Jane in reflection speculates was 'in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern carried by some one across the lawn' – Jane felt 'oppressed, suffocated', and subsequently 'had a species of fit' of sufficient danger to see her recommended a change of scenery and sent away to school.[594] The incident reconstructs the gothic tropes of the imprisoned female and the female protagonist who faints from horror, justifying the vulnerable and passive protagonist as a child understandably inferior to such treatment; it is the gothic that both mentally and physically overwhelms Jane in this chapter and initiates her reconstruction into an adult.

[594] Ibid. (per above) .

Much of this reconstruction is unseen by the reader, however. Jane's early days at school are delineated in some detail, but for the majority of her schooling and physiological adolescence, Jane's narration chooses to 'pass a space of eight years almost in silence', resuming only when she is 'barely eighteen.'[595] Whatever personal development she undergoes in almost half of her life is unanalysed by Brontë, implicitly validating in her work the aforementioned criticism that 'the life of a child could afford no subject matter meet for relation'.[596] The assumption is that Jane has matured considerably, but the process is apparently of no importance to the story or, therefore, her character; her childhood influences her adulthood, but the two do not meet in physical adolescence. But though a more mature individual when the story resumes, there are nonetheless indications that Jane identifies with adolescents; when advertising for a job as governess, she specifically requests 'children […] under fourteen', on the grounds that those fourteen or older would be 'nearer [her] own age' and whom she thus could not relate to as a superior. Although eighteen, she considers that even individuals four years her junior – and, not coincidentally, in the midst of adolescence – would too closely resemble her own state, physical and mental. Adolescence as a psychological process of transition into adulthood is a comparatively modern conception; older teenagers, as legal minors raised in conditions identical to younger children, are here figured as children themselves, for subcategorising Jane's 'child' students as preferably 'under fourteen' shows that the category also encompasses those fourteen or over. As an older teenager only just out of school, Jane has barely departed legal and cultural childhood in herself.[597] Hence her subsequent adolescent experiences and perceptions – in social terms, she is still an adolescent herself.

To resume the analysis, Jane's arrival at Thornfield Hall in Chapter XI demonstrates how she receives reality according to gothic standards, owing to her youthful impressionability. Due to her travel by carriage and arrival at night, Jane does not see the whole exterior of the building, circumventing a first encounter in the manner of the approach to Castle Udolpho, but the suggestion of gothic space is present within its halls despite this unclear impression of its size; she observes that the interior appears as though it 'belonged to a church rather than a house', and this likely influences her subsequent impressions of a 'chill and vault-like air' which creates an 'eerie impression'. She admits that she is affected by the appearance of the

[595] Ibid., Chapter X.
[596] Anonymous, review of *Jane Eyre* in *The Observer*, p. 2.
[597] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Chapter X (for all other quotations in paragraph).

building alone in subsequently stating that 'Externals have a great effect upon the young', which also implies that she considers herself at the time to be young and youthfully naïve. She experiences Thornfield as akin to a castle in a gothic novel, 'stately and imposing', especially on first impressions – and certainly it possesses gothic qualities, with its 'battlements', 'grey front', and to a lesser extent, 'picturesque' appearance (for few fictional gothic seats are truly ugly). Phyllis Bixler agrees that Thornfield Hall is indeed one of the 'gothic elements […] found in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*'; 'Miss Havisham's Satis House, Edward Rochester's Thornfield Hall […] patrimonial mansions with large unused portions and ghostly hidden residents', although as will be seen, in *Great Expectations* the gothic elements are driven by the resident characters, whereas in *Jane Eyre* it is the construction of the setting which takes the gothic lead.[598] Though Thornfield Hall is a 'gentleman's manor-house, not a nobleman's seat', as Jane recognises it in daylight, this merely dilutes the gothic setting, which is not an ordinary or realist location for many readers.[599] Further signs of Jane's propensity for the gothic, and indeed Mr. Rochester's, are displayed in the volumes left for her 'private perusal' in the library – Jane is 'contented […] amply' by a collection of 'light literature, poetry, biography, travels, a few romances', all of which are those genres which overlapped in the gothic novel. Jane's responses to Thornfield prepare her to persist in reading it in gothic terms; she asks whether it has any 'legends or ghost stories', engaging with the fictitious mystique of the building over its reality, and in exploring its corridors compares it to fiction in perceiving it as 'some Bluebeard's castle' – although her reading of her reality with this frame also serves as foreshadowing of Rochester's genuine immurement of his wife, although this trope is reimagined by Brontë in more modern and acceptable terms. Jane's reading of Thornfield according to works of gothic fiction is not an entirely inaccurate conception of its reality, which highlights the novel's gothic genericity. Still, in other respects, the arrival at Thornfield constitutes a learning experience for Jane and a lesson – if not a wholly correct one – in expectations of the real world, for her first impressions are in fact doubly undermined. Towards the end of Chapter XI, Jane overhears a 'laugh […] distinct, formal, mirthless', which 'seemed to wake an echo in every lonely chamber', and which is 'tragic', 'preternatural'. Jane assigns this laugh all the qualities of gothic melodrama, and notes that, under different circumstances, she would have been 'superstitiously afraid', showing the continuing sway of ghost stories over her

[598] Bixler, Phyllis, 'Gardens, Houses, and Nurturant Power in *The Secret Garden*', in *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, ed. by James Holt McGavran Jr. (University of Georgia Press, 2009), p. 217.
[599] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Chapter X (for all other quotations in paragraph).

consciousness. The laugh is subsequently attributed to a servant who could not be 'less romantic or less ghostly', apparently providing another instance of the explained supernatural, or at least the explained gothic – normalising an impressionable youth's wild ideas into the realist and uninspiring.[600] However, the laugh ultimately does transpire to issue from Mr. Rochester's insane, imprisoned wife. Brontë seems to parody, in a manner not unlike Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, the over-enthusiastic reader who cannot distinguish reality from fantasy, but having done so, goes on to rebuild the dismantled gothic in her own style.

Christine Alexander alludes to Brontë's status as a 'New Gothic' writer clearly indebted to this complex relationship with the traditional gothic, in which she both 'use[s] old Gothic motifs of gloomy castles, ruins, ghosts, and stormy nights in her writing' and 'skilfully debunks such Gothic apparatus'.[601] But the extent of the debunking is, naturally, debateable; an early reviewer of the novel, George Henry Lewes, lamented that *Jane Eyre* contains 'too much melodrama and improbability, which smack of the circulating-library' – in other words, existing in continuity with rather than radically departing from the traditional gothic.[602] It is a hard claim to dispute, when Jane experiences such gothic scenarios as, in Chapter XX, being left 'in the third storey, fastened into one of its mystic cells; night around me; a pale and bloody spectacle under my eyes and hands; a murderess hardly separated from me by a single door'.[603] The prospect is 'appalling', Jane admits, and she suffers sensations of fear such as 'horror [which] shook all my limbs'. And yet she is remarkably compliant during this chapter, unquestioningly obeying Rochester throughout such horrors. Presented, in an obscure room mid-night, with a patient whose arm 'was almost soaked in blood', told to tend to him alone for 'for an hour, or perhaps two hours', and 'not speak to him on any pretext', she asks no questions and raises no objections, neither internally nor once the crisis is past; repeated allusions to the need for secrecy, with Rochester remarking that 'a clod-hopping messenger would never do at this juncture' and instructing that 'if any one is about, come to the foot of the stairs and hem', do not disturb Jane's scruples. Neither implicit trust in the aristocracy nor the subordinate position of a servant wholly explain this; any governess would have the right to resign rather than remain in a household with a potential murderer on

[600] Ibid., Chapter XI.
[601] Christine Alexander, '"That Kingdom of Gloom"', p. 409.
[602] George Henry Lewes, 'Recent Novels: French and English' in *Fraser's Magazine for Town and Country*, Vol. 36, Iss. 216 (December 1847), p. 692.
[603] Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Chapter XX (subsequent references in paragraph all to same chapter).

the loose, helping to conceal their grisly crimes. Jane's narration does not address her motivation for such implicit obedience; she merely recites 'I must' over and over as she reviews her tasks. And while she mentally interrogates the situation for all of its mysteries – 'What crime was this that lived incarnate in this sequestered mansion, and could neither be expelled nor subdued by the owner?—what mystery, that broke out now in fire and now in blood, at the deadest hours of night?' – she brings none of these questions to Mr. Rochester, though he could answer them all.[604] Whether or not he would does not factor into Jane's refraining from asking; she is simply perfectly pliable, and her actions clearly presuppose a belief in an explanation that is both reasonable and right.

Indeed, Rochester himself is the one to question Jane's faith in him – 'You are my little friend, are you not?' – and her answer is that 'I like to serve you, sir, and obey you in all that is right.' Rochester keenly observes that she would refuse 'if I bid you do what is wrong'; thus she accepts the morality of Rochester's actions in this chapter without even considering that they might be wrong, which goes beyond a servant's obligations. The explanation for this may be found in an exchange between the pair once the danger is over; Rochester, using a gothic turn of phrase that reflects his knowledge of Thornfield's secret, asks Jane if she does consider the house 'a mere dungeon' – to which, contrary to all she has learnt and experienced shortly before, including secret rooms, the concealment of violent attempted murder, and indeed an attempted murderer's presence in the house, replies that it 'seems […] a splendid mansion'. This use of 'seems' may be a crucial ambiguity, one which acknowledges the house's external respectability and permits Jane to comfort Rochester without actually lying about its darker aspect. But Rochester, whether accurately or not, dismisses her apparently positive feelings as 'the glamour of inexperience […] over your eyes'.[605] This insight which accords with an adolescent reading of Jane's character – new to the world and unaware not just of its dark secrets, but the darker side of human morality exemplified by Rochester. He particularly describes her impressions of Thornfield as being seen 'through a charmed medium', which highlights Jane's credulity and perhaps her confidence in the veil of respectability she at least acknowledges, even if she does not see through it.[606]

[604] Ibid. (per above).
[605] Ibid.
[606] Ibid.

Jane receives the gothic not as an aberration but a natural part of the landscape, and although she has questions about the mysteries of Thornfield, she has no difficulty in crediting their existence in her reality. The reinvention of gothic terror in *Jane Eyre* is to make it credible, enough for Jane to accept rather than being ignorant of it, which proves just as dangerously naïve; the comfortable security of *Northanger Abbey*'s assertion that 'it was not in [Radcliffe's works] perhaps that human nature, at least in the Midland counties of England, was to be looked for' is not to be found, for Brontë asserts that secrecy and deception are indeed in human nature, even constrained by 'some security for the existence even of a wife not beloved, in the laws of the land, and the manners of the age.'[607] The world of *Jane Eyre* is both a gothic one and one which Jane is prepared to find as gothic, in response her history and reading, and this, together with her subordinate status as servant and quasi-adolescent, accounts for her passivity to gothic circumstances – and simultaneously, highlights *Jane Eyre* as a nineteenth-century outpost of the gothic and as a text which utilises the adolescent experience as an appropriate one for development by gothic narratives.

By the beginning of Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations*'s serialisation in 1860, then, there had been an unofficial reappraisal of the gothic in literature. While there was no great renaissance of the genre-defining Radcliffean or Lewisian form, singular plot devices proved uncontentious provided they were smuggled into popular culture under other identities and literary styles. Likewise, not only *Jane Eyre* eschewed the consistent focus on the adolescent subject and divided its attentions between the child's formative experiences and the adult's final maturation. Fortunately, while a child protagonist's possible reactions to the gothic are limited, the way they respond must have a similar impact to an adolescent character; the age difference is negligible, partly for which the gothic can be read as a similar formative influence upon both. If technically adolescent protagonists are harder to find, a child may have enough shared qualities – and if the child is therefore an object of interest, then it is inevitable to turn to Charles Dickens, who Coveney remarks is 'of course the focus for any study of the establishment of the child in the nineteenth-century novel.'[608] For Dickens, use of the child as a subject for tragedy is linked to his own youth, when at an age where the Brontës were writing their juvenilia, Dickens had to work in a shoe-blacking factory to support his financially ruined family. Such a biographical irruption is inevitably read into his literature; Coveney considers it blatant to the point of obsessive egocentricity: 'It needs only

[607] Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (1817) (Oneworld Classics, 2010), p. 143.
[608] Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood*, p. 92.

half an eye to detect the sentimentalities, especially towards children, to discern the poor little drudge of the blacking factory, corroding his feelings in torments of self-pity.'[609] The gothic shades of Dickens's biography lend support to the dramatically realised ones of his own work. Dickens's literary contribution to the nineteenth century is impossible to overlook, and among this contribution lies further use and normalisation of the gothic. Many Dickensian elements fall under the gothic mantle, or indeed the bildungsroman, but for this study's ends it is appropriate to confine attention to a single exemplary text – and it is *Great Expectations* that is not just among Dickens's most iconic works but also has the most relevant gothic-bildungsroman crossover, in its interaction between the figure of the young protagonist and the Dickensian gothic. Furthermore, the publication of *Great Expectations* in the early 1860s illustrates the spread of the gothic through the nineteenth century, and not coincidentally falls into thematic and chronological line with the advent of the sensation fiction genre 'in the late 1850s,' which continued the re-establishment of gothic by having, as Nick Freeman observes, 'cross-fertilised the dense plotting and contemporary settings [of realist fiction] with Gothic elements'.[610] Dickens's relationship with sensation fiction is debateable, but here it suffices to say that Dickensian and sensation fiction participate in a broader re-establishment of gothic drama as a mainstream generic force. Killeen notes the more transformative and evolutionary way that Dickens 'translates traditional Gothic tropes and props into modern realist terms'[611] – but a view of Dickens's take on gothic as solely a modernising one, without recourse to retrograde scenarios and imagery, is incomplete. Dickens's significance is in how he uses classic tropes to create scenarios relevant to his period's modernity – and, unlike sensation fiction, scenarios relevant to youth's place in that modernity.

In gothic fiction, the gothic elements of the world – the nobility and church's tyrannical power, tomb-like imprisonments in ancient buildings – are deployed against adolescents to stifle their potential and independence as adults; even in historical gothic settings, they represent elements of a farther past while the protagonist often represents newer and more modern possibilities. Essentially the same pattern is employed in *Great Expectations*, in which Magwitch and Miss Havisham, two characters representing gothic forces and the past in general, exert their influence upon Pip's development. The novel opens in a strikingly characteristic gothic scene, which is also Pip's 'first most vivid and broad impression of the

[609] Ibid., p. 112.
[610] Nick Freeman, 'The Victorian Ghost Story' in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, p. 98.
[611] Jarlath Killeen, *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1825-1914*, p. 18.

identity of things' – a strongly-emphasised moment of awakening and understanding of the world and its rules, taking place in a churchyard, a 'bleak place overgrown with nettles' within a 'dark flat wilderness'.[612] The association of religion with darkness and barrenness is a link to gothic fiction, in which religious institutions are likewise sterile places (literally so, in their vows of chastity) associated with superstition. Pip as the protagonist is an outsider, being alive among the world of the dead; doubly so, for he is found besides his parents' tombstones. Such a beginning demonstrates the immense influence upon Pip's life of ancestors who are dead, or figuratively so, like Magwitch, who 'started up from among the graves' to confront Pip, walking 'as if he were eluding the hands of the dead people, stretching up cautiously out of their graves, to get a twist upon his ankle and pull him in.'[613] Magwitch is presented as properly belonging among the dead and buried, from whom he has escaped but which are constantly seeking to draw him back to his impotent immurement, and this and his true status as a convict aboard a prison ship are metaphors for each other. Similar to Magwitch in this respect is the other ruling figure of Pip's life, Miss Havisham, who, 'shrunk to skin and bone', resembles to Pip a 'ghastly waxwork' of a 'personage lying in state' and a 'skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress', 'dug out of a vault under the church pavement.'[614] Like Magwitch, Miss Havisham represents something rightly dead and without power, but wrongfully unearthed – a simulacrum of a simulacrum of a figure awaiting burial, uncannily displaced from its original identity, or the image of a person stripped of life and flesh and removed from their true resting-place. Unlike Magwitch, though, Miss Havisham is proud and stately in death – like a person 'lying in state' or 'in a rich dress',[615] having earned respect and fortune, and this impression of authority enables her influence upon Pip to be declared and public, as opposed to Magwitch, in 'coarse grey, with a great iron on his leg', 'no hat', 'broken shoes', 'smothered in mud', 'lamed by stones'.[616] Magwitch, figuratively an escapee from death rather than one preserved out of the grave, is filthy, impoverished, and physically frail, with the legs he supports himself upon especially unreliable, suggesting an inability to carry himself; indeed, he depends upon Pip to keep him from the grave, whereas Miss Havisham supports herself. But both Magwitch and Miss Havisham are gothic revenants, dead hands which continue to steer the future despite their irrelevance and despite

[612] Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations* (1861) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), p. 1.
[613] Ibid., p. 2, 3.
[614] Ibid., pp. 52-53.
[615] Ibid.
[616] Ibid., p. 4.

having been drained of their original energy; in this, they are also emblematic of the evil potential of crime and wealth, which prolong the existence of those fallen from grace.

Magwitch and Miss Havisham are established as agents of the past, and their surroundings equally place them outside of time's regular progression: Magwitch in graveyard, prison ship, and remote Australia, his personal development and transition from penury to profit the work of years unseen in the book's pages; Miss Havisham in her decaying house where every clock has been stopped. But both rework this sense of power rooted in the past in separate ways. Magwitch disappears in Pip's childhood, remaining absent for more than half the story – but when he returns, Pip remembers him more distinctly than even '[i]f the wind and the rain had driven away the intervening years, had scattered all the intervening objects, had swept us to the churchyard where we first stood face to face'.[617] Magwitch not only evokes the notion of time as flexible and open to returns, but suggests time's redundancy – that past and present stand side-by-side. Miss Havisham, by contrast, rather than suddenly returning from the past much changed, is pointedly unchangeable; years may pass, but Pip still meets her 'in the room where I had first beheld her, and it is needless to add that there was no change in Satis House';[618] escorting her around the house in her wheelchair is 'like pushing the chair itself back into the past, when we began the old slow circuit […] The time so melted away'.[619] Miss Havisham even remarks, 'with some displeasure: "You are growing tall, Pip!"'[620] For Pip even to age seems an affront to her as she attempts to fix time in place, never moving forwards. If his ageing also surprises her, considering the exclamatory nature of the statement, this reflects the slightly mysterious, unexamined ageing of Pip, in which years pass by without acknowledgement outside of a few casual allusions; visiting Miss Havisham becomes 'an annual custom';[621] Pip 'fell into a regular routine of apprenticeship-life' in one chapter's opening before beginning the following chapter 'in the fourth year of my apprenticeship'.[622] Hints of Pip's ageing are found in his development of a typically adolescent self-questioning and dissatisfaction, in which he confesses to having 'wished that I was not common', and felt 'ashamed of home', similarly 'all coarse and common'.[623] This is crucial to the development of Pip's character, and his retrospective narration foregrounds it,

[617] Ibid., p. 288.
[618] Ibid., p. 275.
[619] Ibid., p. 219.
[620] Ibid., p. 89.
[621] Ibid., p. 113.
[622] Ibid., pp. 113, 121.
[623] Ibid., pp. 64, 97.

asking of Satis House 'What could I become with these surroundings? How could my character fail to be influenced by them?'[624] Alongside the absence of age markers, this suggests that Dickens was more concerned with developing Pip as a character in the abstract rather than grounding his physical ageing; significance lies instead in Pip beginning the story as a child and later becoming an adult, and how the former influences the latter, without adolescence blurring the boundaries. But while Pip's ageing may be silent, it is nonetheless inevitable, and while Magwitch and Havisham remain powers of the past, further narrative devices, gothic in intention or in effect, are introduced to the story in their attempts to drive Pip's future, or rather, to story him.

Magwitch's intentions follow the traditional pattern of mystery followed by devastating disclosure, beginning with Pip being informed of his eponymous 'great expectations.' Pip is told of a 'liberal benefactor', whose name is a 'profound secret' for no apparent reason, but who desires that Pip 'will come into a handsome property' and 'be immediately removed from his present sphere of life […] and be brought up as a gentleman'. The event of the sudden and often unearned inheritance is a common fictional trope, and an improbable one, a 'dream' and 'wild fancy' of Pip's, but here it also disorders the frequent progression of events in fiction such as the gothic, where fortune is prone to be withdrawn or lost only to be returned to the protagonist in the closing moments of their story.[625] The benevolent practical effect is also reversed, as it removes Pip from a beloved guardian and childhood home and ensconces him in wholly unfamiliar surroundings – into the city, in Killeen's words 'the new site in which Gothic plots and characters could work out their destinies', geographically bringing the classic turn of fortune into a modern setting.[626] This intended beneficence proves therefore to be almost malignant – and the storytelling metaphor created by the benefactor, Magwitch's, use of such tropes encodes a badly mishandled narrative.

Magwitch's desire to hide his name creates a similarly artificial mystery by the emphasis on its 'secret' nature, only to be revealed by himself 'at first hand by word of mouth', in a personal encounter.[627] The eventual encounter and revelation are things of terror to Pip. Magwitch's boasts of his attempts to 'make a gentleman – and, Pip, you're him!' create in Pip only feelings of 'abhorrence', 'dread', 'repugnance'; Pip describes these sensations as

[624] Ibid., p. 87.
[625] Ibid., pp. 125, 126.
[626] Jarlath Killeen, *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1825-1914*, p. 13.
[627] Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, p. 126.

worse than if Magwitch had been 'some terrible beast', but Pip's responses are more as though Magwitch were a corpse, something putrid, fearsome not as a physical threat but as an abstract and psychological one. The dramatic revelation is compared to a gothic novel's dramatic revelation of previously unknown parenthood – Magwitch declares that he is Pip's 'second father'; 'You're my son'.[628] Magwitch has indeed had a patriarchal influence upon Pip's life, but he might more accurately be described as an author, planning Pip's story according to the laws of melodrama. In devoting his life to driving Pip's, the actual result, contrary to expectations, is that Magwitch resembles a shadowy manipulator in the mould of schemers like Radcliffe's Schedoni or a secret tribunal, calculating the lives of others remotely and from behind the scenes. In this sense, to return to the earlier comparison of Magwitch to a revenant, his operations now resemble those of a ghost – mysterious, invisible, achieving seemingly magical effects and transformations. That this is enacted through the medium of wealth is no coincidence, for as Andrew Smith observes, 'Ghosts represent economic figures for Dickens and he uses them to explore changes in the perception of the economic system.'[629] The unpredictable and seemingly arbitrary transfer of money to Pip ultimately revealed to be orchestrated by Magwitch represents the baffling complexity of the new financial systems of the period, and in portraying wealth as a tool blindly and wrong-headedly employed by a ghost-like figure for this kind of storying may be Dickens's way of using the gothic to satirise both money's uncontrollability and its distortion of social values.

While Magwitch attempts to influence Pip's physical conditions, mandating his transfer from the trappings of poverty to the trappings of wealth, Miss Havisham's manipulation is emotional in effect. In their very first meeting, she introduces Estella to Pip with a cruel instruction – 'You can break his heart.'[630] Miss Havisham desires Pip's emotional torment and engineers an enduring and hopeless love for Estella to achieve it. Miss Havisham repeats the lesson in subsequent meetings – 'direct[ing] my attention to Estella's beauty', and emphasising it 'by trying her jewels on Estella's breast and hair'[631] – which also demonstrates how Estella's body becomes a proxy to carry out Miss Havisham's will remotely, like a toy or puppet. She designed Estella, 'adopted', 'bred her and educated her, to be loved'[632] – but not to love, and thus Pip's love can only ever be unrequited. Like Magwitch, Miss Havisham

[628] Ibid., p. 292.
[629] Andrew Smith, *The Ghost Story, 1840-1920: A Cultural History* (Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 47.
[630] Ibid., p. 54.
[631] Ibid., p. 81.
[632] Ibid., p. 219.

weaves a story around the young Pip's prospects, but while Magwitch creates the narrative of Pip's rise to fortune, Miss Havisham encourages him to believe in a narrative of romance and of love ultimately triumphant. Pip's slow awakening to the deception and awareness that he can never have been intended for Estella sees the narrative he imagined replaced by a reality in which he is merely 'a model with a mechanical heart to practise on when no other practice was at hand'.[633] Pip's status in Miss Havisham's hands is as simply another of her puppets. This element transforms Miss Havisham's storytelling of Pip's life into a gothic influence, and she becomes a different gothic figure as she relates to Pip and Estella's romance in her attempts to control it; though earlier figuring as a revenant or ghost-figure, she here takes on the role of the powerful and corrupt matriarch – the cruel abbess of Lewis's *The Monk*, the tyrannical mother of Vivaldi in Radcliffe's *The Italian*, and many other instances. Miss Havisham is also an abusive mother to Estella, one who by her own admission 'stole her heart away and put ice in its place.'[634] She plays the role of parent, but manipulates her ersatz children like objects.

What therefore happens to Pip is that gothic circumstances are used to control his development into an adult – in other words, his adolescence. Coveney's comment on the Dickensian child is that he or she 'lives at the point of impact between the world of innocent awareness and the world of man's insensitivity to man' – in other words, the threshold between childhood and adulthood that is adolescence.[635] This is particularly embodied in Miss Havisham's treatment of Pip, of kindness masquerading as cruelty, and understanding her deceit and his obligations to the criminal Magwitch plunges Pip into true despair – almost into death itself, for the shock is so severe that he 'could not have spoken one word, though it had been to save my life', and he 'seemed to be suffocating'.[636] As he adopts this same potentiality for and semblance of death as his controllers, Magwitch and Havisham, the last of Pip's childhood innocence and his faith in the illusions around him – his romance with Estella, the legitimacy of his money, and the destiny he imagined for himself – undergo their death throes. These dreams are crushed as effectively as if a gothic villain had robbed him of them – which, in effect, they have. Magwitch and Havisham, as figures of the gothic who attempt to read Pip's life in fictional terms, are both his benefactors and his antagonists, and in every gift to him they have also taken something away – his home, his money, his love.

[633] Ibid., p. 295.
[634] Ibid., p. 365.
[635] Peter Coveney, *The Image of Childhood*, p. 112.
[636] Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, p. 293.

But these actions are partly born from the disconnection between Pip's manipulators – his parents, of a sort – and the world around them. Both exist in the past and subsist in the present on classic storytelling devices, with Pip simply a character to be moved as they please, and the results of their endeavours are Pip's horror of Magwitch and his money where he was meant to feel gratitude, and his suffering as Miss Havisham did where she had originally wished to prevent her own tragic history from repeating.

Interpreted in this way, *Great Expectations* reads as a critique of the gothic and its use. Gothic tropes may be resurrected, brought out of the past, but they are the tools of near-dead authors out of step with the realities of the modern world. Recreating gothic stories exactly as they existed in past literature is a dead end doomed to failure – and yet there is every potential in their combination and presence among modernity to create a new kind of gothic suited to the realities of the mid-nineteenth century, one where the secrets and ambiguities of the human mind take precedence over the vagaries of fortune and romance, and where betrayals effect psychological or financial changes more than physical. By communicating this through the medium of an adolescent, Dickens shows not just how the gothic achieves a new maturity but how the dupes and victims of a gothic world continue to be society's most vulnerable group, children, who in undergoing gothic intrigues inevitably reach a broken adulthood – and Pip's victimisation as the subject of a gothic narrative, Magwitch's, Havisham's, and Dickens's, signifies the utter lack of control of children over their own lives in the systems of the nineteenth-century world. Rather than the gothic of earlier novels in which the trials of adolescence give way to the fortune and bliss of mature understanding, for Dickens a gothic adolescence and the suffering concomitant with it is the source of an adult's ruin – an incisive point in a society which, as Dickens knew, was exploiting children with more ruthlessness and efficiency than ever before. In issuing such a warning against modern society's treatment of young people, Dickens could choose no better vehicles than the gothic and adolescence.

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* both demonstrate how the gothic and realism, once rival genres, were coalescing, resulting in sometimes generically incontestable gothic works set in contemporary times and climes – ones more socioculturally plausible and realist, but which made use of devices and plot structures of the gothic to represent the realities of the nineteenth century: The realities of children's lives in particular were increasingly viewed with less naivety than in previous ages and were instead

appreciated for the traumatic and often damaging formative experiences they actually were. Outside of the adolescent context, this form of gothic is a recognised phenomenon in the period's major authors. George Eliot's works, for example, are indicated by Royce Mahawatte as part of a gothic that 'evolved and multiplied and jostled against Realism to become a strident narrative modality in the nineteenth century […] obscured within the popular, domestic and Realist literary landscape.'[637] Mahawatte is clearly cautious about suggesting a fuller integration, allowing only the limited proposal that 'Eliot's rivals', which is to say immediate contemporaries including 'Dickens, Gaskell' – the latter discussed in Part II of this chapter – 'all have Gothic inclusions to varying degrees', rather than being more equally gothic and realist, as contended here.[638] Returning to the adolescent connection, a voguish interest in the child as a literary figure almost inevitably meant the acknowledgement, if only indirectly, of the significance of adolescence and how an awakening from innocence and a development towards maturity were almost inevitably a gothic experience best dramatised using the melodramatic figures of the gothic, if reworked for a jaded audience. The gothic's survival and re-emergence in this fiction is not arbitrary but rather is a purposeful reworking that perpetuates the existing link between the gothic and the adolescent experience. But such literature still fell under the mantle of realism, pure realism having never dominated fiction to the exclusion of all other modes, and the accommodation of gothic in realism raises the question of what was happening in genres with alternative aims to perfect realism and plausibility – for it is to be expected that a chiefly imaginative genre like the gothic would continue to have a voice in fictions that did not place such high value on the representation of modernity. To assess such works, to consider whether the same gothic rationale as in realism holds, requires a switch to a separate phase of this chapter – to set realism and modernity aside, and select from the diverse body of work outside of the respectable, mainstream tradition of literary fiction, scrutinising instead those tailored to more particular audiences.

[637] Royce Mahawatte, *George Eliot and the Gothic Novel* (University of Wales Press, 2013), pp. 7-8.
[638] Ibid., p. 15.

Part II

The realist literature discussed in Part I is useful in establishing the continuity of the gothic genre in the nineteenth century and its continuing association with characters undergoing adolescent experiences. While this strategy is revealing of the tacitly understood literary relationship between adolescence and the gothic, and is informed by and informs earlier and later gothic works in turn, any commentary on adolescence in *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* is distinct from the factors identified in previous chapters as liable to be of particular interest to adolescent audiences. A non-adult audience must have nonetheless read the books – direct evidence is rare, as usual, but Annabel Huth Jackson's memoirs provide the example of her being 'terribly frightened' while reading *Jane Eyre* as a ten-year-old in the 1870s, though this is more exemplary of *Jane Eyre*'s unsuitability for children.[639] It must be borne in mind that neither novel features protagonists of the adolescent demographic or a romantic adventure narrative; furthermore, although *Great Expectations* was originally serialised in Dickens's *All the Year Round* paper for the low price of two pence, both novels were most iconically published in the expensive three-volume novel format, discouraging independent acquisition. These factors, combined with the absence of positive evidence to the contrary, suggest that Brontë and Dickens were pursuing their own courses, as would be expected, rather than treading the well-worn paths towards engaging the youthful demographic. Part II now turns to those books which were, on some level, actually intended for younger people – whether exclusively, or shared by didactic elders. Imaginative literature for the young became more prevalent as the century progressed, with strategies for writing children's literature becoming gradually more refined. Writers were beginning to understand the significance of demographic stratification, with F.J.H. Darton writing that, from around the 1820s, there came 'the discovery that *The* Child was *a* child, and on top of that, that he was male and female, and was also different at five years of age and fourteen.'[640] Penny Brown agrees that 'The strategy of targeting readers of different sexes [was] already well developed by the second quarter of the nineteenth century,' and the experiences of gothic

[639] Cited in Kate Flint, *The Woman Reader: 1837-1914* (Oxford University Press, 1993), p. 218, via UK Reading Experience Database <http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/reading/UK/record_details.php?id=4753> [accessed 9 June 2014].
[640] Frederick Joseph Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 217.

readership, which was very publicly attributed to young women, almost certainly informed this awareness.[641]

Of course, it cannot always be said 'that a writer had a well-defined and precise reader as his object,' nor 'what object he actually hit', which must be a perennial problem for this area.[642] But the nineteenth century held fertile ground for literary colonisation by the canny publisher, with adolescents' gothic tastes one facet of a widening market. Works which tended towards fantasy, widely dismissed for the century beforehand as fit only for children, now became celebrated for this very reason and published without shame for either their subject matter or audience. Penny Brown points to 'Lewis Carroll, George MacDonald, and J. M. Barrie' as 'the best-known writers of fantasies which enjoyed a dual readership'[643] – that is, those as popular with parents as with children, showing the scale of the new audience being catered to – and it is little coincidence that Carroll and MacDonald both wrote in the latter half of the nineteenth century (and Barrie in the early twentieth). Fantasy was a genre which, having no place in literary markets beforehand, subsequently became perfectly placed to flourish because of that earlier dearth – and in doing so, benefited from a preparing of the ground by the success of the popular gothic, which it resembled. It is possible to see early fantasy as an overtly supernatural and, significantly, more optimistic variant of gothic (rather than, latterly, vice-versa). As will be shown, for one of the authors aforementioned the gothic did indeed play this role in their fiction, and thus its success.

There were, naturally, alternative ways to consume the gothic – or variations of it. For instance, although the bluebook form had collapsed, no longer viable to produce owing to changing economic and technological pressures, for those who only had a few pennies to spend, whether poor, the servant class, or schoolboys, there remained demand for what bluebooks supplied, that being cheap, short fiction – and for cheap, short fiction to be worth buying, it needed to provide instant gratification, for the same reasons that bluebooks signalled their content with generically significant titles and arranged plotlines to emphasise incident over feeling. Alan Richardson points to the obvious heir to the bluebook, explaining that the latter's 'fascination with horror, ghost stories, and criminals and other antisocial

[641] Penny Brown, *A Critical History of French Children's Literature, Volume Two: 1830-Present* (Routledge, 2008), p. 30.
[642] F.J.H. Darton, *Children's Books in England*, p. 217.
[643] Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England*, p. 188.

figures would be taken up by the Penny Dreadfuls' – and it can be no coincidence if these 'began appearing in the 1830s', as the bluebook waned.[644] The penny dreadful was a nebulous form covering a mixed body of cheap pulp fictions – even a nebulous name, as other monikers have been applied. The contemporary commentator James Greenwood in an 1873 essay gave 'Penny Awfuls' as one 'conferred on the class of literature in question by the owners thereof', which if true gives an indication of their readers' expectations[645] – as do punning jabs in the likes of *Fun* magazine at 'penny offals.'[646] At their most relevant to the bluebook and gothic traditions, these were, as explained by a pseudonymous contemporary, 'a sheet of eight or sixteen pages, containing a continuous romance of a highly sensational and adventurous character, garnished with striking and even horrifying illustrations', though rather than containing individual stories, their marketing insight was to take an episodic structure, 'continued as long as a paying circulation can be secured'.[647] As ever, they compressed and adapted classic gothic stories, but their chief subject matter of, in Killeen's words, 'historical and criminal subjects' led them to discover a more individual identity as contemporary crime fiction.[648] William Harrison Ainsworth in 1834 published *Rookwood*, a gothic novel featuring the exploits of the infamous highwayman Dick Turpin, and the popularity of this novel influenced further instances of the same material. The genre of Newgate novels, retellings of contemporary true-crime tales, emerged around this time, and as in the era of the gothic, cheaper substitutes quickly followed suit; Greenwood describes how they began with the decision to 'reprint and issue in "penny weekly numbers" the matter contained in the "Newgate Calendar,"' and it is easy to see how such content could be imitated without great difficulty to emphasise cheap shocks and thrills in the shorter format.[649] The genre was wide enough to also admit its share of imaginative, fantastic fiction, however; James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampyre* ran for three years and over two hundred chapters, highlighting the serial format of many penny dreadfuls. In making each issue simply a single chapter in a much longer story, writers had the space and time to actually tell a longer story rather than having to invent a new premise every week, and on a commercial level could encourage readers to purchase the next instalment by judicious

[644] Alan Richardson, *Literature, Education and Romanticism: Reading as Social Practice, 1780-1832* (Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 152-153.
[645] James Greenwood, 'Penny Awfuls' in *The Saint Pauls Magazine*, Vol. 12 (February 1873), p. 163.
[646] Thomas Hood, ed., 'A Good Notion' in *Fun*, Iss. 9 (March 20 1869), p. 23.
[647] The London Hermit, 'Essays and Sketches: The Physiology of "Penny Awfuls"' in *Dublin University Magazine*, Vol. 86, Iss. 513 (September 1875), p. 367.
[648] Jarlath Killeen, 'Victorian Gothic Pulp Fiction' in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, p. 46.
[649] James Greenwood, 'Penny Awfuls', p. 162.

employment of thrilling cliffhangers, as well as being able to extend the story for as long as it was profitable – although, as was the case for *Varney*, this could result in the original purpose of the narrative being lost and the story devolving into a series of unrelated incidents. Nonetheless, it is notable that, like bluebooks, the subject matter of penny dreadfuls continued to imitate popular literature for the upper-classes, both in the use of Newgate material and in the decision to serialise their stories. This may highlight a continuing desire on the part of the working classes to enjoy the same kind of fiction their wealthier counterparts did – or more simply reveals the commercial reality that wealth made little difference to the kind of fiction readers enjoyed.

Penny dreadfuls, however, were not intended for the upper- and middle-classes. Moreover, mainstream literature appears to have been ignorant of their existence until around 1870, with the devastatingly-titled 1875 article 'Bad Literature for the Young' by A. Strahan giving dual credit for their exposure and condemnation to Greenwood's 'Penny Awfuls' and to an 1870 short story by Anthony Trollope, 'An Editor's Tales No. V: The Spotted Dog';[650] Trollope's story concerns an impoverished writer of cheap fiction who, addressing Trollope's more respectable narratorial proxy, suggests 'Your august highness in literature has perhaps never heard of a 'Penny Dreadful'', with which the narrator agrees.[651] Their subcultural status is reflected in the true audience reported for penny dreadfuls, one which Killeen points to as 'locked out of the novel market' and thus targeted by the cheap price of serials;[652] strikingly, though by now predictably, these were adolescent boys, who would largely have had the independence required to obtain them – parental approbation for such ephemeral and shocking material being unlikely – and the scant earnings, too, with some readers probably needing to pool resources. James Greenwood pityingly describes the average reader as a 'foolish lad', one of 'hundreds of boys' experiencing 'constant drudgery and bad living' thanks to factory life, and who is 'dazzled and bewildered' by the array of fictions available; evidently, to Greenwood, the readers could not help themselves from consuming such material. His description implies that penny dreadfuls offered audiences escapism from the tedium of their lives, much like the bluebooks they grew from, though if they allegorised their readers' lives it was more imaginatively. However, Greenwood rather curiously claims

[650] Alexander Strahan, 'Bad Literature for the Young' in *The Contemporary Review*, Vol. 26 (June 1875), p. 983.
[651] Anthony Trollope, 'An Editor's Tales No. V: The Spotted Dog' in *The Saint Pauls Magazine*, Vol. 5 (March 1870), p. 670.
[652] Jarlath Killeen, 'Victorian Gothic Pulp Fiction', p. 46.

that this audience had little taste for the highwayman school of literature, having had 'ground [out] all that spirit of daredevilism', suggesting (perhaps not unironically) that they sought instead 'vices of a sort that were milder and more easy of digestion.'[653] Escapist literature rather than literal escape certainly served this end, but Greenwood is also leading to a publishing device he has recognised the purpose of. As ever, the sympathy between reader and fiction was partly achieved by the deft deployment of audience identification, with the penny dreadful protagonists designed to be identified with by this lower-class, lower-age male audience. Greenwood reels off a list of seven penny dreadful titles – not necessarily literally accurate, but clearly meant as examples of their type – which boldly announce the demographic they hope to reel in: 'The Boy Thieves of London, The Life of a Fast Boy, The Boy Bandits, The Wild Boys of London, The Boy Detective, Charley Wag, The Lively Adventures of a Young Rascal'.[654] While a boy detective seems a more moral exception to its accompaniment, Greenwood at this point enthusiastically condemns the entire field as 'a vicious hotch-potch of the vilest slang, a mockery of all that is decent and virtuous, an incentive to all that is mean, base, and immoral, and a certain guide to a prison or a reformatory if sedulously followed', which very nearly 'openly advocate crime and robbery'.[655] Greenwood even retells an allegedly true story of a boy driven to theft purely so that he could afford to purchase the next number of a serial and resolve a particularly nerve-wracking cliffhanger. Greenwood views penny dreadfuls as not merely tasteless but a social problem, expressing much the same fears of readers adopting the worldview of fiction as critics of gothic novels did – and he was no exception in his views on penny dreadfuls, as is evident from their inclusion in articles such as Strahan's 'Bad Literature for the Young', and an anonymously-written successor entitled 'Pernicious Literature for the Young'. The latter produces a startling echo of Coleridge's condemnation of *The Monk* as 'a poison for youth' in claiming that penny dreadfuls 'poison and corrupt the young'.[656] If such attitudes had not changed over the course of a near-century between the two remarks, it follows that literature, too, was not so different. Such condemnations appear to be inevitable for unofficial, unapproved children's fiction.

[653] James Greenwood, 'Penny Awfuls', pp. 161, 163.
[654] Ibid., p. 163.
[655] Ibid., p. 164.
[656] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, review of *The Monk* in *The Critical Review*, Vol. 19 (February 1797), p. 197; Anonymous, 'Pernicious Literature for the Young' in *The Speaker*, Vol. 12 (August 1895), p. 206.

In many ways penny dreadfuls anticipate some of the later developments in children's and young adult literature found today, with mastery of audience identification, serialisation, and cliffhangers, but while they fascinate as examples of compelling storytelling for adolescents and successors to gothic bluebooks, most lack particularly gothic content in themselves, despite Killeen's statement that 'The Penny Bloods and Dreadfuls come under the broad genre of 'Gothic''.[657] The adolescent-oriented urbanised crime-adventure stories, in which protagonists 'make free with a master's goods, or to force his till or run off with his cashbox' in the name of 'frolic and awful jollity to be obtained at music halls, at dancing rooms,—where "young rascals" of the opposite sex may be met,—at theatres, and low gambling and drinking dens', fundamentally share very little with the form's gothic roots.[658] The discussion of bluebooks in Chapter Two accounts for the popularity of this form in more detail, but without a widespread gothic element, it is unnecessary to repeat the analysis.[659] However, the form's longevity prompted some proposed remedies for their popularity which point back towards bluebook mentalities. The anonymous author of the contemporary critique 'Pernicious Literature for the Young' – whose predictable criticisms of the 'ever-growing outpour of cheap books' and 'very marked increase in the practice of reading' indicate a persistent belief that reading should be for the rich only[660] – proposes as an unusually conciliatory antidote 'disseminating as widely and as cheaply as possible, healthy and stirring tales for boys', asking why there could not be 'penny or halfpenny editions of "Treasure Island" or "King Solomon's Mines," of the "Gentleman of France" or "The Prisoner of Zenda," […] cheap serial issues of the novels of Captain Marryat and of Sir Walter Scott'.[661] Abridgement, adaptation, and appropriation of adult literature were perennial features of the literary landscape, and it is in the latter capacity which the first case study of Part II should be viewed.

Fabiola; or the Church of the Catacombs, a novel of 1854 authored by Cardinal Nicholas Wiseman, is ostensibly a historical religious novel set in and around Rome in the early fourth century, with the secretive Christian community and its martyrs forming the principal protagonists. It is also a strong example of resurgent gothic trends finding expression in new

[657] Jarlath Killeen, 'Victorian Gothic Pulp Fiction', p. 47.
[658] James Greenwood, 'Penny Awfuls', p. 164.
[659] It bears mentioning that, while James Malcolm Rymer's penny dreadful series *The Black Monk; or, The Secret of the Grey Turret* (1843-4) is exceedingly faithful to its gothic forebears, it conversely has no adolescent element.
[660] Anonymous, 'Pernicious Literature for the Young', p. 205.
[661] Ibid., p. 206.

forms and formulae. This was not necessarily the intent of its author; in his preface, Wiseman outlines his aim as being to construct the first of 'a series of tales illustrative of the condition of the Church in different periods of her past existence.'[662] Catholic emancipation in Great Britain and Ireland being only a comparatively recent alteration in British society, with the Roman Catholic Relief Act 1829 only finally unravelling the last of centuries' worth of prohibitive legislature, *Fabiola* is essentially a corrective work of pro-Catholic propaganda.

Fabiola contrasts years of anti-Catholic propaganda found in contemporary fiction, chiefly the gothic, in which typical villains were Catholic priests and agents of the Inquisition and where Catholic institutions and principles were presented as corrupt and tyrannical – with Lewis's *The Monk* and Radcliffe's *The Italian* the most popular and prominent such works. Britain's anti-Catholic popular cultural heritage created an obvious impetus for counterpoints in fiction, designed to be both palatable for Catholics and palatable to the country's non-Catholic audience. Wiseman emphasises in his preface that *Fabiola* is intended for leisure reading – which is to say, that it is intended to be accessible and therefore popular. Having 'earnestly desired that this little work […] be read also as a relaxation from graver pursuits', he acknowledges that it 'consists rather of a series of pictures […] Chronology has been sacrificed to this purpose' – a tacit admission that he has altered the historical record to make the story more interesting.[663] Indeed, as will be shown, the story adopts numerous other conventions of contemporary popular fiction, particularly the gothic, in what may have been a deliberate attempt to capture popular taste but may equally have been unconscious imitation. Although the young are mentioned nowhere in his preface, Wiseman pointedly reassures readers that 'nothing could be admitted here which the most sensitive Catholic eye would shrink from contemplating.'[664] What this clearly suggests is that the book is suitable for family reading and therefore for children, if it is so inoffensive; the claim resembles similar prescriptions in *Tales from Shakespeare* and *The Family Shakespeare* (for which, see Chapter Two) which delineate their texts as suitable for children and families. This remains a coded meaning, however, and in describing how 'he may find' or 'he will thus be led' to take various impressions from the text, the only construction Wiseman makes of his reader is of their masculinity[665] – hardly an unusual assumption for his period and Catholicism.

[662] Nicholas Wiseman, 'Preface' in *Fabiola* (1854) (1886 edition), p. vii.
[663] Ibid., pp. x, ix.
[664] Ibid., p. x.
[665] Ibid., p. viii.

It is, however, probable that some younger readers would have attempted the novel, simply by reason of its immense popularity; even a review written almost a century later attests to it as 'a classic' which in its time was 'a super-best-seller, read in Italy in no less than seven versions, and translated into the vernaculars of Europe from Portugal to Poland.'[666] Whether it was quite so ubiquitous in a country more hostile to Catholicism is harder to assert, but there is evidence to be found of an English-speaking and indeed younger readership, albeit with the usual difficulty attendant upon acquiring such evidence. Although contemporary corroborative documentation is lacking, Christa Ressmeyer Klein's 1973 bibliography 'Literature for America's Roman Catholic Children (1865-1895)' numbers *Fabiola* without caveat among late-nineteenth-century works 'written expressly for Catholic children by Catholic authors and published by Catholic firms', although this may have been a creative liberty which revises an unofficial truism into an authorised one.[667] A better source is a more contemporary testimonial by Michael Watson, an essayist for *The Irish Monthly*. Describing his childhood reading, and having already praised familiar children's classic *Robinson Crusoe* as 'to "the lavish heart of youth" a veritable treasure', he goes on to describe *Fabiola* as 'a greater influence upon his character', one 'read even oftener' than *Crusoe*.[668] Unfortunately, Watson's exact age at the time he read *Fabiola*, aside from it having been 'In the Days of Youth', is unclear, but evidence in the essay suggests that *Fabiola* was probably published before his teenage years, providing a broad range of youthful years in which he might have read the novel.[669] In a triumph for the principle of audience identification, Watson names his favourite character, who 'appealed most strongly' to himself, as 'the Christian youth, Pancratius',[670] who in his first appearance in the story's opening pages, is described as being 'about fourteen years old'.[671] Adolescence has its place in the pages of *Fabiola*, and if one reader responded positively to it, more are likely to have done so.

[666] Walter Kane, review of *Fabiola* in *The Furrow*, Vol. 3, No. 6 (The Furrow, Jun., 1952), p. 327.
[667] Christa Ressmeyer Klein, 'Literature for America's Roman Catholic Children (1865-1895): An Annotated Bibliography' in *American Literary Realism, 1870-1910*, Vol. 6, No. 2 (University of Illinois Press, Spring 1973), p. 137.
[668] Michael Watson, 'Little Essays on Life and Character. VI: In the Days of Youth' in *The Irish Monthly*, Vol. 35, No. 413 (Irish Jesuit Province, Nov. 1907), p. 607. Note: The essay is signed M.W., but is contemporaneous with other *Irish Monthly* pieces by an M. Watson and a Michael Watson.
[669] Watson states (ibid., p. 608) that he attended school with the politicians T.P. O'Connor and Sir Antony MacDonnell, who were born in 1848 and 1844 respectively; Watson's birth date was presumably in the same period. *Fabiola* was published in 1854.
[670] Michael Watson, 'In the Days of Youth', p. 607.
[671] Nicholas Wiseman, *Fabiola*, p. 16.

Continuing to establish the publishing context of *Fabiola*, it bears noting that it is an unusual novel for an 1854 publication. Contemporary fiction was largely situated in recognisably modern settings; as discussed previously, later gothic novels had seen their settings drift gradually to the more local and modern, and from thence derive the Part I case studies: *Jane Eyre* provides no indications of its historical period but equally provides no reason not to read it as recent, while *Great Expectations* only hints at a setting in the near past;[672] modernity without specificity is common in fiction. There was little precedent for a reversal of this trend; Montague Summers points to the 'immense influence of Sir Walter Scott' as responsible for a more historical trend in the nineteenth-century gothic novel[673] – but while many of Scott's novels were set in centuries past, they were also largely set within the United Kingdom, and most iconically in the relatively proximate locality of Scotland. *Fabiola* breaks these moulds by being set not only in a distant time but a distant place – Rome in a mildly anachronistic early fourth century, in which the Diocletianic Persecution of 303, the martyrdom of St. Agnes in 304, and the martyrdom of St. Sebastian in 288 occur in fairly rapid succession. This setting may be accounted for if, as Vincent Lankewish has observed, 'Wiseman most probably wrote *Fabiola* in response to *Hypatia*', an 1853 anti-Catholic novel by Charles Kingsley also set in classical times (specifically the nearby early fifth century).[674] However, this setting also echoes the more geographically and historically displaced gothic novels set in continental Europe; Radcliffe's *The Italian* and Lewis's *The Monk* form the model of a historical gothic novel set at a period of religious persecution, but their persecutors are tyrannical and decadent Catholic forces. Wiseman may have desired to write a novel set in classical times on the period's own merit, but if he aimed instead to invert the anti-Catholic formula of Kingsley and the gothic, there were few available periods in which to position Catholics as innocents under threat from corrupt religious tyranny, and pagan Rome was the best match. As a result, *Fabiola*'s premise figures it as a pro-Catholic envisaging of the familiar historical European gothic formula, whether or not Wiseman intended the echo.

[672] London Bridge is noted in the text as having been 'Old London Bridge in those days' (Charles Dickens, *Great Expectations*, p. 348); 'Old' London Bridge was replaced with 'New' London Bridge in 1831, an event which *Great Expectations* must therefore take place largely before.
[673] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel* (Russell & Russell, 1964), p. 371.
[674] Vincent A. Lankewish, 'Love among the Ruins: The Catacombs, the Closet, and the Victorian "Early Christian" Novel' in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 247.

Reading *Fabiola* according to the logic of the gothic, other aspects emerge as gothic tropes orientated towards promoting Catholicism – but also as exaggerations of those tropes. For example, while *Fabiola* treads no farther geographically than earlier gothic novels, historically its setting is a millennium earlier than was commonplace; to consider the archetypal Radcliffe and Lewis novels, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* opens in the late sixteenth century, *The Italian* in the comparatively recent mid-eighteenth, and *The Monk* between the late fifteenth century and the time of publication, judging by the novel's use of the Spanish Inquisition[675] – the Inquisition's appearance in the latter two titles a key signifier of their anti-Catholic narrativising, as will be seen. *Fabiola*'s setting also establishes its milieu as more irreparably divisive and menacing than those of gothic romance. Gothic novels set in Catholic Europe often elided the fact that their protagonists were themselves necessarily Catholic, but sympathetic Catholic characters could also appear, including the saintly mother of *The Italian*'s heroine, Ellena di Rosalba; Ellena's first impression of her unknown parent is her 'most touching countenance; frank, noble, full of sensibility', despite her Catholic station as a nun.[676] However, in *Fabiola*, the pagan civilisation of Rome is utterly irreconcilable with Christianity; the Christian (and by extension Catholic) characters are threatened universally for their beliefs rather than personal motives harboured by the antagonists, and any sympathetic characters among the pagan populace are either secret Christians, or shortly to be converted. This is emblematised in the development of the eponymous Fabiola. One of the main threads of the narrative – the chief original thread, the historical events that occurred within the Christian community being largely a matter of record – is Fabiola's progression from heathenism and indeed atheism to become a model of Christianity, and as such she is a complex figure, on the one hand 'proud, haughty, imperious, and irritable,' but on the other, possesses 'refined taste' and is 'morally irreproachable'.[677] In other words, the reader is provided sufficient evidence to understand that she is not irredeemable; her personality may be antagonistic, but she is accomplished, expresses intelligence in her taste, and has 'a shield over her virtue', even if that shield is 'her pride'. In addition, the reader is assured that she 'scorned' 'paganism, its gods, its vices, its fables, and its idolatry', suggesting that she has a detailed knowledge of the worship of the Roman gods she was brought up among.[678] Her objections to Christianity, by contrast, are based on ignorance; of it 'she knew nothing,' nor

[675] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), p. 1, *The Italian* (1797) (Penguin Classics, 2004), p. 9; Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (1796).
[676] Ann Radcliffe, *The Italian*, p. 103.
[677] Nicholas Wiseman, *Fabiola*, pp. 45, 43, 46.
[678] Ibid., p. 46.

did she 'think of inquiring into it.'[679] Fabiola is presented as having the potential to become a Christian, with no insurmountable obstacles to conversion; as one officially pagan and tacitly atheist, she is shown to be personally objectionable, but with qualities sympathetic to the high standard of virtue which the text represents Christianity as. This creates the appearance of subtlety in the text's presentation of good and evil – although more often, Christian characters are presented as the height of virtue, and contrasted with pagan characters who are the epitome of wickedness. Proximate examples come shortly after Fabiola's introduction, in the figures of her three personal slaves, Afra, Graia, and Syra. Syra, who later transpires to secretly be a Christian, is 'quiet, silent, but completely engaged with [her] duties'; Afra and Graia, by contrast, are 'garrulous, light', spend 'every moment' lavishing 'the most extravagant flattery' upon Fabiola, and seek to praise those of Fabiola's many suitors 'who has best or last bribed them.'[680] In contrast to Syra, who exemplifies Christian virtues, the pagan characters are presented as shallow and corrupt. This pattern is the overall model for the book, and represents a considerable exaggeration upon the average gothic formulation.

What this also highlights is *Fabiola*'s approach to class. In another unsurprising echo of the gothic novel, Wiseman presents his fourth-century protagonists as espousing the expressions and ideas of modernity. Continuing from the scene above, Syra is drawn to explain her consciousness of her social position in relation to her mistress's, answering thus:

> I put it to your own judgement, whether a poor slave, who holds an unquenchable consciousness of possessing within her a spiritual and living intelligence […] can hold herself inferior in moral dignity […] than one who, however gifted, owns that she claims no higher destiny, recognizes in herself no sublimer end, than what awaits the pretty irrational songsters that beat, without hope of liberty, against the gilded bars of that cage.[681]

Syra's notions are clearly those of the contemporary sentimental protagonist, eloquent, modest, and unselfconsciously self-respecting. In this *Fabiola* resembles many supposedly historical novels which were guilty of writing the past as simply the present with different scenery; an anonymous *Blackwood's Magazine* critic remarked on the trend, writing, in an 1845 article entitled 'The Historical Romance', that 'the manners and sayings of lordling and right honourables had become familiar to all the haberdashers' apprentices and milliners'

[679] Ibid., pp. 45, 46.
[680] Ibid., pp. 47-48.
[681] Ibid., p. 54.

girls in London.'[682] In this admission that such fiction was popular among the adolescent working-class milieu, there is also a suggestion of an upwardly-mobile, class aspiration aspect to enjoyment of romance; a demand for recognisably upper-class sentimental protagonists in fiction of all stripes. In this sense, *Fabiola* was probably again responding to a clear demand, whether from the public or from its genre, for it also adopts these upper-class positions as part of its religiosity. Maureen Moran has observed how its protagonists 'profess social principles of inclusiveness and equality';[683] consider Syra's coded reference to her religion, as one 'in which there is no distinction known, or admitted, between Greek and barbarian, freeman or slave.'[684] Upper-class readers are validated in their morality by Wiseman showing the Christian characters as born to the positions of nobility, with many, as Moran notes, 'elite or in an advanced place in social and political circles', while even the slave Syra 'is really a free woman entrapped through the deceit of her brother', combining social realism and a romantic plot twist.[685] The Christian protagonist is noble in every sense – high-born, sophisticated, and thoroughly modern in their morals. It was clearly unconscionable to write an admirable protagonist as anything but Christian, and a Christian as anything but well-spoken, but the effect is to make *Fabiola*'s generic precedence clear as a successor to the sentimental gothic romance.

Before approaching the inevitable darker side of *Fabiola*'s gothic heritage, it is appropriate to introduce the adolescent characters of the text, whose inclusion is suggestive of Wiseman's knowledge of an adolescent audience and desire to provide them with improving models of behaviour; each one of them also illustrates how *Fabiola* adopts conventions of the gothic and interprets them in drastic fashion. Pancratius, alluded to above, is about fourteen years old when the story opens, and Wiseman depicts him as a model of young, masculine perfection: 'full of grace, and sprightliness, and candor […] with elegance of form and manliness of bearing […] his features display an open and warm heart, while his lofty forehead […] beams with a bright intelligence.'[686] By lending him such physical and intellectual capability Wiseman establishes Pancratius as an admirable, exemplary figure; his adolescence suggests to an adolescent reader that possession of these strengths in adolescence

[682] Anon., 'The Historical Romance' in *Blackwood's Magazine* (1845), in E.J. Clery and Robert Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook 1700-1820* (Manchester University Press, 2000), p. 292.
[683] Maureen Moran, 'The Art of Looking Dangerously: Victorian Images of Martyrdom' in *Victorian Literature and Culture*, Vol. 32, No. 2 (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 479.
[684] Nicholas Wiseman, *Fabiola*, p. 53.
[685] Maureen Moran, 'The Art of Looking Dangerously: Victorian Images of Martyrdom', p. 479.
[686] Nicholas Wiseman, *Fabiola*, p. 26.

is both possible and desirable, though the image is not yet particularly nuanced or realistic. Wiseman continues his idealised presentation of Pancratius by portraying him as morally stalwart, responding to verbal and physical attacks upon his religion and person by passing a benediction upon his antagonist: 'May God forgive you, as I freely and fully do; and may He bless you abundantly.' The portrayal of Pancratius is not without subtlety, as he does undergo sore temptation, reporting that he 'felt [his] blood boil at that moment!' and 'that [he] was strong enough […] to seize [his] unjust assailant by the throat, and cast him gasping on the ground.'[687] Pancratius is capable of resisting the temptation, but by giving Pancratius flaws which he can then overcome, Wiseman attempts to present him not as inhumanly pious but relateable to his audience, which complicates slightly his resemblance to the heroic male of gothic romances, who probably would either surrender to such temptations but mature from them, or never be tempted – but the hero of romance is clearly the model Pancratius is drawn from. A similar analogy applies to Agnes, likewise a technically adolescent character, although her age belies her wisdom. Though 'a child not more than twelve or thirteen years old'[688] – the contrast to Pancratius, a 'youth' at fourteen, suggests either an implicit recognition of adolescence upon Wiseman's part, or a gendered distinction of where childhood ends and adulthood begins[689] – Wiseman first describes her as 'a lady', indicating that her age is distinct from her psychological maturity, although this may also reflect Roman notions of adulthood, as Agnes is shown to run her own household despite her young age. Wiseman continues this dual presentation in describing her as 'unit[ing] the simplicity of childhood with the intelligence of a maturer age', which may allude to her dual mortal and immortal state, as one existing as a simple human, but also one with Christ.[690] A subsequent comparison of her as 'like […] an angel' confirms that Agnes is intended as an exemplary model of goodness incarnate, who even Fabiola 'loved, and ever treated with gentlest affection, and whose society she always coveted.'[691] A contrast is established between Agnes and Pancratius, for while Pancratius's Christianity aggravates those around him, Agnes is able to please everyone, and Fabiola remarks that 'Every body in your house is always smiling, and cheerfully anxious to discharge his duty.'[692] Agnes resembles, in this description, the convention of the Victorian woman as angel in the house, a cheerful worker bringing happiness to all whilst being devoid of negative feeling; Moran agrees that she is the

[687] Ibid., p. 31.
[688] Ibid., p. 58.
[689] Ibid., p. 16.
[690] Ibid., p. 58.
[691] Ibid., p. 59.
[692] Ibid., p. 62.

'model Victorian child-woman, compliant and pure'.[693] Agnes is conforming to yet another stereotype of fiction, therefore, and one reliably encountered as the heroine of gothic novels (for even when such novels feature male or female antiheroes, a pure and virtuous female character is a constant).

While the character types of Pancratius and Agnes resemble gothic protagonists, that neither is the novel's primary protagonist nor a character type exclusive to gothic fiction may undermine their status as gothic references, but what cements their place as characters in the gothic tradition is that they suffer. If both seem saintly, this is because they are literal, historical Christian saints, and therefore necessarily die violent deaths before the end of the novel. In a clear recasting of the popular Inquisition torture scenes of gothic literature – innately anti-Catholic plot devices which appear in texts such as *The Italian* and *The Monk*, two of the most-imitated gothic novels – Wiseman shows his Catholic characters suffering the worst of pagan oppression in an attempt to reclaim literary Catholics as victims of tyranny rather than its conductors. But where the innocent Vincentio di Vivaldi is merely threatened with the Inquisition's instruments, and Ambrosio's endurance of 'the most excruciating pangs, that ever were invented by human cruelty […] His dislocated limbs, the nails torn from his hands and feet, and his fingers mashed and broken by the pressure of screws' is rendered less sympathetic by his guilt, Wiseman goes further, for in narrating the histories of Catholic saints it is inevitable that his noblest characters must not only suffer such tortures but die from them.[694] Both Pancratius and Agnes are executed for their faith, and Wiseman prepares the ground by describing, in admiring terms, the martyrdom of Deacon Laurentius (Saint Lawrence), detailing the 'harrowing spectacle' of beholding 'his tender flesh blistering and breaking over the fire', 'the living motion which the agony gave to each separate muscle' – before concluding that 'every feature, serene and sweet as ever' had the effect that 'you would willingly have changed places with him.' 'That I would […] and, as soon as God pleases!' Pancratius remarks, transparently foreshadowing his imminent death.[695]

Torture is a trope of gothic literature, and of anti-Catholic propaganda, inflicted as it often is by the Inquisition (in the aforementioned *The Italian* and *The Monk*, for instance), but Wiseman's use of torture doubly inverts the trope both in positioning Catholics as victims

[693] Maureen Moran, 'The Art of Looking Dangerously: Victorian Images of Martyrdom', p. 480.
[694] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 425.
[695] Nicholas Wiseman, *Fabiola*, p. 319.

and in reinterpreting the torments and fatalities of torture as enviable rather than horrors to be feared, which lends his text a distinct if possibly naïve moral fortitude. Despite this, Wiseman has evident sympathy for his adolescent characters, upon whom he seems reluctant to inflict such pains, perhaps recognising that asking his adolescent audience to identify with subjects who suffer so horrifically would be a misstep – and so instead Pancratius and Agnes's deaths are effected swiftly and painlessly (and also inconsistently with recognised historical fact). Pancratius is thrown to wild beasts in the Coliseum, and yet they avoid him, 'careering madly round him, roaring, and lashing its sides with its tail, while he seemed placed in a charmed circle which they could not approach.'[696] Wiseman is able to provide spectacle and tension whilst still avoiding ravaging the body of his hero, but at last a panther is unleashed upon Pancratius: 'an elastic spring through the air […] its hind feet on the chest, and its fangs and fore claws on the throat of the martyr' terminate Pancratius's life, though the description is discreet and his last act is one of statuesque grace: He gave 'a graceful wave of his arm, the last salutation of his lips—and fell.'[697] Agnes's subsequent fate is, unsurprisingly, even milder, in act and description, again probably due to Wiseman's desire not to figuratively desecrate her corpse. She is condemned to be beheaded with a sword, an act which Wiseman narrates briefly and through the use of imagery and metaphor: '[The sword] was seen to flash for an instant in the air; and the next moment, flower and stem were lying scarcely displaced on the ground.'[698] In even going so far as to pinpoint the two severed parts of Agnes's body as 'scarcely displaced', Wiseman refrains as far as possible from representing her ordeal as in any way physically damaging. Nevertheless, for an adolescent protagonist to die was radical even within the conventions of gothic fiction, and a bold and daring choice for Wiseman – although, if viewed as a shock-value device intended to gain scandalous and prurient interest in his propagandaic book, it is difficult not to see the deaths of Pancratius and Agnes as part of a growing trend of what Peter Coveney calls 'Victorian 'dying' children'.[699] Wiseman both censors and romanticises the act of death, specifically where undergone by his youngest characters, and the concomitant preservation of their innocence from both moral and physical corruption echoes what Coveney has observed of fiction in 'the middle century' period when *Fabiola* was published: Innocence is presented as 'statistically juxtaposed to experience', and where the dissonance between the two is so intense as to render them irreconcilable, 'its only

[696] Ibid., p. 425.
[697] Ibid., p. 429.
[698] Ibid., p. 484.
[699] Peter Coveney, p. 179.

resolution lay in the defeat of death itself.'[700] This conflict, and its result, is especially potent in Christian terms, in which innocence is an idealised and immortal state: Death becomes the triumph of innocence, rather than mere sensation to sell books. In this respect, *Fabiola* forms something of an outlier in representing young persons' mortality as 'religiously doctrinal, easily justifying as triumphal and glorious good children's extended holy dyings' in a period in which, though representations of childhood mortality were increasing, few were so 'doctrinally consolatory'; Judith A. Plotz records the former style as more characteristic of 'eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century depictions' – another feature contemporary with the gothic novel, in other words.[701] But by reclaiming torture and death not as threats for his characters but as signifiers of holiness, Wiseman exceeds all but the most lurid gothic novels whilst simultaneously sanitising their content, thus enabling him to claim, as quoted, that 'nothing could be admitted here which the most sensitive Catholic eye would shrink from contemplating.'[702]

As a nineteenth-century text, *Fabiola* is a curiosity, with its triple identity as gothic, historical, and religious novel. While these genres were evidently not incompatible, Wiseman writes all three to their generic extremes, with the gothic in particular used to frame in familiar melodramatic terms the historical excesses of brutal Christian purges in Roman times. By writing and reading *Fabiola* as a gothic novel, its historical didacticism and religious propaganda are made accessible through familiarity with the narrative formula, and additionally more shocking (thus having a greater impact on the reader) for when that formula is exceeded or transgressed by the deaths of many of the principal cast, including its exemplary and literally saintly adolescent figures. Wiseman almost certainly projected children and adolescents as part of his audience, for the presentation of the adolescents Pancratius and Agnes suggests that they were established as role models for this readership. As empathetically youthful characters, each is written in the idealised terms of the young gothic protagonist, with even their preordained fates presented as romantic, which little detracts from a perception of their way of life as enviable. While their perfection may not be attainable for the average reader, their virtue and serenity are clearly intended as qualities the reader should wish to possess.

[700] Ibid., pp. 192-193.
[701] Judith A. Plotz, 'A Victorian Comfort Book: Juliana Ewing's *The Story of a Short Life*'in *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, p. 170.
[702] Nicholas Wiseman, 'Preface' in *Fabiola* (1854) (1886 edition), p. vii.

It is clear from Wiseman's preface and his populist interpretation of this historical period that he was intent on creating a widely accessible text, and, accepting at face value the above research of Christa Ressmeyer Klein and testimony of Michael Watson, the evidence suggests that *Fabiola* was accepted by and for contemporary younger audiences. This highlights the continuing relationship between the gothic and adolescent readers, who responded to both high drama and their own representation in such fiction, which was otherwise becoming rare. *Fabiola* is unusual not just for its multifaceted generic approach but for the increasing obsolescence of its generic footing. Wiseman invokes fairly conventional gothic tropes in a period where they were falling out of fashion, unless metaphorical or ironic – consider the way *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* self-consciously invoke gothic tropes as matters of individual perspective which rarely play out according to convention. Even the written style of *Fabiola* is anachronistically florid and didactic, while *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* employ far more individual first-person perspectives and styles. That the adolescent subject recedes from view in favour of the pre-adolescent child and how their subjectivity informs a flawed adulthood in this period's literature renders uncommon *Fabiola*'s use of relatively nuanceless adolescents. *Fabiola* might be called an alternative evolution of the gothic to those of Brontë and Dickens – but that in itself is one more indication of the gothic's incredible generic diversity. Moreover, *Fabiola*, as noted above, was extremely popular. The gothic formula might have been out of fashion, but – perhaps for the very reason of its sudden rarity in its classic three-volume form – there still remained a taste for it.

It is partly the formal elements which render Wiseman's novel particularly unusual. The three-volume form had remained the most popular form since the 1790s period, with *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations* also published this way, but few of the most conventional and formulaic instances of gothic were still written to this length. As discussed in Chapter Two, a desire for immediate gratification and swifter profitability created an impetus for much shorter gothic fiction, first in bluebooks and then in short or serialised stories for magazines, a form which broadened in use to cover general supernatural tales and any melodramatic fiction; as noted, *Great Expectations* was first carried in this form before its complete three-volume publication. Taking this shorter fiction into account, more ephemeral both in its own time and subsequently (as opposed to the elevation to classic status of *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, and *Fabiola*'s contemporary popularity), Wiseman's novel is no isolated resurgence of gothic but part of a trend of the classic female gothic taken to greater extremes.

Ellen Wood's – better known as Mrs. Henry Wood in her time – 'Gina Montani' of 1851, Elizabeth Gaskell's 'The Grey Woman' of 1861, and Sheridan Le Fanu's 'Carmilla' of 1872 bear notable generic similarities, largely in common with *Fabiola*; all three take place in the conventional gothic setting of historical Europe, all feature the motif of the gothic castle as the seat of evil power, and all three have as their protagonists virtuous young women who become the victims of patriarchal or otherwise sexual tyranny. The eponymous Gina Montani is the poor and jilted lover of a count whose jealous wife has her walled up alive; Anna Scherer, the 'Grey Woman' of the title, is lured into marriage with a wealthy aristocrat who proves to be the leader of a vicious robber gang; Laura is preyed on by the vampiric Carmilla in her own home. What is notable about each tale is that they, like Wiseman, choose not to protect their young female protagonists from the villains' predations; Wiseman's Agnes is executed as a Christian, Gina Montani is secretly murdered, Anna Scherer marries and becomes pregnant by a brutal tyrant rather than conveniently avoiding it, and Laura nearly dies from being gradually bled by Carmilla. In gothic romances of the Radcliffe type, it was rare for such characters, particularly as protagonists and main characters, to actually suffer the consequences of their villains' plans, although stories with male, often antiheroic protagonists differed in this regard. This suggests that one development of gothic in this period was the erosion of narrative preferment towards female protagonists, or possibly changing cultural standards no longer demanding the same delicacy. Supporting the latter are examples from these same decades of children, too, losing their protective aura; the following case study will provide further evidence, but among the authors listed above, an 1870 story by Le Fanu entitled 'The Child that Went with the Fairies' involves a male child being kidnapped by fays through no particular fault of his own. But there is a less arbitrary logic to 'Gina Montani', 'The Grey Woman', and 'Carmilla', which is that no further felicity is extended to the passive female protagonist of gothic fiction, who could usually trust a masculine figure to rescue them from a horrible fate. Agnes and Gina Montani both die, Laura is drained to the point of death, and Anna survives only thanks to her resourceful maid, not her own virtues. The heroes, rather than protagonists, are older, masculine figures who play more active roles. Carmilla is ultimately destroyed by the male trinity of Laura's father and his military and aristocratic associates. Anna Scherer's maid, Amante, is 'tall and handsome, though upwards of forty, and somewhat gaunt';[703] her implicitly masculine build suggests that proactive roles in the gothic were associated with male characters, and where

[703] Elizabeth Gaskell, 'The Grey Woman' (1861) in *Gothic Tales* (Penguin Classics, 2004), p. 302.

such roles were assigned to female characters then male characteristics transferred over as well. This suggests that passivity is being prescribed against rather than femininity or youth; as in *Jane Eyre*, the practicality of a character being active rather than passive depended on certain demographic choices, which can be recognised as centring on age rather than gender. The marginalisation of passivity agrees with a reading of gothic as developing towards, or being consumed as, a more unitarily action-centric genre. The greater emphasis on event and thrills was always characteristic of gothic over rival genres, but many of the gothic's greatest commercial successes, such as *The Monk* and bluebooks, were built upon exaggerating this, making the events more numerous and the thrills more intense. The result is that nineteenth-century gothic, though in many ways a moderating influence compared to controversial past successes, produced further developments seen in *Jane Eyre* regarding the role of female protagonists, who were coming to be written with less concern for propriety. However, where *Northanger Abbey*'s Catherine Morland and *The Heroine*'s Cherry Wilkinson were effectively condemned for their misguided actions as much as their misreadings of reality, subsequent female protagonists were also written with fewer anxieties about acceptable behaviour when threatened, having greater freedom in actively responding to the events of the narrative – which often manifested itself in their falling victim to violence, but in other areas produced what may be called recognisably modern female protagonists, as in the following case study.

Owing to the absence of works aimed directly at adolescents, the texts of this chapter have typically been written, at least ostensibly, for adults, but the significance of children's fiction to this thesis cannot be forgotten, as both signifier and logical end-point of any trend to tailor the gothic towards an adolescent audience. The transgressive or adventurous elements of gothic always appealed to younger minds, adolescent and child, and Chapter One discusses numerous gothic works clearly aimed at children rather than adolescents which embraced these elements. The effect of the descension of gothic tropes into children's works through adolescent works varies; to appeal to Chapter One's examples, *Dangerous Sports* employs the gothic to satirise the consequences of reckless adventure, while *The Village-Orphan* conversely presents adventure in gothic surroundings as both interesting and effectual. But both make clear that there is appeal to children in transgressing those boundaries set down by adults and attempting an individual adventure, for better or worse, and this highlights the adolescent impulse in children – the desire to attain greater independence, and experience its concomitant excitement and danger. The later nineteenth century was certainly no desert for

such works. 1872, the year of 'Carmilla', saw the publication of the subject of this chapter's final case study, which likewise celebrates the continuing potential of gothic tropes and the increasing agency of female protagonists: George MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin*, published as a standalone novel after being serialised, like many other contemporary works, in the journal *Good Words for the Young* over 1870 and 1871.[704] In modern parlance it is obviously recognisable as a fantasy novel, set in no real time and place – the context given for its setting is simply that 'There was once a little princess whose father was king over a great country full of mountains and valleys.'[705] In its contemporary context, however, this is recognisable as a combined gothic and fairy-tale milieu – foreign in time and place in addition to being situated in a simple and unreal geography. The fairy-tale genre shares much common ground with the gothic, with its prevalence of castles and royalty, its sudden turns of fortune and malevolent villains, and there were many gothic tales which adopted the use of goblins and other mildly threatening imaginary creatures from fairy-tales; the proximity and increasingly common footing of the two genres may also be seen in their common anthologisation, with the 1826 collection *Legends of Terror!* including familiar gothic stories such as 'The Midnight Embrace in the Halls of Werdendorff, a Romance from the German' (for which, see Chapter Two) alongside obviously folkloric tales such as 'The Leprighaun, or the Gold Goblin, an Irish Tale.'[706] There was ample precedent for a work such as *The Princess and the Goblin* in the gothic anthology and the quest for suitable material for fantastic tales, many already read by children, if not intended for them; George MacDonald's insight was to synthesise the gothic and the fairy-tale in a full-length story directly intended for children.

This is not to say that the story's generic premise was wholly original. Previous chapters have argued for the gothic almost as a multigeneric category, congenial to multiple other genres, with its grim and terrifying tropes adaptable to domestic, adventure, or travel narratives, romances and social satires – multitudinous other forms generally. *The Princess and the Goblin* is built upon similar principles. As children's fiction, it is atmospherically distinct from much recognisable gothic in that even threats of harm are more implicit than stated; certainly there is no sexual threat, and no human characters are killed during the story, although the goblins are not so lucky. But not only are many tropes of the gothic present, as

[704] Anonymous, Endpages in George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) (Puffin Classics, 2011), unnumbered p. 241.
[705] George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*, p. 1.
[706] Anonymous, *Legends of Terror!* (1826), Contents.

are fairy-tale figures as mentioned previously, these are arranged around a narrative which features both a domestic and an adventure element, and indeed a girl's story and boy's story. Multiple sources of appeal are planted for the multi-faceted children's audience. This accords with other development in the period's gothic fiction; previous case studies have shown nineteenth-century literature as placing the gothic in fresh contexts or approaching it with original attitudes, and Smith and Hughes agree that 'From roughly the 1870s on, supernatural, Gothic elements were frequently combined with adventure tales'[707] – which places *The Princess and the Goblin*, with its serialisation beginning in 1870, at the forefront of the trend, even if that trend was anticipated in earlier gothic tales with adventure elements. MacDonald's novel also fell into line with mid-nineteenth-century developments in children's fiction. Darton concludes that, 'between 1837 and 1862' – a foundation established not long before *The Princess and the Goblin* – 'elements in the juvenile library had been clearly stabilized', among which were the ''boy's and girl's' book: original unbabyish stories, without explicit 'morals', ranging, for subjects, far outside English domestic circles,' and 'Fairy-tales as a permanent and honourable possession'.[708] The fairy-tale aspect of the story, evident even in a title which enshrined princesses and goblins, has been discussed above, but is also true is that *The Princess and the Goblin* prioritises interest, intrigue, and adventure above any attempt at didacticism; indeed, unusually for the period, it is only implicitly religious. The story takes place in an imagined rather than authentic setting, and might well be considered 'unbabyish' for choosing not to patronise its readers. Indeed, the novel seems to be directly rebuking the timidity of the average gothic protagonist; on multiple occasions, the eponymous princess, Irene, wakes up in the night and chooses to go alone to climb a mysterious and lonely old staircase in her vast and labyrinthine home. The scenario is essentially a revisiting of similar gothic incidents of heroines exploring the obscure castle they are lodged in, suffering intense terrors in the process; MacDonald undermines their fears by noting that 'Some little girls would have been afraid to find themselves thus alone in the middle of the night, but Irene was a princess.'[709] His protagonist is made of sterner stuff, and her literary ancestors are compared to juvenile 'little girls' of less respectable stock. Rather than asking his young readers to share in a protagonist's terror, he encourages them to be brave.

[707] Andrew Smith and William Hughes, 'Introduction: Locating the Victorian Gothic' in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, p. 12.
[708] F.J.H. Darton, *Children's Books in England*, p. 249.
[709] George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*, p. 83.

The novel's protagonists, as noted above, are both a boy and a girl, appealing to readers of both sexes. Princess Irene is 'about eight years old', which is very young for the protagonist of a gothic novel, 'but she got older very fast'[710] – a statement essentially confirming, for this novel, the hypothesis that gothic experiences are maturing ones, standing for adolescence in developing a character out of childhood innocence and into the wisdom of adulthood. Irene takes the role of the female gothic protagonist – nobly-born, 'sweet […] fair and pretty', and with adventures largely confined to her at once domestic and alien residence, 'a large house, half castle, half farmhouse', combining every lonely gothic residence.[711] Curdie, a miner's boy and stock high-minded peasant, is 'a very nice-looking boy', 'about twelve years old'[712] – it is unusual that he is older than Irene by half her age, but this is in deference to his profession as miner and more dangerous adventures, taking place in a gothic subterrain 'full of hollow places […] and winding ways'.[713] The mountain is inhabited by wicked and, despite the title, plural goblins, who in addition to being equivalent to banditti in serving 'to annoy the people who lived in the open-air storey above them', are also figured as foreign by being described as racially degenerate, having 'at one time […] lived above ground' before becoming 'greatly altered in the course of generations […] misshapen in body' from their subterranean residence.[714] The premise is thus established as a family-friendly vision of the gothic, one which also develops its fairy-tale aspects in lieu of the more common supernatural aspects of the gothic, for the story is devoid of ghosts, thus avoiding the necessity of sympathetic characters dying at any point. Eliding the issues of both sexuality and mortality helps to sanitise the story for children, although it is not without menace. While Irene faces no sexual threats, this commonplace device of the gothic is alluded to in the goblins' plan to marry her to their prince, the brutish Harelip, who declares 'it *will* be nice to make her cry. I'll have the skin taken off between her toes, and tie them up till they grow together.'[715] This fairly horrible torture is arguably more explicit than most threats of violence in the gothic, as is a similar proposal mooted upon the goblins' capture of Curdie, to 'tie him hand and foot, and have the pleasure of seeing him torn to pieces' by animals.[716] To threaten children in this way innovates upon the gothic novel, and in Irene's case recalls Christina Rossetti's 1862 poem 'Goblin Market', in which the non-specifically young Lizzie

[710] Ibid., p. 2.
[711] Ibid., p. 2, 1.
[712] Ibid., p. 36.
[713] Ibid., p. 2.
[714] Ibid., pp. 5, 2, 4.
[715] Ibid., p. 131.
[716] Ibid., p. 141.

piously suffers as goblins 'cuff'd and caught her, / Coax'd and fought her, / Bullied and besought her, / Scratch'd her, pinch'd her black as ink, / Kick'd and knock'd her, / Maul'd and mock'd her'.[717] MacDonald's protagonists do not, however, suffer any of these threats, and that they remain just threats is arguably a gothic quality, more than if the violence was actually inflicted; on the other hand, while no human characters die, the evil and inhuman goblins do in droves, 'swept up drowned' after their plot to kill the humans by flooding backfires, with the grisly result that 'dead goblins were tossing about in the current'.[718] While *The Princess and the Goblin* is in some measure sanitised, in other respects it embraces graphic violence and almost resembles the excesses of gothic bluebooks, which were themselves arguably the more accessible form to child readers.

Irene's introduction foreshadows that these menacing experiences will prompt the characters to grow up – to become more adult, which means passing through adolescence. Both Irene and Curdie are introduced as simple characters. Irene, though described as 'a sweet little creature', begins the story as a bored and somewhat petulant character; forbidden to go outside in inclement weather, she is 'so tired that even her toys could no longer amuse her' (despite their being amazing toys which the author cautions the artist not to attempt to draw), and exaggeratedly 'very miserable' in consequence, enough that her fondest desire is to 'go out and get thoroughly wet, and catch a particularly nice cold, and have to go to bed and take gruel.'[719] Her emotional response, not unrepresentatively for a child, is disproportionate to the events around her, to jeopardise her health from boredom and spite. Slipping away in her nurse's absence, Irene gets lost in an unfamiliar part of her home and, after some time, 'threw herself on the floor, and burst into a wailing cry broken by sobs.' Her emotional disturbance is moderated less by character growth than by her noble status, 'for she was as brave as could be expected of a princess of her age', but this illustrates Irene's emotional immaturity.[720]

Curdie, a little older, is a little wiser; old enough to work as a miner, one of the 'more courageous of them' for his willingness to work all night, when the goblins are about, so that he can 'get extra wages that he might buy a very warm red petticoat for his mother', and to attempt 'finding out what the goblins were about'.[721] Curdie shows bravery, generosity, and

[717] Christina Rossetti, 'Goblin Market' (1862).
[718] George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*, p. 231.
[719] Ibid., pp. 2, 6-7.
[720] Ibid., p. 8.
[721] Ibid., pp. 48-49.

self-sacrifice – but he too has flaws which he outgrows in the course of the story. Irene certainly does; after meeting her wise great-great-grandmother, Irene is no longer afraid to go wandering the labyrinthine corridors of her house at midnight, because 'Irene was a princess.'[722] Not long afterwards, waking in the night 'in a terrible fright' and hearing 'a hideous noise in her room', a magical thread given to Irene by her grandmother grants her immediate courage to escape and to follow the thread, which her grandmother has guaranteed will lead back to her.[723] Irene exhibits both bravery and, particularly, faith in doing so – 'to her surprise, and somewhat to her dismay', the thread leads Irene outside and 'straight up the mountain', but even when it leads into an underground stream and a dread 'shudder ran through her from head to foot', 'She did not hesitate' to follow.[724] Despite her newfound confidence, Irene's faith is shown not to be indefatigable; 'it tried her dreadfully' to follow the thread, and she is scared, but 'wonder[s] at herself that she was not ten times more frightened'.[725] This is significant in the same way as Pancratius's trials in *Fabiola* – they suggest that true bravery is not the absence of fear, but the ability to overcome it. Comparison to *Fabiola* also illuminates the religious allegory of Irene's grandmother and the mysterious but ultimately beneficial ways her thread leads Irene – for Irene's faith is rewarded when her thread leads, along its obtuse journey, to the imprisoned Curdie, who Irene is able to release and lead to safety. Irene's terror in maze-like castles and underground passages leads her to grow from being a spoiled and irritable child into a heroine and model of faith and courage.

Despite Curdie's advantages as an older and more confident character, he requires further trials to reach Irene's state of maturity – often the case for male gothic protagonists, who, due to relaxed social standards for males, are more likely to fall during the course of the story. He dismisses Irene's magical grandmother, allegorically a religious figure, as simply 'nonsense this child talks' due to his lacking faith, but his superiority is tested where he repeatedly concedes his inferiority to Irene's abilities and reason[726] – for instance, when lost and trapped in the mountain and has to admit 'I know nothing about the way, miner as I am', it is Irene who frees him, where conventionally their roles would be reversed.[727] Irene's faith repeatedly trumps Curdie's self-assurance, yet 'she had felt all the time that Curdie was not believing what she told him'; Irene intuitively understanding Curdie's point of view without

[722] Ibid., p. 83.
[723] Ibid., p. 147.
[724] Ibid., pp. 148, 150.
[725] Ibid., p. 151.
[726] Ibid., p. 159.
[727] Ibid., p. 160.

reciprocation highlights the contrasting psychological maturity between the two.[728] Curdie's inability to place faith in others is reflected in his literal inability to perceive his saviour, for when introduced to Irene's grandmother, he sees only 'a big, bare, garret-room […] a heap of musty straw, and a withered apple'. Most damningly, he patronises Irene as a simple child, telling her to 'go down to the nursery, like a good girl', ignoring both her achievements and his failings.[729]

Curdie's dismissal of the 'nonsense this child talks'[730] is akin to that of widely-denigrated old wives' tales – 'the Old Wife's orally transmitted tales of supernatural activity' which Dale Townshend has shown the expurgation of to be central to the reformation of early children's literature, as seen in the constant disavowals of the supernatural in children's fiction in Chapter One of this thesis.[731] In doing so, Curdie is misreading the genre of his own story, and as such also loses the sympathy of the reader who is enjoying the fantastical tale; Curdie's error is also MacDonald's rebuke to those who have dismissed supernatural fiction for children over the years. Worse for Curdie is that he implicitly banishes religion to the nursery, rather than trusting to the signs of a higher power which he himself has experienced. This evidences that Curdie's fatal character-flaw is pride, which blinds him to any knowledge superior to his own, but hope for his redemption by appreciating another's point of view is seeded in a suggestion that he becomes 'sorry, without a chance of confessing, that he had behaved so unkindly', and his continuing investigation of the goblins is a form of apology by proxy;[732] in consequence, the narrator, in both a knowing nod to a frequent genealogical plot twist of romance and a more progressive statement on the nature of nobility, proposes that 'Curdie was not a miner only, but a prince as well. Many such instances have been known in the world's history.'[733] However, there is also a punishment for his lack of faith, which rebounds upon him magnified: Captured and indeed shot by men-at-arms whilst investigating the goblins' activities around Irene's home, he falls into a fever in which his earnest attempts to warn others are considered 'incredible […] raving', and while the guards 'did for him what they could, and promised everything he wanted,' this is 'with no intention of fulfilment.'[734]

[728] Ibid., p. 167.
[729] Ibid., p. 171.
[730] Ibid., p. 160.
[731] Dale Townshend, 'The Haunted Nursery: 1764-1830' in *The Gothic in Children's Literature* (Routledge, 2008), p. 17.
[732] George MacDonald, *The Princess and the Goblin*, p. 194.
[733] Ibid., p. 195.
[734] Ibid., p. 199.

As noted above, children too were coming to suffer more in the period's fiction, and Curdie suffers the worst in this novel. Nonetheless, it is strictly in parallel to Irene that he is trapped, disbelieved, and even ridiculed, though this is also traditional for male gothic protagonists, often imprisoned for debt or murder or abducted by the Inquisition; significantly, it also presents a more abstract form of the 'fall into moral and spiritual night, in which the young person wanders lost, alone, perplexed and despairing' which Roderick McGillis observes as part of 'the basic pattern of nearly all of MacDonald's novels and fantasies.'[735] It is only through suffering that Curdie gains the understanding and maturity necessary to resolve the narrative: Coming to a rapprochement with Irene, defeating the goblins, receiving the king's own favour, being granted a kiss from the princess. Defeating the villains of the narrative, progressing the chaste romantic subplot, and indeed being granted the possibility of social elevation all signal Curdie's growth to a newfound maturity, achieved by character development accelerated by suffering in gothic events; Curdie's early immaturity and lack of wisdom merely awaited an adolescent state to work through.

The Princess and the Goblin sheds light on a number of significant literary and social developments in the gothic and its reception by this later point in the nineteenth century. It demonstrates that literary gothic had not necessarily changed beyond recognition; the gothic tropes in the story are recognisable as those written a century before. What changed was their presentation. MacDonald's resituation of gothic tropes into a fantasy setting, and his orientation of his story towards children, unravel the long-standing arguments discussed in Chapter One that unrealistic fiction corrupted readers' expectations of reality, and that supernatural tales were fit only for children or nobody. There is little chance of any but the smallest child mistaking the setting of *The Princess and the Goblin* and the actions of its characters as plausible or possible to emulate; few of the novel's readers were likely to encounter goblins, fairy grandmothers, or even, inter-class interaction being limited, boy miners. On a slightly more realistic level, the novel depicts Irene as repeatedly running away from her guardians and leaving her home, which is hardly to be recommended for young girls of any period – but perhaps what made this an exciting reading prospect for such an audience was its unreality; as Penny Brown has pointed out, 'For young females, the sheer logistics of

[735] Roderick McGillis, 'Childhood and Growth: George MacDonald and William Wordsworth', in *Romanticism and Children's Literature in Nineteenth-Century England*, p. 159.

rebellion and escape were […] problematic', the more so the younger the person.[736] While young girls might often have desired escape, it was unlikely to be achieved, and thus was a fantasy safely to be indulged. As for the gothic's suitability or otherwise for children, the criticism is undercut in a sanitised gothic story explicitly intended for children and admired for it.

But it is also true that, by this point, attacks on gothic fiction were obsolete, gothic's more traditional expressions having largely given way to the revised forms exhibited in this chapter – and sensation fiction, as will shortly be discussed, inheriting the gothic's critical lightning rod. There is a fair argument that *The Princess and the Goblin* is readable as a fairy tale rather than a gothic novel, which might have substituted goblins for, perhaps, bandits masquerading as spectres, but this does not diminish the story's use of gothic elements; if these were read over by critics or treated differently for their presence in a children's fantasy story, this merely proves that the gothic was becoming accepted literary material by means of careful reworking and sampling, even if that process went unnoticed by consumers. Additionally, several generations of readers had passed since the time of the genre's archetypal texts; by the 1870s, few eighteenth-century readers of gothic could still have been alive, much less their expired criticisms. It is perhaps because of this that readers were able to enjoy and recommend *The Princess and the Goblin* without reservation. Although the first edition of *The Princess and the Goblin* is dated 1872, it seems to actually have been published late in 1871, cannily positioned as a Christmas present, and reviews were enthusiastic and uncritical, with the reviewer of *The Athenaeum* praising it as 'full of romance and adventure', though this same feature would have been regarded negatively were the book only published nearer the start than the end of the nineteenth century.[737] Such had times changed; 'Among Christmas literature for children a better storybook […] could hardly be desired' was *The Examiner*'s conclusion.[738] An adult's recommendation is no sure sign of a child's approbation, of course, but during the story's original serialisation, *The Examiner*'s magazine reviewer noted that 'we may record that two small children grumble that a monthly part does not come out every week', which signals that its audience had taken to the story[739] – and, if 'small', may signal also the continuing habit of children reading above their age

[736] Penny Brown, *The Captured World: The Child and Childhood in Nineteenth-Century Women's Writing in England*, p. 139.
[737] Anonymous, 'Christmas Books' in *The Athenaeum*, Iss. 2304 (December 1871), p. 835.
[738] Anonymous, 'Christmas Books' in *The Examiner*, Iss. 3334 (December 1871), p. 1273.
[739] Anonymous, 'The Magazines' in *The Examiner*, Iss. 3292 (March 1871), p. 238.

group. Of course, what these approbations implicitly reveal is that the gothic had not become the preserve of children alone. The gothic always had much to recommend it to young people, but while they were inspired to look forwards to their maturity, for older readers there was the possibility of nostalgic remembrance of their own youth, and being given cause to romanticise that age. As the author of *The Westminster Review*'s 'Belles Lettres' article slyly noted, the story 'will we think have charms for others besides children.'[740] This open avowal of the book's crossover potential reveals another way in which times had changed, if critics could finally permit that reading tastes need not alter with a person's age. In providing cross-reading appeal and supporting the adventurous young person in fiction, *The Princess and the Goblin* helped pave the way for much subsequent adolescent-centric fiction.

Although *The Princess and the Goblin* concludes the case studies, it at last bears mentioning that there was another, significant, popular literary form at work in the nineteenth century ultimately derived from the gothic. This is the (much-deferred) sensation fiction genre, which may be described as the gothic situated in contemporary England, representing criminality not as the product of exotic climes or antique times but as something that could be encountered beneath the veneer of modern civility. As this definition implies, *Jane Eyre* and *Great Expectations*, along with many later gothic novels, presaged the taste for gothic-styled melodrama in a setting closer to the reader; they merely lacked a greater emphasis on modern polite society, and its reverse, social scandal. The link between sensation fiction and gothic was, if not explicit, observed and acknowledged, with many of the same criticisms being levelled at both. H.L. Mansel, in an 1863 delineation of the genre, drew a continuous line between the Minerva Press, chief publisher of much gothic fiction, and 'the thousand and one tales of the current season', uniting the two in their chief purveyor, the circulating-library, a multigenerational 'hot-bed for forcing a crop of writers without talent and readers without discrimination.' Like the gothic, Mansel outlined the sensation genre as formulaic, 'Each game […] played with the same pieces, differing only in the moves'; the use of a board game metaphor rather than the shopping list of the 'Terrorist' gothic critiques translates the criticism from a basis of unimaginative consumption to one of light entertainment, although Mansel is similarly scathing of the 'commercial atmosphere' of production as deferential only to the 'market-law of demand and supply'. But it is this law of entertainment, rather than improvement, which Mansel particularly objects to; 'Excitement, and excitement alone,

[740] Anonymous, 'Belles Lettres' in *The Westminster Review*, Vol. 41, Iss. 2 (April 1872), p. 581.

seems to be the great end at which they aim' – an end united with their profiteering aims, of course – and this parallels Mansel's dismissal of the gothic output of the Minerva Press as 'light reading' rather than improving material.[741]

It is no coincidence that, conversely, Edith Birkhead used the word 'sensation' to describe the contents of gothic narratives.[742] Indeed, subsequent critics have more overtly connected the subsequently well-established gothic and sensation genres, with Winifred Hughes noting sensation fiction's 'general affinity with the eighteenth-century Gothicism of Ann Radcliffe and "Monk" Lewis', among other sources such as the 'more suspect performances of the Newgate novelists';[743] Laurence Talairach-Vielmas advocates a stronger connection, with sensation fiction 'heavily indebted' to and 'finding its inspiration' in gothic stories; he detects also overlapping narratives and tropes between the two, 'The well, the waters or the lonely quarry as crime sites […] The search for the secret in sensation novels was, indeed, much modelled on that in its Gothic predecessors.'[744] That Ellen Wood, the author of the aforementioned traditional gothic tale 'Gina Montani', was also a prominent sensation novelist cements the connection. But while this form was one which carried gothic forwards, it did so without great significance for literary or actual adolescence. As with gothic novels, it is highly likely that sensation novels were read by adolescents, but there was little internal narrative material for them to project onto in the way of quasi-adolescent protagonists. Sensation narratives generally required their protagonists to be independent adults capable of being taken seriously in social activity. To highlight a typical example, Walter Hartright, protagonist of Wilkie Collins's genre-defining *The Woman in White*, is twenty-eight years old, and while the plot hinges on the target of the novel's villains, Laura Fairlie, not yet being of age, at twenty years she is outside the range of most female gothic protagonists – and more significantly, she is not among the novel's multiple narrators, indicating her secondary status as a character and plot device.[745] Were *The Woman in White* a gothic novel, Laura Fairlie must certainly have been both younger and the viewpoint character. As it stands, she illuminates that characters of adolescent or teenage years were inadequate to the challenges of the sensation plot. As such, sensation fiction's significance to gothic considerably

[741] H.L. Mansel, 'Sensation Novels' in *Quarterly Review*, v. 113, no. 226 (Apr., 1863), pp. 482-514, on Gaslight <http://gaslight.mtroyal.ca/sensnovl.htm> [accessed 22 November 2013].
[742] Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror: A Study of Gothic Romance* (Constable & Company Ltd., 1921), p. 185.
[743] Winifred Hughes, *The Maniac in the Cellar* (Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 7.
[744] Laurence Talairach-Vielmas, 'Sensation Fiction: A Peep Behind the Veil' in *The Victorian Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, p. 29.
[745] Wilkie Collins, *The Woman in White* (1860).

outweighs its significance to adolescence, and thus it bears only a passing mention here – as one of the many directions taken by the gothic in this period, and a sign of why the adolescent protagonist fell out of use, prior to the emergence of more ambitious children's and young adult literature.

It is the emergence of *The Princess and the Goblin* which has the greatest implications for the gothic and children's literature from the late nineteenth century. Its success reveals that both social and market conditions were prepared for a children's and adolescent literature which placed active, independent young characters in improbable or outright fantastical gothic scenarios, a model which is essentially modern in its principles. There is an essential difference between MacDonald's novel and earlier children's works as studied in Chapter One, such as *Dangerous Sports* or *The Village Orphan*; rather than children getting into inconsequential scrapes and being rescued by adults, there is a new willingness to accept their depiction as capable of saving the day independently, even being depended on by adults for this purpose. The survival of gothic tropes in this form, to which there is no sign of a negative response, likewise reflects a shift in critical opinion, one that testifies to the enduring appeal of the gothic. Despite claims of generic exhaustion and market saturation, the gothic has been shown to appear in recognisable form in multiple highly distinct literary expressions throughout the century, some of which are ironic or self-aware comments on fictionality, as in the case studies of Part I, and others of which are unquestioning repetitions of ideas which have lost none of their narrative or figurative power, as in Part II. MacDonald's novel was not an obvious trendsetter, but emerges as being within a trend with the potential for market success: The enduring combination of the maturing child and the gothic adventure. Care still had to be taken in how to present this, though; while Le Fanu's 'Carmilla' was published in the same year as *The Princess and the Goblin*, it met far more disparaging reviews: 'Mr. Le Fanu's ghastly "Carmilla" is, fortunately for the readers of the magazine, brought to a conclusion' is all that *The Examiner*'s critic cares to say.[746] This appears to have had some relation to 'Carmilla''s invocation of the supernatural, and specifically the vampire, judging from the more measured comments of *London Society* magazine's critic, who acknowledges that Le Fanu 'has a pleasant way of telling dreadful things' but declares that a vampire's 'material habits and sanguinary appetites bring it immediately to the touch of experience and reason, and render faith in such existences impossible' – while admitting of some bias in

[746] Anonymous, 'The Magazines for March' in *The Examiner*, Iss. 3345 (March 1872), p. 262.

declaring that 'I do not think that vampires are quite so interesting as ghosts.'[747] If suspension of disbelief remained a problem for critics, as this comment suggests, then conceivably *The Princess and the Goblin* was treated more generously for being set in a wholly unreal land, and moreover, aimed at a more credulous audience for whom suspension of disbelief is less problematic. Whether Le Fanu considered 'Carmilla' a story fit for youths or for adults alone is unclear, published as it was in the eclectic annals of *The Dark Blue* magazine alongside short stories, serial romances, poetry, and articles on English sculpture, but the story's sexual overtones and violent content render it unlikely children's fiction[748] – much though it was probably read by some, as gothic novels were. Of course, critical reaction has never been a reliable barometer of success. It was thanks to such works as 'Carmilla' that the vampire became an instantly recognisable icon of the gothic and one of the most successful additions to the genre – in addition to preserving a place in the gothic for young women.

In speaking of the gothic adventure, one final work of the nineteenth century forms an illuminating example in terms of bridging the gap between classic and modern gothic, adult's and children's literature. Jules Verne is best-known as an author associated with early science fiction, but it is equally proper to term him a significant figure in the proliferation of adventure literature, and indeed crossover literature – a work that 'commands a dual readership of adult and child' here defined by Penny Brown, and indeed previously alluded to in the reviews of *The Princess and the Goblin*.[749] Just as the latter was suggested to possess 'charms for others besides children', [750] Verne was 'certainly inspiring not to boys alone', in Darton's opinion.[751] While earlier gothic novels were suggested to have been written for adults and appropriated by children, what is implied here is that MacDonald and Verne wrote for children but were adopted by adults; however, it is unclear where Verne's allegiances lay. His texts do not prioritise the adventures of child or teenage heroes, though Brown has argued that they were nonetheless intended to appeal to a similar audience; while 'resisting the possibility of reader identification', his characters were 'exaggerated' to evoke stronger emotions of 'admiration, envy, or fear'.[752] His influences are similarly ambiguous; Brown records that he 'had read and admired James Fenimore Cooper, Daniel Defoe, Edgar Allan

[747] Anonymous, 'The Talk of the Town' in *London Society*, Vol. 22, Iss. 129 (September 1880), p. 283.
[748] John C. Freund, ed., *The Dark Blue*, Iss. 10 (December 1871).
[749] Penny Brown, *A Critical History of French Children's Literature, Volume Two: 1830-Present*, p. 103.
[750] Anonymous, 'Belles Lettres' in *The Westminster Review*, p. 581; F.J.H. Darton, *Children's Books in England*, p. 298.
[751] Frederick Joseph Harvey Darton, *Children's Books in England* (Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 298
[752] Penny Brown, *A Critical History of French Children's Literature, Volume Two: 1830-Present*, p. 93.

Poe, Sir Walter Scott, and Johann David Wyss in his youth and appropriated the basic formula', but although he would have had first-hand knowledge of these authors' appeal to youthful readers, having been one himself, neither were these authors writing for children.[753] But whoever Verne intended to read his works – supposing that he even held a preference – is not wholly relevant when his works were nonetheless serialised in Britain in *The Boy's Own Paper* for over thirty years, thus opening them up to a children's readership.[754] Verne is relevant to the history of gothic because he did not simply, as noted above, write science fiction. Verne's work crossed numerous generic boundaries, and many of his stories debatably have a gothic element; however, in one particular novel this is indisputable. Verne's *The Castle of the Carpathians* (*Le Château des Carpathes*) was published in French in 1892 and serialised in English in *Boy's Own* from March to July of 1893, under the title *Rodolphe de Gortz; or, The Castle of the Carpathians*.[755] Unusually, for both the period and author, *The Castle of the Carpathians* is very distinctly a gothic novel, and employs gothic tropes entirely recognisable from the Radcliffe era. The following quotation is representative of the atmosphere throughout:

> A castle deserted, haunted, and mysterious. A vivid and ardent imagination had soon peopled it with phantoms; ghosts appeared in it, and spirits returned to it at all hours of the night. Such opinions are still common in certain superstitious countries of Europe, and Transylvania is one of the most superstitious.[756]

The story centres around a mysterious ruined castle in the mountains of Transylvania – intriguingly, anticipating Bram Stoker's *Dracula* by five years, though their similarities end there. This castle and its environs are visited by a vast number of gothic tropes – mysterious sounds and lights, spectral warnings issuing from the ether, an enigmatic and reclusive baron, the apparent phantom of a woman long-dead. Three-quarters of the book are spent on developing a seemingly supernatural situation by use of these still-familiar gothic tropes, but Verne's plan in setting up these well-established devices was to provide an all-the-more-surprising modern twist upon them in his conclusion – or perhaps a less surprising twist for anyone familiar with Verne's oeuvre: 'At this period […] the use of electricity, which has justly been called the soul of the universe, had been brought to its highest perfection' – and so of course electricity was employed in 'special machinery for spreading terror in the country

[753] Ibid., p. 86.
[754] Andrew Nash, 'Jules Verne: Boys Own Paper / Boys Own Annual' in The Jules Verne Collecting Resource Page <http://www.julesverne.ca/jvboysown.html> [accessed 3 March 2014].
[755] The FictionMags Index – Galactic Central, 'Stories, Listed by Author' [Verga to Verner] <http://www.philsp.com/homeville/FMI/s3999.htm#A128934.14> [accessed 3 March 2014].
[756] Jules Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, trans. anonymous (1903) (Fredonia Books, 2001), p. 24.

by producing phenomena which could only be ascribed to diabolic agencies.'[757] The novel's every mysterious and apparently supernatural incident is explained in careful detail by the use of various electrical devices, employed perhaps improbably and certainly redundantly in this lonely Transylvanian castle under the direction of its legal proprietor who was conducting no illegal or illicit activities whatsoever.

The nominal villain's actions do not, in fact, bear scrutiny, but the point for Verne was clearly to recreate the gothic novel of old and show how new technological developments gave it a fresh breath of life, permitted new possibilities. Even the electrical plot device is firmly in the gothic tradition of the explained supernatural. Thus, in every respect, Verne's novel represents a revival, however brief, of the tradition of the gothic novel – and that this was thought fit for the readers of *Boy's Own* highlights either a continuing appeal of these classic tropes to a young readership or at least a consideration of such an effect. It is insufficient, given that they only appear at the conclusion, to suggest that Verne's trademark science fiction devices were the selling point; the story subsists on its gothic roots, and indeed, the gothic gets the last word in the text. The novel's final page undermines the rationality of its own denouement in predicting that its technologically-explicated conclusion would be forgotten: 'although these different phenomena have been explained in so natural a manner, it must not be imagined', Verne warns, that the villagers 'ceased to believe in their supernatural nature'; the rationalist characters 'found reasoning in vain […] many years will elapse before [the villagers] will renounce their superstitious beliefs.'[758] Verne himself positions the gothic story as the great survivor even over his own scientific romance; other genres, other ways of navigating modernity may come and go, but the antiquity of the gothic outlives them all in the popular imagination.

The nineteenth century was a period of change for the gothic and for its young readership – but not revolution. As a form of popular literature, the gothic may have ceased to be the most prominent genre, but its successors possessed a clear indebtedness to it; the sensation novel exploited terrors and improbabilities derived from the laws and standards of contemporary society and continued to emphasise melodrama and clearly-defined good and evil, while the cheap penny dreadfuls at their most bloodthirsty indulged to excess the gothic's fascination with crime and violence. But the tropes of the gothic were, as has been shown, not uniformly

[757] Ibid., pp. 186, 188.
[758] Ibid., p. 211.

adapted or transmuted to modernity; they survived, albeit in hibernation following the peak of the gothic's market domination in the early decades of the century – and though not always aimed at a younger readership, they were written with a consciousness of the gothic's influence on youth. *Jane Eyre* places its late-teenage protagonist in a revised *Northanger Abbey*, in which her compliant attitude to mysterious events traps her in a scenario which she not only constructs as gothic but which has genuine gothic shades – simultaneously debunking and affirming gothic's role in fiction and suggesting that even a genre-aware, post-gothic text can develop the genre for modernity and express new insights into its influence on a young person's personal growth. *Great Expectations* associates gothic tropes with the forces of the older generation in the way the exertion of their control distorts the expectations and livelihood of the younger generation, showing how a brutal upbringing which fails to respect young people's individuality squanders their talents and frustrates their emotional development. Both texts represent the gothic as partly delusive or artificial, but nonetheless argue for its very real and detrimental effects as inevitably practiced upon naïve youths. The implicit logic of early gothic narratives – that suffering brings reward – is gradually reworked into social satire expressing the tribulations of a child's maturation where adults seek to exploit them. Thus the implication of the gothic as an adolescent rite of passage is more seriously and critically dramatised as part of a growing awareness of and interest in child subjectivity in fiction. *Fabiola*'s more earnest invocation of the gothic highlights important generic and social realities regarding the gothic and adolescence; the former is reworked into an unusual historical and pro-Catholic romance with a reception suggesting that the gothic had become an accepted part of the literary landscape, while the latter is depicted in an outdated but consciously aspirational fashion that suggests an awareness of and tailoring to an adolescent audience. *The Princess and the Goblin* approaches adolescence more obliquely by aiming its gothic fiction directly at children, but its plot depends upon the same quietly understood logic of the gothic as a vehicle to develop immature characters into wiser and stronger individuals. This seemingly disparate collection of individual texts from the nineteenth century, by authors canonical and more obscure, aimed at differing age groups and representing gothic in varying degrees of originality, does in fact reveal trends in fiction's approach to gothic and adolescence; the gothic broadens out in generic range and becomes ever more integrated into the literary landscape, while children become better-acknowledged and adolescence better-understood as subjects and audiences for fiction. Uniting the two are closer examinations and widespread tacit acceptance of the gothic's relevance to a younger

audience, as catalyst and metaphor for their personal development but also as a popular element in their consumption of fiction.

In asking what the authors of the nineteenth century made of the gothic, and whether it retained its pertinence to adolescent audiences, the conclusions which the case studies and overviews of the period's fiction direct to are more accordant with the status quo than might be expected, given the efforts made by critical reviewers to hound the gothic to extinction, particularly in the literature of the young and impressionable. The gothic persisted, often in highly recognisable form, through the entire century, and where it was found, awareness of adolescent development, synthesised with the high drama of the narrative, was to be found also – and often written with greater attention and subtlety than in the gothic style of the late eighteenth century. This correlation itself correlates with the fiction discussed in earlier chapters, in which the adolescent was likewise at home in a gothic narrative; thematically and dramatically, there is considerable reason to conclude that adolescents were the ideal gothic protagonists. Outside of fiction, in the realm of its audience, evidence is harder to obtain – but reader identification suggests that there would have been considerable child and adolescent interest in the gothic-flavoured narratives this chapter details simply because their protagonists tended to be children and adolescents; the account of Michael Watson as a reader of *Fabiola* provides one corroboration of this proposal.[759] Also significant is that, while many of the texts cited in this chapter took no steps to outline their intended reader – and as such did not rule out children and adolescents, who would certainly have read them – there are included texts which were definitely aimed at children, such as *The Princess and the Goblin* and the translated *The Castle of the Carpathians*. That the gothic was finding its way into children's narratives – again, recalling Chapter One's proof that this had always been the case – suggests that authors did not simply consider this an appropriate connection, but that a demand from this audience for gothic material was being catered to. It is likely no coincidence that these works advocate the behaviours and actions of maturity: Wisdom, bravery, independence. Part of the gothic dream was not just to place oneself in an imagined scenario of terror, but to picture oneself as a person capable of resolving these situations. The gothic prepared its young audiences to be better – which meant being older. It guided them through the impulses and motions of adolescence, if in a highly dramatised form. And that these scenarios were so unreal – that the tropes invoked were a century or more old, and

[759] Michael Watson, 'In the Days of Youth', p. 607.

referred to situations not encountered for centuries more in the past – provides the strongest proof that the gothic was not capable of becoming outdated or obsolete. Like a gothic castle, this was a genre built to last – and though it may have fallen into ruin, it remained inhabitable, perhaps the more so for its decay. As Killeen observed, in a line cited early in this chapter, the gothic 'fragmented and took up ghostly habitations elsewhere, indeed everywhere […] became ubiquitous.'[760] The texts cited in this chapter show evidence of gothic in areas quite outside its most popular Radcliffean milieu – modern-day England, ancient Rome, fairy-tale lands. The sensations expressed by the gothic, and their effect on adolescents, were confined to no one era, within fiction or outside of it. Its trans-historical appeal and relevance is such that it even, in works some centuries old, remains comparatively readable to a modern audience – unlike certain fictions. As Morrison and Baldick observe, in their collection of early nineteenth-century *Blackwood's* gothic tales, 'the sentimental and comical fiction of that period is almost entirely unpalatable to modern readers.'[761] The gothic has, by and large, stood the test of time. Even such a futurist of fiction as Jules Verne proposed that, in defiance of the triumph of rationalism, stories of a supernatural ilk would survive in the minds of children for many years to come:

'And Magister Hermod continues to base the lessons he gives to the young folk of Werst on the study of the Transylvanian legends; and for many years yet the villagers will believe that spirits from the other world haunt the ruins of the Castle of the Carpathians.'
--Jules Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians* (1892)[762]

[760] Jarlath Killeen, *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1825-1914*, p. 3.
[761] Robert Morrison and Chris Baldick, 'Introduction' in *Tales of Terror From Blackwood's Magazine*, p. xviii.
[762] Jules Verne, *The Castle of the Carpathians*, p. 211.

CONCLUSION
A Happy Ending?

'*In this book, not only is there no happy ending, there is no happy beginning and very few happy things in the middle.*'
--Lemony Snicket, *The Bad Beginning* (*A Series of Unfortunate Events*) (1999)[763]

The archetypal gothic castle is instantly recognisable. 'The whole edifice is set on a small plateau on the side of a mountain', quite commonly, to which has been 'added new wings, extra towers, numerous chapels, halls' by generations of zealous and eccentric occupiers; it boasts an 'armoury', 'murder holes', and of course the obligatory 'lost' wing, not to mention 'vast cavernous vaulted cellars', and if one is especially lucky, beneath them, 'caves […] ancient and dark places.' An aged raven is seen to roam the turrets; the retinue of servants are prone to disappearances and grisly fates; natural disaster as much as an invading force threatens an end to the castle's very existence. Such a place might have been described in eighteenth-century fiction; in this case, it hails from the twenty-first, specifically Marcus Sedgwick's *Flood and Fang* of 2009.[764] The first instalment of *The Raven Mysteries*, it explicitly markets itself as 'goth-froth', a term implying, if not actually denoting, a gothic light of heart and subject matter.[765] This seems almost oxymoronic, like the gothic in children's literature – and yet, it exists. Such is one example of where the gothic in children's literature presently rests – and where this thesis rests. Literature for young people in the twenty-first century is a rapidly-evolving field, rife with generic and formal experimentation; it, too, may be best surveyed with hindsight – but not without an understanding of the journey taken by authors and readers alike to arrive at that point.

To understand the presence of the gothic in children's literature, this thesis has examined its past, and in doing so has found itself equally occupied with the history of the adolescent; as the present cannot be wholly understood without the past, literature cannot be wholly understood without the reader. There stands still a nominal disconnect between the terms 'children's literature' and 'adolescence,' but increasingly their reading seems to point to these as injudicious, unrepresentative terms, struggling to embrace categories that are blurry

[763] Lemony Snicket, *The Bad Beginning* (*A Series of Unfortunate Events*) (HarperCollins, 1999), p. 1.
[764] Marcus Sedgwick, *Flood and Fang* (*The Raven Mysteries*) (Orion, 2009), pp. 23-25.
[765] Marcus Sedgwick, 'Flood and Fang', MarcusSedgwick.com <http://www.marcussedgwick.com/rm/Flood_and_Fang.html> [accessed 31 December 2014].

beyond definition. This struggle to disentangle the child and the adolescent in terms of their reading now seems natural, for the gothic actively bridges the two; the popularity of the gothic in their literature is accounted for by the same factors, and indeed, one might call them identical when intersected with gothic literature. This is the secret of the gothic's descent into younger literature and less threatening forms: It spread to cover the continuum of its readership. As the popularity of the gothic with those younger than its assumed audience has been continually if tacitly observed, more authors have asked why they should not have their own form of gothic – a gothic presented more amenably to the younger reader but scarcely less transgressive in its subject matter. The experiment of separating children from the gothic was tried from the outset, and failed; this being the case, it must be accepted that the gothic has a natural and therefore inevitable place in children's fiction. This thesis's Introduction took this as a self-evident 'paradox,' but the preceding chapters have since unfolded that paradox, if not exploded it.

Chapter One shows how proto-gothic fictions were, against the wishes of moral guardians, continually peddled to and enjoyed by youthful audiences, up to and including their emergence as fully-realised gothic fiction in the closing years of the eighteenth century. Furthermore, authors allegorised – consciously or otherwise – the experience of the burgeoning adolescent in the form of gothic fiction, presenting their adolescent-aged protagonists as emerging from a sheltered, well-educated childhood into a predatory world of unprepared independence – manipulated legally and affronted by aggressive sexuality, their individuality assaulted by patriarchs from a background of fortune and class. Children and adolescents were sure to identify with this, even to the point of admiring their protagonists' romanticised (and often superficial) suffering, especially with the comforting measure of conclusive happy endings, which reassured readers that even the naïve, at sea in a world that hates them, could eventually grow into a happy adulthood. While critics may have grown increasingly tired of this model, the young audience was by nature rapidly replenished, and their association with gothic reading was so normalised by even the most antagonistic criticism that texts began to emerge specifically celebrating adolescent readership of gothic, as in *Northanger Abbey*, or bringing it directly to an intended audience of children, as in *Dangerous Sports* and *The Village Orphan*. The genre was born for young people's reading; the features of the genre always spoke best of and to the adolescent.

While Chapter Two acknowledges that the aesthetics of bluebook fiction may not always have reached the artistic heights of the gothic novel, this was more than compensated for by the advantages of their form, which so fortuitously suited the adolescent consumer – which publishers may have anticipated, derived as the bluebook was from the chapbook, which thrived among the poor and less educated. Nonetheless, bluebooks did represent original works of art, simply on their own terms, and that where they were derivative or gruesome, the gothic novel at its worst equalled their low standards. Shedding as part of their abbreviative project arguably the least gothic parts of a gothic novel enabled bluebooks to become, on multiple levels, more accessible to younger people as a form – easier to read, to carry, to possess, and indeed to purchase. The latter facet of the bluebook's existence, their capacity to transition their audience from passive child readers into independent consumers and market agents, is a unique transformative element in the influence of the bluebook that validates their inclusion in, at the very least, this particular analysis of gothic literature. The child spurred to practice a tentative adulthood by their engagement with bluebooks must be considered an adolescent.

Chapter Three's overview of gothic influence on nineteenth-century literature dispels the illusion of gothic's disappearance and examines instead how the gothic's dead hand continued to rest upon the rudder of popular fiction when dealing with adolescence. The fundamental adolescent narrative of growth, change, disillusionment and rebirth is so quintessentially gothic that, even as the province and potentialities of literature unfolded to absorb new times, places, and forms, gothic resonances continued to dictate the story of the growing youth, if in subtler or disguised form. That many of these texts were no longer aimed directly, or exclusively, at adolescents as readers is beside the point, since few authors of gothic fiction ever aimed at a specific audience, and likely did not anticipate their appeal to a younger one. It is the association of the gothic with adolescence as corresponding themes that is significant to the development of future literature, in continuing to assert the credibility of the association outside of largely-expired formal gothic literature of the late eighteenth century mould. Indeed, this conviviality was in fact more relevant in the nineteenth century than before, for where previously gothic had been a largely retrospective genre which allegorised contentiously if at all the social tensions of the historical period that produced it, nineteenth-century gothic as applied to the adolescent subject was often employed as a more direct critique of contemporary treatment of young people. If the more recognisable tropes of the gothic – particularly the castle – fell by the wayside for a time, this was largely a

consequence of other allegories taking its place, but other gothic tropes, and especially gothic logic, were dominant forces; the survivability of gothic is implied in its roots, in national romance narratives having already been retrospective at the time of their debut as gothic fiction in the eighteenth century. New approaches to the young person in fiction, including a broader range of children's fictions and realist presentations of adolescent characters, upheld the gothic's link to adolescence and made it indispensable.

These observations point to the following conclusions regarding the gothic in children's literature: It acknowledges the gothicism of the adolescent experience, and constructs the young reader as the adolescent they wanted to become. The necessarily transformative experience of adolescence between childhood and adulthood, a state in which neither the self nor others knows quite whether to treat the adolescent as a child or an adult, is realised as a gothic one in which the responsibilities and social assumptions of adulthood are passed onto an individual who is governed as an immature, dependent child – a model perfected in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho,* and reiterated both in successive gothic novels including *The Village Orphan,* and later a powerful influence upon nineteenth-century texts including Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Dickens's *Great Expectations*. Being forced into the responsibilities and roles of adulthood without the readiness and understanding of how to manage them, alongside an experience of conscious exploitation or suffering, is an universal experience universal owing to biological inevitability, which though dramatised comically in Parkinson's *Dangerous Sports* and Barrett's *The Heroine* is more often, and more naturally, presented as being as horrifying as it is confusing, for instance in Wilkinson's *The Subterraneous Passage* and most other conventional gothic works. The gothic understands that this social pattern is best allegorised and dramatized with reference to the arbitrary authority and its terrifying expressions found in the medieval, antiquated, or otherwise gothic historical periods – less conventional but still highly characteristic examples of which are revolutionary France in the bluebook *The Bloody Hand,* a gothic of the classical period in Wiseman's *Fabiola* and a wholly imaginary time and place in MacDonald's *The Princess and the Goblin* – though the contemporary world can be imagined as equally gothic to a highly subjective protagonist such as that of Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, and arguably any ambiguous and loosely factual historical period is equally imaginary, especially if set in climes so distant as Verne's *The Castle of the Carpathians*. Whether reading a novel like Lewis's *The Monk,* a bluebook like *The Wandering Spirit*, or a serial like *Carmilla* – more significantly, whether written for children or not – reader identification allows readers to

empathise with their protagonists and consume gothic fictions as a playing-out of their own anxieties, but while doing so, the experience of consuming fiction often written for older consumers, or taking on the role of the older consumer in venturing out to buy gothic fiction for themselves, moves the reader to take on the perspective and responsibilities of an adult, thus growing up through adolescence in the process of engaging with gothic fiction. Gothic fiction both caters to and creates adolescent characters and readers.

This thesis concludes its analysis at the close of the nineteenth century, but this leaves much room for a continuation of its premise, especially owing to the inspiration of contemporary young adult literature of the early twenty-first century. Naturally it is to be supposed that there have been numerous examples of the gothic in children's literature in the intervening century, or literature which otherwise carries on the traditions of the gothic and its association with adolescence. However, the nineteenth century also set a precedent for an extremely broad interpretation of gothic within fiction. While the early twenty-first century has seen a massive outpouring of children's fiction, in which examples of nearly any genre can be found in great numbers and diverse forms, the children's fiction of the twentieth century, much though there may be a century's worth of it, is neither so abundant nor, broadly speaking, so bold either in its presentation of the adolescent experience or in its representation of unrelenting tragedy and persecution to child audiences. Still, sanitised though they are, there certainly are fictions of the period with an awareness of how well-suited adolescent-aged characters are to gothic adventures. The Introduction points to Enid Blyton, and particularly her *Famous Five* holiday romances of the mid-century 1942 to 1963 period, in which the eponymous Five, made up of four children (aged initially between ten and twelve) and one dog (age indeterminate) spend their holidays in castles, ruins and caves, discovering all kinds of hidden criminal schemes along the way, which represents a plausible contemporary reimagining of the adventures of gothic fiction – and if the protagonists never faced a threat with real consequences, it must be recalled that neither did the protagonists of much early gothic fiction. Blyton's wider oeuvre is in a similar vein, and represents no inconsiderable source of gothic material, especially when combined with those inspired by and imitating her work, all of which represents a legitimate direction for investigation of further gothic development.

The Introduction also pointed to a number of contemporary gothic classics, those being *Harry Potter*, *A Series of Unfortunate Events*, and *Goosebumps*, in which the gothic appears in

sometimes wildly differing guises. The vein of gothic in children's literature is a rich one, and not difficult to find when sought for; its seeds are everywhere sown in modern literature for children and young adults – a distinction which is often collapsed within such works themselves, where a series like *Harry Potter*, published over a decade, was long enough to bring many of its readers to adulthood along with its protagonists, whose adventures transition from the whimsical to the morbid. Forms of gothic children's literature along similar lines are by no means uncommon, in a field with such popular works for inspiration and emulation. Tending more specifically to the older side of the spectrum, the evolving young adult market, broadly targeting adolescents and teenagers, has an almost universal fascination with death, darkness, mystery and tyranny to an extent that practically defies the need for example – although Derek Landy's nine-part *Skulduggery Pleasant* series, an increasingly dark gothic-noir epic about a wisecracking skeleton wizard detective investigating criminal and political intrigue in an urban fantasy milieu, epitomises the type. There is potential, too, in the many novels categorised under 'paranormal romance' or similar terms, which deal with the sinister creatures of the gothic supernatural, most famously in the *Twilight* vampire romance tetralogy by Stephenie Meyer; that this is a heavily derivative genre with numerous borrowings from the previously-named text is also suggestive of the publishing conditions under which the gothic flourished. What many of these texts have in common, additionally, is that they come in series – the modern equivalent of the favoured gothic form of the novel published in multiple volumes; the only difference is that the volumes are published serially rather than simultaneously, with independent titles and more refined breaks between instalments. Even publishing forms therefore owe a debt to the gothic novel. Lastly, *The Raven Mysteries* and 'goth-froth', conceptually, illustrate how many of the most infamous terrors of gothic have over time been defanged; cartoon skeletons, vampires, mummies, zombies and Frankenstein's monster are perennial instalments of Hallowe'en displays, even and especially at the most public locations. Such displays would not exist if children were not well aware of these iconic threats of gothic horror – and had not been enjoying them for generations.

Contemporary critics of the early gothic novel were quick to condemn any suggestion that they could be read by young people, but it is important also to remember their qualitative arguments: That the gothic was formulaic, repetitive – in short, stagnant. Since, to their mind, the gothic neither evolved nor progressed, it might have been said to be going nowhere – but, with the benefit of two centuries of hindsight, it is clear that this can only be true in its

reverse sense: That, rather than never evolving, the gothic never expired, and thrives today in the fertile, endlessly consuming, endlessly refreshed grounds of children's literature – sustained, vampirically, by young blood. If the gothic is criticised for being too dark for its audience, it must be remembered first that this darkness is a reflection of the world that produces it; secondly, that the audience has its own darkness to bear; and thirdly, that every generation of children has taken that darkness and made it their own. A darkness that is unreal and fictitious, and moreover will inevitably be defeated prior to a happy ending, is far more comforting than the inescapable darknesses of the real world; the newspaper is more frightening than any gothic novel. Indeed, the final trope of the gothic novel, which must allay some concerns about the genre's darkness, is the happy ending, the ultimate cliché. Few were the gothic novels which could not scrape together some good to have emerged from their narratives; the vast majority were of the same mind as Ann Radcliffe in insisting that their narratives described the triumph of virtue over villainy: 'useful may it be to have shewn, that, though the vicious can sometimes pour affliction upon the good, their power is transient and their punishment certain; and that innocence, though oppressed by injustice, shall, supported by patience, finally triumph over misfortune!'[766] Gothic novels are not narratives of relentless nihilism: Even Lemony Snicket, who warns his readers that his story 'has no happy ending', stretches the truth, for *A Series of Unfortunate Events* does eventually conclude with optimism, though it takes the protagonists the course of thirteen volumes to reach it.[767] And though these happy endings may sometimes defy probability, the whole genre has weathered the same accusation, and survived – and indeed, if the final message of the gothic can be put so bluntly as 'you will suffer, but you can still be happy,' is this not a more realistic, responsible message for the young than to protect them from the very notion of unhappiness entirely? The gothic is a literature of hope for the future, and in the darkened chamber of adolescence, that is exactly what the reader needs.

'All was well.'
--J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (2007)[768]

[766] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) (Oxford World's Classics, 2008), p. 672.
[767] Lemony Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*, p. 1.
[768] J.K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Bloomsbury, 2007), p. 607.

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