Horror and Humour in the Male Gothic: Parodic Dialogues with Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) and the Early Nineteenth-Century Literary Market, c. 1796-1850

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Abstract

Since Ellen Moers coined the concept of the female Gothic in 1974, numerous studies have been dedicated to exploring the subcategory of the genre, expanding and propagating the notion that, beginning with Ann Radcliffe's romances in the 1790s, a distinctive female-focused branch of the Gothic dominates the genre from the eighteenth century to the present day. The implicit partner to this notion is the male Gothic, but this subcategory is lacking the same rigorous research. This thesis redresses the balance by conducting an analysis of first-wave Gothic novels from the 1790s through to the mid-nineteenth century, developing what has thus far been cursorily deemed characteristic of the male Gothic.

Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) is considered to have been the founding text of the male Gothic. Violent, voyeuristic, and visceral in nature, Lewis flaunts the supernatural and sexual taboos that Radcliffe and her ilk only implied, parodying generic conventions and satirising social institutions. By engaging in extended comparative literary analyses, I argue that Gothic novels engaged in a dialogic exchange with Lewis's founding text, capitalising on the notoriety of *The Monk* to meet a rising market demand that was shifting from an interest in the Radcliffean 'Terror' Romance to the Lewisite 'Horror' novel. I analyse the crossovers between horror and humour in male Gothic literature from the late-eighteenth century to the mid-nineteenth century, focusing on pulp and popular texts as well as selected canonical texts to assert the importance of understanding the dialogic exchange between narratives of horror and the rise of culture for the masses. I draw on theories of parody and the grotesque to address the relationship between horror, gender, and sexuality, and the points at which they intersect to satirise societal norms.

Dedication to Matthew Lewis, M. P.

I reckon – oh! vain, ill-judging thesis,
I know how oft you frowned at my stasis
and *tsked* impetuous went the whip
when Google floundered upon a Freudian slip
and showed Neville Longbottom's quivering lip,*
instead of he whose novel haunts these pages,
and in the dark followed all the stages
of procrastination and inspiration,
(not excluding poetic creations),
and here to viva, or damnation.

Go then, and pass that deadly scrutiny
whence post-grads emerge in despair or victory:
and when you find, condemned, criticised,
applauded, rejected, and/or verified,
that I have, in fact, survived:
let me sleep without ungodly dreams
of Bleeding Nuns with bones that gleam,
of beauteous orbs, vice and violence,
of Ambrosio with Matilda in hellish alliance –
all that my sanity long suffered in silence.

Assuming now a doctor's office, I
thus on your future Fortune prophesy: -
soon as your novelty is worn away,
and darkened memory fades to grey,

* Matthew Lewis is also the name of the actor who played Neville Longbottom in the Harry Potter films.

once more into the breach I'll fray
to pick apart that Cheshire grin
that makes many a-devil fall sick of sin –
for only madness finds a method
to hear the laughter in monstrous treads,
and see the humour in haunted heads.

Now then your venturous course pursue:
Go, my delight! Dear thesis, adieu!

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Introduction

> Oh! Wonder-working Lewis! Monk, or Bard,
> Who fain would'st make Parnassus a church-yard!
> Lo! wreaths of yew, not laurel, bind thy brow,
> Thy muse a sprite, Apollo's sexton thou!
> Whether on ancient tombs thou tak'st thy stand,
> By gibb'ring spectres hailed, thy kindred band;
> Or tracest chaste descriptions on thy page,
> To please the females of our modest age;
> All hail, M.P.! from whose infernal brain
> Thin-sheeted phantoms glide, a grisly train,
> At whose command 'grim women' throng in crowds,
> And kings of fire, of water, and of clouds,
> With 'small gray men,' 'wild yagers,' and what not,
> To crown with honour thee and Walter Scott;
> Again all hail! If tales like thine may please,
> St. Luke alone can vanquish the disease,
> Even Satan's self with thee might dread to dwell,
> And in thy skull discern a deeper hell.[1]

Lord Byron's lines from *English Bards, and Scotch Reviewers: A Satire* (1809) hyperbolise the horror created by infamous Gothic writer Matthew Lewis. While Ann Radcliffe and her style of 'explained supernatural' dominated the Gothic as it came into its own in the 1790s, Lewis opened the genre to fresh hell in *The Monk* (1796). A litany of sin, violence and satanic supernaturalism assailed readers to the point of excess, distinguishing a strain of the Gothic that some scholars have since come to term the 'male' or 'masculine' Gothic.[2] Yet, among the horrors of demonic summons, bleeding nuns, and incestuous rape, there is a curious, and somewhat unsettling, comic vein. Beginning with Lewis's novel, this thesis explores the relationship between horror and humour, and investigates whether the comic ought to be considered a distinctive feature of the male Gothic at the turn of the nineteenth century.

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[1] Byron, 'English Bard and Scotch Reviewers', in *Lord Byron: The Major Works*, ed. by Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 2-18 (p. 7-8, lines 265-82).

[2] See Joseph D. Andriano, *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction* (University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 1993); Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989); Alison Milbank, *Daughters of the House: Modes of the Gothic in Victorian Fiction* (London: MacMillan, 1992); Anne Williams, *The Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995). Ellis and Williams use 'masculine' Gothic rather than male Gothic.

The male Gothic itself has received little scholarly attention, although critics do tend to agree that *The Monk* is the 'founding' text of the subgenre.[3] Thus, this thesis begins by addressing Lewis's novel, assessing in particular how horror and humour intersect to parody its Gothic predecessors, burlesque gender, and satirise social norms. Though this component of Lewis's style is seldom regarded by contemporary scholars as a feature of the male Gothic, whether it ought to be remains untested. To investigate this, my study follows the trajectory of Gothic 'horror' in its early form, initially addressing those texts which respond to or exploit the scandalous reputation of *The Monk* in the early decades of the nineteenth century, and then turns to penny bloods as the first wave of the Gothic disperses, becoming increasingly nebulous, in the Victorian era.[4] As both the male Gothic and the comic in the Gothic are overlooked subjects, this thesis also engages with neglected novels not traditionally regarded as suited to, or worthy of, analytical study. Much of the analysis is comparative in nature, emphasising the dialogic exchange between authors and critics in the development of the genre and its reception, a dialogue which is often parodic. Ultimately, my research aims to provide the field of Gothic studies with a richer understanding of how the comic plays a key part in the development of the Gothic.

i. Give the Devil His Due: The Male Gothic Research Gap

If the devil truly is in the detail, he must surely be found in Hughes, Punter, and Smith's comprehensive *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic* (2010). Offering a bounty of scholarly entries on the Gothic and its preoccupations, notable authors, and common theoretical approaches to the Gothic 'mode', the *Encyclopedia* includes some thirty or so distinctive subgenres, including Lesbian Gothic, Post-Colonial Gothic, and Irish Gothic, to name but a few.[5] Like the Hydra, different heads make up the monster of the Gothic, but placing a definitive number on the various categories available is a Herculean task. A rising appreciation for the Gothic across the

[3] For examples, see Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, Milbank, *Daughters of the House,* and Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity, and the Gothic at the fin-de-siècle* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004).

[4] This trajectory is common for the study of the development of the Gothic, though recently it has been adopted to follow the strand of horror fiction more exclusively. See Xavier Aldana Reyes, (ed). *Horror: A Literary History* (London: The British Library 2016).

[5] It is now commonplace to consider the Gothic a 'mode' in order to account for the various media and variant readings of the Gothic in contemporary culture and criticism. See Alexandra Warwick, 'Feeling Gothicky?', *Gothic Studies*, 9. 1 (2007), 5-15.

globe has seen the subject expand to distinguish between cultural Gothic modes; contemporary monographs on the Gothic in Spanish, Japanese, and African American cultures illustrate the diversity of the genre.[6] This is further problematised by the consideration of monster/supernatural-based fictions which have roots in Gothic literature, such as vampire, werewolf, and zombie/undead representation in different modern media.[7] The possibilities are seemingly endless: in suggesting that the abundance of Gothic subcategories has expanded beyond control, Timothy Jones points, with evident bewilderment, to an article that sees even quintessential American housewife-turned-felon Martha Stewart as Gothic.[8] Even so, the male Gothic, despite some discussions in response to the conception of the female Gothic, is conspicuous by its absence in the *Encyclopedia* and other current introductory collections.[9] This thesis aims to rectify this disparity.

The dearth of research into the male Gothic can in part be answered by the impetus behind the inception of the female Gothic by Ellen Moers in 1974. Like Elaine Showalter in *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists from Bronte to Lessing* (1977) and other feminists involved in developing 'gynocriticism' in response to phallocentric narratives of literary history, Moers seeks to dedicate exclusive attention to women's cultural work by coining the female Gothic, which she 'easily' defines as 'the work that women writers have

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[6] See Xavier Aldana Reyes, *Spanish Gothic: National Identity, Collaboration and Cultural Adaptation* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017); Michael J. Blouin, *Japan and the Cosmopolitan Gothic: Specters of Modernity* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Maisha L. Wester, *African American Gothic: Screams from Shadowed Places* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[7] Studies on vampire fiction exclusively have received significant attention since the 1990s. For examples, see Ken Gelder, *Reading the Vampire,* (London: Routledge, 1994) and Nina Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press Ltd, 1995). The Manchester-based project *Open Graves, Open Minds* has established scholarly interest in the werewolf and co-organisers Sam George and Bill Hughes edited a collection on the subject: *In the Company of Wolves: Werewolves, Wolves, and Wild Children* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020). Over the last decade, AMC's *The Walking Dead* (2010-present), a television adaptation of the comic book series of the same name by Robert Kirkman, Tony Moore, and Charles Adlard, has helped spark interest in zombie culture in different media; see Laura Hubner, Marcus Leaning, Paul Manning, eds, *The Zombie Renaissance in Popular Culture* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

[8] Timothy G. Jones, 'The Canniness of the Gothic: Genre as Practice', *Gothic Studies*, 11. 1 (2009), 124-32.

[9] For even more recent examples, see Kathleen Hudson, 'Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) – Female Gothic', in *The Gothic: A Reader*, ed. by Simon Bacon (Oxford: Peter Lang Ltd, 2018), pp. 129-35. Hudson does discuss the idea of the male Gothic in this chapter, but it is in relation to the female Gothic.

done in that literary mode that, since the eighteenth century, we have called the Gothic'.[10] While Chapter 1 will show how this reductionist relationship between the author's sex and genre has been debated by other scholars, Moers's article remains significant. Far from being 'easily' defined, even in her own configuration, Moers's readings of Radcliffe, the Brontës, and other female Gothic novelists demonstrates how women writers have used the Gothic to explore women's social and psychological anxieties. Perhaps most famous is her discussion of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), which Moers reads as 'distinctly a woman's mythmaking on the subject of birth', voicing in particular 'the trauma of the afterbirth'.[11] In her view, Victor's rejection of his own creation is the 'horror story of maternity', horrors which Shelley was all too familiar with after familial deaths, including the suicide of Percy Shelley's first wife, miscarriages, and the death of her first child, Clara, who died after eight days having been born prematurely in 1815.[12] By adopting socio-historical and biographical interpretations, Moers recognises the affinity between the Gothic's subterranean terrors and women's repressed desires and traumas, an argument which Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar take further in their pivotal *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* (1979). Thus, Moers's *Literary Women* contributed to second-wave feminist efforts to reclaim women writers throughout western history and was instrumental in establishing the study and appreciation of female authors overlooked by the patriarchal canon.

The very suggestion that women writers of the Gothic should be studied independently began a debate about gender and genre, with patriarchal ideology and the development of middle-class domesticity in the long nineteenth century at the centre of discussion. Some critics, such as Gilbert and Gubar, Michelle A. Massé, and Anne Williams, turned to psychoanalysis to address the impact of patriarchy on the psyche of women writers, while others adopted an historicist approach, looking more directly at the cultural history from which the Gothic emerges.[13] Kate Ferguson Ellis explores the concurrent rise in the idealisation of the home as women's haven and the popularity of Gothic literature, identifying in the Gothic

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[10] Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (New York: Doubleday, 1976), p. 90.

[11] Ibid., p. 93.

[12] Ibid., p. 95. For a recent scholarly discussion of Shelley's life and works, see Angela Wright, *Mary Shelley* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018).

[13] See Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*, 2nd edn. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Michelle A. Massé, *In the Name of Love: Women, Masochism, and the Gothic* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1992); Williams, *The Art of Darkness*.

'a segment of culture directed toward women, a resistance to an ideology that imprisons them even as it posits a sphere of safety for them', in which the heroine battles to purge the Gothic castle of licentious villains who threaten the sanctity of the home.[14] Similarly, in an article for the 1994 special issue of *Women's Writing* on the female Gothic, Alison Milbank maintains that it constructs 'plots of escape from incarceration in an ancient house or convent by a female protagonist who challenges the authority of a usurping male tyrant'.[15] This configuration of the female Gothic has been referred to by some scholars as 'woman-plus-habitation'.[16] As Ellis suggests, the fundamental structure of what she refers to as the 'feminine Gothic' involves 'a castle turned into a prison and reconverted into a home'.[17] We need only review the titles of several Gothic romances of the late eighteenth century to consider the primacy of the trope, such as Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), Eliza Parsons's *Castle of Wolfenbach: A German Story* (1793) and Edward Montague's *The Castle of Berry Pomeroy* (1806), or even look to the parodies published early in the nineteenth century, including Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and Thomas Love Peacock's *Nightmare Abbey* (1818). However, this prevalence for the 'woman-plus-habitation' theme does indicate some difficulty in recognising it to be solely relevant to the female Gothic; even the self-proclaimed inaugural Gothic novel by Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), features a persecuted heroine fleeing her dead fiancé's father throughout the titular castle. If this 'woman-plus-habitation' formula is to be considered an exclusive aspect of the female Gothic, Robert Miles argues, the narrative must be led by the heroine's perspective and proactively engage with debates regarding gender, as many female Gothic authors were 'self-conscious agents intervening in the historical construction of gender'.[18]

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[14] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. x.

[15] Alison Milbank, 'Milton, Melancholy and the Sublime in the "Female" Gothic from Radcliffe to Le Fanu', *Women's Writing*, 1. 2 (1994), 143-60 (p. 143).

[16] Diana Wallace, 'A Woman's Place', in *The Victorian Gothic*, ed. by Andrew Smith and William Hughes (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), pp. 74-88 (p. 77). For 'woman-plus-habitation', see Eugenia C. DeLamotte, *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth-Century Gothic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

[17] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. 45.

[18] Robert Miles, ' "Mother Radcliffe": Ann Radcliffe and the Female Gothic', in *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, ed. by Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 76-97 (p. 46).

A decade after *Women's Writing* produced a special issue on the female Gothic, *Gothic Studies* also dedicated an edition to the subject in 2004, in which Diana Wallace suggests that the female Gothic 'is perhaps par excellence the mode within which women writers have been able to explore deep-rooted female fears about women's powerlessness and imprisonment within patriarchy'.[19] More recently, Kathleen Hudson has argued that the female Gothic is typically understood 'as a mode which prioritized the exploration of hidden terrors and repressed emotions, and reflected certain socially or morally informed female-focused anxieties'.[20] She proposes that the current view in the field is that the female Gothic features 'instances of the "explained supernatural", and an appreciation of "terror" as a form of both emotional and political expression', citing Radcliffe's lead in the creation of these female Gothic aesthetics.[21] The 'emotional and political expression' of terror is illustrated in the common synonymity between threats to female property and threats to the female body, whereby the domestic space has become the battleground of ownership over women's freedom. Hudson's discussion demonstrates that the view of the female Gothic as an exploration, endorsement, or rebellion against eighteenth- and nineteenth-century patriarchy has lasting currency in the field.

Thus Moers established a trend of understanding the female Gothic as a mode which enabled women writers to negotiate, covertly or otherwise, patriarchal oppression and its impact on women's lives. The recognition that there is a distinct female Gothic, then, emerges from a bid to recover female novelists from obscurity and consequently carves out a space for the discussion of women's approaches to the Gothic in the field. Implicitly, there was no need for a complimentary or contradictory male Gothic, as traditionally only 'woman' or 'female' has been adopted as an adjective to indicate a difference to the supposed (male) norm. But other scholars responding to the female Gothic and the implied invocation of a male tradition have suggested that there ought to be a more fully informed concept of the male Gothic. Miles, for

[19] Diana Wallace, 'Uncanny Stories: The Ghost Story as Female Gothic', *Gothic Studies*, 6. 1 (2004), 59-68 (p. 57).

[20] Hudson, 'Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) – Female Gothic', in *The Gothic*, ed. by Bacon, pp. 129-35 (p. 129).

[21] Ibid.

example, suggests that 'for the category of the Female Gothic to perform critical work there must also be a Male Gothic'.[22]

Some critical attention has been paid to the male Gothic, though it pales in comparison to the wealth of research into the female Gothic, as I will soon show. Radcliffe's 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', a treatise on terror and horror published posthumously in *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal* in 1826, has a leading role in the ways in which modern scholars derive the gendered division of the Gothic. Here, horror is often accompanied by surprise, conjured by points of contrast, such as the appearance of Banquo's ghost at the jovial banquet in *Macbeth*; the result is not 'deep and solemn feelings' that linger in the mind, but something more 'transient' only.[23] Terror, on the other hand, is more akin to the sublime, mixing 'grandeur and obscurity', which 'leaves something for the imagination to exaggerate', and is far more subtle and yet transcendent, in its impact:

> Terror and horror are so far opposite, that the first expands the soul, and awakens the faculties to a high degree of life; the other contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them. I apprehend, that neither Shakespeare nor Milton by their fictions, nor Mr. Burke by his reasoning, anywhere looked to positive horror as a source of the sublime.[24]

Radcliffe's theories of the sublime and terror have, as the above quotation suggests, much in common with Edmund Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and Beautiful* (1775). While principally the sublime is 'the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling', it has the propensity to 'excite the ideas of pain, and danger', which 'at certain distances' may be 'delightful', though when they are too close they are 'simply terrible'.[25] Radcliffe's novels share in this view of the sublime, particularly when heroines look out into the natural world. Her use of the sublime and terror are equally trademarks of her style, which elucidates her use of what is commonly referred to as the explained supernatural: spectacles of horror are considered too crude to elevate the viewer to a state of awe, and thus she eschews the use of the supernatural, preferring instead to develop extensive suspense-and-delay tactics which have

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[22] Robert Miles, 'Ann Radcliffe and the Female Gothic', in *The Female Gothic,* ed. by Wallace and Smith, pp. 76-97 (p. 46).

[23] Ann Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', *The New Monthly Magazine and Literary Journal*, January 1826, 145-52 (p. 149).

[24] Ibid.

[25] Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas Into the Sublime and the Beautiful* (Oxford: Oxford World Classics, 2015), p. 34.

a psychological effect. Famously, the incident of the black veil in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which hides something so frightful the heroine Emily St Aubert faints away before readers are made privy to what she has seen, is only explained some few hundred pages later to be nothing more than a wax effigy.

Radcliffe's distinction between horror and terror has since been used by Robert D. Hume to distinguish between types of Gothic, taking Radcliffe as the leading terror-Gothic writer and Lewis as that of horror-Gothic. In the instance of the terror-Gothic, suspense is the principle effect, while the latter 'attempts to involve him [the reader] with the villain-hero protagonist'.[26] This distinction has had a lasting impact on the ways in which critics distinguish between the female and male Gothic. As Hudson explains, the 'distinction between "terror" and "horror" greatly affected authors and audiences' views of what the "Gothic" meant in its earliest forms, and constitutes the fault line between "Female" (terror-based) and "Male" (horror-based) Gothic novels'.[27] While the sublime effects of terror characterise Radcliffe's vision of the Gothic, a vision which helped her to garner a respectable reputation as a woman writer, Lewis is 'sensationalistic', invested in, as James Watt suggests, 'baiting critics and reviewers by knowingly appealing to popular demand'.[28]

In Anne Williams's words, the 'Male Gothic specializes in horror – the bloody shroud, the wormy corpse'.[29] Corpses and other horrific imagery are, at least in *The Monk*, usually associated with the feminine body, with the likes of the Bleeding Nun taking centre stage. Williams, one of few scholars to approach both the male and female Gothic equally, further explains that 'in the Male Gothic the feminine becomes a figure for dissolution/death', and argues that the 'Male Gothic is a dark mirror reflecting patriarchy's nightmère, recalling a perilous, violent, and early separation from the mother/mater denigrated as "female"'.[30] Other scholars have also noted the position of the female as a source of horror in the Gothic authored by male writers in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Miles, in *Gothic Writing* (1993),

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[26] Robert D. Hume, 'Gothic Versus Romantic', *PMLA,* 84 (1969), 282-290 (p. 286).

[27] Hudson, 'Ann Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) – Female Gothic', in *The Gothic*, ed. by Bacon, pp. 129-35 (p. 131).

[28] James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre, and Cultural Conflict, 1764-1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 84-5.

[29] Williams, *The Art of Darkness*, p. 103.

[30] Ibid., p. 66 & 107.

notes that 'women become the convenient, stigmatised other, responsible for the fragility, and irrationality, of the masculine self'.[31] Joseph Andriano, in *Our Ladies of Darkness: Feminine Daemonology in Male Gothic Fiction* – the sole monograph dedicated to the male Gothic – argues that 'what these men fear most is the crossing of gender boundaries', in which the female demon, like Lewis's Matilda, 'attempts to exert her influence […] to feminize the male'.[32] Nida Darongsuwan, in her 2008 thesis on the male Gothic, gender, and class, similarly considers the ways in which male authors negotiate, and resist, emergent middle-class gender ideologies. In the character of Matilda, Darongsuwan suggests, 'Lewis made the theatricality of sensibility threatening to conventional constructions of gender and sexuality'.[33] For Cyndy Hendershot, Matilda's transformation from a male novice, to seductive enchantress, to agent of the devil similarly threatens to destabilise Ambrosio in *The Monk*, as 'the Gothic continually reveals the gulf between the actual male subject and the myth of masculinity'.[34]

Hendershot's interest is in masculinity in the Gothic and so does not approach the question of the male Gothic per se, but she also does not explain what she means by 'masculinity' or 'traditional manhood' in the context of the literature she analyses, going only so far as to say her focus is solely on 'heterosexual' masculinity. There is a certain irony, however, in the recognition that the Gothic reveals masculinity to be 'a veneer that conceals multiplicity and fragmentations' while Hendershot herself presumes a universal and transhistorical understanding of that very masculinity.[35] Andriano's 'post-Jungian' analysis of the feminine demon in male-authored Gothic texts is likewise flawed by its lack of definition, presuming a link between the gender of the author and the gender of the Gothic in much the same way Moers originally posited for the female Gothic. Darongsuwan likewise maintains the essentialised association between the sex of the author and the gender of the Gothic by exploring Walpole, William Beckford, Lewis, and Lord Bryon exclusively. But her view that the male Gothic is socio-historically specific better enables her to address the authors and their texts individually, whereas Andriano's argument is formulaic and uncritically repetitive; by

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[31] Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing, 1750-1820* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 58.

[32] Andriano, *Our Ladies of Darkness*, p. 5.

[33] Nida Darongsuwan, 'Class and gender identity in "male gothic" from Walpole to Byron (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of York, 2008), p. 128.

[34] Cyndy Hendershot, *The Animal Within: Masculinity and the Gothic* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1998), p. 4.

[35] Ibid., p. 1.

first identifying the 'anima' in Jacques Cazotte's *Le Diable Amoureux* (1772), Andriano then uses this single reading to inform all subsequent interpretations of Gothic novels by male authors. His adoption of psychoanalysis also shares defects with other psychoanalytical readings of the Gothic which, though once popular, have since been criticised for universalising anxiety and trauma.[36] This is also the case for Williams, however I would argue that Williams's major flaw is the absolute binary she establishes between the male and female Gothic. Stemming from her use of psychoanalysis and semiotics, the binaries she establishes between culture/nature, symbolic/semiotic, and signifier/signified, for example, awkwardly essentialises the difference between male and female Gothic.

What is most useful in Anne Williams's conception of the male Gothic is her understanding of the plot and narrative convention, in which she argues that the focus on female suffering positions readers as 'voyeurs who, though sympathetic, may take pleasure in female victimization', arguing that the male Gothic, with its 'delight in sexual frankness and perversity', is pornographic.[37] The few other scholars to tackle the topic have similarly noted this link to pornography, associating the sexual content of the male Gothic with misogyny and sadism. But this sexual violence, for Milbank and Ellis both, is associated with a desperate attempt to regain entry into the home from which the industrial revolution had displaced them. The industrialisation engendered the division between home and work, and concurrently led to the belief that the 'private sphere' of the home was naturally woman's place, while men were allotted the 'public sphere' of work.[38] Thus, while for the female Gothic the home became a prison from which to flee, for male writers the home became a sanctuary from which they were disbarred; as Milbank suggests, the male Gothic charts not the escape from an encompassing interior, but 'the attempt of the male will to penetrate that interior'.[39] These commentators of the female Gothic recognised that the social transition to bourgeois domestic ideology had implications for men as well, and that the Gothic was therefore also a realm in which male

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[36] For criticism of the trend to apply psychoanalysis in Gothic studies, see Robert Mighall, *Mapping History's Nightmares: A Geography of Victorian Gothic Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), and Robert Miles, 'Ann Radcliffe and the Female Gothic', in *The Female Gothic,* ed. by Wallace and Smith, pp. 76-97.

[37] Williams, *The Art of Darkness*, p. 103-4.

[38] For more discussions on the industrial revolution, the creation of the middle classes and the ideology of the separate spheres, see Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Classes, 1780-1850* (London: Routledge, 2002).

[39] Milbank, *Daughters of the House*, p. 11.

writers could explore their exclusion from the home. Ellis argues that the gendered division in the Gothic is based on those who find 'refuge from evil' in the home, and those who are an 'exile' from it:

> In the feminine Gothic the heroine exposes the villain's usurpation and thus reclaims an enclosed space that should have been a refuge from evil but has become the very opposite, a prison. The masculine Gothic gives the perspective of an exile from the refuge of home, now the special province of women.[40]

Similarly, Alison Milbank's argument in *Daughters of the House* divides the Gothic along the lines of inclusion/exclusion from the domestic space, in which the male Gothic is characterised by a 'Sadean […] delight in the penetration' of the interior world they have been dispelled from.[41] Here Milbank is, like other scholars, drawing comparisons between Lewis's novel and the Marquis de Sade's works, which I will discuss further in Chapter 1. But the male Gothic's villain-protagonist is seldom successful in their attempt to trespass in the domestic realm. Williams proposes that the male Gothic plot is one of tragedy, concluding with the downfall or death of the protagonist, while the female Gothic plot is one of comedy. By this, Williams recognises that comedy in literature is commonly defined by the form's happy ending, and does not, therefore, address any comical elements of *The Monk*. Ellis similarly suggests that the male Gothic plot is one of tragedy, whereby the villain-protagonist destroys the home in the process of attempting re-entry, leaving the 'destroyer' to 'wander upon the face of the earth', which recalls Charles Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1821) and Shelley's *Frankenstein*.[42]

This complicates Moers's understanding of Shelley's novel as a leading example of the female Gothic. Whether *Frankenstein* should be regarded as female or male Gothic will, briefly, be discussed in Chapter 1 when I explore the further difficulties in asserting a binarism between gendered Gothics. However, it is prudent to note at this juncture that though Ellis, Milbank, and Williams share some ideas regarding what entails the female and male Gothic, they each put forward a binary in opposition with each other, one that pits the male Gothic against the female Gothic. Ellis attempts to overcome such binaries by adopting the terms 'feminine' and 'masculine' Gothic to avoid sex-based essentialism, though still ultimately

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[40] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. xiii.

[41] Milbank, *Daughters of the House,* p. 17.

[42] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. 45.

establishes a binary. As a result of this opposition, Lauren Fitzgerald observes that critics inadvertently reproduce the same plots and characters of their study, whereby 'the differences between Gothic novels written by women and those by men engages the novels themselves in a property struggle similar to the plot Radcliffe and Lewis enact in critical commentary on their literary relationship'.[43]

Altogether, then, the male Gothic has received only one dedicated monograph and one dedicated thesis, remembering that Hendershot's subject is masculinity in the Gothic, while other scholars who offer more extended discussions of the male Gothic do so alongside the female Gothic and commonly risk an essentialised binary between the two. However, there is another text to consider. Andrew Smith, in *Victorian Demons: Medicine, Masculinity and the Gothic at the-fin-de siècle* (2004), briefly refers to the male Gothic when addressing the newspaper reportage of the Whitechapel Murders. Here, he claims, 'we can observe the fantastical Male Gothic world of the killer, and the alternative Female Gothic world of the victims', paralleling the voyeurism of Lewis's 'semi-pornographic visual images' with ways in which the newspapers narrated the murders.[44] Smith continues:

> The Male Gothic, with its literary roots in the Gothic of the 1790s, as in Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), was characterised by its representation of male violence, female persecution, and semi-pornographic scenes.[45]

Voyeurism, pornography, and horror form Smith's view of the male Gothic. His summary, though simple, is fitting, and one which I will carry forward to Chapter 1 to analyse Lewis's infamous novel. Despite being mostly summative in nature and making no new contributions to the topic, Smith's brief reference to the subject of the male Gothic is informative as it draws on the lasting impression of the male Gothic following Lewis's lead. His reputation, one might say, precedes him. The scandal following Lewis's acknowledgement of authorship in the second edition, which André Parreaux meticulously surveyed in 1960, informs the way the male Gothic consequently developed as well as the ways in which modern scholars view *The*

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[43] Lauren Fitzgerald, 'Female Gothic and the Institutionalization of Gothic Studies', *Gothic Studies,* 6. 1 (2004), 8-18 (p. 9) and Lauren Fitzgerald, 'Gothic Properties: Radcliffe, Lewis, and the Critics', *Wordsworth Circle,* 24 (1993), 167-70 (p. 168).

[44] Andrew Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71.

[45] Ibid.

Monk and the subgenre itself, as Part I of this thesis will argue.[46] Certainly, as Part II will demonstrate, the reputation of *The Monk* was exploited by authors and publishers alike to advertise imitative novels, a trend that persists today with specialist Gothic publisher Valancourt Books. But in doing so, the role of the comic in *The Monk* is almost entirely forgotten.

ii. 'Why so serious?' : The Research Question

An emerging theme from the above literature review is the tendency to uncover psychological and/or socio-historical anxiety in the Gothic. The tropes and trappings of ancient castles, usurping tyrants, deviant nuns, and spectral visitations are often read as echoes of repressed trauma, whereby the return of the undead is a manifestation of latent fear. While the first wave of the Gothic typically involved historical, European settings which ostensibly placed contemporary British middle-class readers at a safe distance from the superstitious feudal system of the past, the anxieties of the time were nevertheless present. As David Punter says in his seminal two-volume study *The Literature of Terror* (1980), 'within the Gothic we can find a very intense, if displaced, engagement with political and social problems, the difficulty of negotiating those problems precisely reflected in the Gothic's central stylistic conventions'.[47] In a more recent introduction to Gothic and horror, Xavier Aldana Reyes describes the genre as 'a product of a given time and socio-cultural and psychological make-up that changes and moulds according to shifts in power and historically contingent anxieties'.[48] Or, in the words of celebrated horror novelist Stephen King, 'we make up horrors to cope with the real ones'.[49]

The 'anxiety model', as Robert Miles names it, pervaded the study of the Gothic when it first came to be recognised as a legitimate subject for literary study in the late-twentieth century, having previously enjoyed only occasional and sometimes derisive interest. The emphasis on the transhistorical study of Gothic literature from its self-proclaimed inception

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[46] André Parreaux, *The Publication of The Monk: a Literary Event, 1796-1798* (Paris: Libraire Marcel Didier, 1960).

[47] David Punter, *The Literature of Terror: A History of Gothic Fiction from 1765 to the Present Day* (London & New York: Longman, 1980), p. 62.

[48] Reyes, ed. *Horror: A Literary History*, p. 10.

[49] Stephen King, *Danse Macabre* (New York: Gallery Books, 2010), p. 13.

with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Novel* (1764) to the modern incarnation in Stephen King's ever-expanding oeuvre was upon fear, and the role of the critic was to lift the veil to identify the psychological, sexual, or socio-political origins of Gothic nightmares. Such readings, and even those more contemporaneous with this thesis, overlook the prime purpose of reading literature, especially at a time when the public was becoming increasingly literate – entertainment.[50] While the pleasurable 'petit-mort' of the Gothic, that masturbatory quality of reading the Gothic's repetitive 'flirtation with death', as Leslie Fiedler describes it, has long been appreciated, such readings elevate the Gothic to a superior state of *jouissance*.[51] Undoubtedly, the sexual is essential, but downplaying the simpler appreciation of entertainment has at its roots the prejudice against popular culture which discouraged the study of popular genre fiction at the outset. It begs the question, to borrow the Joker's inquisition from *Batman: The Dark Night Rises* (2008): why so serious?

This question underscores the investigations of my thesis. In aiming to provide a more robust understanding of what constitutes the male Gothic, I have found that the consensus among the few scholars to approach the subject is that *The Monk* is the originator; as such, my immediate attentions fall upon Lewis and his novel. Just as Victor Frankenstein and his monster came to be frequently confused for the same entity, Matthew 'Monk' Lewis becomes synonymous with his monstrous text. Following his admission of authorship and the bold stamp of 'M. P.' with it, the consequent scandal and demands for libel against him, mostly led by Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Thomas James Mathias, have as much to do with the reputation of the novel as its content. That he is held accountable for a new direction of the Gothic is partly a result of this infamy; as I will discuss in more detail in Part II and Part III of this thesis, imitative novels and publishers deliberately courted comparison with *The Monk*, emphasising its sexual and supernatural content in particular. Thus, I question whether the critics' response and the consequent reputation of *The Monk* has a role to play in the make-up of the male Gothic as it has been seen by modern scholars.

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[50] By 1800 in the UK, sixty per cent of males and forty-five per cent of females were literate. See Simon Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-90', in *A Companion to The History of the Book*, 2nd edn., ed. by Simon Eliot and Margaret Rose (West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2020), pp. 471-84.

[51] Leslie Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel* (New York: Criterion Books, 1960), p. 140. It is an unspoken rule that, in order to waylay the charge of lewdness and to better appear the sophisticate, one must say it in French.

Certainly, Lewis engaged with the prevailing Gothic tropes of the time and pushed them to the extreme, making the implicit explicit, and seems at times worthy of the outrage he incited. Where previous Gothic novels, especially Radcliffe's, had often threatened heroines with an 'omnipresent sense of impending rape without ever mentioning the word', Lewis dared not only to realise this threat but to showcase it as a centrepiece, 'forcing us [readers] into a spectatorial position'.[52] Yet, this violence is not what first greets readers; rather, as I will show in Part I, the tone is humorous and mocking. Antonia's ugly elderly aunt is often a subject of ridicule, while even supernatural figures like the Bleeding Nun can be treated as ridiculous and worthy of laughter. Parody prevails throughout the novel, sometimes grotesque, sometimes horrific. *The Monk* as a whole has been read as a parodic response to Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), which then leads some critics to read Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) 'at least in part as a de-parodization of *The Monk*'.[53] The implausibility of Antonia's naivety and passivity, and the implication that the violence she suffers is because her innocence leaves her so ill-equipped to defend herself, can be read as a mockery of popular sentimental heroines. Ambrosio's assault upon the corpse-like Antonia at the conclusion of the novel is seen by Yael Shapira and other critics as a vicious, parodic rejection not only of Radcliffe's heroines, but also of Samuel Richardson's impossibly virtuous Clarissa, 'the most pious dead body of eighteenth-century fiction'.[54]

The comic devices in Lewis's *The Monk* have occasionally been commented upon by critics but have seldom been the subject of extended study – or, for the interests of this thesis, considered to be an essential component of the male Gothic. Robert Kiely, for example, claims that '[o]ne often has the feeling in reading *The Monk* that it is about to become a much funnier or sadder book than it is', as if it should be concretely one or the other.[55] The most extended

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[52] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. 46; Angela Wright, 'European disruptions of the idealized woman: Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* and the Marquis de Sade's *La Nouvelle Justine*', in *European Gothic: A spirited exchange 1760-1960*, ed. by Avril Horner (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), pp. 39-54 (p. 42).

[53] David Punter, 'Social Relations of Gothic Fiction,' in *Romanticism and Ideology: Studies in English Writing, 1765-1830*, ed. David Aers, Jonathan Cook, and David Punter (London: Routledge, 1981), pp. 103-117 (p. 109).

[54] Yael Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse: The Thrill of Human Remains in the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), p. 12.

[55] Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972), p. 106.

discussion of the comical aspects of Lewis's novel is Ann Campbell's 1997 article 'Satire in *The Monk*: Exposure and Reformation', which argues that Lewis's use of satire is to make 'repugnant subject matter palatable rather than to reform a corrupt society or religious institution'.[56] More recently, in her introduction to the 2008 Oxford University Press edition of the text, Emma McEvoy suggests that the 'reader is assailed not only by Gothic horror, but also by the tones of mocking rationality, and, most elusively, of comedy'.[57] Few have ventured to confront this 'elusive' unsettling feature of *The Monk*. In my pursuit of a more rigorous understanding of the male Gothic, and by further elucidating the comic in the subtype's originator, I ask whether humour ought to be recognised as an aspect of the male Gothic alongside its representation of 'male violence, female persecution, and semi-pornographic scenes', however unsettling it might be.

iii. Turning that frown upside down: Methodology and Timeframe

Throughout this thesis I adopt terms related to comedy, the comic, and humour, which here will be clarified. As Andrew Stott explains, comedy can have multiple meanings, referring 'equally to a genre, a tone, and a series of effects that manifest themselves in diverse environments'.[58] Though the lines are increasingly blurred between different cultural forms in modern usage in a 'catch-all' definition, comedy in English is derived from Graeco-Roman plays which largely contrast with tragedy. Gary Day suggests that differences between the two are 'easy to spot' and lists numerous distinctions, which are quoted below:

> Tragedy ends in death, and comedy in marriage; tragedy focuses on the high-born, and comedy on the low-born; tragedy focuses on an individual, and comedy on the community; tragedy celebrates resignation, and comedy celebrates improvisation; tragedy is of the mind, and comedy is of the body; tragedy is the acquisition of self-knowledge and comedy thrives on self-ignorance; and so on.[59]

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[56] Ann Campbell, 'Satire in *The Monk*: Exposure and Reformation', *Romanticism on the Net*, 8 (1997) <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ron/1900-v1-n1-ron420/005779ar/>

[57] Emma McEvoy, 'Introduction', in *The Monk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. vii-xxx (p. xxvii).

[58] Andrew Stott, *Comedy* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005), p. 3.

[59] Gary Day, *The Story of Drama: Tragedy, Comedy and Sacrifice from the Greeks to the Present* (London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2016), p. 11.

The differences between comedy and tragedy are therefore a matter of form, as opposed to any intention to inspire laughter or amuse in the former's case. In particular, as N. J. Lowe explains, definitions of comedy tend to 'centre on the happy ending as the form's defining feature rather than on the necessary presence of an attempt at humour'.[60] This explains Ellis's and Williams's view that the plot of the female Gothic is one of comedy as it often ends in happy marriages, while the plot of the male Gothic is one of tragedy, often ending in the death of the anti-hero.

Thus comedy as a form does not necessarily include humour or intend to be funny. As comedy can refer to multiple mediums, throughout this thesis I use the term exclusively to refer to the genre. The adjective 'comedic', which means characteristic of comedy, similarly does not imply that the referent is funny. There are several types of comedy, some of which more overtly intend to provoke laughter; wherever I mention a particular type of comedy, such as commedia della'rte or comedy of errors, this will be explained at the point of reference. While comedy may not be defined by the presence of humour, it can include comic effects, such as farce or burlesque. In contrast to comedy and comedic, I use 'comic' and 'comical' to indicate that which relates to or intends to be funny or humorous. For 'humour', of which there are numerous variations, I exclusively adopt the following two *Oxford English Dictionary* definitions: 1) 'With reference to action, speech, writing, etc.: the quality of being amusing, the capacity to elicit laughter or amusement. Also: comical or amusing writing, performance, etc'; and 2) 'The ability of a person to appreciate or express what is funny or comical; a sense of what is amusing or ludicrous'.[61]

Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik's theory that the Gothic has a 'comic turn' is instrumental in this investigation. As I show in more detail in Part I, the comic potential in the Gothic has received some attention in recent years, though it remains an understudied concept and is not considered a feature of the male Gothic, which this thesis aims to redress. For Horner and Zlosnik, the Gothic as a transhistorical genre always has a comic aspect because its tropes can easily be turned to comic effect: 'the sinister grotesque', for example, 'is easily converted to

[60] N. J. Lowe, 'I Comedy: Definitions, Theories, History', *New Surveys in the Classics*, 37 (2007), 1-20.

[61] *OED*: https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/89416?rskey=DiqNpq&result=1#eid [accessed 08 August 2020]

the comic flamboyance of the grotesque as excess'.[62] This propensity, however, has been overlooked by many scholars. They suggest that:

> the orthodox account of what is Gothic does not seem to capture the hybridity of most Gothic novels, which includes their juxtaposition of incongruous textual effects. Such incongruity opens up the possibility of a comic turn in the presence of horror or terror.[63]

Horner and Zlosnik consider both the horror and terror of Gothic novels from the early nineteenth century to the present day to feature 'the possibility of a comic turn'. As I have shown in the first section of this chapter, the origins of our understanding of horror and terror typically emerge from Radcliffe herself and have since been adopted as a means of distinguishing between the male and female Gothic form. Horner and Zlosnik do not engage with this discussion, and therefore they imply all Gothic texts have the potential to be comical. This does not, however, conflict with my investigation, as what I am most interested in when adopting their theory is the notion that the Gothic and comic can function on a spectrum, a spectrum which I come to parallel with the male and female Gothic. They propose that Gothic writing should be seen on a spectrum in which one end 'produces horror […] containing moments of comic hysteria', while at the other end 'there are clear signals that nothing is to be taken seriously.[64] Therefore, the comic in the Gothic is always present, but in certain cases it is more evident – more wilfully overt, such as in parodic texts like R. S. Esq's *The New Monk* (1797), which I will analyse in Chapter 3 – while in other cases the comic in the Gothic can offer relief, which is typical of Radcliffe's use of loquacious domestics. But Lewis's use of comic techniques – namely parody, satire, and the grotesque – positions his text elsewhere on the spectrum.

One of the most essential components of Lewis's novel is parody. Therefore, it is important to adopt theories of parody in order to understand the intertextual relationship between texts Lewis establishes in his own novel, as well as in the development of the male Gothic. Horner and Zlosnik's definition of parody as 'a literary mode that, while engaging with a target text or genre, exhibits a keen sense of the comic, an acute awareness of intertextuality and an engagement with the idea of metafiction' is the most comprehensive, developed from

[62] Sue Horner and Avril Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 17.

[63] Ibid., p. 3.

[64] Ibid., p. 15.

seminal twentieth-century theorists.[65] I take their view primarily because I share their concern about postmodern definitions which either minimise or entirely expunge the significance of humour; they suggest that such diminishment of the aspect of humour in parody could be an attempt to 'elevate its cultural function', acknowledging that the comic, and especially parody, has not always been considered a worthy subject of study. However, conceptions of parody presented by Linda Hutcheon and Margaret Rose remain useful when partnered with theories of humour and laughter, such as superiority and incongruity theories; further, adopting such theories assist in waylaying concerns about the subjectivity of humour by providing a functional tool of interpretation. I will discuss these theories and other comic devices in my exploration of parody in Chapter 2.

My aim to trace the comic vein of the Gothic as it evolves at a particular moment in history means that I draw on different primary sources and not just Gothic novels, for example caricature and criticism, whereby I position texts as part of a dialogic exchange. In using theories of parody as a lens through which to investigate the development of the male Gothic, I bring to the fore the 'shared circuit of production' between novelists, critics, and other cultural commentators. This notion of a circuit of production is borrowed from Elizabeth Neiman's study of the Minerva Press, in which she argues that even the derivative material of William Lane's novelists interacted with Romantic-era politics and poetics, creating an 'actively collaborative model of authorship' that was notably led by women writers.[66] Though I do not exclusively study books published by Minerva, this notion of a collaborative exchange is useful as much of my analysis is comparative in nature, as I investigate the circuitous relationship between *The Monk*, its reputation, and the marketisation of Lewis's imitators.

As I have noted, Lewis's novel is largely recognised as the first example of a male Gothic text. However, I do acknowledge that there are problems with recognising a singular, 'original' novel; many literary precursors are often considered influential in the development of the Gothic, including Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), the Graveyard School of poetry such as Edward Young's *The Complaint: or, Night-Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality* (1742-5), and sentimental novels, especially the works of Samuel Richardson. The influence of Richardson's epistolary novel *Clarissa* (1748) on Gothic tropes has been widely discussed elsewhere, for instance, whereby the virtuous victim-heroine's dead

[65]Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn,* p. 12.

[66] Elizabeth Neiman, *Minerva's Gothics: The Politics and Poetics of Romantic Exchange, 1780-1820* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2019).

body is reimagined by Lewis himself as, in Shapira's words, an 'erotic keepsake'.[67] Chapter 1 will review more of Shapira's arguments surrounding Lewis's instrumental role in the creation of the Gothic corpse.

Gothic authors themselves often sought to claim a longer, British literary heritage, often invoking the works of Shakespeare to justify their turn to sensationalism and the realm of feeling. As Anne Williams and Christine Desmet explain in their introduction to *Shakespearean Gothic*, Gothic authors 'revelled in a promiscuous mixing of literary modes, of fiction and history, of the real and the supernatural, of the medieval and the barbarous', for which they found license by the example of Shakespeare's 'irregularity, irrationality, and […] sublime ignorance for "the rules"'.[68] Walpole was first to assert this claim in his introduction to the second edition of *The Castle of Otranto* when he affixed 'A Gothic Story' to the title and acknowledged his authorship. In his interest to make his characters 'speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions', Walpole professes to turn to the rule of 'nature' which sets apart 'the sensations of princes and heroes' from the 'naivete' of domestics, and in so doing confesses that the 'great master, Shakespeare, was the model I copied'.[69] There are socio-political reasons for this invocation too, notably as a result of the increasing tensions between Franco-British relationships following the Seven Years' War (1756-1763) and later, during the heyday of the Gothic novel, the French Revolution. As Angela Wright argues, Walpole's use of Shakespeare enabled him to take '"shelter" under England's greatest literary "genius"' so that he 'distanced himself from the continental origins of his romance, and seemingly participated in defending English literature against the advancing front of French ideas'.[70] Literary ancestors clearly do not make up the genre alone, either; as many scholars have noted, the development of the 'novel of terror', the language of terror, and the concept of terror/terrorism itself is intimately linked. Joseph Crawford, for

[67] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse,* p. 12.

[68] Christine Desmet and Anne Williams, *Shakespearean Gothic* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 3.

[69] Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 10-1.

[70] Angela Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764-1820: The Import of Terror* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 29.

example, argues that 'the very conceptual category of "terrorism" arose as a result of the application of Gothic rhetorical tropes to real acts of historical violence'.[71]

In this study, however, it is useful to present Lewis's work as an original model in order to track the fascinating fractures that follow it. Chapter 1 illustrates that Lewis deliberately intended to create an alternative Gothic by engaging with parody; throughout this thesis, too, it will become increasingly apparent that authors and publishers responded to the scandal of *The Monk* by imitating it, furthering the reputation of his novel and reproducing it in formulaic configurations. Much as Radcliffe is largely recognised as instigating a craze for her style of Gothic romance despite the works of others before her, then, Lewis is equally accountable for ushering in a new direction for the Gothic.

The span of this thesis covers approximately half a century, a time frame which needs to be explained, as I do not wish to suggest that the male Gothic disappears by the mid-nineteenth century. My timeframe eschews the narrow borders of the first wave of the Gothic as well as the expansive reach of a study spanning more than a century. Such timeframes are now somewhat commonplace in Gothic literary studies, whereby collections or monographs either dedicate focus to particular 'waves' or periods of the genre, or comprehensively survey the development of the genre to the present day. For instance, the Gothic Literary Studies series by the University of Wales Press includes a series on the *History of the Gothic* organised by time periods, which covers the Gothic of 1764-1824 (the first wave) by Carol Margaret Davison, the subsequent Gothic of 1825-1914 (until the First World War) by Jarleth Killeen, and Twentieth Century Gothic by Lucie Armitt. Instead, my timeframe traces the development of the male Gothic vein to the penny bloods of the 1840s and 1850s, after which the female Gothic returns to haunt the sensation genre of the 1860s. I am deliberately eschewing the traditional 'first-wave' timeframe of 1764-1821 in order to show that, though the Gothic novel does indeed lose its dominance in the literary market, it remains a popular feature of the publishing world's underbelly.

A comprehensive survey of Gothic literature across a longer period of time is less suited to the aims and scope of this thesis. In part, this is due to the sheer quantity of Gothic publications during the first wave era. Franz Potter's and other scholars' surveyance of Gothic novels demonstrates the sizeable number of Gothic publications. Several guides, including Potter's own appendices on Gothic novels, chapbooks, and tales, and Peter Garside's two-

[71] Joseph Crawford, *Gothic Fiction and the Invention of Terrorism: The Politics and Aesthetics of Fear in the Age of the Reign of Terror* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), p. x.

volume bibliography of novels printed in Britain between 1770 and 1829, indicate just how substantial the numbers of Gothic productions were even during the first wave of the genre's evolution.[72] Instead, I am reviewing a period of roughly fifty years, from the publication of *The Monk* in 1796 to the penny blood serials of the 1840-50s, and focus largely on close analysis of selected texts. A survey of the multitude of Gothic novels published during this period, while it may indicate common characteristics and themes, would constitute a significantly larger project.

My study of the male Gothic and comic in the Gothic, both relatively neglected topics, also considers neglected texts. In part, I join discussions relating to Gothic publishing during the first few decades of the nineteenth century, such as Potter's study on what he terms 'trade Gothic' in *The History of Gothic Publishing*.[73] Potter, in focussing on non-canonical texts and surveying library records to identify which novels were most often borrowed, brings readership and the literary market to the forefront, surveying the works of authors who wrote for pleasure and/or money such as Isaac Crookenden and Sarah Wilkinson. Like Potter, I am interested in those novels which imitate or 'recycle' Gothic plots and tropes, shifting attention from the canonical few to the more numerous lesser-known novels. However, in keeping with the thesis aims to develop an understanding of what the male Gothic is and how the form progresses by applying a 'comic turn' to horror, I focus my scope on those texts which adopt and/or adapt features of *The Monk* in the aftermath of the novel's rise to infamy (Part II) and those that expand the male Gothic as the genre diffuses, or goes 'underground', where it subsists in chapbooks and penny bloods (Part III).

iv. Thesis Overview

This thesis is divided into three parts: Part I, 'Better the Devil You Know: Defining the Male Gothic', which critiques existing scholarship and introduces theories of parody and humour to the subject; Part II, 'Mischief in the Making: the Rise of the Male Gothic', which examines canonical and non-canonical primary texts during the early decades of the nineteenth century in relation to the descriptive criteria established by Part I; and Part III, 'Monsters of the Market: Popular Literature and the Male Gothic, c.1800-1840', which investigates the relationship

[72] Peter Garside, et al., eds, *The English Novel, 1770-1829: A Bibliographical Survey of Prose Fiction Published in the British Isles* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

[73] Franz Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800-1835: Exhuming the Trade* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan).

between 'low' forms of popular literature, including chapbooks, trade novels, and penny bloods, and the male Gothic as the form sinks into the literary underground in the early Victorian era.

Part I centres on the reception of Lewis's novel among both contemporary and modern critics and surveys the ways in which scholars have regarded *The Monk* to be the initiator of a new direction to the Gothic, one that differs vastly from the popular form established predominantly by Radcliffe and other women writers of the 1790s. As Chapter 1 will review, Lewis's novel is generally regarded as the leading, if not primary, example of the male Gothic, which engages with the 'fantastical' world of the Gothic villain instead of the female Gothic form's interest in the viewpoint of the heroines they pursue.[74] Alternatively viewed as the first 'horror' novel in contrast to the 'terror' Gothic novel, distinctions of which are famously defined by Radcliffe herself in 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', the ways in which Lewis's scandalous novel was perceived to diverge from the common Gothic romance of the era shapes how we view the novel to this day. Denounced as morally condemnable, blasted for its 'libidinous minuteness', and slammed for its supernaturalism, contemporary opinions have had a lasting impact on the ways in which modern scholars read *The Monk* and the male Gothic as sadistic, characterised primarily by sexual violence and an ambivalence toward women and mothers, if it is not outright viewed as misogynistic.[75] Yet, as I will begin to show in Chapter 1 but fully elucidate in Chapter 2, the 'vein of obscenity' that *The Monk* is notorious for is also laced with irreverent wit. To return to the Joker's mantra I referred to earlier, Part I asks of critics, both Lewis's contemporaries and those of the present day, 'Why so serious?', and goes on to address the sometimes-unsettling use of parody in *The Monk.*

This section is divided into two chapters to assess the ways in which the male Gothic has been defined through Lewis's leading text and to emphasise the presence of the comic in *The Monk*, despite its current absence from the handful of existing definitions of the male Gothic. Both chapters partly engage with an extended literature review concerned with defining/categorising the male Gothic. I consider how modern understandings of the gendered Gothic is partly crafted by Romantic attitudes toward the genre as a whole, one which regards the Gothic as a lowly subject suitable only for women writers and adolescent males. Yet Radcliffe and other women writers were hardly shrinking violets; they proactively engaged in

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[74] Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71.

[75] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, 'Lewis's Romance of The Monk', *Critical Review, or Annals of Literature*, February 1797 (194-200), p. 197.

the development of the genre, careful to cultivate the Gothic as a respectable literature that did not cater to the taste for melodrama and spectacle. But, as the second section of the chapter explores, Lewis did not hold the opinion of critics in high regard, and transformed the Gothic into a mode of titillation. The irreverent tone of *The Monk* shows Lewis's flair for wit, which leads to my discussion of the comic and humour in Chapter 2. The nature of parody and the dialogue this instigates between texts – the 'antagonistic relations' James Watt argues exist between Gothic novels – is outlined in the second chapter. Discussions of how parody and the grotesque are used in *The Monk* suggest that humour cannot be separated from Lewis's use of horror and could, therefore, be considered a defining feature of the male Gothic.[76]

Part II addresses the development of the male Gothic in the wake of Lewis's novel, recognising the significance of the responses from writers and critics in dialogue with each other to amplify specific themes and features of *The Monk* through a parodic exchange of ideas. The analysis is largely comparative in nature, building on Michael Gamer's theory that 'generic classification also depends upon the readers, publishers, and critics who ultimately determine a text's identity and value'.[77] With this in mind, Chapter 3 considers the ways in which readers of *The Monk* came to be burlesqued in caricature and Gothic parody, drawing on James Gillray's cartoon *Tales of Wonder!* (1802), Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) and the lesser-known French Gothic-parody *The Hero* (1799; translated to English 1817) by Bellin de la Liborlière. Following this, I conduct an extended analysis of the intertextual dialogue established by R. S.'s *The New Monk* (1797). This parodic novel, generally regarded as mere testimony to the rapid rise of *The Monk*'s infamy, is proven to have a much more significant role in the advancement of the male Gothic. Chapter 4 moves from mockery to more well-known novelistic rejoinders to Lewis's novel, addressing the responses to Lewis's Gothic parodying of the heroine figure in Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797) and Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya, or the Moor* (1806). Dacre's violent novel is situated in parodic dialogue not just with Lewis's text but also Radcliffe's female Gothic, rejecting the representation and treatment of the quintessential heroine in both. E. T. A. Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir* (1815), a complex novel with a dizzying number of doppelgängers, is analysed in the third section of Chapter 4. Hoffmann similarly establishes an interactive relationship with *The Monk* in his own vision of monkish madness, advancing the comic aspects of the grotesque to explore the fragmentation

[76] Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, p. 1.

[77] Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic: Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 1.

of the modern self. By conducting a close analysis of these novels, I establish them as simultaneously part of an intertextual dialogue with *The Monk*, a dialogue that sees the rise of the male Gothic in the early nineteenth century, as well as creating their own horrors for a readership increasingly delighted by spectacles that have potential to be erotic, horrific and comic.

Part III, the final section of this thesis, is dedicated to the subject of the male Gothic in the market at the turn of the nineteenth century and during the first decades of the Victorian era. In this period, two important changes in the publishing market occur which influence the development of the male Gothic: the market stratifies, and the number of male authors increases while the numbers of women writers dwindles. While Anthony Mandal suggests that the more equal gender distribution of novelists was partly 'driven by Lewis's male imitators', it is important to recall that, as will be discussed in Part I, the sex of the author does not dictate what works may be considered to follow the female or male Gothic trends, with Dacre as a notable exception.[78] As with Part I and II, Part III is divided into two chapters. These chapters focus on the marketisation of the male Gothic, its development and diffusion as the Gothic becomes increasingly nebulous in the face of rapid changes to industry and the literary market.

Chapter 5 shows that *The Monk* was among the most popular novels to be converted into cheap chapbook abridgements and adaptations, recycling its core themes and scenes mechanically to help give rise to the male Gothic as it has been typically viewed – as a sensationalist text that thrives on shock and horror. Edward Montague's *The Demon of Sicily* (1807) is a salient example of this reductive imitation and bridges the gap between cheap Gothic novels in the first decade of the nineteenth century and the later penny blood fiction of the late 1830s and the 1840s. By looking at this novel's publication history, I will show how *The Monk* was used as a marketing tool not just in the early 1800s, but again when both Montague's and Lewis's novels were re-published by notorious pornographer William Dugdale in 1839 as penny bloods. Parodic development is less obvious in the cheap, mass-market world, but horror can still turn to humour in grisly scenes of violence and supernaturalism. From chapbooks and trade Gothic novels, the demand for cheap fiction shifted in the early Victorian era as advances in publishing and distribution networks altered consumer culture. Chapter 6 addresses penny blood fiction, analysing Edward Lloyd's original publication of *The String of Pearls* (1846-7) – better known today as *Sweeney Todd* – to seek

[78] Anthony Mandal, 'Gothic and the Publishing World, 1780-1820', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 159-71 (p. 167).

out the vein of the male Gothic and the comic. While the Gothic was once fashionable among the middle classes of the late-eighteenth century, by the 1830s and 1840s it is a popular mode in the subculture of the working class, and with its shifts in the nature of humour, its relationship to horror and gender, turn to new directions as the Victorian era becomes increasingly self-conscious of its own contemporaneity. The penny bloods, with their interest in murder, the supernatural, and sensationalist thrills, are the last thread of the male Gothic vein before the female Gothic is reimagined in the sensation novel of the 1860s.

PART I

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Better the Devil You Know:
Defining the Male Gothic

Lust, murder, incest and every atrocity that can disgrace human nature, brought together, without the apology of probability, or even possibility, for their introduction. To make amends, the moral is general and very practical; it is, 'not to deal in witchcraft and magic, because the devil will have you at last!!' We are sorry to observe that good talents have been misapplied in the production of this monster.

The British Critic, June 1796, p. 677

Chapter 1
Genre Trouble: *The Monk* and the Male Gothic

The title page of Part I to this thesis features a quotation from a review of the first edition of *The Monk* in *The British Critic* (1796) – when Matthew Lewis was not yet known to be the author of the work. While it may be brief, it is certainly damning. 'This monster', the critic contends, features 'every atrocity that can disgrace human nature', without 'probability' or 'possibility', and fails to impart a practical moral to justify its content.[1] This early review was not alone in condemnation; a writer with the penname 'Aurelius' submitted a lengthy letter to *The Flapper*, in which they complained that 'the book abounds with passages plainly and unequivocally immoral', introducing at 'every opportunity […] scenes of the most wanton and immodest nature, described in terms scarcely decent'.[2] By twenty-first century standards, such reviews would no doubt entice readers – arguably, too, it had the same impact on Lewis's contemporaries, or otherwise had little influence on deterring readers from pursuing the pages of *The Monk*: the success of the first print prompted not only a second edition six months after, but emboldened Lewis to acknowledge authorship, together with the stamp of 'M. P.'.

Many of the responses to this second edition and revelation of authorship have been discussed by André Parreaux and other critics.[3] Although this chapter returns to some of this criticism, I do so to illustrate its lasting impact on modern conceptions of the male Gothic. In part this chapter functions as an extended literature review, engaging with both the criticism of *The Monk* from the time and modern scholarship, drawing together the recurring themes that lead to the understanding that the male Gothic is primarily 'characterised by its representation of male violence, female persecution, and semi-pornographic scenes', in Andrew Smith's words (see Introduction).[4] Using Michael Gamer's theory that the divide between 'high' and

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[1] 'Book review', *The British Critic*, June 1796, p. 677.

[2] 'Aurelius', *The Flapper*, September 1796, 1-4 (p. 4).

[3] André Parreaux, *The Publication of The Monk: a Literary Event, 1796-1798* (Paris: Libraire Marcel Didier, 1960). Modern editions of the novel are sure to discuss the scandal of *The Monk* in introductory sections. See McEvoy, 'Introduction', in *The Monk*, pp. vii-xxx. See also Michael Gamer, 'Genres for the Prosecution: Pornography and the Gothic', *PMLA*, 114. 5 (1999), 1045-54.

[4] Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71.

'low' literature was cultivated by a Romantic rejection of Gothic aesthetics, the first section shows that our present conception of the male and female Gothic is also partly inherited from Romantic discourse. In particular, academics who have casually suggested that writing in the Gothic mode is merely a youthful preoccupation to outgrow – for male writers, at least – is linked to Romantic male writers' rejection of their own 'Gothic phase'. While this idea is detrimental to both male and female writers, it does provide a means by which it could be argued that, when it comes to the male and female Gothic, there is a general, socio-historical difference between the ways men and women novelists engaged with the Gothic and its critics of the time. With this in mind, neither the male nor female Gothic necessarily has to reflect the sex or gender of the author. For Yael Shapira, the difference is primarily evident in the ways in which writers chose to display (or not) the dead body, with Lewis taking the controversial step to showcase the corpse as an 'erotic keepsake'.[5]

The second section of this chapter returns to the contemporary criticism of Lewis and his scandalous text, arguing that the reception of *The Monk*, as well as its content, is responsible for the emphasis on pornographic, violent, and supernatural features of the male Gothic at the expense of the comic aspect of Lewis's novel. What I demonstrate here is Lewis's evident irreverence for the esteem of critics; this devil-may-care attitude is, I argue, the true cause for the outrage of Lewis's condemners. In eschewing critical opinion in favour of popular entertainment, one which can be seen to indulge in titillation and horror, humour becomes an increasingly apparent feature of *The Monk*. Chapter 2, then, takes up what I am referring to as 'the Joker's inquisition', and presents my unique understanding of the male Gothic as one that combines both horror and humour.

1. 1 Growing Pains: Developing the Gendered Gothic

Popular genres have long struggled to be regarded as legitimate subjects of study which, when it comes to the Gothic especially, has as much to do with its original critical reception in the late-eighteenth century as the influence of early twentieth-century Leavisite elitism in academia. While Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* in particular received heavy condemnation from critics, Gothic literature was generally disparaged by reviewers despite its notable popularity. Or, rather, because of its popularity. Numerous literary historians following Ian Watt's seminal *The Rise of the Novel* (1963) have pointed to the debates surrounding the supposedly addictive quality of reading prose fiction in the long eighteenth century, in which the novel comes to be

[5] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 12.

regarded as a potentially corrupting commodity that denigrates both art and society.[6] Readers were considered to be unreflective pleasure-seekers, while novelists, cashing in on the circulation of their books, were morally bankrupt. The transaction between readers and writers, Yael Shapira argues, was likened to a sexually transgressive exchange: 'novels, critics warn, stimulate their readers in a direct, physical way, awakening their hunger for pleasure and addicting them to its serial gratification'.[7]

The Gothic, after only a few publications in the wake of Horace Walpole's foundational *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), rapidly rose to infamy in the 1790s and inherited the critical condemnation that romances had done battle with throughout the century. The view that novels ought to be morally improving lingered, while romantic pretensions and supernatural fancy were viewed as damaging to young and female readers. 'A novel, if at all useful,' explains the anonymous writer of 'Terrorist Novel Writing' (1798), 'ought to be a representation of human life and manners, with a view to direct the conduct in the most important duties of life, and to correct its follies'.[8] However the Gothic, populated as it is by 'a confusion of terrors', provides very little of use for its young readers: 'what instruction is to be reaped from the distorted ideas of lunatics, I am at a loss to conceive'.[9] The complaint throughout this piece is much like other concerns shared by critics: the use of the supernatural is so lacking in the realities of life that any moral instruction is deficient, and the repetitive machinery is not only predictable, and thus unoriginal, but also demonstrates the mercenary, commercial nature of Gothic writing. Supposedly soiled by financial gain, most Gothic writers – with some exceptions, such as Ann Radcliffe – merely pandered to the tastes of undiscerning readers.

This derision may be partially responsible for the reluctance to study the Gothic, or popular genres in general, in the early twentieth century. Even when scholars began establishing the Gothic in academia in the 1970s and 1980s, some critics still discussed the first

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[6] Ian Watt, *The Rise of the Novel: Studies in Defoe, Richardson, and Fielding* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963). See also Simon Eliot and Jonathan Rose, eds, *A Companion to The History of the Book* (Wet Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2020).

[7] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 7.

[8] Anon., 'Terrorist Novel Writing', *Spirit of the Public Journals for 1797*, vol. 1, 3rd edn (London: James Ridgway, 1802), pp. 227-9 (p. 228). For other 'anti-gothic' articles, see Emma Clery and Robert Miles, eds, *Gothic Documents: A Sourcebook, 1700-1820* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), and Rictor Norton, ed., *Gothic Readings: The First Wave, 1764-1840* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000).

[9] Anon., 'Terrorist Novel Writing', p. 228.

wave as the unruly, wayward 'black sheep' of the Romantic family. Maggie Kilgour, for example, suggests that while Gothic authors share similar preoccupations with Romanticism, the mode is mostly a 'passive vehicle' or 'crude version' of the greater Romantics, sparing only Radcliffe from this judgement.[10] This, in part, is the inheritance of the high and low cultural distinctions established during the time that both Romanticism and the Gothic were at their height (approximately the 1790s-1820s). For Michael Gamer, that we recall this period as the Romantic era even though there were more Gothic texts in circulation points to the ways in which the development of genre, and the notion of high/low literature, depended on an ambivalent and ironic interaction with the reception of the Gothic. As Sue Chaplin also points out, many Romantic writers were privately avid readers of German Gothic tales, but in public turned to 'scathing excoriations of English texts influenced by the German tradition'.[11] Further, Romanticism features aspects commonly considered to be Gothic, such as the sublime and the supernatural, but leading figures were careful to justify or disguise their adoption of such tropes. Exploring the variety of ways writers negotiated, neutralised, or 'inoculated' Gothic motifs, Gamer argues that the Romantic 'privileging of specific literary forms and aesthetics depends upon an ostentatious rejection of others', from which 'the hierarchies of genre […] are their byproducts'.[12] As a result, 'the Gothic perpetually haunts, as an aesthetic to be rejected, romanticism's construction of high literary culture'.[13]

Gamer illustrates that one example of the Romantics' efforts to de-emphasise their use of the Gothic was to present it as a genre for adolescents and women, whereby Wordsworth's *Prelude to Lyrical Ballads* (1800) and Lord Bryon's *Don Juan* (1819) use 'gothic motifs to represent not only situations of youthful wonder and female mischief, but also their respective poets' bemused conceptions of their own younger selves'.[14] I have found that this link between male adolescence and the Gothic also lingers in modern studies and remains detrimental. A few off-hand remarks in otherwise rigorous academic studies reduces Gothic writing to a juvenile obsession as if, as many gothic teens are likely to have been told, interest in writing

[10] Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 22.

[11] Sue Chaplin, 'Ann Radcliffe and Romantic-era Fiction', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic,* ed. by Dale Townshend and Angela Wright (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), pp. 203-18 (p. 210).

[12] Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, p. 15.

[13] Ibid., p. 7.

[14] Ibid., p. 11.

the Gothic was a mere phase to outgrow. Gary Kelly, for example, considers Percy Bysshe Shelley's *Zastrozzi* (1810), modelled on Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806), to be 'an example of what one could call tearaway Gothic – fiction for and by rebellious adolescence'.[15] Although Dacre's novel is widely recognised as a source for Shelley's novel, there is no suggestion that her text is part of this 'tearaway Gothic', despite its distinctly transgressive content (see Chapter 4).

Kelly is not the only modern critic to assume an association between male youth and Gothic aesthetics. Joseph Crawford suggests that Robert Southey's 'To Horror' (1791), written when he was seventeen, shows he was 'evidently much enamoured of horrific scenes', just like 'many an adolescent boy since'.[16] When considering the possible German influences on Lewis's *The Monk* – which has been thoroughly discussed in Syndy Conger's comparative analysis – Crawford even glibly suggests that 'it is equally possible that Lewis came up with such ghoulish scenes without any such outside inspiration, drawing only upon the same *perennial affinity between adolescent boys and imaginary horrors*' (my italics).[17] Not only does this comment sweep aside Conger's work, it grossly underestimates the dialogic interaction between novels that this thesis is interested in tracing. Similarly, Anne Williams claims of *The Monk* that 'its anxieties are, not surprisingly, characteristic of the male adolescent' – suggesting that all young men, across time, share the same anxieties, including Lewis.[18] This view is not as 'perennial' as it may seem: its roots are in the early-nineteenth century. For example, Sir Walter Scott, having previously worked with Lewis on the poetry collection *Tales of Wonder* (1801), sought to distance himself from the 'German-mad' phase of his younger years. In Gamer's view, Scott adopted a 'full-scale appropriation and re-casting of popular gothic materials' not only to transform the Gothic into a 'respectably historical, national, masculine, and poetic mould', but to also transform himself 'from translator of the German and disciple of Lewis to antiquarian scholar and national bard'.[19] In other words, Scott

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[15] Gary Kelly, *English Fiction of the Romantic Period, 1789-1830* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 174.

[16] Crawford, *Gothic Fiction and the Invention of Terrorism,* p. 44.

[17] Ibid., p. 111. Syndy M. Conger, *Matthew G. Lewis, Charles Robert Maturin and the Germans: An Interpretative Study of the Influence of German Literature on Two Gothic Novels* (Austria: Institut für Englische Sprache und Literatur Universität Salzburg, 1976).

[18] Williams, *The Art of Darkness*, p. 115. Williams goes further and suggests that the anxieties in *The Monk* may also reflect discomfort with his 'latent homosexuality'.

[19] Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, p. 165-6.

uses the Gothic but divests it of its associations with the foreign, the feminine, and the commercial so that he can appear almost not to have used it at all.

The Romantic association between male writers of the Gothic and adolescence has had a lasting impact on modern scholarship and is a hitherto overlooked aspect of the ways in which scholars establish a divisional gendered discourse of the genre. The quoted offhand remarks not only undermine male writers of the Gothic, including Lewis, they also implicitly undermine efforts to ensure women writers of the Gothic are regarded as being equally important to male writers in literary history, efforts which began with coining the female Gothic in the outset. Such views seem to suggest that while women authors of Gothic literature are writing in their designated, biologically and socially pre-determined genre, male authors will go on to more 'serious' writing as they mature. The association of the Gothic as a genre dominated by women writers, although meant disparagingly in comparison to the 'masculine' Romantic poet, can at least be corroborated by the numbers of women in the 1790s who wrote Gothic romance and, consequently, were instrumental in its development as a genre. Elizabeth Neiman illustrates that there were more women novelists than male, and that those women predominantly published with William Lane at the Minerva Press throughout most of the 1790s and into the early 1800s.[20] Ann Radcliffe, of course, was the most popular and highly regarded female novelist at the time, though other women writers of the genre who were well-received – by readers, if not always by critics – include Eliza Parsons, Regina Maria Roche, and Eleanor Sleath (all of whom are among the Northanger 'Horrid' Novels from Jane Austen's posthumously published parody).[21] The tide did not turn in favour of male novelists until the beginning of the nineteenth century, a change for which Anthony Mandal holds imitators of

[20] Neiman, *Minerva's Gothics*.

[21] Eliza Parsons's *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793) and *The Mysterious Warning* (1796), Regina Maria Roche's *Clermont* (1798) and Eleanor Sleath's *The Orphan of the Rhine* (1798) are all read by Catherine Morland, the heroine of Austen's quixotic *Northanger Abbey* (1813). Other titles include *The Midnight Bell* by Francis Lathom (1798), *Horrid Mysteries* by Carl Gosse (1796), and Karl Friedrich Kahlert's *The Necromancer*, translated by Peter Teuthold (1794). The collective group of Northanger 'Horrid' Novels were once thought to be fabricated by Austen until early twentieth-century scholar and collector Michael Sadleir traced their origins. See Michael Sadleir, *The Northanger Novels: A Footnote to Jane Austen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927).

Lewis's *The Monk* accountable, while many others suggest Sir Walter Scott in the 1820s secured the shift toward 'masculinizing the market'.[22]

While I find it implausible that there is any universal, 'perennial' affinity between male adolescence and the Gothic of male writers as some scholars have remarked, that the Romantics developed such a view may open the possibility for regarding a more socio-historical understanding of certain tendencies we might find in the male and female Gothic. If novelists were encouraged by critics to use nature as their muse and to write to morally improve their young and impressionable readers, straying into flights of fancy and politically transgressive content was certainly to be avoided – if the writer were interested in courting their good graces. As section 1.2 illustrates, women writers like Radcliffe and Reeve were invested in taking the lead in cultivating a Gothic aesthetics that also garnered a respectable reputation with reviewers, while Lewis dared to do otherwise. *The Monk,* controversially replete with spectacles of dead bodies, eroticised supernaturalism, and religious mockery, is among the first to so boldly gratify the taste for the thrill of the 'bloody shroud, the wormy corpse'.[23]

The 'bloody shroud, the wormy corpse' is an aspect of Anne Williams's understanding of the male Gothic, referring to the graphic quality of its spectacles in contrast to the subtler atmospheres of the female Gothic. Although Williams does, perhaps more so than others, create a direct dichotomy between male and female Gothic by pairing supposed opposites like tragedy/comedy, fixed/permeable boundaries, and symbolic/semiotic, her understanding of the male Gothic is perhaps the most useful, and certainly appears to have been the most influential. She argues that the plot and narrative conventions of the male Gothic

> focus on female suffering, positioning the audience as voyeurs who, though sympathetic, may take pleasure in female victimization. Such situations are intimately related to its delight in sexual frankness and perversity, its proximity to the 'pornographic'.[24]

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[22] Neiman, *Minerva's Gothics*, p. 25. For the view that Sir Walter Scott is responsible for the rising male numbers of novelists, and the turn away from the Gothic to historical fiction in the 1820s, see Peter Garside and Anthony Mandal, 'Producing Fiction in Britain, 1800-1829', *Romantic Textualities*, 1 (1997); Mandal, 'Gothic and the Publishing World, 1780-1820', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Byron and Townshend, pp. 159-71; Michael Munday, 'The Novel and Its Critics in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Studies in Philology,* 79 (1982), 205-26; and Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing*. The market and the rise of the male Gothic in the first decades of the nineteenth century will be discussed in Part II and Part III.

[23] Williams, *The Art of Darkness*, p. 103.

[24] Ibid., p. 103-4.

Andrew Smith's brief reference to the male Gothic in *Victorian Demons*, written nearly a decade after Williams, illustrates the lasting impact of her discussion, as he similarly describes the subgenre to be 'characterised by its representation of male violence, female persecution, and semi-pornographic scenes' following the 'fantastical world of the killer'.[25]

The idea that the male Gothic is concerned with the 'fantastical world of the killer', the guilty anti-hero, is clear in Lewis's novel with his interest in Ambrosio's descent into depravity. There are a few other well-known Gothic novels from the first wave which focus on the anti-hero personality, including the aforementioned *Zofloya*, as well as Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1820) and, arguably, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). Shelley's novel, as I discussed in the Introduction, was initially regarded to be a quintessential example of the female Gothic, discussed at length by Moers in her original essay.[26] Yet, as Diana Wallace and Smith suggest, Victor Frankenstein is 'in many ways closer to the literature of the male overreacher and thus to what critics have more recently defined as "Male Gothic"'.[27] Certainly, Victor and his creature both appear to fit Kate Ferguson Ellis's description of the male Gothic exile doomed to 'wander upon the face of the earth', as the famous last lines of the first edition eschews closure: 'He was soon borne away by the waves, and lost in darkness and distance'.[28] These estimations of the male Gothic – the investment in a villain-protagonist or guilty anti-hero, the semi-pornographic, and supernatural spectacle – offer a functional formula through which I identify novels for analysis.

Much of the difference between the gendered Gothics is considered a matter of perspective; the 'world of the killer', such as that of Ambrosio's plotline in *The Monk*, takes the lead instead of the heroines' attempts to escape the confines of a castle, offering an imagined insight into the interiority of the villain. Readers are positioned as spectators, invited to participate in the thrill of sexual violence by proxy. Lewis was not alone in this voyeurism at the time, either, as Angela Wright argues that he and the Marquis de Sade both 'establish a discourse of spectacle in which both characters and readers are compelled to participate'.[29] It

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[25] Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71.

[26] Moers, *Literary Women*.

[27] Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith, 'Introduction: Defining the Female Gothic', in *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, ed. by Wallace and Smith, pp. 1-12 (p. 2).

[28] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. 45. Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (London: Penguin Classics, 2003), p. 225.

might therefore come as no surprise that de Sade considers *The Monk* 'superior in every respect to the strange outpourings of the brilliant imagination of Mrs Radcliffe' in his 'An Essay on Novels' (1800).[30] His essay was arguably one of the first to reflect on the contemporaneity of the Gothic itself, regarding the genre to be 'the necessary offspring of the revolutionary upheaval'.[31] He goes on to explain that, because there was so much horror in real life:

> Writers therefore had to look to hell for help in composing their alluring novels, and project what everyone already knew into the realm of fantasy by confining themselves to the history of man in that cruel time.[32]

De Sade equates the use of 'hell' for inspiration with a search for escapism from the 'cruel time' of revolution but recognises that this search for escape still reflects 'what everyone already knew' about life. Though British critics typically argued that literature ought to be morally improving at least to some extent, de Sade appreciates the Gothic – and Lewis in particular – as escapist entertainment. By the turn of the century, with the development of cheap fiction as advances to printing technology and distribution networks improved, critics were increasingly less able to police literature. Publishers and novelists, as Part II of this thesis will show in particular, exploited the popularity of *The Monk* in spite of the scandal it caused among critics. In the next section of this chapter, I will show how Lewis turned the Gothic novel entirely to the pursuit of pleasure, a pleasure which mixes thrill, horror, and the comic with irreverent gusto.

1. 2 Devil-May-Care: Lewis and the Critics

The eroticism and the implication of the reader as voyeur, coupled with the supernatural spectacles that pervade *The Monk*, are often regarded as characteristic of Lewis's male Gothic, features which are intended to both titillate and terrify the reader – and which were heavily condemned by critics of the time. Figures 1.1 and 1.2, illustrations of the enchantress from *Le*

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[29] Wright, 'European disruptions of the idealized woman: Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* and the Marquis de Sade's *La Nouvelle Justine*', in *European Gothic*, ed. by Horner, pp. 39-54 (p. 42).

[30] Marquis de Sade, *The Crimes of Love: Heroic and Tragic Tales, Preceded by an Essay on Novels*, translated by David Coward (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 13.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid., p. 14.

Moine, the French translation of *The Monk*, demonstrate these components of the male Gothic according to Lewis's novel.

Figure 1.1: 'Restez, enchanteresse, restez pour ma destruction', *Le Moine* (1811).[33]

In Figure 1.1, Matilda's breasts are the only forward-facing feature, her nipples meeting the onlooker's gaze, while she and Ambrosio are turned away from the viewer and face each other. This scene depicts Ambrosio succumbing to Matilda's manipulative pleas to permit her to stay in the monastery, having revealed her true womanly form instead of her assumed identity as the male novice Rosario. The illustration is a close match to the corresponding description from the narrative, in which Matilda has torn open her habit and exposed her breasts. Ambrosio's gaze is drawn, like the viewer's gaze, to the 'dazzling whiteness' of her breast (the moonlight,

[33] Translation, from the English original: 'Stay, enchantress, stay for my destruction'.

most fortunately, having fallen upon it).[34] It is in this moment that the lascivious monk's desires are awakened, his eyes lingering 'with insatiable avidity upon the beauteous Orb [*sic*]', his body filling with a 'raging fire' and his mind rushing with 'wild wishes' that 'bewildered his imagination'.[35]

Figure 1.2: 'Il vient', *Le Moine* (1811)

The second illustration, which accompanies volume 3, sees the holy man cowering while Matilda uses her mystical arts to summon Lucifer, whose imminent arrival is indicated by the

[34] Matthew Lewis, *The Monk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 61.

[35] Ibid.

simple but ominous caption, 'He comes'.[36] The illustrator here has taken some license as Matilda does not cast her spell with breasts present and correct in Lewis's narrative, though the scene itself reads like a masturbatory performance, replete with 'frantic gestures' while Matilda is 'seized with an access [*sic*] of delirium'.[37]

In combining the sexual and the supernatural, Lewis's *The Monk* declared its difference to the popular Gothic novels at the time. While Walpole's Gothic novel did include supernatural forces, many of the popular Gothic novels some thirty years after *Otranto* in the 1790s eschew the supernatural in favour of the 'explained supernatural', a technique in which episodes that appear to have preternatural causes are later revealed to be entirely rational and human-made. Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) in particular popularised the trope; as I will come to discuss, the technique arguably courts critical opinion in a bid to ensure a respectable reputation, which was of especial importance for women writers. In displaying both the 'beauteous Orb [*sic*]' of Matilda's breast and her ritual summons of the devil with blatant relish, Lewis was seemingly less invested in winning the good graces of the critics who, as my previous section outlined, required novels to represent real life and 'manners' for the betterment of readers. As Emma McEvoy claims, 'Lewis's novel reeks of irreverence […] and smacks of wicked exposure'.[38]

Erotic drives are intimately linked to supernatural forces throughout *The Monk*. Ronald Paulson suggests that it is 'the unleashing of repressed sexual desire that shatters the barrier between the natural and supernatural worlds'.[39] Peter Brooks likewise links the erotic with the supernatural, arguing in similar terms to Paulson that 'the forces of the supernatural enter the realm of human experience in response to man's excessive erotic drives'.[40] Matilda only reveals her abilities to summon and command infernal forces to do her bidding after she has seduced Ambrosio. After providing Ambrosio with potions to drug Antonia and a magic mirror through which he may spy upon the object of his desire, Matilda performs a ritual that summons Lucifer to secure his assistance in Ambrosio's pursuit of Antonia. In the lonely vaults of the

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[36] The caption is taken from the content of the novel. In both cases – English and French – I would suggest 'he comes' is a euphemism for ejaculation.

[37] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 276.

[38] McEvoy, 'Introduction', in *The Monk*, p. xxii.

[39] Ronald Paulson, 'Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution', *ELH,* 48 (1981), 532-54 (p. 544).

[40] Peter Brooks, 'Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*', *Journal of English Literary History,* 40 (1973), 249-263 (p. 256).

monastery, Ambrosio awaits Matilda's return in turmoil, hearing the groans of the damned as they murmur, 'No hope! No succour!'[41] However, when she returns, he is not met with an image of horror, but with Matilda transformed:

> She was now cloathed [*sic*] in a long sable Robe [*sic*], on which was traced in gold embroidery a variety of unknown characters: It [*sic*] was fastened by a girdle of precious stones, in which was fixed a poignard. Her neck and arms were uncovered. In her hand She [*sic*] bore a golden wand. Her hair was loose and flowed wildly upon her shoulders; Her [*sic*] eyes sparkled with terrific expression; and her whole Demeanour [*sic*] was calculated to inspire the beholder with awe and admiration.[42]

Her disguise as a religious man/devoted feminine lover has been replaced by finery, decorated by 'gold' and 'precious stones'. Her arms and neck are bare, and her hair is 'loose and flowed wildly upon her shoulders', a clear image of unleashed female sexuality which is both threatening and engaging – deliberately 'calculated to inspire the beholder with awe and admiration'. Matilda's appearance seems less a passive response to the voyeur's gaze and more a deliberate demand to be looked at, to hold the observer in thrall. In particular, the phallic-shaped poignard in her girdle and the 'golden wand' in her hand accessorise her powerful sexuality with the threat of physical, sexual, and supernatural violence.

Matilda's seductive and supernatural practices received mixed reviews from critics at the time; a writer for *The Analytical Review*, for example, says 'we do not entirely approve of […] the calling up a spirit from hell to borrow female shape', though admits that the revelation of Matilda's identity as Lucifer's agent 'is very finely conceived, and truly picturesque'.[43] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose review of *The Monk* in *The Critical Review* at least begins with some measure of balance, suggests that Matilda 'appears to us to be the author's masterpiece'.[44] Despite this tentative praise, Coleridge argues that '[t]he shameless harlotry of Matilda, and the trembling innocence of Antonia, are seized with equal avidity, as vehicles of the most voluptuous images', making Lewis's novel 'a poison for youth, and a provocative for

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[41] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 274.

[42] Ibid.

[43] 'Lewis's *Monk: A Romance*', *Analytical Review: or, History of Literature*, October 1796, pp. 403-4 (p. 403).

[44] Coleridge, 'Lewis's Romance of The Monk', p. 194.

the debauchee'.[45] Coleridge's complaint is not the content, per se, but rather the author's 'avidity' in creating the 'shameless harlotry' and 'trembling innocence' of its leading female characters. He sees in Lewis's writing an evident glee in conjuring such extremes that, according to Coleridge, provoke youthful and profligate readers. For a novelist to flout the rules of decorum in favour of brazen titillation might well be a cause for concern, but Lewis's position in parliament was even more disquieting for Coleridge.

Coleridge's outraged response to *The Monk* in *The Critical Review*, in which the news that the author is a 'LEGISLATOR' – capitalised as if in a horrified scream – makes him 'stare and tremble', a response which strikes a curious resemblance to Radcliffe's description of the effects of horror discussed in the Introduction.[46] Coleridge, and Thomas James Mathias in *The Pursuits of Literature* (1798), formed a rallying cry to attack the carnal and blasphemous content of *The Monk*, while Mathias also argued Lewis should be prosecuted. While the increasing popularity for the Gothic novel in the 1790s raised many concerns for critics, no novel received quite so much condemnation as *The Monk*. But the vitriol was ineffective. When the fourth edition of 1798 expunged all offensive and explicit content in a bid to appease the critics and waylay court summons, the demand for unaltered previous editions rose, driving the price of the third edition from ten shillings and sixpence to a guinea.[47] While critics complained about Lewis's irreverence, which was all the more markedly shameful because of his status, readers cared very little.

Lewis's novel garnered a reputation for subversive, scandalous content on numerous counts, especially after his admission of authorship. This reputation, I believe, preceded him; or, preceded the modern scholarship which came to view *The Monk* as the first example of the male Gothic. There are some Gothic novels published before Lewis's which contain violent and sexual scenes, especially those which garnered associations with the 'German school', a denominator of the Gothic English critics at the time applied to dark and fanciful fiction, often with derision. Germany was a popular setting for many Gothic novels, such as Eleanor Sleath's *The Orphan of the Rhine* (1798), while some novelists highlighted associations with the country by affixing references to Germany in their subtitles, such as Parsons with *The Castle*

[45] Coleridge, 'Lewis's Romance of The Monk', p. 194.

[46] Ibid., p. 198.

[47] McEvoy, 'Introduction', in *The Monk*, p. x. The price of the third edition is advertised in 'Lewis's *Monk: A Romance*', *Analytical Review,* p. 403, and *Monthly Review*, August 1797, p. 451.

of Wolfenbach: A German Story (1793). Minerva Press further capitalised on the trend by publishing Peter Will's translation of Carl Grosse's *Horrid Mysteries* in 1796. Even Scott, when distancing himself from the Gothic dalliances of his formative years, referred to the period as his 'German-mad' phase. Translations of German texts were particularly popular in the late-eighteenth century and early-nineteenth century, including novels like *The Necromancer* by Ludwig Flammenberg (Carl Friedrich Kahlert's pseudonym), translated by Peter Teutold in 1794, and Lewis's translations of Heinrich Zschokke's *The Bravo of Venice* (1805). Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* (1801) likewise featured six of his own translations from German originals as well as translations by Scott; a translation of Gottfried Bürger's 'Lenore' (1773), the inspiration for the Bleeding Nun, is also included in volume two. But Germany's Gothic, the *Schauerroman*, is not necessarily the equivalent of the British Gothic; Barry Murnane, in fact, points out that English understanding of the German Gothic is a misconception.[48] Of course, the word 'Gothic' is derived from the Goths, a Germanic tribe from 300-400 AD, and the term itself has a long and mutating history in British imagination before Walpole first adopted it as a means to classify *The Castle of Otranto*.[49] Even the name Matilda, which is of Germanic origin and used in *The Monk*, *The Castle of Wolfenbach*, and many more Gothic novels at the time, is a tributary echo of the Germanic origin of Gothic novels.

Carl Grosse, a German author, wrote *Horrid Mysteries* in 1791-4 before it was translated into English. Grosse's novel involves a confusing conspiratorial plot and sexual content to rival Lewis. Within the first few pages, narrator 'S' recounts a strange encounter in the woods where, seemingly from nowhere, a beautiful woman appears. Though the two are complete strangers, he is inspired by a 'secret impulse' to hold her 'violently to [his] panting bosom', whereupon vehement passion thrilled all the pulses of [his] heart'.[50] Only after holding her close – and all that might imply – does he look upon her fully, and observes her 'ash-pale face' and long 'auburn tresses, which are inclined towards her open bosom, which seemed to

[48] Barry Murnane, 'Gothic translation: Germany, 1790-1830', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 231-42 (p. 235).

[49] For a discussion of the cultural history of the term 'Gothic', see Fred Botting, 'In Gothic Darkly: Heterotopia, History, Culture', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 11-24. For a history of the Goths, see Robin Sowerby, 'The Goths in History and Pre-Gothic Gothic', in *A New Companion to the Gothic*, ed. by David Punter (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 25-37.

[50] Carl Grosse, *Horrid Mysteries* (Missouri: Valancourt Books, 2016), p. 12.

expand itself more than usual, in order to receive it entirely'.[51] The novel abounds with sexual content and secret cults. Published the same year as *The Monk*, however, Grosse's carnality was likely overlooked by critics shocked by Ambrosio's increasing depravity as he moves from satiating his desire with the temptress Matilda to raping his virginal sister in the crypt of the monastery.

Lewis's novel is also noticeably more brutal than most preceding popular Gothic novels – filled with 'every atrocity that can disgrace human nature', as the reviewer in *The British Critic* put it.[52] Though heroines in other Gothic novels may be kidnapped by banditti, imprisoned by tyrannical distant relatives, and threatened implicitly with rape or murder, they seldom suffer physical assault. Lewis flouts the by then well-established rules of the Gothic genre by making a spectacle of violence. Montague Summers argues that 'by his very violence, his impassioned realism, Lewis is widely separated from Mrs Radcliffe and her school', which is thus far evident in both the content of the novel and its reception.[53] However, Eliza Parsons's *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (1793), while adopting female Gothic tropes, also anticipates Lewis's use of horror. Sue Chaplin makes this argument when discussing how typical Radcliffean suspense – the technique of terror – becomes actualised in horror Gothic narratives. In Parsons's text, as Chaplin says, 'the abuse of women is violently enacted […] intimations of assault become bodies bruised and bathed in blood'.[54] The Countess of Wolfenbach, for example, was forced to watch her husband make 'repeated stabs […] through several parts' of her lover's body, so that 'his blood flowed in torrents'.[55] The 'inhuman Count' drags her into the same closet in which the bloody corpse is hidden, where she was 'seized with violent pains', which, hoping to die, she mistook to be the effect of poison with some relief – only for the servant to realise she is in labour.[56] To ensure her child's survival, she vows to the Count that

[51] Carl Grosse, *Horrid Mysteries* (Missouri: Valancourt Books, 2016), p. 13.

[52] 'Book review', *The British Critic*, p. 677.

[53] Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1964), p. 233.

[54] Chaplin, 'Ann Radcliffe and Romantic-era Fiction', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic*, ed. by Townshend and Wright, pp. 203-18 (p. 213).

[55] Eliza Parsons, *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (Missouri: Valancourt Books, 2006), p. 97-8.

[56] Ibid., p. 98.

she will never reveal his actions and remain locked away in the Castle of Wolfenbach, while the rest of society believes her to have died in childbirth.

While the pornographic and violent scenes that have been taken to characterise the male Gothic might well be traceable in *Horrid Mysteries* and *The Castle of Wolfenbach*, both pale in comparison to *The Monk*, and did not receive as much critical attention. The male Gothic's interest in pornography, to 'delight in sexual frankness and perversity', is remarked upon in the reviews that complain about the 'wanton and immodest' scenes, as it is also even in those reviews which defend *The Monk*.[57] One staunch defender in *The Monthly Mirror*, who titled their letter 'An apology for *The Monk*' and signed it 'a Friend to Genius', argued that 'this beautiful romance is well-calculated to support the cause of virtue', suggesting that the explicit representation of depravity better demonstrates Ambrosio's 'greatest error' to have 'too great a confidence in his own virtue, too great a reliance on his own hatred of vice'.[58] A critic in *The Analytic Review* similarly regards 'the progress of passion [to be] very happily imagined' in order to illustrate that 'the monk's pride was the arch devil that betrayed him'.[59] In other words, for both these reviewers who praise *The Monk*, the ends justify the means.

Few critics at the time seemed to agree, and Lewis was even threatened with libel, especially in relation to pornographic content. The relationship between Lewis's Gothic and pornography is further elucidated in an article by Michael Gamer who argues that, though neither Gothic nor pornography were terms as we know them today, the two genres were conflated by contemporary readers, as both incited charges of obscenity. Mathias famously argued in *The Pursuits of Literature* that Lewis was indictable by common law, invoking earlier successful legal cases to suppress 'obscene' literature like John Cleland's *Fanny Hill* (1748), and the fines brought against notorious bookseller Edmund Curll for the publications of *A Treatise Of The Use Of Flogging In Venereal Affairs* (1723) and *Venus in the Cloister, or the Nun in her Smock* (1724).[60] Gamer argues that, by suggesting that there is 'another Cleland' in Lewis, and reminding readers that the Attorney General found in Curll's publications 'an

[57] 'Aurelius', *The Flapper*, 1-4 (p. 4).

[58] 'A Friend to Genius', 'An Apology for The Monk', *Monthly Mirror*, April 1797, 210-15 (p. 211).

[59] 'Lewis's *Monk: A Romance*', p. 403-4.

[60] *The Use of Flogging* is a translation of Ioannes Henricus Meibomiu's 1639 *Tractus de usu flagrorum in re Medica et Veneria*; Venus in the Cloister is a translation of *Vénus dans le cloître, ou la Religieuse en chemise* (1683) by the Abbé du Prat.

offense against the King's peace', Mathias 'redefines the generic status of *The Monk: A Romance* – from romance to "pornography"'.[61]

The charge of pornography, whether or not in modern terms, was clearly a problem to Lewis's contemporaries. While the 'wanton harlotry' and 'libidinous minuteness of detail' was cause for concern for Coleridge in his oft-cited article, the pornographic reputation of *The Monk* gave illustrator Charles Williams ample inspiration for caricature (Figure 1.3).[62] Featuring a buxom young woman warming her bare backside by an open fire, it shows her left hand hold open a copy of *The Monk*, while her right hand is suggestively tucked under her dress between her thighs. Other signs of eroticism feature in the cartoon, including other books titled 'Economy of Love by Dr Armstrong' (1736) and 'The Kisses' (unknown); an ornate clock with embracing cupids; the rose-print couch, signalling an abundance of sexuality, and the peculiar, phallic-shaped cushions atop it; and a partial painting representing the mythical Danaë receiving Zeus's 'golden shower', which impregnates her with Perseus.[63] Even the cat luxuriating on its back is a signal to eroticism, as female felines 'on heat' typically seek more affection, which can be gestured by submissively exposing the belly. As I will show in Chapter 3, caricature and parody participate in the myth-making of *The Monk* and the male Gothic, engaging in a dialogue between not only Lewis's novel, but also with criticism. In Williams's cartoon, the pornographic content that provoked the wrath of many critics is instead a subject of satire. Even the woman's blush calls to mind Ambrosio's amatory question to the painting of the Madonna: 'can the Rose [*sic*] vie with the blush of that cheek?'[64]

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[61] Thomas James Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature. A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues*, 8th edn (London: T. Beckett, 1798); Gamer, 'Genres for the Prosecution: Pornography and the Gothic', 1045-54 (p. 1050).

[62] Coleridge, 'Lewis's Romance of The Monk', p. 197.

[63] The British Museum online identifies the painting behind the curtain to be that of Danaë, a detail that is difficult to see without closer inspection. See: BM Satires / Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum. https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1935-0522-7-12 [accessed 3 December 2020]

[64] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 40.

Figure 1.3: Charles Williams, 'Luxury, or the Comforts of a Rumpford' (1801)

In Leslie Fiedler's words, *The Monk* is a 'sadist farrago'. [65] Undoubtedly, the sexual content of Lewis's novel is strikingly violent, particularly in comparison to the dominant Gothic romances of the time. It is typical of the female Gothic most popular in the 1790s for tyrants to threaten the virtuous young heroines with rape, but it is always implicit – unspeakable – and unrealised. For example, Ellis notes that throughout Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), the orphan Emily St Aubert is confronted with an 'omnipresent sense of impending rape without ever mentioning the word'.[66] These unrealised threats become explicit in *The Monk*. In McEvoy's view, Lewis seems 'determined to wreak vengeance on the unbelievably virtuous characters of other novelists', such as Emily, by subjecting heroines to extreme violence which is often sexual in nature.[67] This 'vengeance' against the 'unbelievably virtuous' women has led a number of critics to consider Radcliffe the principle target, reading

[65] Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, p. 111.

[66] Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, p. 46.

[67] McEvoy, 'Introduction', in *The Monk*, pp. vii-xxx (p. xix).

in Lewis's libertinism a 'distinctly hostile' response to sentimentalism.[68] Ambrosio's attack upon the virginal Antonia certainly seems to suggest as much. The climactic scene in which Ambrosio rapes Antonia, while it is also an incestuous act as she is the monk's sister, has heavy-handed overtones of necrophilia: having drugged her to feign death in a macabre inversion of Juliet's deliberate mummery of a death-like state in Shakespeare's tragic romance, Ambrosio commits his monstrous crime among the catacombs where Antonia 'reclined upon her funeral Bier [*sic*]' next to 'three putrid half-corrupted Bodies [*sic*]'.[69] While Jacqueline Howard has noted the 'parodic manipulation of Sentimental conventions' in the scene, others have also suggested it is not merely an inversion of Shakespeare, or an attack on Radcliffe's style[70]: Steven Blakemore, David MacDonald, and Shapira all address comparisons between *The Monk* with Richardson's *Clarissa* (1748).[71] Shapira suggests that Lewis deliberately seeks to 'satirize and subvert the respectable tradition of the novel and the dead body's moral function within it', and in so doing transforms 'the most pious dead body [Clarissa] of eighteenth century fiction into an erotic keepsake'.[72] For Shapira, the eroticisation of the heroine's corpse literalises that which Richardson and Radcliffe only dared suggest and evidences Lewis's embrace of 'the pleasure-focused mission of which the novel had long been accused and thus redefines the purpose of the Gothic corpse as the source of quasi-pornographic thrills'.[73]

Shapira, evaluating the different representations of corpses across the eighteenth century, argues that Radcliffe and Lewis used the image of the dead body in very different ways, the former with a view to cultivate a reputation of respectability, the latter with reckless abandon. Such choices are informed by gender, which offers an alternative approach to reading the female Gothic:

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[68] Markman Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 83.

[69] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 379.

[70] Jacqueline Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), p. 194.

[71] Steven Blakemore, 'Matthew Lewis's Black Mass: Sexual, Religious Inversion in *The Monk*', *Studies in the Novel*, 30. 4 (1998), 521-39; David L. MacDonald, ' "A Dreadful Dreadful Dream": Transvaluation, Realization, and Literalization of *Clarissa* in *The Monk*', *Gothic Studies*, 6. 2 (2004), 157-71; Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*.

[72] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 182 & p. 12.

[73] Ibid., p. 33.

> [Radcliffe's] approach to the corpse is 'female,' in my analysis, only in the sense that it takes into account the anticipated effects of gender ideology on reception, a consideration that an author of Radcliffe's ambition could not possibly ignore. Long considered a key trait of female Gothic, the avoidance of graphic death imagery can be understood as a response to the cultural circumstances of production rather than as an innately 'feminine' approach.[74]

Shapira's view suggests that Radcliffe's decision to avoid the spectacles of horror ensured Radcliffe's respectability, pointing not to an innately 'feminine' or female approach to the Gothic, but rather an awareness and negotiation of the patriarchal attitudes of critics. Lewis, on the other hand, is the first author to portray the 'Gothic corpse' as we know it today, presenting the image 'with deliberate graphic bluntness in order to excite and entertain'.[75]

Shapira, like Gamer, addresses the role of reception in the crafting of the Gothic, which I continue to do throughout this thesis by addressing the dialogic exchange between critics, writers, and even caricaturists in order to trace the development of the male Gothic after Lewis. If Radcliffe used suspense and delay tactics to cultivate respectability, ultimately resorting to the explained supernatural to reduce the grisly spectacle of a corpse to a mere wax effigy, Lewis had other intentions. Throughout the long-eighteenth century, as I discussed in the first section to this chapter, novels were condemned by critics as potentially corrupting commodities, tarnished by the market and consumed by indiscriminate youth. Novelists like Defoe and Richardson, as Radcliffe would do so later, had to tread a fine line between appeasing critics and appealing to readers. According to Shapira, this meant that authors had to judge 'how much of a sensational spectacle the dead body is allowed to become in any particular work'.[76] Used predominantly as a memento mori and to inspire religious reflection, eighteenth-century novelists typically imbued the corpse with moral purpose. This is in stark contrast to Lewis's *The Monk* which is controversially replete with both macabre and erotic spectacles.

Lewis's intention to reject the 'moralizing function' of the novel earlier authors strove to establish during the eighteenth century does not appear to falter, even in the wake of the scandal following the second edition. James Watt suggests that 'he went on to maintain the upstart reputation he had gained with *The Monk*, baiting critics and reviewers by knowingly appealing to popular demand'.[77] Even the expunged fourth edition of *The Monk* (1798),

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[74] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 158.

[75] Ibid., p. 1.

[76] Ibid., p. 3.

[77] Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, p. 84-85.

ostensibly intended to appease the outraged critics and avoid the court summons for which Mathias vehemently argued, features a little mischief: Lewis inserts 'Giles Jollup the Grave and Brown Sally Green' – his own parody of his poem 'Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogine' – into this new edition. Parreaux regards this decision as 'incontrovertible proof that […] Lewis was fully capable of taking an ironic view of his productions'.[78] Furthermore, the opening poem, 'Imitation of Horace', shows that Lewis anticipated criticism, though he was prepared to rise to the challenge and send his novel into the world even so:

> Go then, and pass that dangerous bourn
> Whence never Book can back return:
> And when you find, condemned, despised,
> Neglected, blamed, and criticised,
> Abuse from All who read you fall,
> (If haply you be read at all)
>
> […]
>
> More passionate no creature living,
> Proud, obstinate, and unforgiving,
> But yet for those who kindness show,
> Ready through fire and smoke to go.[79]

An additional footnote to this poem in the expunged fourth edition reads that 'neglected it has not been, but criticised of all conscience'.[80] This may suggest that there is not such 'incontrovertible proof' of Lewis's sense of irony as Parreaux would like to believe – but nor does it rule out the reading that this footnote is written with sarcasm, too.

Lewis's apparent dismissal of critics is at odds with how some of the more celebrated women writers of the time typically appear to have engaged with critics and other novelists. This is not to suggest that women writers were compliant or submissive to the patriarchal and middle-class values of critics, but rather less overtly rebellious and irreverent. For Emma Clery, there is ample evidence that 'Gothic literature sees women writers at their most pushy and argumentative' (pushy and argumentative here being a celebratory statement).[81] Robert Miles, too, believes that women writers of the eighteenth century 'understood themselves to be equal

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[78] Parreaux, *The Publication of The Monk*, p. 59.

[79] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 3-4.

[80] Louis F. Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961), p. 19.

[81] Emma J. Clery, *Women's Gothic: From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley* (Devon: Northcote House Publishers Ltd, 2000), p. 3.

members of the republic of letters, rationally engaged in matters of public engagement', and warns against the ahistorical adoption of present-day feminism to understand the female Gothic.[82] Clery raises similar concerns in *Women's Gothic*, noting that howsoever academics may have moved on from Moers's initial definition of the female Gothic, what remains fairly constant is the view that it is a mode through which women writers typically explore the oppressive and repressive impact of patriarchally-defined gender ideology. Clery refers to this typical understanding of the female Gothic as 'parables of patriarchy', and explains that:

> the rescue of women writers from obscurity tended to involve the construction of an alternative, repressed female tradition […] The current fascination with the Gothic genre in the academy and in the culture generally, has led to many studies of early female writers of Gothic, and almost invariably their works have been read as parables of patriarchy involving the heroine's danger from wicked father figures, and her search for the absent mother. Family relations yet again, though in a heightened form.[83]

Clery criticises the tendency of scholars to refer to works by women as domestic or familial, which ironically perpetuate the patriarchal association with women and domesticity, especially when in contrast to the more 'masculine' epic. In addressing the female Gothic as a response to patriarchal ideology, the very language feminists criticise has consequently then been used by feminists to describe the female Gothic: 'family relations yet again'. This problem is clear even in Miles's introduction to the issue of *Women's Writing* when he describes the female Gothic as 'a recurring *family* of narratives' (my emphasis).[84] The male Gothic is similarly at risk of the self-fulfilling language of gender, in which some commentators overemphasise 'penetration' of the 'dominating phallus' into the domestic space as a defining feature of the form.[85] Further, the use of 'penetrate' and 'phallus' to describe the effects of the male Gothic suggests a heteronormative reading of gender and the Gothic, and risks predetermining the ways in which we examine a text as male or female.

Clery instead argues that Gothic women writers were far from shrinking violets. Dacre and Radcliffe, in very different ways, engage with a dialogic response to *The Monk* in their

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[82] Miles, 'Ann Radcliffe and the Female Gothic', in *The Female Gothic,* ed. by Wallace and Smith, pp. 76-97 (p. 44).

[83] Clery, *Women's Gothic*, p. 2.

[84] Robert Miles, 'Introduction', *Women's Writing*, 1. 2 (1994), 131-42 (p. 131).

[85] Milbank, *Daughters of the House*, p. 12.

novels *Zofloya* and *The Italian* (see Chapter 4), a dialogue which is parodic in nature and crucial to the advancement of the male Gothic. Even before the Gothic rose to popularity, Clara Reeve took the lead in its development in *The Old English Baron* (1777). Recognising that her Gothic-historical romance is the literary 'offspring' of *Otranto*, Reeve criticises Walpole's use of the marvellous and intention to excite readers, complaining that 'the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite'.[86] In taking Walpole to task, Reeve suggests that her novel aims to show how true romance should be written, keeping the story 'within the utmost verge of probability […] without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention'.[87] Reeve's response to Walpole, though the publications of their novels were more than twenty years apart, encouraged later publishers in the early nineteenth century to pair the two together in cheap collections.[88] Reeve's preference for 'probability' while maintaining readers' excitement in part joins the prevailing critical opinion of the novel's function – the same opinion that brought critics to slate Lewis's novel for its lack of realism. This does not mean that women writers were submissive to critics, but rather that they were proactively engaged in the development of the novel form and of Gothic aesthetics.

Lewis's determination to engage with the 'pleasure-focused mission' of the novel, to 'wreak vengeance' against virginal heroines, and to reject the 'moralising function' of literature, demonstrates his irreverence for critical opinion and cultural policing. This irreverence, I argue, is part of his humour; the content of *The Monk* thumbs the nose at critics and satirises their moral self-righteousness. There is even a lengthy rant about critics in chapter five, following Theodore's recitation of his poem, 'Love and Age'. Raymond, Theodore's master and Lewis's mouthpiece, cautions him that the quality of an author's work is beside the point to critics: they are 'an Animal [*sic*] whom everybody is privileged to attack; For [*sic*] though All [*sic*] are not able to write books, all conceive themselves able to judge them'.[89] Ridicule awaits a badly written book, but a good book 'excites envy'; if no fault can be found, critics 'employ themselves in stigmatizing its Author [*sic*]. They maliciously rake out from

[86] Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 3.

[87] Ibid., p. 3.

[88] For example, publishers Simon Fisher's 'Fisher's Library of Modern Amusement' and John Limbard's 'British Novelist' both paired Reeve and Walpole's texts in 1824, the former selling for sixpence and the latter for twopence.

[89] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 198.

obscurity every little circumstance which may throw ridicule upon his private character or conduct, and aim at wounding the Man [*sic*], since They [*sic*] cannot hurt the Writer [*sic*]'.[90] Lewis uncannily predicts his own treatment in the hands of critics, and pre-empts their attack with the suggestion that they are merely jealous, petty, and entitled. Lewis even seems to defend himself from charges of plagiarism in the passage, as Raymond suggests that Theodore's 'best ideas are borrowed […] though possibly you are unconscious of the theft yourself'.[91]

One of the most notorious scenes that commentators attacked, however, parodies critics even more. The scene in which it is revealed that Antonia's mother has censored the Bible, while it invited the most outright condemnation from critics, ironically evidences Lewis's irreverence for the critics themselves arguably more so than it does religion. Ambrosio, having gained entry to Antonia's house, discovers her unusual copy of the Bible: 'How!' the monk muses, 'Antonia reads the Bible, and is still so ignorant?'[92] In this exclamation, Ambrosio is bewildered by Antonia's lack of worldly (carnal) knowledge, implying the Bible provides ample instruction. Upon closer inspection, he realises Elvira has censored its content. This censorship, however, only reinforces the notion that the Bible features content ill-suited to promoting chastity. The passage reads:

> That prudent Mother [*sic*], while She [*sic*] admired the beauties of the sacred writings, was convinced that, unrestricted, no reading more improper could be permitted a young Woman [*sic*]. Many of the narratives can only tend to excite ideas the worst calculated for a female breast: Every thing [*sic*] is called plainly and roundly by its name; and the annals of a Brothel [*sic*] would scarcely furnish a greater choice of indecent expressions. Yet this is the Book [*sic*] which young Women [*sic*] are recommended to study […] She had in consequence made two resolutions respecting the Bible. The first was that Antonia should not read it, till She [*sic*] was of an age to feel its beauties, and profit by its morality: The [*sic*] second, that it should be copied out with her own hand, and all improper passages either altered or omitted.[93]

Numerous critics commented directly on this passage and Coleridge even quoted it at length.[94] 'Aurelias', in the aforementioned article by *The Flapper*, responds to the extract with sarcasm,

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[90] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 199.

[91] Ibid., p. 200.

[92] Ibid., p. 259.

[93] Ibid., p. 259-60.

[94] Copyright laws at the time did not prevent reviewers quoting from books at length; it was common for reviewers to quote an extended passage. See Eliot, 'The British Book Market 1800-90', in *A Companion to The History of the Book*, ed. by Eliot and Rose, pp. 471-84.

claiming it is 'a pity that the author has not followed up this notable discovery, by presenting the world with a new edition of the Bible, purged of its immortalities by his own chaste hand'.[95] Ironically this challenge was answered by one of Lewis's staunch defenders, the supposed 'Friend to Genius', who proposes that Ezekiel is one such chapter from the Bible that might indeed be 'improper for young minds'.[96] Ezekiel relates the story of sisters Oholah and Oholibah who were 'prostitutes in Egypt' where 'in that land their breasts were fondled and their virgin bosoms caressed'.[97] In due course, after many horsemen and Egyptians have enjoyed the sisters, the two meet unpleasant ends. The tale is certainly one of the more sexual and violent chapters of the Bible, of which there are more than Lewis's eighteenth-century reviewers were willing to admit. The apologist of *The Monk* therefore considers Lewis to be one of Christianity's 'best friends', as he 'endeavours to prevent mischief' by drawing attention to such lewd content in the Bible.[98]

This is rather generous of Lewis's self-acclaimed friend, and few critics agreed. Coleridge labelled Lewis an 'infidel', shocked by his ability to 'use even the Bible in conjuring up the spirit of uncleanness'.[99] R. R. complains in *The European Magazine* that nothing good can come of making such an '*oblique attack upon venerable establishments*' (original italics).[100] Yet the Bible and religion itself – despite the horrific Bleeding Nun and Ambrosio's hypocrisy, among many seemingly irreligious scenes – are not necessarily the sole targets of Lewis's mockery in the passage. It also functions as a parodic comment on critical opinion and censorship itself, almost in anticipation of the uproar Lewis would come to face, as he seems to have done in the aforementioned ballad. Douglass Thomson suggests that this 'notorious' episode is an example of Gothic parody that 'verges on the metafictional', one which directly speaks to the political tensions of the time.[101] Metafiction, as I will discuss in Chapter 2, is

[95] 'Aurelias', *The Flapper*, p. 4.

[96] 'A Friend to Genius', *Monthly Mirror*, p. 214.

[97] Ezekiel, 23.3.

[98] 'A Friend to Genius', p. 214.

[99] Coleridge, 'Lewis's Romance of The Monk', p. 198.

[100] R. R., 'Book Review', *The European Magazine*, February 1797, pp. 111-5 (p. 112).

[101] Douglass H. Thomson, 'The Earliest Parodies of Gothic Literature', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 284-96 (p. 293).

quintessential to Margaret Rose's understanding of parody, one which recognises the role of the reader in the reception and interpretation of humorous intertextuality and allusion. Lewis, as an M. P. – despite his enthusiasm for the role being described by McEvoy as 'lukewarm' – would certainly have been aware of the suppressive measures of the two 'Gagging Acts' of 1795 which followed the suspension of habeas corpus in 1794 as mounting anxieties of radicalism and anti-monarchic Jacobins in sympathy with the French Revolution moved politicians to suppress seditious writing and gatherings.[102] He knowingly played with fire by unveiling the hypocrisy of censorship in the example of the Bible's own 'indecent' content.

The political tensions at the time Lewis wrote and published *The Monk* are undoubtedly also accountable for the backlash against the novel by contemporary critics. Complaints were principally made in response to the second edition in which Lewis reveals his authorship and status as M. P.; as I have shown in earlier quotations from Coleridge, Lewis's position in parliament as author made the transgressive content of his novel all the more threatening to the established order. Andrew Cooper surveys the ways in which the Gothic generally provoked critical outrage, and proposes a 'taxonomy of Gothic threats', of which there are four categories: threats to the young, threats to gender norms, the threat of superstition, and the threat of revolution.[103] Unsurprisingly, *The Monk* is a threat on each count. Further, according to Crawford, Lewis's Gothic text was also seen to be 'terrorist' because 'its politics and (lack of) morals were seen as being in sympathy with those of the Jacobin "terrorists" themselves, as both were regarded as being contemptuous of ordinary religion and morality'.[104] *The Monk* was a so-called 'terrorist' novel par excellence.

'Terrorist', blasphemer, and sadist, Lewis quickly earned a reputation, and one that was lasting. Given Lewis's evident irreverence for the opinion of critics and the novel's quality of 'a diffuse philosophy of extreme individualism', it might be tempting to return to the notion of the 'tearaway Gothic' Kelly attributes to the eighteen-year-old Percy Shelley, and to recall that Lewis was not quite twenty-one when he published *The Monk*.[105] Lewis himself draws

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[102] Emma McEvoy, 'Lewis, Matthew', in *The Encyclopedia of the Gothic*, ed. by William Hughes, David Punter and Andrew Smith (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2016), pp. 397-403 (p. 398).

[103] Andrew L. Cooper, 'Gothic Threats: The Role of Danger in the Critical Evaluation of *The Monk* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho', Gothic Studies,* 8: 2 (2006), 18-24.

[104] Crawford, *Gothic Fiction and the Invention of Terrorism*, p. 116.

[105] Parreaux, *The Publication of The Monk,* p. 140.

attention to his youthfulness in the aforementioned poem, inviting the question, 'Pray, what may be the author's age?' to answer, 'Your faults, no doubt, will make it clear/I scarce have seen my twentieth year'.[106] But, as I have discussed, the devil-may-care tone of the poem as a whole – daring to go through 'fire and smoke' – makes this invocation of youthful error ambiguous. Indeed, letters to his mother which appear to refer to the process of writing *The Monk* indicate that he was much pleased with the novel, boasting that 'if Booksellers [*sic*] will not buy it, I shall publish it myself'.[107] Though the scandal that followed his revelation of authorship was likely beyond any prediction he could have made, and whether he did come to regret his irreverence as he matured, is not necessarily the point: at the time of writing and publication, Lewis evidently set out to 'satirize and subvert the respectable tradition of the novel', and deliberately sought to disrupt readers' assumptions.[108]

Conclusion

As the first section of this chapter showed, the effort of Romantics to dismiss their use of the Gothic as merely a youthful phase has had a lasting impact on the ways in which modern scholars have come to consider there to be a 'perennial affinity' between teenage boys and horror. While Crawford and Kelly assume that male adolescents share the same fascination with 'imaginary horrors', Williams views this fascination to be symptomatic of anxieties typical to young men. These views, I have argued, implicitly sustain the idea that the Gothic is a woman's genre, while men 'mature' and go on to write greater literature, especially Romantic poetry. This is, therefore, insulting to all genders – not to mention the Gothic.

There are, however, certain typical differences between male and female authors of the Gothic which we can suggest is a result of the socio-historical context. Women writers like Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe engaged in the development of the Gothic, cultivating a popular literature that maintained respectability. For Reeve, this meant rejecting Walpole's use of supernaturalism to ensure her romance remained within the bounds of probability. Radcliffe similarly avoided the supernatural, illustrating that instances which appear to have other-worldly origins are merely the consequence of superstitious and overactive imaginations. As Clery argues, women writers were 'pushy and argumentative', and to take the view that female

[106] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 4.

[107] Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis*, p. 19.

[108] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 192.

Gothic novels are 'parables of patriarchy' risks projecting modern feminist concerns into narratives that actively engaged with cultural conversation. When *The Monk* entered the Gothic arena, therefore, its content appeared to be strikingly different, despite Parsons's bloody violence in *The Castle of Wolfenbach* or Grosse's sexual content in *Horrid Mysteries*. Lewis's use of spectacle, 'the bloody shroud, the wormy corpse', 'semi-pornographic visual imagery', and the 'fantastical world of the killer', features which are regarded by Williams and Smith to characterise the male Gothic, deliberately seek to entertain readers with little regard for decorum.

Lewis, then, might well be an example of Kelly's 'Tearaway Gothic'. Certainly, the irreverence *The Monk* shows to critics in favour of flagrant entertainment – rejecting the commonly upheld beliefs that the novel should reflect and improve upon real life and manners – provoked outrage on numerous counts. With 'every atrocity that can disgrace human nature […] without the apology of probability', Lewis's brazen acknowledgement of authorship and his status as M. P. provoked critics to condemn him. He and his novel became synonymous, even transforming his name to Matthew 'Monk' Lewis. To a certain degree, his reputation precedes him; without the outrage that followed the second edition of the novel, the new direction to the Gothic that Mandal and others have noticed at the turn of the century may not necessarily have occurred.[109] The critics' opinion of Lewis's novel establishes the themes that imitators of *The Monk* later took up to propagate what modern scholars have come to recognise as the male Gothic – spectacles of supernatural horror, sexual content, and extreme violence. The focus on these features, however, helps to diminish the role of humour in *The Monk*, and sidesteps the question I am asking in this thesis: should we see the comic as a notable feature of the male Gothic? In this chapter I have begun to highlight the parodic nature of *The Monk* which thumbs the nose at critics. This irreverence is the first indication that Lewis's Gothic can be read, however uncomfortably, as comical. The next chapter looks more closely at the symbiotic relationship between horror and humour in *The Monk*.

[109] Mandal, 'Gothic and the Publishing World, 1780-1820', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Byron and Townshend, pp. 159-71; see also Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing.*

Chapter 2

The Joker's Inquisition: The Role of Humour in *The Monk*

Let me begin this chapter by returning to the comparison I made in the Introduction to the Joker and his disturbing mantra: *why so serious*? The villain in Christopher Nolan's *The Dark Knight* (2008), played by the late Heath Ledger, asks this philosophical question while pressing a knife against the cheek of his victims, ready to carve a smile on their faces in a grotesque aping of his own clown-like, scarred grin. This act of violence is not intended to entice laughter from audiences per se: rather, it is a disquieting provocation, one which invites viewers to envision themselves either at the receiving end of violence or as the perpetrator – and to choose between the two roles. The Joker, essentially, is coercing viewers to confront the uncomfortable truth that it may well be better to be him than be his victim. A preference for violence, it is implied, is a slippery slope to a propensity for violence. The Joker's inquisition forces audiences to acknowledge that they enjoy the spectacle of his brutality and thus participate in it by proxy. Matthew Lewis, as I have discussed in Chapter 1, similarly challenged readers to engage in Ambrosio's sadistic pleasure, forcing them to take up the position of voyeur. Given that Lewis's treatment of female characters has been regarded as misogynistic by numerous critics, I do not mean to smile upon the novel's violence or imply that its darkest scenes should incite laughter by addressing the comic aspects of *The Monk*.[1] Rather, I uphold the view shared by Yael Shapira and James Watt that Lewis quite deliberately eschewed the moral purpose of the novel form in favour of flaunting his ability to entertain readers.[2] In taking this view, I further argue that Lewis's interest in sensation leads him to use parody as a tool of satire, which primarily targets the implausibility of Radcliffean heroines and shallow ineptitude of romantic heroes.

How we might read even the more gruesome episodes of *The Monk* as potentially comical is the focus of this chapter. As this thesis understands the comic and comical to indicate that which relates to or intends to be funny or humorous, and understands humour to mean the quality of being amusing, the ability to inspire laughter or amusement, and the appreciation or

[1] For examples see Blakemore, 'Matthew Lewis's Black Mass'; Abigail Boucher, '*The Monk* and Menopause: Gender, Medicine, and the Gothic in the Long Nineteenth Century', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, 13. 2 (2017), 5-20; and Ellis, *The Contested Castle*, to name a few.

[2] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, and Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*.

expression of what is funny or comical, theories of humour, how and why laughter is inspired are important in understanding the nature of the comic. These theories will be discussed in the first section to show that Lewis is not alone in toying with the boundaries between mirth and monstrosity; Walpole hoped to make readers laugh as well as cry in fright in his Gothic novel, and even Radcliffe features moments of comic relief, especially in the dialogue between domestics. The first section explores the ways that modern scholars have begun to unmask 'the grin of the skull beneath the skin', in Victor Sage's words, and comes to introduce Avril Hornerand Sue Zlosnik's theory that the Gothic has a 'comic turn'.[3]

The second section of this chapter looks more closely at parody, which I argue Lewis uses to push the Gothic into the territory of horror. In part I return to the views of previous scholars that *The Monk* is a parodic response to Radcliffe, though I expand this idea by situating parody in the larger contextual history of the novel form itself; throughout the eighteenth century, parody played a part in the development of romance fiction, and Lewis's novel is another iteration of this dialogic exchange. I draw on the work of parody theorists, including Simon Dentith, Linda Hutcheon, and Margaret Rose, who emphasise the metafictional and intertextual nature of parody, noting how it engages with a dialogic exchange between critics, readers, and texts. My final section turns directly to *The Monk* and explores Lewis's parodic dialogue with Radcliffe, grotesque imagery, and satirical engagement with gender, proposing that the comic cannot be separated from Lewis's use of horror and should, therefore, be considered a defining feature of the male Gothic.

2. 1 Tears of a Clown: Laughing and Crying at the Gothic

Monographs like Punter's *The Literature of Terror* (1980) and Richard Davenport-Hine's *Gothic: Four Hundred Years of Excess, Horror, Evil and Ruin* (1998) promote the Gothic as a mode primarily interested in fear. With the exceptions of those texts which ostensibly present as parody or satire, such as the anonymously written *The Animated Skeleton* (1798), humour of any kind might appear to be far removed from Gothic aesthetics. Dark and stormy nights in which the dead return to life seldom seem intended to be funny. Punter, in a later monograph collating his body of work on the Gothic over a sixteen-

[3] Victor Sage, 'Gothic Laughter: Farce and Horror in Five Texts', in *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, ed. by Allan Lloyd Smith and Victor Sage (Amsterdam: Rodophi, 1994), pp. 190-203 (p. 198). The phrase 'skull beneath the skin' is originally from T. S. Eliot's 'Whispers of Immortality' (1918), available on *The Poetry Foundation*: https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52563/whispers-of-immortality

year period, suggests that the genre is 'above all a literature of transgression', an 'adolescent literature, the literature of the "in- between"' – note again the genre's association with youth, as my previous chapter discussed – in which 'there is always a concomitant move to uncover what may be repressed, subdued, cast into the shadows'.[4] The Gothic notoriously eschews boundaries and defies generic classification; it toys with uncertainty, with incongruous collisions between binary opposites – between life and death, reality and fantasy, sanity and insanity. Yet these notions of transgression, of the 'in-between', even of the uncanny, opens the possibility for the comic.

The adjective 'funny' provides a way to begin to understand how the Gothic can be both unsettling and comical: funny means both something amusing (which might provoke laughter) and an inexplicable awareness of something strange or wrong (which might bring about goosebumps or similar bodily responses). This second meaning is, arguably, similar to the uncanny, the sensation or experience of the strangely familiar; a 'funny feeling', an occurrence of déjà vu. Furthermore laughter, as a response to something funny, is not always an expression of amusement; it can also be a nervous impulse, an attempt to relieve tensions arising from the torrent of the tragic or of terror. Gallows humour – grim and ironic humour in the face of desperate or hopeless situations, such as death – is an example of the ways that humour and laughter is used for comic relief. In Terry Pratchett's words, '[w]e who think we are about to die will laugh at anything', itself a witty imitation of the famous Latin phrase, 'we who are about to die salute you'.[5] Making such jokes can be cathartic, allowing the joker to confront fears of death; '[t]o cut death down to size with a casual jest', Terry Eagleton explains, 'is also to vent our spleen on it for the disquiet it causes'.[6] What is considered amusing and unsettling in gallows humour is the sense that it is inappropriate, out of place with the solemnity of the situation – an engagement with the taboo. As Eagleton explains, Freudian theories of laughter propose that jokes 'represent a release of the psychic energy we normally invest in maintaining certain socially essential inhibitions […] an impudent smack at the superego'.[7]

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[4] David Punter, *The Gothic Condition: Terror, History and the Psyche* (Cardiff: University of WalesPress, 2016), p. 2-3.

[5] Terry Pratchett, *Night Watch* (London: Rand House, 2007), p. 212.

[6] Terry Eagleton, *Humour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019), p. 9.

[7] Ibid., p. 11.

If laughter can be a response to what is amusing as well as to what is unsettling, the unifying element for some theorists is incongruity. James Beattie, in his essay 'On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition' (1776), proposed that laughter

> arises from the view of two or more inconsistent, unsuitable, or incongruous parts or circumstances, considered as united in one complex object or assemblage, as acquiring a sort of mutual relation from the peculiar manner in which the mind takes notice of them.[8]

Beattie recognises that the 'inconsistent, unsuitable, or incongruous parts' which inspire laughter are culturally variable, and further appreciates that 'unsuitable' subjects, including subjects of which society morally disapproves, can also be amusing. Similar views are upheld by other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century philosophers, including Immanuel Kant. In his *Critique of Judgement* (1790), Kant proposes that 'laughter is an affect that arises if a tense expectation is transformed into nothing'.[9] For modern humour theorist Paul Lewis, incongruity is at the heart of both horror and humour. In one of the earliest discussions of the Gothic and comic not dedicated solely to Gothic parodies, Lewis argues that 'the very incongruities that can shock or frighten us can also, seen from a slightly different vantage point, or after a moment's consideration, make us laugh'.[10] This notion itself might seem odd – *funny*, because it is incongruous with the expectations of the Gothic that scholars like Punter have long established. This idea of incongruous clashes is taken up by Horner and Zlosnik in *Gothic and the Comic Turn* (2005), the sole extended monograph on the Gothic and the comic. Their argument, upon which I will later expand, is that the Gothic's 'tendency to hybridity' creates 'incongruity [that] opens up the possibility of a comic turn in the presence of horror or terror'.[11]

Despite the early work of Paul Lewis and the more recent study by Horner and Zlosnik, scant attention has been paid to the comical aspects of the Gothic, and no one has thus far suggested it has a particular affinity with the male Gothic, as this thesis does. Formative in the study of humour and the Gothic is Sage, who explores the use of farce and horror in numerous

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[8] James Beattie, 'On Laughter, and Ludicrous Composition', in *Essays* (Edinburgh: 1777), pp. 319-486 (p. 347).

[9] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. by Werner S. Pluhar (Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987), p. 203.

[10] Paul Lewis, *Comic Effects: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Humor in Literature* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1989), p. 113.

[11] Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn*, p. 3.

quintessential Gothic texts, including Radcliffe's *The Italian* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). This latter novel, for Sage, 'elevates the *danse macabre* into an aesthetic which is gothic in every sense' and best demonstrates 'the peculiarly self-conscious complexities of humour which attach themselves to the gothic tradition'.[12] Sage focuses on Van Helsing's philosophical musings on 'King Laugh', who makes everyone 'dance to the tune he play', regardless of the circumstance; '[b]leeding hearts', the German Doctor continues, 'and dry bones of the churchyard, and tears that burn as they fall – all dance together to the music that he make with that smileless mouth of him'.[13] This scene presents gallows humour, imagining death as a merry dancer. Sage, however, equates 'King Laugh' with 'King Death', a memento mori, whereby 'true laughter […] is an enactment of true death'.[14] The scene in which the peculiar discourse takes place – the funeral of Lucy Westenra, who will soon re-emerge from the tomb as the vampire 'bloofer-lady' – is also a farce: the Lucy they are mourning is not Lucy, the dead is not dead. Here, then, is 'the farce of mistaken identity', yet it is in such comical moments that 'lie some of the sources of the book's horror'.[15] Just as Lewis suggested, then, horror and humour can co-exist in the same instance.

The general reluctance to engage with humour in the Gothic might be explained, as Horner and Zlosnik suggest, by the long-standing view that the comic in most forms – especially parody, to which I pay especial interest – is frivolous. This view, much as my Introduction proposed of the Gothic itself, dismisses entertainment as a potential scholarly subject in the early twentieth century. While the Gothic struggled to gain ground as a worthy if not respectable literature, proposing that this popular genre also engages with the comic may have damaged critics' efforts to develop a specialised field on the subject. Further, as earlier quotations from Punter indicate, the Gothic permeates boundaries and refuses to be pinned down; definitions of the mode which uphold anxiety, whether socio-historical or psychological, are difficult enough to establish in the outset, let alone any attempts to include humour. Horner

[12] Sage, 'Gothic Laughter', in *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, ed. by Smith and Sage, pp. 190-203 (p. 197).

[13] Bram Stoker, *Dracula* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 175.

[14] Sage, 'Gothic Laughter', in *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, ed. by Smith and Sage, pp. 190-203 (p. 198).

[15] Ibid., p. 200.

and Zlosnik's answer, in part, is to propose that humour in the Gothic should be seen to function on a spectrum:

> it is perhaps best to think of Gothic writing as a spectrum that, at one end, produces horror-writing containing moments of comic hysteria or relief and, at the other, works in which there are clear signals that nothing is to be taken seriously.[16]

In their view, there are distinctions between moments of 'comic hysteria or relief' from the onslaught of terror and other instances in which the intention to be comical is made clear. At this latter end of their Gothic-comic spectrum are texts like Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817) – parodic novels which often deliberately draw attention to the artifice of Gothic machinery.

Episodes of comic relief at the other end of the Gothic-comic spectrum are commonly demonstrated in the comically effusive dialogues of servants. This is most evident in Radcliffe's fiction, in which the verbose and melodramatic conversations between heroines and their faithful domestics simultaneously serve to both relieve tensions and heighten suspense. In fact, the mystery of the black veil in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* – which transpires only to conceal a wax effigy, not a real skeleton, and has nothing to do with the very real threats posed by Count Montoni – is inspired by the servant's superstitious half-told tale. While exploring the titular castle, Emily St Aubert and her servant Annette come across the now infamous black veil, which piques Emily's interest:

> '…I wish first to examine the picture; take the light, Annette, while I lift the veil.' Annette took the light, and immediately walked away with it, disregarding Emily's call to stay, who, not choosing to be left alone in the dark chamber, at length followed her. 'What is the reason of this, Annette?' said Emily, when she overtook her, 'what have you heard concerning that picture, which makes you so unwilling to stay when I bid you?'
>
> 'I don't know what is the reason, ma'amselle,' replied Annette, 'nor anything about the picture, only I have heard there is something very dreadful belonging to it—and that it has been covered up in black *ever since*—and that nobody has looked at it for a great many years—and it somehow has to do with the owner of this castle before Signor Montoni came to the possession of it—and—'
>
> 'Well, Annette,' said Emily, smiling, 'I perceive it is as you say—that you know nothing about the picture.'[17]

[16] Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn*, p. 15.

[17] Ann Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 233.

Annette's repeated rush of 'and' despite adding nothing of value to explain the supposed mystery further exaggerates her comical loquacity. Emily's smile invites readers to share in her amusement; Annette is, after all, entirely ignorant of the real story, and has let her gullibility, which is here distinctly associated with the peasant classes, run away with her.

Superstitious servants, a staple of the Gothic, are figures of amusement because they are presented as ignorant. Andrew Stott explains that the superiority theory of laughter suggests that people are moved to laugh when they feel themselves to be 'intellectually, morally, or physically above' a person or situation.[18] While this might be Radcliffe's intention in this scene, any ridicule elicited by the servant's ignorance is also turned, in an ironic twist, upon the heroine herself. Emily's dismissal of Annette's superstition is only half-hearted, as her curiosity is piqued; Emily asks repeated questions of her servant and follows her out, reluctant to be left alone in the dark chamber. The infectious power of the unspoken leads Emily's overactive imagination to run riot when she seeks out the picture again, having conjured a 'connection with the late lady of the castle, and the conversation of Annette, together with the circumstance of the veil'.[19] With such terror and fascination occupying her susceptible mind, when Emily finally does lift the veil she faints away, leaving readers none the wiser about what it conceals. As Sandro Jung explains, such tactics belong to the larger framework of Radcliffe's didactic intent; the comical and superstitious servants provide lessons for the heroines 'to effect a moderation of excessive sensibility and counter a belief in superstition and the supernatural'.[20] Even when using humour, Radcliffe continues to promote rational sensibility for heroines and female readers, another method through which she aims to enhance her respectable reputation.[21]

What is most useful in Horner and Zlosnik's proposal is the idea of the spectrum. Gothic novels do not have to use the comic consistently throughout, but can fluctuate, moving between episodes of evident parody, comic digressions, or satire. The spectrum can thus also account for those moments at which scenes or situations can be both frightening and comical at once or, as Lewis has suggested, after a pause of reflection; as I will show in the third section of this

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[18] Stott, *Comedy*, p. 132.

[19] Radcliffe, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, p. 248.

[20] Sandro Jung, 'Sensibility, the Servant and Comedy in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*', *Gothic Studies,* 12.1 (2010), 1-12 (p. 1).

[21] To avoid repetition, please see Chapter 1 for further discussion.

chapter, this is the case for some of the more horrific scenes in *The Monk*, especially those involving the Bleeding Nun. This is how Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* is best understood; melodramatic and camp, this first Gothic novel features numerous comic episodes deliberately undercutting the potential for outright horror.[22] In a letter to a Monsieur Elie De Beaumont, with which he sent a copy of his novel, Walpole writes that 'if I make you laugh, for I cannot flatter myself that I shall make you cry, I shall be content'.[23] Walpole's intention goes hand-in-hand with the theatrical overtones of *Otranto* many scholars have commented upon, no doubt in part due to the author's own invocation of Shakespeare, 'the great master of nature', whose style he claims to have 'copied'.[24] In the preface to the second edition, in which he acknowledges authorship and affixes 'A Gothic Story' to his title, he asks readers:

> if [Shakespeare's] tragedies of Hamlet and Julius Caesar would not lose a considerable share of the spirit and wonderful beauties, if the humour of the grave-diggers, the fooleries of Polonius, and the clumsy jests of the Roman citizens were omitted, or vested in heroics?[25]

As I have discussed, the use of comically garrulous servants – of reimagined Polonius characters, to borrow Walpole's reference to the verbose and meddlesome councillor in *Hamlet* – is a common feature of many Gothic novels. Throughout *Otranto*, Walpole combines the tragic with the comic in exuberant style. His view that Shakespeare's plays are 'wonderful beauties' for similarly combining the 'clumsy jests' of characters with those 'vested in heroics', which are presumed to contrast with one another, reflect the incongruity theory of humour. So, too, does this recall Radcliffe's own theories of horror, whereby her example of the surprise appearance of Banquo's ghost at the banquet in *Macbeth* is a result of a contrast in tone, of a

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[22] Max Fincher explains that 'camp can be a taste, and it is closely connected to a parodic and comic effect' which is often self-consciously performative, especially of gender: see Max Fincher, *Queering the Gothic in the Romantic Age: The Penetrating Eye* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 103.

[23] Horace Walpole, *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, ed. by W. S. Lewis, vol. 40 (18 March, 1764) 380 <http://images.library.yale.edu/hwcorrespondence/page.asp> [accessed 30 July 2018]

[24] Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, p. 8. My Introduction outlined Wright's discussion of Walpole's invocation of Shakespeare in *Britain, France and the Gothic, 1764-1820.* See also Anne Williams, 'Reading Walpole Reading Shakespeare', in *Shakespearean Gothic*, ed. by Desmet and Williams, pp. 13-36.

[25] Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, p. 11.

sudden shift in expectation.[26] The very opening scene of Walpole's novel, in which the tyrant Manfred's son Conrad is crushed to death on his wedding day by an enormous helmet 'an hundred times more large than any casque ever made for human being' (depicted in Figure 2.1), evidences this incongruous mix: a tragic death of a young man by a ridiculous and fantastical object strikes the reader as both shocking and amusing.[27]

Figure 2.1: The giant helmet at the beginning of Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*.

There is clearly a comic heritage in the Gothic. Only in acknowledging 'that the roots of the Gothic lie in the comic as well as the tragic', explain Horner and Zlosnik, can we recognise that the Gothic is part of a 'complex and popular cultural response to modernity'.[28] Horner and Zlosnik view the nostalgia of the Gothic, its interest in medieval pasts inhabited by superstition and God-like sublimity, to gesture toward 'the fragmented condition of the modern subject', in which the comic turn offers a 'position of detachment and scepticism towards such cultural nostalgia'.[29] The mode's mixed nature, wavering between extremes and shirk the confinement of generic boundaries, is part of this uncertainty of facing the modern world. To a certain degree, this does return to the 'anxiety model' of Gothic studies which had been the focus of scholarship from the 1980s until the twenty-first century, despite Horner and Zlosnik's

[26] To avoid repetition, see my Introduction for my discussion of Radcliffe's 'On the Supernatural in Poetry'.

[27] Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, p. 19.

[28] Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn*, p. 7.

[29] Ibid., p. 3.

interest in avoiding 'pathologising' the Gothic.[30] Their argument is more appropriate for the socio-historical context of the first wave of the Gothic, the roots of this unsettling self-reflexivity of the modern subject, rather than the transhistorical, genealogical approach they adopt which includes twentieth-century authors such as Margaret Atwood, Angela Carter and Patrick McGrath.

Rather than considering what the comic in the Gothic has to say about the modern male or masculine subject in the male Gothic per se, I adopt parody as a critical lens through which to address the dialogic development of the male Gothic. What I take forward from Horner and Zlosnik's theory is their notion that the Gothic-comic functions on a spectrum, which I will come to partner with a proposal to position the male and female Gothic on a parallel spectrum. The following section addresses the nature of parody, its related terms, and how I intend to adopt it in my comparative analyses in Part II and Part III.

2. 2 Playing the Fool: Parody and the Gothic

While the comic has traditionally been regarded as a frivolous subject for study, parody, which may also use comic effects, has received similar dismissal, the roots of which can be traced to the notion of an English literary canon that emphasises originality and innate genius. In attempts to counter the increasing commercialisation of the novel and the development of the mass market, critics regarded derivative imitations of original works as most offensive to cultural taste. For example, if Radcliffe was regarded as the founder of a school of fiction, her 'host of servile imitators' only 'profaned' her 'genius', according to Sir Walter Scott.[31] Parody, relying on intertextuality, allusion, and metafiction – on mimicry and mockery – is therefore 'the worst enemy of creative genius and vital originality', according to twentieth-century critic F. R. Leavis.[32] More current criticism has, fortunately, restored the reputation of parody by

[30] Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn*, p. 3.

[31] Sir Walter Scott, *Lives of the Novelists* (Philadelphia: H.C. Carey & I. Lea, 1825), p. 208: https://www.google.co.uk/books/edition/Lives_of_the_Novelists/5_k_AAAAYAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=0 [accessed 05 September 2020]. For a discussion of how Scott regards Radcliffe as an exception to the rule that women writers are generally unexceptional, see Ellen Ledoux, 'Was there ever a "Female Gothic"?', *Palgrave Communications*, 3 (2017).

[32] Robert L. Mack discusses Leavis's comments in *The Genius of Parody* (2007) and cites that they were reprinted in *The New Oxford Book of Light Verse*, ed. Kingsley Amis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), p. xiv–xv. See Robert L. Mack, *The Genius of Parody: Imitation and Originality in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century English Literature* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 15.

exploring its cultural meaning in post-modern British art and literature; Simon Dentith, Linda Hutcheon, and Margaret Rose, as this section will explore, present competing understandings of the function of parody, theories which I will utilise in my analysis of Gothic literature. In understanding *The Monk* as a parody of the female Gothic, scholars have yet to consider the work of parody in the development of the subgenre, even when acknowledging that parody, far from signalling the demise of the Gothic, can encourage the genre to 'experiment and innovate'.[33] In my use of parody as a lens through which to follow the progress of the male Gothic, I follow Robert L. Mack's view that 'parodies (and, indeed, most other forms of literary reference, imitation, echo, and response) can and should be looked upon as activities that have long constituted an inherent and positive facet of almost all artistic (and specifically literary) endeavour'.[34]

Mack explains that parodies are 'the textual products of a myriad of sophisticated literary processes that seek not to obscure but rather to highlight – and, not infrequently, ostentatiously to flaunt – their status as in some way marked or derivative'.[35] Numerous theorists have explored the various 'sophisticated literary processes' parody uses to define the mode, especially to distinguish parody from other related comic modes such as satire, or mere pastiche. While parody and satire often overlap, satire intends to 'denounce folly and vice and urge ethical and political reform through the subjection of ideas to humorous analysis'.[36] In other words, satire has a moral or political purpose, using humour to effect change; parody, on the other hand, does not use humour to moralise, though it may still encourage generic development, as I will later discuss. Graphic satire – humorous illustrations with political subjects – were especially prevalent in the eighteenth century with the popular prints of William Hogarth, Thomas Rowlandson and James Gillray. I draw on selected illustrations in this thesis, recognising, as Mack also does, that some caricatures – especially Gillray's cartoons – 'often seems to form the graphic counterpart to the exaggerated tactics of formal literary

[33] Natalie Neill, 'Gothic Parody', in *Romantic Gothic: An Edinburgh Companion*, ed. by Angela Wright and Dale Townshend, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016), pp. 185-204 (p. 200).

[34] Mack, *The Genius of Parody*, p. 6.

[35] Ibid., p. 3.

[36] Stott, *Comedy*, p. 109.

parody'.[37] The confusion between satire and parody is likely because both use referential techniques to establish associations with their subject.

For Margaret Rose, metafiction is the primary feature of parody, making the role of the reader integral to the recognition that a text is parodic. By quoting or alluding to the parodied text(s), parodists draw the reader's attention to the artificiality not only of the parody itself, but also their target. Thus, the parodist evokes 'certain expectations in his readers' to interpret the parodic dialogue.[38] There are multiple layers of decoding and encoding between texts and readers, whereby the parodist-as-reader first decodes the work to be parodied before it is encoded again – 'distorted', in Rose's terms – in the parody. Readers of the parody then become decoders, 'who – knowing and having previously decoded the original – is in a position to compare it to its new form in the parody'.[39]

Understanding parody as a metafictional work accounts for the ways in which parody typically adopts techniques of hyperbole to emphasise its repetitive machinery and artifice. Even critics and reviewers used such techniques to mock the Gothic, as the anonymously written 'recipe' for 'terrorist' novels illustrates:

> *Take* – An old castle, half of it ruinous,
> A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.
> Three murdered bodies, quite fresh,
> As many skeletons, in chests and presses.
> An old woman hanging by the neck, with her throat cut.
> Assassins and desperadoes, *quant. suff.*
> Noises, whispers, and groans, threescore at least.
> Mix them together, in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of the watering-places before going to bed.[40]

There are a few such 'recipes' which reduce the Gothic to a list of ingredients, implying anyone may follow the instructions to concoct a popular romance novel. In fact, as Fern Pullan demonstrates, the most fashionable genres of the nineteenth century were all subjected to this cook-book transformation, from the silver fork novels of the early nineteenth century to the

[37] Mack, *The Genius of Parody*, p. 233.

[38] Margaret A. Rose, *Parody//Meta-Fiction* (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1979), p. 20.

[39] Ibid., p. 26.

[40] Anon., 'Terrorist Novel Writing', p. 229.

sensation fiction of the 1860s.[41] Recipes like the above further engage with criticisms of the developing commodification of culture and play on metaphors comparing consumerism with voracious appetites. Such recipes rely on readers' familiarity with the parodist's target, which presents an issue with Rose's theory of parody as metafiction. The level of familiarity, and therefore a reader's ability to decode the parody, is difficult to ascertain. Rather, it is better to suggest that the parodist, working with metafiction, presumes – or perhaps even hopes for – a certain level of awareness of the original to achieve its comic effect.

While Rose recognises the comical aspect of parody, influential post-modern theorist Hutcheon suggests that parody does not have to be considered humorous. For Hutcheon, parody is 'a form of imitation' which is 'characterized by ironic inversion', whereby a 'critical distance is implied between the background text being parodied and the new incorporating work, a distance usually signalled by irony'.[42] The aspects of imitation and repetition, for Hutcheon, means it does not have to be humorous. There is some historical justification for this view if the origins of the term are considered. Simon Dentith describes the etymological root of parody, *parodia,* as 'a narrative poem, of moderate length, in the metre and vocabulary of epic poems,

but treating a light, satiric, or mock-heroic subject', the only surviving example being *Batrachomyomachia* (or 'Battle of the Frogs and Mice', a mock-heroic parody of Homer's *Iliad*). Following this, in Greek and later Roman writing *parodia* referred more generally to 'a widespread practice of quotation, not necessarily humorous, in which both writers and speakers introduce allusions to previous texts'.[43] Hutcheon's theory, by displacing the role of humour, attempts to remain neutral in the face of historical changes to the cultural meanings of parody.

Hutcheon's view that parody is characterised by 'ironic inversions', however, can be partnered with the previously discussed incongruity theory of laughter. If incongruity theory proposes that the recognition of unexpected juxtapositions of opposites strikes a person as absurd or funny – and again here I mean the polysemic meanings of funny – 'ironic inversions'

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[41] Fern Pullan, 'Women's Writing in Popular Genes, c. 1790-1870: Gothic, Silver Fork, and Sensation' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Leeds Beckett University, 2021). Silver forks are a genre of fiction popular between the first wave of the Gothic and the mid-nineteenth century sensation school which centred on high society scandals in the manner of Lady Caroline Lamb's *Glenarvon* (1816). Ellen Miller Casey, '"The Aristocracy and Upholstery": The Silver Fork Novel', in *A Companion to Sensation Fiction,* ed. by Pamela K. Gilbert (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), pp. 13-26.

[42] Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985)*,* p. 6 & p. 32.

[43] Simon Dentith, *Parody* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 10.

similarly implies a relationship with the incongruous. Combining parody theory with humour and laughter theories provides insight into how the role of the comical nature of parody can be understood, and also helps mitigate concerns for the subjectivity of humour. Adopting theories of how humour functions and the causes of laughter provides an interpretative working model, regardless of whether or not laughter or amusement is inspired, and further enables socio-historical contexts to be accounted for. Therefore, in order to include the comic in my understanding of parody, it is most appropriate to adopt Horner and Zlosnik's comprehensive definition: they define parody to be 'a literary mode that, while engaging with a target text or genre, exhibits a keen sense of the comic, an acute awareness of intertextuality and an engagement with the idea of metafiction'.[44] Their definition is useful for my thesis as it includes the intertextual, metafictional, and comic aspects of parody.

My interest in parody, however, is not limited to Lewis's use of the comic in *The Monk*. In recognising the role of parody in critiquing and developing the Gothic as Natalie Neill has done, I am also testing its role in the development of the male Gothic specifically. Mack, in his exploration of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century parody, demonstrates that parody is not 'destructive' or 'anarchic', but rather plays 'a far more complex role in – and has contributed in a far more creative manner to – the greatest achievements of our literary traditions'.[45] Parody has, in fact, been integral to the novel form itself, with Cervantes's *Don Quixote* among the European texts often regarded as the first novel. Because of this, Dentith argues that 'parody therefore enters into the very texture of the novel, defining its relation to other devalued modes and establishing its claims for a more realistic apprehension of real life'.[46] Dentith takes the view that parody critiques the mimetic failures of literature to advance 'a more realistic apprehension of real life', though an understanding of the concept of 'real life', or how it is best represented by the novel, is culturally-inflected and variable; hence, in Chapter 4, I argue that Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806) re-engages with the parodic impulse to the Gothic Lewis unleashed, but that this re-engagement also parodies Lewis to illustrate his own errors of representation.

In the eighteenth century, when the novel was beginning to emerge as a cultural commodity, parody was used to answer authors' configurations of the form. Charlotte

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[44] Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn*, p. 12.

[45] Mack, *The Genius of Parody*, p. 6.

[46] Dentith, *Parody*, p. 56.

Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752), itself a parody of *Don Quixote*, parodies the criticism that distinguishes between the novel and the romance, blurring the boundaries between, and challenging the gendered lines, of generic categorisation.[47] Even Lewis alludes to *Don Quixote* to satirise repressive gender expectations when Elvira, convinced that the Bible poses a threat to her daughter's innocence, supposedly 'preferred putting into her Daughter's [*sic*] hands "*Amadis de Gaul*," or "*The Valiant Champion, Tirante the White*;"' or even 'the lewd exploits of "*Don Galaor*," or the lascivious jokes of the "*Damsel Plazer di mi vida*"'.[48] These Spanish chivalric romances featured in Cervantes's text, the first being a particular favourite of his delusional protagonist. Further, *Amadis de Gaul* and *Tirant lo Blanch* are both known for their sexual content. By suggesting that Elvira would prefer her daughter read about their exploits instead of the Bible, Lewis's ridicule is twofold, as Helen Moore points out: on the one hand, Lewis targets the 'sexual knowledge and desire of maternal figures, as emblematized by their reading habits', and the deadly hypocrisy of sexual repression which renders 'the good book worse than the famously "bad" books of chivalry'.[49]

Yael Shapira also highlights the role of parody in debates around the image of the dead body and its use in the novel. Richardson's *Pamela*, for instance, was answered by Henry Fielding's parody *Shamela* (1741). Although both authors intended to 'thwart the sensationalist potential of the corpse', they had different ideas about how to best ensure that the corpse did not become sensationalised, and Fielding demonstrated his view by parodying Richardson.[50] While Richardson aimed to present the heroine's 'chaste body' as 'an analogue for the purity of the book itself', Fielding's *Shamela* illustrates that readers could not be relied upon to react the way Richardson prescribed. He offers instead 'ironic scrutiny that prompts readerly self-awareness rather than unreflective absorption'.[51]

Lewis, of course, had other ideas. As I outlined in Chapter 1, *The Monk* is often considered a parodic response to Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, one which is

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[47] Mary Patricia Martin, ' "High and Noble Adventures": Reading the Novel in *The Female Quixote*', *Novel*: *A Forum on Fiction* (1997), 45-62.

[48] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 259.

[49] Helen Moore, *Amadis in English: A Study in the Reading of Romance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), p. 262.

[50] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 116.

[51] Ibid., p. 8.

'determined to wreak vengeance on the unbelievably virtuous characters of other novelists'.[52] Lewis, as Emma McEvoy says, is 'a determined saboteur of convention'.[53] The 'virtuous characters of other novelists' also includes Richardson. By converting the corpse into 'an erotic keepsake', as Shapira argues, Ambrosio's rapacious attack and murder of his sister at the climax of the novel can be regarded as

> a deliberately lewd, macabre parody of the end of *Clarissa* that is more than just an intertextual reverberation between two novels with shared themes: it is a declaration of Lewis's intent as a novelist, since in his revision of *Clarissa*'s precedent he loudly rejects the moralizing function that Richardson had labored to assert as the saving grace of fictional entertainment.[54]

Lewis uses parody, then, to make a mockery of convention and to advance the Gothic novel securely into the field of sensational entertainment. Parodic episodes in *The Monk* do not necessarily invite readers to laugh at the text itself, but to reflect upon the absurdities of the texts which precede it. As the next section of this chapter will demonstrate, Lewis's parody chiefly uses the grotesque and spectacles of horror to satirise and subvert gender norms – to ridicule the virtuous heroine and the loyal hero in a world where everything is all for show.

2. 3 The Jester's Jape: Gender and the Grotesque in *The Monk*

> What can repay me for having kissed the leathern paw of that confounded old Witch? [*sic*] Diavolo! She has left such a scent upon my lips that I shall smell of garlick [*sic*] for this month to come! As I pass along the Prado, I shall be taken for a walking Omelet [*sic*], or some large Onion [*sic*] running to seed![55]

I can think of no better quotation to demonstrate that there is humour in *The Monk* than the above. The comical complaint is Christoval's, after having flattered Antonia's aunt so that his companion, Lorenzo, may better talk to the young woman without her interference. Leonella mistakes his attentions for a sincere interest in her hand in marriage despite the disparity in age and, apparently, her pungent scent. Her appearance is also repulsive, as the 'gypsy's song'

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[52] McEvoy, 'Introduction', in *The Monk*, p. xix.

[53] Ibid., p. xviii.

[54] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 183-4.

[55] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 24.

makes clear: Leonella sports 'two grey eyes that squint' and a 'few red hairs' upon her brow.[56] Her efforts to improve her appearance, all her 'paint and patches, lust and pride', are 'spent on useless show'; the gypsy fortune-teller advises her instead to think no more of marriage, but of God.[57] Of course, Leonella is much offended by this comical mockery – and it does not convince her that she should give up her pursuit. Her passion for the cavalier, and his continued efforts to dodge her affections, appear at occasional intervals, until she leaves Madrid upon the death of a cousin to collect her inheritance. This fortune evidently improves her appeal, as she soon marries a young apothecary enamoured of her wealth. It seems, then, that the gypsy fortune-teller was quite mistaken in her prediction for Leonella: she does find herself a suitor, albeit one incentivised by money.

Leonella is a prime example of the grotesque. Like the Gothic, the grotesque often defies stable definition; paradoxical in nature, its propensity to disturb, to cause disgust, to provoke laughter and shock, breaks down boundaries between supposed opposites. Philip Thomson describes the grotesque as 'the unresolved clash of incompatibles', while Geoffrey Harpham explains that the grotesque does not necessarily emerge from the components of an image, but rather because 'it refuses to be taken in whole because it embodies a confusion of type'.[58] While the grotesque has a long history, its cultural resonance mutates; that which might cause confusion, or which might be perceived as incompatible, can be reliant on socio-historical and cultural contexts. In the example of Leonella, as Abigail Boucher explains, 'the perceived grotesqueness' for Lewis's contemporaries lies in her 'insistence on a sexual life': sexual interest is the preserve of men, and sexual appeal is the preserve of young women.[59] Boucher argues that Leonella's ugliness and old age is associated with the post-menopausal body that is, in the views of medical men of the long-nineteenth century, no longer productive and ought, instead, to be passive and content with its lot. This mockery of the older woman – and other female characters – leads Boucher to consider *The Monk* misogynistic, while other scholars like Jacqueline Howard have similarly complained that Lewis mostly 'attempt[s]

[56] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 38.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Philip Thomson, *The Grotesque* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1972), p. 27; Geoffrey Galt Harpham, *On the Grotesque: Strategies of Contradiction in Art and Literature* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 6.

[59] Abigail Boucher, '*The Monk* and Menopause: Gender, Medicine, and the Gothic in the Long Nineteenth Century', *Nineteenth-Century Gender Studies*, 13. 2 (2017), 5-20 (p. 10).

humour at the expense of women'.[60] As I will come to show, however, Lewis's treatment of women as subjects of grotesquery and humour is not necessarily misogynistic.

Whether or not Leonella's treatment is regarded as misogynistic, there is no doubt that it is intended to be comical. The nature of the grotesque is comparable to that of the Gothic and humour both, in that its incongruous effects inspire conflicting responses. 'The classic reaction to the grotesque', Thomson explains, is 'the experience of amusement and disgust, laughter and horror, mirth and revulsion, simultaneously'.[61] Maxmillian Novak proposes that the Gothic and the grotesque are synonymous in nature: '[t]he skeleton with its combination of deathly terror and horrible grin is the essence of the grotesque and the essence of the Gothic'.[62] There are echoes of Sage's 'grin of the skull beneath the skin' here – the unnerving symbiotic relationship between horror and humour. Grotesque, the Gothic, and humour all depend upon incongruous confrontations. However, Novak's view overestimates the affinity between the Gothic and the grotesque, to a degree, as the grotesque is primarily visual in nature. From the frescos unearthed in fifteenth century Rome, the paintings of the temptations of St Anthony (see Chapter 4), to the Theatre of the Grotesque in the early twentieth century, the grotesque has principally been a visual art form. In particular, it is concerned with the abnormal body, made up of exaggerated and deformed features, sometimes mixed with non-human body parts – a body that is incoherent as a whole, confusing the human with the bestial, positioning the body in flux between states. For Mikhail Bakhtin, this means that the emphasis is 'on the apertures or the convexities, or on various ramifications and offshoots: the open mouth, the genitals, the breasts, the phallus, the potbelly, the nose'.[63] Like the sites of abjection, the grotesque stresses the entrances and exits of the body from which waste and fluids, such as blood, faeces, and genital discharge, are secreted.[64]

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[60] Jacqueline Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 198.

[61] Thomson, *The Grotesque*, p. 24.

[62] Maximillian E. Novak, 'Gothic Fiction and the Grotesque', *Novel: A Forum on Fiction,* 13 (1979), 50-67 (p. 51).

[63] Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. by Hélène Iswolsky (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1984), p. 26.

[64] Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

Arguably, then, the grotesque has a closer affinity with the male Gothic following Lewis's example, as it regales readers with bloody, visual imagery more so than the subtler tensions of the female Gothic. But the grotesque, as I have already suggested, is also linked to humour, which further associates it with the male Gothic. Bakhtin's understanding of the grotesque develops from his discussion of the carnival which, unlike the formal feast, suspends hierarchy and all its attendant privileges and prohibitions, enabling the breakdown of boundaries to celebrate the material body; every member of society is brought to the same level. In what he calls 'grotesque realism', Bakhtin suggests that the essential principle is 'degradation […] the lowering of all that is high, spiritual, ideal, abstract; it is a transfer to the material level, to the sphere of earth and body'.[65] This is, for Bakhtin, where parody comes in, as one aspect of grotesque forms which 'bring down to earth [and] turn their subject into flesh'.[66] In this, Bakhtin understands parody as a form of mockery which lowers subjects and brings them 'down to earth' – a reminder of the real world and its bloody, fleshy, mortality.

Leonella's description, in fact, calls to mind Quinten Massys's painting 'An Old Woman' (1513), also known as 'The Ugly Duchess', which demonstrates the principles of the grotesque. Breasts bolstered by a tightly laced corset, the skin around the subject's chest is crinkled, leather-like – not the stereotypical smooth, plump alabaster of (western) paintings depicting young women, and certainly not like the depictions of Matilda in Figures 1.1 and 1.2 in the previous chapter. The breadth of her shoulders and shape of her face masculinise the subject, blurring the lines between genders. Facial features are out of proportion and oddly shaped: the wide nostrils and elongated philtrum above thin lips, behind which, we might suppose, is a toothless mouth; large ears, widely spaced apart across the skull; and a peculiarly bulbous forehead, missing eyebrows, upon which sits the horn-shaped escoffion. Like Leonella, the duchess has red hair, which has a long history of association with evil, witchcraft, and deviant sexuality.[67] She is warty, wrinkly, and abundant in flesh, a confusion of gender and erotic signals.

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[65] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 19.

[66] Ibid., p. 20.

[67] Jacky Collis Harvey, *Red: A History of the Redhead* (New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers, 2015).

Figure 2.2: Quinten Massys, 'An Old Woman ("the Ugly Duchess")', (1513)

At first glance, the scenes with Leonella offer comic relief, and little else. Howard even compares her to the comically garrulous nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* – another unwed, presumably post-menopausal woman whose proper place in society is the domestic arena as carer and chaperone to younger women who are, by virtue of youth and beauty, waiting to be of better use to society as wives and mothers. However, Leonella is the only character to observe that Ambrosio is suspiciously sinister. While Christoval observes that '[t]oo great severity is said to be Ambrosio's only fault', Leonella outright states that 'I do not like this same Ambrosio in the least' as he made her 'tremble from head to foot', commenting that she 'never saw such a stern-looking Mortal [*sic*]' – which is in direct contrast to Antonia, whose response to his impressive oratory is almost sexual in nature, as I will discuss shortly.[68] Further, it is only after Leonella leaves the country that Ambrosio breaks into their house to assault Antonia. Upon being discovered by Elvira, he suffocates her with a pillow. Death – murder – occurs in Leonella's absence.

[68] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 22.

More significantly, Leonella is the only person who might have educated Antonia about men and women – about sex – sufficiently to protect herself against the advances of Ambrosio. Leonella's overt sexuality is, however grotesque she may appear to be, the sole combatant against sexual passivity and ignorance. At the beginning of the novel, while the crowd at the Capuchin Church await the arrival of the titular monk, the cavaliers discuss what is said of his history and character, explaining that because he 'knows not in what consists the difference of Man and Woman [*sic*]', he is considered to be a Saint. Antonia, naively, asks whether she is also a saint as well, implying that she, too, knows nothing of sexual difference. Leonella replies:

> 'What a question! Fye, Child, Fye! [*sic*] These are not fit subjects for young Women [*sic*] to handle. You should not seem to remember that there is such a thing as a Man [*sic*] in the world, and you ought to imagine every body to be of the same sex with yourself. I should like to see you give people to understand, that you know that a Man [*sic*] has no breasts, and no hips, and no…'
>
> Luckily for Antonia's ignorance which her Aunt's lecture would soon have dispelled, an universal murmur through the Church announced the Preacher's arrival.[69]

The final demarcation between the sexes following Leonella's list – the genitals – is interrupted by Ambrosio's arrival. Readers are left to conjecture the punchline, but the sarcastic tone of the narrator is telling of Lewis's attitude toward the ignorance of heroines like Antonia. This is how *The Monk* is considered to parody Radcliffe and 'wreak vengeance on the unbelievably virtuous heroines'. Leonella may have been Antonia's best defence against assault. For all the apparent ridicule, Leonella may not be such a misogynistic representation of women after all. As Max Fincher explains, Leonella 'is at the same time a stereotype of the garrulous, older woman and a woman who protests against another stereotype – a meek and submissive femininity'.[70] Her off-stage marriage – her survival while other women are victims of cruelty and murder – suggests that her rejection of 'meek and submissive femininity' is more advantageous than submission to it.

There are numerous examples of the grotesque in *The Monk*, all of which are principally women, especially of an older age – which is why Boucher and others consider its representation of women misogynistic. Rodolpha, the baroness in the parallel plot, for example, is much like Leonella; she comically mistakes Raymond's gentlemanly attentions for ardour. Ironically, his labours to 'please her' involve reading multiple Spanish romances to her, which

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[69] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 17-18.

[70] Fincher, *The Penetrating Eye*, p. 93.

he describes as 'wearisome', especially 'the Knight of the Sun', which he read so often to her that the novel 'was on the point of falling from [his] hands through [e]nnui'.[71] The implication of ennui is that these romances lack excitement, though Rodolpha is much entertained by them. This complaint arguably echoes Lewis's own criticism of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* which, despite considering it 'one of the most interesting Books [*sic*] ever written', also says 'it is not very entertaining till St Aubert's Death [*sic*]'.[72] The letter, which was sent to his mother in 1794, goes on to complain that St Aubert's 'travels to my mind are uncommonly dull, and I wish heartily that they had been left out'.[73] Lewis, in developing a parodic dialogue between *The Monk* and *Udolpho*, wastes considerably less time in commencing the action of his novel in comparison to Radcliffe, whose titular castle does take a significant amount of time to appear on the page. Quick to escalate the drama, Rodolpha's discovery that Raymond is enamoured of Agnes brings about the appearance of the Bleeding Nun.

Agnes, who later becomes a tragic spectacle, has a keen sense of humour, which appears thus far to have been overlooked by scholars. While Campbell proposed that the servant Theodore is a satirical mouthpiece for Lewis, I would suggest that Agnes is more overtly characterised by humour. While her sketch of the Bleeding Nun and the horror she inspires in onlookers is a clear example of the grotesque which, as I have discussed, is often also associated with parody, she also draws a caricature of her aunt. Joking with Raymond, she shows him a sketch of a likeness of Rodolpha, in which she 'had so much exaggerated every fault, and rendered every feature […] irresistibly laughable'.[74] Caricature, like parody, exaggerates features to the point of absurdity. Agnes is sarcastic, too: in recounting the myth of the Bleeding Nun, she is clearly dubious of the veracity of the tale, explaining the ghost's behaviours as if they were mere mischievous antics. For instance, the spectre of Beatrice – the Bleeding Nun's real name – is said to have begun 'to amuse herself by knocking about the tables and chairs' which is 'accompanied with shrieking, howling, groaning, swearing, and many other agreeable noises of the same kind'.[75] Agnes is clearly being sarcastic about the habits of the legendary

[71] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 134.

[72] Letter to his mother, The Hague, Sunday, 18 May 1794, quoted in Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis*, p. 208-9.

[73] Ibid.

[74] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 142.

[75] Ibid., p. 139.

figure, and even suggests that '[p]erhaps she was a bad [s]leeper' to explain the behaviours.[76] Her sarcasm continues, saying that, after attempts to appease her wandering spirit, she becomes 'more tractable and well-behaved' by only appearing once every five years, at which time the porter leaves the castle gates open 'out of respect' and to prevent her from 'making her exit in a way so derogatory to the dignity of her Ghost-ship [*sic*]'.[77] In showing scorn toward superstition, Agnes is unlike other female Gothic heroines who, as I have previously discussed, are susceptible to fancy. She is certainly more engaging than Antonia.

In an ironic twist – ironic in the context of the Gothic at the time, where supernatural suppositions commonly transpire to be false, especially in Radcliffe's novels – the Bleeding Nun is real. Agnes, having conspired with Raymond to escape the Castle of Lidenberg so that she cannot be forced to commit to the life of a nun, and may thus be with her lover, dresses in a wig and gown on the night the Bleeding Nun's spectre is thought to venture out. But Raymond does not save Agnes, and instead makes his vows of love to the very real and horrifying spectre, who proceeds to visit him on a nightly basis. With 'bloodless' lips and 'lustreless and hollow' eyes, she recites to him the same vows he intended for Agnes, making a mockery of romance which renders the promise 'mine thy body! Mine thy soul!' one of haunting. Under her '[r]attlesnake' gaze, Raymond freezes in terror, explaining '[m]y nerves were bound up in impotence'.[78] Coral Ann Howells describes this episode as a 'ghastly parody of a lovers' meeting, where Raymond's riveted stare and the nun's petrifying regard are the hideous opposite of the lovers' gaze', whereby Raymond's 'impotence' positions him in the role of the passive female.[79] But the scene in which he mistakes his lover for a dead nun is also farce. Mistaken identities abound in the Gothic, with secret family histories and ancestral look-alikes, but Lewis pushes the trope into the realm of supernatural horror by the ridiculous confusion between the spectre of a dead nun and a heroine. Since Raymond is entirely unable to recognise the difference, the sincerity of his love for Agnes is also mocked, further undermining his heroism.

If Lewis's novel is regarded as parodic, one that engages with the popular Gothic which precedes it, representations of gender in the Gothic come to be satirised. Parody and satire can

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[76] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 139.

[77] Ibid., p. 141.

[78] Ibid., p. 160.

[79] Coral Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery: Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London: Athlone Press, 1979), p. 71.

overlap; satire can be a vehicle of parody, and vice versa. The key point of difference is that satire does not rely on meta or intertextual dialogues with preceding texts and genres, but rather engages with the socio-political mores of society, typically to showcase its vice and follies. For Ann Campbell, this ultimately means that Lewis's use of satire is a 'destructive force' and a 'disruptive violation of an accepted, or at least understood, order'.[80] As I argued in Chapter 1, Lewis's novel is defiant of novelistic decorum, which is part of his comic turn to the Gothic; his use of satire, then, is another demonstration of this rebellious impulse. Campbell argues that *The Monk* penetrates deeper into layers of corruption in much the same way that satire, 'like an autopsy', dissects society and exposes its hypocrisy. Lewis's satirical destruction, however, leaves no scope for reformation, and gives no answers. I would suggest this destructive force and failure to effect change – Lewis's seeming lack of interest in doing so – points to the parodic impulse of *The Monk*, which only *uses* satire as a tool of mockery.

In suggesting that Lewis wields satire to destroy institutions but offers no model of reformation, Campbell is among the few scholars to recognise that *The Monk* is profoundly ambivalent; it is difficult, for example, to concretely suggest that it is a misogynistic novel, or pro/anti-revolution, or even anti-Catholic. Angela Wright, for example, suggests that Lewis's link between Antonia and the Madonna, as well as Justine and the Madonna in de Sade's *Justine* (1791), seeks 'to upset the assumptions of their readership, rather than criticise Catholic devotion per se'.[81] Implicitly, then, such ambiguity can be seen to signify Lewis's deliberate irreverence. Joseph Drury in particular emphasises the ambiguity of Lewis's engagement with the French Revolution, arguing that, with the destruction of empty idols, Lewis shows 'ambivalence about the iconoclastic gesture', proposing that *The Monk* illustrates the view 'that the effort to emancipate oneself from traditional idols and obligations ultimately involves the adoption of new ones which are likely to be no different, and probably much worse, than the ones that have been destroyed'.[82] For example, the statue in the convent of St Clare, which supposedly still holds the withered hand of a would-be thief, is found to be hollow, and nothing but a ruse made by the Prioress to hide the secret dungeon within which she imprisons Agnes

[80] Campbell, 'Satire in The Monk: Exposure and Reformation', *Romanticism on the Net*, 8 (1997), n.p.

[81] Wright, *Britain, France and the Gothic*, p. 133.

[82] Joseph Drury, 'Twilight of the Virgin Idols: Iconoclash in *The Monk*', *The Eighteenth Century*, 57. 2 (2016), 217-33 (p. 221).

and her dead child. In Drury's view, such ambivalence suggests 'the need for an approach to the gothic that […] rejects simple binaries opposing modernity and tradition'.[83]

The rejection of binaries is particularly demonstrated in the reversal of gender expectations – especially in the figure of Matilda, who enters the convent as a male novice named Rosario. She reveals herself to Ambrosio, as the French illustrations depicts (see Figure 1.1), in the garden at the monastery but, more specifically in 'a rustic grotto' – the etymological root of the grotesque, according to Justin Edwards and Rune Grauland.[84] By situating the disrobing of Rosario to reveal Matilda in a grotto, Lewis makes an implicit association with the grotesque. Fincher further suggests that this scene, which is part of a 'little grove', is an inversion – a parody – of the scene of Eve's temptation of Adam in the Garden of Eden. Others have commented on this comparison with the Biblical story of Adam and Eve, placing Ambrosio in the position of a male Eve. Anne Williams, for example, compares the titular monk's behaviour to the 'stereotypical female of medieval theology', one who is 'weak, irrational, carnal', who is easily manipulated because of a '"female" tendency toward compassion and a susceptibility to flattery, as well as an irresistible sensuality'.[85] For example Matilda, exclaiming that she will commit suicide if Ambrosio banishes her, manipulates him to secure a token signifying that he will think of her from time to time, and that she may stay. This token is to be a rose; when he reaches into the bush, something bites him, and he falls gravely ill, saved only by Matilda's sacrificial suction of the venom from the wound. I say that 'something' bites Ambrosio because Williams and others, like Ambrosio himself, assumes the creature was a serpent, further advancing the Biblical overtones. However, Father Pablo, drawing out the venom into his lancet, identifies the 'greenish hue' as the venom of a 'cientipedoro' – a centipede. This overlooked fact, I would suggest, advances the parodic engagement with the Biblical tale, reducing the deadly serpent to nothing but an arthropod, which makes Matilda's self-sacrifice, which secures Ambrosio's life and lust, all the more melodramatic.

Rosario/Matilda illustrates that gender identity – or the performance of it – is ambiguous and liable to shift. Soon after she and Ambrosio first begin their clandestine relations, Matilda becomes 'less devoted to his will' and adopts a 'manliness in her manners'

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[83] Drury, 'Twilight of the Virgin Idols: Iconoclash in *The Monk*', p. 229.

[84] Justin D. Edwards and Rune Graulund, *Grotesque* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013).

[85] Williams, *The Art of Darkness*, p. 116.

that displeases him; she commands him, and wins arguments that oblige him to 'confess the superiority of her judgement'.[86] Cyndy Hendershot argues that her previously devoted behaviour only 'apes the feminine gender role of worshiper of masculine wholeness', and her consequent 'manliness' reveals the 'fictional basis' of the feminine.[87] Further, the loss of Matilda's devotion and idolisation causes Ambrosio to regret Rosario, who he describes as 'the fond, the gentle, and submissive' – a young man with traditional feminine attributes.[88] For Wright, Matilda is a 'unique and remarkable indictment of the roles played by male desire' in previous models found in Diderot, de Sade, Radcliffe and, of course, Jacques Cazotte's *Le Diable Amoureux* (1772; translation: *The Devil in Love*).[89] 'Her ability to gender switch, to posture submission when required, and her mimicry of the Madonna', Wright argues, 'all undermine previous literary constructions of femininity'.[90]

While Matilda reveals the 'fictional basis' of femininity by deliberately performing the role of the feminine, Antonia reveals that, even when it is not a performance, it is cultivated by institutions and beliefs, such as by Elvira's censored Bible, which leaves her entirely ignorant. Antonia's innocence and beauty, so thoroughly destroyed by Ambrosio, is shown repeatedly to be naught but a spectacle. As I have already shown, her ignorance of gender and sexuality are made clear from the outset. In fact, her primary appeal is her naivety, as she is not, strictly, beautiful. When the veil is lifted from her face in the Church and the cavaliers (and readers) can observe her, '[t]he several parts of her face considered separately' are described to be 'far from handsome'; it is only when 'examined together' that she is 'adorable'.[91] This could even be read as a parodic version of Leonella's grotesquery as, in Harpham's understanding of the grotesque, it is the effect of the whole and not its components that causes 'confusion of type' – the effect of the parts of Antonia are not handsome, save for when they are considered together, the inverse of the grotesque effect Leonella demonstrates. After their initial meeting,

[86] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 231-2.

[87] Hendershot, *The Animal Within*, p. 16.

[88] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 232.

[89] Wright, 'European disruptions of the idealized woman: Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* and the Marquis de Sade's *La Nouvelle Justine*', in *European Gothic*, ed. by Horner, pp. 39-54 (p. 49).

[90] Ibid.

[91] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 11.

Lorenzo and Christoval discuss their interaction with Antonia – the former enamoured, and the latter mocking:

> 'She seems possessed of every quality requisite to make me happy in a Wife [*sic*]. Young, lovely, gentle, sensible…'
>
> 'Sensible? Why, She said nothing but "Yes," and "No".'
>
> 'She did not say much more, I must confess—But then She [*sic*] always said "Yes," or "No," in the right place.'
>
> 'Did She so? Oh! your most obedient! That is using a right Lover's [*sic*] argument, and I dare dispute no longer with so profound a Casuist [*sic*]. Suppose we adjourn to the Comedy?'[92]

Christoval wittily remarks that Lorenzo has been charmed by superficial qualities; conversation clearly has nothing to do with it. He is quite right: Antonia barely speaks in the scene and says nothing that can be considered to demonstrate that she is 'sensible'. In the eighteenth-century sentimental novel, sensibility denoted a person's ability to perceive or respond to intellectual or emotional stimuli. This emotional sensitivity also characterises many Gothic heroines like Emily St Aubert, who are here, once again, targeted by Lewis's parody – and so are the sentimental heroes who fall for such women. Christoval's observation that Antonia has said very little mocks Lorenzo as well, as it reveals the absurdity of his own misguided sensibility. In the absence of meaningful conversation, Lorenzo's attraction to Antonia can only be explained by her youth, innocence, and looks.

Throughout, Lewis parodies femininity by continuously representing Antonia not only as ignorant, but as unrealistic. The removal of Antonia's veil, as Campbell points out, is ironic, because she is 'exposed simply because she attempts to cover herself'.[93] Similarly, Eve Sedgwick argues that '[t]he veil that conceals and inhibits sexuality comes by the same gesture to represent it'.[94] Further, she is repeatedly compared to mythical figures and, more specifically, the statue of Venus. In the Church, before her veil has been removed fully from her face, it is 'dislodged' enough to 'discover a neck which for symmetry and beauty might have vied with the Medicean Venus', which is 'of the most dazzling whiteness, and received additional charms from being shaded by the tresses of her long fair hair, which descended in

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[92] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 2.

[93] Campbell, 'Satire in The Monk: Exposure and Reformation', *Romanticism on the Net*, 8 (1997), n.p.

[94] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, 'The Character in the Veil: Imagery of the Surface in the Gothic Novel', *Publications of the Modern Language Association,* 96 (1981), 255-70 (p. 256).

ringlets'.[95] In a number of other Gothic novels, long hair has an almost sentient ability to modestly cover naked breasts – a tendency which Dacre parodies in the fairy-like Lilla (see Chapter 4). Later, when Matilda has given Ambrosio a magic mirror which enables him to spy upon Antonia, she is described again to be in the attitude of the famous statue. Although she does not know she is being spied upon by Ambrosio (and readers), 'an inbred sense of modesty induced her to veil her charms'; as she pauses upon the edge of the bath, she stands 'in the attitude of the Venus de Medicis', at which point a bird 'nestled its head between her breasts, and nibbled them in wanton play'.[96] Here, then, is an example of the voyeurism which characterises the novel, part of what Wright suggests is a 'discourse of spectacle in which both characters and readers are compelled to participate'.[97] Spectacle is significant in Lewis's iteration of the Gothic, one that develops in the male Gothic by those who imitate his investment in the visual, and refers back to my argument in Chapter 1 which proposed that Lewis aims to entertain readers regardless of criticism. Spectacles like this, where Antonia is so improbably poised to bathe with the bird upon her breasts and so impossibly beautiful, are shown to be nothing *but* spectacle. Even if readers are expected to suspend disbelief and regard the mirror as having magical properties, there is still the suggestion that this impossible image of Antonia is staged, conjured by magic.

Her comparison to the statue of Venus, too, points to the sham of her improbable postures of modesty. Olivia Ferguson discusses the significance of the statue in the eighteenth century, demonstrating that it came to connote ideal female beauty. The statue itself, thanks to industrial development, was reproduced in miniature for individual purchase and admiration. Ferguson thus argues that 'Lewis's reference and allusions to the statue at once participate in this culture of appreciation and disparage it, evoking the repetition and replication that were integral to the mania for the Venus de' Medici'.[98] This evocation further 'invites us to consider the statue's history of association with cliché' – a cliché which, in *The Monk*, ironically

[95] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 9.

[96] Ibid., p. 271.

[97] Wright, 'European disruptions of the idealized woman: Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* and the Marquis de Sade's La Nouvelle Justine', in *European Gothic*, ed. by Horner, pp. 39-54 (p. 42).

[98] Olivia Ferguson, 'Venus in Chains: Slavery, Connoisseurship, and Masculinity in *The Monk*', *Gothic Studies,* 20. 1 (2018), 29-43 (p. 32).

eroticises feminine modesty.[99] Lewis's representation of the feminine as one of cliché and implausibility is part of his parodic engagement with the typical heroine, one which culminates in the ultimate parodic spectacle of Antonia's rape and death among the crypts, a macabre and 'ironic inversion' of Romeo and Juliet's tragic deaths. Regarding Antonia's violent end as parodic might seem counter-intuitive, especially if parody, like Rose and Horner and Zlosnik argue, is comic in nature. The humour here is an example of the superiority theory of laughter; Lewis, by revealing the performance of feminine postures and the ironic eroticisation of modesty, scorns the representation of the typical heroines which precede it.

To Diane Long Hoeveler, the fortitude and dignified resolution of Radcliffean heroines is also only a performance, one which has, as she contentiously argues in *Gothic Feminisms*, the appearance of 'victim feminism' – an ideology of female power through pretended and staged weakness'[100]. Gothic heroines typically adopt 'professional femininity' – which is nothing more than a 'gender masquerade' – to make a show of conforming to patriarchy when, in fact, they are using the ideology that is designed to restrict their power against the men who pursue them.[101] However, this gender subterfuge is thoroughly unmasked in *The Monk*, and performed for darker ends by the vindictive Victoria de Loredani to seduce her lover – and his brother – in Dacre's *Zofloya*, which will be discussed in Chapter 4. Like Shapira's suggestion that Fielding's parody *Shamela* critiques Richardson's *Pamela*, Lewis uses parody to critique the vision of femininity typically found in the female Gothic, as Antonia's femininity proves fatal in *The Monk*. While for Radcliffean heroines the preservation of virginity and virtue enables them to withstand temptations and tyrants, Lewis's novel, much like de Sade's *Justine*, does the opposite: virtue leads only to victimisation.

From the beginning, Lewis invites readers to recognise the performativity of gender, where even attendance at the Capuchin Church is a spectacle: 'The Women [*sic*] came to show themselves, the Men [*sic*] to see the Women […] Some came because they had no better means of employing their time till the play began'.[102] Though the church is overcrowded, forcing Leonella to elbow her way through the throng, religious sentiment has not motivated their

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[99] Ferguson, 'Venus in Chains: Slavery, Connoisseurship, and Masculinity in *The Monk*', p. 32.

[100] Diane Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminisms* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), p. 7.

[101] Ibid., p. 11.

[102] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 7.

attendance. Christoval, in the aforementioned quotation in which he mocks Lorenzo's marital sentiment, also mentions attending a play – a comedy, no less.[103] These subtle references to the theatre, and comedy, 'stage' the plot as one of theatrical performance, and further suggest that it should not be taken seriously. To an extent, in reading *The Monk* as parody, its plot could be considered an ironic inversion of bathos – a reversal of the typical trajectory of bathos from solemn sophistication to anti-climactic absurdity, whereby the anticipation of the comic is initially established in the scenes of the church by the behaviours of the crowd, the interactions between the cavaliers, Leonella and Antonia, and the inference that Christoval and Lorenzo will attend a comedy at the theatre, only for this light-hearted performance to increasingly descend into depravity and death.

This trajectory is propelled principally by Ambrosio's descent from devout servant of God to murderer consigned to Hell. This trajectory parallels the fall of Satan and positions the two as counterparts, in much the same way as Leonella and the Baroness are. While critics have recognised the homoerotic overtones of Lucifer's sublime appearance – the awe-inspiring beauty of his noble figure – there are also physical similarities between Ambrosio and Lucifer on the first occasion Matilda summons him following her masturbatory enchantment (see Chapter 1). Despite the warning groans of the damned and the oppressive dread that looms over Ambrosio as he awaits the arrival of the demon, he discovers that Lucifer is a young man, 'perfectly naked', whose magnificence inspires Ambrosio to look upon him with 'delight and wonder', and yet

> however beautiful the Figure, He [*sic*] could not but remark a wildness in the Daemon's eyes, and a mysterious melancholy impressed upon his features, betraying the Fallen Angel, and inspiring the Spectators [*sic*] with secret awe.[104]

While this passage reads much like Milton's vision of Satan as a proud and melancholy fallen angel in *Paradise Lost*, much of this description is also comparable to Ambrosio's own appearance. His look 'inspired universal awe' among the church-goers, whereby 'few could

[103] Wright argues that Lewis was likely familiar with numerous French plays popular in Paris during his visit in the 1790s, most of which featured convents as sites of oppression, some of which were comedies. One example is Pierre Laujon's comedy *Le Couvent, Ou Les Fruits Du Caractere Et De L'education* (1790). See Wright, *Britain, France, and the Gothic*, p. 126-7.

[104] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 277.

sustain the glance of his eye at once fiery and penetrating'.[105] The Wandering Jew, too, is another Ambrosio/Lucifer counterpart, again described in similar terms, with a 'majestic presence', a countenance marked by 'profound melancholy', and a look that inspires Raymond 'with a secret awe, not to say horror'.[106] The 'band of black velvet which encircled his forehead' – concealing the blazing cross which Coleridge so admired – even mirrors the religious cowl of monkish dress and the 'bright [s]tar' that 'sparkled' upon Lucifer's forehead. His eyes are also 'large, black, and sparkling', much like Ambrosio's eyes.[107] Williams considers the alluring, penetrative eyes and noble but suffering deportment to be typical of the male Gothic villain, originating from Milton and developing into the Byronic hero; black and piercing eyes are masterfully, if somewhat repetitively, used in Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1821), for example.[108]

In Lewis's configuration, however, the attractive and conflicted anti-hero transforms into a monster. Elvira, upon discovering Ambrosio stealing upon her slumbering daughter, denounces him as a 'Monster of Hypocrisy!' and threatens to 'convince the Church what a Viper she cherishes in her bosom' – the viper, once more, resonating with religious metaphor of the serpent in Eden, again associating Ambrosio with the devil.[109] At the climax when Antonia pleads for her life, Ambrosio fears she will reveal him to be 'an Hypocrite [*sic*], a Ravisher [*sic*], a Betrayer [*sic*], a Monster [*sic*] of cruelty, lust, and ingratitude'.[110] This monstrosity is physically made apparent by the later appearances of Lucifer, as if reflecting Ambrosio's soul. Lucifer, when Ambrosio awaits the tortures of the inquisition, then appears 'in all that ugliness which since his fall from heaven had been his portion', his once beautiful limbs now 'blasted'.[111] His body is bestial, disproportionate – grotesque:

> …a swarthy darkness spread itself over his gigantic form: His [*sic*] hands and feet were armed with long Talons: Fury [*sic*] glared in his eyes, which might have struck the bravest heart with terror: Over [*sic*] his huge shoulders waved two enormous sable wings; and his

[105] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 18.

[106] Ibid., p. 168.

[107] Ibid.

[108] See Williams, *The Art of Darkness*.

[109] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 301.

[110] Ibid., p. 385.

[111] Ibid., p. 433.

> hair was supplied by living snakes, which twined themselves round his brows with frightful hissings.[112]

His appearance mirrors Lorenzo's prophetic dream soon after meeting Antonia, in which he sees his wedding interrupted by a 'gigantic' figure with a 'swarthy' complexion, whose eyes are 'fierce and terrible'.[113] This monster's mouth 'breathed our volumes of fire; and on his forehead was written legible characters—"Pride! Lust! Inhumanity!"'.[114] This dream, as the later events of the plot evolve, reveals Ambrosio to be the monstrous savage who tears Antonia away from Lorenzo, but the physical appearance also aligns with Lucifer's later manifestation.

But Lorenzo might be this monster, too. The dream, argues David Macdonald, is both premonitory and psychological wish-fulfilment.[115] Lorenzo, in the dream, is in the position of observer – voyeur – just as Ambrosio is throughout much of the plot. Having had very little interaction with Antonia – having only really seen her face, since her conversational skills are decidedly lacking, as Christoval jibes – Lorenzo's wish to marry her is, in the dark parody of the dream, a wish to rape her. In several Gothic novels, including *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Demon of Sicily* (see Chapter 5), and *Vileroy; or, the Horrors of Zindorf* (see Chapter 6), heroines are often subjected to demands of marriage, and with the coercion to commit vows comes the unspoken threat of rape. In describing such a dream, Lewis makes clear that even the supposed heroes have the propensity to turn villainous, and in so doing parodies not just the virtuous heroines but their chivalric lovers also. Lorenzo's desire to marry Antonia despite knowing so little about her, Lewis makes clear, is nothing but a desire to bed her. Lorenzo even fails to save Antonia from Ambrosio, and almost forgets her; his discovery of her dying body after Ambrosio's attack is almost happenstance, as he is only in the convent to gain justice for his sister's maltreatment. The constancy of his affections, which Antonia so easily wins in the beginning, is tested by the beautiful Virginia, whose 'tender concern' for his suffering sister 'gained her an exalted place in his good graces'.[116] With Antonia dead and buried, and Agnes

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[112] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 433.

[113] Ibid.

[114] Ibid., p. 28.

[115] Macdonald, ' "A Dreadful Dreadful Dream": Transvaluation, Realization, and Literalization of Clarissa in *The Monk*'.

[116] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 395.

restored to health, Lorenzo marries Virginia – certainly not the behaviour of a typical romantic lover.

Chivalric heroes and virginal heroines are both subjected to Lewis's parody in *The Monk*. From the outset Lewis stages his characters as set pieces in a performance, emphasising the shallowness of the heroes and the implausibility of the virginal heroine. However grotesque Aunt Leonella may be, she remains the only woman who survives unscathed.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Gothic has always had an affinity with the comic, whether in examples of loquacious servants providing comic relief, melodramatic turns to hysteria, or grotesque proportions of supernatural spectacle that cross into the absurd. The comic and the Gothic both have a propensity to engage with the unexpected, blurring the lines between supposed opposites; incongruous effects can both cause fear and laughter. For Horner and Zlosnik, the Gothic should be read on a spectrum in which one end 'produces horror-writing containing moments of comic hysteria or relief and, at the other, works in which there are clear signals that nothing is to be taken seriously'. Typically, Gothic parodies like *The Animated Skeleton* and *Northanger Abbey* sit at the end of this spectrum, whereby hyperbole reveals the repetitive machinery of the genre.

Parody features 'ironic inversions' and metafictional engagement with texts and readers both. I have argued that adopting theories of humour and laughter to understandings of parody ensures that the comic component in parody is also accounted for. These theories offer functional means by which to identify humour in socio-historical contexts, regardless of subjectivity. Thus, when Lewis is charged with making jokes at the expense of women in particular, the intent to be humorous remains evident. Yet, in viewing *The Monk* as a parody, his target is not so much women, but rather the representation of heroines, and their shallow lovers, in previous Gothic texts.

There are signals that nothing is to be taken seriously in *The Monk*, though they are buried under spectacles of horror, which situates Lewis's novel near the comic end of Horner and Zlosnik's Gothic-comic spectrum. In reading *The Monk* as a parodic text, Lewis adopts techniques related to parody to blur the lines between horror and humour, especially the grotesque. Following Lewis's lead, the comic can be a matter of vantage, be that the position of texts in dialogue, an 'inside' joke shared between reader and narrator or author – or a Joker's sinister smirk. The following section of this thesis explores how texts which mimic, mock and

respond to *The Monk* continue to engage with the comic and advance the male Gothic in parodic dialogue with Lewis's novel.

PART II

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Mischief in the Making:
The Rise of the Male Gothic

I have sought, by a ridicule of its worst parts, by only substituting one appetite for another, to display the grossness of the idea, and to call a blush of contrition over the cheeks of those who have dwelt with pleasure on [The Monk's] pages

R. S. Esq, *The New Monk* (1797), p. 2

Chapter 3

Funny Bones: The Male Gothic in Early Gothic Parodies

My previous chapter discussed how the Gothic has always had an affinity with the comic. A simple push – or turn of the screw – is all it took for writers like Jane Austen, Bellin de la Liborlière, and R. S. to take the Gothic into the realm of parody. This chapter is interested in the parodies which sit at the end of Horner and Zlosnik's Gothic-comic spectrum 'in which there are clear signals that nothing is to be taken seriously'.[1] My discussion analyses several sources, of different media, which parody the Gothic and sustain comical dialogue with *The Monk* to satirise critics, readers, and the genre alike. The first section addresses the representation of reading *The Monk* and its effects in James Gillray's cartoon, *Tales of Wonder!* (1802; Figure 3.1), Bellin de la Liborlière's *The Hero; or, The Adventures of a Night* (1817), and Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (1817). Each, to a degree, showcases the supposed pernicious effects of reading Gothic novels in general, but in particular emphasise the dangers of reading *The Monk.* While their representations reflect the concern of critics at the time, they also burlesque the outcry against Matthew 'Monk' Lewis.[2] I argue that the comic effect in Gothic parodies is created by a dialogic interaction between novels, readers, and critics, which invites readers of the parody to not only question their taste for the Gothic, but also the reaction against it. *The Monk*, as perhaps the most scandalous example of a new breed of Gothic in the 1790s, is central to this dialogue.

The subject of the second section is R. S.'s eccentric parody of Lewis's infamous novel, its euphemistic sexual content and caricatures of the supernatural. *The New Monk* (1797) best demonstrates Horner and Zlosnik's definition of parody as 'a literary mode that, while engaging with a target text or genre, exhibits a keen sense of the comic, an acute awareness of intertextuality and an engagement with the idea of metafiction'.[3] While most other Gothic parodies during this time, including those novels I will discuss in the first section, are quixotic

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[1] Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn*, p. 15.

[2] The *OED* defines burlesque as a transitive verb meaning 'to turn into ridicule by grotesque parody or imitation'.
https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/25000?rskey=qjL5la&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid [accessed 6 November 2019]

[3] Ibid., p. 12.

in nature and therefore parody multiple sources instead of a singular hypotext, R. S. engages exclusively in intertextual discourse with *The Monk* in a sustained comic dialogue. While I am, in part, joining discussions which recognise that *The New Monk* is a testament to the popularity of *The Monk*, I also argue that this parody can be read as one of the first novels to advance the male Gothic. To make this argument, I reverse Horner's and Zlosnik's process of unveiling the 'comic turn' of the Gothic by identifying the Gothic heart of R. S.'s humour.

3.1 Ridiculing Romances: Reading *The Monk* in Gothic Parodies

The cartoons of James Gillray share similarities with principles of the Gothic and the grotesque. A prolific satirist, his cartoons caricatured everyone from whores to Napoleon and featured 'processions of grinning grotesques, malevolent animals, and mischievous hobgoblins'.[4] His cartoons twist recognisable dignitaries into absurd and sometimes fantastical creatures, exaggerating features beyond reality to caricature their appearance. For example, in 'Enchantments lately seen upon the Mountain of Wales, or Shon-ap-Morgan's Reconcilement to the Fairy Princess' (Figure 3.2), printed the same year as *The Monk* in 1796, the Princess of Wales is depicted atop a mountain in a reconciliatory embrace with Prince of Wales who sports horns, hoofs, and a rotund, caprine belly, with a goatish beard curling under his puckered chin to complete the bestial look. The other goat-like figures on the right are Lord and Lady Jersey, the latter of whom began an affair with the future King George IV in 1794, soon after he had married his cousin, Caroline of Brunswick, following Lady Jersey's own encouragement for the match. The three figures on the left, Loughborough, Lord Cholmondeley and the Duke of York, involved with efforts to reconcile the Prince and Princess, dance in glee to celebrate their reunion.[5] Nevertheless, Gillray's depiction of Prince George as a goat-human hybrid centres him, the adulterer, as little better than a beast. This corporeal combination of the human and the non-human, as I discussed in Chapter 2, is a particularly common visual representation of the grotesque, one which often oscillates between the typically male Gothic invocation of horror and laughter. As Gillray's most productive years coincide with the French Revolution and the Gothic-Romantic era, resemblances to the Gothic in his oeuvre are unsurprising.

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[4] See 'The whore's last shift' (1779) and 'Maniac raving's-or-Little Boney in a strong fit' (1803). Sally Hoban, 'The satirical world of James Gillray', *The Lancet*, 358 (2001) 675.

[5] See description and curator comments from Mary Dorothy George and Frederic George Stephens, *The British Museum*, BM Satires/Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum.
<https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/P_1868-0808-6546> [accessed 3 June 2020]

Figure 3.1: James Gillray, 'Enchantments lately seen upon the Mountain of Wales, or Shon-ap-Morgan's Reconcilement to the Fairy Princess' (1796)

James Gillray's cartoon 'Tales of Wonder!' (Fig 3.2) depicts four fashionable women gathered to listen in rapt attention to a reading of *The Monk*. Three of the women lean forward, almost out of their seats, to listen all the more intently; the woman on the left looks on with alarm on her face and stretches out her hands in shock, while the lady in green beside her, whose expression is unseen, rests a comforting hand on her shoulder. But the central woman in yellow, facing outward, depicts the most evident fright with clenched hands and a horrified expression. Larger in form, with sagging jowls and a drooping, downturned mouth, she is a vision of the grotesque. Her likeness is mockingly mirrored in the bust on the mantlepiece, the headpiece snake-like, an ornamental Medusa; the eyes of the figurine glare down at her. Beside this bust are two other grotesque ornaments: a skeleton and a long-legged dragon with a serpentine neck, whose head seems bent upon the direction of the readers as if to listen in. On the detail panel of the fireplace, there appears to be the God Poseidon, identifiable by his trident, riding a horse-drawn chariot. Upon the wall, to complete the image of fantasy and romance surrounding the women, hangs a painting of a knight with a maiden in his arms, ambiguously either her persecutor or saviour. It is not only that these women read *The Monk*; they adorn their houses with décor inspired by their reading of romance. As a result, the cartoon suggests, the central woman in yellow has become grotesque. There are no indications in the illustration which identify what specific episode of *The Monk* causes such disfiguring fright:

the entirety of the book itself is to blame. In exaggerating readers' response to Lewis's Gothic in this way, however, Gillray does not necessarily render women readers the sole target of ridicule. Rather, as I will go on to argue, Gillray offers a visual representation of the fears of outraged critics and, in so doing, satirises their moral indignation.

Figure 3.2: James Gillray, 'Tales of Wonder!' (1802)

By caricaturing women readers of *The Monk* in 'Tales of Wonder!', Gillray participates in both critical and satirical discourses on the Gothic more generally as well as Lewis's novel specifically. Literature, it was widely upheld, had the potential to instruct or to corrupt the increasingly literate masses and women of leisure. One critic for the *Quarterly Review*, for example, believed that novels ought to be judged for 'the standard of [their] morality and sentiment' by a 'strict literary police'.[6] As Maggie Kilgour explains, the spread of literacy, the rising powers of the press, and the increase of female readership and authorship led to 'fears that literature could be a socially subversive influence'.[7] Critics claimed that such readers, especially the young and women, were too easily amused to consider the subject of taste or morality, and could even confuse the real with the ideal, as I will discuss shortly in relation to

[6] 'Art, VII', *Quarterly Review,* 1809, 146-154 (p. 146).

[7] Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, p. 6.

quixotic Gothic parodies.[8] Andrew Cooper surveys the ways in which the Gothic especially provoked critical outrage, and proposes a 'taxonomy of Gothic threats' through which critics made their judgements, of which there are four categories: threats to the young, threats to gender norms, the threat of superstition, and the threat of revolution.[9] The view that the Gothic generally threatened impressionable young minds, for example, is evident in *The Monthly Review* in 1793, which argued that the 'influence that novels have over the manners, sentiments, and passions, of the rising generation […] is a serious and painful' issue.[10] Similarly women, according to Thomas Gisborne, were susceptible to the 'mischievous effects' of romances, forming an 'appetite […] too keen to be denied'.[11] So eager are readers to have their 'insatiable avidity' appeased, Gisborne complains, that they become 'indiscriminate' in their choice morsels.[12] Metaphors of voracious appetites and eating to describe the consumption of reading are fairly common at the time; as Chapter 2 discussed, popular genres across the nineteenth century were often transformed into 'recipes'. Further, in their increasing passion for modern romances, Gisborne believes that women are said to exhibit 'an aversion to reading of a more improving nature', and are no longer offended by works that should supposedly cause offense.[13] Jacqueline Pearson explains that reading, for some critics, 'was dangerous because it could distract [female readers] from domestic duties or transgress the limits of the private sphere'.[14] Romances seduced women with a glimpse of the outside world, of fanciful adventures, and threatened to make them discontented with their lot.

Caricatures and parodies of the Gothic arguably parodied the moralistic outrage against the genre by hyperbolising the opinions of critics, an argument hitherto overlooked by modern scholars. In a satirical essay against the genre, for example, the author of 'Terrorist Novel

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[8] Munday, 'The Novel and Its Critics in the Early Nineteenth Century', p. 213.

[9] Cooper, 'Gothic Threats: The Role of Danger in the Critical Evaluation of *The Monk* and *The Mysteries of Udolpho'*.

[10] 'Art XI', *Monthly Review*, 1793, 297-302 (p. 297).

[11] 'On Romances and Novels, and the Proper Employment of the Time of the Fair Sex: Extracted from Gisborne's *Duties of the Female Sex*', *Scots Magazine,* 1797, 374-7 (p. 375).

[12] Ibid., p. 376.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1835: A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 2.

Writing' appeals to those 'female readers' who are 'desirous of catching the season of terrors' in a bid to encourage them to seek better literature, one that is not designed to elevate the 'imagination into such a confusion of terrors, as must be hurtful'.[15] The anonymous writer continues to address the supposed ill effects of Gothic novels on female readers by asking:

> Can a young lady be taught nothing more necessary in life, than to sleep in a dungeon with venomous reptiles, walk through a ward with assassins, and carry bloody daggers in their pockets, instead of pin-cushions and needle-books?[16]

To Emma Clery and Robert Miles, introducing an excerpt from the above source, the humour is based on 'familiarity, with at most a vague intention to diminish the popularity of their object of ridicule'.[17] Here, Clery and Miles suggest humour is created by adopting language readers are familiar with, which draws attention to the repetitive formulism of Gothic novels, a view that reflects Margaret Rose's understanding of parody as metafiction. Further, the dialogic exchange between the parodied object, the parody, and the reader is highlighted by the notion of the familiar, the connotation of closeness, an 'inside joke' shared between parodists and readers. However, criticism and the critics can also be the target of parody. The writer of 'Terrorist Novel Writing' is, after all, adopting a line of argument that is comparable to the aforementioned concern that women readers, whose 'insatiable avidity' turns their attention away from 'improving' reading so that they no longer seek out 'the affectionate intercourse of domestic society'.[18]

Gillray's cartoon of the women reading *The Monk* parodies familiar fears voiced by critics. In this picture, a pair of scissors and other sewing paraphernalia are left on the table as the women listen instead to *The Monk* – the self-same items the writer of 'Terrorist Novel Writing' laments have been replaced by 'bloody daggers'. The eligible, affluent young women have turned their attentions away from traditional pastimes to pursue the rush of fashionable literature. As Pearson shows, 'domestic duties, *especially sewing*, frequently interrupted reading' for a number of frustrated heroines in novels during the late 1700s (my italics).[19] Further, marriage appears to be shirked by the figures in Gillray's cartoon, as no wedding rings

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[15] Anon., 'Terrorist Novel Writing', p. 229 & p. 228.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Clery and Miles, *Gothic Documents*, p. 184.

[18] 'On Romances and Novels, and the Proper Employment of the Time of the Fair Sex…', p. 376.

[19] Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750-1830*, p. 4.

are visible on the women's hands. This, too, responds to fears that women may be influenced by the example of Gothic heroines who fall in love with beautiful and sentimental heroes. 'Marriage', the anonymous author of 'Terrorist Novel Writing' regrets, is no longer brought about 'by ordinary means' in Gothic romances.[20] The central figure in Gillray's cartoon illustrates what may happen to young women readers who pursue flights of fancy instead of seeking suitable marriages. Older, larger, and decidedly uglier than her younger companions, the woman in yellow demonstrates the horrible future that awaits women readers of *The Monk*.

Considering what, exactly, onlookers are invited to find amusing in Gillray's cartoon opens a line of enquiry into the communal nature of parody. In burlesquing the fright women readers supposedly suffer upon reading *The Monk* by caricaturing their expressions, it is also implied that any horror they feel is nonsensical. In which case, the horrors of *The Monk* are similarly subject for ridicule, prompting the question: if the horrors of *The Monk* are absurd, are critics overreacting? Gillray's cartoon operates within the discourse of criticism and asks in response, with a mischievous smirk, the same question I posed in my introductory chapter when considering the reasons modern critics have overlooked the evident humour in the male Gothic: why so serious?

Gillray is not the only commentator to caricature the look of horror upon reading Lewis's novel. The French novel by Bellin de la Liborlière, originally published in 1799 as *La nuit anglaise, ou les aventures, jadis un peu extraordinaire, mais aujourd'hui toutes simples et très communes de M. Dubaud*, was translated to English in 1817 by Lewis's own sister with the title *The Hero; or, the Adventures of a Night*. The protagonist Mr Dob, a nouveau riche man who made his fortune during the French Revolution, becomes bored by the fashions of the day until he is presented with Gothic romances. *The Monk – Le Moine*, as it was known in France – is among a trunk of books given to him. When it is discovered by the apothecary, he is described as turning 'pale' and he quickly drops the book from 'his trembling hands'.[21] Later Dubert, the doctor, looks upon the same volume:

> The doctor had chanced to cast his eyes on the frontispiece, which represented the Devil in propria persona carrying by his scalp the prior of the Dominicans of Madrid over Sierra Morena. Struck with astonishment at such a representation at the head of a work, said to be the favourite study of the prettiest women, the medical Adonis had not been able to

[20] Anon., 'Terrorist Novel Writing', p. 228.

[21] Bellin de la Liborlière, *The Hero; or, the Adventures of a Night*, translated by Sophia Shedden (Missouri: Valancourt Books, 2011), p. 12-3.

> control his first impulse of fear. Mr Dob is the first to gather resolution enough to approach the box. He seizes the volumes one after the other – examines the frontispiece of each; he sees spectres, magicians, poignards – he trembles with delight.[22]

Even the doctor, a learned modern man, struggles to 'control his first impulse of fear', though Mr Dob 'trembles with delight'. The description of the frontispiece is a close match to the illustration accompanying the fourth edition of *Le Moine,* depicting the final scenes of the novel in which the devil liberates Ambrosio from the tortures of the Inquisition by carrying him away in flight, only to drop him to his prolonged death (see Figure 3.3).

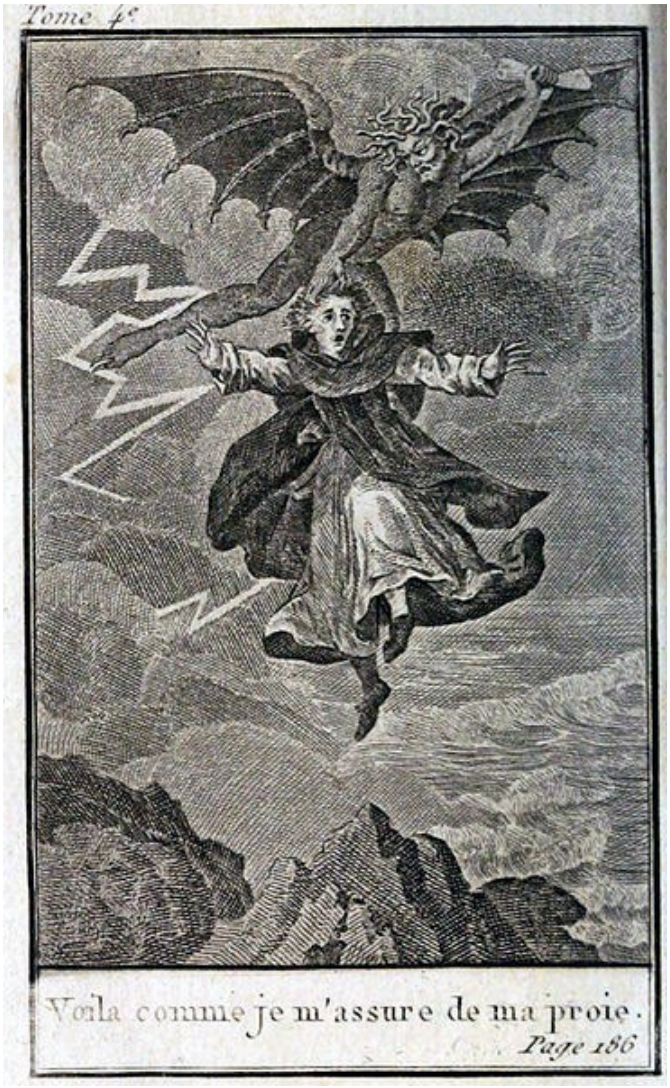

Figure 3.3: 'Voila comme je m'assure de ma proie', *Le Moine* (1811), p. 186.[23]

[22] de la Liborlière, *The Hero*, p. 13.

[23] Translation: 'this is how I make sure of my prey'.

The illustration closely corresponds to the description of Lucifer as he appears in the cells of the Inquisition; gone is the 'beautiful Figure [*sic*]' who Matilda had summoned previously, and instead is a grotesque figure whose hands and feet are 'armed with long Talons [*sic*]', with 'two enormous sable wings' from his shoulders, and hair 'supplied by living snakes'.[24] The illustration also shows the parchment Ambrosio signed to give his soul to the devil in exchange for his escape from the dungeons.

The Hero is a quixotic tale, one of several such parodies of the genre at the time, including more well-known novels like Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine* (1813) and Jane Austen's posthumously published *Northanger Abbey* (1817). Modelled on the comical misadventures of *Don Quixote* by Cervantes (1605-1615), quixotic protagonists are typically rash, overeager individuals with extravagant romantic ideals who are unable to discern the difference between the fancy of their reading habits and the reality of their own world. The comic effect is, invariably, to showcase the absurdity of romance and chivalry. Don Quixote, for instance, mistakes a herd of sheep for an army, which he, singly, hopes to defeat in combat. Over a century later, Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752) participates in the renewing interest in romances by telling the ridiculous story of the orphaned heiress Arabella, whose youth was spent in such seclusion that she mistakes romantic novels for representations of the real world and its manners. Such delusions lead Arabella, much to the frustration of her cousin and suitor, Glanville, to confuse mere cordiality with courtship, and assume numerous men are desperately in love with her. Her obsession with romance and chivalry, and her difficulty in perceiving the reality of modern manners, provide a model for later Gothic parodists whose attentions turn, for the most part, to the female reader.

Discussing the Gothic form of quixotic tales popular at the end of the eighteenth century, Natalie Neill suggests that the 'Quixotes' book-fuelled fantasies are repeatedly contrasted against a more prosaic modern world' which emphasises the disparity between the foreign exoticism of the Gothic world and modern domesticity.[25] In so doing, 'the parodists call attention to the Gothic's lack of realism'.[26] This is partly the case; the very nature of this form of parody invites a comparative dialogue between the fancies of the Gothic and the 'realities' of the contemporary world. The purpose of calling attention to the Gothic's lack of realism, however, does appear to differ, and is not always designed to be a scathing mockery

[24] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 433.

[25] Neill, 'Gothic Parody', in *Romantic Gothic,* ed. by Wright and Townshend, pp. 185-204 (p. 199).

[26] Ibid.

in which laughter is purely inspired by a sense of superiority. Liborlière's *The Hero* is gently critical of the Gothic machinery his quixotic character is regularly and wilfully fooled by, though he also appears to celebrate the pleasures of the Gothic.

Mr Dob reads at least nine Gothic novels to which he frequently compares his own adventures through his castle's catacombs. Aside from *The Monk*, these include French translations of Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797); Mary Robinson's *Hubert de Sevrac* (1796); George Moore's *Grasville Abbey* (1797); and two French novels, *The Tomb* (*Le Tombeau*) (1799), and Liborlière's own Gothic novel *Célestine* (1798). Liborlière accompanies each quotation with footnotes throughout the two volumes, for the benefit of curious readers.

To translate from French to English – including reverting French translations of English novels back to English – would have been no mean feat for the translator, Sophia Shedden, Matthew's Lewis's sister. Shedden undertook the task in 1799, though she did not publish her version until 1817. This time gap accounts for the title Shedden adopted: *La Nuit Anglaise* translates to *The English Night*, and would, perhaps, suit Liborlière's purposes better, as most of the novels parodied are English in origin. However, in choosing the title *The Hero*, Shedden alludes to Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The Heroine*, a popular Gothic parody published in 1813. Neill, introducing a modern reprint of Shedden's translation, suggests that this delay was in part due to Lewis's interference, as he did not want the family involved with the scandal his novel had provoked. Further, as his biography makes clear, Lewis discouraged his sister and their mother from pursuing literary careers and considered women writers to be 'a sort of half-man'.[27] Yet Shedden certainly was a talented woman, performing more than the role of translator; Neill suggests she acts 'as editor, abridger, canonizer, and parodist in her own right', altering punctuation for drama, employing hyperbole, and using 'colourful expressions' in the stead of plainer prose.[28] In particular, Shedden re-arranges the order Mr Dob reads the Gothic novels, saving *The Monk* for last. In so doing, she emphasises that her brother's novel is significant to the developing canon of English Gothic.

Mr Dob does seem to favour *The Monk* above other texts, if Shedden's translation is to be trusted. While he concedes that Radcliffe's novels, 'in spite of some trifling defects and

[27] Letter to his mother, Friday, 18 March 1803, quoted in Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis*, p. 220. See also David L. MacDonald, *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000).

[28] Natalie Neill, 'Introduction', in *The Hero,* pp. vii-xxii (p. xix).

absurdities' do 'deserve indulgence, and even admiration from their originality', he considers the character Ambrosio 'a master-piece'.[29] Further, having relished the horrors of *The Monk*, he wonders, '[w]ho can in future dare hope to invent one which can surpass it? […] Let all pens be broken! All inkstands be overturned! *Posterity has nothing left to write*!'[30] Of course, pens did not break and inkstands remained upright, to which *The Hero* itself is testimony, as the novel comments on and participates in the genre (a clever in-joke from Liborlière). Such hyperbolic statements illustrate Margaret Rose's notion that parody exhibits 'engagement with the idea of metafiction'.[31]

Like many quixotic plotlines, Mr Dob explores his castle with the intention of discovering his own Gothic adventure, believing himself to be haunted by the spectre of the man he killed, Chevalier de Germeuil, the father of the woman with whom his own son is in love. The text is heavy with extended quotations from the previously mentioned list of Gothic novels, at times used to better describe his surroundings and experiences, and at others to mock the trappings of the genre more directly. In the dark tunnels of the castle, for instance, he finds himself in need of light, though supposes whatever light he may find will be insufficient, for 'during my whole perusal of *Radclifferies*, I have never met with one lamp which gave even a decently good light'.[32] More generically, though still with Radcliffe and also Lewis in mind, Mr Dob also observes that 'whosever [sic] is a *monk*, an *Italian*, and has a name ending in *oni*, is infallibly a very great rascal'.[33] These typically Italian names, of course, are further contrasted with the comically dull name, 'Mr Dob'. Once more, these intertextual references reflect parody's metafictional dialogue between texts and readers, whereby the parodist suggests 'certain expectations in his readers' to decode the material.[34]

As a result of the regular combination of intertextual references and comical observations, Liborlière's Gothic is a patchwork parody, drawing on all sources relatively equally. Even so, *The Monk* stands out above the others, at times, especially at the plot's climax.

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[29] de la Liborlière, *The Hero*, p. 124.

[30] Ibid. Original italics.

[31] Horner and Zlosnik, *Gothic and the Comic Turn*, p. 12.

[32] de la Liborlière, *The Hero*, p. 59. Original italics.

[33] Ibid., p. 53.

[34] Rose, *Parody//Metafiction*, p. 20.

Toward the end, Mr Dob is trapped in a dungeon and awaits death when a daemon appears, offering to liberate him if he vows to never again read English romance, just as the devil appears before Ambrosio to liberate him from the dungeons of the Inquisition in exchange for his soul. Though Mr Dob initially resists, his fears overwhelm him, and so he signs the contract – which transpires to be a marriage contract, giving his consent for his son to marry Ursula. All spectres, horrors and bandits, it transpires in a Radcliffean turn of events, were naught but the mischievous acts of soldiers, hired by Mr Dob's son and Dr Dubert to deceive him so that he might learn the folly of his obsessive reading and permit the marriage between his son and the daughter of the man he murdered. Here, the male Gothic interest in spectacle and horror is answered for by the customary female Gothic explained supernatural, used ironically by the cast of characters to tease the quixotic protagonist.

Other spectacles of horror mimic *The Monk*; notably, an ape of the Bleeding Nun appears. Mr Dob encounters a veiled woman playing the lute (musical talent being a common accomplishment of Gothic heroines, who like to play and sing sombre songs while they wither in dungeons). The lute, however, breaks; the young woman's clothes fall apart and 'the veil was suddenly raised', revealing 'a bare skeleton, which still preserved its eye-balls, which were fixed steadfastly upon him, lustreless and hollow'.[35] In response to this grisly Bleeding Nun mimic, '[t]he unfortunate Mr. Dob "would have called for aid, but his nerves were bound up in impotence, and he remained in the same attitude, inanimate as a statue"'.[36] Here, as is frequent in *The Hero*, an original quotation from *The Monk* is used to describe Mr Dob's own experience.[37] Much as Lewis's Bleeding Nun professes to Raymond, which I have also quoted below for comparison, this skeletal lute-player says:

> Dob! Dob! thou art mine!
> Dob! Dob! I am thine!
> Leave thee will I never!
> I am thine!
> Thou art mine!
> Bones and soul for ever![38] (*The Hero*)

[35] de la Liborlière, *The Hero*, p. 97.

[36] Ibid.

[37] The original quotation is Raymond's response to meeting the Bleeding Nun. Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 160.

[38] de la Liborlière, *The Hero*, p. 98.

> Raymond! Raymond! Thou art mine!
> Raymond! Raymond! I am thine!
> In thy veins while blood shall roll,
> I am thine!
> Thou art mine!
> Mine thy body! Mine thy soul!——[39] (*The Monk*)

The Bleeding Nun scene, and the climactic appearance of Lucifer, give *The Monk* some claim to being the most frequently appropriated Gothic novel in the parody. What is most significant, however, is what elements have been quoted and adapted for Mr Dob's story. The spectacles of horror – the devil, the Bleeding Nun, and Matilda's magic – are all evident in Liborlière's imitative parody, indicating that, above all else, these scenes were regarded as exemplary of Lewis's Gothic. Indeed, as Chapter 5 will further elucidate, Raymond and Agnes's plot and the Bleeding Nun were especially favoured in abridgements and adaptations of *The Monk*.

Not every Gothic parody that features a reading of *The Monk* affords it such high praise as Mr Dob, nor even spends much time discussing its effects. Perhaps the most famous Gothic parody is Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, which was published the same year as *The Hero* (1817). The heroine, Catherine Morland, is particularly partial to Gothic romances, and contrives to find evidence of typical Gothic plots and ploys when she visits the Tilney family's Northanger Abbey, and comes to suspect General Tilney of murdering his own wife. Although she is mistaken, this does not absolve General Tilney from the charges of tyranny; he is preoccupied with wealth, status, and lineage, and shuns Catherine when he learns she is not as wealthy as he presumed. Susan Allen Ford thus argues that Austen's parody uses the Gothic to reveal the ways in which the real experience of women can indeed be Gothic, suggesting that 'for Austen, gothic language and gothic conventions retain their power as she reveals the real gothic tyrannies of General Tilney, their effect on his daughter and even on her friend'.[40]

Catherine reads numerous popular Gothic novels which have since come to be known as the Northanger 'Horrid' novels. It should be no surprise that *The Monk* is implied to be amongst these novels, as this is the only book to have caught the attention of Mr Thorpe, who haughtily suggests that novel-reading is a tedious pastime.

> 'Have you ever read Udolpho, Mr. Thorpe?'

[39] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 160.

[40] Susan Allen Ford, 'A Sweet Creature's Horrid Novels: Gothic Reading in *Northanger Abbey*', *Persuasions Online,* 33. 1 (2012) http://www.jasna.org/persuasions/on-line/vol33no1/ford.html? [accessed 18 June 2019]

> 'Udolpho! Oh, Lord! Not I; I never read novels; I have something else to do.' Catherine, humbled and ashamed, was going to apologize for her question, but he prevented her by saying, 'Novels are all so full of nonsense and stuff; there has not been a tolerably decent one come out since *Tom Jones*, except *The Monk*; I read that t'other day; but as for all the others, they are the stupidest things in creation.'[41]

Mr Thorpe here makes judgement against novels while professing never to have read them, suggesting that they are 'all so full of nonsense and stuff'. Finding Fielding's *Tom Jones* to have been the last 'tolerably decent' novel – published in 1749, some forty years prior to the novels Catherine and Isabella fondly discuss – Thorpe's exception for *The Monk* is striking. It is not, however, a Mr Dob-like zeal for the ingenuity of horrors Lewis conjured that makes the arrogant John Thorpe claim a liking for *The Monk*. While some scholars have previously suggested that this exception caricatures the male critic, believing Mr Thorpe to have read Lewis's novel solely because it was written by a man, the 'horrid novels' do include fiction by other male writers, including Francis Lathom's popular *The Midnight Bell* (1798), *Horrid Mysteries* by Carl Gosse (1796), and Karl Friedrich Kahlert's *The Necromancer*, translated by Peter Teuthold (1794).[42] Catherine herself, as Angela Wright argues, cares very little '[w]hether a novel was composed by a male or female, or published anonymously, did not matter so much as whether it was "truly horrid"'.[43] Though it was published in 1818, *Northanger Abbey* was Austen's first completed novel and written in 1803, at the height of the popularity of the Gothic, when the reputation of *The Monk* was still scandalous. Katie Halsey, discussing how readers responded to *The Monk* in personal journals, observes a trend whereby many readers felt they ought not to continue reading, and yet completed the book even so. Thomas Carlyle, for example, reading Lewis's novel in 1817, thought it 'the most stupid & villainous novel that I have read for a great while' and yet 'sat up until four o'clock' to read it.[44] Arguably, *The Monk* may simply have been the one book that Thorpe could not have avoided.

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[41] Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, p. 24.

[42] Jodi L. Wyett, 'Female Quixotism Refashioned: *Northanger Abbey*, the Engaged Reader, and the Woman Writer', *The Eighteenth Century,* 56. 2 (2015), 261-76.

[43] Angela Wright, 'Disturbing the Female Gothic: An Excavation of the Northanger Novels', in *The Female Gothic: New Directions*, ed. by Diana Wallace and Andrew Smith (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 60-75 (p. 73).

[44] Quoted in Katie Halsey, 'Gothic and the History of Reading, 1764-1830', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 172-184 (p. 179).

Once more, it is evident that Gothic parody not only generates a dialogue with the hypotext – or, in this case, the famous Northanger 'Horrid' Novels – but also with critics. This section has focussed on parodies which engage in a dialogue with multiple sources, including critical opinion. The quixotic novels discussed here, like earlier examples from Cervantes's *Don Quixote* and Lennox's *The Female Quixote*, typically involve intertextual and metafictional engagement with multiple sources. In the following section, however, R. S. Esq's *The New Monk* dedicates itself to parodying Lewis's novel exclusively. As I will now illustrate at length, the comic-Gothic parody still engages with, and advances, the male Gothic.

3.2 Mocking the Monk: R. S. Esq's *The New Monk* (1797)

In her introduction to *The New Monk*, Elizabeth Andrews admits that the novel is a 'guilty pleasure'.[45] Andrews views *The New Monk* as a 'comic tangent' in which 'horror and terror are conspicuously absent'.[46] While I agree that the novel is primarily concerned with parody that is burlesque in style and at times flamboyantly absurd, there are moments of horror that, as I will argue in this section, engage with the development of the male Gothic following Lewis's example.

The plot is like-for-like: a holy man is driven to commit heinous acts in pursuit of his desires, and is aided in these endeavours by a woman of unusual talents whom he had first thought to be a man; meanwhile, in the parallel plot, a young man aims to liberate his lover from the confines of a strict household, but is thwarted by mysterious supernatural occurrences that only a Wandering Jew can help put to rest. The substituted characters, no longer representatives of Catholic Madrid in an earlier century, are all contemporary Brits: Joshua Pentateuch, the 'Reverend of the West End', a Methodist, is the Ambrosio figure; Betsey, a baker, is Matilda's substitute; Ann Maria Augusta replaces Antonia; Lord Charles Clottleberry is Lorenzo de Medina's substitute; Alice and Henry Mountfardington/Mr Fortesque are proxies for the lovers Agnes and Raymond; and Mrs Rod, a governess, is R. S.'s answer to the merciless Prioress. Like Mr Dob's name in *The Hero*, the collection of names in *The New Monk* are humorously 'normal' in contrast to the typical Gothic names.

While his novel mirrors the plot, R. S. alters the incentive of his holy man's debauchery. Joshua meets Betsey, whose artful persuasions initially have much more to do with cookery

[45] Elizabeth Andrews, 'Introduction', in *The New Monk*, by R. S. Esq. (Missouri: Valancourt Books, 2012), pp. vii-xxiii (p. xxiii).

[46] Ibid., p. xxiii & p. xvii.

than witchery: she tempts him with a joint of meat. In this plotline, the supernatural makes a delayed entry while Joshua enjoys feasting. But when glutting on meat has bored him, just as Ambrosio grows tired of Matilda's delights, he looks elsewhere for his pleasure – to Ann Maria Augusta's money. This change to the protagonist's desires can, in part, be answered by the author's preface, which provides some insight into the supposed purpose of the parody and the alterations made:

> I have sought, by a ridicule of its worst parts, by only substituting one appetite for another, to display the grossness of the idea, and to call a blush of contrition over the cheeks of those who have dwelt with pleasure on [*The Monk*'s] pages.[47]

R. S.'s preface seems damning of Lewis's text. Like several critics at the time who levied attacks against the carnal content of *The Monk*, R. S. finds Lewis's novel to be full of 'obscenity', featuring a 'vast phalanx of mischief' and 'religion hooded by prejudice'.[48] This echoes Coleridge's complaint, who argues that Lewis's novel can serve no moral purpose; worse, the 'libidinous minuteness of detail' and the 'shameless harlotry of Matilda' is nothing but a 'poison for youth' and a 'provocative for the debauchee'.[49] R. S.'s preface joins this outrage against *The Monk*, labelling it an 'evil' that threatens young readers, as do all other 'Novels and Romances of the day'.[50] His parody, as the above quotation states, therefore seeks 'to display the grossness' of the novel and expose the supposed evils of *The Monk*.

At least, this is what R. S. alleges in his preface. Published less than two years after the first edition of Lewis's novel, R. S.'s parodic version both testifies to and exploits *The Monk*'s rapid rise to infamy. Regardless of the sincerity of R. S.'s preface, after four editions in only two years, it is unlikely any parody could abate the public interest in *The Monk*¸ if indeed that was the hope. One reviewer of R. S.'s novel similarly argued that the parody would do little to hinder the popularity of Lewis's novel, claiming that '[t]he whole of the Monk cannot be injured by ridicule'.[51] A reviewer for *The Monthly Mirror* was equally unconvinced by R. S.'s efforts to highlight the worst of *The Monk*, suggesting that '[e]ven on the score of morality, R.

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[47] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 2.

[48] Ibid.*,* p. 1. To save repetition, see Chapter 1 for criticism against *The Monk*.

[49] Coleridge, 'Lewis's Romance of The Monk', p. 197.

[50] R. S., *The New Monk,* p. 1.

[51] 'Novels', *Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature,* November 1798, 356-57 (p. 357).

S. has no advantage over the old monk'.[52] The reviewer goes on to complain that *The New Monk* is more uncouth than *The Monk*, remarking that '[v]ulgarity and indecency are frequently observable' in the text.[53] *The Critical Review* similarly suggests that R. S.'s 'desire of burlesque has led him into indelicate descriptions of a very gross nature'.[54]

Presumably taking advantage of the popularity of *The Monk*, then, R. S.'s prefatory disgust is likely to be a fabrication, or an exaggeration of the outrage levied against Lewis and his novel, to mock the outraged critics. As with Gillray's caricature and some of the sources discussed in the previous section of this chapter, parody engages with multiple sources to satirise critical opinion as well as the novel. As the heavy condemnation levelled at Lewis's text may be seen to have assisted the novel's notoriety and therefore ironically boosted readership, it seems unlikely that readers of *The New Monk* would approach the parody without at least some familiarity with the novel it so closely parodies.[55] Reviews, too, featured extended quotations, if not discussions of particular scenes; for example, Coleridge's review quotes from the scene in which Ambrosio discovers Elvira's censured Bible, and fully features the poem 'The Exile', while *The European Magazine* (1797) quotes at length the scene in which Matilda first summons Lucifer and concludes with Lewis's 'The Water King' ballad.[56]

Furthermore, the novel itself appears to be at odds with the prefatory statement of intention. *The New Monk* is strewn with euphemisms that parody sexual desire and sexual activity. The parody exchanges flesh for flesh, which makes the substitution of 'one appetite for another' somewhat literal. While all 'the dashing females of the *bon ton*' vie for his attention, Joshua, unlike Ambrosio, is said to have 'regarded them not with the eye of a covetous [*sic*]'.[57] A devout vegetarian, Joshua is instead tempted by meat. Alone in his room, the 'Reverend of the West End' privately salivates over a painting of what he mistakenly believes to be a joint of mutton (it is actually ham, which Betsey had commissioned to be painted in the likeness of the pig Joshua later eats, much like the Madonna which, in *The Monk*,

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[52] *Monthly Mirror*, 1798, p. 345.

[53] Ibid.

[54] *Critical Review*, p. 357.

[55] Chapter 1 reviews how the price of the unaltered editions rose following the expunged fourth edition of *The Monk*.

[56] Coleridge, 'Lewis's Romance of The Monk', and R. R., 'Book Review'.

[57] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 129.

is deliberately painted in the likeness of Matilda). The scene, like most throughout the parody, invites a comparison with *The Monk*, as these parallel extracts illustrate:

> What sweetness, yet what majesty in her divine eyes! […] Can the Rose [*sic*] vie with the blush of that cheek? Can the Lily [*sic*] rival the whiteness of that hand? Oh! if such a Creature [*sic*] existed, and existed but for me! Were I permitted to twine round my fingers those golden ringlets, and press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom! Gracious God, should I then resist the temptation?[58] (*The Monk*)
>
> What mutton is there! […] how the joint is done! What fat – what delicious lean! How nice it hangs upon the hook! Can the piony [*sic*] vie with the redness of the flesh? Can the lily rival the pure whiteness of the fat? […] were I permitted to stick my knife and fork into that luscious morsel, and grind with my teeth the sweets of that savory breast![59] (*The New Monk*)

As is evident in the passages quoted, *The New Monk* closely imitates *The Monk*. The cheek of Madonna/Matilda, compared to a rose, is substituted for the red flesh of meat and compared instead to a peony, and both the 'whiteness of that hand' and the 'pure whiteness of the fat' are compared to a lily. The exclamations and syntax are, likewise, comparable, following a similar development of detail and increasing excitement. The absurdity of Joshua's hyperbolic admiration for a painting of meat ridicules Ambrosio's fervent desire for the Madonna. The invitation to make comparison made by this intertextual closeness, however, overlooks the parodic effect of Lewis's original, as Ambrosio is equally hyperbolic in his adoration of the Madonna image to parody the eroticisation of idealised femininity.[60]

Joshua's non-sexual desires continue to be described in sexual terms. After he has satiated his appetite for meat, he turns instead to Ann Maria Augusta's money. The sight of her riches 'could not but inspire him with pleasure and admiration; he longed, he panted for their possession'.[61] His desperate attempts to secure the money read as an act of sexual assault upon Ann Maria Augusta: 'He attempted to make himself master of her treasure by impatient force, and violated with his bold hand the aperture of her pocket'.[62] The euphemisms here are strongly

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[58] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 40-1.

[59] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 23-4.

[60] See Chapter 2 for my discussion of how Lewis unveils the irony of eroticisation of virginal heroines.

[61] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 134.

[62] Ibid., p. 142.

coded as sexual; her 'treasure' can easily be read as her virginity or sex, while the violation is clearly a reference to Ambrosio's violation of Antonia while she slept, and the 'aperture of her pocket' indicates genitals. Pockets, and also purses – pockets not being sewn into clothing until the Regency era, but rather tied about the waist beneath a dress, accessible via a hole in the garment – have long been used euphemistically for a vulva or vagina, especially in seventeenth-century drama and poetry.[63] In the ballad *A Country Lass and a Young Taylor* (1672-5), for example, the lines 'And having groped her Purse/and taken all her money/He grop'd again, and mist/and caught her by the Coney' illustrate how 'purse' is both used literally and euphemistically.[64] Later in the poem, the country lass claims her 'purse' is 'so deep' that he will hardly reach the 'treasure'.[65] Further, George Chapman's comedy *May Day* (1611) confuses theft with rape: 'play the pick-purse, and steal a poor maid's maidenhead out of her pocket while sleeping'.[66] This is much the same in this scene in *The New Monk*, as Ann Maria mistakes his intentions for rape when, having given her an opiate and sequestered her among the barrels of alcohol in the basement of Mrs Rod's boarding school, she wakes to find him searching 'for the slit of her pockethole' – another lewd euphemism for genitals, 'slit' being a slang term for the vagina since the early 1600s[67] – which was 'totally mistaken by the female for another cause […] natural enough'.[68] Sex, then, remains ironically present in the euphemisms, and reminds readers of the explicit sexual content of the original text.

Despite this, attitudes toward potential sexual relationships in *The New Monk* are more ambiguous. Mrs Rod, the cruel governess who represents the Prioress that imprisoned the pregnant Agnes in Lewis's original, is adamant that she would 'sooner have the itch, or the

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[63] For the slang use of pocket and purse, see Gordon Williams, *A Dictionary of Sexual Language and Imagery in Shakespeare and Stuart Literature* (London: The Athlone Press, 2000).

[64] The ballad is subtitled, 'How the Taylor lost his plight and pleasure/His Yard not being, by the Standard, Measure', to mock the size of the Taylor's penis. 'A Country Lass and a Young Taylor', *Early English Books Online* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/B04722.0001.001/1:1?rgn=div1;view=fulltext> [accessed 30 June 2020]

[65] Ibid.

[66] George Chapman, *May Day*, V. i. 287, from *Early English Books Online* <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo/A18415.0001.001?view=toc> [accessed 30 June 2020].

[67] Jonathan Green, *Green's Dictionary of Slang* (2020). <https://greensdictofslang.com/> [accessed 30 June 2020].

[68] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 194 & p. 195.

scarlet fever in my school, than one man', because men are 'epidemic'.[69] Men are painted as a corrupting force by Mrs Rod's argument, a (sexually transmitted) disease that would spoil the young women of her finishing school. Therefore, when Alice's plan to elope with Henry is discovered, Mrs Rod proposes to flog her until unconscious, and leave her for at least four days to survive on nothing but bread and water. Her name, too, means both the stick used to flog someone and the punishment of caning itself, as in 'the rod'. Her disdain for men and sexual relations is ironic, given the connotations of her name and the meaning of flogging at the time. Flogging in the 1736 Canting Dictionary by Nathan Bailey is described to involve 'a naked Woman's [*sic*] whipping with Rods [*sic*] an old (usually) and (sometimes) a young Letcher [*sic*]'.[70] Further, thanks in part to Edmund Curll's publication of *A Treatise Of The Use Of Flogging In Venereal Affairs* (1723), flogging was associated with pornography in the eighteenth century.[71] Flogging is, then, considered a sexually deviant act, and Mrs Rod's intent to flog the young Agnes places herself in the position of the usually older male. She is just as hypocritical as Lewis's Prioress. Arguably, the name masculinises her also via the connotation of a rigid, phallic, implement. Her severe judgement against Alice – R. S.'s answer to Lewis's Agnes – invites readers to find the punishment of the young love-struck girl extreme. However, Alice is spared the pain of the rod when the benevolent Mrs Eleanor suggests she should be 'examined' first.[72] Though Mrs Eleanor does not elaborate on what is meant by an examination, it is presumably one to test her virginity, likely involving a medical procedure to check her hymen remains intact.[73] Mrs Rod, however, being as sadistic as her name implies, is less interested in establishing Alice's innocence or guilt, and intercedes in the proposed examination by forcing a sleeping draught into the young woman and fakes her death so that

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[69] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 29.

[70] Nathan Bailey, *Canting Dictionary of 1731*, online at https://words.fromoldbooks.org/NathanBailey-CantingDictionary/f/flogging.html [accessed 30 June 2020].

[71] See my discussion of pornography in *The Monk* in Chapter 1; see also Gamer, 'Genres for the Prosecution: Pornography and the Gothic', 1045-54.

[72] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 182.

[73] The hymen is not an accurate indicator of virginity, a fact that was recognised by influential theorists in the eighteenth century as well; even so, the demand for a physical, demonstrable sign of virginity was prevalent, and the hymen remained the most important indicator. See Tassie Gwilliam, 'Female Fraud: Counterfeit Maidenheads in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 6. 4 (1996), pp. 518-548.

she can continue with her punitive plan. It matters little to the cruel governess whether Alice had surrendered her virginity to her lover or not. Unlike Lewis's Agnes, who is found in one of the most horrific scenes of the novel chained to a bed and clutching her dead baby in the catacombs of the nunnery, Alice never does have sex with her lover.

This is a significant change, and possibly one of the few scenes that supports the intentions claimed by the preface. Though Alice is still imprisoned for communicating with her lover and plotting an elopement, the plot remains the same despite the absence of sexual contact. Considered in dialogue with *The Monk*, this change implies that R. S. believes Agnes could still have been mistreated by the Prioress had she remained a virgin, and thus the sexual relationship between Agnes and Raymond is shown by the parody to be gratuitous to the original plot. To emphasise the difference between the two texts, Henry Mountfardington denies having enticed Alice to surrender her virginity in a moment of passion; such an act, for Henry, would have been dishonourable. His argument against pre-marital sex reads like a direct criticism of Lewis's choice to allow Raymond and Agnes to unite in the gardens of the nunnery:

> could I have taken the least liberty with your sister, from that moment my respect, my love, would have degenerated, and would have evaporated;—had it been a passion of that description, I should consider myself a villain, and one whom you ought to chastise […] with that in the mind of a man of honour, let the circumstances be ever so engaging, the opportunity ever so enticing, or the actions on the one hand ever so exciting, it would be impossible for such a man, under such ideas, to take the least advantage.[74]

There are, for Henry, no circumstances in which an honourable man should allow himself to 'take advantage' of a lover's ardour. In Lewis's text, Raymond continues to love Agnes and mourn her loss, and marries her at the resolution when she is again restored to liberty and health. The version of events offered in the parody, therefore, may imply that such continued affection is implausible, because 'respect' and 'love' – presumably from the male suitor toward his intended bride – would be 'evaporated'.

While Peter Brooks suggests that, in *The Monk*, 'the forces of the supernatural enter the realm of human experience in response to man's excessive erotic drives', the supernatural has no evident link to sex in *The New Monk*.[75] In fact, supernatural figures appear to have no internal logic in R. S.'s novel whatsoever. While Betsey's artful persuasions are initially un-

[74] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 101.

[75] Brooks, 'Virtue and Terror: *The Monk*', p. 256.

spectacular, she does, on one occasion, produce a mirror 'set in two ribs of human bone' so that Joshua can watch Ann Maria counting her money in her own home, much like the mirror Matilda gives to Ambrosio so that he can observe Antonia bathing.[76] Tempted to distraction, Joshua agrees that she shall help him procure Ann Maria's money. Her assistance begins with the casting of a spell, again conducted in an imitation of Matilda. Betsey changes 'her coat and breeches for a huge black robe, with arms bare up to her shoulders', reminiscent of the 'long sable Robe' Matilda dons in the catacombs; Betsey also carries an 'oak wand of unusual thickness', just as Matilda 'bore a golden wand'; further, R. S. burlesques the 'girdle of precious stones, in which was fixed a poignard' tied around Matilda's waist with the 'huge hanger' strapped around Betsey.[77] The masturbatory overtones of Matilda's ritual, which I discussed in Part I of the thesis, are absent in R. S.'s description of Betsey's spell-casting. In its stead is a ridiculous performance that summons a grotesque figure that is 'lank, sallow, and sullen, with a beard long as a horse's tail, and black as bear-skin', around whom is 'a magic circle of guineas' – with 'three large blue dogs' at heel.[78] This strange man is persuaded to bestow upon Joshua a key, which can unlock any door he wishes to open. He uses this key to sneak into Ann Maria's house while she sleeps, where the absurdity only increases; discovered in the act by Olivia, Joshua kills her by unusual means:

> he in fury sat upon the breast of the unfortunate Olivia; and, by the assistance of an up and down motion, attempted to deprive her of that breath which had already been lost in his late cruel exertions.[79]

Her murder is comparable to Elvira's own death in the parallel scene from the hypotext. Ambrosio suffocates Antonia's mother by smothering her with a pillow and 'pressing his knee upon her stomach with all his strength'.[80] Wendy Jones, in arguing that Ambrosio's 'unquenchable sexual desire is a displacement of his desire of his mother', reads his murder of Elvira as a metonym for rape.[81] Despite Joshua's silly means of murdering his mother in *The*

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[76] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 146.

[77] All quotes from *The New Monk,* p. 147; all from *The Monk,* p. 274.

[78] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 148.

[79] Ibid., p. 161.

[80] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 303.

[81] Wendy Jones, 'Stories of Desire in *The Monk*', *ELH*, 57 (1990), 129-50 (p. 134).

New Monk, the close likeness of the scene re-enacts the metonymic murder/rape from *The Monk*. Both murders take place in a bedroom and use the physical force of the male body atop the female to deprive the mothers of breath. The scene in the parody, however, exaggerates the sexual undertones of the scene from Lewis's original, exchanging Elvira's stomach for Olivia's breast and applying an 'up and down motion', which can be read as another euphemism for sex. This scene, while comical, is also sexually violent and encourages reflection upon the sexual violence in *The Monk*.

Betsey's conjuring of the peculiar supernatural figure adds a singular episode of supernaturalism to Joshua's narrative, though the most memorable supernatural figures occur in the parallel plot. This may reflect upon the popularity of Raymond's plot in *The Monk*, which enjoyed several chapbook adaptations, which I will review in Chapter 5. R. S.'s answer to the Bleeding Nun which, as Chapter 2 previously outlined, parodies a lovers' embrace, is the 'Bleeding Doctor'. Also aptly named Doctor Hectic, he haunts Welford mansion every five years, with much noise and chaos:

> shrieking always led the band; howling was tenor; groaning and hollow cries, joined by swearing, and dead bones beating times on skulls, made the whole concert […] nothing at times was heard in the house but black oaths and horrid execrations. A moment after he would run over the names of all the medicines used; then whistle; and last of all repeat the whole of his anatomical knowledge as orderly as if still giving his lectures.[82]

The choice of medical man in the stead of a woman in a religious habit is no coincidence. In the process of nationalising the Gothic by setting the parody in contemporary Britain, R. S. brings modern medicine under scrutiny as if it were the new religion of learned men. The character, described in life to be 'in every circumstance improper' and, tellingly, an atheist, considered marriage to be 'foolish shackles', regarded religion to be 'pomp ridiculed', and thought that 'as he had nothing to convince him of an hereafter, he would exercise all his faculties whilst he was sure of them'.[83] The hauntings undertaken by Dr Hectic appear to be ironic punishment for a man who lived a chaotic, atheist life. He might even be considered the first example of the 'Mad Doctor', a man of science whose madness is driven by their pursuit of knowledge rather than Faustian pacts with the devil for mystical knowledge.

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[82] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 77-8.

[83] Ibid., p. 95.

The Bleeding Doctor is not the only doctor in *The New Monk* to boast a lack of faith, and nor is he the only doctor to be subjected to ridicule for his knowledge or supposed lack thereof. Dr Phial – occasionally spelt also as Dr Vial – is summoned to attend Joshua's wounds after being attacked by the pig he later eats. The name Phial/Vial links the doctor to the paraphernalia of his profession, and further plays on the sound to pun with the word 'vile'. Described as a mere 'quack', he recites the numerous injuries the preacher has sustained, announcing that 'the *humerus* to be shook considerably, and the radius to be considerably impaired by the fall as for the *digitary* extremities *manual*, I can firmly advance that the palmaric tendons were stretched beyond their usual length'.[84] So grave are his wounds, according to the Doctor, that he says, 'indeed, if he recovers, it will be a —': readers are here to presume he would have said 'miracle', had his own scientific convictions allowed him to say so. Dr Phial's list of Joshua's injuries foreshadows Dr Hectic's unusual habit of reciting his anatomical knowledge. The verbosity of both doctors is a stereotype of the quack whose characteristics, as numerous eighteenth-century caricatures portrayed them, included 'pretentiousness, ignorance, and loquacity' – characteristics which therefore meant that quackery was not merely a charge against medical men, but also politicians.[85]

Dr Phial's knowledge is subject to mockery when Betsey reveals Dr Phial was entirely inaccurate in his conclusions. She, not the doctor, saves Joshua, by simply licking away the black dirt which had appeared to be bruises, though she herself then suffers 'a severe cholic' as a result of ingesting the balms Dr Phial had applied to the imaginary wounds.[86] The failures of doctors to properly diagnose the obvious, to confuse the self-evident with something other – in Dr Phial's case, to presume impending death – is a common subject for mockery in the eighteenth-century, and is caricatured by Thomas Rowlandson in 'The Quack Doctor Humbug Gives Advice Gratis' (see Figure 3.4). The well-dressed and portly gentleman is sniffing a urine flask in order to diagnose the young woman's illness, while a man leers in the background. Uroscopy, though it had been a common practice throughout the Middle Ages, was no longer a reputable method of diagnosis in the eighteenth century, yet it was still employed by some quack doctors. The man in the doorway, laughing as if he knows the man

[84] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 39. Original italics.

[85] Fiona Haslam, *From Hogarth to Rowlandson: Medicine in Art in Eighteenth Century Britain* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), p. 79.

[86] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 47.

for a fool, and the demure, downcast gaze of the young woman, points to either love-sickness or pregnancy – 'the usual assumption', which is obvious to viewers while the doctor, supposedly a learned man, is clueless.[87]

Figure 3.4: Thomas Rowlandson, 'The Quack Doctor Humbug Gives Advice Gratis', n.d.

R. S. does not exclusively mock Lewis's novel in his parodic text, then. He mocks the medical profession, considers them 'quacks' and represents them as mentally unstable. In subjecting these figures to ridicule, they also become spectacles of horror. The Bleeding Doctor is a peculiar combination of the comically absurd and grimly macabre; thin and clothed in black, his clothes are 'stained with blood', but he also wears a 'large wig' which 'entirely [hides] his face'.[88] Doctors were stereotyped as wearing large wigs, and caricatures often applied wigs and other 'pomposities' to identify them to readers, such as we can see in Figure 3.4. Later, when he makes his nightly visits to Henry Mountfardington, he is much more horrific in appearance, as the haunted man describes:

[87] Haslam, *Medicine in Art in Eighteenth Century Britain*, p. 79.

[88] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 76.

> I saw a light-blue marbly visage, glazy eyes, without any pupils, and purply lips […] He dropped his lower jaw, and a sound issued from his inside, the most hollow and agonizing possible to be conceived; it seemed to me a connection of groans.[89]

Andrews, in her introduction to the Valancourt reprint of *The New Monk*, suggests that there is no evidence of horror in the novel. Here, however, I disagree. R. S. shows skill at creating the spectre of Doctor Hectic, whose corpse-like appearance and groans illustrate how even parodies participate in the creation of the Gothic. Henry continues to recount his encounter with the Bleeding Doctor, explaining that he 'approached the side of my bed; grasped my hand with his clayey fingers, and stooping over me, pressed his cold and moist lips to mine'.[90] The homosexual overtones of the scene are abundantly clear, as the doctor poises to kiss the horrified Henry and recites, in imitation of the Bleeding Nun's own declarations to Raymond in *The Monk*, 'Henry, what is your's [*sic*] is mine! Death and thee these arms entwine!'[91]

Henry is forced to call upon the aid of a Wandering Jew in order to exorcise the Bleeding Doctor. Though the Wandering Jew has some additional eccentricities in comparison to Lewis's own Wandering Jew, this supernatural character shares the most similarity with the original and undergoes the least amount of change. Unlike the Bleeding Nun and, in fact, all other characters in *The New Monk*, the Wandering Jew is not converted into a contemporary British character. Both versions of the Wandering Jew in *The Monk* and *The New Monk* are solitary, remarked for travelling without servants, and rumoured to have some connection with the Devil; the characters in both are dark, sombre men who inexplicably cause people to dislike them the longer they are in a particular place, despite whatever good they may do. Below, descriptions of the Wandering Jews are compared:

> His countenance was strongly marked, and his eyes were large, black, and sparkling: Yet there was a something in his look, which the moment that I saw him, inspired me with a secret awe, not to say horror.[92] (*The Monk*)

> He was a man long, then, and bony; his visage was marked strongly, being scored with wrinkles, and his eyes were large in the extreme, deep, blue, and hollow. Yet there was

[89] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 86.

[90] Ibid., p. 87.

[91] Ibid.

[92] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 168.

> something in his aspect that made your welcomes recoil within yourself.[93] (*The New Monk*)

Here, the two descriptions are similar, and not, actually, parodied by hyperbolic excess. It is possible that this is one of the elements that R. S. claims to have 'glided over [as] there is the least to condemn' in his preface. Further, other critics found Lewis's Wandering Jew worthy of praise; perhaps the most complimentary statement that Coleridge makes about *The Monk* is praise for the 'great vigor of fancy' of the Wandering Jew. He goes on to say that 'we could not easily recollect a bolder or more happy conception than that of the burning cross on the forehead of the wandering Jew'.[94] Coleridge himself created his own version of the Wandering Jew in the ballad 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner' (1798), first published with William Wordsworth in *Lyrical Ballads*. The myth of the Wandering Jew, an outcast condemned to walk the earth until the second coming of Christ, is a popular figure in both Gothic and Romantic texts, most notably Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* (1821). Perhaps, given the praise offered to Lewis's Wandering Jew, R. S. found the figure to be so grotesque in the outset that to burlesque him further was not required, or otherwise unnecessary to parody.

However, there is a peculiar addition to the description of the Wandering Jew in *The New Monk*. While there are many comical moments in the parody, the ritual performed by the Wandering Jew to summon the ghost of the Bleeding Doctor is simply bizarre. Making a circle, turning several times in different directions, and finally taking up his black cat in his right arm, the Wandering Jew instructs Henry not to look inside his mouth (Lewis's Wandering Jew instructs Raymond not to look upon his face, where the burning cross is found). Henry, however, is unable to resist: 'I looked up out at the corner of my eye, and beheld a hairy grey circle on the roof of his mouth. I was seized with insensible horror'.[95] This image is quite unsettling – or, as is common in the male Gothic, grotesque, recalling how the grotesque inspires both disgust and laughter, whereby the composite parts may make sense, but the assemblage 'embodies a confusion of type'.[96] Imagining hair *inside* a mouth is disconcerting, if not repulsive. By retaining most of the original details of Lewis's Wandering Jew, adding

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[93] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 91.

[94] Coleridge, 'Review of The Monk', p. 194.

[95] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 94.

[96] Harpham, *On the Grotesque,* p. 6.

only this peculiar mouth, R. S. participates, deliberately or otherwise, in the Gothic-comic grotesque.

I have argued that R. S.'s Wandering Jew, though he is grotesque, remains mostly unchanged likely because it is one of few elements in Lewis's novel that his harshest critics found praiseworthy. So, too, does R. S. retain Lewis's second Jewish character from *The Monk*; both Matilda and Betsey use a Jew to sell their paintings to the religious protagonists. In *The Monk*, this Jewish character reinforces associations between Jews and the devil, and acts, as Carol Margaret Davison says, 'as the middleman between the devil and his victims', which 'maintains the established idea, represented in various illustrations dating from the Medieval era to the Enlightenment, that the Jews and the devil were business partners'.[97] While Lucifer does not make a direct appearance in *The New Monk* – the strange man Betsey summons is ambiguously characterised and remains unnamed – the Jew that Betsey uses to sell her painting does maintain the suggestion that Jews are agents of corruption. R. S. continues this association with the ironic connotations of Joshua, the Methodist preacher, with anti-Semitic stereotypes.

As Davison illustrates in *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature*, the Gothic emerges at a time when discourses of nationalism in the increasingly secular age of Enlightenment regularly defined itself according to its supposed European 'Other' – the nationless Jew. While it might appear unusual for a Methodist character to be associated with Jewish stereotypes, conspiracy theorists argued that so-called 'crypto-Jews' who masqueraded as Christians posed the greatest threat to social order.[98] Chief among these was the Abbé Barruel, whose five-volume *Memoirs pour servir a l'histoire du Jacobinisme* (1797) went on to influence the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* published in 1905. According to Davison, the English translation that replaced 'Jacobin' with 'anti-Christian' invited connotations of Judaism because Jews had long been seen as the 'primary anti-Christian "Other" in the European world-view'.[99] Frank Felsentein, in discussing the association of Jews with the Devil since the thirteenth century, suggests that as the 'betrayer of Christ', Jews were regarded to be

[97] Carol Margaret Davison, *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 103.

[98] Ibid., p. 61.

[99] Ibid., p. 39.

'intent upon the very destruction of Christian society'.[100] Further, with the rise of capitalism and what Emma Clery refers to as 'ghost money' within the stock market, Jewish peoples, who had long been associated with a Shylock-like monetary obsession, came to be seen as a demonic financial force in the process of 'Judaizing Britain'.[101]

In the mid-eighteenth century, Parliament introduced the 'Jew Bill' (1753) which naturalised Jewish men born abroad (mostly merchants) without the need to take the sacrament.[102] This Act was met with public outrage and consequently repealed a mere month after it had been introduced. This does, however, provide some insight as to why a Methodist may have been coded as a crypto-Jew, as the Act also comes five years after the Pendle Forest Riots of 1748 in which hatred of the revival of Methodism was met with violence by members of Lancashire chapelries. Michael Snape, in discussing the political and cultural climate at the time of the riots, illustrates that there is a 'strong correlation' between hostility shown to Methodists and other deviant groups, including Catholics and Jews.[103] Having a Methodist protagonist, but coding him with anti-Semitic stereotypes, allows R. S. to attack both religious groups at once.

The first suggestion that the so-called 'Reverend of the West End' is associated with Jewishness is in his name. His first name, Joshua, is a book of the Hebrew Bible, and one of twelve spies sent to explore the land of Canaan before becoming leader of the Israelites after Moses's death. As readers would likely have known at the time, Pentateuch is also a religious term meaning the 'Five Books of Moses' (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). While these books are part of the Biblical Old Testament, they also form the Hebrew Torah. This initial association between Joshua and Jewishness is advanced by a description of his appearance. His nose is described in detail as 'a sharp, but aquiline nasal promontory [that] over-shadowed a mouth, in form like the all-powerful bow of the

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[100] Frank Felsentein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830* (London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 29.

[101] Emma J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 133.

[102] Dana Rabin, 'The Jew Bill of 1753: Masculinity, Virility, and the Nation', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 39. 2 (2006), pp. 157-171.

[103] Michael Francis Snape, 'Anti-Methodism in Eighteenth-Century England: The Pendle Forest Riots of 1758', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 4. 2 (1998) 257-81 (p. 257).

Easterns'.[104] The description of his face continues, focusing on the Methodist's eyes, in which there 'was such a something, not pomposity, but somewhat stronger, in his look and manner, that forced universal fear and expectation. In short, no one could bear his eyes, when fixed upon them'.[105] As Ann Maria Augusta's aunt also later explains, 'he's an ugly, long, withered fellow: he indeed makes me quite nervous with his eyes'.[106] His description is similar to that of the Wandering Jew, who is similarly 'long, thin, and bony', with eyes that were 'large in the extreme' in which 'there was something in his aspect that made your welcomes recoil within yourself'.[107] Joshua's description prefigures the portrayal of fin de siècle Gothic villains Svengali in George Du Maurier's *Trilby* (1894) and the Count in Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the latter of whom, though not ostensibly Jewish, has been linked to anti-Semitic stereotypes by Ken Gelder and Davison separately.[108] Both later characters are described as tall and thin, with sinister eyes and prominent noses; here, attention is similarly paid to Joshua's 'Eastern' nose and eyes that inspired 'universal fear and expectation'.

The choice of meat Joshua devours also indicates that he is associated with anti-Semitic representations of Jewishness contemporary to the time. While Andrews argues that Joshua is 'rendered peculiarly English and working class, since the cut of meat is "mutton" rather than the iconic joint of beef', she does not then consider the significance of what the meat transpires to be.[109] The mutton in the image he salivates over, like the image of the painting of the Madonna Ambrosio adores, is painted in the likeness of a real joint of meat, but it is not mutton – it is ham, which is forbidden in kosher laws. While this might appear to counter my argument that the Methodist is coded with anti-Semitic stereotypes, Joshua's consumption of ham relates to anti-Semitic discourse which regards Jewish people to be duplicitous and sacrilegious against their own religious laws. For example, images of Judensau, which depict Jews in what one would call obscene contact with a sow, are carved into numerous Medieval churches, particularly in Germany; one such example remains on the façade of a thirteenth-century

[104] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 11.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid., p. 12.

[107] Ibid,, p. 91.

[108] Ken Gelder, 'Reading *Dracula*', in *Reading the Vampire*, pp. 65-84, and Carol Margaret Davison, 'Britain, Vampire Empire: Fin-de-Siècle Fears and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*', in *Anti-Semitism and British Gothic Literature*, pp. 120-157.

[109] Andrews, 'Introduction', *The New Monk*, p. xxi.

church in Wittenberg where Martin Luther once preached, despite petitions to have the offensive stonework removed.[110] Thomas Rowlandson, a cartoonist contemporary with R. S., parodied three elderly Jewish men preparing to eat a full pig in 'Jews at Luncheon' (1794).

Figure 3.5: Thomas Rowlandson, 'Jews at a Luncheon, Or a peep into Dukes Place' (1794)

Note also in this depiction the large noses of all characters, the stereotyped 'Eastern' look of Joshua's prominent nose, and the heavy-set brows over their eyes. They are eating at Duke's Place, London, which was home to the Great Synagogue at the time. Founded in 1690, it was destroyed in a German Air Raid on 11th May, 1942.[111] The depiction of Jewish men carving a pig to eat in their own place of worship is deeply anti-Semitic.

Joshua's taste for meat soon gives way to the desire for money, which further associates him with Jewish stereotypes. Felsenstein's study of anti-Semitism demonstrates that Jewish

[110] Oliver Moody, 'Judensau of Wittenberg carving makes antisemitism "acceptable"', *The Times*, June 5 2019. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/judensau-of-wittenberg-carving-makes-antisemitism-acceptable-ltd3rm7qw> [accessed 22 October 2019].

[111] *Jewish Communities and Records Online*, <https://www.jewishgen.org/jcr-uk/London/city_gsduke/index.htm> [accessed 30 June 2020].

people have long been associated with moneylending and greed, a stereotype that is 'evidenced' by Biblical stories which compare Jewish people to Judas. Felsenstein says that 'like Judas, the Jewish moneylender was depicted on stage and elsewhere as completely unscrupulous and totally untrustworthy, a fiend-like agent who would sell his very soul for financial gain'.[112] Joshua is 'unscrupulous' in his efforts to gain Ann Maria Augusta's money: he 'violates' her pocket and kills his own mother in the process (as Ambrosio had also killed his mother in an attempt to rape Antonia). Joshua Pentateuch, the so-called Reverend of the West End, is coded as a duplicitous, greedy, un-Christian Jew.

Like Ambrosio, Joshua must be punished for his sins. In the contemporary setting of England, however, the Inquisition is no longer the means of torture for the hypocritical preacher. Instead, Joshua is brought to the gallows by an angry mob, making a spectacle out of his death:

> the rope was made fast to the throat of the struggling man […] he kicked, and contorted, in all the agonies of suffocation. Five minutes did he dangle; the earth again received him; he breathed; it was a very short respite indeed; he again ascended yet alive, and the executioner made fast the hempen string
> […]
> He wagged backwards and forwards, till the troubled air grew calm, and his useless and enchained body was pendant and motionless from the gibbet's arm.[113]

Before he does take his last breath within the noose, numerous birds begin to peck his face, including 'one, more lucky in a long bill than the rest, darted deep into his eye, tore it out by the root, and pierced the agonizing brain of the dying criminal'.[114] For Andrews, Joshua's prolonged death is an example of body horror, though it is 'still a figure of fun and is objectified', in which 'terror or horror cannot be focused on the object of his body because humour already is'.[115] However, Joshua's body is not the object of humour at this point. His death, described over the length of a page, is given excessive detail, ending with the grim statement that 'there lay his corse [*sic*], rotting, unburied, and the prey of maggots, worms, and

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[112] Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes,* p. 34.

[113] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 226.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Andrews, 'Introduction', in *The New Monk*, p. xix.

birds'.[116] In his death, R. S. creates what Douglass Thomson considers travesty, 'one of the more visceral forms of Gothic parody', which is usually 'unleavened by humour or irony' and which 'amplif[ies] Gothic horror'.[117] Thomson argues that 'these travesties actually end up providing more graphic gore than their source material'.[118] While it is Thomson's view that travesty is used with the aim of revealing the depravity of the hypotext or taste for Gothic horror, R. S.'s use of travesty is more ambiguous. Despite his declarations of disgust for *The Monk* in the preface, the content of *The New Monk* renders the sincerity of such a sentiment doubtful.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that the various forms of parody which make intertextual reference to Lewis's *The Monk* illustrate the dialogic exchange between novel, reader, and critic. It is clear that these caricatures and parodies of *The Monk* engage with critical opinion as much as with readers of the genres to burlesque the critics themselves who, as I have shown, hyperbolise the dangers, especially for young women, of reading novels like *The Monk*. I have illustrated that Gillray's cartoon represents the common concerns of critics by caricaturing women reading Lewis's novel. Their looks of horror, comically exaggerated, reveal the absurdity of the horror in *The Monk* and, in turn, the absurdity of the uproar against it. Further, we have seen how impossible it is for even the most reluctant reader to avoid *The Monk* in Austen's *Northanger Abbey*.

This chapter has also demonstrated how parodies participate in the creation of the male Gothic, selecting specific elements or scenes from *The Monk* to parody, further cementing those features as part of the male Gothic form. These parodies advance the reputation of *The Monk* and showcase the interest in spectacles of horror, demonstrating that the themes of the male Gothic are on the rise soon after Lewis's novel was first published. In *The Hero*, translated by Lewis's own sister, spectacles of horror from *The Monk* are striking in a text that is heavily intertextual throughout, highlighting the significance of the supernatural spectacle in the rising wave of the male Gothic. But in so doing, such texts associate the male Gothic with the comic and parody.

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[116] R. S., *The New Monk*, p. 226.

[117] Thomson, 'The Earliest Parodies of Gothic Literature', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Byron and Townshend, pp. 284-96 (p. 285).

[118] Ibid., p. 287.

Further, I have argued that R. S's *The New Monk* does more than testify to the rapid infamy of Lewis's novel – it is much more than a mere parody of *The Monk*. R. S. uses the example of *The Monk* to burlesque modern Britain, targeting medical men in the manic Dr Hectic and caricaturing Jewish peoples with anti-Semitic stereotypes. The overemphasis, as ridiculous as it may be, on sexual euphemisms, the absurd and, at times, frankly mystifying use of the supernatural, all illustrate the significance of spectacle in the male Gothic. What these findings further indicate is that scholars of the Gothic should view parodies of the genre as part of an ongoing dialogue which advances the genre and canonises certain texts and themes. This will better allow us to view the Gothic as a collaborative mode in which new visions of the male Gothic come to gain popularity, with parody playing an integral role.

Chapter 4
Mimicry and Madness: Dacre, Hoffmann, and Radcliffe's Response to Lewis

If mimicry is the sincerest form of flattery, Charlotte Dacre, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Ann Radcliffe, and a host of lesser-known Gothic authors can be counted among Lewis's admirers. This is, perhaps, a rose-tinted view of the dialogue between Lewis's and Radcliffe's novels, with the latter's *The Italian* (1797) being regarded by numerous scholars as a response to *The Monk*, which mutes the explicit elements of supernaturalism and eroticism in favour of Radcliffe's more subtle evocation of terror and the sublime.[1] Dacre, however, so evidently fashioned *Zofloya, or the Moor* (1806) on Lewis's novel that some contemporary critics felt obliged to say 'we are sorry to remark, that the "Monk" seems to have been made the model, as well as the style, of the story'.[2] Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir* (1815) is also modelled on *The Monk*, and even directly refers Lewis's book when Aurelia, the woman with whom the monk Medardus is in love, reads the tale with horror at the thought that her own lover could be like Ambrosio. These three novels are, one might say, more sophisticated than many of those which were seen to capitalise on the notoriety of *The Monk*, such as Edward Montague's *The Demon of Sicily* (1807), which will be discussed in Chapter 5. This chapter, by focusing on texts which respond to the themes established by *The Monk*, expands the work of my previous chapter, which illustrated the collaborative exchange between novel, reader, and critic in the development of the male Gothic in parodic texts. While Chapter 3 demonstrated how humour can be turned to horror in the example of *The New Monk* in particular, Chapter 4 returns to applying Horner's and Zlosnik's 'comic turn' to the Gothic, assessing whether those Gothic texts which are not overtly concerned with humour adopt, eschew, or further advance the ways in which supernatural, sexual, or violent spectacles can be viewed as comical.

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[1] See, for example, Syndy M. Conger, 'Sensibility Restored: Radcliffe's Answer to Lewis's *The Monk*', in *Gothic Fictions: Prohibition/Transgression,* ed. by Kenneth W. Graham (New York: AMS Press, 1989), pp. 113-149.

[2] 'Romances and Novels', *The Annual review and history of literature*, January 1806, p. 542.

The first and second sections of this chapter address Radcliffe's and Dacre's novels, which have been regarded as novelistic responses to Lewis's text by numerous scholars.[3] While it is the intention of this thesis to predominantly address overlooked Gothic novels, in analysing the literature which establishes dialogic intercourse with *The Monk*, neither *The Italian* nor *Zofloya* could be discounted, though these novels do already have a significant body of scholarship reviewing them (especially *The Italian*).[4] However, the comic in these novels has yet to be accounted for. In analysing *The Italian*, I discuss how Radcliffe counters Lewis's use of humour and proposes her own approach to the comic in the character Paulo. In the second section, I argue that what David Punter considers a 'de-parodization' of the Gothic in *The Italian* is, in turn, *re*-parodised in Dacre's *Zofloya*, and situate the latter in parodic dialogue with not just Lewis's novel but also the Radcliffean school in general.[5] This may go some way toward finalising debates regarding whether or not Dacre's and Radcliffe's novels belong to the male Gothic or, as is more likely the case, reaffirm the need I proposed in Part I to regard the male and female Gothic as functioning on a spectrum to parallel the comic-Gothic spectrum put forward by Horner and Zlosnik.

In the third section, I analyse Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir*. Hoffmann, whose famous *The Sandman* (1816) was used by Freud to explore the concept of the uncanny – a staple of Gothic psychoanalytical discourse – is a well-known writer in Gothic and Romantic studies, though *The Devil's Elixir* has received less attention than his tales. Originally published in German in 1815, *The Devil's Elixir* was translated into English and published first by Blackwood in 1824, and again in 1829. While the novel is replete with a dizzying number of doppelgängers predating James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), it also engages with the grotesque which, as I will show, British reviewers and publishers acknowledged was at times comic in nature. As such, in contrast to those Gothic

[3] On Radcliffe's *The Italian* as response to *The Monk*, see for example Andrew Smith, 'Radcliffe's Aesthetics: or, the Problem with Burke and Lewis', *Women's Writing*, 22. 3 (2015), 317-30; and for Dacre, see Carol Margaret Davison, 'Getting Their Knickers in a Twist: Contesting the "Female Gothic" in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*', *Gothic Studies*, 11. 1 (2009), 32-45.

[4] Monographs on women writers of the Gothic in particular address Dacre and Radcliffe. See Clery, *Women's Gothic*, and Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminisms*.

[5] David Punter, Social Relations of Gothic Fiction', in *Romanticism and Ideology: Studies in English Writing, 1765-1830*, ed. David Aers, Jonathan Cook, and David Punter (London: Routledge, 1981), pp. 103-117 (p. 103).

novels which overtly parody or satirise Gothic conventions, Hoffmann's novel is one of few ostensibly male Gothic novels to be acknowledged as featuring humour.

4. 1 No Laughing Matter: Radcliffe's Response to Lewis in *The Italian*

Critics often view the sequence of publication between Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Lewis's *The Monk*, and Radcliffe's *The Italian* as evidence of literary rivalry between the two authors. Lewis's novel is described by Jerrold Hogle as a 'Germanic and luridly sexual effort to "re-masculinise" Gothic romance', an effort which is often thought to parody *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (see Chapter 2), while Punter claims that *The Italian* is partly a 'de-parodization of *The Monk*' in response.[6] For Andrew Smith, Radcliffe's novel consciously 'moves beyond the type of aestheticism developed in *Udolpho* because her various Gothic devices were turned by Lewis into self-parodying rhetoric'.[7] Though Emma Clery has contended that contemporary critics of *The Italian* never directly considered it a riposte to *The Monk*, Angela Wright observes that 'from 1798 onwards [Radcliffe and Lewis] were often placed together, be that in a symbiotic, comparative or even competitive literary environment'.[8] But the story of the rivalry itself, as Lauren Fitzgerald points out, is a Gothic plot, one that recounts 'the struggle between heroine and villain over property', whereby Radcliffe uses *The Italian* to reclaim the title of Gothic sovereign.[9]

The main point of comparison – and departure – between *The Monk* and *The Italian* is in the character Schedoni, another monkish villain intending to commit heinous crimes against the heroine who, unbeknownst to him, is his own flesh and blood. Such plots are fairly customary in the Gothic, of course; incest and murder of secret heirs by usurping tyrants were first introduced to the genre by Walpole's novel, which harks back to the Gothic's engagement

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[6] Jerrold E. Hogle, 'Recovering the Walpolean Gothic: *The Italian: Or, the Confessional of the Black Penitents* (1796-1797)', in *Ann Radcliffe, Romanticism and the Gothic,* ed. by Townshend and Wright, pp. 151-67 (p. 151). Hogle also argues that Radcliffe's novel shares similarities with Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), and returns to earlier Gothic aesthetics of blending the real with the supernatural. Punter, 'Social Relations of Gothic Fiction,' in *Romanticism and Ideology,* ed. by Aers, Cook, and Punter, pp. 103-117 (p. 109).

[7] Smith, 'Radcliffe's Aesthetics: or, the Problem with Burke and Lewis' (p. 327).

[8] Wright, 'Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis', in *The Cambridge History of the Gothic,* ed. by Townshend and Wright, pp. 304-22 (p. 319); Emma Clery, 'Introduction', in *The Italian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. vii-xxxi.

[9] Fitzgerald, 'Gothic Properties: Radcliffe, Lewis and the Critics', p. 167.

with Shakespeare. However, for the first time, Radcliffe attributes the villain and the heroine's lover Vivaldi narrative perspective, offering readers insight into the psychological and emotional motivations and turmoil of each character. This interest in the villain's viewpoint, his desires, conspiracies, and criminal acts, was first introduced to the Gothic by Lewis with Ambrosio. Schedoni's characterisation was highly praised. While some reviewers were weary of being presented with 'the same characters and the same scenes' in Radcliffe's works, or warned that her 'luxuriant painting of natural scenery […] palls by repetition on the pampered imagination', the monk was highly regarded as a new figure of sublime terror.[10] Although a writer for *The Critical Review* preferred Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and the earlier *Romance of the Forest* (1791), they acknowledged that some scenes 'powerfully seize the imagination', citing in particular 'the interview between the marchesa and Schedoni in the church, and the discovery made by Schedoni that Ellena was his daughter'.[11]

In this scene, having conspired with the Marchesa to kill her son's lover to prevent their union, Schedoni is poised to stab the sleeping Ellena when he sees a miniature portrait around her neck. The sight of this trinket makes Schedoni recoil in horror; Ellena awakes and, upon seeing the monk, begs for her life: '"Be merciful, O father! be merciful!"'[12] While Ellena only means 'father' in the religious sense, Schedoni's 'earnest' echo of "Father!" reveals his own fears: that he had been about to kill his own daughter.[13] The miniature, which is of Ellena's father, transpires to be Schedoni's brother, whom he murdered in order to claim his estates – and to claim his wife. Schedoni, therefore, believes that Ellena is his own daughter (who would have been conceived by rape though, as ever in Radcliffe, this remains unmentioned). Arthur Aikin, writing for *The Monthly Review*, also appreciates 'the horrible sublimity' of the scene between Schedoni and Ellena, believing it to be 'perhaps unparalleled'.[14] Like the writer in *The Critical Review*, however, Schedoni is incorrect in his assumption: Ellena is not his daughter, but she is his niece.

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[10] 'Mrs Radcliffe's *Italian*', *Critical Review, or, Annals of Literature*, June 1798, pp. 166-9 (p. 166), and Arthur Aikin, 'Rev. of *The Italian*', *Monthly Review, a Literary Journal*, March 1797, pp. 282-4 (p. 284).

[11] 'Mrs Radcliffe's *Italian*', p. 166.

[12] Radcliffe, *The Italian*, p. 235.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Aikin, 'Rev. of *The Italian*', p. 283.

Here, then, is one of the main aspects of Radcliffe's novel that leads critics to consider *The Italian* a revision of *The Monk*; Schedoni is paralysed by guilty fear and does not commit murder, whereas Ambrosio's guilt is temporary, as the fear of discovery that he is a hypocrite is far greater than his conscience, which leads him to commit further monstrosities, including the murder of his mother and his sister. Furthermore, Schedoni's murder of his brother and the implied rape of his sister-in-law/wife, occurs in the novel's pre-story, off-stage, which de-centres the violence readers meet with when reading *The Monk.* As Hogle argues, 'Schedoni's most Ambrosian extremes are thus relegated to a time long before he became a priest, making his lascivious drives *not* aroused by Catholic icons the way they are for Ambrosio'.[15] Radcliffe sidesteps the accusations of blasphemy levied against Lewis despite the similar choice of villain by refusing to present the monk's crimes as direct consequence of his pious devotion. For the writer in *The Monthly Visitor* the confusion of Ellena's relationship to the guilty monk was 'highly impressive', all the more so because Radcliffe successfully 'benumbed [readers] with fear […] without the intervention of apparitions'.[16] In other words, the use of supernatural spectacle – the demons, bloody spectre, and mystical Wandering Jew Lewis had so recently introduced to the Gothic – were not necessary to create the same (or superior) effect.

Mitigating this terror are, as ever in Radcliffe, comically garrulous servants. As I discussed in Chapter 2, servants often provide 'comic relief' at times of distress through their confusing, loquacious dialogue, but these comic episodes are also used by Radcliffe as a suspense and delay tactic. Superstitious and prone to alarm, servants like Annette in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* amplify heroines' predisposition to flights of fancy; Emily would have had little recourse to seek out the dreaded black veil if it had not been first introduced by Annette. However, in *The Italian*, the tables turn somewhat: Vivaldi and Ellena, separately, are so overwrought with emotion that they jump to conclusions before the servants have barely uttered a word of explanation, and the presumption by the servant that they share the same information leads to a comical confusion to which only the reader is privy. For example, after Ellena's mother has died in the early stages of the novel, Vivaldi rushes to the house and mistakenly presumes his paramour is dead. Ellena makes a similar mistake a few hundred pages later:

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[15] Hogle, 'Recovering the Walpolean Gothic', p. 159. Original italics.

[16] 'Literary Review', *Monthly visitor and entertaining pocket companion*, January 1797, pp. 79-85 (p. 84).

> "Death! and in the Marchese's family!" exclaimed Ellena.
>
> "Yes, Signora, I had it from his own servant. He was passing by the garden−gate just as I happened to be speaking to the maccaroni−man […]
>
> "'Well, dame,' he says to me, 'I have not seen you of a long time.' 'No,' says I, 'that is a great grievance truly! for old women now−a−days are not much thought of; out of sight out of mind with them, now−a−days!" –
>
> "I beseech you to the purpose," interrupted Ellena. "Whose death did he announce?" She had not courage to pronounce Vivaldi's name.[17]

For Victor Sage, this scene demonstrates not the sixteenth-century Italian character, but rather the action of eighteenth-century farce in which 'mistaken identity is the dynamo, not only of plot, but also of comic effect'.[18] This farce is mirrored at the end of the novel when Vivaldi assumes Ellena is dead, creating a cyclical effect that emphasises the monotony of servant life in which the servant is forced to have the same conversation at the service of their superiors while trying to give voice to their own narrative. This becomes more apparent with the comical reference to the macaroni man: on both occasions where Vivaldi and Ellena mistake the death of a parental figure for the death of one another, the servant refers to the same person. A macaroni man at the time referred to a dandy or a set of young men who have travelled Europe and imitate their fashions; Horace Walpole, in a letter to the Earl of Hertford, refers to the 'Maccaroni Club (which is composed of all the travelled young men who wear long curls and spying-glasses)'.[19] Radcliffe, therefore, invites a double-reading – both the dandyish young man and the pasta, staple of Italian cuisine. Here, Radcliffe uses humour as part of her scheme of suspense and delay.

The servant of most significance is Paulo who, like Theodore is to Raymond, is also his master's companion and, arguably, revises Theodore's role in response to *The Monk*. *The Monthly Visitor* particularly praises the terror of the scene between Schedoni and Ellena, claiming that 'good Paulo is a happy relief: indeed he has often spoken to our heart'.[20] While the reviewer found Paulo endearing, his role is more than mere comic relief. Unlike other servants, Paulo is the voice of reason for his over-emotional master. In the first volume of the novel, when a stranger warns Vivaldi to stay away from Ellena then cannot be found again,

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[17] Radcliffe, *The Italian*, p. 373.

[18] Sage, 'Gothic Laughter', in *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, ed. by Smith and Sage, pp. 190-203 (p. 192).

[19] See *OED* https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/111762?redirectedFrom=maccaroni#eid [accessed 6 November 2018].

[20] 'Literary Review', *Monthly visitor,* p. 84.

Paulo 'quickly perceived that his master was not altogether indisposed to attribute to a supernatural cause the extraordinary occurrences at Paluzzi' and so 'he began, in his manner, to rally him', noting that if the man were indeed a ghost, 'he seems to have a good mortal instinct in taking care of himself'.[21] This amusing observation is arguably a direct nod to the readers of the time who, as *The Italian* was Radcliffe's fourth novel, were likely familiar with her motif of the explained supernatural. For Hogle, Paulo's courage and lack of superstition differentiates him from other Gothic servants, which means that he

> comes close to transcending the garrulous, ignorant servants of *Otranto* and *Udolpho* by equalling the insightful perceptiveness of Schedoni's 'penetrating eye' and being 'incredulous to superstition of any kind', because of which he can sometimes steer his master away from the traps set by Schedoni and others.[22]

By making the servant the voice of reason instead of a superstitious gossip, Radcliffe ironically inverts her own formula – 'ironic inversions at critical distance' being Linda Hutcheon's understanding of parody.[23] Radcliffe's engagement with readers' expectations also reflect Margaret Rose's view that parody necessarily requires the involvement of the reader to 'decode' the metafictional dialogue between texts.[24] Paulo's amusing observations of his master's folly acts as a telling wink, serving as a mediator between the world of the novel and readers. Arguably, then, Radcliffe shows willing to parody her own style.

Vivaldi does not solely depend on Paulo's common sense, but also depends on Paulo to remind him of his duties as a benevolent nobleman, a role which is often imagined as paternalistic. For Kathleen Hudson, Paulo's dedication to his master has a pedagogical function fundamentally linked to Radcliffe's belief in 'a morally informed socio-political structure built upon mutual respect and shared values', whereby she reconstructs the servant-master relationship 'of hierarchical structures into an idealised sociomoral exchange'.[25] His farcical performance when threatened with separation from his master at the Inquisition is deliberate,

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[21] Radcliffe, *The Italian*, p. 71 & p. 73.

[22] Hogle, 'Recovering the Walpolean Gothic', p. 157.

[23] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody*, p. 6.

[24] Rose, *Parody//Metafiction*.

[25] Kathleen Hudson, *Servants and the Gothic, 1764-1831: A Half-Told Tale* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2018), p. 91.

in Hudson's view: 'Paulo performs and verbalises signifiers of identity […] which invoke normal ranks and codes of conduct'.[26] In fact, Paulo is so significant that he is given the final words of the novel:

> "Pshaw!" replied Paulo, "who can stop, at such a time as this, to think about what he means! I wish that all those, who on this night are not merry enough to speak before they think, may ever after be grave enough to think before they speak!"[27]

Hudson argues that this passage gives power to both servants and Radcliffe as Gothic author, viewing Paulo 'as a philosophising metonym with social and moral support [which] justifies his role as a Gothic narrator'.[28] This is strikingly at odds with Lewis's Theodore, whom Campbell argues is one of the leading satirical characters of *The Monk*, who 'simply indulges his appetite, and of course Lewis's, for derision' (see Chapter 1).[29]

While some aspects of Paulo's character may seem farcical, if not comical, Radcliffe counters the parodic turn to the Gothic that Lewis establishes in *The Monk* by ensuring comic aspects have a moralising, stabilising function. Readers are invited to share in the recognition of the novel's artifice, the postures of its characters and performances – not so that they share in the vengeful rage against superficiality as in Lewis's novel, but so that they can recognise the value of those roles. The performativity of Radcliffe's heroines and heroes is not artificial posturing, per se, but rather essential to ordering a benevolent society. *The Italian* is not so much a 'de-parodization' of the Gothic but rather a corrective response to Lewis's use of parody, illustrating how parody can be transformative instead of destructive – even if that means parodying her own style. Radcliffe does not divest the Gothic of its comic aspects, but shows how to put them to good use instead of indulging in the anarchic loss of control found in Lewis's novel. In contrast, Charlotte Dacre, as I will show in the next section, had little interest in re-establishing order, and would instead push Lewis's irreverence into new territory.

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[26] Hudson, *Servants and the Gothic, 1764-1831*, p. 93.

[27] Radcliffe, *The Italian*, p. 415.

[28] Hudson, *Servants and the Gothic, 1764-1831*, p. 95.

[29] Campbell, 'Satire in *The Monk*: Exposure and Reformation', *Romanticism on the Net*, 8 (1997), n.p.

4. 2 Ironic Inversions of Lewis and Radcliffe in Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806)

Kim Ian Michasiw, in their introduction to the 2008 Oxford University Pess edition of *Zofloya*, suggests that 'Dacre may well be […] one of the first "Goth-identified" subjects'.[30] Dacre deliberately constructed a Gothic persona for herself by adopting the pseudonym 'Rosa Matilda', evoking Lewis's own Rosario/Matilda, while Matilda is a popular choice of name in Gothic novels generally. Further, Dacre fostered an association with Lewis by dedicating her first novel, *The Nuns of St Omer* (1805), to him.[31] For Clery, Dacre's deliberate cultivation of such a persona demonstrates that she was a savvy author with a 'competitive instinct'.[32] In writing *Zofloya*, Dacre shows 'a clear intention to trump the other work for salaciousness and horror'.[33] Unlike Radcliffe who sought to distance herself from Lewis by improving upon and refining his Gothic form in *The Italian*, Dacre deliberately invoked affinities with the scandalous M.P, as I will shortly discuss. In this section, I propose to consider whether Dacre's *Zofloya*, as an apparent imitation of Lewis's visceral style, pursues the comic vein I have exposed in *The Monk*, one which is parodic in nature.

When Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya, or the Moor; a Romance of the Fifteenth Century* was published in three volumes in 1806, critics were quick to observe the similarities the novel shared with the plot of Lewis's *The Monk*. One reviewer remarks that it is 'so closely imitated from Lewis's Monk, as to force the reader upon a comparison', finding the earlier text to be the better of the two, though suggesting that a more original tale by Dacre might have done well.[34] Another critic, from *The Annual Review*, observes that 'both the style and story of Zofloya, are formed on the *chaste* model of Mr Lewis's "Monk"' (original italics).[35] The

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[30] Michasiw, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Dacre, *Zofloya, or the Moor* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), vii-xxx (p. xi).

[31] For a comprehensive discussion of the role of pseudonyms and anonymity in Dacre's career, see Lisa M. Wilson, 'Female pseudonymity in the romantic "age of personality": The career of charlotte King/Rosa Matilda/Charlotte Dacre', *European Romantic Review,* 9. 3 (1998) 393-420. Adopting pseudonyms or anonymity safeguarded authors from accusations of immorality by critics, but it was also, as was the case for Dacre, a deliberate marketing tool. For a review of anonymity and its uses in the early 1800s, see Kathryn Dawes, 'Anonymity and the Pressures of Publication in the Early Nineteenth Century', *Romantic Textualities,* 4 (2000), 1-22.

[32] Clery, *Women's Gothic*, p. 103.

[33] Ibid., p. 107.

[34] 'Dacre's Zofloya', *General review of British and foreign literature*, June 1806, pp. 590-3 (p. 590).

[35] 'Romances and Novels', *Annual review and history of literature*, January 1806, p. 542.

review continues, lamenting that 'the delicacy of a female mind' could even imagine such 'voluptuousness of language' and the 'exhibition of wantonness of harlotry'.[36]

Figure 4.1: 'Rosa Matilda', illustration accompanying Dacre's *Hours of Solitude* (1805)

A reviewer for the *Literary Journal*, in a particularly caustic diatribe, condemns not only the novel but female novelists as a whole, suggesting that women 'have the seeds of nonsense, bad taste, and ridiculous fancies, early sown in their minds' which, if left unchecked, 'render the brain putrid and corrupt'.[37] This critic believes that Dacre's mind is 'afflicted with the dismal malady of maggots in the brain' – a deliberate and ironic use of Gothic imagery which further illustrates how the Gothic can be turned to humour, used here to mock the genre itself.[38] In fact, the entire review is bitingly sarcastic, jeering even when summarising the plot by combining the language of the Gothic with that of civility to complain that the devil 'very

[36] 'Romances and Novels', p. 542.

[37] 'Zofloya, or The Moor', *Literary Journal*, June 1806, pp. 631-5 (p. 633).

[38] Ibid., p. 634.

rudely seized her by the throat' before throwing the heroine to her death, which was all the more '*uncivil* because Victoria had fallen in love with his infernal majesty, who in his disguise of a Moor appeared to her a *very fine fellow*' (my emphasis).[39] As Chapter 3 shows, critical opinion constitutes part of a dialogue between Gothic novels and Gothic parodies, informing the means by which James Gillray caricatured readers of *The Monk*. In this example from *The Literary Journal*, the ironic use of Gothic language renders the subject under review ridiculous, while the review itself is also a source of comic-Gothic entertainment.

The associations critics make between Dacre and Lewis depend upon the visceral and supernatural content. As with Lewis's *The Monk*, there is so much violence in Dacre's *Zofloya* that to regard any element of its content as potentially comical might appear counter-intuitive, or even morally questionable. Both novels feature a villain-protagonist whose transgressive desires lead to increasingly violent tendencies, aided all the while by a satanic figure in disguise. In *Zofloya*, however, Dacre inverts the gender dynamic seen in *The Monk*, casting instead the haughty, ruthless Victoria as lead villain and a black male servant, the titular Zofloya, as the supernatural/Satanic agent. James Dunn, in discussing Victoria's 'feminine' version of violence, acknowledges that Dacre 'pays homage' to Lewis's novel, but finds it more significant that she declares her independence from him by changing the genders:

> let us have our sex and violence, [Dacre] seems to say, but let us see what it looks like beyond the stock feminine props of persecution and victimization; let us make women the subject rather than the object of a toxic erotic agony.[40]

Dunn argues that Dacre deliberately appeals to women readers tired of women being the 'subject rather than the object of a toxic erotic agony'. Similarly, Yael Shapira argues that Dacre's novel indicates a 'budding recognition that women readers might enjoy the gruesome corpses of Gothic fiction in distinct ways and for distinct reasons of their own'.[41]

In regarding Victoria's destruction of Lilla as a rejection of the 'exquisite female body' seen in Dacre's literary predecessors, Shapira acknowledges the dialogic interaction between Gothic novels that James Watt has suggested is typical of the genre during its heyday (see

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[39] 'Zofloya, or The Moor', p. 633.

[40] James A. Dunn, 'Charlotte Dacre and the Feminization of Violence', *Nineteenth-Century Literature*, 53: 3 (1998) 307-27 (p. 308).

[41] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 201.

Chapter 2).[42] But it is also the dialogic exchange, and the gender inversions Dacre employs, that open the possibilities to read *Zofloya* not only as a parody of Lewis's *The Monk*, but also a parodic response to Radcliffe's Gothic, especially *The Italian*. It is important to recall that, in Linda Hutcheon's view, parody relies on 'ironic inversions': Dacre's inversions of gender in *Zofloya*, in which the protagonist is a villain-heroine instead of a villain-hero, opens a dialogue between both Lewis and Radcliffe. The numerous comparisons between *Zofloya* and *The Monk* made by reviewers further evidences Margaret Rose's understanding of parody, which positions the reader as decoder in the intertextual and metafictional dialogue between texts. Victoria is often likened to both the seductive, duplicitous Matilda and the proud, lascivious Ambrosio, while Zofloya recalls Matilda as the devil-in-disguise.[43] However, Victoria's desire for her brother-in-law, her murderous schemes and her rape of him, in fact parallel Schedoni's history from Radcliffe's novel, in which he murders his brother and rapes his sister-in-law. Dacre's novel places Schedoni's off-stage history to the forefront. If *Zofloya* is 'a clear intention to trump [*The Monk*] for salaciousness and horror', it does so by revelling in the sexual violence Radcliffe attempted to foreclose.

Victoria's attack, and Lilla's descriptions, potentially hold the key to the ways in which Dacre advances the role of the comic in the male Gothic. In contrast to the fiery Victoria, Lilla is described as 'pure, innocent, free even from the smallest taint of a corrupt thought', with a 'seraphic serenity of soul' and 'angelic countenance'.[44] Her small, child-like form and innocence accounts for her principal appeal to Henriquez, just as Antonia's innocence accounts for her appeal to Lorenzo in *The Monk*. Left bereft by her disappearance, Henriquez cannot entertain thoughts for any other woman (especially Victoria), as Lilla's 'trembling delicacy, her gentle sweetness, her sylph-like fragile form, were to him incomparable'.[45] Further, 'the rest of her sex, when placed beside her, appeared, in his idea, like beings of a different order'.[46] There is also irony at play here, as *Lilla* is the being of a different order. Repeatedly described

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[42] See Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*.

[43] See, for example, Dunn, 'Charlotte Dacre and the Feminization of Violence'; Davison, 'Getting Their Knickers in a Twist: Contesting the "Female Gothic" in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*'; and Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminisms.*

[44] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 133.

[45] Ibid., p. 194.

[46] Ibid.

in terms of supernatural beauties to emphasise her fragility and diminutive size, such as 'like an aërial spirit', 'sylph-like fragile form', and 'fairy-like beauty', Lilla is emptied of tangible, physical qualities and instilled with hollow ideals.[47] As Victoria viciously (and amusingly) says, Lilla is nothing but an 'immaterial speck' and a 'puny babbler' – small enough that Victoria's 'least power could at any time annihilate'.[48] The scorn Victoria shows for Lilla recalls the superiority theory of humour; Victoria sees Lilla as physically and intellectually her inferior, worthy of nothing but contempt. Her attitude anticipates the villain's mocking laughter and grandiosity. Dacre hyperbolises the association of innocent heroines with mythical, impossible beauties that Lewis had previously parodied, pushing them even further into the realm of absurdity.

Furthermore, when Lilla is imprisoned in the cave, she is compared to the figure of the Venus di Medici, inviting parodic dialogue with *The Monk*. In tattered clothes, Lilla is 'still in pure unaltered modesty', with her long tresses 'essaying' to veil her exposed breasts: altogether, even when suffering, Lilla remains in 'figure, grace, and attitude, a miniature semblance of the Medicean Venus'.[49] Lilla's comparison to the Venus recalls the description of Antonia in *The Monk*, whose 'beauty might have vied with the Medicean Venus', a beauty which 'received additional charms from being shaded by the tresses of her long fair hair'.[50] Every inch of Lilla's body – particularly her hair – is imbued with an almost preternatural modesty, as if her spectral body must always preserve the child-like innocence and immateriality Henriquez so adores. The hair which modestly but beautifully trails loose, sometimes veiling exposed breasts, signals Dacre's parodic engagement with feminine tropes, as similar effects are used in *The Monk*, Grosse's *Horrid Mysteries* – and Radcliffe's *The Italian*. For instance, Vivaldi, like Shakespeare's Romeo watching the unknowing Juliet upon the balcony, watches Elena sing the midnight hymn, admiring the musicality of her voice and beauty of her appearance. Her hair is described in the following terms:

> Her fine hair was negligently bound up in a silk net, and some tresses that had escaped it, played on her neck, and round her beautiful countenance, which now was not even

[47] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 168, p. 194, & p. 226.

[48] Ibid., p. 196, p. 223 & p. 168.

[49] Ibid., p. 223.

[50] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 9.

> partially concealed by a veil. The light drapery of her dress, her whole figure, air, and attitude, were such as might have been copied for a Grecian nymph.[51]

As if in answer to Lewis's own associations of Antonia with the Venus, Radcliffe associates Elena with a 'Grecian nymph', but rather than being eroticised, she is associated instead with natural sublimity. In the privacy of her own home, Elena's hair is 'negligently bound up in a silk net', allowing some tresses to escape and 'play on her neck'. Further, she is not 'even partially concealed by a veil' – which is just as well, since veils only confuse Vivaldi, as he later mistakes another beautiful noviciate nun for Elena when trying to reunite with her at the convent. This arguably pacifies Lewis's eroticisation of the veil, whereby the '[t]he veil that conceals and inhibits sexuality comes by the same gesture to represent it' (see Chapter 2).[52]

Hair, too, often acts like a veil for Gothic heroines, once more inhibiting sexuality yet ironically representing it. For example, the auburn hair of the mysterious woman whom 'S' encounters in *Horrid Mysteries* is 'inclined towards her open bosom, which seemed to expand itself more than usual, in order to receive it entirely'.[53] While Radcliffe aims to maintain the romantic imagery of loose hair, Dacre parodies it. Lilla's hair, which remains 'in pure unaltered modesty' to veil her 'polished bosom' while she 'raised her eyes, of heavenly blue' to beseech her 'gloomy persecutor' for mercy, pushes Victoria's rage beyond control. Although she aimed to 'plunge [the dagger] in the fair bosom of the beauteous orphan', she changes her grip and instead cuts her 'alabaster shoulder', where blood 'issued thence' and 'slightly tinged her flaxen tresses with a brilliant red' – as if her hair were actually wounded.[54] It is in this initial attack, before Victoria succeeds in hurling her over the cliff, that Lilla loses her innocence, the red of blood on white skin, clothes, garments – and in this case, hair – so often signalling sexual maturity either as the signifier of menarche or the loss of virginity (supposed to be signalled by the breaking of the hymen). With the loss of her innocence – with the affirmation that she does, in fact, have a material body – Lilla no longer relies on her appeals for mercy, and finally attempts to escape and to 'despairingly grapple with the superior force of her adversary'.[55]

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[51] Radcliffe, *The Italian*, p. 12.

[52] Sedgwick, 'The Character in the Veil: Imagery of the Surface in the Gothic Novel', p. 256.

[53] Grosse, *Horrid Mysteries*, p. 13.

[54] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 225.

[55] Ibid., 225.

Alas, she is still merely a 'puny babbler', so Victoria 'seized her by her streaming tresses' to hold her back while stabbing her 'in the bosom, in the shoulder, and other parts'.[56] The hair that once seemed to protect her modesty is ironically the means by which Victoria restrains Lilla so that she can stab her to death.

This is, too, the only moment in which Lilla is attributed physical materiality. Her murder necessarily differentiates her from Antonia, whose rape makes clear she possesses a physical body, which leads to Ambrosio's 'post-coital depression'; she was to be enjoyed only in the voyeur's fantasy of looking. Lilla's materiality, in contrast, is only temporary, as Victoria's final act is to hurl her down the cliff; her body entirely disappears from Victoria's, and the reader's, view. Shapira argues that for 'Victoria, it is the destruction not just of her romantic rival, but of that rival's potential to become a beautiful corpse that seems to carry the most gratifying charge' – but overlooks the irony here.[57] Though it is certain Lilla died from the stab wounds and the fall, in failing to witness her final breath, Victoria leaves her in a liminal space between dead and dying, corpse and spirit. In an ironic twist, it is Victoria, who so hated the 'immaterial speck', who affirms Lilla's own immateriality.

By contrast, Victoria is imbued with abundant references to her physicality – her realness. In one description of Victoria, her departure from the heroine stereotype is signalled by direct reference to what she does not look like: 'hers was not the countenance of the Madona [*sic*] – it was not of angelic mode'.[58] This description continues, noting that her 'beautiful fierceness' was 'dark, noble, strongly expressive', and in her 'large dark eyes' were 'the traces of a strong and resolute mind'. In juxtaposing Victoria with the immaterial Lilla, Dacre presents an alternative heroine made of flesh and blood, and full of passion – which neither Lewis nor Radcliffe dared to. Further, she is clever and calculating, and executes her own escape from the confines of her elderly relative's house – notably without the assistance of any potential romantic interest, in what Moreno considers a 'reversal of the Radcliffean Gothic'.[59] In the first half of the novel, before she weds Berenza and meets the titular Zofloya with whom she schemes to seduce his master, she is tricked by her mother and her mother's lover into visiting

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[56] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 226.

[57] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 206.

[58] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 76.

[59] Beatrix Gonzalez Moreno, 'Gothic Excess and Aesthetic Ambiguity in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*', *Women's Writing*, 14. 3 (2007), 419-34 (p. 428).

the Signora Modena and wakes to discover they have abandoned her there. Finding that venting her frustration gets her nowhere, she acts meek and mild, befriending Catau, the domestic – who, unlike most other servants in Gothic literature, is simple and speaks to the point rather than with comic loquacity. Erasing the humorous component typical of the servant characters still engages with parodic dialogue; the difference is so notable readers would have undoubtedly observed it by contrast. This 'reversal' of the female Gothic type, however, does not necessarily mean Dacre adopts the male Gothic, instead points to Dacre's novel being 'somewhere in between', according to Moreno.[60] Victoria turns the typical female Gothic heroine's fortitude into a resolute determination to save herself.

However, this is not to suggest that this portion of the novel is without echoes of *The Monk*. The Signora Modena is crone-like and contemptuous. She has 'a long yellow visage, small grey eyes, and a stiff unbending meagre figure', and has never, 'even in the best of her days', had a man view her with admiration – much like Antonia's grotesque Aunt Leonella.[61] There is also something of Lewis's cruel Prioress in her behaviour, as she is described as 'proud, fastidious, and possessed of a mercenary soul', who manages to secure independence through 'flattery, peculation, and hypocrisy'.[62] Like the Prioress, she acts as if a pious Catholic, but her sermonising is hypocritical and manipulative. To a degree, her calculated schemes are admirable; like Victoria and Megalena, she is clever, aware of her situation in society, and uses this to her advantage. Discontented with the idea of 'conventual seclusion', but being 'portionless', she has spent her time making lengthy visits to noble families 'where she would act alternately the overseer, the companion, the governess, or the servant' and has, as a result, 'actually amassed, as the friendless period of ages approached, sufficient to make it pass with comfort'.[63] Through studious manipulation, she avoids both marriage to a man and marriage to the church as a nun, and retires, entirely independent. Like Leonella, Victoria's elderly relative survives the narrative but, unlike Leonella, she needs no man or inheritance to secure her retirement. Modena could have offered the same essential life-lessons to Victoria that Leonella might have provided Antonia, had she remained with her. Modena's life and ultimate

[60] Moreno, 'Gothic Excess and Aesthetic Ambiguity in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*', p. 431.

[61] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 39.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

success would have provided a model for Victoria, had her excessive passions not ruled her temperament.

Following her escape and marriage to Berenza, Victoria is increasingly dissatisfied with wedded life. Her frustration only worsens when she meets Henriquez, her husband's brother, and his black servant, the titular Zofloya. Not only was the depiction of a sexually violent woman controversial at the time, so was the depiction of a white woman desiring a black servant. While Victoria had previously shown the strength of her resolve and capability to manipulate men, her attraction to Zofloya, as Hoeveler suggests, is a 'weakness, a fatal flaw', as '[l]ust for the first time makes her vulnerable, irrational, open to frightening fancies'.[64] She is vulnerable, for example, to his flattery. Presenting Victoria with a bouquet of roses, Zofloya plucks one to hand to her, but a thorn pierces her finger, causing it to bleed. The servant, concerned by the sight of her blood, tears his own clothes to soak the blood and, 'upon his knees […] pressed the crimsoned linen to his heart'.[65] The scene echoes the garden scene in *The Monk*, in which Ambrosio plucks a rose for Matilda and is bitten by an insect, which he mistakes for a snake (see Chapter 2). In these scenes, Matilda and Zofloya act the flatterer, and with it initiate the prospective protagonists' downfall; Ambrosio soon forsakes his monastic vows, and Victoria forsakes her marital vows by confessing her desires for Henriquez to the seemingly devoted servant. However, she finds that her 'fascination' with the Moor is 'unconquerable' and she must look away, 'fearful to express the conscious emotion of her bosom'.[66]

The final scene of Dacre's novel again echoes *The Monk*. After he has helped her escape the soldiers who attack the robbers' cave in exchange for her soul, Zofloya transforms into the devil and transports them to the edge of a cliff instead, from which, like Ambrosio, she falls to her death and into hell to face punishment for her crimes. For Carol Davison, these scenes add a 'twist on the Faust story – a specifically *Female Gothic* twist – by representing the compact with the devil as a marriage'.[67] In this, Davison in fact suggests that the female Gothic is a proto-feminist exploration of female-focused anxieties and experiences, and views Dacre's

[64] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminisms*, p. 112.

[65] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 147

[66] Ibid, p. 148.

[67] Davison, 'Getting Their Knickers in a Twist: Contesting the "Female Gothic" in Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*', p. 38. Original italics.

novel as a revision of the female Gothic. However, as I discussed in Chapter 2, parody can also be defined as 'imitation for the purpose of critique'; if Dacre is revising the female Gothic, part of this revision is parodic in nature, and not exclusive to the female Gothic. Moreno's observation that the novel slides from terror to horror is a 'fracture in the traditional categories' of the female and male Gothic is more fitting. By inverting the gender roles of the villain-protagonists and destroying the feminine, Dacre's novel oscillates between not only the male and female Gothic, but also between points on the Gothic-comic spectrum.

This is also made apparent in other examples of ironic inversions which mock masculine figures. As shown in Part I, Lewis, much like de Sade, positions the hero-villain as a voyeur whose principal delight is in erotic spectacle, which makes readers participate in this pleasure by proxy. This is evident from the beginning, in which men come to church to look at the women, and the women attend in order to be seen. Dacre, however, inverts this 'male gaze' by not only attributing sexual desire to female characters Victoria and Megalena, but by objectifying male characters to their gaze. For instance, Victoria's brother, Leonardo, reposes under a tree, where Megalena finds him in the following pose:

> his hands were clasped over his head, and on his cheek, where the hand of health had planted her brown-red rose, the pearly gems of his tears still hung – his auburn hair sported in graceful curls about his forehead and temples, agitated by the passing breeze – his vermeil lips were half open, and disclosed his polished teeth – his bosom, which he had uncovered to admit the refreshing air, remained disclosed, and contrasted by its snowy whiteness the animated hue of his complexion.[68]

Megalena is 'struck with lively admiration' and unable to 'quit the spot', until an insect alights upon his cheek and startles him awake.[69] This description parodies the romanticised beauty of heroines, adopting extravagant imagery from the 'brown-red rose' of his cheek, 'the pearly gems' of tears, and the hair 'agitated by the passing breeze'. Arguably, Dacre is recalling Lewis's own hyperbolic description of the Madonna, in which Ambrosio asks, 'can the rose vie with the blush of that cheek?'.[70] The eroticism of the 'snowy whiteness' of Leonardo's exposed 'bosom' also echoes Ambrosio's wish to 'press with my lips the treasures of that snowy bosom!' of the Madonna. Megalena, though desirous of Leonardo, is not fooled by his humble appearance, which points to further ways in which Dacre engages in parodic dialogue

[68] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 103.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 40.

with Gothic tropes. Having reviewed his attire, she addresses him with suspicion: 'You appear a stranger here; and, pardon me if I distrust what it seems meant to convey'.[71] There are many examples of noble men dressing as peasantry in Gothic novels, in some cases because their ancestors have been disinherited of their birth-right, such as in Reeve's *The Old English Baron*, and in other cases because the ruse is deliberate – as it is in *The Monk* when Raymond is advised by his father to go abroad not as the Condé de las Cisternas, but as the simple Alphonso d'Alvarada in order to better mingle with the lower classes. While Raymond successfully conceals his identity for some time, Megalena is too knowledgeable of her people to be tricked.

Men, on the other hand, are easily fooled. In Diane Long Hoeveler's argument that Gothic heroines perform a 'version of "victim femininity"', typical female Gothic heroines achieve 'power through pretended and staged weakness' – a performance that Lewis parodied, and destroyed, in *The Monk*.[72] By contrast, Dacre's heroine performs 'victim femininity' in order to manipulate men. Victoria does not use overt sexual seduction to secure her marriage to Berenza, but rather acts like a shy, love-struck heroine ashamed of her devotion. In one scene, Victoria 'affect[s] in reality to sleep' while Berenza watches her, hoping that he is the cause of her troubled slumber; she pretends to be 'disturbed in her sleep' and 'heaved a broken sigh', whispering 'Berenza – I love thee!'[73] She continues the preposterous performance, 'starting up, and stretching out her arms, as if under the impression of her dream […] and affecting surprise and shame at the sight of Berenza, she covered her face with her hands'.[74] Stephanie Burley suggests that Berenza's failure to recognise this as a performance is a result of gender and class difference, whereby Victoria's understanding of her position as a 'subordinate' only allows him 'superficial knowledge of her': she is able to 'dominate Berenza at the very instant he imagines himself as the master of her heart'.[75] It is also satirical mockery: in knowing she is being watched, she takes control of the male gaze for her own intentions, and

[71] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 104.

[72] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminisms*, p. 7.

[73] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 74.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Stephanie Burley, 'The Death of Zofloya, or The Moor as Epistemological Limit', in *The Gothic Other: Racial and Social Constructions in the Literary Imagination*, ed. by Ruth Bienstock Anolik and Douglas L. Howard (London: McFarland & Company Inc, 2004), pp. 197-211 (p. 201).

ironically uses feminine postures to manipulate the men who so admire them. She inverts the power dynamic and proves it to be as false and fanciful as the fairy-like Lilla.

Other instances of parody occur which further demonstrate that Dacre dares to do what other women writers dared not. The dread of the black veil in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, which was such a popular scene that it came to form the basis of a chapbook title *The Veiled Picture* (1802), is parodied in *Zofloya*. While Radcliffe's heroine only braved the black veil when her curiosity got the better of her and, like many Gothic heroines, fainted at the sight before even readers could share in her fright, Dacre demonstrates Victoria's difference as villain-heroine by promptly casting open the curtains which she already knows to conceal the corpse of Berenza. Radcliffe's 'explained supernatural' machineries and refusal to create macabre spectacle – even when her heroines expect it – means that the black veil only hid a memento mori, a wax effigy of a corpse: Dacre's corpse is real. Victoria goes even further, as another veil masks the body's face: 'desperate, fierce, she snatched it away', and without fear she looks upon Berenza's 'disfigured' features.[76] There is even a third moment of unveiling, whereby 'she opened his peaceful unconscious bosom, whereon large spots of livid green and blue became revealed'.[77] Dacre pierces the veil three times – one might say she is three times as daring. But this last reveal, which shows the incontrovertible truth that Berenza is dead, finally makes Victoria 'almost senseless with overpowering dread'.[78] While Shapira suggests that Lewis transforms the heroine's corpse into an 'erotic keepsake', Dacre certainly does not. Scenes of violence and horror in parodic texts do not necessarily inspire mirth when regarded in exclusion; rather, in engaging with the dialogic, intertextual exchange between texts, parody sets out to critique and reveal the absurdities of the hypotext (see Chapter 2). The comic potential in such instances is reflexive in nature. Dacre engages with Lewis here, challenging his own parodic visions with her own parodic twist, showing there that is nothing desirable about a corpse.

Victoria is unlike many other Gothic heroines or tyrannical villains. If, as Markman Ellis suggests, '*The Monk*'s weird ambiguity stems from its confusion of genres: a gothic libertine novel for young ladies', Dacre shows what libertinism for women truly looks like.[79]

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[76] Dacre, *Zofloya*, p. 189.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Markman Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 96.

Like Lewis, she uses parody as a tool to satirise generic norms of gender representation, critiquing Lewis and Radcliffe both. Readers – whom Dacre could easily surmise were women – are invited to be in on the joke, to smirk at the impossible standards of femininity they are burdened with. Victoria's character and destructive action, then, is 'a stand-in for a female reader who finds in the destruction of male erotic clichés her true Gothic pleasure', as Shapira implies – but it also mocks gender stereotypes with savage glee, in ways which Lewis did not.[80] In contrast, Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir*, does not mock the performance of gender and romantic representation, but rather the performance of identity itself.

4. 3 Grinning Grotesques: Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir* (1824)

With thanks to James Hogg's *The Private Confessions and Memoirs of a Justified Sinner* (1824), Edgar Allan Poe's short story 'William Wilson' (1839), and Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886), the doppelgänger and dual-personality tropes of the Gothic are now a staple of uncanny Gothic-horror, coercing characters and readers alike to confront the instabilities of reality and the fragmentation of selfhood in the modern world. Earlier Gothic novels of the 1790s, including Radcliffe's, featured prototypes of the doppelgänger in the form of ancestral look-alikes, typically represented by portraits which haunt, whether supernaturally or psychologically, protagonists in search of secret histories and the villains who attempt to bury them. In the nineteenth century, the doppelgänger and dual self takes a more psychological turn in which the identification of the narrator/protagonist as the 'original' version of the double (or, in some cases, multiple avatars) becomes an arbitrary assignment. The power of horror in these texts moves from supernatural spectacle to confrontation with the uncanny spectral-self, a mirror-maze confusion divested of the absolute supernatural and replaced by unsettling ambiguity. Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir*, initially published in 1815 and later translated to English in 1824, is one of the first to explore this effect.

Though critics have long remarked that *The Monk* is one of the sources for Hoffmann's novel, comparisons between the texts are generally observational and with relatively few discussions focused on *The Devil's Elixir*. Patrick Labriola suggests that Medardus produces his own double in order 'to live out the sexual fantasies and need for authority that he has repressed as a monk', and – like Lewis's Ambrosio – first expresses this need for power by

[80] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 205.

preaching to an awe-struck crowd.[81] William Crisman similarly argues that Hoffmann 'works to translate and make patent the narrative that he sees latent in *The Monk*', not only in *The Devil's Elixir*, but also in the short story 'Councilor Krespel'.[82] This latent content, according to Crisman, is the implicit father-daughter attraction between Ambrosio (as Holy Father) and Antonia, which is again repeated in the attraction between Hoffmann's monk Medardus and Aurelia. Like Rosario/Matilda, Aurelia confesses that 'she cherished a forbidden love' for one whose 'holy vows for ever fettered the object of her affection'.[83] Matilda, after revealing Rosario was naught but a disguise, similarly confesses she loved Ambrosio. Further, Aurelia is later shown to share a likeness with an image of Saint Rosalia, much like Matilda shared a likeness with the painting of the Madonna in *The Monk*. The name Rosalia, too, recalls the name Rosario. But Aurelia is also like Antonia in appearance, as she is described as 'tall, slender, but exquisitely proportioned', wearing 'foreign dress, with a long veil over her face'.[84] So, too, does Aurelia later conceive of herself as Antonia when reading *The Monk* among her brother's romances. Though Hoffmann does not name the novel directly, the description of the tale is unmistakeable, as Aurelia summarises it as 'the history of a monk, who, being overcome by temptations of the devil, renounced his vows, and fell in love with a young lady, who in consequence perished miserably'.[85] In her letter she admits to reading the romance 'with avidity', confessing that 'though the lessons that it contained might have expected to open [her] eyes to the dangers which [she] was drawing on [herself]', she did not stop her own compulsive interest in Medardus. This is to be her downfall, as Medardus comes to kill her in a moment of madness, in similar terms of 'reckless cruelty' as Ambrosio kills Antonia, both monks suddenly being 'repulsed' by the object of their desires.

Medardus's every step is followed by a mysterious and horrible painter, whose 'unearthly glare', 'large black staring eyes' and repentant wanderings recall the Wandering Jew which, although introduced into Gothic literature by Lewis, was particularly well-known in

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[81] Patrick Labriola, 'Edgar Allan Poe and E. T. A. Hoffmann: The Double in "William Wilson" and *The Devil's Elixirs*', *The International Fiction Review*, 29 (2002), 69-77 (p. 72).

[82] William Crisman, 'Romanticism Repays Gothicism: E.T.A. Hoffmann's "Councilor Krespel" as a Recovery of Matthew G. Lewis's *The Monk*', *Comparative Literature Studies*, 40. 3 (2003), 311-328 (p. 315).

[83] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir* (London: William Blackwood, 1824), p. 87.

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid., p. 122.

Germanic culture following the pamphlet 'Kurze Beschreibung und Erzählung von einem Juden mit namen Ahasverus' in 1602 ('A Brief Description and Narration Regarding a Jew Named Ahasuerus'). The painter shares some features with Lewis's own representation of the mythical man. Both are tall, dressed in dark and foreign robes, with large black eyes. When Raymond in *The Monk* is visited by the figure, he observes 'something in his look' which 'inspired [him] with a secret awe, not to say horror'; Medardus, preaching fervently at the Church with pious bluster, similarly observes 'an unearthly glare in his large black staring eyes' which fills him with 'mysterious horror'.[86] In both representations, the Wandering Jew appears to have an eerie, indescribable ability to inspire horror in their onlookers; Raymond, despite being warned not to look upon the Wandering Jew as he cast his incantations, is rendered senseless by the sight of the burning cross, while Medardus is driven mad into 'full paroxysm' before collapsing.[87] Yet Hoffmann's painter transpires to be Medardus's own father. He stalks Medardus solely to inspire him to turn from the path of dissolution he had followed, taking on the role of his conscience. There is some irony here, however, as it is his own painting of Aurelia that further awakens Medardus's desires. Just as a Jew painted the image of the Madonna in the likeness of Matilda in Lewis's novel, so too does the Jewish painter create the picture of St Rosalia in the likeness of Aurelia. Unlike Lewis's Wandering Jew, however, the painter bears no parodic mark of the cross. However, as his son, Medardus does show the physical signs of 'hereditary guilt' when, as a child in the embrace of the Abbess, her diamond cross wounds his neck, leaving an 'impression, in the form of a cross' which is 'quite visible, and even suffused with blood'.[88]

The plot is tricky to follow, with a dizzying number of doppelgängers described by an unreliable narrator uncertain of his own sanity as he reflects on his life and its incredible events. This difficulty was observed by critics at the time; a writer for *The Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*, for example, complained that 'the story is as incoherent as it is extraordinary […] we almost despair of making anything like a story out of the work'.[89] A review in *The Monthly Miscellany* similarly labels the novel 'a wild, aimless, bewildering romance, abounding with all that is extravagant, absurd, and impossible'.[63] This confusion is, arguably,

[86] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 168, and Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 60.

[87] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 60.

[88] Ibid, p. 10.

[89] 'Review of New Books', *Literary Chronicle and Weekly Review*, September 1824, pp. 561-3 (p. 563).

a result of Hoffmann's dedication to the grotesque. For Maximillian Novak, if the Gothic is considered a grotesque mode, 'the proper plot should be a series of intertwined stories held together by some loose unifying pattern', like the grotesques unearthed in fifteenth-century Italy.[90] There are numerous digressive episodes, interactions with madmen, and near misses before the plot repeats, as if compulsively, back to scenes of temptation overlooked by the frightening figure of the painter. The doubles themselves are part of this 'loose unifying pattern', as there are more doppelgängers than Medardus and his brother. If this is part of what constitutes the novel as the grotesque, and was a cause for complaint, it also inspired high praise.

Reviewers, especially in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine,* highly favoured the horrific and comic aspects of *The Devil's Elixir*, admiring Hoffmann's blend of the 'exquisitely ludicrous' with the 'haunted hero […] without in the smallest degree weakening the horrors'.[91] *The Literary Chronicle* also suggests that 'some of his horrors are relieved by an occasionally comic scene or character', having rendered horror which, in their view, was no longer as popular as it was, 'subservient to a more serious purpose'.[92] Aside from the Gothic parodies I discussed in Chapter 3 which are clearly at the comic end of Horner and Zlosnik's Gothic-comic spectrum, *The Devil's Elixir* is the only Gothic novel studied in this thesis to be commented upon by contemporary reviewers to feature humour, and to recognise that this is part of the scheme of horror. In Chapter 1, I argued that Lewis's irreverent tone partly inspired the controversy of *The Monk* and, as such, critics shirked from explicitly identifying the novel's comic components. Hoffmann's novel, on the other hand, has such absurd scenes of madness that the comic, which is tied to the affect of the grotesque, is irrefutable.

The Devil's Elixir is linked with the grotesque from the outset through the elixir itself. The translator's preface from Blackwood's 1824 edition associates *The Devil's Elixir* with 'a grotesque and half-ironical, half-serious sketch', and compares the irregular mix of the novel to the works of Jacques Callot, a seventeenth-century French printmaker who dabbled in caricature and the grotesque – including a depiction of the temptations of St Anthony (Figure 4.2).[93] The story of St Anthony is popular among many artists of the grotesque in the late

[90] Novak, 'Gothic Fiction and the Grotesque', p. 54.

[91] 'The Devil's Elixir', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, July 1824, pp. 55-67 (p. 57).

[92] 'Review of New Books', p. 561.

[93] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. vi.

Middle Ages, including in works by Martin Schöngauer (c. 1470), Hieronymus Bosch (c. 1505), and Mathias Grünewald (1512-16). Callot's influence on Hoffmann's writing is further evident in his first collection of tales, *Fantasy Pieces in Callot's Manner* (1814), the first two volumes of which were prefaced by German Romantic Jean Paul.

Figure 4.2: Jacques Callot, 'The Temptations of St Anthony' (1635)

Mikhail Bakhtin recognised Hoffmann's works, among other German Romanticists and *Sturm und Drang* tales, as 'perhaps the most powerful and original development' in what he terms the 'new Grotesque'.[94] While madness has always been a necessary component of the folk carnival, by the Romantic era, madness in the grotesque 'acquires a somber, tragic aspect of individual isolation', losing the 'festive' madness that was once 'a gay parody of official reason, of the narrow seriousness of official "truth"'.[95]

Instead, in *The Devil's Elixir*, madness falters in the attempt to parody the truth by ironically and impulsively revealing the truth. For example, Pietro Belcampo, possibly the most absurd madman in the narrative, is nevertheless astute in his estimations that Medardus is a monk. Following the murder of Hermogen, Aurelia's brother, Medardus needs to disguise himself and, fortunately, finds himself in the company of the eccentric hairdresser. Belcampo

[94] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 37.

[95] Ibid., p. 39.

is expertly able to parody Medardus when he compares his movements to that of a monk, ironically stumbling on the truth. Complaining that Medardus has 'not resigned himself to his natural character', Belcampo struggles to 'amalgamate together all the contradictions and conflicts in [Medardus's] character and gestures' and identifies 'something that directly points at monachism'.[96] Belcampo goes on to mockingly recite '[e]x profundis clamavi ad te, Domine. Oremus. Et in omnia secula seculorum!' with expert mimicry, 'imitating, at the same time, to the very life, the postures and gesture of a monk'.[97] Yet no sooner has Belcampo mockingly recited the prayer than he changes posture, assuming 'a proud look of defiance', and declaring, 'I am more wealthy, more wise, prudent, and intelligent, than all of ye, ye blind moles!'[98] This humorous hubris, recalling the superiority theory of laughter, again parodies Medardus's own triumphant pride when he took to the altar to preach. Belcampo is not merely parodying Medardus in these performances; he is another avatar of Medardus himself. The doppelgänger, Andrew Webber argues, is 'an inveterate performer of identity' and 'could be said to represent the performative character of the subject'.[99] In mimicking Medardus's monkish movements, Belcampo demonstrates the performativity of his rituals and habits, illustrating the falsity of his holy devotions. Even Medardus admits that, '[i]mperfect and ridiculous as the man's *expressions* were, yet there was so much home *truth* in his remarks' (original italics).[100]

His appearance is ridiculous too, making the comic component of the grotesque evident. Belcampo is described in terms reminiscent of the harlequinade character of commedia dell'arte, complete with a 'pointed red nose – a pair of glistening eyes – lips drawn upwards into an exquisite grin […] and, above all this, a high powdered toupee'.[101] He wears 'a large ostentatious frill, a fiery-red waistcoat [and] a frock-coat, which in some places was too narrow, in others too wide; of course [it] did not fit anywhere!'[102] Belcampo behaves as bizarrely as he

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[96] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 202.

[97] Ibid., p. 201. *De Profundis*, or psalm 130, is often read in preparation for the sacrament of confession.

[98] Ibid., p. 202.

[99] Andrew J. Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 3.

[100] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 201.

[101] Ibid., p. 195.

[102] Ibid.

looks, cutting the monk's hair with 'the most absurd writhing, twisting, grimaces, and extravagant discourse', alternately appearing angered and happy, as at one moment 'he looked cross and gloomy – now smiled – anon stamped and clenched his fist – then smiled again' until Medardus cannot keep himself from laughing.[103] Belcampo is an example of what Novak considers the 'comic grotesque', such as the harlequin figure, involving the 'clowning of the servants and the disturbing psychological involvement of their masters', which is more likely to arouse laughter than disgust, the latter being the grotesque in its 'proper sense'.[104] Though other theorists of the grotesque do not propose such a distinction, the difference between 'comic' and 'proper' grotesque' – between laughter and disgust – could easily be understood on a spectrum, in much the same way Horner and Zlosnik regard the comic and the Gothic.

As another version of Medardus in all but appearance, Belcampo is the only character to witness the painter and share Medardus's belief that he is both real and of supernatural origin. In fact, it is Belcampo who plants the seed that he is 'Ahasuerus, the Wandering Jew, or Bertram de Bornis, or Mephistopheles, or Benvenuto Cellini, or Judas Iscariot; in short, a wicked *revenant*'.[105] The possibilities of what the painter might be, the repetitive 'or', reflects Medardus's own numerous identities. At this point in the novel, Medardus himself has adopted several names; born Franciscus, he took the name Medardus when he became officiated, and later declared himself to be St Anthony in a moment of delusional grandeur; following this, when he ventures out into the world, he takes on the identity of Victorin; with Belcampo, he assumes the name Leonard, recalling his former abbot's name, Leonardus. As if this were not confusing enough, Belcampo is, in fact, another double; he commonly speaks in third person, referring to himself as Belcampo, but also relates conversations with himself under the name Peter Fairfield. He explains to Medardus that 'there is an infamous wicked fellow that lurks concealed within me, and says, "Peter Fairfield, be no longer an ass, and believe that thou existest; for *I* am properly *thou*"'.[106]

This confusion between 'I' and 'thou', of both being one and the same, is typical of doppelgänger narratives, evident also in Hogg's own iteration of the ambiguous doubling between Robert Wringham and Gil-Martin in *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a*

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[103] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir,* p. 202.

[104] Novak, 'Gothic Fiction and the Grotesque', p. 58.

[105] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 239.

[106] Ibid., p. 242.

Justified Sinner, published in the same year as the English translation of Hoffmann's novel. An article in *The Monthly Miscellany* compares the two with some confusion, recognising that in both 'the hero has his *double* or *demon*' but, 'whether the numerous crimes that are perpetrated by the *hero*, or the *demon*', the author 'does not appear to know'.[107] The reviewer considers the ambiguity to be an error of Hogg's (and Hoffmann's) clarity, rather than the uncanny indistinctness of the doppelgänger effect. Which is the doppelgänger, and whether or not they are even real, is merely a matter of perspective, as *The Devil's Elixir* demonstrates. Medardus wavers between certainty of his own status as 'host' and being driven to madness by the thought that he might be his own double, a doubt that seemingly begins at the first sight of the other. Yet, in the scheme of the plot, the first person to assume the identity of the other is Medardus himself. After a young man (Victorin) falls over the edge of a cliff – which may or may not have been the fault of the monk – Medardus takes up the man's sword and hat, leading his servant to mistake him for Victorin in disguise. Rather than correcting the servant's mistake, Medardus is overtaken by '[a]n inward irresistible impulse to act the part of the deceased Count'.[108] Effectively, while in the castle, Medardus peforms a double bluff, playing the part of a man who pretends to be Medardus himself. The repeated appearance of Victorin in the garb of a monk and his ludicrously insane behaviour points to the effect that Medardus as Victorin's double has had upon him, much in the way that Medardus's own madness reflects the effect of viewing himself in other doppelgängers.

The so-called original, or 'host' in Webber's terms, converges with the double in doppelgänger narratives, blurring the boundaries between objective and subjective selfhood. The doppelgänger, Webber explains, is primarily visual in nature, whereby the 'host' comes to see its 'other self as another, as visual object […] the subject may not so much have as actually *be* the *Doppelgänger* by seeing itself'.[109] For example, while Medardus sleeps at the hunter's house to shelter from a storm, he dreams that he is disturbed by a 'dark form' in whom he claims to have 'recognised *myself* in the capuchin habit, with the beard and tonsure!'.[110] Upon waking, 'the abominable dream' becomes reality, as he 'actually be[holds] at the table, with

[107] 'Review of New Publications', *Monthly Miscellany*, August 1824, pp. 78-82 (p. 82).

[108] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 106.

[109] Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature*, p. 3. Original italics.

[110] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 261.

his back turned […] a figure dressed in the capuchin habit!'[111] In Hoffmann's novel, horror is still visual in nature as it is in *The Monk*, but it is the spectacle – or, rather, the spectre – of the self that inspires horror. The horror of the double is further demonstrated by their auditory effect, as Webber explains that the doppelgänger's speech 'echoes, reiterates, distorts, parodies, dictates, impedes, and dumbfounds the subjective faculty of free speech'.[112] This is best demonstrated by a scene in volume two when, held prisoner for murder, Medardus is once again haunted by his double in the habit of a monk. The sound of the double's voice, like his appearance, confuses Medardus's own surety that he is himself:

> Now, methought I recognised the voice as one that I had known before, but it was not then so broken and so stammering. Nay, with a chill shivering of horror, I almost began to think there was something in the accents that I now heard, resembling the tones of my own voice, and involuntarily, as if I wished to try whether this were really so, I stammered, in imitation, 'Me-dar-dus!—Me-dar-dus!'[113]

These qualities of confusion and hallucination typically invite a psychological reading of the double, particularly regarding the uncanny. Of course, Freud used Hoffmann's tale 'The Sandman' to explore his theories of the *unheimlich*, establishing an association between Hoffmann's works and psychoanalysis. Doppelgänger narratives, for both Labriola and Amit Marcus, explore confrontations with the uncanny as projections of repressed anxieties; the double is the result of fragmented selfhood, the consequence of social restrictions made upon natural impulses. In Romantic literature, according to Marcus, the doubles are analogous with contrary impulses to destroy and to create. In *The Devil's Elixir*, the double is both internal, 'a dissociative projection of psychic contents', and also external, 'a separate and autonomous person' – it is both 'a *sign* of self-fragmentation and its *cause*'.[114] To be rid of the sign that ironically causes duality can only therefore be achieved by suicide, as in Edgar Allan Poe's 'William Wilson' and Stevenson's later *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. However, as Labriola shows, Hoffmann's tale is unusual in that Medardus's encounters with his double enable him to

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[111] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir,* p. 262.

[112] Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature*, p. 3.

[113] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 36.

[114] Amit Marcus, 'Recycling of Doubles in Narrative Fiction of the Twentieth and Early Twenty-First Centuries', *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, 11. 2 (2013), 187-217 (p. 194).

undergo development and 'to create a conscience and to reflect upon his actions by the end of the novel'.[115]

While it might be tempting to draw on psychoanalysis to discuss the double figure as manifestations of repressed anxieties and desires – as Labriola does – Bakhtin's principle of the grotesque body also gives insight into how the double may emerge and why it enables Medardus to repent. Bakhtin understands the grotesque as a material body that is 'ever unfinished, ever creating', revealing its growth and excess during 'copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, the throes of death, eating, drinking, or defecation'.[116] It is at these moments that the 'chain of genetic development', the principle of the grotesque body, becomes evident – what Bakhtin describes as 'two links shown at the point where they enter into each other'.[117] One of the points at which 'the chain of genetic development' becomes evident includes drinking, where 'two links' of the grotesque body 'enter into each other'. In drinking the elixir, Medardus reveals the 'two links' of his selfhood, conjuring the double – his brother – whose identity merges with own.

Primarily visual in nature, the likeness between Medardus and Victorin, his double, emphasises the physical, material characteristics of his body – the grotesque realism of his existence. Though he appears at times to be spectral in nature, that the double is his half-brother points to simultaneous states of spectrality and solidity, somewhere between being distinct from Medardus and being reliant on his existence. This blend of states is evident when Victorin emerges, as if from the dead, to confront Medardus at his castle:

> But, oh horrible sight! at that moment arose, and stood bodily before me, the hideous blood-stained and distorted figure of Victorin! Methought it was not *I*, but *he*, that had spoken the words in which I thought to triumph! At the first glance of this apparition, (whether real or imaginary,) my hair stood on end with horror.[118]

Readers, especially English readers, may well have expected the return of Victorin's vengeful spirit at this point, as is typical of Gothic ghost stories in the era.[119] However, Victorin 'stood

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[115] Labriola, 'Edgar Allan Poe and E. T. A. Hoffmann: The Double in "William Wilson" and *The Devil's Elixirs*', p. 75.

[116] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 26.

[117] Ibid., p. 26.

[118] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir,* p. 176.

[119] See my discussion of *Tales of Wonder!* in Chapter 5 for this trend.

bodily' – solidly – before Medardus, 'blood-stained and distorted' from his fall. Yet Medardus still refers to him as an 'apparition', uncertain whether he is 'real or imaginary', positioning Victorin between dead and undead, material and immaterial, a ghastly reminder of his own mortality. Further, as this quotation demonstrates, the sight of the double always has a physical effect on Medardus, again emphasising the grotesque relationship between the two. Here, his 'hair stood on end with horror', whereas in other instances he collapses or, with repeated exposure, becomes increasingly gaunt and dishevelled in appearance.

The emphasis on visual horror is also mirrored by sexual and pictorial spectacle. The voyeuristic gaze that Lewis invited readers to participate in when reading *The Monk,* following the 'fantastical world of the killer', is reflected back upon the protagonist.[120] As Webber explains, the narrative is one of 'double vision', where Medardus's gaze is both 'violating' and 'violated'.[121] While the gaze of the painter is especially prominent – and more typically discussed by scholars – other characters also have a penetrative gaze, coercing Medardus to confess his desires or drive him to madness. Before supping from the elixir and leaving the monastery, for example, Prior Leonardus challenges the then sixteen-year-old Medardus to renounce all flesh without hesitation, fixing upon him 'his dark penetrating eyes'.[122] Under this stare he recalls a 'form, which had been long banished from [his] recollection' – the choirmaster's sister.[123] The unreliability of Medardus's memory is here also demonstrated, as only then does he admit to experiencing the sexual desire that he has previously been too proud to acknowledge. His recollection of this sensation, however, reads also like one of horror, as his heart beat, his 'limbs tottered' and he struggled to breathe to the point that he 'almost fainted'.[124] In this response, Medardus moves ironically from the 'masculine' position of the 'violating' gaze to the 'feminine' position of the 'violated'.

While Ambrosio's lust is primarily aroused by voyeurism, Medardus's desire is bound to both being the observer and being observed; he experience other instances of sexual pleasure when looking at objects while becoming an object under observation himself. Taken through

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[120] Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71.

[121] Webber, *The Doppelgänger: Double Visions in German Literature*, p. 191.

[122] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 71.

[123] Ibid., p. 28.

[124] Ibid., p. 29.

an exhibition of paintings at a club he frequents, he is only temporarily inspired to repent by the portrait of the Abbess he so reveres, as he then sees the exact likeness of Aurelia. Gazing upon the picture, he 'devoured the charms' of Aurelia's likeness from the 'enchanted canvass [*sic*]' which 'gleamed out in full splendour' and, though pondering whether her 'childlike pious looks' accuse him of murdering her brother, is inspired only with a 'malicious spirit of scorn and irony'.[125] He only regrets that he had not made Aurelia his own the same night he had stabbed her brother, and so begins to formulate 'a thousand plans' to obtain the object of his desire. No sooner does he make the resolution to pursue her, than he again encounters the painter – or so he believes. Entering the club room, he 'perceived at once […] the stranger', yet 'his countenance was not turned towards me'.[126] Following this, '[a] conviction of the truth immediately flashed on [his] mind' that this was the same 'horrible Unknown' who had stared at him in the church.[127] Not having seen the man's face, his own 'conviction of truth' determines that the stranger is the same man; readers are, once more, left to doubt Medardus's reliability. This unreliability, however, also shows that Medardus's voyeurism turns to exhibitionism, returning to the 'double vision' in which pleasure and anxiety simultaneously involve 'violating' and being 'violated'.

If the double emerges from the grotesque when Medardus drinks from the elixir, it is not so much the revelation of Medardus's repressed anxieties and desires that causes horror, as Labriola would have it, but the recognition of himself as grotesque. The carnival, home of the grotesque, once 'celebrated temporary liberation from […] the established order' and 'marked the suspension of hierarchical rank, privileges, norms, and prohibitions'.[128] The festivities this engenders are, however, horrifying to Medardus's sense of pride: his hubris cannot tolerate the suspension of hierarchy, not while he seeks to be at the pinnacle of society. Although he initially drinks the elixir to restore his strength, having been struck down in fright by the appearance of the painter at the church, the effect is so exhilarating that he hopes also to 'have once more the power of obtaining that noblest of earthly supremacies, an empire over the minds of others!'[129] This ambition is promptly achieved as, like Lewis's Ambrosio, he speaks so

[125] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 223.

[126] Ibid., p. 227.

[127] Ibid., p. 227.

[128] Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, p. 9.

[129] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 75.

'ardently' and 'impressively' that his audience 'were confounded'.[130] However, this is not enough to satisfy his inexhaustible desire, and he ventures out into the world where his pursuits become increasingly depraved. In seeking to aggrandize himself by taking the elixir, ironically the opposite takes effect, as he becomes increasingly debased, brought low, dragged down into the material and carnal world.

Through the numerous identities and disguises Medardus assumes, the confusion of doppelgängers and madmen, Hoffmann blends horror with the comic even more blatantly than in *The Monk*. His engagement with Lewis's novel is less parodic in nature than Dacre's *Zofloya*, though it is evidently a source of inspiration. With the abundance of doppelgängers in *The Devil's Elixir*, it might even be said that Hoffmann's allusions to *The Monk* position his text not as a parodic response, but rather as a double. Hoffmann pushes the hubris found in Ambrosio to the extreme so that Medardus's delusions of grandeur lead him to the brink of insanity. The 'fantastical world of the killer' Lewis explored in *The Monk* is expanded upon in *The Devil's Elixir* by the introduction of first-person narrative, providing an even closer insight into the mania of the protagonist. In so doing, Hoffmann transforms the supernatural into the psychological, a trend that developed across the nineteenth century. His use of the grotesque and the double advances the comic potential of the male Gothic into the realm of the absurd with characters like Belcampo, whose harlequinade characteristics parody Medardus and draw attention to the performativity of his own nature. While Lewis used the comic to reveal the artificiality of gender performance, Hoffmann used the comic potential of the grotesque to question the very nature of selfhood.

Conclusion

As I discussed in Part I of this thesis, Radcliffe and other women writers actively engaged in the literary-cultural debates of the time, collaboratively cultivating the Gothic romance and, in Radcliffe's case especially, crafting a persona as a respectable woman author. In response to *The Monk*, Radcliffe's *The Italian* redirects the comic in the Gothic to pacify the destructive effect of Lewis's parody, showing instead that the performance of societal roles fulfils essential communal duties. If Radcliffe's authorial persona was one of respectability, placing her on equal footing with her male counterparts, Dacre's authorial persona was a little closer to Lewis's own – defiant, disregarding the rules of decorum, which was especially bold for a woman writer at the time. Dacre's *Zofloya*, which transitions from female Gothic to male

[130] Hoffmann, *The Devil's Elixir*, p. 78.

Gothic, terror to horror, slides along the Gothic-comic spectrum, using parody to satirise both Radcliffe's and Lewis's representations of gender, especially heroines. She creates a passionate, vindictive heroine capable of turning the tables on the men who idolise feminine subjugation, whose fury against the 'immaterial speck', Lilla, invites female readers to share in the savage glee of her destruction. The comic in the Gothic is still used, therefore, to question the performativity of gender in both Radcliffe and Dacre, yet Hoffmann turns his attention to the performativity of the self in *The Devil's Elixir*. Clearly inspired by *The Monk*, Hoffmann's novel expands upon the world of a monk driven mad by desire and power. Hoffmann introduces the doppelgänger to the Gothic, delighting in the breakdown of boundaries between the self and other, subject and object, the violater and violated.

This chapter has thus considered the ways in which those texts considered to respond to *The Monk* engage with Lewis's novel and continue to develop his use of the comic to explore gender roles in the Gothic. While not always parodic, the dialogic exchange between novels illustrates the ways in which genre develops through textual conversation, even across countries. But these writers – Radcliffe, Dacre, and Hoffmann – more proactively engage with the cultivation of authorial persona and style; their intertextual discourse is, to varying degrees, more sophisticated than those which exploit the notoriety of *The Monk.* The marketisation of the male Gothic in cheap fiction, and the ways in which hack writers imitated Lewis, is the subject of the third part of this thesis.

PART III

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Monsters of the Market:
Popular Literature and the Male Gothic, c.1800-1850

Ladies and gentlemen – I fear that what I am going to say will spoil your appetites; but the truth is beautiful at all times, and I have to state that Mrs. Lovett's pies are made of *human flesh!*

James Malcom Rymer, *A String of Pearls* (1847)

Chapter 5

Monsters of the Market: Developing the Male Gothic, 1800-1830s

From lascivious monks, murderous women and grotesque madmen, Lewis's literary responders thus far addressed all showcase a parodic engagement with *The Monk*. This chapter moves from mockery to mimicry to address the marketisation of male Gothic tropes and assess whether comic devices are used in chapbook and trade Gothic fiction. Derivative and repetitive, plots in chapbooks and trade Gothic novels are often considered to be so formulaic that to read one is much the same as reading another. Though the lower echelons of Gothic literature have typically been neglected by scholars, their place in the market and their role in the development of culture for the working classes of the nineteenth century has come to be of more interest to Gothic scholars in recent years. Notably Franz Potter, whose work on the popular, cheaper publishing trade in both *The History of Gothic Publishing, 1800-1832* (2005) and the more recent *Gothic Chapbooks, Bluebook and Shilling Shockers, 1797-1830* (2021), brings publishing statistics, strategies, and formulaic fiction from the pre-Victorian decades of the nineteenth century into the limelight. In his analysis of Gothic publishing practices, Potter suggests that recycling is 'essential', a 'sign of activity rather than stagnation, decay and decadence' which 'indicates a continual interaction between the author and the reader'.[1] Elizabeth Neiman, too, recognises a pro-active collaboration and circulation of ideas between non-canonical writers, recognising that, as Max Fincher has also made clear (see Chapter 1), distinctions between high and low literature were not fully formed in the Romantic era. Even the derivative texts published by Minerva and their ilk, according to Neiman, should be read alongside those texts which we now consider canonical – as they would have been at the time. The Minerva novelists form 'a collective authorial model', communicating 'with each other through constant, often subtle modifications on and infractions of these popular formulas'.[2] For Potter, the interaction is between author and reader; for Neiman, the interaction is a collaboration between authors and their work. Building upon this, I argue that when it comes to developing the male Gothic, the interaction is threefold, between readers, writers and critics – a dialogue of cultural exchange primarily enabled by parody.

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[1] Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing*, p. 8.

[2] Neiman, *Minerva's Gothics*, p. xxi.

The lesser-known imitations of *The Monk* are addressed in this chapter, beginning with the chapbook abridgements and adaptations of Lewis's novel. My interest in these chapbooks is to advance discussions regarding their relationship to *The Monk* and their role in developing the male Gothic as it is commonly understood by modern scholars like Anne Williams and Andrew Smith: a Gothic that is interested in the spectacles of the 'bloody shroud, the wormy corpse', the 'semi-pornographic', and the villain's mindset – an understanding which eschews engagement with the somewhat problematic relationship Lewis established between horror and humour.[3] Chapbooks, cheaply produced and relatively inexpensive to borrow or purchase, potentially reducing a three-hundred page novel to a tenth of its size, likely target readers with less familiarity with the original, but with enough familiarity – by word of mouth, reviews which feature lengthy extracts, or, in the case of *The Monk*, pure reputation – to desire to be part of the conversation, or 'in the know'. As a result, the chapbook adaptations and abridgements of *The Monk* potentially disengage from the parodic dialogue Lewis establishes with the Gothic to merely copy and reduce the content to the skeleton structure of plot. Yet, there are some clear examples of 'ironic inversions' – Linda Hutcheon's understanding of parody – which is made evident in some illustrations and content of imitative chapbooks, especially in the use of the supernatural.

The second and third section of this chapter both consider Edward Montague's *The Demon of Sicily* (1807). The publication history of the novel is surveyed first to demonstrate how publishers who exploited the notoriety of *The Monk* engaged in the development of the male Gothic. Originally published by James Fletcher Hughes in 1807 and later republished with illustrations as a penny blood by pornographer William Dugdale in 1839, the reputation of Lewis's Gothic is shown to be exploited both in the immediate aftermath of the scandal attending *The Monk* and later, even after Lewis's death. As I will argue, the disrepute of the publishers equally influences the ways in which the male Gothic developed, drawing readers' attention to particular tropes and subjects. Following this, in the last section of this chapter, I will look more closely at Montague and his novel, assessing how far his work engages with and continues the association between horror and humour that Lewis first established.

[3] Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71, and Williams, *The Art of Darkness*, p. 103.

5. 1 Turning the Tide: Chapbooks and Cheap Imitations of *The Monk*

As precursors to the penny blood, the subject of the final chapter in this thesis, Gothic chapbooks targeted an increasingly literate lower class, offering cheaply produced short tales and pamphlets to read during limited leisure time. Unlike the multi-volume novels books which were popular among the middle classes and typical of the Gothic, chapbooks picked novels to the bare bones of plot, stripping the Gothic down to spectacle and action in thirty-to-forty pages or less. The average volume of a novel in the Romantic era cost between five and six shillings, making the typical three-volume novel between fifteen and eighteen shillings – an unaffordable luxury for most, even the middle classes, who were more likely to borrow books from circulating libraries rather than purchase them outright.[4] At the circulating libraries, however, as Potter observes, chapbooks could 'easily be obtained […] for a penny a night or purchased at the booksellers for a sixpence or a shilling'.[5] Richard Altick suggests that these prices enabled even working class 'manual laborers, factory hands, and domestic servants of London and the large Industrial towns' access to popular reading material, though leisure time was limited to Sundays until the Saturday half-day holiday was introduced in the 1860s.[6] Although chapbooks and street literature had been in circulation since the sixteenth century, there was a notable surge in interest and output at the end of the eighteenth century and into the first decades of the nineteenth century, driven by the commercialisation of the novel and the popularity of the Gothic. Although chapbooks also included new stories, abridgements of popular works by leading Gothic authors, including Lewis, Radcliffe, Reeve, and Walpole, allowed more people 'the same reading experience as the elite and therefore the same access to and ownership of their luxury items'.[7] Chapbooks enabled the Gothic to cross class boundaries, and publishers were eager to supply demand. Potter explains that

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[4] Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-90', in *A Companion to The History of the Book*, 2nd edn., ed. by Eliot and Rose, pp. 471-84.

[5] Franz Potter, *Gothic Chapbooks, Bluebooks and Shilling Shockers, 1797-1830* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2021), p. 11.

[6] Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1957), p. 288.

[7] Diane Long Hoeveler, 'Gothic Chapbooks and the Urban Reader', *Wordsworth Circle*, 41: 3 (2010), 155-8 (p. 157).

> they exploit the tawdry and sensational familiar gothic elements in a discernible appropriation of literary themes which obscures the line between astute imitation and explicit plagiarism. Importantly, it demonstrates that publishers were not only aware of readers' predilections for the sensational, but also that they understood how to exploit the growing economic power of a literate working class.[8]

Potter extensively surveys the output and practices of leading chapbook publishers in the early nineteenth century, noting that although the Gothic was not the only genre to be printed in chapbook form, it was the most popular. Publishers were keen to exploit the growing consumerist populace by supplying 'sensational' fiction at more affordable prices. Thomas Tegg is especially demonstrative of this exploitative practice, publishing thirty-seven Gothic chapbooks in the period of 1803 to 1810 – which includes *The Demon of Venice* (1810), an adaptation of Dacre's *Zofloya* – illustrating that his 'brief, but intense interest in the gothic [was] purely commercial'.[9]

The most commercial Gothic novel to be converted into chapbook form is arguably *The Monk*. W. B. Gerard, Diane Long Hoeveler, and Potter all note that Lewis's scandalous text was published in redacted and abridged formats more than any other single Gothic novel, though Hoeveler suggests this is merely because it is a 'sprawling' book with different plot strands, making it easier to divide and condense.[10] Certainly, the five chapbook abridgements and adaptations of *The Monk* Potter has identified focus on the separate strands of the novel – Ambrosio's plot, and Raymond's encounters with the supernatural, as their full titles make clear, which I list here in chronological order: *Father Innocent, Abbot of the Capuchins, or, The Crimes of the Cloister* (1796); *The Castle of Lindenberg; or, The History of Raymond and Agnes. A Romance; With the Story of the Bleeding Nun: and the Method by which the Wandering Jew Quieted the Nun's Troubled Spirit. By Matthew Gregory Lewis, Esq. Member of Parliament for Hindon in Wiltshire and the Author of the Castle Spectre. Ornamented with Two Engravings* (1798); *Fatal Vows; or, The False Monk. A Romance* (1810); *The Monk, A Romance in which Is depicted the Wonderful Adventures of Ambrosio, Friar of the order of the capuchins, who was diverted from The track of virtue, by the Artifices of a Female Demon, That entered his Monastery disguised as a Novice, and after seducing him from his vow of celibacy, presented him with a branch of Enchanted Myrtle, to obtain the person of the*

[8] Potter, *Gothic Chapbooks, Bluebooks and Shilling Shockers*, p. 27.

[9] Ibid, p. 75.

[10] Diane Long Hoeveler, 'Gothic Adaptations, 1764-1830', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Glennis Byron and Dale Townshend (New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 185-198 (p. 186).

beautiful Antonia of Madrid; how he was discovered in her chamber her mother, whom he murdered, to keep his crimes a secret; and the particulars of the means by which he caused the body of Antonia to be conveyed in a sleep to the dreary vaults of his own convent, where he accomplished wicked machinations on the innocent virgin, whom he then assassinates with a dagger, presented him by his attendant fiend, who afterwards betrays him to the judges of the inquisition, in the dungeons of which he is confined, and suffers torture; and how, to escape from these, he assigns over his soul and body to the devil, who deceives him, and inflicts a most ignominious death (1818); *The Bleeding Nun of the Castle of Lindenberg; or, The History of Raymond & Agnes* (1823). I would suggest that *Fatal Vows* is not strictly speaking an abridgement, but rather a loose adaptation, recycling key tropes and scenes, much like *Almargo & Claude* (1803), which Hoeveler has also considered to be a redaction of Raymond and Agnes's plot from *The Monk* but is, again, an adaptation. These titles – of varied and surprising length – offer clear indications of what readers may expect. *The Castle of Lindenberg* uses Lewis's full name and status, clearly exploiting his reputation to advertise the chapbook; the lengthiest title, the chapbook published in 1818, describes numerous scenes from Ambrosio's plot to convince readers of its truth to the original. Notably, the very first chapbook, *Father Innocent*, was published the same year as *The Monk* itself, demonstrating how rapidly the novel rose to fame.

Some chapbook abridgements lift whole sections from *The Monk*, while others paraphrase scenes. *Father Innocent* (1796) and *The Monk. A Romance…* (1818) both abridge the content, almost word for word, though they notably gloss over violent and lewd scenes. In *The Monk. A Romance*…, for example, Ambrosio's first sexual encounter with Matilda is merely referenced by the narrator: 'we cannot detail Matilda's reply; suffice it to say, that lost to modesty, and abandoned of virtue, she drew the guilty, unhappy Ambrosio, into her snares'.[11] Potter further argues that, although 'by 1810, the emphasis of the Gothic had shifted from the terror narratives to those of unrestrained horror on the example of Matthew Lewis', many abridgements and imitations reduced the dissolute content and, in some cases, offered Ambrosio further chance to repent.[12] This may explain why there are no illustrations of Lucifer as the beautiful youth Matilda first summoned, and only the monstrous, winged version who forces Ambrosio to sign over his soul to save him from the tortures of the Inquisition. The first

[11] Anon., *The Monk. A Romance*… (London: W. Mason, 1818), p. 11.

[12] Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing*, p. 30.

apparition of the devil in *The Monk*, whose appearance is 'impressed' with 'a mysterious melancholy […] betraying the Fallen Angel' inspires in Ambrosio a 'secret awe' and appears to afford far too much sympathy for the devil – not to mention implicit queer attraction as well.[13] Instead, illustrations such as Figure 5.1 focus solely on the later vision of Lewis's devil, which illustrates that not only does Lucifer's appearance change from the beautiful, noble youth to a grotesque beast, but he is also racially altered: 'his gigantic form' is now covered by 'a swarthy darkness'.[14] By choosing solely to represent the devil in this monstrous form, the chapbooks equate 'black and white' with 'wrong and right' as part of their efforts to moralise *The Monk*.

Figure 5.1: 'Soul & Body for ever, See p. 35', *The Monk. A Romance*…(London: W. Mason, 1818)

[13] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 277.

[14] Ibid., p. 433.

Potter and Hoeveler have both observed this moralising tendency, though illustrations to chapbooks arguably paint a slightly different picture. Traditionally, chapbooks used woodcut prints, though Ann Lemoine – whom Potter identifies as the most prolific chapbook publisher, and one of the only female publishers in the industry at the time – worked closely with the copper printer John Roe from 1802 to produce aquatint prints in Gothic chapbooks, improving the quality to deliberately market to middle-class consumers, who would otherwise be typically borrowing books from the circulating library, not owning them. Though none of the chapbook abridgements of *The Monk* depict sex scenes – not even to show Matilda's 'beauteous orb', as the French illustrations dared to do (see Chapter 1) – the violent and supernatural episodes are often illustrated. Gerard, discussing pictures accompanying the various chapbooks of *The Monk*, finds that Raymond's confrontation with the banditti (see Figure 5.2), the Bleeding Nun and the Wandering Jew (see Figure 5.3), and Agnes's recovery from imprisonment are most often depicted. It is Gerard's view that the interest in depicting these scenes 'help[s] to root out […] secretly embedded evils that have destabilized, or threaten to destabilize, the aristocratic order', re-establishing stability during the upheaval of the French Revolution.[15] In this, he joins other scholars who have traced in Lewis's original reflections of revolutionary turmoil, in which the banditti represent the rampant mob and the Bleeding Nun 'a dark goddess of the Terror'.[16] In simplifying the plot of *The Monk* – especially in those examples which separate the two plots – the ambiguous views on revolutionary politics, and what Joseph Drury calls the 'iconoclash' of Lewis's text (see Chapter 2), become more definitively anti-revolution.[17]

Domesticity and violence clash in Figure 5.2, in which the light of the homely hearth and the candlelit dining table illuminate Raymond and Marguerite's attack upon the banditti leader Baptiste, their faces scowling with determination. Marguerite holds back Baptiste's knife while Raymond throttles him by the neck. Domestic tranquillity is also disturbed by external forces in Figure 5.3, though this time of a supernatural nature. The room, decorated by floral, orderly chintz wallpaper and featuring a half-seen four-poster bed, is invaded by the disorderly shapes and figures of the supernatural – the circular perimeter of the Wandering Jew's ritual, and the skulls and cross-bones within it; the sweeping, shapeless garb of the

[15] W. B. Gerard, '"Absence has not abated your love": the nostalgia for an idealized aristocracy in *The Castle of Lindenberg* during the Romantic era', *Word & Image*, 32. 4 (2016), 393-408 (p. 399).

[16] Ibid., p. 398.

[17] Drury, 'Twilight of the Virgin Idols: Iconoclash in *The Monk*'.

Bleeding Nun and her white veil, creating an effect of dynamism while the men facing her stand sturdy, parallel to each other. Both the caption and the (stereotypical) curls of the Wandering Jew's beard indicate his Jewishness to viewers.

Figure 5.2: 'Raymond and Marguerite, kill Baptiste, and then make their escape with the Baroness, from the Banditti', *The Castle of Lindenberg*… (London: S. Fisher, 1798).[18]

Gerard's argument is accurate, to a point. Unlike penny bloods which, as I will discuss in the next chapter, developed more interactively with working-class readers on a consumer-led basis, chapbooks at the turn of the nineteenth century appear to be more exploitative of fashionable trends. The view that these chapbooks focused on these scenes to present anti-Revolutionary polemics, re-asserting the order of society by demonstrating the dangers of insurgence to the people who read the chapbooks, is arguably part of this exploitative commercialisation. Gerard proposes that the absence of illustrations of the evil prioress and the jealous baroness 'suggests a lack of interest in viewing high-ranking characters who represent improperly exercised authority'.[19] Yet, the reason might also be that scenes with these women are less dynamic and dramatic than those involving murder and violence, and so have less

[18] Image featured in Gerard, '"Absence has not abated your love": the nostalgia for an idealized aristocracy in *The Castle of Lindenberg* during the Romantic era', p. 396.

[19] Gerard, '"Absence has not abated your love": the nostalgia for an idealized aristocracy in *The Castle of Lindenberg* during the Romantic era', p. 405.

commercial appeal. There is more opportunity for sensationalism, and even parody, in illustrating other scenes.

Figure 5.3: 'The Wandering Jew laying the Ghost of the Bleeding Nun', *The Castle of Lindenberg*… (London: S. Fisher, 1798).[20]

I would argue that, by illustrating the scene in which the Wandering Jew brandishes the burning cross emblazoned on his forehead in order to lay the Bleeding Nun to rest, the parodic potential of the mythical figure becomes evident. If parody, as Hutcheon argues, involves 'ironic inversions', the branding of a Jewish man with the Christian cross is an example of parody, albeit anti-Semitic. This may explain why Coleridge considers the image the most 'happy conception' in *The Monk* (see Chapter 3), though he used the Wandering Jew for more solemn purposes in *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*. So, too, might the image of Marguerite's restraint upon Baptiste be viewed as parodic. In *The Monk*, Marguerite only gives Raymond a signal to attack when Baptiste's back is turned, before Baptiste can attempt to take Raymond's life; in the illustration, she is an active participant in his murder. With the signs of domesticity – and her domestic duty – abandoned, she takes hold of the hilt of his dagger, which is suggestively positioned around Baptiste's waistline: the dagger, like Matilda's ceremonial poignard with which she pricks herself to summon the devil (see Chapter 1), is a phallic symbol, and is here mastered by the brow-beaten woman. The ironic inversion in the image is the

[20] Image featured in Gerard, '"Absence has not abated your love": the nostalgia for an idealized aristocracy in *The Castle of Lindenberg* during the Romantic era', p. 398.

reversal of gender roles and expectations. Whoever may have purchased *The Castle of Lindenberg* need only to view the illustrations to be delighted by the horror and violence. Although literacy rates were improving, I would suggest the inclusion of illustrations also partly appealed to those with deficient, or developing, literacy skills.[21] It was still common practice in the early nineteenth century for the literate to read aloud to illiterate listeners; showing pictures involved listeners in the entertainment of the book. Viewed in isolation, these pictures showcase the role of parody in the making of horror and violence, and challenge the prevailing view that the abridgements of *The Monk* aimed to establish a stronger moral conclusion.

Hoeveler and Potter have both observed that cheap and chapbook Gothic fiction typically employ the effects of horror more characteristic of Lewis's Gothic than of the female Gothic, but that this horror is mitigated by moralistic denouements and sermonising authorial interjections. For example, the most prolific 'hack' writer, Sarah Wilkinson, commonly features a 'moral subtext which interposes decorum, decency and morality', even when adapting or recycling horror motifs, according to Potter.[22] Wilkinson's efforts to create 'distinctly polite horror' has particular consequences for the humour I have argued is integral to Lewis's horror and use of the supernatural; her 'bluebook' adaptation of Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*¸ Potter explains, 'divests the play of the comic possibilities in supernatural horror and thus of the emotional contradictions of the form'.[23] Wilkinson's *Albert of Werdendoff; or, the Midnight Embrace* (no date) clearly demonstrates this 'polite horror', using the supernatural only to provide the moral message of the novel. The unfortunate heroine, Josephine, succumbs to the seductions of the aristocratic Albert, only to discover his promise of marriage is false.[24]

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[21] In 1800, roughly sixty per cent of men and forty-five per cent of women could read; by 1841, rates had risen to sixty-seven per cent and fifty-one per cent respectively. See Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-90', in *A Companion to The History of the Book*, 2nd edn., ed. by Eliot and Rose, pp. 471-84.

[22] Potter, *Gothic Publishing*, p. 70.

[23] Ibid., p. 61 & p. 57. The name 'bluebook' is derived from the blue jacket cover of cheap books in the early nineteenth century; however, Potter has recently shown the term itself to be redundant, as many other colours were used at the time, and could seldom be differentiated from chapbooks. See Potter, *Gothic Chapbooks, Bluebooks and Shilling Shockers*.

[24] The name Josephine may also recall Sade's heroine Justine, a virtuous woman victimised by libertine debauchees, and her sister Juliette, who is unashamedly depraved. See Marquis de Sade, *Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) and *Juliette, or Vice Amply Rewarded* (New York: Arrow, 1991).

The narrator laments that 'illicit love, tho' at first ardent, will soon decay, and leave nought but wretchedness behind' – and the wretchedness that is left behind is spectral in nature.[25] Albert's haughty fiancée, like Lady Macbeth, mocks his manhood and coerces him to kill his first lover, whose spirit returns to haunt them during their wedding celebrations. While other scholars have observed the similarities between this tale and Lewis's ballad 'Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogen', featured in *The Monk* and again in *Tales of Wonder* (1801), her appearance, 'clad in the habiliments of the grave', and her behaviour, are very much like Lewis's the Bleeding Nun.[26] Her hauntings, however, prove fatal to Albert:

> Josephine wound her arms around his trembling form. 'I am come from the confines of the dead, said she, to make thee fulfil thy parting promise.' She dragged him by a force he could not resist, [*sic*] to her breast she pressed her clammy lips to his, and held him fast at his noisome icy embrace. At length the horrific spectre released him from her grasp. He started back in breathless agony, and sunk on the floor […] then expired with a heavy groan.[27]

Both Lewis's and Wilkinson's spectral females beckon to the men who have wrongly professed love – Raymond by accidentally offering his vows to the dead nun instead of Agnes, Albert by making false promises to Josephine – and force the men into a macabre kiss that mocks romance. The supernatural in chapbooks, Hoeveler observes, was presented as something real, appealing to superstition rather than criticising such beliefs, as is typical of the female Gothic. She further argues that the working classes upheld a 'lottery mentality', where fate explained one's position, and the nature of good and evil – and its supernatural representative forces, such as angels and demons – made order of the world. Spirits like Josephine's, returning to punish and reassert the rights of the wronged, are common in chapbook stories. Yet, in this case, Wilkinson's use of a spectre so like the Bleeding Nun suggests that there is also parodic engagement with *The Monk*. Wilkinson's tale was first published in the anonymous collection *Tales of Terror, or, More Ghosts!* in 1801, which was often mistakenly attributed to Matthew Lewis himself – *Tales of Terror* was, in fact, a parody of Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*.

Tales of Terror includes a number of short ghost stories, introduced by a comical 'Prologomena to the Terrors', which explains the many reasons why spectres typically return

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[25] Sarah Wilkinson, *Albert of Werdendoff, or the Midnight Embrace* (London: J. Bailey, n.d), p. 9.

[26] Douglass H. Thomson and Diane Long Hoeveler, 'Shorter Gothic Fictions: Ballads and Chapbooks, Tales and Fragments', pp. 147-66.

[27] Wilkinson, *Albert of Werdendoff*, p. 20.

from the grave and their stereotypical habits. As discussed in Chapter 2, parody as a tool of mockery and criticism often highlights the repetitive machineries of genre. Though the collection does not necessarily directly target Lewis, it does illustrate that there were common beliefs, or representations, of ghostly apparitions – and how easy it was to mock the supernatural. The prologue's sarcasm is straight-faced, as if merely informative; the notable exceptions to the general rule, which are evidently not to be taken seriously, suggest the intention is to parody. For instance, readers are informed that '[o]ccasionally spirits will even condescend to talk on common occurrences', such as in the instance of the visitation from Major George Sydenham to Captain William Dyke to complain that 'this sword did not use to be kept after this manner when it was mine' and instructs him to clean it – a decidedly trivial matter for ghosts to be restless about.[28] One of the tales even parodies the loyal servant, staple of the Gothic also discussed in Chapter 2; the missing Anselm's last letter to his wife, which reports feeling oppressed by 'uncomfortable gloom', glibly adds a 'P.S.' note, explaining that he has left his 'faithful Paulo' behind but hopes 'he will be able to follow me with my baggage in a few days'.[29] Blending the trivial with the solemn adds both to the mystery and the humour – remembering, of course, that Paulo is the name of the faithful servant in Radcliffe's *The Italian* (see Chapter 4).

This example sets out to be parodic. Those chapbooks which borrow or imitate Lewis's Gothic style – of adopting spectacle and sensationalism more than the slow burn of Radcliffe's sublime terror – still show signs of parody, but this may be the result of the excessive nature of horror which often itself teeters close to the edge of the ridiculous and hyperbolic extreme. The Gothic has, as I have discussed in Chapter 2, a comic heritage, one which is brought to the fore by Lewis, who pushes the boundaries between horror and humour with disregard for decorum. Further, the influx of Lewisite imitators in the early decades of the nineteenth century, remarked upon by Potter and Mandal, may not simply be exploiting the taste for his Gothic following the scandal *The Monk* caused – writers like Isaac Crookenden were also arguably emboldened by his example. Rivalled only by the prolific Wilkinson, who lived by the pen to earn a living though was frequently in financial difficulty, Crookenden penned at least ten chapbooks across seven years and did not write for money. Potter suggests he had a 'dubious literary reputation' as a 'notorious purveyor of noxious horror' with a particular interest in

[28] Anon., *Tales of Terror!; or, More Ghosts* (London: Ann Lemoine, 1802), n.p. Available at https://chawtonhouse.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Tales-of-Terror.pdf [accessed 08/08/2020].

[29] Ibid.

incestuous tales (this is somewhat of an understatement).[30] Though he was chiefly an educator and, like many Gothic chapbook and cheap fiction writers, concluded his novels with heavy-handed and largely obvious moral lessons (such as, not to desire one's sister), his use of the supernatural and sensational firmly sets his typical output in the male Gothic. A clear example is *The Horrible Revenge; or, The Monster of Italy!! A Romance of the 16th Century. Also, Hopeless Love. An Interesting Tale*, published by R. Harrild (1808). The illustration in Figure 5.4 shows the villainous Julien's father (also confusingly named Julien) receiving the head of his wife's lover which, 'when the flesh was consumed, he ever after had the food of his wife presented to her in the disgustful hollow'.[31] This especially grotesque torture appears again in James Malcolm Rymer's Gothic penny blood, *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle* (1844). In both instances, the skull-as-dinner-plate is absurdly cruel – it is both ridiculous and horrific at once.

There are clear influences from *The Monk* in this thirty-six page tale; Julien's mother wastes away on a straw bed in a dungeon, like Agnes, but instead of cradling a dead infant, she cradles a skull from which she is forced to eat. Further, Julien, already debauched by the company of many women, turns to his sister with 'horrible thoughts' and a 'lewd expression' – the clear difference between Julien and Ambrosio here being that he already knows Amanda is his sister, and pursues her nonetheless.[32] Fortunately for the heroine, she is saved from his advances by the interception of a venerable old man in a cave – who, in true Gothic fashion, transpires to be their repentant father, and condemns his terrible son with his dying breath. Julien is so distressed by having committed parricide and his attempt to rape his sister that he stabs himself. Amanda's lover, Albio, pops up at the last moment, with little opportunity for heroics. They marry, even so.

If chapbook writers, despite imitating Lewis's style, did not necessarily engage outright with parody and the comic in the same way *The Monk* had, writers like Crookenden were still evidently emboldened by his disregard for critical opinion. Regardless of the moral denouement, and the additional short tale, *Hopeless Love* – which is purely and dully didactic, as if an afterthought, or a 'saving grace' – Crookenden was able to exploit the taste for scandal Lewis ushered in. Though many chapbooks and hack writers sought to reduce the lewd and lurid content of *The Monk* in their imitations, the parodic potential of the supernatural becomes

[30] Potter, *Gothic Chapbooks, Bluebooks and Shilling Shockers,* p. 90 & p. 91.

[31] Isaac Crookenden, *The Fatal Revenge* (London: R. Harrild, 1808), p. 17.

[32] Ibid., p. 26.

apparent in some illustrations. The example of a deliberately parodic chapbook, which has been mistaken for Lewis's own, shows how his mocking tone and playful engagement with the supernatural is regarded as part of his unique style. Far from being exclusively concerned with pornography, supernaturalism, and violence, chapbooks still recycle the 'grin of the skull beneath the skin' – even if it is buried a little deeper beneath more 'polite' horror.

Figure 5.4: 'And agreeable to their Orders, brought Julien his Head. He contemplated it with exulting Scorn – See p. 17', Isaac Crookenden, *The Horrible Revenge* (London: R. Harrild, 1808)

5. 2 Haunted Histories: The Publication History of *The Demon of Sicily*

Chapbook publishers like Fisher, Lemoine, and Tegg were not the only publishers to recognise the marketability of Gothic tales and to borrow heavily from Lewis's use of spectacle. Even publishers who marketed their books to the middle classes – or, at least, those who sold their

novels and romances at prices only affordable to the middle classes – were interested in exploiting popular taste. One such example which closely imitates *The Monk* while adopting some elements of the female Gothic is Edward Montague's *The Demon of Sicily*, and it is first important to situate Montague's novel in the early nineteenth century publishing industry, and to review the publishers themselves, their tactics, reputation, and output, to illustrate how derivations of Lewis's novel came to be used as a marketing tool, and how such strategies consequently advanced the development of the male Gothic.

Edward Montague published five of his six works with the notorious James Fletcher Hughes, a publisher Peter Garside and Anthony Mandal suggest was 'never respectable'.[33] Garside's and Mandal's mammoth bibliography of literature published in the Romantic era drew heavily on the Corvey Library based in Höxter, Germany, a library which includes an impressive 72,000 volumes of books, including 15,000 English titles, and was collected mostly by Victor Amadeus, Landgraf of Hesse-Rotenburg (1779-1834).[34] However, certain absences in the library indicate that Victor and his wife, Elise, were not simply avid collectors of popular English novels: they were discerning in their choices as well, omitting texts and publishers that Garside and Mandal have catalogued from other sources. Works published by Hughes are notably absent.

Working initially in association with Crosby and Co. – the company that published William Godwin's *Caleb Williams* (1794) – Hughes entered the publishing market independently in 1802 at Cavendish Square, London. He was in the trade a decade, from 1802 to 1811, falling bankrupt in 1808, the same year he published more than any other publisher, including Minerva Press. During his career, Hughes published almost one hundred novels, which accounted for nearly ten percent of the market for fiction at the time.[35] Though he published only two novels in his first year, by 1806 he published ten, affirming his business to be a major contender in the industry, and one that was on the rise: in 1807, he published sixteen novels, while in 1808 the figure increased to twenty-seven. The year 1808 was not only the most productive for Hughes: more novels were published in 1808 than any other year between 1800-1829, with one hundred-and-one novels in total.[36] Hughes's twenty-seven novels

[33] Garside and Mandal, 'Producing Fiction in Britain, 1800-1829', p. 4.

[34] Sheffield Hallam, Corvey <https://extra.shu.ac.uk/corvey/oldwebpages/corvey.html> [accessed 21 July 2018].

[35] Ibid.

[36] Garside and Mandal, 'Producing Fiction in Britain'.

represent over a quarter of this number, establishing him, albeit briefly, as a dominant competitor in the publishing trade. No other publisher reached more than twenty novels during this year; Minerva published sixteen, while other leading publishers Longmans published ten, and Crosby and Co. nine.[37] Hughes's most productive years, 1807 and 1808, saw a total of forty-three novels in contrast to Minerva's twenty-nine. Further, as Potter's study shows, chapbooks themselves were fewer in number at this time. I would tentatively suggest, therefore, that the momentary downward turn to the cheaper trade of chapbooks could be a result of an uptake in novels, led by the cheap 'trade' Gothic texts by Hughes, whose books seems to have been half-way between the chapbook and the novel in price and quality.

Though his success was short-lived, it was evidently enough time to secure Hughes a reputation. In the long eighteenth century, as I have discussed in previous chapters, the status of the novel as a consumerist commodity feeding the insatiable appetite of an increasingly literate but indiscriminate reading public was the source of much concern for cultural gatekeepers, and Gothic romances in particular were often targeted as little better than a source of cheap thrills. The reviews of Dacre's *Zofloya,* which I discussed in Chapter 4, remind us that women writers and women readers in particular were seen to be at greatest risk of corruption from supposedly transgressive popular novels. With the stratification of the market at the turn of the nineteenth century, however, publishing popular fiction was ever-increasingly a capitalist venture, and could not be stopped by the outrage or warnings of critics; indeed, as I have suggested in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, the outcry against *The Monk* likely backfired, and only served to exacerbate public interest. Hughes, then, entered the industry at the opportune moment: in the aftermath of Lewis's successes, when it had become more than evident that critics could exercise little control over public taste, and when the novel had firmly entrenched itself in popular culture. Even more fortuitous for Hughes, he entered the market when the dominance of the leading publisher of Gothic and popular fiction of the 1790s began to wane: William Lane's Minerva Press.

Publishing records and statistics recently collated and analysed by Neiman illustrate that the Minerva Press, which has long been recognised as a leading publisher by scholars, reached its highest rate of output in the years 1795-1802, but began to decline in the years 1803 to 1811. The years Neiman identifies to be Minerva's heyday follow in the wake of Ann Radcliffe's first novels*, The Castle of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789), *A Sicilian Romance* (1790), and *The Romance of the Forest* (1791), which were soon followed by the immensely popular

[37] See Garside, *The English Novel, 1770-1829.*

The Mysteries of Udolpho (1764) and *The Italian* (1797). Minerva published a number of notable works by other women Gothic novelists during the 1790s, including Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* (1796), Eliza Parsons *The Mysterious Warning* (1796), and Eleanor Sleath's *The Orphan of the Rhine* (1798), which make up three of the 'Horrid' novels in Austen's *Northanger Abbey* (see Chapter 3). Lane published so many women writers in the 1780s and 1790s that they outnumbered male novelists, an achievement that Neiman calls the 'Minerva effect', one which would last until 1821 when the press diminished under Anthony Newman's control.

But Nieman suggests that Minerva's initial period of decline was 1803-1811, in which other scholars have identified both the shift in direction of the Gothic initiated by Lewis and the rise of the male author. Anthony Mandal's review of publishing trends between 1780 and 1820 cites that 'the 1800s as a period saw roughly even gender distribution of authorship, in no small part the result of the market for Gothic fiction driven by Lewis's male imitators'.[38] While Mandal suggests that the more equal gender distribution of novelists was partly a result of the number of male authors imitating Lewis, it is important to recall that, as I have already discussed in Chapter 1, the sex of the author does not dictate what works may be considered to follow the female or male Gothic trends, and Dacre's *Zofloya* (1806) is a leading example of how female authors adopted Lewis's style in the early 1800s. Furthermore, while Neiman shows that during the years of Lane's initial decline of 1803-11 there were fewer women who published with Lane than before the turn of the nineteenth century, the decrease is minimal; it is during 1820 and 1829 that the rates of female authors decreased noticeably, which answers for what Neiman refers to as the 'masculinizing of the market' as the Victorian era begins.[39]

Hughes thus entered the publishing industry during Minerva's initial decline – though I am by no means suggesting Hughes, as a rival publisher with (fleeting) success, was responsible for their deterioration. He was, however, a savvy salesman – or, as Lucy Cogan colourfully puts it, a 'rackety figure who specialised in popular fiction aimed squarely at feeding the public's voracious appetite for novels'.[40] As his marketing tactics and choice of novels show, Hughes was unhindered by such paltry concerns as causing offence and was more

[38] Mandal, 'Gothic and the Publishing World, 1780-1820', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Byron and Townshend, pp. 159-71 (p.167).

[39] Neiman, *Minerva's Gothics* (2019), p. 24.

[40] Lucy Cogan, 'Introduction', in Charlotte Dacre, *Confessions of the Nun of St Omer* (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), p. vii.

than content to exploit the appetite for the Gothic. Numerous titles published by Hughes deliberately imitated other popular titles, such as Sophia Woodfall's *Rosa; or, the Child of the Abbey* (1805), which played upon Roche's *Children of the Abbey*. More explicitly, the boldly titled *The Monk of Udolpho* (1807) clearly draws on the titles of the two most popular Gothic novels of the time, Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) and Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794). According to the author of this hybrid, the title was not his choice, but rather Hughes's. T. J. Horsley Curties, a prolific Gothic author who published with Minerva Press as well, claimed that he was called upon by Hughes to complete the task of writing a novel with such a title after the death of Hughes's original author. In his preface, Curties complains that 'not without the strongest reluctance' did he agree to the task, and so '*declare[s] thus publicly* any share in the title page'.[41]

Of course, Hughes was not the only publisher to exploit the taste for the Gothic. For example, Anthony K. Newman, William Lane's successor at the Minerva Press, re-published nearly sixty per cent of their stock, advertising some as new or with new titles.[42] This trend of reprinting Gothic novels, and in some cases changing the titles to disguise them as new, was continued by a number of publishers throughout the 1820s and 1830s. Penny blood publishers also took up this practice, as I will discuss in Chapter 6. From the Gothic heyday to the mid-nineteenth century, titles featuring castles, monks, nuns, and mysteries abound. The novels Hughes published by Edward Montague are no different. For example, under the pseudonym Edward Mortimer, *Montoni; or, the Confessions of the Monk of Saint Benedict* was published in 1808, a title that recalls the dastardly Montoni of Radcliffe's *Udolpho*, and Lewis's own *The Monk*.[43] Nor was the Gothic the only genre to be exploited in such a way; hack writers such as Charles Sedley and Mary Julia Young, who both also published with Hughes, imitated popular scandal novels as well as the Gothic. Nicola Lloyd claims that Young's novels 'all pastiche elements of popular modes of fiction', including the declining interest in sensibility and

[41] T. J. Horsley Curties, *The Monk of Udolpho* (London: J. F. Hughes, 1807). Original italic.

[42] For Anthony Newman's publishing practices, see Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press, 1790-1820* (London: Oxford University Press, 1939). Statistics cross-referenced by myself and Léger-St-Jean for research on Gothic reprints from 1800-1840s; see forthcoming, Hannah-Freya Blake and Marie Léger-St-Jean 'Penny pinching: reassessing the Gothic canon in penny blood reprints', in *Penny Dreadfuls and the Gothic*, ed. by Nicole Dittmer and Sophie Raine (Cardiff: Wales University Press, 2022).

[43] Hereafter, the title of *Montoni; or, the Confessions of the Monk of Saint Benedict* will be abbreviated to *Montoni.*

sentiment, the current taste for the Gothic, and the rising interest in scandal.[44] For instance, according to Lloyd, Young's *The East Indian, or Clifford Priory* (1799) is in Radcliffe's style of the Gothic, while *Moss Cliffe Abbey; or, the Sepulchral Harmonist* (1803), the first of her novels she published with Hughes, merely pastiches the Gothic while using sentimental devices to comment on public vice. Other titles by Young, such as *A Summer at Brighton* (1807) and *A Summer at Weymouth* (1808), replicate the popular scandal novel by T. S. Surr, *A Winter in London* (1806), published by Richard Phillips. Sedley's *The Infidel Mother: or, Three Winters in London* is of the same ilk, and was particularly criticised in the fifth volume of *The Monthly Repertory of English Literature* (1808) as one of many novels with 'a title-page [that] ought to have some relation to the contents of the book'.[45] The criticism continues, along with a list of other novels with titles relating to English cities, protesting that '[t]his *ruse de commerce* of a tricking title-page is only an old cheat practised upon the purse of the public'.[46]

Thus, Hughes acquired a bad reputation for catering to, and exploiting, public interests in popular fiction, and nothing seemed more popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century than Lewisite Gothic – or even Lewis himself. Hughes published three of Lewis's own works, including *The Bravo of Venice* in 1805, a translation of a German novel by Heinrich Zschokke, the second edition of which advertised the upcoming *Legends of the Nunnery,* supposedly by Matthew Lewis. However, this was a flagrant lie: *Legends of the Nunnery* was written by Edward Montague, and was published the same year as *The Demon of Sicily* in 1807. As is evident in Curties' aforementioned preface, Hughes had no qualms about taking liberties with novels and novelists to market them as he saw fit, and Montague's novel was no exception. Cogan even suggests that Dacre was subjected to Hughes's manipulative marketing tactics, casting the sincerity of Dacre's dedication to Lewis in *Confessions of the Nun of St Omer* (1805) into doubt as the novel itself bears little resemblance to his Gothic style. However, given how deliberately Dacre cultivated her own persona, and her parodic engagement with *The Monk* in *Zofloya*, I find it unlikely that Hughes acted without her blessing in this case (see Chapter 4).

Hughes, then, deliberately fostered an association with Lewis and other authors, including Montague. But it is Montague's *The Demon of Sicily* in particular that purposely

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[44] Nicola Lloyd, 'Mary Julia Young: A Biographical and Bibliographical Study', *Romantic Textualities: Literature and Print Culture, 1780-1840*, 18 (2008), 63-114 (p. 66).

[45] *The Monthly Repertory of English Literature*, 5 (London: Parsons, Galignani and Co, 1808), p. 289. Original italics.

[46] Ibid.

imitates *The Monk*. Montague Summers in *The Gothic Quest*, one of the earliest studies on the genre, briefly addresses Montague's *The Demon of Sicily*, describing the novel as 'extremely imitative of and infinitely more extravagant' than Lewis's *The Monk*, though beyond noting the close likenesses between the two novels, Summers does not recommend Montague's works to 'any save those who can find pleasure even in the extravagances of this school'.[47] The claim that Montague's novel imitates and exaggerates *The Monk* is one that the modern publisher, Valancourt Books, continues in their blurb for their bicentennial anniversary edition of *The Demon of Sicily*, suggesting Montague's novel 'outdoes Lewis's novel in its outrageous depiction of sex and violence'.[48] Drawing comparisons to *The Monk* is still clearly a beneficial means of advertising a novel to modern publishers. As I have outlined in Chapter 1, the visceral qualities of Lewis's Gothic are the most common features modern scholars use to identify or categorise the male Gothic emphasising, as Andrew Smith suggests, the 'fantastical world of the killer' and 'semi-pornographic visual images'.[49] It is this latter component that likely drew William Dugdale to both *The Monk* and *The Demon of Sicily* in the later 1830s.

Before I turn to the novel itself and address the ways in which Montague imitates or even 'outdoes' Lewis, a final discussion of the novel's publishing history further testifies to the ways in which the male Gothic became marketable. In 1839, Dugdale republished both *The Demon of Sicily* and *The Monk* in serial form. The timing is telling; Dugdale's republication of *The Monk* coincides with the publication of *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, a biography by Mrs Margaret Baron Cohen Wilson and published by Henry Colburn, though Baron-Wilson's authorship was not acknowledged until 1844, and the reliability of her accounts is doubted by both Louis Peck and David MacDonald, who are particularly wary of her efforts to recover Lewis from the shadow of controversy caused by *The Monk*.[50] But Dugdale, like Hughes before him, was a publisher with a reputation. His notoriety as a publisher of obscene and pornographic literature led to numerous incarcerations and influenced the development of Lord Campbell's Act against obscene publications in 1857. The year before

[47] Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, p. 236 & p. 239.

[48] Blurb to *The Demon of Sicily* (Valancourt Books, 2007).

[49] Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71.

[50] Henry Colburn was predominantly a publisher of the popular 'Silver Fork' novels. See Casey, 'The Silver Fork Novel', in *A Companion to Sensation Fiction,* ed. by Gilbert, pp. 13-26.

this Act came into place, police raided Dugdale's shop for the ninth time and seized over 3,000 novels.[51] Though Dugdale began his career as a radical pressman, by the 1830s he had become a leading seller of high-quality pornography.[52] His advertisement in *The Oddfellow* of 1839, which includes both *The Monk* and *The Demon of Sicily*, also includes *The Memoirs of Harriette Wilson*, *Written by Herself*.[53] Originally published in 1825, Wilson's memoirs recount her life as a courtesan in the Regency period, sharing lurid details of her liaisons with numerous aristocratic patrons. An additional description of the new print of Lewis's novel is provided, describing the edition as '[v]erbatim from the original, which was suppressed'.[54] Arguably, Dugdale is toying with the truth here; the expunged fourth edition of *The Monk*, as I mentioned in Chapter 1 and Chapter 3, did little to abate the public interest. Dugdale uses the scandal attending the novel to entice readers who, in the early years of Victoria's reign and two decades after Lewis's death, are somewhat removed from the original charges of blasphemy and immorality levelled against *The Monk*. By advertising *The Monk* and *The Demon of Sicily* together, Montague's novel is not only associated with the same scandalous content as Lewis's, but also with a host of obscene and pornographic publications. Although it is difficult to track Dugdale's entire output as he published under numerous pseudonyms, lists compiled by Sheryl Straight and Sarah Bull respectively strongly suggest that *The Monk* and *The Demon of Sicily* are the only Gothic novels he reprinted.[55]

Dugdale's discerning and highly selective choice of Gothic novels emphasises the transgressive sexual content in both and brings Lewis's and Montague's novels to new readers. Iain McCalman suggests that most of Dugdale's clientele were upper class men because his publications were expensive luxuries, though Lynda Nead points out that women and working-class people could at least see Dugdale's wares in his glass-front shop window on Holywell Street. In the aforementioned advertisement, *The Demon of Sicily* was listed at a price of two shillings, while *The Monk* was available for two shillings and sixpence (the most expensive

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[51] Matthew Sweet, *Inventing the Victorians* (London: Faber and Faber, 2001).

[52] Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries, and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Oxford: Carendon Paperbacks, 1993).

[53] 'Multiple Classified Advertisements', *The Oddfellow*, (1839), p. 152.

[54] Ibid.

[55] My thanks go to Dr Sarah Bull, Assistant Professor at Toronto University, for discussing her extensive research into Dugdale and for highlighting relevant materials for review.

novel in this advert was *The Memoirs of Harriette Wilson* at four shillings and sixpence). These prices, contrary to McCalman and Nead's assertions, suggest some of Dugdale's publications were fairly average in price.[56] The illustrations accompanying *The Demon of Sicily* are also not of particularly high quality, though they do depict the sexual, supernatural and violent content of Montague's novel. For example, an illustration accompanies the story of 'Leonardi de Vicensio and the Fair Isabella', one of many integrated 'histories' the protagonists read to pass the time. Isabella, devoted wife of Ugo de Tracy, stabbed herself to prevent the villainous Vicensio from coercing her to have sex with him; frustrated, he 'divided the lovely head of Isabella from the convulsed body' before she died. Dugdale's illustration (Figure 5.5) depicts this horrific scene. While the illustration shows Isabella's naked breasts, the novel itself does not go so far as to describe her decapitated corpse with breasts displayed – much as the French version of *The Monk* depicted Matilda's breasts in every illustration, whether or not there was a corresponding reference in the narrative, as discussed in Chapter 1 (see Figure 1.2). The illustrations accompanying Montague's novel, by publishing alongside Lewis's and by being a close imitation of it, magnify the pornographic violence of the male Gothic.

[56] Simon Eliot, *Some Patterns and Trends in British Publishing, 1800-1919* (London: The Bibliographical Society, 1994).

Figure 5.5: 'Vicensio's Revenge on the Body of Isabella', Edward Montague, *The Demon of Sicily* (London: Dugdale, 1839)

Publishers across two centuries exploited the similarities between *The Demon of Sicily* and *The Monk* to market Montague's novel, from Hughes in the early 1800s, Dugdale some thirty years later, and twenty-first century Valancourt Press. Hughes rode Lewis's coattails at the height of his celebrity; Dugdale celebrated the pornographic violence of *The Monk* and Montague's derivation of it by serialising and illustrating *The Demon of Sicily* in the manner of a penny blood; Valancourt Press appeals to modern Gothic enthusiasts by suggesting Montague is even more excessive and extravagant than Lewis. The male Gothic – the new focus on 'male violence, female persecution, and semi-pornographic scenes' in the Gothic which scholars hold Lewis accountable for initiating – was born not only as a result of imitative texts, but by the deliberate marketisation of its core transgressions.[57] The joke was very much on the critics who lambasted Lewis: the appetite of the public could not be satiated.

[57] Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71.

5. 3 Dialogues with Demons: Edward Montague's *The Demon of Sicily* (1807)

While publishers were keen to supply readers with the latest popular fiction, they could not do so without authors willing to write stories which recycled popular tropes and plots. Hughes published an interesting mix of authors, some of renown like Lewis himself, popular and prolific writers like Wilkinson, and imitative 'hack' writers like Sedley. Hughes needed these less reputable but otherwise popular writers on board, even if some, like T. J. Horsley-Curties, would have preferred not to be so besmirched by his marketing tricks. Edward Montague appears to be one such willing writer. Like many minor Gothic authors, Montague has not been the subject of extended study and little is known about his life, but there is some evidence to suggest his reasons for writing. His first publication, a satirical poem titled *The citizen: a hudibrastic poem in five cantos. To which is added, Nelson's ghost: a poem in two parts* (1806), which sold for six shillings, suggests that Montague wrote for money.[58] In his prefatory address to reviewers, he explains that if it were not for the butcher's wife interrupting his breakfast to request the debt he owed her husband, he would not have sought to publish his 'first-born child'.[59] He hopes that, despite the 'imperfections' of the work, publishing will help settle his debts, asking that it

> raise me some money, that I may pay this red-faced devil, and ensure myself something to eat, for I have as great an objection to starving as most of my countrymen, and think it would very ill suit me indeed.[60]

Montague, writing six works across only two years, supposedly turned to writing to pay the butcher 'seven pounds eighteen shillings and ninepence'. His sarcasm, however, may suggest that such claims are in jest, or may even mock the common practice of prefatory addresses to readers and reviewers confessing an author's financial distress. The poem itself mocks romance writers who spend their time, 'Wasting so much writing paper/Filling the heads of these great nations/With tales of ghosts and apparitions'.[61] This mockery goes further, parodying women writers in particular who wrongly suppose their works were 'quite divine' when in reality 'the

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[58] 'Monthly Catalogue', *Monthly Review, or, Literary Journal*, 50 (1806), p. 103.

[59] Edward Montague, *The Citizen: a hudibrastic poem in five cantos. To which is added, Nelson's ghost: a poem in two parts* (London: J. F. Hughes, 1806), p. xii.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., p. 32-33.

reviewers did not dote/And monthly damned each book she wrote'.[62] Montague clearly had a sense of humour, even if it was at the expense of women writers. He even dedicated his poem to himself.

Despite this ridicule of popular romances, Montague's novels illustrate his familiarity with the form, beginning with his debut published by Minerva Press, *The Castle of Berry Pomeroy* (1806). While he went on to publish all of his subsequent novels with Hughes, it was not unusual at this time for novelists to debut with Minerva. Neiman calculates that fifty-nine per cent of authors published their first novels with Minerva between 1803 and 1811 before pursuing further publications with competitors elsewhere. Despite this period being the first sign of Minerva's decline in popularity, the publisher still attracted new novelists; Montague was one such novelist in this era who sought Minerva's well-established fame for publishing popular fiction to debut his first Gothic novel before turning to Hughes.

This may suggest why his first Gothic romance was published by Minerva, and not his subsequent Lewisite imitation, which I will address shortly. Named for the castle of the same name in Devonshire, *The Castle of Berry Pomeroy* tells the story of two sisters, one virtuous, the other vengeful. Lady Elinor poisons her sister, Matilda, to gain the inheritance and thwart her marriage to a man she too desires to marry, though the poison Elinor has given to Matilda is one that merely causes a death-like appearance. Father Bertrand, Elinor's co-conspirator who has supplied the poison, keeps Matilda alive but hidden in the chambers of her own crypt. In true Gothic fashion, Matilda's midnight wanderings lead Elinor to believe she is being haunted for her crimes. The castle is later stormed by the king's men, and Elinor and Father Bertrand are brought to court to meet with justice; Elinor is sentenced to live out her days in a nunnery, Father Bertrand is sentenced to death, and Matilda is reunited with her lover, and they marry. The story is more akin to female Gothic than male, as it lacks the lucid quality of violence, sex and supernaturalism and, despite Montague's parodic poem, lacks humour. Arguably, *The Castle of Berry Pomeroy*, with its medieval British landscape, including the siege at the castle itself and visits to the king's court, is an example of an historical-Gothic romance first and foremost.

The history of Montague's first novel is also one of interest. In twenty-first-century England, the castle is supposedly haunted by the 'White Lady', who is said to have been 'imprisoned in a dungeon by her sister, because of rivalry over a suitor', and has allegedly been

[62] Montague, *The Citizen*, p. 37.

seen 'dressed in white' and 'carrying her head under her arm'.[63] This spectre is said to be of Lady Margaret, a woman who is not recorded as having ever lived at Berry Pomeroy. Emma McEvoy argues that Montague's novel is partially responsible for this belief that the castle is haunted by a wronged sister, arguing that the White Lady is 'indebted to the *reprinting* of a Gothic novel of 1806 by some savvy local publishers'.[64] With the return of the Gothic at the end of the nineteenth-century and the mounting popularity of national ghost stories, the novel was re-published in 1892 alongside a guidebook to Berry Pomeroy Castle by the Mortimer brothers as part of what Emma McEvoy considers 'a well-coordinated business strategy aimed at the literary tourist'.[65] While the text itself, littered as it is with inconsistencies and errors, may not yield much interest to modern readers of the Gothic, its publishing history demands attention, illustrating how even trade Gothic novels could be used in marketing strategies nearly a century later and, in this case, be held responsible for a modern ghost story.

Montague's other novels have become much more obscure. In 1807, he began to publish with Hughes, producing *The Legends of a Nunnery* and *The Demon of Sicily*. The following year, under the pseudonym 'Edward Mortimer', he published *Montoni* with Hughes (this novel was first advertised on the frontispiece of *The Castle of Berry Pomeroy,* which used the name Montague); with the same moniker in 1808, he published the only non-Gothic novel of his brief oeuvre, *Modern Characters: A Novel* with G. Hughes.[66] Another novel, *Friar Hildargo*, is attributed to Edward Mortimer in the frontispiece for *Montoni*¸ and has also been attributed to Edward Montague, further suggesting the two are one and the same.[67] An original copy of this novel has not been sourced, but a later version has been rediscovered by Marie

[63] Emma McEvoy, 'Becoming a Haunted Castle: Literature, Tourism and Folklore at Berry Pomeroy', in *Gothic Tourism* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 127-59 (p. 143).

[64] Ibid., p. 156. Original italics.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Peter Garside suggests G. Hughes may have been related to J. F. Hughes; there is also a possibility J. F. Hughes is related to the chapbook publisher, Thomas Hughes. See Peter Garside, 'J. F. Hughes and the Publication of Popular Fiction, 1803-1810' (1987); https://academic.oup.com/library/article-pdf/s6IX/3/240/9871843/240.pdf [accessed 19 July 2018]; and Potter, *Gothic Chapbooks, Bluebooks, and Shilling Shockers*, p. 43.

[67] See McEvoy, 'Literature, Tourism and Folklore at Berry Pomeroy'.

Léger-St-Jean under the title *Love and Crime; or, the mystery of the convent*, a penny blood published by Thomas Paine in 1841 and later George Pierce.[68]

When *The Demon of Sicily* was first published in 1807 by Hughes, the Gothic had begun its male Gothic turn in the wake of the scandal caused by *The Monk* – and the similarities between the two novels are immediately evident. The opening scene of Montague's novel introduces the leading holy man admiring the portrait of a saint, Santa Catherina:

> A pleasing melancholy dwelt in the beautiful features; the mild blue eyes were raised in seeming adoration to Heaven; her golden locks flowed on her ivory neck, and the swelling charms of her bosom were perhaps too well represented for the gaze of the secluded inhabitants of a monastery, where whatever tends to excite the passions should studiously be avoided.[69]

The 'golden locks', like the 'golden ringlets' of the Madonna's portrait/Matilda's portrait in *The Monk*, the 'ivory neck', and the 'mild blue eyes' that are reminiscent of Lewis's Antonia, paint the Santa Catherina like any other Gothic heroine. But, as Valancourt Books's blurb suggests, the description goes further than *The Monk* by emphasising the 'swelling charms of her bosom' which, in Lewis's text, is referred to only by the euphemism 'beauteous Orb'. To open the novel with such a salacious scene invites readers to make comparisons between Montague's novel and *The Monk*, but with the distinct difference that Lewis's comparable scene occurs at chapter two (roughly forty pages into the novel in modern editions). The plot is launched immediately, with little time dedicated to scene-setting or characterisation. Montague's direct imitation of Lewis's text in the very opening page of *The Demon of Sicily* may arguably rely on readers recognising that he is, unashamedly, appropriating a key component of the scandalous novel, inviting a dialogue to be maintained between his novel, *The Monk*, and readers themselves.

For Montague's novel, the effect of this textual conversation appears to initially invite readers to make comparisons to illustrate that his novel is, in fact, even more sensational than Lewis's. If readers had not read the original, at least two chapbook abridgements of *The Monk* had been published by the time *The Demon of Sicily* had been published; some familiarity can therefore be expected of readers. Little time is dedicated to Padre Bernardo's interiority or

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[68] Marie Léger-St-Jean, 'Price One Penny. a Database of Cheap Literature, 1837-1860' http://www.priceonepenny.info/database/show_title.php?work_id=300 [accessed 26/03/2021]

[69] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 3.

guilty conscience; plot, as in many trade Gothic novels and chapbooks, is more essential than the emotional or psychological subjectivity of protagonists.[70] By forfeiting characterisation and interiority for plot, Montague creates a villain whose desires can go beyond those of the hypocritical Ambrosio, and in so doing creates a holy man who lusts not only for a mortal woman, but for an angelic saint. The form depicted in the portrait Padre Bernardo gazes upon with lust is not a representation of the devil-in-disguise as it is in *The Monk*; it is a representation of the real Santa Catherina, who appears before the licentious monk in a moment of divine intervention. Her 'golden locks' are 'waved in captivating ringlets on her bosom', but it is a 'vain presumptuous effort' for 'the pen of man [to] describe the beauties of a Saint'.[71] The notion of extreme beauty that is beyond words is common to Gothic romances, though here the meaning could also be an ironic signal that Santa Catherina is Saint Catherine de'Virgi of Bologna, patron of artists.[72] Further, this particular Saint Catherine is also recognised as the patron saint against temptation.[73] In a voice that sounds like 'the melody of a thousand harps', she pleads with the monk to 'repent of your faulty conduct, amend your future life, and by tears, fasting, and penitence, render yourself worthy to become an inhabitant of the blissful regions of Paradise'.[74] But her pleas do nothing to stop him. The angels, being 'guiltless', wear 'no envious veils to conceal the lovely beatific charms' of their perfect bodies, and are thus exposed to his hungry gaze.[75] Far from being inspired by their purity to atone for his sins, Padre Bernado 'greatly […] panted to be amongst those lovely forms'.[76] He is so wanton that even angels become the object of his desire, much to the shock of Santa Catherina herself, who quickly 'closed the view from his unhallowed gaze'.[77] His lust is insurmountable.

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[70] Hoeveler, 'Gothic Chapbooks and the Urban Reader'.

[71] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 42.

[72] Gothic novels are seldom applauded for their historical or geographical accuracy – so even if the novel is supposedly set in Sicily, to refer to a saint from Bologna, a northern city of Italy, is not too far-fetched.

[73] 'St. Catherine of Bologna', Catholic Online. Available at https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=111 [accessed 9 July 2019]

[74] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 42.

[75] Ibid.

[76] Ibid., p. 43-4.

[77] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 44.

That which is untouchable appears to be the most beguiling for the monk, which is, in Montague's vision of monastery life, all women. The holy man, sent to the monastery as an infant like other monks in his brotherhood, 'had not seen the face of a woman', leaving only the nuns 'with their long black veil seen through the chapel screen' to inform him of the 'fascinating sex'.[78] As such, Bernardo is desperate to see a real woman, and begs the Demon to reveal beauty to him. The Demon responds by teleporting Bernardo into the private chambers of a sleeping woman, where Bernardo is neither seen nor heard, or able to physically touch her. Rather, Bernardo is in prime position as a voyeur: able to look without being seen, much as Ambrosio is able to spy upon Antonia through the use of Matilda's magic mirror – but in closer proximity. Like other naked Gothic heroines, as I discussed in Chapter 4, Bernardo can see that 'part of her glossy tresses had wandered from their confinement, and sported over her bosom, which was exposed'.[79] The object of his desire eventually transpires to be his sister, again as Ambrosio and Antonia are related. The anonymity of this woman at this point in the plot, however, is somewhat confusing; until readers are told at the beginning of the fourth volume that events which took place in the fifth chapter of the first volume have now aligned chronologically, it is possible to assume the sleeping woman shown to Padre Bernardo to be Louisa, his own mother. Though this confusion is more likely a consequence of clumsy writing, incestuous desire for numerous close relations is a fairly frequent feature in the Gothic, especially the male Gothic, as is evident in Crookenden's works.[80]

These scenes show how Montague's own monk was modelled on Lewis's Ambrosio. Objectifying the divine and devout, Bernardo's lust is the principal force of the plot, but his desire for Angelina is never satiated. However, he does share sexual contact with a novice nun named Agatha whose real name, revealed in another plot line, is Laurentina – Conte Angelo's daughter. Agatha's story is comparable to Agnes's (as her name is comparable as well): seduced by a handsome man, she yields up her virginity to him, though he soon abandons her. Unlike Agnes, however, Agatha is shown to have her own sexual appetite, and has sexual

[78] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 68.

[79] Ibid., p. 253.

[80] A later scene in which Padre Bernardo dreams of embracing this unknown woman reads much like Victor Frankenstein's dreams of embracing his lover before her form crumbles into that of his dead mother's in Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818): 'He then thought he drew near to embrace her; his arms encircled her lovely waist; when suddenly the beauteous form faded to his view, the flesh deserted the bones, and a hideous skull was before him' (p. 69).

interactions with multiple men: Cavini, the first seducer; Marino, who is murdered by her father; Ferdinando, with whom she plots to escape from the nunnery; and Padre Bernardo.

Agatha has the greatest number of sexual encounters in the novel, relationships which are, because of where they take place and how often she is discovered in the act, spectacles for the reader. On one occasion, she 'abandoned […] every idea of delicacy, and studious only to gratify her passions […] passed the hours of midnight in shameful and sinful intercourse' in her father's house – much to his outrage, as he discovers the lovers in the act and kills Marino, a scene that is depicted by Dugdale's illustration to the 1839 edition (see Figure 5.6).[81] Though the illustration is not pornographic, the violence is sexually symbolic. The blade wielded by the father is phallic, poised above Marino's punctured chest; blood pours over Agatha/Laurentina's well-defined breasts in an ejaculative stream which looks to be emerging as much from the tip of the dagger as it is from Marino's wound. By having pre-marital sex, Agatha loses her identity, which is entirely owned by the patriarchal father within whose power it is to expel her from his house, change her name, and force her to enter the prison-like confines of the nunnery.

Despite the expectation that she will become a celibate nun, Agatha's sexuality fundamentally does not alter. Here she meets Ferdinando, and eagerly awaits his return so that he can help her escape. So fervent are their desires for each other, however, that they cannot resist fulfilling them, and the first opportunity for escape is missed as a result. Padre Bernardo, having spied upon the two lovers, blackmails Agatha to have sex with him if she wishes her secret to be kept safe. Padre Bernardo and Agatha then have intercourse, this time atop the grave of the woman Agatha had poisoned, Sister Marianne. Sister Claudina, having ventured to the crypt to mourn the loss of her friend, discovers the two in the act, but is murdered by Padre Bernardo before she can raise the alarm. In each of these examples, not only are the sexual acts themselves taboo (because pre-marital), they are taboo because they are in sacred places, or otherwise spaces that are overseen by a ruling patriarch (God the Father, the monastery's Abbot, the biological father Conte Angelo). Agatha is always caught in the act – by her father, by Padre Bernardo, and by Sisters Marianne and Claudina; her sexual encounters are always a spectacle, for characters and readers alike.

[81] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 166.

Figure 5.6: 'Count Angelo Stabbing the Paramor of his Daughter', *The Demon of Sicily* (London: William Dugdale, 1839), p. 167

As previously discussed in the introductory chapter, much of the sexual content of *The Monk* relies on visual imagery, as the carnal acts themselves quickly lose Ambrosio's interest. As the analysis thus far illustrates, *The Demon of Sicily* features voyeurism prominently through the lust of Padre Bernardo and his objectification of Santa Catherina's portrait and his secret observations of Angelina, enabled by the assistance of the titular Demon's powers. Linked to the use of voyeurism in Montague's *The Demon of Sicily* is the presence of the supernatural; the titular Demon is a voyeur himself, though his desires are much more malicious. The Demon is always watching for sinful mortals, searching for an opportunity to corrupt their hearts and claim their souls for hell. For example, when Padre Bernardo again wishes to be with a woman, the Demon 'saw the monk, and though deep plunged in the centre of the globe, he heard his request'.[82] His primary role in the novel is to tempt those who are already deliberating to commit sin. An eloquent speaker, he offers convincing rhetoric to tempt his victims to succumb to their desires and sign over their soul to him. To Agatha/Laurentina,

[82] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 71.

for example, he uses flattery to convince her that she is loved by Cavini, and that love is no sin, but natural, and warns that '[t]oo often in the formal tie of marriage the sweet emotions of the soul, the ineffable delights of existence, the charms of love are for ever lost'.[83]

The Demon and his minions are set upon claiming the souls of the sinful, and quite literally do so. In the story of the brothers Rodolph and Felippo – one of the histories of the monastery Bernardo peruses to while away the time awaiting the Demon's nocturnal visitation – Felippo murders his own brother for marrying the beautiful Laurina. The inhabitants of the castle hear the groans of death and fall upon Felippo; to save himself from execution, he sells his soul to the Demon. But this is a trick, for which Felippo suffers greatly:

> Instantly sharp and excruciating pains seized [Felippo's] body, his soul trembled on his lips; a fiend, commissioned by the Demon, seized it, and in his sharp talons tightly grasped it; and darting through the earth thousands of fathoms, at length hovered over the burning lake, where he released his burthen, which flailing plunged deeply into the horrid flood, and then rising, rolled on with the flaming billows, to join myriads of unfortunate wretches in the same torturous state.[84]

The effect of the horror is immediate, but the detail that provides it is vague; while Felippo suffers 'instantly sharp and excruciating pains', his journey to Hell is incomprehensibly rapid, something that cannot be described in words. The effect of Montague's horror is to supply enough imaginative detail for the reader to develop the image in full, and to aid such imagery by drawing on popular conceptions of Hell, such as the Miltonic 'burning lake' and the 'horrid flood', and the tortured wretches who populate the nightmare vision in a Dante-esque scene of suffering.

The appearance of Montague's demon is also comparable to Lewis's own descriptions of Lucifer:

> his form was noble; a *beautiful* symmetry dwelt in his limbs, but his countenance bore the *marks of regret, disappointed ambition, and inveterate malice*; dark and dreadful passions had marked his features with their gloomy hue, and by *his eyes of fire* the monk recognized in him his nocturnal visitant.[85] (*The Demon of Sicily*; emphasis added)

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[83] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 159. I am also reminded of the frequent monologues found in Marquis de Sade's *Justine*, in which a number of 'debauchees' attempt to convince the virtuous heroine that all forms of pleasure are what 'nature' intended, and thus to deny oneself is sinful because disobedient to natural laws. See Sade, *Justine, or the Misfortunes of Virtue.*

[84] Ibid., p. 251.

[85] Ibid., p. 43.

> the perfection of whose form and face was unrivalled […] Yet however *beautiful* the Figure, He could not but remark *a wildness in the Daemon's eyes*, and a mysterious *melancholy impressed upon his features*, betraying the Fallen Angel, and inspiring the Spectators with secret awe.[86] (*The Monk*; emphasis added)

Both Montague's demon and Lewis's Lucifer are beautiful, though marked by regret, and their eyes reveal their true nature. In these quotations, the demonic figures are reminiscent of Milton's Satan – noble, beautiful and melancholy rhetoricians. Louis James, having only discovered Dugdale's 1839 version of the text, recognised 'some glimmerings of past English literature' in *The Demon of Sicily*, suggesting that Montague's novel applied 'the cosmology and demonology of Milton's *Paradise Lost* [...] to Gothic romance, and has verbal echoes of Milton's work'.[87] James, however, had not realised that this was not the first edition of Montague's text, and failed to account for its relationship to *The Monk*.

This noble vision of the demon is not illustrated. Like *The Monk. A Romance…,* Dugdale's illustration of the titular Demon appearing before the monk is monstrous in appearance, and dark in contrast to the white robes of the weeping nuns (see Figure 5.7). With the exception of the wings, the demonic figure is quite human in appearance. He is, however, racially contrasted with the white face of the nun and the monk. Dressed only in a loin cloth, the demon recalls common depictions of West Indian and African slaves from the era (see Figure 5.8). Though the illustration in Dugdale's penny blood comes after the Slavery Abolition Act in the UK (1833), it maintains racist associations between the demonic and the African race also seen in earlier chapbooks.

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[86] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 277.

[87] Louis James, *Fiction for the Working Man, 1830-1850; a Study of the Literature Produced for the Working Classes in Early Victorian Urban England* (Middlesex: Penguin University Books, 1974), p. 77.

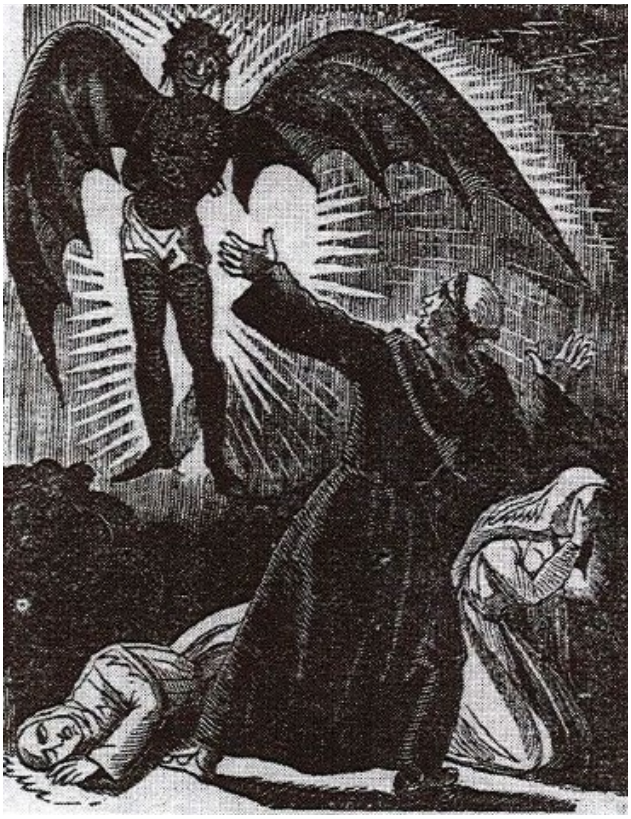

Figure 5.7: ‘The Demon of Sicily appearing to Bernardo’, *The Demon of Sicily* (London: William Dugdale, 1839), p. 226

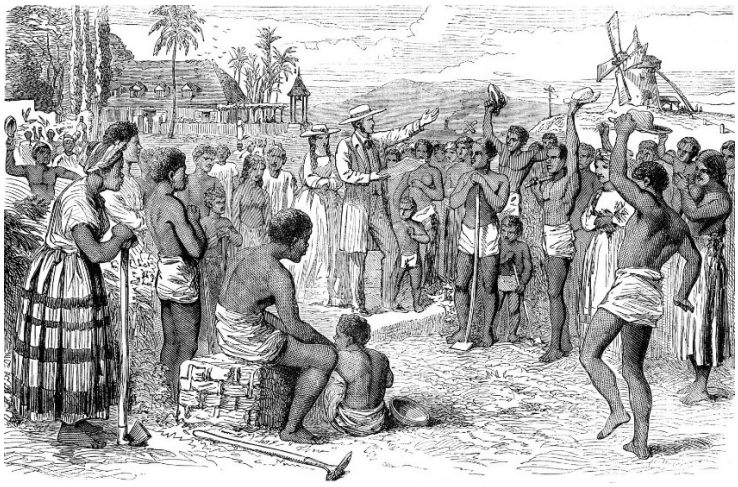

Figure 5.8: ‘Enslaved persons on a West Indian plantation being freed following passage of the Slavery Abolition Act’ (1833)

Though the supernatural of *The Demon of Sicily* has already been discussed, it does also include the explained supernatural. One of the early instances of what eventually transpires to be a fakery of supernaturalism is when Ricardo, Padre Bernardo’s father, explores the forbidden tower of his father’s castle in search of the secret of his mother’s death. He is prohibited from entering a chamber by the sudden appearance of ‘a bloody sword and arm

seemed thrust out of the solid wall' in a scene that is more reminiscent of Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) than it is of *The Monk*.[88] Though quite absurd and an example of the Gothic's 'comic turn', the monstrous suit of armour that terrorises various characters in Walpole's text is a supernatural phenomenon. However, the thrusting hand that blocks Ricardo's path is (much later) revealed to be a deliberate ruse by his father's confessor. Father Grimaldi, on his death bed, reveals his involvement with the Marchese's plots to first incarcerate his wife in the Southern Tower, and then to kill her. Father Grimaldi is convinced that he did slay Ricardo's mother, and that her body lies still in the chamber of the tower, having seen her ghostly form pass through the turret bearing a lamp. Again, this instance of spiritual wandering is explained when Ricardo's mother's last letters are discovered, revealing that she had fled from the castle to the sanctuary of the monastery, where she composed her tale though she died from her wounds soon after. In this double layer of explained supernatural, the ghostly figure Father Grimaldi saw was, in fact, his victim escaping.

Like many Gothic novels of the day, the monks of both of Montague's novels are conspirators and murderers, corrupted by greed and lust. Hoeveler suggests that the 'demonic nuns and mysterious monks' that so frequently populate lower-class Gothic literature keeps the 'demonic and the divine alive in all of their magnificent power' after the supernatural has faded from public imagination.[89] Certainly this is evident in both *The Castle of Berry Pomeroy* and *The Demon of Sicily*; there is a distinct and simplistic binary between the forces of good and evil, the heroes and villains, a binary that is common in cheaper, or less reputable, Gothic literature. Though Ambrosio in *The Monk* is a 'monster of hypocrisy', he does, to an extent, suffer the pangs of his conscience, and readers are made privy to his own introspections. In contrast, Padre Bernardo shows very little remorse for his break from faith.

Montague's use of the explained supernatural and the real supernatural embed a moral message in his novel. Potter suggests that 'trade Gothic often unexpectedly contained a moral subtext which attempted to interpose decorum, decency and morality.'[90] As previously demonstrated, Agatha in *The Demon of Sicily* is shown some sympathy for her indiscretions, though her story is presented as if a lesson to other women: 'Let her sad story arm her with

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[88] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 37.

[89] Diane Long Hoeveler, *The Gothic Ideology: Religious Hysteria and Anti-Catholicism in British Popular Fiction, 1780-1880* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2014), p. 4.

[90] Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing*, p. 98.

resolution to steel her bosom against the soft advances of love and the empassioned language of the seducer'.[91] This novel, which supposedly 'outdoes Lewis's novel in its outrageous depictions of sex and violence', is moderated by morality. Other Gothic texts, including *The Monk*, tag moral messages to the resolutions as if to redeem the transgressions of the main body of the work, with very little lasting effect. The moral messages of *The Demon of Sicily* increase in the second half of the novel, though any intention to demonstrate that 'vice to be hated needs but to be seen' is not initially evident.[92] It is possible to argue, at least, that the increasing number of the narrator's moral messages may indicate an awareness of the need to appease critical opinion; on the one hand, the sexual content is initially more transgressive than *The Monk*, while on the other, *The Demon of Sicily* engages with conciliating rhetoric against vice.

Montague's *The Demon of Sicily* is more nuanced than a straight-forward Lewisite Gothic fiction: whatever any deliberate marketing tactics imply, it is not a simple imitation. Rather, as I have shown, it is in dialogue with *The Monk* as well as female Gothic tropes. Published by Hughes, who was keen to meet the demands of the reading public, *The Demon of Sicily* is more scandalous from the outset, launching straight away into a scene in which a holy man sexually objectifies a saint. Though Montague's writing may not meet the same standards as canonical Gothic texts, it certainly illustrates how *The Monk* was re-packaged with tropes of the female Gothic for audiences hungry for the latest literary trends.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that *The Monk* was the most frequently abridged in chapbook form. While the abridgements at times gloss over explicit sexual content or violence, illustrations chiefly depict violent and supernatural scenes. They highlight the parodic potential of the spectacles Lewis describes in *The Monk*, showcasing a clash between domesticity and supernaturalism. Further, horror writers like Isaac Crookenden were clearly emboldened by Lewis's example. Although chapbooks are perhaps more imitative in nature than parodic in their engagement with *The Monk* and male Gothic tropes, there is still an undercurrent of the comic, even if it is hidden by moral tags which claims that vice was only represented to better promote virtue.

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[91] Montague, *The Demon of Sicily*, p. 305.

[92] Ibid.

I have also shown that publishers have a role to play in the ways in which the male Gothic is understood. Hughes, a 'rackety figure', was quick to exploit the scandal caused by *The Monk* and published a flurry of imitative texts, including *The Demon of Sicily*.[93] William Dugdale's 1839 republication of *The Demon of Sicily* alongside *The Monk* in penny weekly numbers further positions both texts as pornographic in nature. So, too, does the republication history of Montague's *The Castle of Berry Pomeroy*, discussed by Emma McEvoy, illustrate the relevance of Gothic studies engaging with publication history.

Montague's novel initially appears to outdo the scandalous sexual and violent content of *The Monk* by launching into the heart of the action. In so doing, he foregoes the parodic engagement with the performance of gender Lewis had established in the beginning of *The Monk*. The dialogue that Montague's text initially established with Lewis's text further breaks down with the introduction of the explained supernatural. The real supernatural occurs mostly in Padre Bernardo's plotline, the portion of the narrative that bears strongest resemblance to Lewis's *The Monk*; in the same turn, the explained supernatural belongs to the parallel plot, which is more comparable to the female Gothic. The supernatural itself is quasi-religious in nature – the book is peopled by Angels and Demons, not ghosts and goblins – which endorses clear distinctions between right and wrong, good and evil. As Potter and Hoeveler both suggest, cheaper Gothic novels appear to eschew moral ambiguity. In the example of Montague's text, this accounts for the breakdown of parodic dialogue. Even so, Montague's novel is evidence of the rising interest in sensationalism, which the penny blood flaunts with glee in the Victorian era. In my final chapter, I trace the comic vein in the Gothic metropolis of London, where humour and horror are the deviant delights of Sweeney Todd and Mrs Lovett.

[93] Cogan, 'Introduction', in Dacre, *Confessions of the Nun of St Omer*, p. vii.

Chapter 6

Haemorrhaging Horror: Penny Bloods and the Male Gothic

The so-called first wave of Gothic literature, initiated by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764, is typically considered to conclude with Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth the Wanderer* in 1821.[1] The 1820s predominantly turned to historical fiction, newly 'masculinised' following the example of Sir Walter Scott's Waverley Novels (1814-1832).[2] While the rising number of male authors at the turn of the nineteenth century is largely considered to be a result of Matthew Lewis's influence, male novelists did not begin to outnumber women writers until Scott's entry into the market.[3] Gothic chapbooks, and chapbooks in general, declined after 1825 as the publishing market shifted interests, marked by the rise of serialisations and cheap fiction.[4] Yet the Gothic is not so easily exorcised; as Jarlath Killeen explains, the genre 'fragmented and took up ghostly inhabitants elsewhere, indeed everywhere, in nineteenth-century culture'.[5]

The final chapter of this thesis considers the Gothic in penny blood fiction in the 1840s. According to *Price One Penny: A Database of Cheap Literature, 1837-1860*, over one thousand penny weekly serials were published from 1837 through to 1860.[6] Edward Lloyd was the most prolific publisher, accounting for thirty-two per cent of serials and producing ten periodicals; his longest running penny periodical was *The Penny Sunday Times and People's Police Gazette*, which began in April 1840 and concluded in October 1850. Although most

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[1] See Carol Margaret Davison's discussion of the first wave of the Gothic in *History of the Gothic: Gothic Literature 1764-1824* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009)

[2] Mandal, 'Gothic and the Publishing World, 1780-1820', in *The Gothic World*, ed. by Byron and Townshend, pp. 159-71. Sir Walter Scott's Waverley Novels, though largely considered historical fiction, still share affinities with the Gothic. See Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[3] Munday, 'The Novel and Its Critics in the Early Nineteenth Century'.

[4] Potter, *Gothic Chapbooks*.

[5] Jarlath Killeen, *Gothic Literature, 1825-1914* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), p. 3.

[6] Marie Léger-St-Jean, *Price One Penny: A Database of Cheap Literature, 1837-1860*, online database: http://www.priceonepenny.info/database/statistics.php [accessed 15 October 2019]. All statistical data is from this database, unless otherwise stated.

serials were penned by anonymous hack writers, Thomas Peckett Prest, James Malcolm Rymer, and George William MacArthur Reynolds collectively account for fifteen per cent of serials with identified authors, totalling 173. But *Price One Penny* is incomplete; Marie Léger-St-Jean's database, which cross-references numerous other existing bibliographies, catalogues, and libraries, awaits access to information from three other bibliographies: the list of 1,047 titles on *Price One Penny* is only going to grow. Such a multitude suggests that the role of parodic dialogue in the development of the male Gothic may shift, which will be explored throughout this chapter.

The first section of this chapter considers the penny bloods *Angelina, or St Mark's Abbey* (1841) by Thomas Peckett Prest and *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle* (1844) by James Malcolm Rymer, illustrating how Gothic tropes were recycled for new consumers in the early Victorian era. Predominantly drawing on female Gothic machinery, Prest's and Rymer's early ventures into the Gothic for penny blood publication lacked any noticeable innovation. Prone as they are to recycling machinery and hyperbole, it is easy to mistake repetitive patterns and cliché for parody; distinguishing between deliberate humour and accidental absurdity can be difficult in these examples.

The second section considers James Malcolm Rymer's *Varney the Vampire, or, the Feast of Blood* (1845-7). Although there has been some interest in the serial in more recent years, it has been viewed to have little literary merit by modern scholars, despite its popularity among contemporaries. *Varney the Vampire* is generally confined to studies specifically dedicated to the vampire in which, at least, it is rightly recognised as instrumental in the development of prevailing literary (and filmic/televisual) representation of the creatures.[7] In addressing Rymer's popular serial, I analyse the ways in which the male Gothic came to be re-packaged for the new, Victorian popular market, and uncover the continuation of the comic vein in its horrors.

The third section of this thesis turns to the most enduring penny blood in popular culture: Rymer's *The String of Pearls*, better known today as *Sweeney Todd*. This macabre tale of inadvertent cannibalism is replete with double entendre; when the mystery of where Todd sends his corpses is revealed, and the origins of the stench around St Dunstan's church is uncovered, readers are invited to look back on sly, witty hints and double-meanings throughout the serial. In a Victorian London in which almost anyone can be a murderer or a victim,

[7] For examples, see Auerbach, *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, and Gelder, *Reading the Vampire*.

Rymer's new urban Gothic revels in playing tricks not on the critics as Lewis had done in *The Monk*, but rather on the readers themselves.

6. 1 Skeletons in the Closet: The Gothic Tradition in Penny Bloods

The dialogic development of the male Gothic, initiated by *The Monk*'s parodic model of the Gothic and continued by writers like Charlotte Dacre and R. S. Esq. in response to Lewis's jest, arguably begins to break down in the face of the increasingly competitive Victorian publishing industry and the rising literate consumerist market. As Anna Gasperini explains, penny bloods 'were read aloud, and passed around until the paper fell to pieces' and were 'quite literally […] read to destruction, thus fulfilling their only function, that is: satiating the craving for fiction of as many readers as possible'.[8] They were designed to be cheap to print, distribute, and purchase, deriving their name from the typical one-penny price per weekly instalment and the content of murder and melodrama. The working class, who had largely been taught literacy skills in Sunday Schools in the hope of improving moral education and to mollify any social discontent, led the demand for cheap and entertaining reading material.[9] This demand coincided with developments to paper-making and the rotary press, reducing the cost of production, while railways also enabled wider distribution networks.[10] Although the 'taxes on knowledge' were not repealed until 1855 – instrumental in the development to sensation fiction of the 1860s – the tax on paper was reduced from threepence to one penny in 1836.[11] Lloyd's penny weekly, *The Penny Sunday Times*, avoided stamp duty altogether by publishing fiction and fabricating news reports, and came to be one of the most popular periodicals in the 1840s. For those who neither had the time nor the money to buy a daily newspaper, Sunday papers like Lloyd's provided cheap, light reading material. Working class culture, distinct from the middle class, came to develop its own interests, and the penny blood publishers answered that demand.

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[8] Anna Gasperini, *Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction, Medicine and Anatomy: The Victorian Penny Blood and the 1832 Anatomy Act* (Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2019), p. 4.

[9] Cassandra Falke, 'On the Morality of Immoral Fiction: Reading Newgate Novels, 1830-1848', *Nineteenth-Century Contexts*, 38. 3 (2016), 183-93.

[10] James, *Fiction for the Working Man*.

[11] Eliot, 'From Few and Expensive to Many and Cheap: The British Book Market 1800-90'.

The mounting influence of publishers and the working-class consumer potentially shifts the dialogic dynamic between readers, critics, and writers, and disrupts the parodic exchange in the development of genre. Penny bloods are a form of reading material as opposed to a genre per se and, in aiming to establish a winning formula for readers, permeate generic boundaries. Louis James, in his seminal discussion of working-class literature, suggests that 'the domestic romance, the fashion novel, and stories of criminal life [are] far more common' in penny bloods than the Gothic.[12] A selection of titles demonstrates the breadth of the penny blood generic range: Prest's *Ela, the Outcast*, *or, the gipsy of Rosemary Dell* (1839-40), one of the most popular penny bloods; *Gallant Tom; or, the perils of a sailor ashore and afloat* (1840), a 'nautical romance', also by Prest; G. W. M. Reynolds's *The Massacre of Glencoe: a historical tale* (1860); and the anonymous Gothic work *Angela, the Orphan; or, the bandit monk of Italy* (1841). The Gothic, as these titles show, is not the only literary root of the penny blood; scholars typically look to the criminal tales of the Newgate Calendar, broadsides, historical romance, and melodrama as well.[13] This cross-contamination of genre, together with the sheer number of penny bloods, problematises direct and sustained parodic dialogue with singular hypotexts, or possibly even with representative texts of a genre. The dialogic development of the penny blood is, instead, predominantly between publisher and reader, with writers recycling and repackaging the favourite components for easy entertainment.

The number of reprints and adaptations in weekly serials points to the interest in marketing tried and tested popular fiction to the working class. More than half of penny blood titles were adaptations, translations, and reprints of other popular fiction. Most notably, Charles Dickens was frequently adapted for working-class readers by Prest and published by Lloyd – or, as Dickens complained, flagrantly plagiarised.[14] Prest began his penny blood venture with Lloyd, producing adaptations of Dickens, including *The Penny Pickwick* (1836-7), *Oliver Twiss* (1837-9), *Nickelas Nickelbery* (1838-9), and *Barnaby Budge* (1841) – book titles which parody the original names. Prest even assumed the name 'Bos', which plays with Dicken's own nickname, 'Boz'. These early penny blood plagiarisms, as James explains, afforded Lloyd the experience of publishing for the working class, while writers like Prest could 'experiment in

[12] James, *Fiction for the Working Man*, p. 83.

[13] See Gasperini, *Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction, Medicine and Anatomy* and F. S. Schwarzbach, 'Newgate Novel to Detective Fiction', in *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, ed. by Patrick Bratlinger and William B. Thesing (Blackwell Publishing, 2002), pp. 227-43.

[14] James, *Fiction for the Working Man*.

finding lower-class literary tastes' before penning original works.[15] Together, Prest's hack-writing and Lloyd's publishing tactics were instrumental in the development of penny bloods as a consumerist product, responding to working-class taste without the influence of the middle class.

Gothic novels from the first wave were also republished in weekly serials, allowing some of the more popular Gothic novels to reach a new generation of readers. My collaboration with Léger-St-Jean, the creator of *Price One Penny*, has thus far identified twenty-six reprinted Gothic novels from the first wave of the Gothic era.[16] *The Monk* was reprinted by William Dugdale in 1839 alongside an illustrated edition of Montague's *The Demon of Sicily*, though Dugdale does not appear to have reprinted any other Gothic text, as discussed in Chapter 5. Lewis's novel was again reprinted in thirty-six weekly numbers in 1848 by George Purkess. While Ann Radcliffe, unsurprisingly, remained popular in the nineteenth century, the most reprinted Gothic novels in penny weekly parts were Regina Maria Roche's *The Children of the Abbey* and the now lesser-known historical-Gothic romances by Elizabeth Helme, *The Farmer of Inglewood Forest* (1796) and *St. Clair of the Isles* (1803). Among the reprints were also texts presented as new. For example, *Love and Crime*, published by T. Paine in 1841, is actually *The Friar Hildargo* by Edward Mortimer, which was first published by J. F. Hughes in 1807.[17]

In responding to the tastes of working-class consumers, publishers of penny bloods hired hack writers to pen original serials. Paid low wages to rapidly produce chapters for publication on a weekly basis, writers were predominantly anonymous; interest in individual authorial styles concerned the publishers and their readers considerably less than was evident in Romantic-era discussions of Radcliffe and Lewis.[18] Attempts by twentieth-century scholars to identify penny blood authors has led to some confusion; for example, *The String of Pearls. A Romance,* first serialised in 1847 over eighteen weekly parts in Lloyd's *The People's Periodical and Family Library*, has been attributed to at least five authors, according to Robert

[15] James, *Fiction for the Working Man*, p. 75.

[16] See the forthcoming publication, Hannah-Freya Blake and Marie Léger-St-Jean, 'Penny Pinching: Reassessing the Gothic canon through nineteenth-century reprinting', in *Penny Dreadfuls and the Gothic*, ed. by Nicole Dittmer and Sophie Raine (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2022).

[17] Mortimer is likely Edward Montague, the author of *The Demon of Sicily*; to avoid repetition, see Chapter 5. See Blake and Léger-St-Jean for more examples of weekly serials misrepresented as new, under different titles.

[18] Rosalind Crane, *Violent Victorians: Popular Entertainment in Nineteenth-Century London* (Manchester University Press, 2012).

L. Mack, though it is now generally considered to be the work of Rymer following the investigations conducted by Helen Smith.[19] But as Rosalind Crane argues, both Prest and Rymer in particular were 'fairly representative of the regular authors Lloyd and other publishers of cheap fiction used' and, therefore, 'debates about the authorship of particular works within this canon matter very little, apart from further highlighting the uniformity of much of the fiction produced'.[20]

Sustaining the interest of readers was of more importance to publishers, with some serials running over more than a year. The longest penny blood, Rymer's *Gentleman Jack*, ran for 205 numbers over nearly four years from 1852-6; *Varney the Vampire*, one of the select few penny bloods to be studied by modern scholars, ran for 109 numbers over more than two years. Further, no sooner did one story conclude than another began, producing an endless cycle of pulp entertainment. For example, the penultimate chapter of Prest's *Angelina*, *or St Mark's Abbey* in *The Penny Sunday Times* featured the first and second chapters of his subsequent Gothic penny blood, *The Death Grasp, or a Father's Curse!*, which ran for forty-seven numbers from April 1841. With poorly-paid hack writers producing chapters on a weekly basis over lengthy periods of time, the quality of the writing, and the consistency of internal logic, is therefore generally wanting. In Prest's *Angelina, or St Mark's Abbey*, for example, the unscrupulous Rufus is named Ruthven for a handful of chapters before slipping back to Rufus. Initially serialised in Lloyd's *The Penny Sunday Times* across fifty-five numbers, *Angelina* is clumsily written, adopting Gothic cliché with little artistry or innovation. Rather, Prest relies on recycling female Gothic tropes, including ruinous castles, orphaned heroines pursued by tyrants, and secret family histories.

The efforts to ensure consumers continued to buy each penny instalment may justify why it takes Prest such an exceptionally long time to explain why the characters 'Kate of the Abbey' and 'the White Lady' are so invested in protecting the heroine. There is no plot-based reason why secrecy must be maintained – the mystery aims purely to keep readers buying the next instalment. The typical Gothic mystery of family heritage is well suited for this, as the various histories are laboriously revealed: Kate of the Abbey transpires to be the repentant Lady Emmeline, who abandoned her husband to be with her seducer; Hugh is her son and heir, not the son of a smuggler; the heroine, Angelina, is Lady Matilda's daughter, the White Lady,

[19] Helen Smith, *New Light on Sweeney Todd, Thomas Peckett Prest, James Malcolm Rymer and Elizabeth Caroline Grey* (Bloomsbury: Jarndyce, 2002).

[20] Crane, *Violent Victorians*, p. 170.

who was coerced into marrying the Baron but has long been wrongfully presumed dead. Here, Prest adopts the explained supernatural; even atmospheric sounds that occasionally frighten the various characters are repeatedly nothing more than gusts of wind (so frequent is this explanation that it is laughable, though this does not appear to be Prest's intention). The skeleton in the trunk, hidden among the caverns, also proves false, used to deter curious explorers – an explanation perfunctorily tagged onto the very final paragraph of the serial when all else has been explained.

This story lacks any significant engagement with male Gothic tropes or the comic. Nevertheless, Prest's choice of setting is unusual. However inaccurately, first-wave Gothic novels typically used historical European settings: Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, for example, is set in sixteenth-century France. In contrast, Prest's *Angelina* is closer to home: set in Redcar, a seaside in Yorkshire, 1752, which was supposedly 'notorious for smugglers and dealers in all sorts of contraband goods'.[21] Though smuggling was especially high in the eighteenth century as a result of costly custom duties, smuggling was predominantly conducted along the southern coast of England and West Wales.[22] However, the choice of setting allows Prest to introduce nautical themes closer to home, which he explored in full in *Gallant Tom* and other penny bloods, while sea-faring tales of pirates, shipwrecks and adventures were among the more popular subjects of penny weeklies. Indeed, as Matthew Rubery explains, the latest shipping news became a staple of newspapers in the Victorian era, often combining the factual details of missing persons and cargo with the trauma of the wreck – a combination which inspired novelists to resituate news from the sea 'within dramatic scenes showing its impact on individual lives'.[23] Despite recycling predominantly female Gothic tropes, Prest introduces more current interests into the narrative. In choosing a British location there are suggestions of the future 'domestic' turn to the Gothic, where Victorian England is transformed into the sites of murder and mystery.[24] Penny bloods like Rymer's *The String of Pearls* convert the streets of London to the new urban Gothic, while sensation fiction later displaces the Gothic

[21] Prest, *Angelina, or St Mark's Abbey*, p. 6.

[22] W. A. Cole, 'Trends in Eighteenth-Century Smuggling', *The Economic History Review*, 10. 3 (1958), 395-410.

[23] Matthew Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction after the Invention of the News* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 31.

[24] David Punter, for example, describes sensation fiction as domesticated Gothic. See Punter, *The Literature of Terror*.

into the quiet countryside homes of gentlefolk.[25] As *Angelina* is among the first of his experiments with the Gothic, perhaps Prest's lack of innovation or efforts to blend horror with humour is merely the result of remaining with tried and tested tropes.

Rymer appears to be more confident in wielding multiple narrative strands and combining conventions of Gothic and historical romance genres. *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle: A Romance of Chivalry* was published in fifty-two weekly parts in 1844 and later collated into sixty-two chapters in book format in 1850, published by Lloyd.[26] *Vileroy* sees the heroine, Caroline, imprisoned in a castle by her uncle and his murderous companion until her lover helps her escape. The omnipresent but unnamed threat of rape pervade the novel; Count Durlack's pursuit of Caroline's hand in marriage to secure the deeds to her father's properties echoes Emily St Aubert in Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, drawing on the typical female Gothic trope in which 'disinheritance is figured as the equivalent of incestuous rape'.[27]

Though the plot is typically female Gothic, there are scenes of violence and horror more typical of the male Gothic, which are most commonly the subjects of the illustrations, much as was the case with illustrations in chapbooks (see Chapter 5). In Figure 6.1, for example, the history of the Baron's cruelty to his first wife is depicted. Sophia loved another when she was forced to marry the Baron, who led her to believe that her lover had died in battle. When her lover returns, the two reunite, but their affair is discovered; the vengeful Baron kills the soldier and imprisons his wife, forcing her to eat from her lover's skull or starve to death. This excessive cruelty was previously featured in Isaac Crookenden's chapbook *The Horrible Revenge* (1808); to a degree, *Vileroy* reads like an elaborate expansion of Crookenden's thirty-six-page tale.

[25] See, for example, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, *Lady Audley's Secret* (Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1997).

[26] All quotations from *Vileroy* are taken from a modern reprint by CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014, however this reprint has been misattributed to Thomas Peckett Prest. See [James Malcolm Rymer], *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle* (London: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014).

[27] Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminisms*, p. 2.

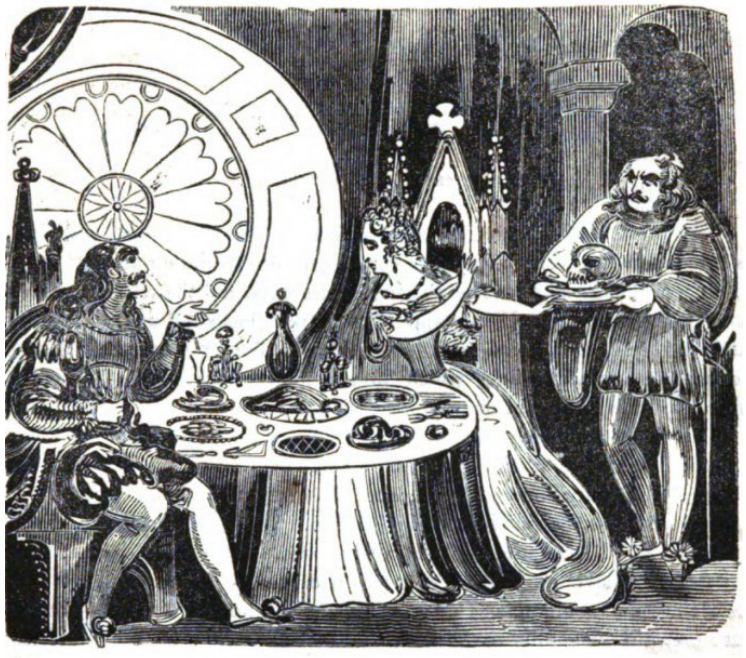

Figure 6.1: Sophie presented with the skull of her murdered lover, p. 81.[28]

Instances of the supernatural, which are predominantly of a ghostly nature, are mostly explained by the wanderings of an old prisoner and the ravings of Euphoric, the Count's page who secretly intends to kill him. Not every instance of potentially supernatural appearance is explained, though this comes across mostly as an error on the writer's part, as there are rather too many intricacies and conspiracies to neatly tie, and penny bloods are notoriously inconsistent. The explained supernatural, however, introduces humour to Rymer's Gothic. Like Radcliffe's earlier Gothic novels, the servants are superstitious, and believe the castle to be haunted. But the supposed ghost is more like a mischief-maker with a habit of tweaking noses. Namine, professing to have witnessed a spirit 'all in white' moving about the castle and disappearing through grates, believes that the ghost goes about 'pulling people's noses' and shows a particular 'regard for Francisco's', as if it 'want[s] to make his a little longer, for you know […] it is a very short one'.[29] The heroine knows better than to believe in such a ridiculous story, and offers explanations herself, suggesting perhaps the white figure that Namine saw slinking through the grounds was nothing but a cat. While superstitious servants like Annette in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* offered comic relief, appealing to superiority theories of laughter, *Vileroy* goes further by presenting such a ridiculous and decidedly unthreatening ghost. This

[28] Images are from the digitised edition of *Vileroy* available on Haithi Trust. https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951002098388n&view=1up&seq=7&skin=2021

[29] Rymer, *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle*, p. 24.

might be considered an example of an 'isolated gag', which Rob Breton suggests is a common feature in cheap fiction, but also arguably establishes a parodic dialogue with Radcliffe's typical Gothic servant.

The superiority theory of laughter, which views amusement to be triggered by a sense of moral, physical, or intellectual superiority, can be further applied to the larger scheme of the explained supernatural throughout the serial. The most superstitious character is the Baron, who is terrified that the ghosts of his victims are haunting the castle and does whatever he can to avoid the chambers in which he committed his crimes, as if '[t]he very echo of his own footsteps in those apartments appalled his soul'.[30] When his sordid and bloody past is fully revealed, Claudio and Caroline use this to their advantage to escape. Claudio, it transpires, is the brother of the man the Baron murdered for planning to elope with his first wife; his portrait still hangs in Caroline's bedchamber. While it is a common trope of the Gothic to feature uncanny familial resemblances in paintings or miniatures, Rymer risks no confusion as Claudio and his murdered brother are twins – and potentially, again, parodies the Gothic by taking the trope of familial resemblance to its logical endpoint. This means that Claudio can fool the Baron and use his guilty fear against him; unable to flee from his approach, Claudio instead stands boldly before the Baron, arms folded in the attitude of his brother's portrait. As the quotation below illustrates, the Baron is terrified:

> For one moment the Baron Zindorf seemed bereft of the power of motion or speech, and with eyes starting from their sockets, mouth open, and every vein in his face distended with horror, he glanced at Claudio as if he was turned to stone at the sight of him.[31]

The passage demonstrates the hyperbole typical of penny blood hack writers, overemphasising the extent of the Baron's terror, and once more recalls Radcliffe's understanding of horror as that which 'contracts, freezes and nearly annihilates' the nerves.[32] It also reflects Raymond's 'impotence' in the face of the Bleeding Nun in Lewis's *The Monk*.[33] The idea of impotence in the face of fear is further associated with a failure to uphold his 'manhood' by the Count, who repeatedly retorts that his superstitious fears 'unman' him. The Count's frustrated mockery of

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[30] Rymer, *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle*, p. 384.

[31] Ibid., p. 385.

[32] Radcliffe, 'On the Supernatural in Poetry', p. 149.

[33] Lewis, *The Monk*, p. 160.

his co-conspirator exhibits the scorn of superiority, while Claudio and Caroline wield their moral superiority, armed with the truth, to best their persecutor, a humorous 'one-upmanship' against the Baron.

Early experiments with Gothic in penny bloods from Rymer and Prest showcase little innovation, vouching for recycling tried and tested tropes, especially those from the female Gothic. The weekly serial format would appear to be well suited to the suspense and delay tactics required of the explained supernatural, whereby secret family histories are eventually – or, in the case of *Angelina, or St Mark's Abbey*, laboriously – unmasked. The quality of the writing and over-reliance on cliché in some instances pushes the Gothic in penny bloods into the realms of self-parody. Like B-rate or Hammer House horror films, penny bloods can be so bad that they are enjoyable. Rymer's *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle* is somewhat more original, though the plot recycles Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. There are some traces of humour here, though in *Varney the Vampire*, as the next section will discuss, Rymer uses the comic more confidently throughout.

6. 2 Fangs and Fun: *Varney the Vampire* (1845-7)

Although penny bloods are more than Gothic in subject, the weekly penny serials ensured the endurance of the mode in the early Victorian era. Once the favourite of the middle classes, the Gothic's turn to sensationalism and spectacle – at least partly ushered in by Lewis's *The Monk* – transformed the genre into popular entertainment. Penny bloods, according to Gasperini, were 'exciting, easy to read, and graphic, and […] soon crystallized in a formula involving murder, betrayal, gender-shifting, and the occasional supernatural event (not to mention scantily clad damsels in distress)'.[34] These features reflect the prevailing understanding of the male Gothic which recognises violence, supernaturalism, and semi-pornographic imagery as dominant traits. While the examples of *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle* and *Angelina, or St Mark's Abbey* discussed in the previous section are largely female Gothic in nature, they are also derivative, symptomatic of Prest's and Rymer's early experimentation of producing the Gothic in penny weekly serials. It is the more original tales of the mid-1840s as the penny blood gains ground which demonstrate an association with the male Gothic. The supernatural tales of the penny blood in particular demonstrate the development of the subgenre; this section

[34] Gasperini, *Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction*, *Medicine and Anatomy,* p. 4.

addresses the comic and Gothic spectacle in Rymer's *Varney the Vampire, or the Feast of Blood* (1845-7).

If the male Gothic formula, outlined by Andrew Smith following the relatively few studies exploring the subject, is characterised primarily by 'its representation of male violence, female persecution, and semi-pornographic scenes', in which the 'fantastical Male Gothic world of the killer' takes the narrative lead, Rymer's penny blood appears to fit the description.[35] *Varney the Vampire* opens with the figure of a sleeping woman 'just budding into womanhood […] in that transition state which presents to us all the charms of the girl – almost of the child, with the more matured beauty and gentleness of advancing years'.[36] The bed clothes are 'in much confusion', partially exposing 'a neck and bosom that would have formed a study for the rarest sculptor that ever Providence gave genius to', and a shoulder that is 'whiter, fairer' even than the bedding.[37] Her 'long hair has escaped from its confinement and streams over the blackened coverings of the bedstead', flowing luxuriantly – wantonly – across the bed; not even her hair, that seemingly preternatural veil heroines once relied upon for modesty in earlier Gothic texts, protects her from the scrutiny of the narrator's gaze.[38] It is easy to consider the description hyperbolic, even parodic, but Rymer's attention to detail – however unrealistic and eroticised – also invites readers into the bedroom of the sleeping beauty, taking up the position of a voyeur.

But as voyeurs finding the pleasure in intruding upon her privacy, readers also observe the lurking figure 'standing on the ledge immediately outside the long window', as it is 'pattering and clattering' upon the glass, 'feeling for some mode of entrance'.[39] The description of the ghoulish figure continues as it creeps closer to the sleeping woman:

> The eyes look like polished tin; the lips are drawn back, and the principal feature next to those dreadful eyes is the teeth – the fearful looking teeth – projecting like those of some

[35] Smith, *Victorian Demons*, p. 71.

[36] James Malcolm Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, *or the Feast of Blood* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2010), p. 6.

[37] Ibid., p. 6.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid., p. 7.

> wild animal, hideously, glaringly white, and fang-like. It approaches the bed with a strange, gliding movement.[40]

From once taking pleasure in viewing the sleeping beauty, readers are forced to experience a different form of pleasure as voyeur. While in *The Monk* readers were made privy to Ambrosio's desires and enticed to share in them vicariously, readers do not share in the mind of Rymer's monster. Here, they are positioned as silent witness to the impending attack, helpless to prevent it; helpless, almost, like the unwitting heroine. Readers as voyeurs in this instance are at once both the victim and the attacker, an unsettling, pleasurable mix. The implication in continuing to read, then, is that there is pleasure in witnessing the implicitly sexual bite of the vampire from the safe position as reader – an observer peering through the keyhole. The attack upon Flora soon follows:

> she was dragged by her long silken hair completely on to [the bed] again. Her beautifully rounded limbs quivered with the agony of her soul. The glassy, horrible eyes of the figure ran over that angelic form with a hideous satisfaction – horrible profanation. He drags her head to the bed's edge. He forces it back by the long hair still entwined in his grasp. With a plunge he seizes her neck in his fang-like teeth – a gush of blood, and a hideous sucking noise follows.[41]

The repeated use of Flora's hair as a means to control her, as if rope, emphasises the sadism of the vampire's bite. Although hair had often been used as a veil to conceal sexuality in earlier Gothic novels – a gesture which ironically also represents that which it aims to hide, as Eve Sedgwick has argued – Flora's hair in this scene is thoroughly divested of its power to veil at all.[42]

Figure 6.2 offers graphic detail of the vampire's attack upon the beautiful Flora. In the act of dragging her hair back to clamp his mouth upon her neck, the white countenance of her face is exposed to the onlooker, revealing an expression that is ambiguously between pain and pleasure. The long, clawed fingers of his hands are squarely wrapped around her breast, and her legs, evidently thrashing about, are poised apart beneath the white blanket. One arm stretches, as if imploringly, to the frowning painting upon the wall, to little avail. This illustration, accompanying the very first instalment of the serial – a handful of pages before the

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[40] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, p. 7-8.

[41] Ibid., p. 8.

[42] Sedgwick, 'The Character in the Veil: Imagery of the Surface in the Gothic Novel'.

attack itself – acts as advertisement, promising lurid sensationalism and semi-pornographic imagery. Precisely who experiences the *petit mort*, that trademark of Gothic sexuality, is uncertain – if it is Flora, it is also the onlooker, who can safely enjoy imagining themselves in the position of either the attacker or the victim.

CHAPTER I.

——"How graves give up their dead,
And how the night air hideous grows
With shrieks!"

MIDNIGHT. — THE HAIL-STORM. — THE DREADFUL VISITOR.—THE VAMPYRE

THE solemn tones of an old cathedral clock have announced midnight—the air is thick and heavy—a strange, death like stillness pervades all nature. Like the ominous calm which precedes some more than usually terrific outbreak of the elements, they seem to have paused even in their ordinary fluctuations, to gather a terrific strength for the great effort. A faint peal of thunder now comes from far off Like a signal gun for the battle of the winds to begin, it appeared to awaken them from their lethargy, and one awful, warring hurricane swept over a whole city, producing more devastation in the four or five minutes it lasted, than would a half century of ordinary phenomena.

It was as if some giant had blown upon some toy town, and scattered many of the buildings before the hot blast of his terrific

6.2 *Varney, the Vampire; or, the Feast of Blood. A Romance*, 'Chapter 1' (1845)

These scenes may appear clichéd to modern readers, as what James Twitchell describes as 'the initiation of the heroine through sex' is now a common trope of vampire fiction, popularised in particular by the scenes of Lucy Westenra's gradual vampirisation by the Count and the partial conversion of Mina Murray in Stoker's *Dracula* (1897).[43] But much of the modern iterations of the vampire are influenced by Rymer's penny blood; as Twitchell

[43] James B. Twitchell, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1981), p. 124.

explains, 'much of the credit we give Bram Stoker really belongs to the authors of *Varney*'.[44] He expands upon John Polidori's earlier configuration of the vampire from 1819 as a Byronic aristocrat, adding the European background to the vampire's origins, pseudo-scientific explanations of their behaviours, and the plot of the hunt which alternates between positioning the vampire as the hunter and the hunted. Although Twitchell acknowledges that Rymer's serial can be tedious, he also says that it is 'unparalleled even in vampire lore', and describes it as 'part melodrama, part picaresque novel, part theodicy, part parody, part travesty' – it is, in short, 'just a rollicking story'.[45] As the serialisation of *Varney the Vampire* ran for over two years across 109 parts, its plot is inconsistent and convoluted, but there are certainly clear episodes of humour – elements which are 'part parody, part travesty', as Twitchell claims, though he does not then discuss them. I have, therefore, selected representative episodes of *Varney the Vampire* in which parody, travesty, and humour play a part.

Far from the 'isolated gags' Breton suggests as common to the penny blood, there is an overarching scheme of subtle humour. Despite repeated reference to a 'figure', readers are immediately aware that the creeping creature who attacks Flora is a vampire; to modern readers, such a fact would be self-evident, as the vampiric tropes Rymer establishes are so familiar that attempts to pretend there is some mystery about the identity of a nightly fanged attacker would be pointless. But for Rymer's contemporary audience, the title of the penny blood itself gives the game away. This might not seem altogether that significant, until it becomes apparent that the main character who refutes the existence of the vampire, and misdiagnoses Flora, is a Doctor. The Bannerworth family and the locals are all quick to identify the 'real' culprit of Flora's neck wounds and the attacks throughout the town, while Dr Chillingworth merely suggests the young woman was bitten by an insect. Like Dr Phial in *The New Monk*, men of the medical profession – who are supposed to be more knowledgeable than the average person – fail to correctly diagnose what is evident to a layman, as well as obvious to readers.

This places readers in a position of superiority over the Doctor Chillingworth and appeals to the superiority theory of laughter. While Terry Eagleton is sceptical about the usefulness or accuracy of this theory, he proposes instead that humour 'may be less an exercise

[44] Twitchell, *The Living Dead: A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* Twitchell's study predates Smith's identification of various penny blood authors, which attributes the authorship of *Varney* to Rymer. At the time of writing, the authorship remained contested, hence Twitchell's use of the ambiguous plural 'authors'.

[45] Ibid., p. 122-3.

in power than a contestation of it', a contestation that suggests 'a field of symbolic struggle, not simply the sneering of the powerful'.[46] There was much reason for the working classes, the target audience of *Varney the Vampire*, to contest the power of medical men at the time. While scholars have previously viewed the penny blood as eschewing engagement with politics in favour of solely aiming to entertain, more recent studies have illustrated the complex relationship between the form and medical law. Sara Hackenberg suggests that it is 'significant' that these texts were published soon after the 1832 Anatomy Act and the 1834 New Poor Law, which 'contributed to the criminalization of poverty by punishing the impoverished, while they were alive, with inhuman conditions, and then with the dissection table after death'.[47] Within the last few years, Gasperini has comprehensively analysed the sometimes-ambiguous relationship between the Anatomy Act of 1832 and the penny blood, suggesting that characters victimised by G. W. M. Reynolds's 'Resurrection Man', Rymer's Varney, Dr Chillingworth, and Sweeney Todd 'spoke to the voiceless, powerless pauper who read *The Mysteries of London* and dreaded the surgeon's slab'.[48]

The Anatomy Act of 1832 enabled licensed physicians, surgeons and medical students legal access to 'unclaimed' corpses in a bid to quell the grisly resurrectionist trade sensationalised by infamous cases like Burke and Hare in 1828. As Gasperini argues, the language of the law was euphemistic and ambiguous, placing the advancement of medical knowledge above the safety of the poor, who disproportionately represented the 'unclaimed' corpses over which medical men could assert ownership. Many of the supposedly unclaimed dead could be found in hospital, prison, or the workhouse, and could later be seen on the dissection table. In Gasperini's view, the penny blood's interest in the 'horrifying displaced and dismembered corpse, with the ambiguous medical man hovering over it […] answered more complex needs than bloodlust and voyeurism'; it was, in fact, 'key to a code that mapped the working-class readers' way through the cellars of their fears, up and out, through their Anatomy Act reality'.[49]

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[46] Eagleton, *Humour*, p. 40.

[47] Sara Hackenberg, 'Vampires and Resurrection Men: The Perils and Pleasures of the Embodied Past in 1840s Sensational Fiction', *Victorian Studie*s, 52. 1 (2009), 63-75 (p. 69).

[48] Gasperini, *Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction*, *Medicine and Anatomy,* p. 242.

[49] Ibid.

Dr Chillingworth maintains that there is no such thing as vampires in spite of the testimonies presented to him. Resolute in his opinion, he informs George that if a vampire 'was to come and lay hold of me by the throat, as long as I could at all gasp for breath I would tell him he was a d——d impostor', to which George retorts that such a denial would 'carry incredulity to the verge of obstinacy'.[50] So, too, would he deny a miracle, even if he should witness one himself, because he 'should endeavour to find some rational and some scientific means of accounting for the phenomenon', and further demonstrates he is an atheist by denouncing the existence of 'prophets and saints, and all that sort of thing'.[51] For Gasperini, Dr Chillingworth's arrogance shares parallels with Victor Frankenstein, who is an 'embodiment of the arrogant doctor tainted with hubris'.[52] But the proclamation of atheism also aligns him with both Dr Phial and the ghostly Dr Hectic from *The New Monk*, which predates Shelley's novel as well. Undoubtedly, *Frankenstein* is the more influential work, while *The New Monk* is obscure. Readers – those who were most threatened by the Anatomy Act – are armed with knowledge the unscrupulous Dr Chillingworth does not have. For all his arrogance, almost everyone around him knows better. His ignorance of the existence of vampires is ironic, too, as Dr Chillingworth himself dug up Varney's own corpse when he was a medical student.

Subtle though this comic component may be, there are clear instances of outright humorous intent in other episodes of the serial. In particular, the lengthy graveyard scene, in which the mob has come to play the part of resurrectionists themselves to seek out the graves of the vampire (see Figure 6.3), is full of jests and witty dialogue. For example, having dug up the grave of the butcher, they find only a brick in the coffin. This, however, is insufficient evidence to prove that he has risen from the dead. Dick – a rowdy rabble-rouser – sarcastically suggests the brick is still the butcher anyway:

> 'Well, I'm blowed, here's a transmogrification; he's consolidified himself into a blessed brick—my eye, here's a curiosity.'
> 'But you don't mean to say that's the butcher, Dick?' said the boy.
> Dick reached over, and gave him a tap on the head with the brick.

[50] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, p. 54.

[51] Ibid., p. 55.

[52] Gasperini, *Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction*, *Medicine and Anatomy*, p. 88.

> 'There!' he said, 'that's what I calls occular demonstration. Do you believe it now, you blessed infidel? What's more natural? He was an out-and-out brick while he was alive; and he's turned to a brick now he's dead'.[53]

Dick and the boy go on to prank the rest of the crowd with the empty coffin; the boy lies quietly within it, waiting for Dick's signal to suddenly stir and scare the anxious onlookers. In other words, the two are 'clowning' around about the graves with little regard for the solemnity of their surroundings. Such scenes invite the readers to be in on the joke and participate in the humour of the characters – once more, they are aware of the true mischief afoot. Arguably such episodes provide comic relief, parodying the interest in macabre subjects the serial evinces. Further, it is an example of what Twitchell considers 'part-travesty'. Understanding travesty to trivialise or mock a dignified subject, Dick and the boy's humorous play ironically illustrates as much disregard as Dr Chillingworth had when he, too, dug up the corpses for medical examination. This exceptionally long and error-strewn penny blood feature other numerous other episodes of witty riposte, parodic hyperbole, and slapstick, showing Rymer's increasing confidence in crafting entertaining serial fiction. *Varney the Vampire*, though largely confined to studies on the vampire as a distinct genre, evidently shows the continuation of the male Gothic lineage. With the success of *Varney the Vampire*, Rymer continues to develop a more sophisticated Gothic penny blood in *The String of Pearls* which, as I will show in the final section, features a decidedly dark comic turn throughout.

6. 3 Nightmare on Fleet Street: James Malcolm Rymer's *The String of Pearls*

The String of Pearls, now better known as *Sweeney Todd*, is perhaps the most infamous penny blood as it has reached almost mythic status in modern popular culture. A visit to the London Dungeons features an interactive experience at Mrs Lovett's pie shop and Todd's parlour. Johnny Depp and Helena Bonham Carter sing and slaughter alongside one another as the anti-heroes in Tim Burton's film adaptation of 2007, itself an adaptation of Stephen Sondheim's musical production. It was first adapted for stage, however, by George Dibdin Pitt in 1847 – the same year it had concluded its eighteen weekly numbers in Lloyd's *The People's Periodical*. Shorter than his *Varney the Vampire*, Rymer shows more control and consistency over what was originally titled *The String of Pearls*, though Lloyd later expanded it vastly in

[53] Rymer, *Varney the Vampire*, p. 282.

1850, as did many others besides. Throughout the second half of the nineteenth-century, various adaptations in novel form and for the stage altered the name of the story, placing *Sweeney Todd* at the centre. Charles Fox's 1878-80 *Sweeney Todd, the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* is the most familiar name today. For this discussion, I will be using a modern reprint of the original eighteen-part serial by Rymer.

The story is likely familiar to most: Sweeney Todd, a barber, kills his customers by dropping them through a trap door beneath his barber's chair, where their bodies are then ground into mincemeat for Mrs Lovett's pies. The titular pearls are, in most modern adaptations, quite forgotten, as indeed their significance to the plot dwindled in the first serial. Todd acquires the jewels by murdering Lieutenant Thornhill, who had been commissioned to deliver them to the beautiful Johanna Oakley by her missing lover, Mark Ingestrie. Mark has been imprisoned in Mrs Lovett's cellars and forced to work as her cook, where the only food he is allowed to have are the pies he comes to know are made from dismembered bodies. He eventually escapes through the lift that transports the pies from the cellar to the shop, making the theatrical declaration to surprised customers:

> Ladies and gentlemen – I fear that what I am going to say will spoil your appetites; but the truth is beautiful at all times, and I have to state that Mrs. Lovett's pies are made of *human flesh!*[54]

This final revelation is the first instance in which the language of consumption and appetite is not intended for a double entendre: Mark's exposé really will 'spoil your appetite'. Weaving an irreverent, playful tone throughout the narrative, Rymer creates slapstick scenes of domestic disharmony and uses ironic euphemism for disturbing, entertaining effect. His relish could rival Lewis's (pun intended).

Sweeney Todd himself is a picture of the grotesque. Frequently referred to as 'ugly', Todd is an 'ill-put together sort of fellow', recalling the grotesque mix of composite parts which, singly, may make perfect sense but inspire confusion, disgust, and hilarity when found together: he has an 'immense mouth', has a squint 'to add to his charms', and a head of hair with 'the appearance of a thick-set hedge' in which wire, combs, and even scissors become lost.[55] His disproportionate body, for Gasperini, frames him as a 'deviation from nature […] as

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[54] James Malcolm Rymer, *Sweeney Todd: The String of Pearls* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 2010), p. 257.

[55] Ibid., p. 2 -3.

if Todd has been assembled, rather than born'.[56] Gasperini further suggests there are echoes of Frankenstein's monster in this assemblage of body parts, arguing they are both 'intrinsically linked to the world of anatomy and body traffic'.[57] Yet, because Todd is grotesque, there is more than just the ugly and the sinister in his appearance – there is a comic component as well. Robert L. Mack suggests that Todd's look and theatrical personality is comparable to the 'convergence of the traditional pantomime clown and the more ominous "villain" of melodrama'.[58] Certainly, Todd performs both sadistic murder and slapstick violence, a mix of behaviours that confuse when to be disturbed with when to be amused. For example, when Todd is facing a gang of ruffians who try to steal the string of pearls from him, he wields a wet mop 'most vigorously' to waylay them.[59] But when mop-head comes off, he used the handle instead, and makes 'fearful havoc on the heads of the assailants'.[60] Because of the light-hearted in tone, readers are invited to laugh at this spectacle, as if to encourage them to root for his successful venture – having forgotten just how ill begotten the pearls were in the outset.

What is most grotesque and comically strange about Todd, however, is his laugh. Described as a 'short disagreeable kind of unmirthful laugh, which came in at all sorts of odd times when nobody else saw anything to laugh at at all', a response to some 'out-of-the-way joke' that only he knows about, his laugh punctuates scenes and dialogue entirely at random.[61] It is so short and sudden that when others hear it, 'people have been known to look up to the ceiling, and on the floor, and all round them, to know from whence it had come'.[62] Those who hear his laugh clearly expect something supernatural, or unnatural, to be the cause. Nor do readers know from whence the horrific noise comes, as it is not attributed any onomatopoeia and is seldom stated to have happened until another character remarks upon it. For example, Lieutenant Thornhill – the first man to be murdered in the narrative – is in conversation with

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[56] Gasperini, *Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction*, *Medicine and Anatomy,* p. 133-4.

[57] Ibid., p. 134.

[58] Robert L. Mack, *The Wonderful and Surprising of Sweeney Todd: The Life and Times of an Urban Legend* (London: Continuum, 2008), p. 59.

[59] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 60.

[60] Ibid.

[61] Ibid., p. 2.

[62] Ibid., p. 3.

Todd when he exclaims, 'What the devil noise was that?' to which Todd replies: 'It was only me […] I laughed'.[63]

He seems to understand that laughter is the appropriate response to something funny. When Tobias, his miserable young apprentice, claims that it is 'funny' that Thornhill's dog didn't leave with his master – stumbling here upon the truth that the dog stays put because his master has been murdered at the barbershop – Todd retorts, 'Why don't you laugh if it's funny?'[64] Todd is either being facetious, and knows full well that Tobias means 'strange' when he says 'funny', or Todd is being genuine. He knows, too, how to make a joke – albeit a dark and secret joke, the punchline of which only he knows. When the crowd gather outside his shop and ask where the dog's master (the murdered Thornhill) has gone, Todd sarcastically remarks, 'I should not wonder if he had come to some foul end!' The irony, of course, is that Thornhill has indeed met a 'foul end', and Todd all but confesses to knowing as such. But this joke is his own, and nobody else laughs. The crowd, however, do find amusement in the joke a boy cries out: 'But I say, old soap-suds […] the dog says you did it'.[65] This witty remark is followed by a 'general laugh', though Todd merely replies, 'Does he? he [*sic*] is wrong then'.[66]

Todd's mysterious laughter, it may seem, is simply the laughter of a madman. The random nature of his laughter implies a sudden outburst, the build-up of pressure requiring release. 'The construction of social reality', Terry Eagleton explains, 'is a strenuous business which demands a sustained effort, and humour allows us to relax our mental muscles'.[67] Freud similarly considered laughter a necessary, albeit temporary, relief from the strain required to keep the impulse of the id in check.[68] However, the frequent use of euphemism and irony which Todd indulges in, whereby he hints at the truth, suggests a closer affinity with the superiority theory of laughter. Further, Todd does carry about him a sense of superiority, a self-assurance that he is too clever to be caught. The reduction of his fellow man to the food of his neighbours, too, advances this notion that his laughter, whether or not the joke was entirely in his head, is

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[63] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 5.

[64] Ibid., p. 7.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid.

[67] Eagleton, *Humour*, p. 16.

[68] See Sigmund Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious* (London: Penguin Books, 2002).

triggered by a sense of scorn and contempt for his supposed inferiors, the victims of his trade and blade.

Perhaps the most well-known euphemism is when Todd admits to Colonel Jeffrey that Lieutenant Thornhill had come to his barber shop and says: 'I shaved him and polished him off'.[69] When asked what he means by 'polishing him off', Todd claims he means only '[b]rushing him up a bit, and making him tidy'.[70] Of course, he really means he has killed him, but the phrase 'to polish off' is also a double entendre, meaning 'to complete or consume quickly'.[71] So significant is this phrase, in fact, that an advertisement commonly used for late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century dramatisations features it beneath an illustration depicting 'the famous trap-door scene' (see Figure 6.3). Use of the phrase itself was relatively new in the early decades of the nineteenth-century; it might even be argued that the popularity of Sweeney Todd's phrase ensured its longevity.[72] Modern readers are already 'in the know' about the true meaning of such euphemisms. Given the rapid success and various adaptations of the penny blood, contemporary readers would undoubtedly have soon been able to identify the numerous examples of double entendre which hint at the true pie-making process. New readers, when the pages were still fresh off the press in 1846, may have experienced an unsettling sense of foreboding, and would therefore have had reason to review the contents. Like any good mystery novel, the clues have always been there, hiding in plain sight – but in *The String of Pearls*, this seems to be Rymer's own joke.

It is no surprise *The String of Pearls* was so quickly adapted for the stage; it is full of spectacle and sensationalism. Everything in the hasty, hungry world of Fleet Street is a feast for the eyes, if not also for the stomach. Johanna is as beautiful as any traditional Gothic heroine, with hair 'of a glossy blackness' and eyes that were 'a deep and heavenly blue'.[73] With hyperbolic flourishes, her countenance is described as one which could be looked upon 'for a long summer's day, as upon the pages of some deeply interesting volume, which furnished the

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[69] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 20.

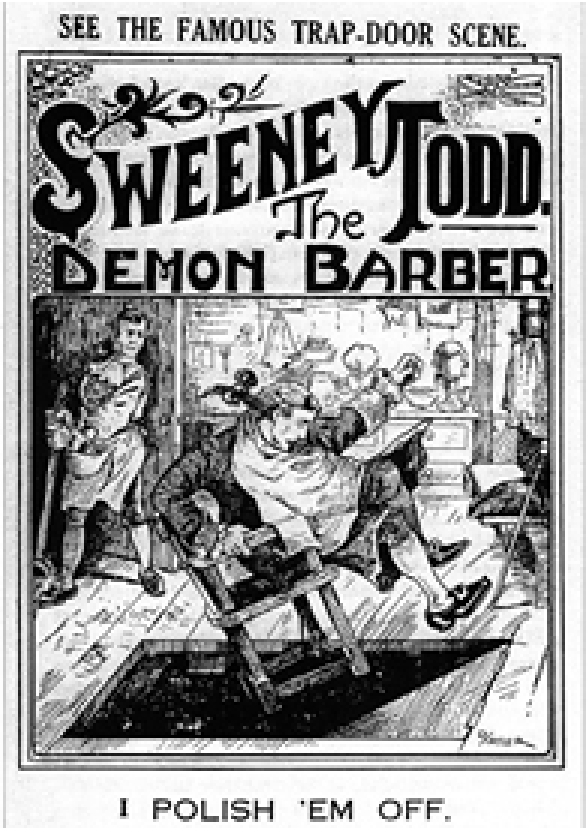
[70] Ibid.

[71] *OED*, online: https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/146865?rskey=mhdFIF&result=2&isAdvanced=false#eid29483376 [accessed 6 November 2020].

[72] Dickens also uses the phrase in *Pickwick Papers* in 1837.

[73] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 10.

most abundant food for pleasant and delightful reflection'.[74] Like *The New Monk*, *The String of Pearls* plays on metaphors of hungry consumers, a metafictional comic turn that alerts readers to their own voracious appetite. But it is Mrs Lovett's descriptions which best capture the metaphorical and metafictional association between the consumption of food and the Victorian consumer.



6.3 : 'I polish 'em off', advertisement to dramatisations of Sweeney Todd.[75]

When, in the fourth chapter, readers are led to the bustling pie-shop in Bell-Yard, the narrator names Mrs Lovett as the cook of the delicious pies with a telling wink: 'now we have let out some portion of the secret'.[76] Though some of her customers are convinced there is a 'sinister aspect' about her, as smile is 'cold and uncomfortable', they nevertheless continue to

[74] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 27.

[75] Mack, *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd*, p. 110.

[76] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 27.

attend and purchase her pies. Yet the narrator remarks that she is 'buxom', 'young', and 'good-looking', capable of enamouring many 'young scions' who 'please[s] himself with the idea that the charming Mrs. Lovett had made that pie especially for him, and that fate or predestination ha[s] placed it in his hands'.[77] Her pies are truly addictive, as 'the small portions of meat which they contained were so tender, and the fat and the lean so artistically mixed up, that to eat one of Lovett's pies was such a provocative to eat another'.[78] If Lewis's novel was a 'provocative for the debauchee', Lovett's pies are a 'provocative' for the gluttonous.

As Mack explains, '[t]he performance of desire, the erotics of the body, the cultivation of physical appearance, and the appetite of the consuming subject are all inextricably linked with one another' in the figure of Mrs Lovett.[79] The abundance of her own flesh and the flesh in her pies equates the enterprising Mrs Lovett with consumable food stuffs, something to taste and enjoy, and which never ceases to be available – so long as there is still a steady stream of supply and demand. Her pies, too, read like erotic euphemism, whereby 'the paste was of the most delicate construction, and impregnated with the aroma of a delicious gravy that defies description'.[80] Ultimately, the equation between her body and her pies renders her flesh dead and unsavoury. When Sweeney Todd poisons her, the death is apt: she has died by unwittingly ingesting poison – her just desert/desserts.

The String of Pearls continues to flaunt the irreverence for decency and decorum that Lewis once exhibited in *The Monk*. Rymer's penny blood transforms the 'erotic keepsake' of the dead body to a consumable source of entertainment, striking up a new vein of the male Gothic in the Victorian urban city in which the dead and the living, quite literally, share close quarters. As Sally Powell explains, Rymer's serial 'dramatize[s] and exploit[s] the corporeal horror of the cadaver for the titillation of the common reader'.[81] Powell and Gasperini both discuss the close proximity in which the poor lived with the dead, illustrating that the foul stench exuding from St Dunstable's Church, beneath which Todd's and Lovett's meat fodder

[77] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 27.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Mack, *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd*, p. 25.

[80] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 26.

[81] Sally Powell, 'Black markets and cadaverous pieces: The corpse, urban trade and industrial consumption in the penny blood', in *Victorian Crime, Madness and Sensation*, ed. by Andrew Maunder and Grace Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), pp. 56-58 (p. 56).

are kept, had a very grisly ring of truth to it. As Gasperini explains, '[a]lmost every church in the city of London had its own (severely overcrowded) burial ground, which made the sight and smell of the dead commonplace'.[82] When space was needed for new occupiers, the coffins of the poor were disinterred, the corpses within 'broken with a spade and shovelled in a hole dug nearby'.[83] Unlike the middle classes, the poor were regularly exposed to the sights and smells of death, their homes 'surrounding the overcrowded cemeteries were unprotected against pollution from the decomposing matter that saturated the ground'.[84]

Yet humour in this novel remains pervasive. Even when the Church exudes its foul odour – of what will later transpire to be the '*stinkifications*' of corpses – the scene is treated with characteristic wit. Everyone from the Reverend, the organ-blower, churchwardens, and attendees have long remarked upon the smell, but it is not until the bishop visits that anything is done about it. In an exchange with an elderly lady, the sole person who can tolerate the stench as she has long since lost her olfactory senses, there is a comical misinterpretation of the bishop's question. When he asks what the smell is, she retorts that, 'surely you know; you seem to me to have a nose', to which the churchwarden replies: 'Yes […] I have that honour, and I have the pleasure of informing you, my Lord Bishop' – mistakenly, and profusely, affirming that she does, in fact, have a nose, until she realises that was not his concern.[85]

The upkeep of a light-hearted tone in such a grisly tale is arguably a matter of sales; Rymer, under Lloyd's direction as publisher, needed to keep the masses entertained without entirely repulsing their sensibilities. Yet, as Mack suggests, '[w]e enjoy the breaking of taboos and the dramatic enactment of forbidden pathologies, but we seem to enjoy them all the more when they are accompanied by the sound of sardonic laughter'.[86] Thus, *The String of Pearls* showcases a return to irreverence, of the flaunting and titillation of readers by the spectacles of horror previously exhibited by Matthew Lewis in *The Monk*. The laughter of the demon barber of Fleet Street – random, hyena-like, relishing the secret it keeps – is much like that of the Joker himself.

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[82] Gasperini, *Nineteenth-Century Popular Fiction, Medicine and Anatomy,* p. 153.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., p. 153.

[85] Rymer, *Sweeney Todd*, p. 140. Original italics.

[86] Mack, *The Wonderful and Surprising History of Sweeney Todd*, p. 58.

Conclusion

The melodramatic excess of the Gothic has always risked 'sending itself up' to parody; these penny blood Gothic tales, plagued by cliché, often slip into self-parody. I have argued that early penny blood forays into the Gothic genre rely on the safety of tried and tested tropes predominantly from the female Gothic. The scope for close intertextual parodic dialogue, while numbers of publications are so vast and writing is so rapid, lessens as the market increasingly develops. In the case of Thomas Peckett Prest's *Angelina, or St Mark's Abbey*, any parody or humour is largely the result of flawed writing and an over-reliance on cliché. James Malcolm Rymer's early experiment with the Gothic in *Vileroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle* similarly recycles female Gothic tropes with little innovation, though he shows more confidence in controlling the unwieldly veins of plot.

As the penny bloods lay secure foundations among working class readers by the mid-1840s, Rymer's *Varney the Vampire* dares to dabble with the supernatural and begins to introduce more comic episodes. This text is more closely aligned to the male Gothic, with its semi-pornographic visual imagery and violence, as well as its keen sense of the comic. But Rymer seems to rise in surety, producing the most popular and long-lived penny blood, *The String of Pearls*. With so much humour, however dark, this penny blood is closer to the comic end of the Gothic-comic spectrum proposed by Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik and sits alongside Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*.

Conclusion

Let's Put a Smile on that Face: the Male Gothic and the Comic

At the opening of this thesis, I borrowed the Joker's mantra from Christopher Nolan's 2008 film, *Batman: The Dark Night*, to ask 'why so serious?' This question has run throughout the thesis, as if Matthew Lewis himself posed the question in penning *The Monk*, despite its reputation for blasphemy, violence, and misogyny. This thesis has interrogated the sometimes-disturbing propensity for the comic at the core of Lewis's novel and explored the ways in which this comic turn developed through the parodic dialogue between texts, critics, and readers in the immediate response to the controversy *The Monk* caused. It is therefore helpful, as I draw my conclusions, to remind readers that I have not read the selection of Gothic novels addressed in this thesis with a sense of humour, notwithstanding the absurdity of R. S. Esq's *The New Monk*. Approaching subjects of rape, murder, and cannibalism in the guise of pastry-consumption as humorous has its limits.

Or perhaps it does not, and that may be Lewis's point. While some scholars have read *The Monk* as a parodic response to typical sentimental and Gothic heroines, none have gone so far as to consider the role of humour as a defining feature of the male Gothic as I have done. This thesis has used *The Monk*, largely seen to initiate a new direction to the Gothic which some scholars, and myself, have termed the male Gothic, to expand upon discussions on the subject. As my Introduction demonstrated, there are few dedicated studies to the male Gothic, and those available that do solely address the subject do not necessarily provide useful definitions. There is a tendency to assume a relationship between the sex of the author and the form of Gothic, a view begun by Ellen Moers's own coinage of the female Gothic in 1974.[1] The male and female Gothic, however, cannot so concretely be separated. In reading *The Monk* as a parodic response to *The Mysteries of Udolpho* in which Lewis is 'determined to undo' Radcliffe's 'careful management of sensationalist materials', the very emergence of the male Gothic form is reliant on the concretisation of the female Gothic, from which Lewis casts a leering shadow.[2]

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[1] Moers, *Literary Women*, p. 90.

[2] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 182.

In Part I of this thesis, I reviewed the prevailing attitudes toward *The Monk*, both of Lewis's contemporaries and modern scholars, showing how, in Emma McEvoy's terms, his 'novel reeks of irreverence […] and smacks of wicked exposure'.[3] Previous scholars have viewed his attitude as symptomatic of adolescent male rebellion, a view inherited from Romantic writers' rejection of their own youthful 'Goth phase', forming part of their deliberate cultivation of distinctions between high and low literature. Lewis's irreverence is instead, I argued, demonstrative of his flair for wit, hell-bent on exposing the performative sham of virtuous heroines and chivalric heroes and of 'baiting critics and reviewers by knowingly appealing to popular demand'.[4] In particular, for Yael Shapira, this 'baiting' is predicated on his lurid portrayal of the corpse, unabashedly flaunting such images as 'the source of quasi-pornographic thrills'.[5] Spectacles of horror, like the dead body and the supernatural, evoke erotic excitement, no longer a mere 'flirtation with death', as Fiedler has suggested of Radcliffe's works.[6] Lewis's male Gothic outright invites that masturbatory quality of novel-reading, of the desire for self-gratification and transgressive private pleasure, that eighteenth-century critics had long feared would come from reading novels and romances.

Scholars may have shirked the task of approaching the comic components of *The Monk*, confused by whether or not the book is about to be 'funnier or sadder' than it is, or simply finding the comic to be 'elusive', because of Lewis's unsettling transformation of the dead female body into an 'erotic keepsake'.[7] Andrew Smith's neat summary of the male Gothic, which I have used throughout to guide my selection of novels for study, suggests that the subgenre is 'characterised by its representation of male violence, female persecution, and semi-pornographic scenes'.[8] I do not dispute this, nor did I seek to; rather, I have shown the comic is essential to *The Monk*, and addressed whether or not it continues to be a defining feature of the male Gothic. To do this, I adopted theories of humour and laughter, outlined in Chapter 2, in order to provide a formula for reading the comical aspects of *The Monk* and other texts.

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[3] McEvoy, 'Introduction', in *The Monk*, p. xxii.

[4] Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, p. 85.

[5] Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 33.

[6] Fiedler, *Love and Death in the American Novel*, p. 140.

[7] Kiely, *Reading the Romantic Novel*, p. 106; McEvoy, 'Introduction', p. xxvii; Shapira, *Inventing the Gothic Corpse*, p. 12.

[8] Ibid.

While humour is subjective, considering incongruity and superiority theories of humour has better equipped me to interpret how the 'grin of the skull beneath the skin' may simultaneously evoke laughter and fear.[9] The Gothic, as Avril Horner and Sue Zlosnik have contested, is on a spectrum between the 'serious' and the 'comic', and even Radcliffe features episodes of comic relief. What differentiates Lewis's humour from his predecessors', and what situates *The Monk* nearer the comic end of the Gothic-comic spectrum, I argue, is his use of parody as an overarching scheme to critique and develop the Gothic in new directions. Part II showed how other authors took up this parodic dialogue. The various sources discussed in Chapter 3 highlight how Gothic parodies do not merely engage with the hypotext to generate meaning and humour. Rather, their caricatures of readers who are, variously, horrified, delighted, or approving of *The Monk,* engage with contemporary criticism and begin to show the reception of the male Gothic. James Gillray's cartoon *Tales of Wonder!*, Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, and Bellin de la Liborlière's *The Hero* mock both the impassioned outrage against the Gothic and the readers themselves, reinforcing my argument that Lewis's spectacles of horror can easily, with a turn of the screw, become spectacles of humour. Yet, the inverse can also occur; parodic Gothic novels, squarely at the comic end of Horner and Zlosnik's spectrum, can be seen to engage in horror. The association of Joshua Pentateuch with anti-Semitic stereotypes, I also argued in Chapter 3, advances R. S.'s *The New Monk* as more than a mere parody of *The Monk*, to be read only as evidence of the popularity of Lewis's novel. In fact, I view *The New Monk* as an early developer of the male Gothic in the aftermath of its progenitor and consider it far more sophisticated (at times) than is often credited.

Chapter 4 showed how the dialogic nature of parody continued to develop the male Gothic in the examples of Radcliffe's *The Italian*, Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya*, and E. T. A. Hoffmann's *The Devil's Elixir*. Each of these novels has been regarded as responding to *The Monk*, though scholars have not hitherto explored their intertextual dialogue or considered their engagement to be parodic in nature. I have argued that together they illustrate how genre develops through textual conversation, to counter the comic turn Lewis initiated to the treatment of heroines, as in the case of Radcliffe's novel, or to advance the comic beyond the realms of reason, in the case of Hoffmann's grotesque novel. However, in the face of the expanding book trade and the rising marketisation of novels, the opportunity for intertextual dialogue between texts begins to break down the parodic impulse of development. Part III

[9] Sage, 'Gothic Laughter', in *Gothick Origins and Innovations*, ed. by Smith and Sage, pp. 190-203 (p. 197).

showed how cheap fiction, marketed toward an increasingly literate working class, mimicked and recycled key tropes of the male Gothic. I argued that parody became increasingly internalised, showcasing the propensity for the Gothic to teeter into the realm of the ludicrous, 'sending itself up' to parody. But, as Franz Potter suggests, recycling tropes is still a 'sign of activity rather than stagnation' which 'indicates a continual interaction between the author and the reader'.[10] In the example of penny bloods, however, the interaction is between publishers and readers-as-consumers, while hack writers like James Malcolm Rymer aim to keep up the pace. His various penny bloods show an increasing confidence in creating new Gothic stories for a new generation especially, as I have argued, in those texts which show a greater affinity to the male Gothic. Though traces of *The Monk*, some fifty years later, are absent from *Varney the Vampire* and *The String of Pearls*, the comic vein begun by Lewis remains evident in the grotesque Sweeney Todd, the euphemistic language of Mrs Lovett, and the dark humour of the city's cannibalistic consumerism.

My final chapter also highlighted that penny bloods are not entirely Gothic in nature. Much more research into penny blood publications is necessary in general; despite rising interest in the weekly penny serials in recent years led by scholars Rob Breton and Anna Gasperini, most attention has been paid to those select few of lasting popularity or influence. As I discussed in my final chapter, there are over 1,000 titles to consider. It was, therefore, beyond both the scope and interest of this thesis to survey penny bloods on a larger scale. However, I would suggest that an avenue of research remains open in the cataloguing and tracking of genres in penny blood serials in order to shed further light into popular entertainment for the Victorian working classes. I am confident that humour will play a key role in the penny bloods, regardless of which genre texts share affinities with.

There is more to be done in the study of the comic and the Gothic and the ways in which horror can overlap with humour. I have contributed to the subject by drawing out the comic vein in *The Monk* and the male Gothic, arguing that parody is an essential component not only in Lewis's novel, but in the development of the genre. In doing so, I have followed Robert L. Mack's view that parody 'can and should be looked upon as activities that have long constituted an inherent and positive facet of almost all artistic (and specifically literary) endeavour', and argued that the male Gothic develops by intertextual, parodic dialogues.[11] The role of parody

[10] Potter, *The History of Gothic Publishing*, p. 8.

[11] Mack, *The Genius of Parody*, p. 6.

in later Gothic texts of the nineteenth, and indeed the twentieth century, remains to be addressed. Questions concerning the place of parody in genre development in the multimedia cultural present, and how its influence can accurately be measured, would further advance our understanding of how the Gothic mutates, infects, and haunts the modern world.

This thesis has challenged the concept of the male Gothic as one which is typically characterised by semi-pornographic imagery, supernaturalism, violence, and an interest in the world of the killer. To this view, I argue that it is essential to consider the role of the comic, especially the grotesque and satire. It is clear that parody and the comic play a role in the development of the male Gothic. Matthew Lewis's irreverent wit, thumbing the nose at critics, begins an association with horror and humour that lingers in the Gothic to the present. Parody continues to influence the way that we understand genre and the Gothic, highlighting commonalities with hyperbolic excess. Far from signalling the demise of the genre, such parodies invite transformation and dialogic reflection. The tendency for the Gothic to mutate and survive in the shadows will, no doubt, continue to do so – no thanks, I believe, to the transformative impulse of parody and the comic turn.

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