GOTHIC FICTION

Introduction

by Peter Otto

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1. The Sadleir–Black Collection

It was not long before the lust for Gothic Romance took complete possession of me. Some instinct – for which I can only be thankful – told me not to stray into 'Sensibility', 'Pastoral', or 'Epistolary' novels of the period 1770–1820, but to stick to Gothic Novels and Tales of Terror.

Michael Sadleir, XIX Century Fiction

It seems appropriate that the Sadleir–Black collection of Gothic fictions, a genre peppered with illicit passions, should be described by its progenitor as the fruit of lust. Michael Sadleir (1888–1957), the person who cultivated this passion, was a noted bibliographer, book collector, publisher and creative writer. Educated at Rugby and Balliol College, Oxford, Sadleir joined the office of the publishers Constable and Company in 1912, becoming Director in 1920. He published seven reasonably successful novels; important biographical studies of Trollope, Edward and Rosina Bulwer, and Lady Blessington; and a number of ground-breaking bibliographical works, most significantly Excursions in Victorian Bibliography (1922) and XIX Century Fiction (1951).

According to Sadleir, the roots of his "mania" for Gothic Romance lay in his "youthful enthusiasm" for Baudelaire and Mallarmé. These writers were "profound admirers of Edgar Allan Poe". Following in their footsteps, Sadleir read Poe's gothic stories and so was led to "the work of Charles Brockden Brown; and from Brown to the English, German and French romances of the 'Terror' school".

As Gothic novels commonly testify, passions, even those with such a plausible pedigree, never operate in isolation. The attempt to possess a desired object is inevitably shaped and constrained by chance, means and predisposition. Sadleir, for example, was "more interested in hunting 'difficult' and unusual books than in the acquisition of famous and therefore expensive ones". "This ingrained characteristic of [his] collecting mania" was, he admits, "virtually forced on me ... by limitations of finance". At the same time, "intensive collection of any author or movement" was for Sadleir always carried out with "the intention of ultimately writing the material collected into biography, bibliography or fiction". Nevertheless, it was a remarkable stroke of luck that enabled Sadleir's Gothic collection to become a reality, while also helping to determine the form it would ultimately take.
“In the autumn of 1922”, while "poking about on the uppermost floor" of Bumpus' bookshop in London, Sadleir "came across a little run of books", five titles in all, that included a first edition of Regina Maria Roche's The Children of the Abbey (London: Minerva, 1796) and Horrid Mysteries. A Story, translated from the German of the Marquis of Grosse by Peter Will (London: Minerva, 1796). The former was one of the most successful of the books published by William Lane's notorious Minerva Press, appearing in at least ten editions before 1825. The latter is the last of the seven "horrid novels" recommended to Catherine Moreland by her friend Isabella Thorpe in Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey (London: John Murray, 1818). Its discovery was remarkable because only ten years earlier it was commonly assumed that Isabella's list contained names only of fictitious novels. In 1922, although now recognised as the titles of real works, it seemed unlikely that all seven Northanger novels were extant. The attempt to obtain a complete collection of "horrid novels" became the chief support and object of Sadleir's biblio-mania.

The next Northanger novel to fall into Sadleir's hands was Roche's Clermont. A Tale (London: Minerva, 1798), and then Eliza Parsons' The Mysterious Warning, a German Tale (London: Minerva, 1796). Using words that evoke the aura of a religious quest, Sadleir writes that his acquisition of the fourth was a "miracle" that occurred "one blessed morning" when a "sudden impulse" took him into the shop of "perhaps the least likely bookseller in London to have such obscure trifles as Gothic Romances". Guided by his "good angel" he found, "straight opposite the door in a shelf under the broad central table", a copy of The Midnight Bell, a German story, founded on incidents in real life by Francis Lathom (London: H.D. Symonds, 1798). The remaining Northanger novels, however, were obtained in the first instance by Arthur Hutchinson, who must be counted as second only to Sadleir as architect of the Sadleir-Black collection of Gothic Fiction.

Hutchinson was editor of Windsor Magazine, a member of the Omar Khayyam Club, and a "bibliomaniac". Sadleir described him as "a bald, large-faced, solid-built but terrifyingly energetic and always bustling man, with a more tireless capacity for talk than anyone I ever met". The friendship between Sadleir and Hutchinson was, evidently, based on their shared penchant for collecting books; but beyond this broad similarity, one is struck by their differences: both collected books of the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century, but whereas Sadleir had a sharp focus (Gothic fictions), an aim (the production of "biography, bibliography or
fiction"), and standards (first editions, in good quality), Hutchinson was, in Sadleir's words, "the kind of collector conventionally called 'omnivorous', his lust for fiction being uncontrolled ... by selective design". Hutchinson's "devouring hobby" was, simply, the collection of fiction, "not necessarily fiction in first edition or fiction in original state, but just fiction".

Hutchinson's passion for collecting was unconstrained even by space. In the bedroom in which he lived, "in a hotel off the Strand", he kept two large packing cases which he filled with his purchases, often not stopping even to unwrap them. Once the cases were full, they were replaced with fresh ones. The old cases were transported to a warehouse where they awaited Hutchinson's retirement, a period in which he would have the leisure at last to sort and arrange his books. Even this remarkably unconstrained passion, however, did have a degree of focus. As Sadleir notes, with more than a hint of incomprehension, Hutchinson had "a very strange but quite definite predilection for fiction by women authors".

When Hutchinson died, sadly before his retirement, Sadleir discovered that he had been made executor of Hutchinson's immense, unsorted, heterogeneous library. Sadleir describes his first attempt to survey this collection as the entry into a gothic labyrinth:

“I shall never forget the first sight of that astonishing collection ... Having arrived at the huge building, we were conducted to a sort of mezzanine floor -- low-ceilinged and in complete darkness. There were, we were told, one hundred and forty packing cases of books, of which a random dozen or fifteen had been unpacked. We were given torches and left to investigate. The rays of light flickered across the vast floor on which – spines upward – were ranged row after row of books. It looked as though an over-floor of books had been laid down, with the narrowest passages here and there through which we crept, flashing the torches on to title after title, and feeling every moment more appalled at the prospect of having to sort these thousands of volumes and prepare them for sale. For they were completely unclassified and desperately miscellaneous ... Out in the daylight my colleague and I stared at one another in despair. What in the world were we to do?"

Of course, the obstacles that impeded Sadleir's first attempt to survey Hutchinson's library were also an index of its strengths. A less "omnivorous" collector, or even a collector more constrained by space, might have rejected or overlooked some of the priceless items assembled
by Hutchinson. For example, Sadleir found a copy of *The poems of Mrs. Ann Radcliffe* (London: J. Smith, 1816) "sandwiched between two fiction-cheaps for bookstall sale, the three items wrapped in newspaper and tied with a string". A large number of Gothic chapbooks, in many cases still today the only extant copies, were "discovered in bundles of paper-covered oddments -- modern novels, local guides, time-tables and odd numbers of magazines". The remarkable array of Gothic chapbooks contained in the Sadleir-Black collection is today one of its major strengths.

Entombed in Hutchinson's packing cases, Sadleir also found many of the novels by women and by minor Gothic writers that are now counted as major strengths of the collection. There were novels by Charlotte Dacre, Mary Charlton, Elizabeth Helme, Francis Lathom, Lady Morgan (Sidney Owenson), Harriet and Sophia Lee, Eliza Parsons, Regina Maria Roche, Charlotte Smith, and a host of other writers less well known to all but the readers of late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century circulating libraries. As Sadleir remarked, "from no other single source were so many new titles obtained".

In 1926, when Sadleir was preparing a paper on the *Northanger* Novels, Hutchinson provided him with two more of the novels on Isabella's list: Eliza Parson's *Castle of Wolfenbach* (London: Minerva, 1793) and *The Necromancer; or, The tale of the Black Forest. Founded on facts, translated from the German of Lawrence Flammenberg (a pseudonym of Karl Friedrich Kahlert) by Peter Teuthold* (London: Minerva, 1794). Although Hutchinson was unaware of the fact, his collection also contained the seventh and last "horrid novel", *The Orphan of the Rhine. A Romance* by Eleanor Sleath (London: Minerva, 1798), for Sadleir the most valuable of the gems he was to uncover.

Sadleir continued to add to his collection until 1935. By that date, he seems to have lost interest, perhaps because his set of *Northanger* novels was now complete; the biographical work on the Gothic, after Sadleir's pioneering efforts, was now being done by others; and/or his interests had turned elsewhere, to his work on Trollope and Victorian fiction. Whatever the reason, Sadleir's collection was now for sale.

Robert Kerr Black (born in 1907 at Montclair, New Jersey; died in 1975), a bibliophile and antiquarian bookseller, purchased the collection in 1937. During the next five years, he added approximately 100 items. Sadleir and Henderson had established the collection; Black attempted to fill the gaps they had left. His contributions included Beckford's *An Arabian tale*, from
an unpublished manuscript; with notes critical and explanatory (London: J. Johnson, 1786; the first edition of Vathek); a first edition of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein; or, The modern Prometheus (London: Lackington, et al, 1818); Percy Shelley's St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian: a Romance (London: J. Stockdale, 1811) and Zastrozzi; a Romance (London: G. Wilkie and J. Robinson, 1810); along with all six of Charles Robert Maturin's novels (often cited as "the greatest as well as the last of the Goths"), including a first edition of Melmoth the Wanderer: a Tale (Edinburgh: Constable, 1820). Black also added the publisher's contract for Mrs Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1794).

Black studied first at Princeton and then, as a graduate student, at the University of Virginia. While at the latter, he was introduced to the Gothic, and his own particular interest in parodies and burlesques of the Gothic was roused, by Professor Archibald Shepperson, author of The Novel in Motley: A History of the Burlesque Novel in English (1936), which contained a chapter on "Gothic Nonsense". In 1942, therefore, when the need to preserve the collection became pressing, and in order to establish a public, scholarly resource, Black gave the collection to the University of Virginia, where it is now housed in the Special Collections Department of the Alderman Library. In addition to maintaining the collection, in the years since then the Special Collections Department has, "through purchase and gift", made significant additions.
2. The Microfilm Collection

The remarkably extensive archive produced by these heterogeneous, yet oddly complementary, influences is organised in Gothic Fiction, the present microfilm collection of texts from the Sadleir–Black archive, into four main sections:

Parts One and Two: Matthew Lewis and Gothic Horror
This first section focuses on the master of Gothic Horror, Matthew Lewis, and the host of minor and major writers who, in the years after the publication of Lewis's The Monk, attempted to emulate, plagiarise or surpass the horrors described in that volume. These are novels of graphic violence, sexual transgression, and supernatural terrors. Also included are authors who, although perhaps only indirectly influenced by Lewis, attempt to reproduce the frenzied violence and pace of the German Schauerroman (thriller or shocker). In addition to three early editions of The Monk (mapping his belated attempts to sanitize his novel) and six other Gothic works by Lewis, highlights of the collection include works by Charlotte Dacre, Joseph Fox, William Green, Carl Grosse, Ann Julia Hatton, William Ireland, Harriet Jones, Francis Lathom, Thomas Pike Lathy, Mary Pilkington, Charles Maturin, John Moore, John Palmer, Eliza Parsons, Regina Maria Roche, Richard Sicklemore and George Walker, amongst others.

Parts Three and Four: Gothic Terror – Anne Radcliffe and her Imitators
Described as a "mighty enchantress"14 and "the Shakespeare of Romance Writers",15 Ann Ward Radcliffe is the most important of the Gothic novelists, routinely credited by her contemporaries with having inaugurated a new "school" of fiction.16 Her novels of suspense, sublime scenery, exquisite terror (conjured by protagonists and readers from hints, signs and possibilities) and the explained supernatural, with their remarkable heroines of sensibility and powerful villains, were enormously popular. They inspired a host of followers, imitators, and plagiarists attempting to take advantage of the almost insatiable demand for her work. This section contains all five of the novels Radcliffe published in her lifetime (all are first editions) and the most important of the writers who (in the novels included here) followed closely in her tracks. There are works by James Boaden, Elizabeth Bonhote, Eliza Bromley, Mary Charlton, Hannah Cowley, T. J. Horsley Curties, Catherine Cuthbertson, Sarah Green, J. M. H. Hales, Ann Julia Hatton, Elizabeth Helme, Anthony Holstein, Mrs Isaacs, Sarah Landsdell, Mary Meeke, Mary Pickard, Mary Ann Radcliffe, Mary Robinson, Regina Maria Roche, Rosalia St. Clair, Catharine Selden, Eleanor Sleath,
Catherine Smith, Charlotte Smith, Louisa Stanhope and Sarah Wilkinson, along with novels by anonymous writers.

Parts Five and Six: Domestic and Sentimental Gothic
Many of the novelists included in this third section are also influenced by Radcliffe and, like that "mighty enchantress", draw heavily on the plots and tropes of the novel of sensibility. In these works, the realism of the eighteenth-century novel of seduction is displaced by an interest in the subjective world of uncertainty, agony, and nightmare into which the protagonist is plunged. In this often female-centred fiction, the gothic heroine of sensibility is discovered searching for her missing parents, acting as detective, struggling to emancipate herself from a violent family, exploring the "terrain" that divides sense from sensibility, trying to make sense of the collision between the private and the public world, and so on. In Lewis's The Monk, the paternal family (and companionate marriage) is offered as antidote to the patriarchal world exemplified by monastic institutions. In domestic and sentimental gothic, the paternal family (and the disjunction between private and public worlds it confirms) is explored as a possible source of horror. In this context, the centre of the third section is Mary Shelley's famous Frankenstein; or, The modern Prometheus, represented by the first edition of 1818. Also included are novels by a stunning variety of authors: Mrs Bennett, Charles Brown, Elizabeth Brown, Mrs Burke, Catherine Cuthbertson, Charlotte Dacre, Selina Davenport, Eliza Fenwick, Isabella Hedgeland, Elizabeth Helme, Lady Caroline Lamb, Francis Lathom, Anna Mackensie, Mary Meeke, George Moore, Sydney Morgan, Agnes Musgrave, Eliza Parsons and Mary Pilkington, John Russell, Louisa Stanhope, Richard Warner, and Charles Brockden Brown, amongst many others. "Domestic and Sentimental Gothic" also includes earlier instances of the form by Mrs Gunning, Mrs Harley and Charlotte Smith.

Parts Seven and Eight: Gothic History, Satire and Chapbooks
Drawing on the late eighteenth-century revival of interest in Gothic (i.e. medieval) architecture and customs, Gothic histories commonly renarrate events in the lives of figures such as Lady Jane Grey, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth II and Mary Queen of Scots. Although the authors of such works sometimes have a good eye for historical detail, their protagonists are painted as victims, villains, heroes or heroines in a Gothic drama. The collection includes early Gothic histories by Thomas Leland, Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee and James White, as well as later examples by many of the main practitioners of the form: C. A. Bolen, T. J. Horsley Curties, Thomas De Quincey, William Godwin, Sarah Green, Mrs Harley, Elizabeth Helme, William
Ireland, George Lambe, Francis Lathom, Charles Maturin, Edward Moore, Agnes Musgrave, Anna Maria Porter, Jane Porter, Ann Radcliffe, Mary Shelley, Henry Siddons, Louisa Stanhope, Joseph Strutt, Mrs Sykes and Thomas Whalley.

Jane Austen's Northanger Abbey (written in 1798; revised and completed by 1803; first published in 1818) is the most well-known of the satires, parodies and burlesques of the genre that were common, particularly in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Amongst the fourteen examples included in this collection are Eaton Stannard Barrett's remarkable The heroine, or Adventures of a fair romance reader (London: Henry Colburn, 1813), Mary Charlton's Rosella, or, Modern occurrences. A novel (London: Minerva, 1799), Sophia Griffith's She would be a heroine (London: Baldwin, et al, 1816), Ircastrensis's Love and horror; an imitation of the present, and a model for all future romances (London: J. J. Stockdale, 1815), Thomas Peacock's Nightmare Abbey (London: T. Hookham, jun., et al, 1818) and the first edition of Northanger Abbey.

In contrast to the many hundreds of pages contained by "typical" Gothic novels, chapbooks are usually composed of no more than 24 or 36 pages. Luridly illustrated, they often squeeze into their much narrower compass the events narrated by their larger cousins. Their pages are consequently packed with horrors, swoons and remarkable events, advertised with titles such as: The bloody hand, or, The fatal cup. A tale of horror! In the course of which is described the terrible dungeons and cells in the prisons of Buonaparte (London: Stevens and Co. Circulating Library, [n.d.]); The secret oath, or Blood-stained dagger, a romance (London: Tegg and Castleman [1802]; The cavern of horrors; or, Miseries of Miranda. A Neapolitan tale (London, W. S. Betham, [1802]; Fatal jealousy; or, Blood will have blood! Containing The history of Count Almagro ad Duke Alphonso (London: T. and R. Hughes, 1807), and so on. Designed to be popular and ephemeral, few Gothic chapbooks have survived. Indeed, many of the more than 120 chapbooks in this microfilm collection have been reproduced from the only copies now extant. Although an important part of Gothic fictions and the precursor of the Victorian penny dreadful and shilling shocker, Gothic chapbooks have rarely been the object of academic study.

The four sections of Gothic Fiction are designed to be inclusive rather than exclusive. While focussing on prose works written in English, they include the occasional Gothic drama and a handful of the many English and French translations of German and French Gothic fictions. Although the collection
is centred on works published in England, Scotland and Ireland, it includes a handful of texts published in the United States.

Before describing in more detail the authors and some of the Gothic "movements" represented in this collection, however, it may be useful to describe its main contours in more detail. It is an indication of the variety of texts included that the attempt to describe its contents and the various research possibilities it opens, quickly becomes an account of the genre. In what follows, all Gothic texts cited are included, often in first editions, in Gothic Fiction.
3. Gothic Origins

In the earliest usage of the word, "gothic" refers to the language and customs of the Goths and, more broadly, the Germanic peoples who in the third, fourth and fifth centuries AD harried the Roman Empire, capturing Athens in 267–8 and sacking Rome in 410. For the Renaissance, therefore, Gothic and Classic were opposites: gothic barbarism, superstition and violence were the abhorred contraries to Classical civilisation, reason and peace. This contrast conditions the gradual extension of the word's referent to include the barbarous, uncouth and unpolished in general. And this more general sense of the word in turn governs, from at least the last decade of the seventeenth century, the use of gothic to mean the medieval. In comparison with the art of the Greeks and Romans, medieval art, architecture and society was thought to be barbaric or, in other words, gothic. Addison illustrates this collocation of the gothic, the barbaric and the medieval in The Spectator, No. 62 (May 11, 1711). Those writers, he opines, who lack the "strength of genius to give that majestic simplicity to nature, which we so much admire in the works of the antients", are "Goths in poetry, who like those in architecture, not being able to come up to the beautiful simplicity of the old Greeks and Romans, have endeavoured to supply its place with all the extravagancies of an irregular fancy".

In the course of the eighteenth century, however, the relative merits of the Classic and the Gothic were reassessed. Rather than providing evidence of a "disordered fancy", the distance of the Gothic from Greco–Roman "civilisation" was now taken as evidence of the former's truth to nature and freedom from artifice. Although predated by the rise of antiquarian interest in the Gothic, arguably this reassessment begins with a group of mid eighteenth-century writers that includes Thomas Gray, Joseph and Thomas Warton, Bishop Richard Hurd and Horace Walpole. The extent of the cultural shift fostered by these writers can be seen in Hurd's Letters on Chivalry and Romance (1762), where the Renaissance estimation of the relative merits of the Gothic and the Classic is reversed, at least in relation to poetic matters. "The gallantry, which inspirited the feudal times", Hurd writes, furnished "the poet with finer scenes and subjects of description in every view, than the simple and uncontrolled barbarity of the Grecian".

For our purposes, the most important member of this group is the last. Horace Walpole's neo–gothic villa, Strawberry Hill, is the most well–known and influential example of the eighteenth–century Gothic revival in
Lownds, 1764), is usually regarded as the first Gothic fiction.

When Walpole subtitled the second edition of The Castle of Otranto, "A
Gothic Story", he used the word "Gothic" to mean "medieval". His book was
an attempt to evoke "the manners of ancient days", of the medieval world.
As presented by The Castle of Otranto, these were "the darkest ages of
Christianity", in which society was plagued by superstitions, supernatural
apparitions and violent passions. Yet, at the same time, the medieval is
presented as a necessary counter-balance to the more enlightened world of
modernity. In the ancient romance, Walpole writes, "all was imagination and
improbability". In the modern romance, "the great resources of fancy have
been dammed up, by a strict adherence to commonlife".

In The Castle of Otranto, Walpole attempted to blend both genres, to bring
modern fiction into relation with its primitive roots. This involved a return,
as Walpole's account of the story's genesis suggests, not merely to a
superstitious past but to the irrational springs of the psyche:

“I waked one morning ... from a dream, of which all I could recover was,
that I had thought myself in an ancient castle (a very natural dream for a
head filled like mine with Gothic story) and that on the uppermost banister
of a great staircase I saw a gigantic hand in armour. In the evening I sat
down and began to write, without knowing in the least what I intended to
say or relate."

While writing this book, Walpole confessed to Madame Du Deffand, "visions
and passions choked me. I wrote it without regard for rules, critics, and
philosophers".

The Castle of Otranto includes many of the motifs that were to became
staples of the genre it founds: the castle, subterranean vaults, the
supernatural, the persecuted heroine, the villainous father, and so on. It
touched on many of the themes that became Gothic staples: incest and
forbidden passion; the oedipal rivalry between father and son; the uncanny
return of the past in the present; the rupture of the everyday by acts of
violence, and the subsequent revelation of what has been hidden or
repressed; the tomb as a liminal space between life and death or between
rational and irrational/demonic aspects of the psyche. At the same time, its
collocation of the "primitive" (that is, superstition, emotion and
imagination) with the realistic language of the modern romance anticipates later Gothic attempts to compose a language of the psyche.

Nevertheless, the heyday of the Gothic did not begin until the last decade of the eighteenth century, sparked by the publication of Ann Radcliffe's third and fourth novels, The Romance of the Forest (1791) and The Mysteries of Udolpho (1794). In the nearly thirty years that divided the publication of The Castle of Otranto from The Romance of the Forest a relatively small, but nevertheless significant group of novelists followed in Walpole's footsteps, many represented in this collection by first editions of their key works.

Perhaps the most significant is Clara Reeve's The champion of virtue. A Gothic story (Colchester: Printed for the Author, 1777), reissued in 1778 under the more well-known title of The Old English Baron. This book is, Reeve writes in her Preface to the second edition, "the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto, written upon the same plan, with a design to unite the most attractive and interesting circumstances of the ancient Romance and modern Novel". It is also, as Frank observes, "the Gothic tradition's linking corridor between the supernatural medievalism of Walpole's The Castle of Otranto and Mrs. Radcliffe's romances".

Of course, there are "passages" leading to Radcliffe's fiction, the genre as a whole and/or its sub genres, that communicate with other rooms in the castle of eighteenth-century fiction. William Beckford's An Arabian tale, from an unpublished manuscript (London: J. Johnson, 1786; later published as Vathek), drawing on the tropes of the oriental tale, is the ur-text for oriental gothic. Sophia Lee's The Recess; or, A tale of other times (London: T. Cadell, 1783–5) is an important early instance of historical gothic, key examples of which are grouped in the fourth section of the collection. As such it looks back to Thomas Leland's Longsword, Earl of Salisbury. An historical romance (London: W. Johnston, 1762). Published two years before The Castle of Otranto, Leland's novel is sometimes cited as the "true" founding-text of the Gothic, although it lacks the supernatural machinery that is a key part of the genre.

In Mrs Harley's The castle of Mowbray, an English romance (London: C. Stalker and H. Setchell, 1788) and Susannah Gunning's Barford Abbey, a novel in a series of letters (London: T. Cadell; and J. Payne, 1768), the novel of sensibility has started to become a vehicle for gothic passions, actors, and scenarios. Also drawing on the novel of sensibility, the portrait of the
heroine and her vicissitudes in Charlotte Smith's Emmeline (London: T. Cadell, 1788) and Ethelinde, or The recluse of the lake (London: T. Cadell, 1789) strongly influenced Radcliffe's work. Indeed, Smith is sometimes thought to deserve the rank of "co-creator of the School of Radcliffe".25 Also deserving of mention is John Moore's Zelucco (London: A. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1789). The hedonism, unrestrained passion, and sadistic cruelty of its chief characters, Zelucco and Nerina, strongly influenced Gothic and romantic villains, the latter anticipating the character of Matilda in Matthew Lewis's The Monk.

By the end of the eighties, the early Gothic of Walpole, Reeves and Lee was sufficiently established to be the subject of satires such as James White's Earl Strongbow: or, The history of Richard de Clare and the beautiful Geralda (London: J. Dodsley, 1789), and was popular enough to attract imitators and plagiarists, such as Mrs Harley in her Priory of St. Bernard; an old English tale (London: Minerva, 1789), a near plagiarism of The Recess. In this same year, Ann Radcliffe published her first novel, The castles of Athlin and Dunbayne. A Highland story (London: T. Hookham, 1789), although it was at first almost completely ignored by the critics.
4. Gothic Revolutions

1789 was also the year in which the French Revolution began, marked by the convocation of the Estates-General, the establishment of the National Assembly, and the fall of the Bastille. These events, along with the reign of Terror (1792–95) inaugurated by Robespierre, provided the most important of the catalysts that transformed early Gothic into the "high" Gothic of the 1790s and first decades of the next century. In the often quoted words of the Marquis de Sade, Gothic fictions were "the necessary fruit of the revolutionary tremors felt by the whole of Europe".

Although De Sade was not alone in holding this view, the precise relation between the events in France and "high" Gothic is a matter for dispute. For De Sade, the misery that became commonplace in the aftermath of the French revolution, coupled with the democratisation of writing, had made the novel "as difficult to write as it was monotonous to read". Misfortunes were commonplace and "there was not an individual left" who was unable to depict what s/he had suffered. "In order to confer some interest on their productions, it was necessary to appeal to hell for aid and to find chimeras in the landscape".

On the level of form, Hazlitt proposes a relation of partial congruence between disorderly literatures and disorderly times (in contrast to De Sade's belief that, in the case of the Gothic, the former amplifies the latter). He writes, for example, that "Mrs. Radcliffe's 'enchantments drear', and mouldering castles, derived part of their interest ... from the supposed tottering state of all old structures at the time". Yet this symmetry enables a more profound dissymmetry:

“It is not to be wondered at, if amidst the tumult of events crowded into this period, our literature has partaken of the disorder of the time; if our prose has run mad, and our poetry grown childish.”

Gothic fictions afford a retreat from the chaotic events of the real world.

"A JACOBIN NOVELIST", the anonymous author of a "Letter to the Editor" published in the Monthly Magazine in August 1797, agrees with De Sade that the writers of Gothic fictions were attempting to maintain interest in the novel. The relation between the French revolution and the Gothic novel is, however, much closer than De Sade allows: the latter imitates and is directly taught by the former. According to "A JACOBIN NOVELIST", by the
last decade of the eighteenth century the events presented by novelists as "a description of human life and manners" had become either stale or outmoded: "There are", for example, "but few ways of running away with a lady, and not many more of breaking the hearts of her parents". Just when novelists "were threatened with a stagnation of fancy", Maximilian Robespierre "arose ... with his system of terror" to teach them "that fear is the only passion they ought to cultivate, that to frighten and instruct were one and the same thing". The prime agent of this influence is imitation. Indeed, "A JACOBIN NOVELIST" writes that

“alas! so prone are we to imitation, that we have exactly and faithfully copied the SYSTEM OF TERROR, if not in our streets, and in our fields, at least in our circulating libraries, and in our closets. Need I say that I am adverting to the wonderful revolution that has taken place in the art of novel-writing, in which the only exercise for the fancy is now upon the most frightful subjects, and in which we reverse the petition in the litany, and riot upon 'battle, murder, and sudden death'.”

In the late eighteenth- and early-nineteenth centuries, perhaps the most sustained reflection on the relation between Gothic fictions (along with the reading habits, tastes, and communities they fostered) and the French Revolution is conducted by Gothic novelists themselves. Lewis's The Monk and Radcliffe's novels (from A Sicilian Romance to The Italian), are deeply and self-consciously concerned with social and aesthetic matters made problematic by events in France. For Radcliffe in particular (and for many of her followers), a key theme is the problem of how one should read books, characters and events in a world where traditional sources of authority are suspect.

Charles Lucas's The infernal Quixote. A tale of the day (London: Minerva, 1801) is a bitter response to the "Jacobin" sentiments of Gothic novelists such as William Godwin and Thomas Holcroft. Francis Lathom's The midnight bell, a German story, founded on incidents in real life (London: H. D. Symonds, 1798) and Carl Grosse's The dagger capitalise on popular interest in the heroic/shocking scenes of the French revolution and the Terror. In Charlotte Smith's The banished man (London: T. Cadell, jun. and W. Davies, 1794) and Mary Pilkington's remarkable The subterranean cavern; or, Memoirs of Antoinette de Monflorance (London: Minerva, 1798), the fictional horrors of the Gothic become political, converging with the horrors of revolutionary turmoil. As Frank notes, "Pilkington's heroine is caught up in the dangerous flux of revolutionary ideas and is called upon to
demonstrate her heroism by investigating all of the violent possibilities released by the revolution”.

It is important to note, however, that the "revolutionary tremors felt" in England in the last decades of the eighteenth century emanated from sources more diverse than the preceding discussion has implied. There were three other "great" revolutions in this period – the agrarian, the industrial, and the American – and all played a role in producing "the tumult of events" reported by Hazlitt and to which Gothic was in part a response.

One should also add that Gothic fictions are the first genre designed for a mass, popular market; they are a product of yet another revolution, "The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-century England" and of improvements in book production and circulation. Indeed, a large measure of the anxiety provoked by the Gothic is related to the perceived difficulty of keeping the fictional worlds and experiences enjoyed by the rapidly growing reading public in a "proper" relation to the "real" world sanctioned by authority.

For conservative writers, such difficulties were thought most likely to arise amongst the often female readers of popular genres, where reading was a leisure activity ungoverned by accepted protocols. It was often assumed that Gothic was such a genre and that circulating libraries, which had proliferated from the middle of the eighteenth century, had helped create the new reading audience that hungered for this kind of popular, recreational fiction. In Sheridan's The Rivals (1775), Sir Anthony Absolute claims that

"a circulating library in a town is as an evergreen tree of diabolical knowledge! It blossoms through the year! – And depend on it ... that they who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last".

Certainly, as Jacobs notes, "By the time Ann Radcliffe’s The Italian appeared in 1797, British reviewers routinely complained that circulating libraries were degrading literature by pandering Gothic romances and other generic hack fiction to female readers".

By the end of the eighteenth century there were many publishers of popular literature and hundreds of circulating libraries to distribute it. In London, the most well-known was William Lane’s Minerva Press and Circulating Library. "In its heyday the Minerva Library had a stock of nearly seventeen thousand books and circulated thousands of volumes throughout Britain,
both to individual subscribers and in collections loaned to shopkeepers in provincial and seaside towns. In 1791 Lane was advertising complete circulating libraries of one hundred to ten thousand volumes for sale to shopkeepers interested in a sideline to their business”.

The appetite of Lane’s Minerva Press for Gothic fictions made plausible the rumour that he would pay five pounds for any unpublished work of fiction. Owing in part to his interest in new writers (their manuscripts were less expensive than those produced by established authors), Minerva published "twice as many works by women as by men". The Minerva authors included in this collection include, apart from those recommended by Isabella: Sophia Francis, Ann Julia Hatton, Thomas Pike Lathy, Anna Mackenzie, John Palmer, Mary Pilkington, Regina Maria Roche, and many others.

Minerva brought William Lane wealth and a degree of notoriety. George Daniel writes, for example, in The Modern Dunciad (1814) that:

“Although, in raising spirits and the rest,
Lewis without a rival stands confest.
Though sprites appear obedient at his will,
Ghosts are but ghosts; and demons, demons still;
Alike in matter, and in form the same:
Hobgoblins differ only – in the name:
Yet Lewis trembles lest his fame be won,
And Mistress Radcliffe fears herself outdone.
But these are harmless, Satire must confess,
To the loose novels of Minerva’s Press;
Such melting tales as Meeke and Rosa tell;
For pious Lane, who knows his readers well,
Can suit all palates with their diff’rent food,
Love for the hoyden, morals for the prude!
Behold! with realms of nonsense newly born,
Th’industrious pack who scribble night and morn;
Five pounds per volume! an enormous bribe,
Enough, methinks, to tempt a hungry scribe.”

Daniel’s complaint is, in essence, that Minerva is willing to feed indiscriminately the debased appetites of the public. At one pole of the Press’s promiscuous mix of publications one might place Mary Meeke’s Mysterious husband. A novel (London: Minerva, 1801), a story of subdued terrors, domestic sentiment, and happily resolved genealogical puzzles.
Writing to support herself, Meeke ("Gabrielli") published 34 novels of this kind (twenty-eight with Minerva), all closely attuned to public taste. At the other pole is Rosa Matilda's (Charlotte Dacre) *Zofloya; or, The Moor* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806), replete with neurotic obsessions, sadistic passions, sexual transgressions, supernatural terrors and eternal damnation. The notoriety of this novel was no doubt augmented by the fact that Dacre was the daughter of John King, the well-known radical writer, money-lender and blackmailer.

Minerva's novels are "loose", it seems, not merely because some include sexually explicit writing but because the Press and the Library make no attempt to discriminate between novels of "Love for the hoyden" and of "morals for the prude". Both kinds of fiction are treated as commodities to be bought and consumed.

Hazlitt implies, as does "A JACOBIN NOVELIST", that the fictional worlds propagated by Gothic fictions have not merely eclipsed the real, but conditioned our sense of what constitutes the real. The sense that the border between fictional and actual realities is shifting (and even that reality is conditioned by fantasy) conditions Gothic satires such as Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, Mary Charlton's *Rosella*, or, *Modern occurrences* (London: Minerva, 1799), Eaton Stannard Barrett's *The heroine*, or *Adventures of a fair romance reader* (London: Henry Colburn, 1813), and Ircastrensis's *Love and horror; an imitation of the present, and a model for all future romances* (London: J. J. Stockdale, 1815).

No matter how one explains the phenomenon, by the close of the eighteenth-century Gothic fictions were one of the most widely-read genres. The extent of its popularity is suggested by Mayo's claim "that about a third of all fiction published in volume form between 1796 and 1806 was frankly 'Gothic' in character, or at least included important scenes of sentimental terror".
5. The Northanger Novels

"Dear creature! how much I am obliged to you; and when you have finished Udolpho, we will read the Italian together; and I have made out a list of ten or twelve more of the same kind for you".

"Have you, indeed! How glad I am! – What are they all?"

"I will read you their names directly; here they are, in my pocket-book. Castle of Wolfenbach, Clermont, Mysterious Warnings, Necromancer of the Black Forest, Midnight Bell, Orphan of the Rhine, and Horrid Mysteries. Those will last us some time."

Jane Austen, Northanger Abbey

A useful overview of the Gothic as it emerged in the 1790s is provided by Isabella Thorpe's list of "horrid novels", mentioned earlier as the chief support and object of Sadleir's biblio-mania: Eliza Parson's Castle of Wolfenbach (London: Minerva, 1793); Regina Maria Roche's Clermont. A Tale (London: Minerva, 1798); Parsons' The Mysterious Warning, a German Tale (London: Minerva, 1796); The Necromancer; or, The tale of the Black Forest. Founded on facts, translated by Peter Teuthold from the German of Karl Friedrich Kahlert (London: Minerva, 1794); Francis Lathom's The Midnight Bell, a German story, founded on incidents in real life (London: H.D. Symonds, 1798); Eleanor Sleath's The Orphan of the Rhine. A Romance (London: Minerva, 1798); and Horrid Mysteries. A Story, translated from the German of the Marquis of Grosse by Peter Will (London: Minerva, 1796).

The earliest of the novels on Isabella's list were published in 1793 and 1794; two appeared in 1796; and the remainder in 1798. The first group appeared, therefore, during the height of the Terror in France, and during the first phase of the Gothic craze of the 1790s, that began with Radcliffe's A Sicilian Romance (1790) and The Romance of the Forest (1792) and entered its second, still more popular phase in 1794, with the publication of Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho. The second group of texts on Isabella's list were published in the same year as Matthew Lewis' The Monk, the text that established the most important alternative to Radcliffe's gothic. Given that Northanger Abbey was in large part written in 1798, one might suggest that the last group of texts signals for Austen the genre's contemporaneity and its still rapidly increasing popularity.
The vexed question of the relation between (popular) literature and history, fantasy and actuality, is implied in the subtitles of Isabella's "horrid novels": "A Tale", "A Story", "A Romance"; "a German tale", a "tale ... Founded on facts", and "a German story, founded on incidents in real life". This is, as I have suggested, one of the key concerns of Austen's Northanger Abbey, evident in chapter fourteen for example, in the ambiguity which allows Eleanor Tilney to believe that her friend, Catherine Moreland, is speaking of social rather than literary revolution:

"I have heard that something very shocking indeed, will soon come out in London."

Miss Tilney, to whom this was chiefly addressed, was startled, and hastily replied, "Indeed! - and of what nature?"

"That I do not know, nor who is the author. I have only heard that it is to be more horrible than any thing we have met with yet."

"Good heaven! - Where could you hear of such a thing?"

"A particular friend of mine had an account of it in a letter from London yesterday. It is to be uncommonly dreadful. I shall expect murder and every thing of the kind".

The "proper" relation between fiction and reality is on this occasion introduced by Henry Tilney who, speaking with a more than mildly paternal tone, offers to "make" Eleanor and Catherine "understand each other". In this context, it is important to note that four of the novels on Isabella's list are by women, and that female authors account for four of the five titles written in England. At the same time, all but one of the "horrid novels" were published by William Lane's Minerva Press.

For Sadleir, Clermont and Horrid Mysteries represent opposing poles of the Gothic. Where the former is by an English author, the latter is a sometimes awkward translation by Peter Will, minister of the Lutheran Chapel in Savoy, of a German Schauerroman. Clermont is a novel of (relatively) mild terrors, the explained supernatural, (rational) sensibility and tender love-scenes. Horrid Mysteries is a Teutonic shocker that focuses on the barbaric rituals and "international intrigues of the sect of Illuminati", deals "unashamedly in the supernatural" and contains "love scenes" which suggest an "enraptured
fleshliness". Indeed, Varma claims that it was the "voluptuous scenes" of this book in particular that tarnished the reputation of the Minerva Press, "a charge which became universal against the entire gothic school". Sadleir locates the other "horrid novels" at various points between these two poles, between the English and Teutonic, orthodox and transgressive, rational and superstitious extremes of the genre.

In Sadleir's view, readers attracted to Clermont were hoping to escape the real. The book obliges by translating them "to a vanished paradise of cultured pleasure-seeking where, to those fortunate enough to have been born to wealth and education, all is ease and peace and gaiety". In contrast to Roche's "florid unreality" and "dream of security", Grosse's novel is judged "the most potent Schauerroman ... [and] the most defiantly fantastic of any novel of the period", while its focus on "the sect of Illuminati" gives it "a strong actuality of interest".

The feminist criticism of the seventies and eighties inverts this valuation. Roberts, for example, writes that Horrid Mysteries and The Necromancer are typical of Gothic novels, often written by men, that foreground "a male protagonist or villain hero over a heroine and her love story". Their sensational fiction has, Roberts implies, less "actuality of interest" than the "horrid novels" written by women which, despite their failures and contradictions, provide a genre in which women could "triumph over their male pursuers, while at the same time maintaining the admired female traits of passivity, propriety, and domestic virtue". For Roberts, “The Midnight Bell stands apart from both groups, distinguished by Lathom's (slightly) less stereotypical characterisation of his heroine and hero.”

Despite their disagreements, the primary categories deployed by Sadleir and Roberts recall the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century view that there were two primary kinds of Gothic fiction, namely horror and terror fiction (to use Radcliffe's terms), that had been established by the work of, respectively, Lewis and Radcliffe. The fault line commonly thought to divide these writers structures both the genre and the first sections of this microfilm collection. We must therefore map it in a little more detail.
6. Radcliffe and her Imitators

“There is a fascination in her 'Mysteries of Udolpho,' which those who feel in youth will likely remember in old age: but it is not the fascination of pleasure; it resembles that practised by the adder, when it sucks, as rustic naturalists say, the lark from the sky – we shudder and become victims. The earth, as we read, seems a churchyard – the houses become castles of gloom – the streams run as if with blood – the last note of the blackbird seems that of the last trumpet – "disasters veil the moon" – and Ann Radcliffe and her mysteries triumph."

Alan Cunningham

The life of Ann Radcliffe, "the great enchantress", "the first poetess of romantic fiction" and the most important writer of Gothic fictions, spans the period during which the genre (or, more accurately, its first incarnation) waxed and then waned. Born on 9 July 1764, the year in which Walpole published The Castle of Otranto, she died on 9 January 1823, when Gothic fiction was thought to be itself a thing of the past. Radcliffe was the only child of William and Ann Oates Ward who, her first biographer (presumed to be Thomas Noon Talfourd) is careful to say, "though engaged in trade were allied to families of independent fortune and high character". One of the most significant of these relatives was Thomas Bentley, of the firm Wedgwood and Bentley, a frequent visitor at the Ward's house and with whom the young Ann Radcliffe stayed for long periods. A founder of the Presbyterian Academy at Warrington and the Dissenter's Octagon Chapel, Bentley was friends with Joseph Priestley, Sir Joseph Banks and Benjamin Franklin.

On the 15th January 1787, Ann Ward married William Radcliffe, a graduate of Oxford and (probably) rejected Law student, who became a translator, journalist and in 1791 the proprietor and editor of the English Chronicle. After her marriage, and with William's encouragement, Radcliffe "soon began to employ her leisure in writing", publishing five novels and a volume of travel writing in less than ten years: The castles of Athlin and Dunbayne. A Highland story (London: T. Hookham, 1789); A Sicilian romance (London: T. Hookham, 1790); The romance of the forest (London: T. Hookham and J. Carpenter, 1791); The mysteries of Udolpho, a romance (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1794); A journey made in the summer of 1794, through Holland and the western frontier of Germany (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1795); and The Italian; or, The confessional of the black penitents (London: T. Cadell, jun. and W. Davies, 1797).
Although Radcliffe's first novel was barely noticed by the critics, her third was so popular that she received the sum of £500 for her fourth, The Mysteries of Udolpho. "[T]his sum was double her husband's annual income as a newspaper proprietor, and astonishing when compared to the £10 or £20 paid to authors of three-volume Minerva novels". Talfourd writes that the publisher, "Mr. Cadell, who had great experience in such matters", on being told that Mrs Radcliffe had signed a contract for this sum, "offered a wager of £10" that his informant had been misled. Ironically, Mr Cadell's publishing company offered Radcliffe £800 for her next novel, The Italian.

As Rogers writes, although The Romance of the Forest "established Radcliffe's reputation ... it was Udolpho that catapulted her to fame".

Hookam and Carpenter produced a second edition of The Romance of the Forest in the year it was released, and further editions were published in 1792, 1794, 1796 and 1799. Second and third editions of Udolpho appeared in London in 1794 and 1795, sales of the novel being helped by James Boaden's enormously popular Fontainville Forest (London: Hookham and Carpenter, 1794), an adaptation of The Romance of the Forest, which opened at the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden, on the 25 March 1794. Dublin editions of Udolpho appeared in 1794 and 1795. Before the turn of the century, French (1797, 1798) and German (1795, 1798) translations had also been published.

The Mysteries of Udolpho inspired a crowd of Radcliffe imitators. In some instances, this took the form of plagiarism or at least extensive borrowing. In John Mitchell's The spectre mother, or The haunted tower (London: Dean & Munday, [n.d.]), for example, the villain of Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho, Montoni, is barely disguised as the detestable Moresco. The author of The mysteries of Udolpho, a romance, founded on facts; comprising the adventures & misfortunes of Emily St. Aubert (London: W. Mason, [n.d.]) was able to condense the four volumes and 1,797 pages of Radcliffe's novel to the point where s/he could include, within the 36 pages allotted to this chapbook, a second tale, Adolphus and Louisa, or The fatal attachment, a tale of truth.

Although not the work of (simple) plagiarists, the titles of texts such as Faulconstein Forest (London: Hookham, Junior, and E. T. Hookham, 1810) and The avenger; or, The Sicilian vespers (London: J. J. Stockdale, 1810)
advertise their indebtedness to specific works by Radcliffe, no doubt in the hope of drawing an audience hoping to enjoy once again the thrills of, respectively, The Romance of the Forest and A Sicilian romance.

Of course, many of Radcliffe's followers and/or competitors had a complex relation with their "strong precursor". Of the host of writers who imitated and/or revised Radcliffe's work, perhaps the most significant are Isaac Crokenden, Catherine Cuthbertson, Mrs Isaacs, Mary Meeke, Mary Ann Radcliffe (her Manfronè; or, The one-handed monk. A romance (London: J. F. Hughes, 1809) was frequently attributed to Ann Radcliffe), Regina Maria Roche and Eleanor Sleath. Relations with the founder of their school were not always equanimous. In the introduction to his Ancient records, or, The abbey of Saint Oswythe (London: Minerva, 1801), T. J. Horsley Curties readily admits that the book's "mysteries – its terrific illusions – its very errors must be attributed to a love of Romance, caught from an enthusiastic admiration of Udolpho's unrivalled Foundress. He follows her through all the venerable gloom of horrors, not as a kindred spirit, but contented, as a shadow, in attending her footsteps."

Nevertheless he goes on to argue that, despite Radcliffe's pre-eminence, the field should now be left to men:

“Ought the female Novelist, in order to display a complete knowledge of human nature, to degrade that delicate timidity, that shrinking innocence which is the loveliest boast of womanhood in drawing characters which would ruin her reputation to be acquainted with? – Ought she to describe scenes which bashful modesty would blush to conceive an idea, much less avow a knowledge of? – Oh no! let the chaste pen of female delicacy disdain such unworthy subjects; – leave to the other sex a description of grovelling incidents, debased characters, and low pursuits: – there is still a range wide and vast enough for fanciful imagination; but when female invention will employ itself in images of the grosser sort, it is a fatal prediction of relaxed morals, and a species of – at least – LITERARY PROSTITUTION.”

As McIntyre dryly remarks, "a lady of any literary conscience might well have a sense of guilt at being responsible for such a following".

Radcliffe was so retiring, and so few of her letters and diaries are extant, that it remains unclear why, after the publication of The Italian, at the height of her fame, she published no further novels. (Although in 1802, inspired by a visit to Kenilworth Castle, she worked on a sixth novel, Gaston
de Blondeville, or, The court of Henry III (London: Henry Colburn, 1826), it
was not published until after her death.) Her withdrawal from public notice
was so complete that many of her contemporaries believed she had died or
gone mad. Her name does not appear in A Biographical Dictionary of the
Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland (1816). Sir Walter Scott admitted
that, like many others, he believed "that, in consequence of brooding over
the terrors which she depicted, her reason had at length been overturned,
and that the author of The Mysteries of Udolpho only existed as the
melancholy inmate of a private mad-house".

Talfourd advances a number of possible explanations for Radcliffe's
"retirement": she felt unable "to surpass her "Mysteries of Udolpho" and her
"Italian"; she was unwilling "again to subject herself to criticism by
publication"; having begun to write for pecuniary advantage, she stopped
when it was no longer necessary. Others have suggested that the true cause
lies in her ill-health (she suffered from asthma), the melancholy caused by
the death of her parents, or the popular association of the Gothic with the
French revolution. Although we may never be able satisfactorily to explain
why, after 1796 Radcliffe left Gothic fictions to her imitators, competitors
and opponents.
7. Lewis and his Followers

“Not without reluctance then, but in full conviction that we are performing a duty, we declare it to be our opinion, that the Monk is a romance, which if a parent saw in the hands of a son or daughter, he might reasonably turn pale. The temptations of Ambrosio are described with a libidinous minuteness ... The shameless harlotry of Matilda, and the trembling innocence of Antonia, are seized with equal avidity, as vehicles of the most voluptuous images ... [The work is a bugbear] for children, a poison for youth, and a provocative for the debauchee.”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

It was not unusual for Radcliffe's admirers to claim that her fiction had the power to transport them to an imaginary world. Talfourd wrote that when we read Radcliffe's wild and wondrous tales “…the world seems shut out, and we breathe only in an enchanted region, where lover's lutes tremble over placid waters, mouldering castles rise conscious of deeds of blood, and the sad voices of the past echo through deep vaults and lonely galleries.”

Scott compared the experience of reading the works of "this mighty enchantress" to "the use of opiates, baneful when habitually and constantly resorted to, but of most blessed power in those moments of pain and of languor, when the whole head is sore and the whole heart sick".

The Monk: a romance (London: J. Bell, 1796), published by Matthew Gregory Lewis when he was 21, conjured a very different response. Rather than offering an alternative to the "real" world, this book seemed to threaten it. For some readers, the stakes were therefore high. Thomas Mathias, for example, wrote in The Pursuits of Literature that "LITERATURE" well or ill conducted, IS THE GREAT ENGINE by which ... ALL CIVILIZED STATES must ultimately be supported or overthrown". For Mathias, The Monk was therefore nothing less than "a new species of legislative or state-parricide".

In contrast to Radcliffe, Lewis was born into the upper ranks of society. His father was Deputy Secretary at War, the owner of plantations in Jamaica, and a supporter of Pitt's government. Lewis's education was "impeccably appropriate to the son of a well-to-do government official". By the time The Monk was published, "He had been fashionably educated at Marylebone Seminary, Westminster School, and Oxford ... and after graduating from the
university had received through his father's influence a post in a British embassy". Again owing to his father's influence, in 1796 a seat was found for him in Parliament. Lewis's father planned a diplomatic career for his son; from an early age, Lewis longed to be a writer. The Monk made the former impractical and the latter a reality.

The first edition of The Monk was published anonymously. It sold well and was, on the whole, favourably received. It was the second edition, appearing in the same year but signed "Matthew Lewis" and advertising his newly achieved status as Member of Parliament, that unleashed a storm. "The fact that the writer was a Member of Parliament and the son of the Deputy Secretary at War, a frequenter and a friend of the aristocracy, seemed to make his authorship of The Monk an unpardonable offence". The book was judged immoral and, worse, blasphemous. When Mathias suggested that aspects of the book were "actionable at Common Law", Lewis issued an expurgated version. In Parreaux's summary:

"Lewis did not content himself with hunting out of his book any words which might be deemed indecent, such as lust, enjoy, enjoyment, incontinence, etc. Not only did he expurgate Ambrosio’s vain attempt to violate Antonia, cancel almost all references to physical love, and proscribe all mention of sexual appetites or pleasures. Whole paragraphs, nay, whole pages disappeared: the dialogue between Antonia and Leonella (silly rather than harmful), where the convention that a young lady 'should be ignorant of the differences between the sexes' was derided; the description of Ambrosio’s feelings at the sight of Matilda’s breasts; his voluptuous dreams; the kissing scene between Ambrosio and Matilda; the first fall of Ambrosio (in the new version, instead of yielding to temptation, he is represented struggling against it, and a concluding moral tag is added); the description of his love night with Matilda; his growing satiety, as he becomes 'glutted with the fulness of pleasure'; the description of Antonia undressing and bathing (as she appears to Ambrosio in the magic mirror), or sleeping naked (while the monk prepares to violate her); Ambrosio’s anticipation of the pleasures he will experience when he enjoys her; and finally the long scene in the vaults of the convent, where Antonia is at last violated, were all cancelled."

These revisions did little to rescue Lewis's reputation. The entry under "Lewis" in A Biographical Dictionary of the Living Authors of Great Britain and Ireland (1816) summarises economically the conventional view:
“While on his travels [Lewis] wrote a romance of great notoriety, and certainly displayed a luxuriant fancy, but sadly debased by obscenity and impiety. The work, however, was pruned of much of its offensive matter on coming to a second edition (sic), though even in its renovated state it is dangerous to the moral principles of young and inexperienced readers.”

Lewis's difficulties arose in part because readers tended to associate him with Ambrosio, the villain of his book. As is well known, Ambrosio is attracted to a young male novice Rosario, who turns out to be a young woman, Matilda. Ambrosio soon breaks his vow of celibacy and makes love to Matilda, who turns out to be a devil in human disguise. His attempts to realise his desires lead him to murder his mother and rape and murder his sister. The association of Lewis with Ambrosio's variously transgressive desires was strengthened by the "open secret" of his homosexuality and, from the early nineteenth century, of his love for William Kelly, the son of Isabella Kelly (the author of Gothic fictions such as Joscelina: or, The rewards of benevolence (London: Printed for the Author, 1797) and Ruthinglenne, or The critical moment (London: Minerva, 1801)). Indeed, it has been argued that "gossip about Lewis's erotic attraction to men ... played a key role in establishing him as a literary lion", anticipating a link between fame and sexual transgression that was to become established with Byron.

While Radcliffe established a school, The Monk, according to Scott, "was so highly popular that it seemed to create an epoch in our literature". Like Radcliffe's works, Lewis's novel inspired a host of plagiarisers, imitators and competitors. The mystery of the black convent (London: A. Neil, [n.d.]) and Fatal vows, or The false monk, a romance (London: Thomas Tegg, 1810) are two of the many chapbooks that draw heavily on The Monk. Ireland's The abbess (London: Earle and Hemet, 1799) vies with Lewis's descriptions of pain, suffering, and sexual excess. Perhaps the most disturbing moment in The Monk occurs after the Abbess, having been captured by the mob and treated with "every species of cruelty which hate or vindictive fury could invent", falls beneath the blow of a well-aimed flint:

“She sank upon the ground bathed in blood, and in a few minutes terminated her miserable existence. Yet though She no longer felt their insults, the Rioters still exercised their impotent rage upon her lifeless body. They beat it, trod upon it, and ill-used it, till it became no more than a mass of flesh, unsightly, shapeless, and disgusting.”
The same graphic detail, sensational prose, and curiously dispassionate tone is emulated in The abbess when, to cite only one example, Honoria and Girolamo are burnt at the stake:

“Many pitied Honoria’s fate; but universal execrations were loaded on the hateful Girolamo. When at the stake, his murderous arm was first severed from his body, and cast into the fire, which was already consuming the penitent Honoria. The chain was, then affixed to Girolamo’s body, who was sentenced to be burned by a slow fire; yet, he shrunk not from the scorching fame, that gradually consumed his flesh, and ended, at length, his detested existence.”

Going one step further in the representation of the dreadful, Walker's "objective" in The three Spaniards (London: G. Walker and Hurst, 1800) "is to horrify, startle, disgust, and amuse Monk Lewis’s own audience with a book calculated to out-Monk The Monk itself". As Frank writes, the result was "an almost unrivalled example of the violent, hate-driven sado-eroticism of the high Gothic at its highest peak".

Between the extremes represented by those who borrow heavily from and those who attempt to surpass Lewis, are the productions of writers who variously imitate, respond to, develop, or attempt to transform aspects of Lewis’s work. Amongst such books, perhaps the most significant of those included in this collection are Charlotte Dacre’s remarkable Zofloya; or, The Moor: a romance of the fifteenth century (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1806); Joseph Fox's Santa-Maria; or, The mysterious pregnancy (London: G. Kearsley, 1797); Sophia Francis’s The nun of Miserecordia; or, The eve of All Saints (London: Minerva, 1807); William Child Green's Abbot of Montserrat; or, The pool of blood (London: A. K. Newman, 1826); and Francis Lathom's Italian mysteries; or, More secrets than one (London: Minerva, 1820).
8. Terror and Horror Gothic

The differences between the Gothic fictions of, on the one hand, Radcliffe and her imitators and, on the other hand, Lewis and his followers is the implicit subject of an essay by Radcliffe entitled "On the Supernatural in Poetry", published posthumously in the New Monthly Magazine in January 1826. Designed as an excerpt from the 'Introduction' to Gaston De Blondeville, the essay reports a rather one-sided discussion between two travellers, Mr. W--- (Willoughton) and Mr. S--- (Simpson). The latter is introduced as one "who seldom troubled himself to think upon any subject, except that of a good dinner". The former, a literary enthusiast, develops the important distinction between terror and horror:

"'They must be men of very cold imaginations,' said W---, 'with whom certainty is more terrible than surmise. 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, though they all agree that terror is a very high one; and where lies the great difference between horror and terror, but in the uncertainty and obscurity, that accompany the first, respecting the dreaded evil?'"

As his allusion to Burke suggests, Mr. W--- is drawing on A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful (1757), in particular its contention that "terror is ... the ruling principle of the sublime" and that no object is "terrible" if it is not also veiled in obscurity. Burke's argument was elaborated in works by, amongst others, Anna Laetitia Aikin and Nathan Drake. In the context of the debate between Mr. W--- and Mr. S---, conducted as they travel to Kenilworth Castle, the distinction justifies Radcliffe's Gothic fiction at the expense of the "kind" fostered by Lewis. The lurid horrors of the latter, stop readers in their tracks, appalled by what has been vividly set before them. The uncertain terrors of the former make readers, like the characters, active participants in the struggle to discern the truth behind equivocal appearances.

In the twentieth century, the distinction between terror and horror is often incorporated within the much more ambitious contrast between male and female Gothic. In the former, horror is a result of the persistence of the past in the present: it is engineered by the patriarchal father (the priest,
tyrannical father), religious institutions, and tyrannical (often aristocratic) families. Supernatural terrors are real; yet at the same time, the experience of horror shatters everyday reality and reveals the unmanageable depths of the human psyche (rather than the guiding hand of God). As this suggests, male Gothic is often structured as an oedipal struggle between sons and patriarchal fathers, whether familial, religious or divine.

In contrast, female Gothic locates the source of terror in the present, in the possibility that the paternal protector (whether father or lover) is untrustworthy or immoral. Supernatural terrors are discovered to be illusions, fabricated by the heroine's imagination, a consequence of a culture that shelters her from the truth. Female Gothic fictions often involve, therefore, a struggle between daughters and paternal (or patriarchal) fathers. Terror evaporates as the heroine learns of her true identity. Alternatively, it modulates into awe, as the heroine glimpses the divine order behind nature.

Although helpful as a first ordering-principle, a glance at the diverse texts contained in this microfilm collection indicate the limits of any attempt to divide Gothic fictions between these camps. So-called male Gothic fiction includes books by female authors (Charlotte Dacre, Sophia L. Francis, Ann Julia Hatton, Harriet Jones, Anna Mackenzie, and so on); and men produce works that appear to belong with female Gothic fictions (T. J. Horsley Curties, Isaac Crookenden, Francis Lathom, George Moore). As Norton observes,

"Once the genre is categorized by gender, a host of cross-overs rise up between female writers of 'male Gothic' and male writers of 'female Gothic', and the distinctions between classifiable types breaks down. Isaac Crookenden wrote 'the male Gothic' by the simple expedient of plagiarizing Ann Radcliffe's novels and reversing the gender of the characters."

Moreover, many Gothic fictions draw on both Radcliffe and Lewis, terror and horror, male and female Gothics. This is nicely suggested by the title of T. J. Horsley Curties' sensational The monk of Udolpho; a romance (London: J. F. Hughes, 1807), which advertises its indebtedness to the ur-texts of male and of female Gothic. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein is for the twenty-first century perhaps the most well-known Gothic fiction to combine elements of both streams.
9. Gothic Echoes / Gothic Labyrinths

In a letter to William Wordsworth, written early in October 1810, Coleridge explains how, after "reading a Romance in Mrs Radcliff's style", he constructed “a scheme, which was to serve for all romances a priori – only varying the proportions --- A Baron or Baroness ignorant of their Birth, and in some dependent situation – Castle – on a Rock – a Sepulchre – at some distance from the Rock – Deserted Rooms – Underground Passages – Pictures – A ghost, so believed – or – a written record – blood on it! – A wonderful Cut throat -- &c &c &c.”

Similar schemes are commonplace during the period. Walker's Hibernian Magazine for January 1798 offers the following "recipe":

“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."

The view that Gothic fictions rely on a small stock of devices, conventions and preoccupations recurs in many accounts of the Gothic, often with negative connotations. Amongst the Gothic's "trappings", Hume mentions "haunted castles, supernatural occurrences (sometimes with natural explanations), secret panels and stairways, time–yellowed manuscripts, and poorly lighted midnight scenes". Sedgwick's list of Gothic preoccupations includes

“the priesthood and monastic institutions; sleeplike and deathlike states; subterranean spaces and live burial; doubles; the discovery of obscured family ties; affinities between narrative and pictorial art; possibilities of incest; unnatural echoes or silences, unintelligible writings, and the unspeakable; garrulous retainers; the poisonous effects of guilt and shame; nocturnal landscapes and dreams; apparitions from the past; Faust– and Wandering Jew–like figures; civil insurrections and fires; the charnel house
and the madhouse. The chief incidents of a Gothic novel never go far beyond illustrating these few themes."

Putting aside the quibble that this list contains many more than a "few themes", it is important to note that stock devices and themes are only the most overt sign of the shaping role played in this genre by intertextuality. At times, Gothic texts seem to be engaged in a long, unfinished conversation with each other and with other texts and genres; or, alternatively, Gothic seems to be a labyrinth in which texts echo, plagiarise, but also recontextualise and transform their precursors and competitors.

Amongst the (originally) non-gothic voices that can be heard in the Gothic, the most prominent are: Edmund Burke’s A Philosophical Enquiry (1757) and, indeed, many of the key eighteenth-century theorists of the sublime; Shakespeare’s plays, most prominently the ghost scene in Hamlet and the witches scene in Macbeth; Milton's Paradise Lost, in particular his portrait of Satan, which influenced the way that Gothic villains were characterized; Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy; the work of the Graveyard poets, such as Edward Young's The Complaint or, Night Thoughts on Life, Death, and Immortality (1742), Robert Blair’s The Grave (1743) and Thomas Gray's "Elegy written in a Country Church-Yard" (1751); James McPherson’s "Ossianic" poems, Fingal (1762) and Temora (1763); myths and popular ballads from Britain and the Continent; the literature of sensibility, particularly novels by Rousseau, Richardson and Prévost; and Schiller’s Die Räuber (The Robbers, 1781) and Geisterseher (The Ghostseer, 1787–9). Even this long list is far from complete!

"Conversion" between Gothic texts sometimes involves no more than plagiarism and/or abbreviation. Chapbook authors in particular were liable to draw resources from pre-existing works: Wolfstein; or, The mysterious bandit (London: J. Bailey, [n.d.]) is a shameless plagiarism of Shelley’s St. Irvyne; or, The Rosicrucian: a romance (London: J. J. Stockdale, 1811); The midnight groan; or The spectre of the chapel involving an exposure of the horrible secrets of the nocturnal assembly (London: T. and R. Hughes, 1808) borrows liberally from Grosse’s Horrid Mysteries; The castle of St. Gerald, or The fatal vow (London: J. Ker, [n.d.]) condenses Clara Reeve’s The Old English Baron; and The romance of the Appennines (London: J. Nichols, 1808) "is a gothic refabrication of two Shakespearean comedies, Twelfth Night and As You like it with Gothic embellishments from several other plays plundered liberally in order to Shakespeareanize the terror and suffering".
Works by Radcliffe and Lewis were, as I have suggested, valuable quarries for plagiarists, while also providing a point of reference for their competitors, imitators and followers. Although the first two sections of the collection are designed to foreground the schools who took Radcliffe or Lewis as their models, this should not be allowed to conceal the intertextuality that often structures relations between their followers, between both minor and well-known Gothic writers, and within (or between) the various sub-genres of the Gothic (monastic shocker, robber romance, tower gothic, oriental gothic, gothic melodrama, and so on).

In addition to Sedgwick's list of Gothic preoccupations, these debates or inter-textual conversations return again and again to questions such as: the nature and limitations of sensibility; the "powers" of the heroine of sensibility; the "new man", exemplified by Vivaldi in Radcliffe's The Italian or Henry Tilney in Northanger Abbey; the problems and possibilities posed by reading, particularly in the context of the new mass market for books; the relation between public and private, male and female spheres of influence; the limits and possibilities opened for women by companionate marriage; the nature of the passions; the status of the novel; the role of women writers; and so on.

These inter-textual conversations are in part driven by the desire to "cash in" on a genre and set of themes that for much of the nineties and until perhaps the beginning of the 1820s, were of widespread popular interest. Indeed, Gothic fictions are deeply inflected by yet another set of exchanges, between authorial intent, market expectation, generic constraints, and the demands of publishers and distributors. An important feature of the microfilm collection is, therefore, the reproduction of the publisher's advertisements and other material often published with Gothic texts.

Until the 1960s, the remarkable intertextuality of the Gothic was commonly seen as a flaw making the genre unworthy of serious study. Gothic was a popular rather than a "high" genre; its members were, in Coleridge's celebrated distinction, works of fancy rather than imagination. In other words, rather than composing an organic, unified whole, Gothic novels were like Victor Frankenstein's monster, a collocation of materials drawn from other sources, bound together in a monstrous (dis)unity. Of the mediocre mass of Gothic fictions, only a handful were worthy of study.
George Sampson's judgement, in The Concise Cambridge History of English Literature (1941) is a representative instance of these views:

“The 'tale of terror' had a great run of popularity ... at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth. Some of them were trash of the most abject kind ... And just as three or four real story-tellers have emerged from the modern horde of semi-literate murder-merchants, so three fairly considerable figures [emerged from the Gothic] ... These are Ann Radcliffe, Matthew Gregory Lewis, and Charles Robert Maturin.”

Michael Sadleir's pioneering bibliographical research, along with early accounts of the genre by Summers and Varma, arguably prepared the ground for the remarkable revaluation of the Gothic that occurred in the last decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, during this period, informed by successive waves of literary theory (in particular Marxist, psychoanalytic, New Historicist and feminist approaches and, more recently, Queer Theory), some of the features that had previously relegated Gothic to the margins now attracted readers to the genre. From the beginning of the 1980s, increasing numbers of critics have been drawn to the Gothic precisely because is a popular genre, the first developed for a modern mass-market; its authors and readers are more likely to be women than men; the genre is structured by quotation, pastiche, allusion, intertextuality, and so on.

Despite this resurgence of interest in Gothic, it has been difficult to find all but the most well-known members of this genre. As Sadleir observes,

“the library circulation represented to within a few copies the entire dissemination of an ordinary novel; ... the volumes were read to pieces if they were popular, and quickly scrapped if they were not; and ... such fictions being regarded as at best a transient entertainment, it was to no one's interest or satisfaction to care for their survival.”

Consequently, despite the growing interest in "non-canonical" Gothic authors and in the genre as a whole, most accounts of the Gothic still focus on "canonical" authors. There is, for example, no extended study of the literary exchanges between Ann Radcliffe or Matthew Lewis and their followers. Aside from William W. Watt's fifty-four page monograph, there are few discussions of Gothic chapbooks or their illustrations. Even key writers of the genre, such as Catherine Cuthberson, Regina Maria Roche and Charlotte Dacre have seldom been the object of extended critical discussion. Despite recent work, Dorothy Blakey's now outdated The
Minerva Press (1939) remains the only book-length study of the most important of the circulating libraries and presses that "fed" the Gothic craze. Although there have been important studies of Gothic conventions, discourses and preoccupations, most rely on only a small sample of texts. One of the hopes of the editors of this microfilm collection is that it will provide the catalyst to redress this situation.

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