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The Transforming Muses.

Stage Appropriations of the Gothic Novel in the 1790s

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The Transforming Muses:
Stage Appropriations of the Gothic Novel in the 1790s

Second Part

Performing Stage Appropriation in the 1790s: the Languages of the Stage and the Page

Third Part.

Practising the Appropriation of the Gothic Stage: Case Studies

INTRODUCTION

To interpret a text is not to give it a (more or less justified, more or less free) meaning, but on the contrary to appreciate what *plural* constitutes it.

Roland Barthes, *S/Z**

Multiple versions exist laterally, not vertically. […] Oscillation is not hierarchical.

Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation**

The Transforming Muses:
Towards a Theorization of Stage Appropriation

Between creation and reception: appropriation as a textual practice

This thesis aims to provide a different point of entry to Gothic novel and drama through the channel of appropriation. In my theory, appropriation gives equal epistemological status to both verbal and non-verbal sign systems. This strategy allows for a holistic approach to Gothic and to analyse several literary-cultural formations as correlated, rather than discrete. Furthermore, I prefer to approach what I define as the "appropriated texts" in an anti-hierarchical fashion. I do not believe that hypertexts are necessarily more degraded or less refined than hypotexts.[1] I simply see them as *different*, and think of them as cultural echoes from the past –signals of the intertextual dimension and of the cultural dialectics which in my opinion originate and constitute any work of art.

Before proceeding with any further theoretical issues, an explanation of the concept of *appropriation* should be provided. I offer the following definition: appropriation is the multiple process of consumption and creative (re)production of objects/texts enacted by the author(s) and the audiences. The use of the plural forms here is fully intentional. As I explain in Part I, ch. 1, the definition "author(s)" reflects the collaborative nature of late-eighteenth century performance, and challenges traditional notions of monologic authorship in the Romantic era. Michael Gamer's argument concerning Romantic authorship has greatly influenced my study: "the

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* The epigraphs are taken from R Barthes, *S/Z*, transl. by Richard Miller, preface by Richard Howard (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975), p. 4 and L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (New-York-London: Routledge, 2006), pp. xiii-xv.

[1] My use of the terms *intertextual*, *transtextual* and any other reference to textuality in the "second degree", including *transmodality*, is profoundly indebted to the theorisation offered by Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Translated by Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky; foreword by Gerald Prince. Lincoln (Neb.)-London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997.

explosion of Gothic fiction and stage drama –especially a drama that depends upon spectacle, and therefore upon the work of many hands – destabilizes the notions of authorship and originality in the Romantic period. […] Does the author reside in the text of the play or in the effect of its stage production?" Gamer wonders.[2] Similarly, "audience(s)" seems more appropriate than audience, primarily because we are dealing with (at least) two separate publics –a public of readers *and* one of spectators, the first often merging into the second– a social hendiadys which might be simply referred to as the addressee or receiver of the narrative/dramatic message. Secondly, theatre and social historians have taught us that the composition of the late-Georgian theatrical audience was volatile and hardly homogeneous in terms of tastes and membership.[3] It included members of various as much as varying social groups –generally positioned in the boxes, pit and gallery– who freely intermixed in the space of a single theatrical night, as I explain in Part II, ch.1. Crucially, the diversified composition of the audience implies that different horizons of expectations, frames of reference, cultural and dramatic competences coexisted for any given performance.

As far as the relation of Gothic theatre and the novel in the 1790s is concerned, I identify two main appropriative modes, which offered the audiences two easily-identifiable transmodal interfaces:

a) *page-to-stage appropriation*. This is a transmodal form similar to *adaptation*. In its most common occurrence, it indicates the process whereby a novel is adapted for the stage. Usually, the adaptor and the novelist are not the same person, although they may be so as in the case of Lewis's *The Bravo of* Venice, 1804, which the author himself dramatised as *Rugantino, The Bravo of Venice* (Covent Garden, 1805.)[4] In this thesis, 'page-to-stage appropriation'

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[2] M. Gamer, "Authors in Effect: Lewis, Scott, and the Gothic Drama", *English Literary History* 66 (1999), p. 833-34. See also M. Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic. Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[3] See chapter III, "Repertoire, tastes, and audiences", Donald Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 110-162.

[4] M. G. Lewis, *The Bravo of Venice*, available from http://www.globusz.com/ebooks/Bravo/00000010.htm. The author has tried her best endeavours to ensure that the website addresses referred to in her study are correct and active. However, no guarantee can be made that a site will remain accessible or that the contents will be still relevant to the present research.

will be illustrated by looking at the case of *Fontainville Forest* (Covent Garden, 1794), a successful adaptation by James Boaden of Ann Radcliffe's first best-selling novel, *The Romance of the Forest* (1794). By the time Boaden adapted the novel, this had already been through four editions. The excitement generated by the appearance of a stage version may be imagined when we learn that it "compete[d] with a production of Handel's Oratorios with which Kemble was opening his New Drury Lane."[5]

This example is quite suitable for a study of appropriation in that the 'appropriated text' (Radcliffe's) was very popular and remained clearly identifiable in its transmigrations. Therefore, we may assume that many spectators went to the theatre after having read the novel, or at least were familiar with it through the numerous reports, comments and excerpts which appeared in the press during the 1790s (for instance in the journal *Monthly Extracts*). Their enjoyment would thus be the result of their dynamic perception of textual sameness and difference.

Arguably, any of the 'follow-ups' to the novel –be they critical, narrative, performative, visual– would have the potential to reshape the initial decoding. In point of fact we know that Boaden actually capitalized on Radcliffe's success, as proven by the subtitle of the printed version of his play, which runs "Founded on the Romance of the Forest,"[6] thus foregrounding its literary source. As well as focalising the audiences' attention,[7] such a paratextual device predetermines and encourages a certain type of reception. Accordingly, at the intra-textual level we may define its implied receiver as 'ideal' or 'virtual'[8] We may thus surmise that the task awaiting most of Boaden's audiences consisted in the oscillation between two contiguous signifying systems (the play and the novel), a process characterized on the one hand by

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[5] R. Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho. The Life of Ann Radcliffe* (London-New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), p. 89.

[6] The front page of *Fontainville Forest* is reproduced in *The Plays of James Boaden*, edited by Steve Cohan (New York-London: Garland, 1980), no page number.

[7] For the concept of focalisation, see G. Genette, *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press and Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), pp. 189-194.

[8] U. Eco, *The Role of the Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979).

the pleasures of repetition (the re-telling as 'showing' of Radcliffe's work) and on the other by change (its adaptation as "re-mediation" on to the stage).[9] This twofold process of fruition (simple and complex) is explained by Linda Hutcheon as follows: "if we know the adapted work, there will be a constant oscillation between it and the new adaptation we are experiencing; if we do not, we will not experience the work *as an adaptation*."[10]

Arguably, the investigation of the methodology of stage appropriation as adaptation is also an enquiry into the role of the Model Spectator. As explained by Marco De Marinis, the concern of such an investigation is "to show in what way and to what degree a performance anticipates a certain kind of spectator (a certain kind of reception)."[11] At the same time we may also imagine that even those members of the audience unfamiliar with *The Romance of the Forest* may have still been able to enjoy *Fontainville Forest* as a drama in its own right, and place it within the contemporary cultural context. Finally, as far as the present-day reader is concerned, even if we approach Boaden's play without any previous knowledge of Radcliffe's work, the subtitle of the drama still makes us aware of the overt presence of a hypotext. In this way, present-day readers may still fairly easily connect the play with its narrative source text (the novel) –if they wish to do so.

b) *stage-to-page appropriation*. This is a transmodal form similar to adoption, inclusion or incorporation. The novel draws from and assimilates various past- and present-day plays and theatrical forms, both legitimate and illegitimate. In my thesis I examine Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1796), an example of 'omnivorous' text that silently, yet efficiently appropriates a variety of contemporary spectacular forms and conventions taken from the fringe world of pantomime and visual shows. These signs of the spectacular alien are assumed and assimilated within the narratives in such

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[9] For the definition of "remediation", see L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, cit.

[10] Ibid., p. xv. The italics are in the text.

[11] M. De Marinis, "Dramaturgy of the Spectator", *The Drama Review*, Vol. 31, No 2 (1987), p. 103.

an efficient and inconspicuous way that they are no longer perceived as *other* but, rather, they appear as fully naturalised.

From the point of view of historical reception, it follows that whereas *The Monk*'s metatextual dimension may have been easily recognised by the contemporary public, present-day readers may in fact find it more difficult to recognise, and accordingly they may risk missing the implicit transtextual relationships present therein. In this latter case, *The Monk*'s covert textual plurality in fact limits the number of competent readers and partially predetermines their level of enjoyment.[12] Hans Robert Jauss has articulated the "hermeneutic difference" between hypotext and hypertext as follows:

> When the author of a work is unknown, his intent undeclared, and his relation to sources and models only directly accessible, the philological question of how the text is 'properly' – that is, 'from its intentions and time' – to be understood can best be answered if one foregrounds it against those works that the author explicitly or implicitly presupposed his contemporary audience to know.[13]

In point of fact no specific source text is ever named in *The Monk* – particularly so because it is not a single text but rather a cluster of theatrical elements which in fact Lewis mutely referred to and appropriated. The author mingles, fuses and structures the novel's *partial* texts –which in my model not only include what we may traditionally call 'the narrative' but also the scenery, music, and special effects present therein. From the addressee's point of view, we may say that the author structures the receiver's attention by defocalising it away from some of these partial texts only to refocalise it on others. It follows that the intertextual and intertheatrical dimension of the novel may be inferred and recuperated only through the Ideal Reader's prior knowledge of the theatrical context and familiarity with the set of codes which characterised contemporary stage conventions and stagecraft. This complex

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[12] For a discussion of the concept of "open work" in relation to Barthes's theory of the plural in the text, see U. Eco, *The Open Work*, transl. by A. Cancogni, with an introduction by D. Robey (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989). For the idea of "double coding" elaborated by Charles Jencks, *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (London, 1977) in its relation to literary texts and intertextuality, see U. Eco, "Intertextual Irony and Levels of Reading". *On Literature*. Transl. by Martin McLaughlin (Harvest Books, 2005), pp. 212-235).

[13] H. R. Jauss, *Towards an Aesthetic of Reception* (London: The Harvester Press, 1982), p. 28.

textual density makes *The Monk*'s spectacularity particularly opaque and difficult to retrieve for the reader of the present time.

I contend that putting the spotlight on the covert appropriative mode enacted by *The Monk* –as much as by many other works in the Gothic vein– may be an effective way of approaching the text and making it 'come off.'[14] Furthermore, I argue that this reading strategy *au second degré* must have been a fairly common practice for many contemporary readers, at least for a large part of those who attended the theatre or recognized its conventions. It may be useful here to remember that the late Georgian public was familiar with various forms of intersemiotic translation and re-mediation through several contemporary, highly successful economic ventures; amongst these in the 1790s we may recall Alderman John Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery (opened in 1789), which by 1791 had at least sixty-five paintings on display, and Fuseli's Milton Gallery (1791-99), which exhibited a series of forty pictures inspired by episodes of *Paradise Lost*.[15]

In case of both 'page-to-stage' and 'stage-to-page' transmigrations, stage appropriations activate various levels of understanding and enjoyment in the receiver. Although all of them are legitimate, only those concerned with stage appropriations *as such* are relevant to the present study.

As well as directly addressing the two cases of adaptation and incorporation illustrated above, my thesis also engages with a diversified *parterre* of 'novel-to-stage' and 'stage-to-novel' appropriations exemplified by the Gothic of the 1790s, such as the use of literary insertions (epigraphs, citations) and the incorporation of extra-literary allusions (musical or vestmental additions and quotations). This mechanism recycles various cultural material of higher or canonical status (for instance Shakespearian

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[14] The term is used by Paul Dwyer, the translator into English of Marco De Marinis's article, as follows: "the performance only 'comes off' to the extent that the real audience corresponds to the anticipated one, thus reacting to the performance in the desired way" ("Dramaturgy of the Spectator", cit., p. 103).

[15] The interface art, commerce and literature in the 1790s is discussed in Luisa Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery Turning 'Reader into Spectators'* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2006). Particularly useful for my research is Calè's examination of the literary galleries as multi-medial visual anthologies that implied the presence of an active spectator (chapters 2 and 3).

dramas, Milton's poetry or eminent musical arias), thus providing an example of what we may define as generic ennoblement or 'canonical relocation'. I define this latter practice as a form of *cultural* appropriation, which aimed at aggrandizing and canonically repositioning the Gothic text.[16]

Parts I and II of the thesis –the site of general insights in the mechanisms of appropriation– will contextualise and illustrate the Gothic drama in the 1790s. These two wide-ranging historiographical chapters will be complemented by a third part dedicated to the analysis of *Fontainville Forest* and *The Monk*, the two texts which I use as case studies to illustrate in some detail the practice of stage appropriation. Roman Jakobson's theory of translation as applied to Film Studies has offered many helpful insights during the elaboration of this last part of my study, in particular as regards the concepts of 'intra-linguistic' translation (translation within one single language) and 'intersemiotic' translation or transmutation (translation between different semiotic systems, including nonverbal configurations).[17] In the final part of my work I also move from the methodological to the theoretical level of the enquiry. Here I contend that the two forms of stage appropriation I have discussed ('novel-to-stage' and 'stage-to-novel') provide a visual (or *ostensive*) model of the epistemological uncertainties at the heart of Gothic.[18]

Appropriation: the nuts and bolts.

Starting from the above theoretical premises, I argue that appropriation represents both *process* and *product*, and in this sense it may be compared to adaptation.[19] In

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[16] For a discussion of Radcliffe's use of quotations and references, see below, pp. 226 *et foll*. See also Norton, *The Mistress of Udolpho* , cit., for Shakespeare's influence on Radcliffe (p. 73).

[17] R. Jakobson, *Essais de linguistique générale* (Paris: Seuil, 1963). In English see Jakobson, "On the Linguistic Aspects of Translation". In Reuben A. Bower (ed.), *On Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), pp. 232-39.

[18] Umberto Eco explains ostension as follows: " Ostension is one of the various ways of signifying, consisting in de-realizing a given object in order to make it stand for an entire class. But ostension is, at the same time, the most basic instance of performance." When any performer signifies by ostension he/she represents through gesture, "doing something which is theatre at its best, since I not only tell you something, but I am offering to you a model, giving you an order or a suggestion, outlining a utopia or a feasible project." ("Semiotics of Theatrical Performance", *The Drama Review*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (1977), pp. 110-11).

[19] L. Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, cit.

effect appropriation may be perceived and enjoyed as a form of re-telling (in the sense as a text *au second degré*) or more simply at face value as straightforward telling/showing –just like adaptation. In other words, I suggest that stage appropriation is the performance of a textual transit.

Stage appropriation purports to be a productive or transitive mode of using the text,[20] which is a practice necessary –and in my theory at times *implied*– at the synchronic and diachronic level by both the critical and general audiences of Gothic. Appropriation readjusts the audiences' competences, which are simultaneously projected backward and forward, on both the absent and the present texts –what we may define as the more or less implied hypotext(s) and their explicit hypertext. The process of filling the gap between present and absent texts –i.e. the process of actualising the texts' semantic potential– coincides with and at the same time engenders a third *virtual* textual level, which exists only *in the mind* of the addressee. The audiences are directly co-opted into the actualisation of this form of third-level textuality, which is the virtual result of the spectators/readers' process of decoding/encoding. As a matter of fact it does not exist in actuality either on the stage or the page, and yet it is always *potentially* there –a new text born of the multiple pleasures of recognition, remembrance, interpretation and understanding, in which reception entails production.

Before proceeding with an examination of appropriation and the role of the addressee it is important to note, however, that the theoretical model I present aims to offer only one among many possible ways of approaching the variety of texts that form the Gothic mode in the 1790s. The purport of my reading is in no way exclusive, and in fact it strives against any attempt at inflexible monologism. After all, there can be no concrete evidence that all of the spectators had the same level of intertextual or cultural competence or that they had all read the texts that were appropriated on the stage and the page respectively. Although it may be surmised that in the case of the adaptations of very famous novels the spectators must have been familiar with the relevant narrative hypotexts, this may not necessarily be true for lesser known works of fiction.

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[20] Barthes, *S/Z*, cit., p. 4.

Similarly, in case of hypertexts with 'uncooperative' (opaque), generic or misleading titles the source text(s) may have remained unclear or vague. This may apply to Henry Siddons's *The Apparition of the Cliffs* (Covent Garden 1794), which was very loosely based on Radcliffe's *Sicilian Romance* or Miles Peter Andrews, *The Mysteries of the Castle* (Covent Garden, 1794), partly based on the same novel.[21] As we realise from the formulaic titles of both Siddons' and Andrews' plays, the recurrent themes and structures of Gothic may have further contributed to distancing those narrative hypotexts which had no open peritextual or epitextual acknowledgement in either the dramas or their published re-mediations.[22]

I suggest that appropriation may thus concern either specific texts (clearly identifiable by virtue of the addressee's prior competence) or more generally inferential frames of reference dictated by the horizons of expectation and textual/theatrical strategies activated by the reader/spectator.[23] I argue that appropriation spotlights two different and by no means exclusive interpretative processes. These vary in the degree of their complexity, and may be defined as

1) *au second degré* or hermeneutic –in which case the addressee recognizes, correctly collocates and understands the hypertexts–

and

2) *au premier degré* or simple –in which case the performance or the novel is not recognised as referring back to another work or cluster of works.

The palimpsestic pleasure of the text is the result of the addressee's active shift between these two levels of reception.

A final critical *caveat* concerns the role of the gendered reader. It is not the intention of this study to propose an investigation of viewing and the process of 'gap-filling' at the basis of appropriation as structured by the unconscious –a privileged topic

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[21] The full title of H. Siddons's work is *The Sicilian Romance or, The Apparitions of the Cliffs, An Opera. As performed with universal applause at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden* (London: printed for J. Barker, Drury Lane, 1794). M. P. Andrews, *The Mysteries of the Castle: A Dramatic Tale. In Three Acts: As Performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden* (London: printed by W. Woodfall for T. N. Longman, Paternoster Row, 1795)

[22] Peri- and epitextual elements in relation to the voice of the author or publisher are discussed in G. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, translated by J. E. Lewi; foreword by R. Macksey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[23] See K. Elam, "Intertextual relations and decodification", *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama* (London-New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 83-87.

of Film Theory, particularly of feminist studies. I am aware that visual pleasure and the morality of the spectator remain central to many interpretations of Gothic, in particular as regards the representation of women and its gender-specific reception and interpretation. The analysis I propose, however, primarily aims at providing a functional definition and some general insights for the study of stage appropriation. Thus I only touch on what Laura Mulvey has defined as the split between spectacle and classic narrative, what we may rephrase as the passive and active stance of viewing.[24] I feel that the interest in stage appropriation is still so recent – we may say still in its infancy- that at the moment it is more important to lay the foundations of this theoretical enquiry.

Nevertheless, as I will explore in my discussion of Sarah Siddons and Gothic in Part II, ch. 2 of this study, an important field of investigation opens up for the study of the relationship between gender-specific responses to seeing and appropriation –taken in their connection with both eighteenth-century aesthetic thought and the apparatus of the gaze. It might be useful here to remember that, as demonstrated by Ellen Donkin, eighteenth-century stage management and theatre production were almost exclusively male-centred, thus marginalizing women's presence and practice.[25] Audience and stage interaction were also markedly gendered, as proven by the impact on female spectators of such shocking plays as Matthew G. Lewis's *The Captive* (1803). As many contemporary commentators noted, this monodrama famously played for one night only before an audience in which many ladies were driven "into fits by the forcible and affective manner of the actress."[26] Similarly, forms of "co-voyeurism"[27] were exploited

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[24] The spectator's look and the pleasures of viewing are presented in Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", *Screen*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (1975), pp. 6-18. See also Jill Dolan, *The Feminist Spectator As Critic* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988). For a summary of the various schools of criticism providing a reading of Gothic, including feminist approaches, see below, Part I note 32 and 33.

[25] E. Donkin, *Getting Into the Act: Women Playwrights in London, 1776-1829* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[26] The passage from the *Biographia Dramatica* is quoted in J. Cox, "Introduction", in *Seven Gothic Dramas, 1789-1825*, edited and with an introduction by Jeffrey Cox (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1992), p. 43. The text of the monodrama was contained in *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis* With many pieces in prose and verse, never before published. In two volumes. London: Henry Colburn, 1839. Disinterested sensibility has been recently discussed in Fiona Price, " 'Myself Creating What I saw': The Morality of the Spectator in Eighteenth-Century Gothic", *Gothic Studies* Vol. 8, No. 2 (2006), pp. 1-17.

[27] S. Bennett, *Theatre Audience. A Theory of Production and Reception* (London-New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 75. Interestingly, Robert Miles notes that Gothic story-telling took the form of "a succession of instructive tableaux," which positioned the reader between masochism and voyeurism, "or possibly both […], a fact explicitly and

in both Gothic novels and dramas, as shown by the renowned recognition scene in Radcliffe's *The Italian* (1797), in which the villainous monk Schedoni looms over the sensuous body of the sleeping Ellena di Rosalba just moments before stabbing her –a sexually charged episode which had a very different on-stage rendition at the hands of James Boaden.[28] These types of audience-stage interaction offer a further example of stage appropriation, seen this time as the affective power wielded by the players over the audiences and the absorption of the latter in the scenic events.

The transtextual dimensions of appropriation may be graphically condensed by recurring to three tables. Italics are used to highlight typographically any occurrence of what I define as *virtual* textuality. With the adjective *virtual* I identify the product of the addressee's decoding/encoding activity, including implicit or covert forms of hypotextuality.

Stage appropriation or adaptation

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scandalously brought out by *The Monk*" (*Gothic Writing 1750-1820. A Genealogy*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002, pp. 44-45).

[28] J. Boaden, *The Italian Monk* (Haymarket, 1797). Act II [scene iv]. *The Plays of James Boaden*, cit., pp. 50-51. The play has no indication of scene number. Less controversial than its source text, in this case the adaptation deliberately challenges the already formed expectations of the theatre-goers. For an introduction to the forms and function of *anagnorisis*, see Marie Philip Haley, "Peripeteia and Recognition in Racine," *PMLA*, Vol. 55, No. 2 (1940), pp. 426-439, partic. 426-27.

	Textual relation				
	Hypertext or source text	**First addressee**	**Hypotext or target text**	**Second addressee**	**Virtual or implied hypotext**
	Novel.	→	Dramatic adaptation	→	*Recognition of hypotext-hypertext interface*
Communicative relation		Reader-author. Decoding→encoding		Reader. Decoding	
	Means and context of production (ex. censorship of novel)	Dissemination	Technical infrastructures. Means and context of production (ex. theatre censorship)		

Table 1 - Methodological framework of stage appropriation or adaptation. Novel to drama.

The definition of "means and context of production" which I have used in the bottom line of the above table indicates the material conditions for the production and reception of the novel/drama. These also included the moral requirements of the textual products, for example in relation to the representation of class relations, historical events, and religion –all aspects of paramount importance during the 1790s.[29]

Stage appropriation may be analysed in its relationship with the various forms of literary and extra-literary dissemination which shaped the textual and cultural afterlife of a text. Editorial success was often accompanied by the appearance of numerous 'offspring', which might include excerpts and reviews in the popular press, chapbook versions, prints, and such artistic re-mediations as ballets inspired by favourite episodes or characters of particularly well-known novels and dramas. The history of the cultural afterlives of the Bleeding Nun inset tale from *The Monk* (Bk. II, ch. i) may be taken as a good example of the complex web woven by the late Georgian, and particularly by the Gothic, textual re-mediations. Lewis's story was re-told as a successful Grand Ballet (Charles Farley, *Raymond and Agnes; or, The Castle of Lindemburgh*, Covent Garden, 1797), a drama (generally ascribed to H. W. Grossette, *Raymond and Agnes, The Travellers Benighted: or, The Bleeding Nun of Lindemberg. An Interesting Melo-drama*, performed at the London minor theatres in 1809), and even as a Grand Romantic English opera (*Raymond and Agnes*, words by Edward Fitzball, music by E. Loder, Manchester, 1855 and London, 1859). In the new century the narrative eventually reached the bluebook circuit with a number of re-writings, such as *The Castle of Lindenberg; or, The History of Raymond and Agnes, A*

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[29] Stage censorship during the Romantic period has been recently examined by D. Worrall, *Theatric Revolution. Drama, Censorship, and Romantic Period Subcultures 1773-1803* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

Romance (1799, rpt. 1820), and *The Bleeding Nun, or The Castle of Lindenberg; or, The History of Raymond and Agnes*, published 1823.[30]

The consumption of the appropriated textual formations was simultaneous, through the harmonious combination of three distinct levels of "pre-spectacle, the spectacle itself, and post-spectacle."[31] As reconstructed by Montague Summers, for instance, the second edition of *The Monk* quickly sold out while the ballet *Raymond and Agnes; or The Castle of Lindemburgh* was being produced. Joseph Bell, Lewis's publisher, informed the public as follows:

> "The Book has been reported out of print, and as a Grand Ballet has been brought forward, taken from the above work, many people wish to see the book before the performance; and as it will be some months before a new edition can be ready to supply the demand, he has given this notice."[32]

In case of 'page-to-stage' appropriation the multiple, contrapuntal languages of the stage adaptation (for instance scenery, mimicry, gesture, music, lighting, costumes, and stage design) require a dramatic consciousness in the theatregoer that is different from the purely literary consciousness required of the reader. Textual decoding is supplemented, at times supplanted, by the correct decoding of the complex network of nonverbal signs and connotative effects which make up the performance (for instance, music). For this reason, in my discussion of the appropriative mode enacted by the Gothic novels of the 1790s I will analyse in detail the various sign systems simultaneously and dynamically at work in the

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[30] Across the Channel, in France, the story enjoyed further success. It became a drama entitled *La Nonne Sanglante* at the hands of Anicet Bourgeois and Jacques Maillan (1835) and an opera (Charles Gounod, *La Nonne Sanglante*, 1854). For a discussion of *The Monk*'s multiple textual afterlives see M. Summers, *The Gothic Quest. A History of the Gothic Novel* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964), pp. 210-35, André Parreaux, *The Publication of 'The Monk'. A Literary Event 1796-1798* (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1960), Anne Williams, "Lewis/Gounod's Bleeding 'Nonne': An Introduction and Translation of the Scribe/Delavigne Libretto", Romantic Circle Praxis Series / *Gothic Technologies: Visuality in the Romantic Era*. Available from the Romantic Circles website www.rc.umd.edu at http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/gothic/intro/miles, accessed on 22 May 2006; Franz J. Potter, *The History of the Gothic Publishing, 1800-1835. Exhuming the Trade* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). For a scholarly introduction to the issues of cultural dissemination in the eighteenth century, see P. Sabor and T. Keymer (eds.), *The 'Pamela' Controversy. Criticism and Adaptations of Samuel Richardson's 'Pamela', 1740-1750* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2001). In the Gothic area, finally, see the appendixes in Deborah D. Rogers, *Ann Radcliffe: a Bio-bibliography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1996), p. 175 et foll.

[31] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, cit., p. 206.

[32] Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, cit., p. 211.

performance (Part II of the thesis, sections 3, and 4). These sections also examine the phenomenon of semantic re-creation, which illustrates how different signs and effects were used in the hypertexts to (re)create an impact on the target receivers comparable to the one experienced by the source receivers

It might be useful to remember also that the reception of a play varies both in diachronic and synchronic terms. As well as being appreciated in different ways by the individual members of the audience, "a play may vary greatly from performance to performance, because one of its creative forces changes nightly."[33] While the novel is a cultural artefact whose material nature does not change in time, a performance is ephemeral and transient –particularly so in case of the para-legal shows that in the later eighteenth century were staged away from the three patented theatres (Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket in the summer months), beyond the legitimate pale of the spoken (and often printed) drama.[34] As a consequence, my discussion will pay particular attention to those aspects of the Gothic stage, which had specific theatrical rather than dramatic characteristics –and which are thus expedient to delineate the nature of stage appropriation as *stage* appropriation. These aspects will be addressed in the sections dedicated to the *mise en scène* (Part II, ch. 1), where the textual manifestations (novel) will be compared with the multiplicity of sign systems of which performances are composed.[35]

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[33] S. Kattwinkel, "Introduction". In S. Kattwinkel (ed.), *Audience Participation. Essays on Inclusion in Performance* (Westport, Conn.-London: Praeger, 2003), p. xi.

[34] J. Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[35] Hereafter I shall use the concepts of "dramatic/literary text" and "theatrical/performance text" as theorised by Marco de Marinis: "[t]heatrical text - this is no longer meant to indicate the dramatic, literary text but rather the text of the theatrical performance (*testo spettacolare*), the performance text. This is conceived of as a complex network of different types of signs, expressive means, or actions, coming back to the etymology of the word 'text' which implies the idea of texture, of something woven together" ("Dramaturgy of the Spectator", cit., p. 100). I find the concept of text as *texture* of great relevance for my theory of appropriation in connection with the latent textual plurality of such works as *The Monk*.

Novel adaptation or redaction

With the proliferation of the chapbook or bluebook versions of famous Gothic texts a second form of appropriation – what I call appropriation '*au second degré*'- became rather common. This second case of appropriation may be exemplified by the re-adaptation or *redaction* in chapbook format of successful Gothic dramas. This was the case of two homonymous romances penned by the chapbook writer, Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson, entitled *The Castle Spectre* (published respectively in 1808 and 1820),[36] both of which are prose narrativizations of Matthew G. Lewis's dramatic hit, *The Castle Spectre* (1798).[37]

This second mode of stage-to-page appropriation is very similar to the page-to-stage one, and it may be represented as follows:

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[36] S. S. Wilkinson, *The Castle Spectre, or Family Horrors. A Gothic Story* (London: printed for T. And R. Hughes, 1808) and *The Castle Spectre. An Ancient baronial Romance* (London: J. Bailey, 1820).

[37] For a discussion of Wilkinson's production as an adapter, see F. Potter, *The History of the Gothic Publishing*, cit.

	Textual relation				
	Hypertext or source text		**Hypotext or target text**		**Virtual or implied hypotext**
	Drama.	→	Novel.		*Recognition of hypotext-hypertext interface*
Co-textual relation	Plural co-textuality of theatrical night (transitory signs)	Dissemination	Plural co-textuality of Gothic novel (permanent signs)		
Communicative relation	Means and context of production	Author-Spectator (hearer/viewer). Decoding→encoding		Reader. Decoding	

Table 2. Methodological framework of stage appropriation or redaction. Drama to novel

As far as my enquiry is concerned, 'stage-to-page' appropriation as illustrated in Table. 2 is significant not so much in itself, but rather as a symptom of the latent theatrical dimension inherent in many Gothic novels. In point of fact the overarching theory of the stage appropriation of Gothic I propose requires that the two tables above (Tables 1 and 2) merge together as in Table. 3a. My contention is that the analysis of the Gothic drama –a complex topic of investigation in its own right, as I explain in the First Part of my study– should help us become more aware of the theatrical sub-texts *virtually* present within the Gothic novel. I contend that these, in turn, should be the objects of a twofold analysis. First of all, critical investigation should look into the recurrent formal or thematic theatrical echoes to which these sub-texts *openly* give voice. They may include such dramatic intertextuality as, for instance, the one enacted with Shakespeare's plays (a topic which I take up in the final part of my thesis) as well as the kinetic-visual components of telling.[38] At the same time, critical investigation should also become more aware of the multiple languages *covertly* present in the Gothic novel.

Recent visual culture studies applied to the narrative and poetic texts of the Romantic era[39] seem to confirm my hypothesis that the Gothic novels incorporate multiple visual/aural/oral sub-texts –so far rather marginalized and only sporadically considered by the critical appreciations of the genre. I contend that the channel of appropriation may be useful to identify and retrieve these neglected sub-texts. In this respect, Lewis's *The Monk* seems to offer a particularly fruitful

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[38] Some critics of Gothic have remarked on the relationships of the genre with the contemporary Georgian stage. For instance, Emily St. Aubert's performance is compared to contemporary acting techniques in J. Fisher, "The Stage on the Page: Sarah Siddons and Ann Radcliffe", *Eighteenth-century Women: Studies in their Lives*, Vol. 2 (2002), pp. 243-263. In its turn, Fisher's essay is much indebted to Coral Ann Howells's discussion of the gestural language of the Gothic in *Love, Mystery, and Misery. Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London: The Athlone Press, 1978).

[39] See W. Galperin, *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), G. D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real. Romanticism and Visual Culture, 1760-1860* (New York- Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) and, more recently, the special issue of the Romantic Circle Praxis Series, *Gothic Technologies: Visuality in the Romantic Era*, edited by Robert Miles. Available from the Romantic Circles website www.rc.umd.edu at http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/gothic/intro/miles, consulted on 8 June 2006.

field of investigation. In this novel a small number of quotations from *Macbeth*, *Measure for Measure* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona* are coupled with less explicit allusions to the contemporary stage representation of the supernatural. More significantly, as I will explain in Part III of the thesis, the isotopy (or single level of sense) of transformation underlying *The Monk* draws silent inspiration from such contemporary visual shows and scenographic devices as Philippe de Loutherbourg's Eidophusikon *(*a mechanism that was supposed to provide a 'Representation of Nature, or Various Imitations of Natural Phenomena represented by Moving Pictures') as well as the marvellous stagecraft which characterised the late eighteenth-century pantomimes and harlequinades.

	Textual relation				
	Hypertexts or source texts			**Hypotext or target text**	**Virtual or implied hypotext**
	(Drama →) Gothic novel.		→	Drama	*Recognition of hypotext-hypertext interface*
Co-textual relation		Plural co-textuality of Gothic novel.		Plural co-textuality of theatrical night.	
Communicative relation			Author-spectator (hearer/viewer). Decoding→encoding	Reader/hearer/viewer. Decoding	
Cultural contexts of production and reception	Technical infrastructures. Means and context of production (ex. censorship)			Technical infrastructures. Means and context of production (ex. theatre censorship)	

Table 3a. Methodological framework of stage appropriation. Model of the three-phased Gothic intertextuality.

Table. 3a illustrates what I call the triple-phased hyper-textuality of the Gothic novel. Instead of offering a straightforward example of adaptation from novel to drama (novelistic source text ➔ dramatic target text, as in the case of the adaptation of *The Romance of the Forest* into *Fontainville Forest* which I summarised in Table. 1), the recognition of textual plurality appears to confirm that the Gothic novel is a form of hypertext in its own right. The multiple languages present within the Gothic novel transform it into the hypertextual intersection of pre-existing cultural echoes –visual, spectacular and theatrical signs– as is the case of *The Monk*.

Arguably, this type of stage appropriation actualises the semantic potential of the novel. I define this form of covert textual embedding the 'crypto-intertextuality' or rather '*ur*-intertextuality' of the Gothic novel (Table 3b).

Crypto Hypotext(s)	Hypertext
Multiple languages (drama, visuality, spectacle etc.)	Novel

Table 3b. Theatrical *ur*-intertextuality of the Gothic novel.

In its turn, when the Gothic novel is adapted into dramatic form (Table 3c), this transposition silently brings to the surface –and thus *virtually* re-activates– the latent (and often displaced) theatrical echoes embedded within the novel itself.

Hypotext	Hypertext
Gothic Novel	Gothic dramatic adaptation. Reactivation of theatrical crypto-intertextuality of the Gothic novel.

Table 3c. The Gothic dramatic adaptation.

As is the case with sensitive or artistic translation and with some transtextual practices based on the dialogic relations among texts –such as parody, re-mediation, re-writing and other types of literary migrations –appropriation amounts to an "interpretative re-statement" that effectively illuminates and unearths what "was already there" in the original text.[40] The analysis of the mechanics of appropriation helps uncover the meaning and significance of the various textual signs in their interactive function. As a consequence, we may contend that the analysis of Gothic appropriations has a three-fold function: 1) it discloses and highlights the inherently dramatic and theatrical subtexts in the narratives; 2) it encourages a revision of the horizons of expectation of the texts and, finally, as a consequence of the above 3) it dynamically re-activates a long-neglected stage-page dialogism.

A writerly act? Appropriation and the role of the audiences.

In this part of the introduction my argument is concerned with further defining the activities *au second degré* of the addressee, i.e. the cognitive operations produced by any member of the audience who recognises a stage appropriation as a stage *appropriation*. What I propose thus applies only in the case of a knowing receiver –i.e. somebody who is aware of the existence of either a novelistic hypotext in the case of an adaptation (*Fontainville Forest*) or a cluster of performance forms and texts in case of a spectacular novel (*The Monk*). In this sense the model receiver of the stage appropriation I imagine coincides with Umberto Eco's Model Receiver.[41]

From a theatrical point of view, I further suggest that seeing the patrons of stage appropriations as Model Receivers dovetails with the current theories of the eighteenth-century stage audiences –who were not only vocal and proactive in their material interaction with the stage but also psychologically and emotionally involved with the events the actors' lives (audience-actor interaction). As suggestively recounted by John Brewer:

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[40] G. Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 419 and 423.

[41] Eco, *The Role of the Reader*, cit.

Players made the stage seductive […]. For much of the century the spoken drama was dominated by the extraordinary public attention paid to every aspect of the lives of its most famous players […]. The eighteenth-century audience was not like its twentieth-century English or American counterpart, watching and sitting in silence, confining its involvement to final applause. Less conscious of being in the presence of 'culture' and more mindful of being part of the theatrical experience, […] *people in the audience looked on drama as their property*.[42]

The concept of stage appropriation I here propose thus somewhat complicates Susan Bennett's assertion that "[w]ith the establishment of private theatres in the seventeenth century […] audiences became increasingly passive;" in point of fact, I argue that stage appropriation highlights the role of the spectator in both literary and theatrical communication.[43] Inactive and silent audiences usually indicate that the spectators are relegated to the status of receivers of the message –a fact that apparently became the norm after David Garrick's 1763 reforms established the ontological and physical barrier that separated stage and audience and trained the spectators to passive behaviour.[44] I do not deny that this sense of awed reception may have been correct in terms of consumption; I do, however, wish to question somewhat the configuration of this social contract. In terms of a semiotic analysis of the consumption of the late-Georgian theatre, I find traditional notions of audience passivity debatable. We may actually say that frame-breaking was in fact almost the norm. Although the stage-audience and the actor-audience interactions significantly diminished after Garrick's reforms, these exchanges by no means finished, as demonstrated by the numerous episodes of catcalling, rioting and other lively manifestations of audience displeasure (especially about admission prices) that spice up the thespian chronicles of the age.[45]On the contrary, it would appear that managers and performers continued to rely on various forms of audience participation, as attested not only by the prologues and epilogues to the plays, but also by

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[42] J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of Imagination* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), pp. 334 and 351. The italics are mine.

[43] Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, cit., p. 3. For an introduction to theatrical communication, see K. Elam, cit., pp. 28-87.

[44] After the 1763 alterations to the Drury Lane auditorium, members of the audience were no longer permitted to stand in the wings, attend the green-room or sit "in a specially constructed amphitheatre on the stage itself," especially on benefit nights (I. McIntyre, *Garrick*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 2000, pp. 320-21). The enlarged capacity of the auditorium would make up for the loss in the players' benefits and "from that time on, the privilege of going into the orchestra or behind the scene was extended only to members of the Royal Family" (ibid, p. 321). See also K. A. Burnim, *David Garrick Director*, with a foreword by G. Winchester Stone (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press and London and Amsterdam: Feffer and Simons, 1973).

[45] I can here mention the riots which followed the abolition of the practice of the half-price ticket introduced for the performance of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* (Drury Lane, January 1763); just in the very same weeks the audience was being banished from the stage space (McIntyre, *Garrick*, cit. pp. 326-28).

the recurrent practice of directly addressing the theatre patrons with thanks, apologies, pleas of patience and other forms of beseeching.[46] What I wish to prove is that the mechanism of appropriation puts to work a range of cognitive and intersemiotic strategies that challenge conventional notions of stage-audience passive interaction. As I will go on to argue, these strategies activate a *mental* proximity which reconfigures and by-passes traditional theories about the Georgian audience's *material* distancing.

On a more general level, we may suggest that the concept of creative receivers was at the basis of late Georgian cultural consumption. I have already mentioned the visual re-mediations of literary texts activated by the literary galleries and by the serial publication of illustrated and captioned texts and anthologies.[47] Here I wish to call to mind the process of so-called 'sublimication,' through which the writer conjures vague descriptions, later worked up into sublime images in the readers' minds. This activity was theorised in Section IX of William Gilpin's *Remarks on Forest Scenery* (1791), one of the texts which inspired Radcliffe. [48] Gilpin defined the consequences of sublimication as follows:

> In general, the poet has great advantages over the painter in the process of sublimication, if the term may be allowed. The business of [the poet] is only to excite ideas; that of [the painter] to represent them. The advantage of excited over represented ideas is very great inasmuch as they are, in some degree, the reader's own production, and are susceptible of those modifications which make them peculiarly acceptable to the mind in which they are raised; whereas, the others, being confined between a distinct and unalterable outline, admit of none of the modifications which flatter the particular taste of the spectator, but must make their way by their own intrinsic force.[49]

As explained by Rictor Norton, "the skilful writer throws out vague hints that are taken up by the readers and worked into sublime images in their own minds, thereby becoming all the more powerful for *being the joint creation of writer and reader*."[50]

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[46] J. Fisher, "Audience Participation in the Eighteenth-Century London Theatre", cit., pp. 55-69. Considerably older, yet still valid is L. Hughes's study, *The Drama's Patrons: A Study of the Eighteenth-Century London Audience* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1971), whose title is drawn from Samuel Johnson's famous Prologue to *The Merchant of Venice* (Drury Lane, 1747), "a maxim for the entire century with regard to the audience and its involvement in stage matters" (Fisher, "Audience Participation", cit., p. 55). On the tradition of prologues and epilogues in the eighteenth century see M. Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1961) and D. J. Ennis and J. B. Slagle (eds.), *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-raisers, and Afterpieces: the Rest of the Eighteenth-century London Stage* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2007).

[47] Calè, *Fuseli's Milton Gallery*, cit.

[48] Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, cit., p. 42.

[49] W. Gilpin, *Remarks on Forest Scenery and Other Woodland Views*, edited by T. D. Lauder (Edinburgh: Fraser & Co, London: Smith, Elder & Co, Dublin: Curry, 1834), Vol. 1 p. 335.

[50] Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, cit., p. 78. The italics are mine.

In accordance with this cognitive frame of reference, we may state that the role of the reader and the spectator of the stage appropriation of Gothic is reactive and participative. As far as *stage* appropriation is concerned, any activity which falls within the theatrical frame (dramatic action) is accompanied by audience activity at the interpretative level (decoding-encoding). Thus the audiences are co-opted into and directly contribute to the theatrical event. It is here appropriate to recall Marco De Marinis' definition of the "dramaturgy of the spectator" as referring to "the various receptive operations/actions that an audience carries out: perception, interpretation, aesthetic appreciation, memorization, emotive and intellectual response, etc."[51]

In case of stage appropriations, the spectator further enlarges the activities listed above through acts of decoding, mnestic recognition, and the ensuing generic and contextual re-adjustment of the present (overt) text. Thus he/she completes what De Marinis defines as the overall result of the spectators' operations: "it is only through these actions that the performance text" and here I would add *stage appropriation* "achieves its fullness, becoming realised in all its semantic and communicative potential."[52] In my argument, the addressee of the stage appropriations is a creative one, contributing directly to the communicative circuit through his/her activity of decoding/encoding. At the same time the addressee recognises the hidden literary hypertexts of the drama/novel being seen/read, thus bringing to the surface any covert or marginalized co-textuality. In this sense, it is through his/her crucial interpretative activity of textual archaeology that the receiver truly and decisively actualises "the semantic potential" of the dramatic or narrative text. This form of cooperation transforms the addressee into an actual "maker of meaning."[53]

Gothic appropriations prompt the varied activation of the audiences. The range of transformations induced in the receiver by the target text and the text-audience interaction (*first degree activation* of the addressee) are amplified and complicated by the mnestic palimpsest and imaginative components underlying the hypertext (*second degree activation*). Robert Hume set the agenda for a reconsideration of the role of the reader of the Gothic in his pioneering appreciation of the genre: "[t]he literature of the later

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[51] De Marinis, "Dramaturgy of the Spectator", cit., p. 101.

[52] Ibid. The insertion in square brackets is obviously mine.

[53] Ibid, p. 102.

eighteenth century attempts to rouse the reader's imaginative sympathies; the particular device employed towards this end by the Gothic novel writers is terror […]."[54] He later defined further the concept of the participative energies of the reader:

> Another distinctive feature of the early Gothic novel is its attempt to *involve* the reader in a new way. In the sentimental literature of the age one is invited to admire fine feelings; in Gothic writing the reader is held in suspense with the characters […]. Inducing a powerful emotional response in the reader (rather than a moral or intellectual one) was the prime object of these novelists.[55]

Among the objectives of the present enquiry is to show to what extent stage appropriations imply a *writerly* act –an activity that makes "the reader no longer a consumer, but a producer of the text" and opens new entrances in the plurality of the Gothic.[56]

A few practical notes: chronological limits of the enquiry, authors and works analysed.

In order to offer a more cogent and pointed argument, I have chosen to limit the scope of my research to the single decade of the 1790s, the period that may be defined as the Gothic cusp[57] as well as the decade of efflorescence of the Gothic drama.[58] My reasons for this choice are interconnected at three levels, concerning in turn the sociology of literature, the history of literature, and the reception of Gothic.

According to Paula Backscheider, the author of one of the earliest reappraisals of Gothic drama, the genre "reached its creative and popular peak at a time when a number of political orders were being renegotiated and being complicated by an almost unprecedented national and international crisis."[59] Backscheider points out that the

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[54] R. Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel", *Publications of the Modern Language Association*. Vol. 84, No. 2 (1969), p. 282.

[55] Ibid., p. 284.

[56] Barthes, *S/Z*, cit., p. 4.

[57] R. Miles, "The 1790s: the Effulgence of Gothic". Jerrold Hogle (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 41-62.

[58] J. Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit.. As further noted by David Punter, "[t]he Gothic novel […] was the dominant genre of the decade, and part of the explanation of this is that it was now beginning to gain critical acclaim" (*The Literature of Terror. The Gothic Tradition,* London-New York: Longman, 1996, vol. 1, p. 54).

[59] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 149. Backscheider's decision is consistent with her choice of discussing not the whole span of the English Gothic drama, as much as the inception and establishment of the genre, which she

development of the Gothic drama coincided with a period characterised by internal rupture and external upheaval. The economic strain caused by poor harvests was followed by the popular pressure accentuated by contemporary continental events, which encouraged such radical publications as Thomas Paine's *The Rights of Man* (1793). Simultaneously, these latter contributed to the consolidation of competing ideologies, as shown by the increase of the radical education tracts by/for women and the ensuing renegotiation of traditional familial and gender roles.

This domestic sense of insecurity and turmoil was heightened by the backlash of both the American and the French Revolution, which in turn led to the horrors of the Reign of Terror and hence to Napoleonic expansionism. If in the 1780s the Gothic drama "became a recognized and popular literary mode," it is in the 1790s, Backscheider argues, that it turned into "a mania, as it did the gothic novel."[60] This cultural reading is shared by Robert Miles who further contends that "after 1794 the Gothic […] became a way of speaking the unspeakable."[61] Miles' hypothesis is suggestive for my theory of stage appropriations; I would like to pursue it one step further and, as I will explain in my discussion of Lewis's *The Monk* in Part III of my thesis, I would in fact contend that it is in the 1790s that, partly through the influence of stage spectacle, the Gothic became a way of *ostending* the unspeakable.[62]

Jeffrey Cox, another authoritative scholar of Gothic drama, takes a historiographical stance complementary to Miles' and Backscheider's. He groups the plays collected in his pioneering anthology *Seven Gothic Dramas* into three main chronological sections. The first phase ("The Birth of the Gothic Drama from the Spirit of Sensation") records the rise and later success of the genre, which quickly became "*the* dramatic form for the revolutionary years of the 1790s".[63] Cox admits of the presence of

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places between "the time of the adaptation of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* for the stage in 1781 and the first adaptation of one of Anne Radcliffe's novels in 1794 […]. That decade's gothic drama has largely been ignored" (ibid., p. 158).

[60] Ibid., p. 149.

[61] Miles, "The 1790s: the effulgence of Gothic", cit., p. 55. Robert Miles's rigorous historical analysis convincingly demonstrates that "the upsurge in Gothic works is indeed dramatic during the 1790s", reaching a peak in 1800, "the year in which the largest number of Gothic novels were published" (ibid., p. 42).

[62] Eco "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance", cit.

[63] Cox, "Introduction", cit., p. 5. See also the hypothesis made by J. Donohue, who explains: "[b]ecause of the derivative nature of Romantic plays and the continuity of theatrical production behind them, it will be necessary to look back as far as the Jacobean drama and the Restoration theatre for contexts adequate to an understanding of dramatic character in this later age" (*Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970, p. 5).

Gothic elements in the Jacobean and Elizabethan dramatists as well as throughout the eighteenth century, from the early 'she-tragedies' onwards; Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother* is indicated as the earliest example of the genre. In his opinion, however, the Gothic drama exploded in England only after 1789 ("The Triumph of the Gothic Drama").[64]

The focus on the 1790s I have selected holds true also in terms of the production of the two authors I have chosen to look at in more detail −Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis. Radcliffe, the first novelist I will examine, stopped publishing in 1797. If we except her earliest novel, *The Castle of Athlin and Dunbayne* (published in 1789) and the posthumous *Gaston de Blondville* (1826), her major production spanned and indelibly marked the Nineties.[65] We may notice then that while Radcliffe established herself as the rising star of the end-of-the-century book market, at the same time on the metropolitan stages the Gothic drama became "the dramatic form for the revolutionary years of the 1790's"[66]. The chronological synchronization of Radcliffe's success with the triumph of the Gothic drama contributes to render more coherent my interdisciplinary study of the novelistic and dramatic forms of the Gothic and it foreshadows possibilities of intertextual transfers and intersections.

The third benefit of choosing Radcliffe and Lewis as the two case studies with which to test my overarching theory of stage appropriation is given by the consideration that these two authors represent perhaps the most controversial and most widely discussed pairing of Gothic novelists. In effect Radcliffe and Lewis are commonly taken as the representatives of two divergent, and often conflicting, trends of the novelistic Gothic −on the one hand the 'female' Gothic or school of Terror and on the other the 'male' Gothic or the school of Horror. In general terms, we may say that the male Gothic focuses on the psychology of the villain, while the female variant privileges the

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[64] Cox's third phase of the Gothic drama coincides with the post-Napoleonic period and differs from the earlier two phases because of cultural and ideological changes of great import. Cox maintains, however, that in its last phase, the Gothic drama "is no longer the key theatrical resolution of the generic and political questions facing the dramatist." In fact with the dawn of a new century Gothic drama rapidly turned into a "protest against the dominant ideology of the day", simultaneously objecting "against the rise of the new dominant popular form of domestic melodrama" ("Introduction", cit., p. 5).

[65] R. Miles, *Ann Radcliffe. The Great Enchantress* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 9-11.

[66] P. Ranger, *"Terror and Pity reigned in Every Breast": Gothic Drama in the London Patent Theatres, 1750-1820.* London: Society for Theatre Research, 1991, p. 20.

description of the heroine's plight at the hands of her (often male) antagonists.[67] This difference was suggested early on by Radcliffe herself in her influential essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry" (*New Monthly Magazine*, 1826). In this metacritical presentation of her aesthetics in dialogue form, Radcliffe notes that the main difference between her art and her imitators' (amongst whom was Lewis and his school) lies in the diversity existing between surmise and image, uncertainty and certainty– in a word , I would say, between imagination and visualization.

> '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 faculty 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 [error for 'the latter'], respecting the dreaded evil?'[68]

If we carry Radcliffe's poetical agenda one step further, in terms of this thesis we may keep in mind that Horror and Terror coincide with two different story-telling approaches: telling and showing, based respectively on the mind and the eye. In the first mode of engagement, the audiences are immersed "through imagination in a fictional world," whilst with the second they are engaged "through the perception of the aural and the visual."[69] Robert Miles, for one, brings this theoretical explanation to the context of the Gothic: "[t]error occurs in the minds of [Radcliffe's] characters, whereas in Lewis terror leaves its literal imprint on his characters' mutilated bodies."[70] I contend that applying the study of stage appropriation to Radcliffe's and Lewis's works may be thus

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[67] For a definition of the "female Gothic", see amongst the others Robert Miles, "[i]n pushing aside the 'phallocentric', feminist critics have refocused our attention on Radcliffe's feminine topography, reading her texts not as a weak protest against patriarchy, but as a powerful, indeed terrifying expression of experiences elsewhere, until then scarcely articulated […]. The 'feminine' ceases to be male plus absence, an etiolation of the will by gender, but a presence in its own right, the shadow of the mother, not just the father, falling across the text" (in R. Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820*, cit., p. 115). The bibliographic references I quote Part I, notes 33 and 34 may be helpfully integrated with the following seminal introductions to the Female Gothic: Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (London: Allen, 1977), Juliann Fleenor (ed.), *The Female Gothic* (Montreal: Eden Press, 1983), Claire Kahane, "The Gothic Mirror", in S. N. Garner *et al*. (eds.), *The (M)other Tongue: Essays in Feminist Psychoanalytic Interpretation* (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1985). More recent studies have been offered by Kate F. Ellis, *The Contested Castle. Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), Alison Milbank, *Daughters of the House. Modes of the Gothic in Victorian Fiction* (London: Macmillan, 1992) and Susan C. Greenfield, *Mothering Daughters. Novels and the Politics of Family Romance. Frances Burney to Jane Austen* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002).

[68] *The New Monthly Magazine* Vol. 16 No. 1 (1826), pp. 145-152. Rpt. in R. Norton, *Gothic Readings. The First Wave, 1764-1840* (Leicester and London: Leicester University Press, 2006), p. 315.

[69] Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation*, cit., p. 22.

[70] Miles, *Ann Radcliffe*, cit., p. 47.

useful to highlight the visual embeddings present in narration. While this silent spectacular and performative intertextuality is arguably relevant for several narratives of the Gothic, for instance for Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance*, it becomes absolutely central, I would contend, in the shaping of *The Monk*'s narrative strategy. At the same time stage appropriation highlights the Gothic page-to-stage transmodalizations, which in our case will be drawn from *The Romance of the Forest*'s telling to *Fontainville Forest*'s showing.

After Gothic bibliophile Montague Summers stressed early on the modelling roles played by Radcliffe and Lewis in the construction of Gothic, this distinction became a sort of critical shorthand, adopted by most of the literary histories of the genre.

> It might seem difficult to decide whether it was Ann Radcliffe or Matthew Gregory Lewis who extended the more powerful effect upon the temper and shaping of the Gothic Novel as it went its varied course, and since actually the influence of the former was far greater than that of the author of *The Monk*, it may appear a paradox to say that none the less it was the latter upon whom contemporary writers of fiction more closely modelled certain prominent aspects of their work.[71]

In effect Radcliffe and Lewis have been customarily yoked together in discussions of the Gothic novel since at least the studies of Edith Birkhead (*The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic* Romance, 1921) and Eino Railo (*The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism*, 1927) by reason of the influence that the work of the former bore on that of the latter.[72] Very few critics have ventured beyond this superficial connection, the most notable of them being David Punter who states in one of his earliest studies of the Gothic: "Radcliffe and Lewis have traditionally been seen as the protagonists of two distinct types of Gothic, but in fact alongside the stylistic differences lies a considerable and, in a sense, embarrassing identity of thematic preoccupation."[73] Interestingly, Punter continues:

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[71] Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, cit., p. 232.

[72] The most thorough analysis of the relationship of Lewis's novels with Radcliffe's remains to date R. P. Reno, *The Gothic Visions of Ann Radcliffe and Matthew G. Lewis* (New York: Arno Press, 1980). It is here worth noting, however, the contrasting view expressed by M. Summers, according to whom "in all essentials, it must be emphasized, Mrs. Radcliffe and Lewis differ very widely from one another. They have certain romantic subject-matter in common, but so entirely opposite are their several methods of approach and treatment that although casually they may appear at some points to contact this similarity is extremely superficial and proves but a deceptive glamour of resemblance" (*The Gothic Quest*, cit., p. 233).

[73] Punter, *The Literature of Terror*, cit., p. 55.

> Radcliffe and Lewis attempted an even more ambitious synthesis than Walpole's, in which prose equivalents were sought for poetic and dramatic conventions, *and could sometimes only be found at the price of narrative distortion* […].[74]

The "narrative distortion" here evoked by Punter is the site of what I call 'stage appropriation' –a textual threshold in which novelistic and theatrical texts overlap with and disseminate within each other. I argue that Punter's provocative remark may be further pursued only if we move our investigation beyond Radcliffe and Lewis's significant thematic interconnections on to the level of the authors' shared reception of the contemporary theatrical conventions. To my knowledge, Radcliffe's and Lewis's novels have never been addressed through an approach that highlights their shared theatrical co-textuality. Originally born from the practical need of concentrating my analysis on a limited number of authors, my decision to focus on Radcliffe and Lewis has in fact permitted me to assess the different (and at times divergent) appropriations of the Gothic stage enacted by the two authors within the span of a single decade.

After an introduction to the themes and forms of the Gothic drama (Part I), I will examine the use of three specific aspects of the Gothic dramatic language as recorded by both novel and drama: music, lighting, and scene design (Part II, Chapter 1). These introductory chapters will be brought into context in the final section of my thesis (Part III), devoted to the stage appropriations respectively *in* and *of* the Gothic novel, particularly, though not exclusively, in *Fontainville Forest and The Monk*. This final part of my enquiry has been conceived as a litmus paper, and it aims at providing the necessary link between the former theory-oriented and latter text-oriented parts of my thesis.

I have already provided an outline of my argument as developed in Parts I and II of my study. Here I wish to stress how the case studies with which I engage with at length in Part III involve the novelistic and dramatic representations of the supernatural, one of the several facets of the epochal relationship between reality and illusion, and as such of Enlightenment epistemology. Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* offers an interesting specimen for my analysis in as much as the dramatist decided to bring the supernatural

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[74] Ibid, p. 58. Mine the italics.

on stage, thus addressing –and crucially challenging– a central aspect of Radcliffe's poetics. I put Boaden's practice in context by looking at contemporary stage presentations of the supernatural as offered for instance in *Hamlet*. In particular, I focus on the successful production of *Macbeth* put on at the new Drury Lane Theatre on 22 April 1794, only one month after the opening of *Fontainville Forest*, with John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons in the leading roles. In my opinion this intertheatrical scheduling is highly symbolic: Radcliffe, the so-called "Shakspeare [sic] of Romance Writers"[75] finally competed, although in an adapted form, with the Bard himself. This dramatic battle, in fact more akin to a real epistemic clash, was significantly played out on the field of the end-of-the-century supernatural spectacularism.

Judith Fisher has recently drawn attention to the fact that "when Mrs. Radcliffe revealed the rational explanations for the castle's horrors [Udolpho's], to some of her critics, it was as if she had given away the theater machinists' backstage secrets."[76] I shall try to carry this generic assertion one step further by framing it within the contemporary theatrical context. Accordingly, my discussion of the "explained supernatural" employed by Radcliffe will be compared to (and juxtaposed with) the audiences' suspension of disbelief in its relation to the practicalities of staging (stage machines and change of scenery, acting conventions in pantomime and drama etc.).

In similar fashion, the second of my case studies, dedicated to stage appropriation in *The Monk*, will discuss the novel in relation to contemporary stage presentation and in the context of the Romantic harlequinades and spectacular visual exhibits. In this section, I frame Lewis's representation of the supernatural within the contemporary mechanics of staging, such as the use of machinery, stage traps, special effects as well as other aspects of spectacular stagecraft. I will draw comparisons with other theatrical manifestations of the supernatural such as those offered, for instance, in the Harlequin Faustus pantomimes and in George Colman's *Bluebeard, or Female Curiosity* (Drury Lane, 1798). In particular, the inclusion of Colman's Gothic pantomime –analysed in the context of Lewis's spectacular extravaganzas– will allow me to address the issue of spectacular

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[75] Nathan Drake, *Literary Hours* (1804). For Drake's review see Document no. 3 in D. Rogers (ed.), *The Critical Response to Ann Radcliffe* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood Press, 1994).

[76] Fisher, "The Stage on the Page: Sarah Siddons and Ann Radcliffe." *Eighteenth-century Women: Studies in their Lives*. Vol. 2 (2002), p. 260.

transformations as stage actualisation (what I have called the *ostension*)[77] of the overarching ontological and epistemological uncertainty at the heart of Lewis's poetics.

Coral Ann Howells has pointedly noted that "Gothic techniques are essentially visual in their emphasis on dramatic gesture and action and in their pictorial effects, giving the reader an experience comparable to that of a spectator at the theatre."[78] The purport of this remark may be tested by enlarging the field of my enquiry to include contemporary visual and stage spectacle. I argue that as far as Lewis is concerned, the assimilation of the visual becomes a mode of telling, an actual authorial strategy through which the writer manipulates and guides –I would go so far as to suggest *stage manages*– the readers' attention.

Visual culture studies in the Romantic era will be employed to illustrate the relevance of visuality and spectacle in the contemporary cultural discourse. The juxtaposition between the 'inward eye' and the 'physical eye' (with the vilification of the latter) at the core of the early Romantic discourse[79] will be employed from a theatrical point of view as a contribution to explain the dramatic ideology that has long belittled the Gothic dramatic and spectacular production –not only in the past but in some cases up until today. I support what we may define as *visual observation* or *visual reading* of the novel, using methods more familiar to visual culture historians than literary critics.

My study wishes to unshackle the Gothic from the textually-based tyranny which many critical appreciations have forced upon it. Roland Barthes, for one, has called for a reading that "must be plural."[80] Hopefully, listening to some of the least heard voices of the Gothic texts and looking at some of their many overlooked textual signs may help us retrieve the long-lost collective dimension of the genre.

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[77] For "Ostension", particularly the "Forms of Ostension", see P. Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre. Terms, Concepts, and Analysis* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1998), pp. 244-46.

[78] Howell, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, cit., p. 16.

[79] For a challenge to the critical assumptions relating to Romantic vilification of the visual, see D. Townsend, "Gothic Visions, Romantic Acoustics", who invites a fresh enquiry into "the extent to which Romanticism, certainly in its earlier Wordsworthian and Coleridgean manifestations, distanced itself from the frantic imaginings of the Gothic romancer through effecting a shift from the eye to the ear, from sight to the auditory field as the privileged organ and field of aesthetic perception and appreciation" (*Gothic Technologies: Visuality in the Romantic Era*, cit, p. 1). A similar point is cogently made by Galperin, *The Return of the Visible*, cit.

[80] Barthes, *S/Z*, cit., p. 15

FIRST PART

A thoughtful analysis of 'Gothic' should challenge the kind of literary history that organizes, delineates, and defines: a literary history that also confines us with some inherited literary concepts, particularly ideas about genre, that can be as confusing as Udolpho's amazing structures.

Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic*

The English Gothic Theatre:
Themes, Structures, and Socio-Cultural Contexts of Production and Reception.

A Stage of Tears and Terror: Introducing the Gothic Stage

Introducing a study of the English Gothic theatre with a paragraph entitled "A Stage of Tears and Terror" has several implications. Intentionally venturing across Genette's textual thresholds,[1] such an introduction wishes to offer a synthesis of the genre and, most of all, to highlight three of the most distinctive characteristics of the Gothic drama: the theory of *mise –en-scène*, the acting style of its performers and the emotional participation elicited in the audience and physically demonstrated by them. From my viewpoint, the complex performative event, which I define with the term 'Gothic stage', must be analysed by enquiring into the peculiarities of its nature as "spectacle" –as drama and performance– rather than just by reading and interpreting its dramatic texts, however fascinating such an undertaking might be. As a consequence, I propose a model of analysis of the theatrical communication activated by the Gothic which privileges first of all audience-stage interaction as much as the interaction among the members of the audience, and secondarily the interaction between the audience and the actors.[2]

Contemporary theatre historians who have investigated and catalogued the signifiers of Gothic theatre and the complex meanings they accompany have critically classified the easily recognizable atmospherics and recurrent themes of

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* The epigraph to the first part is taken from A. Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago-London, University of Chicago Press, 1995), p. 13.

[1] G. Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, translated by Jane E. Lewin; foreword by Richard Macksey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

[2] For a tentative discussion of the "eighteenth-century audience", see the relevant chapter in J. O' Brien, *Harlequin Britain. Pantomime and Entertainment 1690-1760* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), pp. 63 et foll.

this genre,[3] comparing it on the basis of these elements with the better known manifestations of the Gothic novel. Such an approach may perhaps miss the mark, overlooking the very essence of a complex cultural phenomenon, which is very far from our own aesthetics as well as from contemporary theatre practices. The Gothic spectacle – dependent as it was upon the non-verbal– was intrinsically ephemeral, condemned for too long a time to the enduring indifference of the historians. The task of historically reconstructing this genre is rendered even more elusive by the fact that most contextual evidence has reached us, in the form of *written* documents: reviews, theatrical critiques, thespian biographies, printed versions, along with the often unreliable copies of plays deposited with John Larpent, the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays from 1778 to 1824). To these we may only add *iconographical* documents –the actors' portraits in costume and a few reproductions of theatre interiors.[4]

My project entails the analysis of the Gothic stage as a peculiarly theatrical phenomenon –hence, the emphasis on the word, stage, in "A *Stage* of Tears and Terror", denoting the morphological space and ontological limit of the Gothic theatre. The stage was the place where the actors moved and spoke, surrounded by the fragile ontological diaphragm of the proscenium arch –the stage-auditorium barrier– behind which bustled teams of stage hands with their ever more complex machinery. The interaction between stage and stage hands was thus exposed in plain view: the audiences were enthralled in a sort of infinite and collective 'suspension of disbelief.' As maintained by Paula Backscheider, they enjoyed the

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[3] See below, Part II, Chapter 2, "Staging the Signifiers of the Gothic": Plots and Actants, Edifices, The (On-Stage) Presence of the Past, The Signs of Identity.

[4] A totally new and deeply challenging approach to the theatre's 'lost-in-the-making' dimension and its (con)textual strictures is offered in Jacky Bratton's monograph, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). For a record of the manuscript and printed copies deposited with Larpent, see D. MacMillan (ed.), *Catalogue of the Larpent Plays in the Huntington Library*, Huntington Library List No. 4, San Marino (Ca), 1939. The full on-line catalogue may be accessed at http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf1h4n985c&chunk.id=odd-1.8.3&brand=oac. Accessed on 8 August 2008.

sets in a "somewhat detached, analytical mode," [5] thus coupling aesthetic perception with emotional engrossment. Only at the end of the century did machinery definitively supersede the livery servants needed for scene changes as by then complex stagecraft had made human appearance offensive to stage propriety.[6] Rather temptingly, we might see the Gothic performance as a collective rite, which effected "a theatricalisation of the audience."[7] This latter was at the same time self-conscious and reflective, impassioned and detached, as we realise from the following review, which describes how the horrors of Bluebeard's chamber could quickly give way to laughter.

> In the *Blue Room*, or Charnel House, where the ashes of *Blue-Beard*'s Wives are deposited, the whole contrivances were thrown into ridicule by want of celerity in the intended transitions. KELLY attempted in vain to remove the Spectre of Death. […] The Spectre remained, however, incorrigible; and shewed uncommon attention to the audience, by the most polite *bows* we ever witnessed from a *Spectre*! The spectators could not resist the temptation, and laughed very heartily at this *phenomenon*.[8]

An arena of ritual for the exorcism of anxieties and fears,[9] the stage is in my opinion the only space where the physical creation or critical reconstruction of the Gothic theatre may actually happen.

In my critical system, tears and terrors represent the constituent theatrical enactment inscribed upon the Gothic theatre text, which was created, and at times

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[5] P. Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics. Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), p. 172. It is here important to note that both renovations of Drury Lane Theatre (1792 and 1794) aimed at improving the audience's sightline and to offer a better view of the stage, as testified by the removal of the chandelier in the middle of the proscenium and the increased sloping of the pit, which gave an unobstructed view of the stage to the spectators seated in the upper parts of the house. See the chapters "Playhouses" and "Stage Presentation" in *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit., pp. 90-92.

[6] Document no 168, "The installation of new machinery at Drury Lane, 1784", Chapter "Stage Presentation", ibid., p. 222.

[7] Here I somewhat readapt Galperin's argument in *The Return of the Visible*, cit. p. 94.

[8] Review of the Opening Night performance of *Blue-Beard. The Oracle and Public Advertiser* No. 19,833 (17 January 1798), p. 3. In "Appendix: Contemporary Reviews and Comments", J. Cox and M. Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, (Broadview Press: Peterborough, Ont.), 2003), p. 331; the italics are in the text.

[9] For the connection between theater and exorcism see in partic. the work of Mircea Eliade, (*Patterns in Comparative Religion*, transl. R. Sheed, Meridian Books, New York, USA, 1963) and Victor Turner (*From Ritual to Theatre*, Paj Publications New York, 1982, and *The Anthropology of Performance*, Paj Publications, New York, 1988).

intentionally constructed around the specific talents of the great tragic and comic actors and actresses who interpreted its roles. The recurrent and simplistic actantial structuring of characters as villain, heroine, and hero –each with their specific and predictable spheres of action– did not always derive exclusively, as Paula Backscheider has noted, from the ritualistic aspects of the genre.[10] We may assume that it was in fact influenced by the typecasting of the actors, whose specialized, immutable, and profoundly self-referential repertories arguably contributed to the public's emotional detachment, shaped its expectations, and furthered its aesthetic pleasure. As recalled by Joseph Donohue, "[t]he theatre of the age was emphatically not a playwright's theatre but an actor's theatre, and the successful playwright was one with the knack of tailoring his piece to the abilities and tastes of players." Donohue goes on to add:

> The play was chiefly a wagon for a star, and the sooner the playwright realized that his task was to fashion such vehicles, in a self-effacing, even self-degrading way, the sooner he achieved his goal of performance –and counted the proceeds of his benefit night. […] The orientation of the theatrical event towards the actor in character is unmistakable in all the evidence of theatrical life that survives from the period, most notably in the playbills. Virtually never is the dramatist's name mentioned.[11]

In a theatre associated more with the talent of its performers rather than with that of its authors (this period is remembered as the age of John Philip Kemble and Edmund Kean, certainly not of George Colman, Thomas Morton, or John O'Keeffe), the succession of two different acting styles –one linked to tears and the other to terror– became the metonym of two contiguous but not coinciding cultural systems, which we may simplistically define as the neo-classical and the

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[10] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, *passim*.

[11] J. Donohue, *Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), pp. 7 and 62. A similar perception is offered by Michael Booth who has chosen to consider "Theatre and actors" (" 'The Kemble Religion': 1776-1812") rather than playwrights in his influential introduction to late eighteenth- early nineteenth-century theatre (M. Booth, "The Social and the Literary Context", in *The Revels History of Drama in English*, Vol. vi *1750-1880*. London: Methuen, 1975). Both critics embrace the Romantic anti-spectacular prejudice against the actorial over the dramatic text (see for instance Charles Lamb's "On Garrick and Acting: and the Plays of Shakespeare, considered with Reference to their Fitness for Stage Representation," *Reflector*, 1811). It is worth mentioning here that the expression 'Kemble religion' was the coinage of another Romantic reviewer, William Hazlitt, (*Examiner* 8 December 1816). Both the Lamb and Hazlitt essays ultimately reflect the Romantic construction of the actor that informed theatre studies (and more generally visual-cultural analysis) until fairly recently.

Romantic systems. In the Aristotelian aesthetics as re-elaborated by eighteenth-century playwrights, the spectators' tears –a manifestation of tragic catharsis and the fruit of the homeopathic purification of the passions– were the symbol of an acting style (and therefore a typology of reception) which was rational, chastening, and, lastly, re-socializing.

On June 10, 1776, David Garrick, sublime incarnation of the scientific study of passions which formed the basis of the eighteenth-century naturalistic school of acting (Denis Diderot's *Paradoxe sur le Comédien* had appeared *c.*1773),[12] withdrew from the stage. This event is a sign of the deep changes in the sensibility, morality, didacticism and edifying satire proper to eighteenth-century theatre which took place in the last quarter of the century, even in more mature forms of drama (for example, Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *School for Scandal*, Drury Lane 1777), and which slowly gave way to the increasingly sensational exaltation of the passions. According to the new aesthetics prevailing at the century's end, tragic action was no longer intended as an instrument for the intellectual refining of the passions. Its purpose became rather the amplification and elevation of those passions, analysed in their solitary development, in obedience to an anti-rational and emotional process, which in itself was to become the focus of meta-literary representation in drama, novel and poetry. Joanna Baillie's dramatic series, *Plays on The Passions*, Charlotte Dacre's novel *The Passions* (1811), and William Collins's poetic afterpiece "The Passions. An Ode for Music" (first performed in 1750 with music by William Hayes) is just three significant examples among many.[13]

The contemporary reputation of Collins's piece may be taken as an illustration of this fruitful transmigration of forms, linking neoclassic aesthetic hierarchies to the Romantic re-evaluation of impassioned expression. Collins's

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[12] Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Newark: Univ. of Delaware Press, 1985).

[13] W. Collins, "The Passions. An Ode for Music", in *The Works of William Collins*. Edited by R. Wendorf and C. Ryskamp (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979,) pp. 49-53.

verses influenced the Gothic novelists, who appropriated quotes from 'The Passions' for comment on the action and as a mood-setter. For instance ll. 1-8 from the poem are used by Ann Radcliffe as an epigraph for chapter 11 of *The Romance of the Forest*, in which Adeline begins her flight from the abbey.

> Ah, fear! Ah frantic fear!
> I see, I see thee near!
> I know thy hurry'd step, thy haggard eye!
> Like thee I start, like thee disordered fly! [14]

An extremely popular piece and a genuine tour de force of histrionics, 'The Passions' was recited by great performers such as John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons, who gave mimic and oral expression to the thirty passions described by Collins. James Boaden, one of Siddons's biographers, recalls the transformation of the written poem into an actorial text:

> [Collins's *Ode on the Passions*] was a composition for music, and it could not well have better than the voice of Mrs Siddons. She was in truth the organ of passion; but the poet here describes the passion by its sympathies with particular scenes in nature, and its characteristic expression when fully displayed. The human form under its influence is given as the symbol of the passion. The actress who described the character lent in a great degree her countenance and her gesture as aids to the beautiful imagery of the poet. This is unavoidable in all stage recitation, and criticism must not proudly reject *the living commentary* upon language, however forcible.[15]

The reports of the second London début of Sarah Siddons (who would just one year later incarnate Sir Joshua Reynolds's ideal of the Tragic Muse) as she ventured out upon the boards of Drury Lane –significantly in the season of 1782-1783, less than ten years after Garrick's farewell[16]– clearly emphasize the end-of

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[14] A. Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, ed. Chloe Chard (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1986), p. 152.

[15] J. Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons* (London: Gibbins and Company, 1893), pp. 405-406. The italics are mine. For a calendar of Sarah Siddons's performances of "Ode to Passions" see J. Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830*, 10 voll. (Bath: H. E. Carrington, 1832). The dramatic relevance of Collins's Ode is noticed by E. J. Clery, who maintains that Sarah Siddons's blood-curling invocation "Come, you spirits" (*Macbeth* I, v, 39) "begs comparison with a developing tradition of odes to the personifications 'Fear', 'Terror' or 'Horror' ", amongst which we may also count Collins's 'The Passions' " (E. J. Clery, *Women's Gothic. From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley*, Tavistock, Devon: Northcote House in association with the British Council, 2000, p. 12)..

[16] Siddons had in fact had an unpromising début at Drury Lane at the end of 1775 when she acted Portia to Thomas King's Shylock. In this earliest phase of her career she appeared a number of times against Garrick,

the century change in dramatic aesthetics. Dramatic catharsis no longer depended upon pathemic purification but rather upon the audience's overwhelming, empathetic identification with the actors.

> Well I remember (how is it possible I should ever forget?), the sobs, the shrieks, among the tender part of her audience; or those tears, which manhood, at first, struggled to suppress, but at length grew proud of indulging. We then, indeed, knew the luxury of grief; but the nerves of many a gentle being gave way before the intensity of such appeals and fainting fits long alarmed the decorum of the house, filled almost to suffocation.[17]

The title of this section, "A Stage of Tears and Terror", thus encourages to study the Gothic theatre essentially as a theatrical event, not merely a textual one. At the same time, it strives to underline the crucial institutional aspects which entailed a revolution in the hierarchy of theatre genres (the morphological changes that occurred in the auditoria such as the enlarging and remodelling of playhouses, new techniques of illumination, increasingly marked use of stage machinery). In effect the change of the spatial relationships between actor and audiences, as well as between the actors themselves, contributed to the alteration in the repertory of plays and in their actual realization on stage. This phenomenon created a widening rift between critical respectability and public popularity. It also implied an inexorable sliding away of the theatre from 'words' towards gestures, images, and special effects, which initially had been restricted to the crowded circuses, amphitheatres, and other places of popular entertainment thriving in the capital.

This slow movement was definitively sanctioned in 1811 when George Colman the Younger organized a revival of his immensely successful *Blue-Beard* (1798) complete with horses and elephants at Covent Garden, one of the strongholds of the patented theatre establishment. This spectacular staging of Colman's Oriental Gothic afterpiece erased the flimsy dividing line separating official theatre from the illegitimate universe of hippodrama, and seemed to oust

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but met only the tepid favour of the public. After six years of employment in the provincial theatres, Siddons reappeared at Drury Lane in October 1782 (Booth, "The Social and Literary Context", *The Revels History of Drama in English*, cit., p. 106).

[17] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons*, cit., p. 195. For a definition of "pathemic" see A. J. Greimas, *De l'imperfection* (Perigueux, 1987). In English see A. J. Greimas *et al.*, *The Semiotics of Passions: From States of Affairs to States of Feeling* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), in partic. pp. 1-62.

once and for all poetic genius from the stage. A telling *Morning Post* review suggested at much:

> We can never approve of any system that may go to exclude SHAKESPEARE, to make way for pantomimes in five acts, or which may give to unmeaning noise the gaudy *spectacle*, that time which might afford as rational pleasure and dignified amusement in the works of our best dramatists. In favour of so vicious a system we can never lift our voice; yet we still do not see […] that SHAKESPEARE is likely to be trampled under foot by the horses introduced in an after-piece at Covent-garden Theatre […] and though much may be said of the tendency of such spectacles to vitiate public taste; we are of opinion that very little injury need be dreaded from them, at a time when that is most prized which is most ridiculous, and when *Hamlet Travestied* is more eagerly followed that [sic] *Hamlet* itself.[18]

The competition between Shakespeare's masterpieces and the generically less noble Colman afterpiece finds clear visual expression in a later *Bluebeard* playbill (show of December 9, 1816, see Figure 1). The size of the characters used for both the title of *Bluebeard* and the advertisement of its "Equestrian Troops" has by now become significantly bigger than the one used to advertise the mainpiece, Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, starring the Kemble family. As we read in the summary, repertory interchangeability in fact prevailed. The leading actor of the company, John Kemble, would perform Brutus "on Monday" and King John "On Thusday", while "Wednesday and Friday Next" would be the turn of the "All-Attractive Musical Drama *The Slave*, probably Thomas Morton's opera[19]

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[18] Review of the 1811 revival of *Blue-Beard. The Morning Post* No. 12,497 (19 February 1811), p. 3. Extract. As quoted in *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 334. The emphases are in the text. The section of "Contemporary Reviews and Commentary" in the volume is especially helpful in tracing the contemporary debate between high and low cultural forms of theatre. See for instance Leigh Hunt's damningly satirical review of the 1811 revival of Colman's *Blue-Beard*, ibid., pp. 338-39, for an example of Romantic antispectacular prejudice: "[such exhibitions] are too powerful a stimulus to the senses of the common order of spectators, and take away from their eyes and ears all relish for more delicate entertainments" (p. 340).

[19] Application Nov. 1, 1816, Produced as *The Slave* Nov. 12. See item 1942 of The catalogue of John Larpent Plays. Available at http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf1h4n985c&chunk.id=c01-1.8.5.2&brand=oac. Accessed on August 8, 2008.
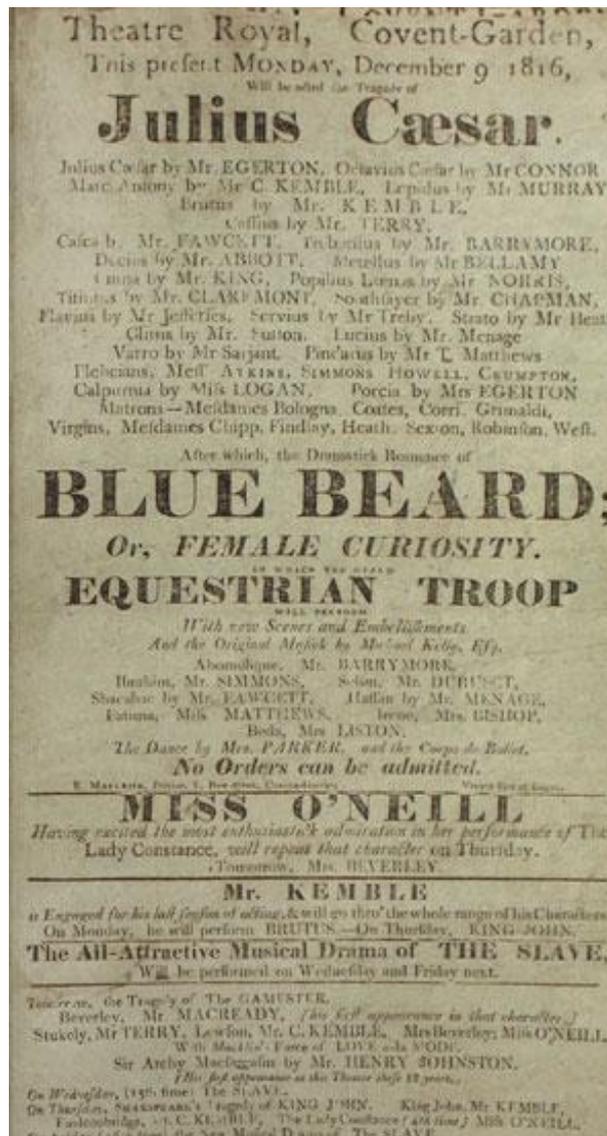
1. Playbill for a performance of *Blue Beard* on 9 December 1816, Theatre Royal Covent Garden. Centre for Performance History. Available from http://www.cph.rcm.ac.uk/Virtual%20Exhibitions/Music%20in%20English%20Theatre/Pages/Caption4.htm

This archival evidence shows that the *Morning Post* reviewer had failed to grasp the epistemic import of the arrival of the *real* on stage –real horses, real elephants, real processions –signs and tokens of a new kind of 'profane' drama, harking back to opera, another heavily criticised kind of 'verisimilar' performance which

refused the tyranny of the text.[20] A cross-fertilization of art and entertainment, the theatre of the latter part of the eighteenth century wants to achieve its effects not only in the service of the moral or aesthetic education of the audiences, but also to amaze and amuse them.[21] It is in this context that I place the Gothic shows of the 1790s.

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[20] See for instance, Joseph Addison's famous attack on Italian opera: "A little Skill in Criticism would inform us that Shadows and Realities ought not to be mix'd together in the same Piece; and that Scenes, which are designed as the Representations of Nature, should be filled with Resemblances, and not with the Things themselves. If one would represent a wide Champain Country filled with Herds and Flocks, it would be ridiculous to draw the Country only upon the Scenes, and to crowd several Parts of the Stage with Sheep and Oxen" , *Spectator* no. 5 (Tuesday, March 6, 1711). For the anti-referential language of the Italian opera, see the critique in ibid., no. 18 (Wednesday, March 21, 1711): "[…] the Audience grew tir'd of understanding Half the Opera, and therefore to ease themselves Entirely of the Fatigue of Thinking, have so order'd it at Present that the whole Opera is performed in an unknown Tongue. We no longer understand the Language of our own Stage; insomuch that I have often been afraid, when I have seen our Italian Performers chattering in the Vehemence of Action, that they have been calling us Names, and abusing us among themselves." Respectively available at http://www.hoasm.org/VIIA/Spectator3-6-11.html and http://www.hoasm.org/VIIA/Spectator3-21-11.html . Both accessed on September 5th 2006.

[21] G. D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real*, cit.

Uncloseting the Gothic Monster.

Anne Williams's contention that

> until about twenty years ago, the Gothic was ignored by serious literary critics; those publishing on the Gothic were usually either enthusiastic antiquarians such as Montague Summers and Devendra P. Varma or philologists bent on cataloguing[22]

could be applied until fairly recently to Gothic drama studies. The mass-oriented and extremely popular Gothic dramas that flourished in England around the turn of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century endured a long and unjustified critical neglect. They were relegated to the margins of a genre that for a long time remained –in Williams's provocative definition– "literature's unspeakable 'other'," or as David Richter has more recently remarked, "a field that was once neglected at best –and at worst a bastion of bibliophilic cranks."[23]

The overwhelming popular success of Gothic drama is well documented in several contemporary primary records, and it is acknowledged by many amongst the most celebrated authors of the day – including Samuel T. Coleridge and William Wordsworth, least gentle of judges.[24] Nonetheless, and in spite of regularly overflowing houses, the High-Romantic disregard for mass entertainment and the ensuing lack of historical investigation into most forms of non-textual spectacle contrived to transform the Gothic drama into a dim blot in Britain's cultural history, an artistic manifestation that Paula Backscheider does

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[22] A. Williams, " 'The Horror, The Horror': Recent Studies in Gothic Fiction", *Modern Fiction Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (2000), p. 789.

[23] D. Richter, *The Progress of Romance: Literary Historiography and the Gothic Novel* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1996), p. 2.

[24] It must be here remembered that Wordsworth's gothicised *The Borderers* was rejected by Drury Lane in 1798, during the successful run of Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (Drury Lane, December 1797-June 1798). Just at the same time, Coleridge's *Osorio* was similarly turned down by the same theatre. On Coleridge's and Wordsworth's generic negotiations with the Gothic, see Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit., in partic. chap. 3 " 'Gross and Violent Stimulants': producing *Lyrical Ballads* 1798 and 1800", pp. 90-126.

not hesitate to call "one of the most denigrated and neglected forms in the entire history of drama."[25]

As far back as 1992, Jeffrey Cox recalled the "immense popularity"[26] but the scant critical respect encountered by such works as James C. Cobb's *Haunted Tower* (Drury Lane, 1789), Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (Drury Lane, 14 December 1797) and George Colman the Younger's *Blue-Beard* (Drury Lane, 16 January 1798), due to a high-brow scepticism that for a long time persisted in the academia. For instance, George Colman the Younger's biographer Martin Wood has thus recently summarised two of the playwright's most enduring dramatic successes in the Gothic vein:

> *Blue-Beard, or Female Curiosity*. […] Its story is *insignificant*; sinking doors, sepulchres, skeletons, cracks in the earth, collapsing buildings, and constant musical numbers, *all to cater to the audience's hunger for spectacle*. Debut: 16 of January; 63 performances.

And again,

> *Feudal Times, or The Banquet Gallery*. A melodrama. […] A ruthless baron, his forbidding castle, a kidnapped and imprisoned lady, a siege, and a last-minute escape before the castle's tower explodes, are the spectacular elements *in lieu of a plot*. Debut: 19 of January 1799, 39 performances.[27]

Elsewhere the critic stigmatises *Blue-Beard's* story as "insignificant" and disparagingly concludes, "[Colman's] audiences content, he ignored the critics and counted the money"[28] Again, high-minded critical scepticism clashes against the actual overwhelming economic success of Gothic dramas, as made clear by J. R. Stephens: "The forty-one nights of the revival of Colman's *Blue-Beard* (Drury Lane 1798) in 1811 brought Covent Garden 'above *twenty-one thousand* pounds'

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25 Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 150.

26 J. Cox, "Introduction", in *Seven Gothic Dramas, 1789-1825*, cit., p. 2.

27 M. Wood, "George Colman the Younger. Summaries of Selected Plays" [online], available from http://www.uwec.edu/Academic/Curric/mwood/colman/summaries.html , accessed on July 3, 2005. The emphases are mine. For a more objective reconstruction of Colman's formula, see J. Donohue, *Theatre in the Age of Kean* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1975), pp. 94-97.

28 M. Wood, "George Colman the Younger", *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Vol. 89, Paula Backscheider (ed.), *Restoration and Eighteenth Century Dramatists* (Detroit: Gale Research, 1989), p. 75.

", thus contributing significantly to the total receipts of the season."[29] We can only agree with Michael Gamer that the intensity of the numerous negative descriptions of Gothic drama "give some indication of the extent of the gulf existing between critical and popular audiences."[30]

The disregard of Gothic drama exemplified by Wood's critique perplexingly contrasts with the undeniable popularity of the plays themselves, confirmed by the high number of their performances. This critical *aporia* stands out even more evidently when we remember that over the past three decades the Gothic –long relegated to a marginal presence in the field of Romantic studies– has evolved into an area of critically diverse and theoretically aware scholarship. Within the wide-ranging revisionist project which was labelled "the New Eighteenth Century"[31] and with the fresh impetus recently given to the study of Romantic dramaturgy[32] –especially of the female theatrical and dramatic contributions–[33]

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[29] J. R. Stephens*, The Profession of Playwright. British Theatre 1800-1900,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 30.

[30] Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit., p. 4.

[31] For an early seminal reassessment of the eighteenth-century literary canon, see F. Nussbaum and L. Brown, "Revising Critical Practices: An Introductory Essay", in F. Nussbaum and L. Brown (eds.), *The New 18th Century. Theory, Politics, English Literature* (London-New York: Methuen, 1987).

[32] For detailed discussions of Romantic dramaturgy, with particular attention given to the works of the major Romantic male poets, see *inter alia* R. M. Fletcher, *English Romantic Drama, 1795-1843: A Critical History* (New York: Exposition Press, 1966); T. Otten, *The Deserted Stage: The Search for Dramatic Form in Nineteenth-Century England* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1972); R. A. Cave (ed.), *The Romantic Theatre. An International Symposium* (Gerrards Cross: Colin Smythe and Totowa, NJ: Barnes and Nobles, 1986); A. Richardson, *A Mental Theatre. Poetic Drama and Consciousness in the Romantic Age* (University Park-London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988); F. Burwick, *Illusion and the Drama: Critical Theory of the Enlightenment and Romantic Era* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1991); E. Burns, " 'The Babel Din': Theatre and European Romanticism", in G. Ward (ed.), *Romantic Literature: A Guide to Romantic Literature, 1780-1830* (London: Bloomsbury, 1993), pp. 51-67; G. Kucich, " 'A Haunted Ruin': Romantic Drama, Renaissance Tradition, and the Critical Establishment", *The Wordsworth Circle* Vol. 23 No. 2 (Spring 1992), pp. 64-75; D. P. Watkins, *A Materialist Critique of English Romantic Drama* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 1993); J. Carlson, *In the Theatre of Romanticism. Coleridge, Nationalism, Women* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); M. D. Purinton, *Romantic Ideology Unmasked. The Mentally Constructed Tyrannies in Dramas of William Wordsworth, Lord Byron, Percy Shelley, and Joanna Baillie* (Newark: University of Delaware Press and London-Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1994); T. C. Davis, " 'Reading Shakespeare by Flashes of Lightning': Challenging the Foundations of Romantic Acting Theory", *English Literary History* Vol. 62 (1995), pp. 933-54; G. Russell, *The Theatres of War: Performance, Politics, and Society, 1793-1815* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995); T. Allan Hoagwood and D. P. Watkins (eds.), *British Romantic Drama: Historical and Critical Essay* (Madison, NJ: Farleigh Dickinson University Press-London: Associated University Presses, 1998); M. Simpson, *Closet Performances: Political Exhibition and Prohibition in the Dramas of Byron and Shelley* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998); Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit.

since the publication of Robert Hume's pioneering revaluation of the Gothic novel, numerous appreciations of the Gothic have come out in print.[34] Nowadays no contemporary scholar feels the need to justify the publication of yet another study of the Gothic novel. The joint contributions of critical theory and historiographical reconstructions have legitimised Gothic studies as a proper subject of literary investigation, and they have given a crucial contribution to its institutionalisation.[35]

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[33] For Romantic female dramaturgy, besides Cox's section "Joanna Baillie: Gothic Women" in "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas,* cit.*,* pp. 50-57, and Carlson's chapter, "Romantic Theatricalism: Surveilling the Beauties of the Stage", *In the Theatre of Romanticism*, cit., pp. 134-175, see *inter alia* E. Donkin, *Getting Into the Act. Women Playwrights in London 1776-1829* (London- and New York: Routledge), 1995; C. Burroughs, *Closet Stages: Joanna Baillie and the Theatre Theory of British Romantic Women Writers* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1997); J. Franceschina (ed.), *Sisters of Gore. Seven Gothic Melodramas by British Women, 1790-1843* (New York-London: Garland, 1997); *British Women Writers Around 1800: New Paradigms and Recoveries. A Special Issue of "Romanticism on the Net"* (1998), available from http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1998/v/n12/005827ar.html (in partic. T. Crochunis's "Introduction", and the contributions of C. Burroughs, "Teaching the Theory and Practice Of Women's Dramaturgy", and M. D. Purinton, "Revising Romanticism by Inscripting Women Playwrights"); T. C. Davis and E. Donkin (eds.), *Women and Playwriting in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); C. Burroughs (ed.), *Women in British Romantic Theatre. Drama, Performance, and Society, 1790-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); B. Bolton, *Women, Nationalism, and the Romantic Stage. Theatre and Politics in Britain, 1780-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2001; M. D. Purinton, "Science Fiction and Techno-Gothic Drama: Romantic Playwrights Joanna Baillie and Jane Scott", *Romanticism on the Net* Vol. 21 (2001) available from: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/21purinton.html ; T. Crochunis (ed.), *Joanna Baillie, Romantic Dramatist: Critical Essays* (London: Routledge, 2004). Invaluable information on Romantic female dramaturgy may also be found on the "British Women Playwrights around 1800" website (general editors: T. C. Crochunis and M. Eberle-Sinatra), available from http://www.etang.umontreal.ca/bwp1800/ . Their bibliography –arranged by author and subject– is one of the most comprehensive and it can be accessed at http://www.etang.umontreal.ca/bwp1800/biblio/index.html .All the sites were accessed on 18 January 2005. This recognition in the current research on Romantic dramaturgy may be completed by a list of the excellent modern editions –also in electronic format– of plays by Harriet Lee, Frances Burney, Joanna Baillie, Mariana Starke, Jane Scott, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Fanny Kemble among the others: *The Plays of Hannah Cowley,* edited by F. M. Link (Garland: New York–London, 1979); *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney*, 2 vols, edited by Peter Sabor (London: Pickering & Chatto, 1995); *Female Playwrights of the Nineteenth Century*, edited by A. Scullion (London: Dent, 1996); the series *Eighteenth-Century Women Playwrights*, general editor D. Hughes (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2001). The editions of several British women playwrights can be accessed from http://etang.umontreal.ca/bwp1800/plays/index.html.

[34] Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel", cit., pp. 282-290.

[35] L. Fitzgerald, "Female Gothic and the Institutionalization of Gothic Studies", Monographic issue on "Female Gothic", Guest Editors A. Smith and D. Wallace*, Gothic Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2004), pp. 8-18. The various theoretical and methodological approaches to the Gothic I surveyed in this study to reconstruct and contextualise the background of the genre may be taken as a specimen of the range of the critical investigations in the area: G. Haggerty, *Gothic Fiction/Gothic Form* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989); R. Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820,*, cit.; R. Miles, *Ann Radcliffe*, cit.; A. Williams, *Art of Darkness*, cit., C. A. Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, cit.; J. Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction. A Bakhtinian Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); Ann B. Tracy, *The Gothic Novel, 1790-1830: Plot Summaries and Index to Motifs* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1981); Douglas H. Thomson, Jack G. Voller, and Frederick S. Frank (eds), *Gothic Writers. A Critical and Bibliographical Guide*. (Westport-London: Greenwood Press, 2002); F. J. Potter, *The History of the Gothic*

In this thriving scenario, however, relatively scarce and unsystematic attention has been reserved for the historiographical and critical investigation of the Gothic stage, and more particularly for the reciprocal relationships of the dramatic and the novelistic modes of representation within Gothic - an issue that might involve a significant reassessment of the coeval cultural repertoire and the relations between diverse cultural forms at the close of the eighteenth century. A good example of the contemporary schizophrenic response to the multiple modes of the Gothic has been recently provided by the ambitious and apparently thorough *Gothic Literature. A Gale Critical Companion* in 3 volumes, with a foreword by Jerrold E. Hogle, one of the most influential modern critics of the genre. The "Performing Arts and the Gothic" section of the monumental *Gale Critical Companion* promisingly announces discussions of such diverse artistic forms as Drama, Film, Television, Music in their interface with the Gothic. However, the space allotted to these topics unfortunately covers only a meagre handful of pages, of which just five are left to the drama.[36] The only Gothic

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Publishing, 1800-1835. Exhuming the Trade (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); M. Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, cit., M. Billi (ed.), *Il gotico inglese. Il romanzo del terrore: 1764-1820* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1986); F. Frank, *The First Gothics* (New York-London: Garland, 1987); E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 1672-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); M. Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995); D. Saglia and G. Silvani (eds.), *Il teatro della paura. Scenari gotici del Romanticismo europeo* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2005); D. Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism. The Professialization of Gender from Charlotte Smith to the Brontës*, (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press and Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1998); E. J. Clery, *Women's Gothic*, cit.; M. Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit. In several of the above studies, many theoretical approaches intersect and fruitfully build on each other, as in the case of the psychological and sexual readings of the Gothic offered by George Haggerty, Robert Miles and Anne Williams. I want further to acknowledge my indebtedness to the following collection of essays: D. Punter (ed.), *A Companion to the Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000); K. W. Graham (ed.), *Gothic Fictions. Prohibition/Transgression* (New York: AMS Press, 1989); J. Hogle (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); D. Long Hoeveler and T. Heller (eds.), *Approaches to Teaching Gothic Fiction: The British and American Traditions* (New York: Modern Language Association, 2002); D. Punter and G. Byron (eds.), *The Gothic* (Malden, Mass.-Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).

[36] *Gothic Literature. A Gale Critical Companion*, foreword by Jerrold E. Hogle; Jessica Bomarito, Project Editor, 3 vols. (Detroit-New York: Thomson-Gale, 2006). See also the results of the recent survey presented to the delegates at the Conference "Teaching Romanticism", Friends House, Euston Road, London, 17-18 March 2006. Although the results of the questionnaire bear witness to the diversity of Romanticism being taught in the United Kingdom, it is significant to note that most of the respondents do not use an interdisciplinary pedagogical approach. The results show that closet drama is among the Romantic genres least often taught. Sharon Ruston, the Conference organizer, has usefully commented the amount of data produced by the questionnaire: "It is clear that the 'big six' are very much present in our classrooms. […] I then asked whether drama was being taught on these modules and 57% answered that no plays are taught. Of the plays taught, the closet drama *Manfred* came top with 18 people teaching this, followed by 7 for *The*

dramatist introduced in this section is James Boaden, whose work is acknowledged in one succinct sidebar reference.

Similarly, the *Gale Critical Companion* bio-bibliographical profile of Matthew G. Lewis –novelist, dramatist, poet and editor of the Gothic– is likewise disappointing, perplexingly compressed as it is in less than three pages. Out of the three columns devoted to Lewis's "Major Works" and "Critical Reception", only a mere seven rather unflattering lines are spared to describe his numerous and previously successful plays.

> Of Lewis's plays, the best known is *The Castle Spectre* (1797), a Gothic production that met the current demand for melodrama, spectacle, and two-dimensional characterisation. Although it helped establish Lewis as one of the era's most popular playwrights, *The Castle Spectre* is largely overlooked by modern critics.[37]

The apparent critical disparagement of the Gale contributor is, however, contradicted in the following page by the list of Lewis's "Principal Works". These counts seven volumes of poetry and prose narrative against thirteen works for the stage, including melodramas, tragedies and sundry dramatic pieces. Such a record may easily explain how Victor Emeljanow could call Lewis "the most successful Romantic dramatist"[38] in his meticulously researched collection of primary source materials for the study of Romantic theatre. These two examples make clear that the canonical state of the Gothic dramatists is still far from settled.

In terms of canon formation and revision, the *Gale Companion* clearly posits itself as a trend-setting and comprehensive critical work, as shown by innovative sections dedicated to the popular disseminations of the Gothic in both the musical and mass-market literature business. The impact of its conservative discussion of the drama remains to be seen, yet it seems to run clearly counter to other recent scholarship, whose historiographical aim has been not merely

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Cenci, 5 for *De Monfort*, 5 for *The Borderers* and 5 for *School for Scandal*" (S. Ruston, "Questionnaire Report. 'Teaching Romanticism' ", *BARS Bulletin & Review*, Issue No. 30, October 2006, p. 11). These data regard 97 questionnaires. The full results may be accessed on the British Association for Romantic Studies website at http://www.bars.ac.uk/teaching/survey/surveyresults.php .

[37] *Gothic Literature. A Gale Critical Companion*, cit., vol. 3, p. 33.

[38] V. Emeljanow, "Introduction" to chapter "V. Stage Presentation", in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit., p. 221.

inclusive, but also expressly re-evaluative of the genre as a whole. For instance, one such invitation has been lately launched by George Haggerty in his review of the Broadview edition of *'The Castle of Otranto' and 'The Mysterious Mother'* edited by Frederick Frank. Quite convincingly, Haggerty has drawn attention to the benefits scholars and students may derive from the comparative reading of Walpole's narrative and dramatic work, presented for the first time in one volume.

> Frederick S. Franks's Broadview is the only one of which I am aware in which the novel and the play are published together. This is a great boost to anyone interested in Walpole studies. […] How […] useful to have the play available in this edition, along with the novel, so that anyone reading Walpole's novel can look at the play in order to come to a fuller understanding of Walpole's fascinating imagination. […] I look forward with delight to being able to introduce students to the play as well as the novel and to show them the one really great tragedy that was written in the later eighteenth century.[39]

Haggerty's words are important at more than one level. Firstly, Haggerty implies that even the recent re-shaping of the editorial market provoked by the on-going revision of the eighteenth-century canon has not significantly increased the availability of the primary reference texts of the Gothic drama. Only very recently has it been included in low-priced collections of Romantic and Gothic texts or collected in paperback anthologies - thus signifying their forthcoming official incorporation into the mainstream Gothic canon and possibly their future inclusion in the university syllabi.[40] At the same time, and more importantly in terms of my enquiry, Haggerty is correct in his claim that a comparative approach to the Gothic analysed as a coordinated art form will entail remarkable changes in terms of canon formation, approaches to teaching, and the construction of higher education syllabi.

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[39] G. Haggerty, Review of H. Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, edited by M. Gamer and *'The Castle of Otranto' and 'The Mysterious Mother'*, edited by F. S. Frank,, *Gothic Studies.* Monographic issue on "Gothic Ex/changes". Guest editors Terry Philips and Sue Zlosnik. Vol. 7, no. 1 (May, 2005), p. 110-11.

[40] P. Baines and E. Burns (eds.), *Five Romantic Plays, 1768-1821* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), R. Norton (ed.), *Gothic Readings*, cit., Joanna Baillie, *Plays on the Passions*, edited by P. Duthie (Broadview Press: Peterborough, Ont., 2001), Horace Walpole *'The Castle of Otranto' and ' The Mysterious Mother'*, edited by Fredreick Frank, (Broadview Press: Peterborough, Ont., 2003), Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit. The pedagogical implications of the current reshaping of the Romantic dramatic canon are helpfully discussed in Burroughs, "Teaching the Theory and Practice Of Women's Dramaturgy", cit.

Following on from this, my argument in this study will be that the multifarious artistic production of several practitioners of the late eighteenth-century Gothic –of which Horace Walpole's or Matthew G. Lewis's versatile and multigeneric artistic productions provide an appropriate, but hardly unique case– invites a critical investigation, which must be by its nature holistic and thoroughly re-appropriative in terms of both the modern critical frameworks it employs and the original historiographical taxonomies it seeks to offer. In my opinion, the combination of varied representational practices and sets of discourses –both literary and non-literary– at the heart of the Gothic encourages a comparative approach to the study of the late eighteenth-century dramatic and narrative texts that promotes the integrated analysis of visual, novelistic and theatrical strategies of representation.[41] Such an approach prompts a series of questions about the nature, development and relation of usually discrete representational practices and the history of their reception in the context of eighteenth-century literary culture. In this respect, Michael Gamer's contention appears particularly cogent in its definition of the Gothic as a discursive site:

> It is worth reiterating, I think, that, unlike most twentieth-century commentators, gothic's readers in the 1790s considered it neither exclusively a kind of fiction nor even necessarily a narrative mode. […] By nature heterogeneous, gothic texts regularly contain

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[41] For a reading of the Gothic as a system of "numerous speech genres which have arisen from historically concrete situations of social interaction", see Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction*, cit. The quotation is taken from p. 16. The relation of drama and the novel has been the object of relatively few methodological studies, which have contributed over the years in various, and often opposing ways to define the theoretical framework that serves the argument of the present thesis. An invaluable introduction to the comparative analysis of theatre and the early novel is proposed in Laura Brown, *English Dramatic Form, 1660-1760. An Essay in Generic History* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 1981). The presence of drama in the eighteenth-century novel is amply recorded in Robert Noyes, *The Thespian Mirror: Shakespeare and the Eighteenth-Century Novel* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1953) and *The Neglected Muse. Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Tragedy in the Novel, 1740-1780* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1958). The embedding of the Restoration play-texts in the eighteenth-century novel is analysed by Susan Staves in "Fatal marriages? Restoration Plays Embedded in Eighteenth-Century Novels", in D. L. Patey and T. Keegan (eds.), *Augustan Studies. Essays in Honour of Irvin Ehrenpreis* (Newark: University of Delaware Press and London-Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1985, pp. 95-108). The interface between popular theatre and the Victorian novel is helpfully discussed in Emily Allen, *Theatre Figures. The Production of the Nineteenth-Century British Novel* (Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2003). Finally, for more recent analyses of the re-discovery of the theatrical nature of the Austen novel, see also Paula Byrne, *Jane Austen and the Theatre* (London-New York: Hambledon and London, 2002) and Penny Gay, *Jane Austen and the Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For a discussion of Gothic visuality in its relation to the novel, see M. Myrone (ed.), *Gothic Nightmares. Fuseli, Blake and the Romantic Imagination* (London: Tate Publishing, 2006).

multiple modes of writing, shifting from novelistic prose into poetry, inset oral narratives, didactic fables, or pantomimic and dramatic spectacles. With Miles, then, I define Gothic neither as a mode nor as a kind of fiction (the "gothic novel") but as an aesthetic. […] At the very least, if gothic is a site crossing the genres, it is a site that *moves*, and that must be defined in part by its ability to transplant itself *across* forms and media: from narrative into dramatic and poetic modes, and from textual into visual and aural media.[42]

Gamers' contention that "Gothic [is] neither [...] a mode nor [...] a kind of fiction" recalls the presence of intersections and migrations of forms of the heart of Gothic, with similarities and contact zones across genres and cultural hierarchies as underlined in a few pioneering interdisciplinary studies. In her groundbreaking assessment of English theatre in the years 1760-1800, Paula Backscheider has rightly noticed that off- and on-stage Gothic narratives show the same structure of feeling, as well as sharing stock characters, codified settings and highly-stylised plots.[43] The main Gothic typologies (the psychological, the supernatural, and the political) regularly appeared in the late eighteenth-century theatre: dreams, visions, otherworldly apparitions, villainous tyrants and their virtuous opponents, overthrowings of tortured usurpers and redemptive redressings of social injustice enacted a symbolic economy popular on page and stage alike.

In effect, despite obvious similarities at the level of both signifiers (conventions and superficial appurtenances) and signified (the Gothic themes, which illustrate how identity, fears and desires are symbolically projected and re-worked into culture), most critical studies still seem to ignore the relationship existing between such established gothic classics as Horace Walpole's *The Castle*

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[42] Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit., pp. 3-4. In his fine monograph, Gamer acknowledges his debt to Robert Miles's seminal discussion of the Gothic as a "language of subjective representation" and "a discursive site crossing the genres". See Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820*, cit., p. 189 and p. 176. The definition of the Gothic as a discursive practice takes its inspiration from Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?", transl. J. V. Harari, P. Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (Harmondswoth: Penguin, 1986), esp. p. 114.

[43] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., pp. 155-56. For contemporary contestations of the Gothic as a mechanic or imitative art form, see "The Terrorist System of Novel-Writing" (Anon., 1797, in Norton (ed.), *Gothic Readings*, cit., pp. 299-303), "Terrorist Novel Writing" (Anon., 1798, in Clery and Miles (eds.), *Gothic Documents*, cit., p. 182-83) and 'Anti-Ghost' 's "On the Method of Inculcating Morality" (Anon., 1798). See Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit., pp. 55-56 and A. Wright, "Haunted Britain in the 1790s". Romantic Circle Praxis Series / *Gothic Technologies: Visuality in the Romantic Era*. Available at http://www.rc.umd.edu/praxis/gothic/wright/wright . Accessed on 22 May 2006.

of Otranto (1764) or Matthew Gregory Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) and their contemporary, highly-successful dramatic adaptations. These may include such generically legitimate texts as Robert Jephson's *The Count of Narbonne*, (Covent Garden, 1781), and James Boaden's *Aurelio and Miranda* (Drury Lane, 1798) as much as a plethora of illegitimate afterpieces capitalising on the most sensational episodes of the novels. A particularly relevant example is the famous "Bleeding Nun" intertext in Lewis's *The Monk*, which enjoyed a massive success in ballads, short dramatizations and other forms of popular texts.[44] These transmodalizations benefited from the development of a 'trade' market publishing of Gothic works and were, I suggest, essential to the pervasive dissemination of the novelistic blockbusters of the Gothic among different audiences, and in new contexts and modes. If we carry this argument one step further, we may assume that similarly, the redaptions –particularly in chapbook format– of well-known Gothic stage successes (for instance Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson's *The Castle Spectre, An Ancient Baronial Romance*, published in sixpence format by J. Bailey in 1820) remains to date a field of investigation still virtually unexplored.[45] We are thus reminded of the continuing necessity of approaching the Gothic form by retrieving fresh paths of analysis. Paraphrasing Franz Potter we could say that we are faced with an ongoing critical and editorial *exhumation*, which must be wary of the ideologically deep-seated strictures of canon formation and transmission.

The analysis I propose is thus twofold. Gothic dramatic adaptations, of which James Boaden's work provides a good specimen, are studied in relation to their novelistic antecedents. I maintain that in their turn these appropriated and (re)produced in narrative the themes and forms typical of the Gothic stage. Concurrently, the Gothic plays are also analysed as self-contained dramatic works, which were acted, often with great success, and can thus be considered as reflective of popular judgement, dramatic constraints and the contemporary

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[44] See above, "Introduction", n. 30.

[45] See Potter, *The History of the Gothic Publishing*, cit. In this thesis with the term *redaption* we indicate the adaptation in narrative form of a drama.

discursive practices. By reminding us of the on-going "paradigm shift"[46]

currently taking place in theatre and literary history, particularly in the field of

Romantic studies, my comparative approach aims to provide a theoretical, an

historical as well as a practical framework for the study of the Gothic stage

appropriations at the end of the eighteenth century.

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[46] Crochunis, "British Women Writers Around 1800: New Paradigms and Recoveries", cit., p. 1. Accessed on June 27, 2005.

An Overview of Critical Responses to English Gothic Theatre.

> Immense popularity and little critical respect - this might be the epitaph for the Gothic drama that filled the London stages in the decades around the turn from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century.[47]

It may be argued that the long-standing disparaging view of the Gothic theatre recalled here by Jeffrey Cox and described in section 2. of this work may be connected with three particular issues, which operated at both the synchronic and diachronic levels: a) the end-of-the-century rise of spectacle, b) originality, c) dramatic ideology. These factors, in their turn, must be analysed in connection with the changing patterns of reception of the Gothic in England in the aftermath of the 1793-94 post-revolutionary events in France.[48] Each of these aspects will be addressed in the following subsections.

3.1   *Spectacular Monstrosity/Monstrous Spectacularity*

In the eighteenth-century aesthetic hierarchies, spectacle occupied a marginal position, in accordance with the Aristotelian theorising proposed in *Poetics*. Contemporary attacks against theatrical shows were resonant of classical censure, which included spectacle amongst the lowest forms of entertainment.

> The tragic fear and pity may be aroused by the Spectacle; but they may be also aroused by the very structure and incidents of the play – which is the better way and shows the better poet. The Plot in fact should be so framed that, even without seeing the things take place, he who simply hears the account of them shall be filled with horror and pity at the incidents; which is just the effect that the mere recital of the story in *Oedipus* would have on one. To produce this same effect by means of Spectacle is less artistic, and requires extraneous aid.[49]

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[47] Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., p. 2.

[48] J. Cox, "Ideology and Genre in the British Antirevolutionary Dramas of the 1790s", *English Literary History* Vol. 58 (1991), pp. 579-610 and G. Taylor, *The French Revolution and the London Stage 1789-1805* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[49] Aristotle, *Poetics*, in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by R. McKeon (Chicago: Random House, 1941), pp. 1467-68, cit. in Gamer, "Authors in Effect", cit.,, p. 840. For contemporary dramatic theories, see C. Green, *The Neo-Classic Theory of Tragedy in England During the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1934); I. Simon (ed.), *Neo-Classical Criticism 1660-1800* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971); H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (eds.), Vol. IV, *The Eighteenth Century* and Marshall Brown

Patrick Pavis explains:

> In the nineteenth century there were *spectacle plays*, in which a great array of visual stage elements was deployed. Spectacle had a pejorative connotation, as opposed to the deep, lasting nature of the text. Aristotle listed it in his *Poetics* as one of the six parts of tragedy, only to diminish its importance with respect to action and content: 'Spectacle, though fascinating in itself, is of all the parts the least technical in the sense of being least germane to the art of poetry.' (1450b) Theorists (e.g. Marmontel) long continued to reproach it for its external, material nature, apt for *amusement* rather than *entertainment*.[50]

Aristotle's criticism was fully endorsed by eighteenth-century critics, who maintained the importance of morality and didacticism as well as entertainment in drama, according to the Horatian tenet of *utile et dulce*. It is no surprise then that the growing presence on the English stage of text-free and generically-mixed cultural products aimed at the audience's sensual gratification met with stern opposition throughout the century. Joseph Addison's attack on Italian opera from the pages of the *Spectator* offers an early example of the neoclassical condemnation of spectacle, [51] and so do Alexander Pope's biting couplets against Lewis Theobald and John Rich, the first English Harlequin, in *The Dunciad* (1728, published in four different versions up to 1743). Similarly, William Hogarth satirised the attempt made by the supporters of spectacle to out-stage the classics in the theatrical engraving "A Just View of the English Stage" (1724, Fig. 2), which portrays the Drury Lane patentees Colley Cibber, Barton Booth and John Wilks as they rehearse a pantomime. Sheets from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are hung over their privy, while Ben Jonson's ghost pops up through a stage trap. [52]

(ed.), Vol. V. *Romanticism* in *Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*. General editors H. B. Nisbet, and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

[50] Entry "Spectacle", inPavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre*, cit., pp. 346-47. The last italics are mine.

[51] J. Addison. *Spectator,* No. 5, Tuesday, March 6, 1711. Available from http://www.hoasm.org/VIIA/Spectator3-6-11.html and *Spectator,* No. 18, Wednesday, March 21, 1711. Available from http://www.hoasm.org/VIIA/Spectator3-21-11.html.

[52] The opposition between pantomime and the Shakespearian tradition is a trope in the eighteenth-century discourse of anti-spectacularism. It was exploited by David Garrick in *Harlequin's Invasion* (Drury Lane, 1759), Garrick's nationalistic counter-pantomime which conflated the disparaged figure of Harlequin –here speaking- with that of the French enemy. As summarised by one of the telling stage directions of the play, Shakespeare succeeds in chasing harlequin away: "MERCURY: Now let immortal Shakespear rise / Ye sons of Taste adore him. / As from the sun each vapour flies, Let folly sink before him. *Trab* [sic] *bell: Shakespear rises: Harlequin sinks*" (Act III). D. Garrick, *Harlequin's Invasion*, in *The Plays by David Garrick*, edited by

2. William Hogarth, "A Just View of the English Stage" (engraving, 1724). Free domain art available from http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/b/bf/Hogarth-rehearsal.jpg

Approaching the end of the century, the attack shifted to the new genre of sensational drama, which allegedly provided merely low 'bodily' enjoyment, instead of a higher form of aesthetic pleasure mediated through elevated emotions and *pathos*. Sensational shows, and Gothic shows in particular, thus received mostly negative critical attention. Not surprisingly, even the most successful dramas of the 1790s, such as Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*, did not provide an

William Pedicord and Frederick Louis Bergmann, vol. 1 *Garrick's Own Plays, 1740-1766* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1980), p. 224

exception to this critical rule, being dismissed as they were as "sensationalism pandering to the lowest common denominator."[53]

At the turn of the century the critical divide between higher and lower dramatic forms reached an extreme. The superiority of the written word over the image, reasserted by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing in *Laocoön* (published in1766),[54] was endorsed across Europe by Romantic theorists like Schlegel, Coleridge and Wordsworth. The anti-mimetic prejudice shown by these critics supported the symbolic force of the ideal and the imaginative over the self-referential, unimaginative –and often vulgarly material– visual. Sensation, stimulation and spectacle were condemned because they contributed to the dethroning of judgement .The numerous and continual press attacks against spectacle, however, testify not only to the critical disparagement of entertainment, positioned as it was on the lower ranks of the artistic hierarchy, but also the success of the ever more elaborate staged shows. The representation of the follies of the fashionable –the core of eighteenth-century comedy- was no longer perceived as an instrument to educate the audience, nor could the tragic calamities of the noble and the just arise pity and terror in the breast of the spectators. As we read in an anonymous contemporary review appeared on the *St. James's Chronicle*,

> [w]e wish it could be brought to the Recollection of the Managers and the Writers that Dramatic Audiences are ignorant of real life; that they frequent Tragedies not merely to be imposed upon, but to be agreeably instructed; and that in the Tragedies real life is hardly ever represented. […] The [Managers'] Fancies are perpetually bloated by fictitious Monsters and extravagant Caricatures: Being enjoined probably to regard all Things in Subservience to sudden Surprises and Strong Emotions. [55]

This judgement echoes the bitter words of the critic writing for the *Devil's Pocket Book*, published in 1786, whose his critical agenda states:

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[53] James R. Allard, "Spectres, Spectators, Spectacles: Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*", *Gothic Studies*, vol. 3 n. 3 (December 2001), p. 247).

[54] Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoon: An Essay On The Limits Of Painting And Poetry* (1766). First English translation (1853). Modern edition transl. by Edward Allen Mccormick (Baltimore,-London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984).

[55] The review is in C. H. Gray, *Theatrical Criticism in London to 1795* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 264.

> To restore the stage to its primitive dignity shall be the unceasing endeavours of our minds, and the grand object of our animadversions, to force its lordly despots to a state of repentance and humiliation for the enormities of their management, to disrobe them of their habitual insolence, […] purify their minds by the force of irresistible and honest admonition, and make them finally tremble at the bar of public justice, for the unlicensed commission of vices and follies that have been to long permitted to sleep in oblivion […].[56]

Victor Emeljanow has drawn attention to the consequences that the growth and diversification of the late eighteenth-century public had on the dramatic repertoire. The new cultural demands and the varied tastes of the "workforce who continued to flood into London from the end of the eighteenth century"[57] may be associated with the ever more frequent lamentations on the state of the English stage and the prevailing debased and anti-literary taste. The strong emotional quality of contemporary acting and the improved possibilities of stagecraft (lighting, music, stage machinery, sound effects) further contributed to this novel overlapping of morality and spectacle, instruction and "escapist entertainment,"[58] which undermined "the established foundations of British dramatic tradition by making the emotional excitement of the audience a first consideration."[59] Newspaper theatrical criticism reflected this epoch-making change, as a new theory of popular judgment replaced enduring neo-classical dramatic tenets. As the reviewer of a contemporary newspaper significantly observed, at present "we judge of the play by its *effect* on the audience" (*Oracle; or Bell's New World*, 1789).[60] It is worth pointing out here that the etymology of the word effect has

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[56] Ibid, p. 302. A similar point of view is endorsed by music historian A. S. Garlington jr. as late as 1960: "the English public was interested in the theatre only as a place of entertainment, not as a temple of moral and spiritual edification. The native composers catered to this interest with many compositions that strike our modern taste as utterly worthless, however greatly they may have been enjoyed in their own time" (A. S. Garlington, jr. " 'Gothic' Literature and Dramatic Music in England, 1781-1802", *Journal of the American Musicological Society* vol. 13, No. 1 (1960), p. 51)

[57] V. Emeljanow, "Introduction", in chapter III, "Repertoire, Taste and Audiences", Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit., p. 110.

[58] Franceschina, "Introduction", *Sisters of Gore*, cit., p. 2.

[59] B. Sutcliffe, "Introduction", in *Plays by George Colman the Younger and Thomas Morton*. Edited by B. Sutcliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge Universiy Press, 1983), p. 10. My reading of the pleasures of Gothic drama has been stimulated by Roland Barthes's seminal *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975).

[60] Cit. in Gray, *Theatrical Criticism in London to 1795*, cit., p. 289. The italics are in the text. Since James Boaden was one of the two proprietors of the daily newspaper *Oracle* [1789-1798 or later], this quotation is particularly pertinent to my investigation. Although we cannot ascertain whether he is in fact the author of the article, nonetheless we may assume that as a co-proprietor of the newspaper, he would share the critical and

marked theatrical undertones, the Latin term *effectus* originally meaning "accomplishment, performance," As James Boaden's criticism will prove, in the end-of-the-century aesthetics *effect* and drama were more and more often considered as one and the same.

The far-reaching changes hitherto outlined as far as aesthetic theory is concerned may be applied to Gothic discourse. A good starting point may be to consider the *effect* Gothic strove to reach. Many are the approaches; possibly, the most helpful remains Ellen Moers', who authoritatively observed that the desire "to scare" became the "one definite auctorial intent" of the Gothic writer:

> Not, that is, to reach down into the depths of the soul and purge it with pity and terror (as we say tragedy does), but to get the body itself, its glands, muscles, epidermis, and circulatory system, quickly arousing and quickly allaying the physiological reactions to fear.[61]

I suggest that a passage excerpted from John Aikin's *Sir Bertrand; A Fragment* (1773) –one of the earliest examples of what I call Gothic stage appropriations- may be used to illustrate Moers's theory. *Sir Bertrand; A Fragment* is, I believe, an excellent candidate to illustrate the late eighteenth-century Gothic aesthetics and the transformations of late eighteenth-century writing. From the very start it is evident that the poetics of the fragment challenges the concepts of diegetic progress and didacticism typical of eighteenth-century aesthetics. These are

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ideological stance of most of the reviews published therein. As explained by Boaden's biographer, Temple Maynard, the newspaper reported a variety of social, public and private news "as well as art news. In the *Oracle*, under the pseudonym of Thespis, [Boaden] offered dramatic criticism and theatrical gossip" (T. Maynard, "James Boaden", *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Paula Backscheider (ed.),Vol. 89 *Restoration and Eighteenth-Century Dramatists,* Detroit: Gale Research, 1989, p. 27). For a poetics of effect in Boaden, see below, Chapter III, "To Ears of Flesh and Blood", pp. 226 *et* foll.

[61] E. Moers, *Literary Women*, cit., p. 90. The sensory excess and complexity of Gothic drama recalls Ben Singer's theory of melodrama. Singer enumerates what he defines the "five key constitutive factors" of the genre: pathos, overwrought emotion, moral polarization, nonclassical narrative structure and sensationalism (*Melodrama and Modernity. Early Sensational Cinema and Its Contexts*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2001, pp. 44-49). Singer interprets melodrama as a reaction to capitalism, yet I believe that the historical grounding of his argument may be of use also for an analysis of Gothic drama in the 1790s: "melodrama's insistence on moral affirmation [must be seen] as a symptomatic response to a new condition of moral ambiguity and individual vulnerability following the erosion of religious and patriarchal traditions and the emergence of rampant cultural discontinuity, ideological flux, and competitive individualism within capitalism modernity. Melodrama expressed the anxiety of moral disarray and then ameliorated it through utopian moral clarity" (ibid., p. 46). In my opinion, this argument is compatible with David Punter's theory of the rise of the Gothic, which sees the genre as the response of the middle classes to the confused hierarchies of contemporary society (Punter, *The Literature of Terror*, cit.).

further undermined by the highly repetitive and dreamlike structure of the episode, built in a marvellous and deliberately delayed crescendo of totally unrealistic, sensational happenings.[62]

Approaching *Sir Bertrand; A Fragment* as a type of stage appropriation *in* the novel, I see the influence of pantomime and harlequinades, their magical tricks and fantastic personages. I contend that the complex generic hybridism of the Gothic form is clearly recognisable in *Sir Bertrand*. Furthermore, the history of the literary afterlives of this narrative fragment show how it influenced contemporary dramatic production, thus providing an illustration of how the Gothic novel possessed and was in its turn possessed by the stage.

In 1786 the fragment was adapted by Miles Peter Andrews as *The Enchanted Castle* (Covent Garden), a pantomime also known under the title *The Castle of Wonders.*.

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[62] The relevance of dreams for the proto-romantic Gothicists is recorded by Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, of whose oneiric genesis the author tells us, "I waked one morning in the beginning of last June 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)…" (H. Walpole, Letter to William Cole, 9 March 1765, cited in Walpole, '*The Castle of Otranto' and 'The Mysterious Mother'*, cit., p. 259).

THE

S O N G S,

RECITATIVES, AIRS, DUETS, TRIOS,

AND

CHORUSSES,

INTRODUCED IN THE

PANTOMIME ENTERTAINMENT,

OF THE

ENCHANTED CASTLE,

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE-ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

THE WORDS BY

MILES PETER ANDREWS, Efq;

AND THE MUSIC BY

MR. SHIELDS.

" *Of* FORESTS *and* ENCHANTMENTS *drear,*
" *Where more is meant than meets the ear.*"
MILTON's Penferofo.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR, AND SOLD AT THE BRITISH
LIBRARY, IN THE STRAND. M,DCC,LXXXVI.

PRICE SIX-PENCE.

3. Frontispiece. Peter Miles Andrews. *The songs, recitatives, airs, duets, trios, and choruses, introduced in the pantomime entertainment, of The enchanted castle, as performed at the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden.* (London, 1786) *Eighteenth Century Collections Online.* Gale Group. http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO

In the Preface to the 1786 edition, Andrews defended his decision "to stray from the beaten track." He admits to have drawn elements from both Horace

Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and *Sir Bertrand* and asserts that in so doing he has created new form, never before seen on stage]

> The Novelty attempted to be dramatised Tonight, takes its Rise from the Writings *of Miss Aikin, and the Hon. Horace Walpole. The Castle of Otranto, and the Fragment of Sir Bertrand*, forms the Basis of an Endeavour to bring upon the Stage somewhat of the Effects which may be produced by Midnight Horror, and Agency supernatural. What maybe the Result of this experiment, To-night must determine, for hitherto the experiment has not been made.[63]

Sir Bertrand may thus represent a good beginning to explore page-to-stage appropriations, and to demonstrate my theory of the Gothic dramatic adaptation as a re-activation of the theatrical *ur*-intertextuality inherent in the Gothic novel.[64]

Every (rational) action made by Sir Bertrand encodes the frustrations of unfulfilled desire, and it is answered by a supernatural counteraction, which serves to drive the knight's eternal quest forward. The following graphic representation aims to highlight the dramatic components of Aikin's prose.

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[63] M. P. Andrews, "Preface". *The songs, recitatives, airs, duets, trios, and chorusses, introduced in the pantomime entertainment, of The enchanted castle, as performed at the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden. The words by Miles Peter Andrews, Esq; and the music by Mr. Shields.* London, 1786. Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue. Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group., http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO , p. iv. See B. Evans, *Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley* (University of California Publications in English vol. XVIII, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1947), pp. 67-68.

[64] See "The Transforming Muses: Theorising Stage Appropriation", in partic. pp. 14-27 of this thesis, and Table 3c therein.

Sir Bertrand; A Fragment	**Semiotic analysis**
The heavy door, creaking upon its hinges, reluctantly [ ] yielded to his hand –*he applied his shoulder to it and forced it open – he quitted it, and stepped forward–* **the door instantly shut with a thundering clap.** […] he looked behind him, and beheld, across a hall, upon a large staircase, a pale bluish flame which cast a dismal gleam of light around. *He again summoned forth his courage and advanced toward it–.* **It retired.** […] A dead cold hand met his left hand and firmly grasped it, drawing him forcibly forwards –he endeavoured to disengage himself, but could not– *he made a furious blow with his sword, and instantly a loud shriek pierced his ears,* **and the dead hand was left powerless in his** – *He dropped it, and rushed forward with desperate valour.* […] The vault, at length, suddenly opened into a lofty gallery, in the midst of which a figure appeared, completely armed, thrusting forward the bloody stump of an arm, with a terrible frown and menacing gesture, and brandishing a sword in his hand. *Sir Bertrand undauntedly sprang forwards*; and aiming a fierce blow at the figure, **it instantly vanished**, letting fall a massy iron key. […] *Sir Bertrand flew to the lady and clasped her in his arms –* she threw up her veil and kissed his lips**; and instantly the whole building shook with an earthquake, and fell asunder with a horrible crash.**[65]	Gesture Movement Prop Sound effect Scenery Special effect (light) Gesture Gesture Sound effect Special effect Movement Scenery Scenery Special effect (**appearance**) Gesture Movement Special effect (**disappearance**) Prop Movement Prop Gesture Special effect Sound effect

As illustrated by the passage above, Sir Bertrand's adventure is given enhanced sensorial impact through the same special effects and theatrical claptraps introduced on stage by the late eighteenth-century theatrical spectacles. In particular, we may notice that sound effects (*thundering clap*; *loud shriek*; *horrible crash*) convey atmosphere. In the passage, sound effects (clap of thunder) are accompanied by lighting effects (the pale-coloured flickering flame). The

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[65] J. Aikin, *Sir Bertrand, a Fragment*. R. Norton (ed.), *Gothic Readings*, pp. 8-10. Both the italics and the bold characters are mine. See the principle of "terrible pleasure" enunciated in Anna Laetitia Aikin, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror" (1773): "[it] is the pleasure constantly attached to the excitement of surprise from new and wonderful objects. […] the more wild, fanciful, and extraordinary are the circumstances of a scene of horror, the more pleasure we receive from it […]" (ibid, p. 283).

dramaturgical and semiological functions performed by these effects counterpoint and colour the action, while reinforcing its meaning. Effects also coordinate the other dramatic systems by establishing signifying relationships between them.

Turning now to the architectural components of scenery, we notice that the lofty medieval room in which Aikin's knight moves seems to be spatially organised as a multi-layered interior. This perspective-like special configuration seems to be suggested by the mention of a vault that "*suddenly* opened into a lofty gallery", as if manoeuvred through receding planes operating on grooves. At the end of the narrative sequence (spectacular climax), the Medieval edifice is suddenly shaken by a mighty quake, which sensationally topples it to the ground. This kind of disaster was popular in Gothic melodramas and pantomime, as we shall see in the following chapter.

As I will explain in detail in my discussion of *The Monk*, I suggest that many of the effects I have drawn attention to were shared with the tradition of technically sophisticated spectacular pantomimes and extravaganzas that were establishing themselves as the on-the-rise theatrical fare by the year of the composition of *Sir Bertram*. As well as being popular in Gothic melodramas, these effects were regularly used by the Gothic stage appropriators. Matthew G. Lewis, for one, exploited these effects with great success in both his novel and melodramas. It must be noticed, however, that Lewis's showy use of optical and mechanical stage effects was not isolated. In effect the same shocks may be traced in other novels of the same period, as revealed by a central episode in the first volume of Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest*:

> While [Adeline] looked on [the dying man], his features changed and seemed convulsed in the agonies of death. The spectacle shocked her, and she started back, **but he suddenly stretched forth his hand**, and seizing hers, grasped it with violence: *she struggled in terror to disengage herself*, and again looking on his face, saw a man, who appeared to be about thirty, with the same features, but in full health, and a most benign countenance. He smiled tenderly upon her and moved his lips, *as if* to speak, **when the**

floor of the chamber suddenly opened and he sunk from her view. The effort she made to save herself from following awoke her.[66]

It is useful to contextualise such scenes of typical Gothic disappearance within the framework of contemporary stage practice, especially as regards such machines as the "cuts" and "traps" cut in the floor boarding of back- and front-stage, which allowed elements of scenery or actors to rise or sink through.[67] Arguably, as I will explain in detail in my discussion of Lewis's *The Monk,* the stagy otherworldly apparitions and disappearances shared by Gothic novels and dramas gave comparable material and conceptual representation to similar perceptions of the (imaginative) world and responded in analogous ways to contemporary widespread anxieties and desires.

On the pragmatic level, also of interest is the unprecedented fusion of thrilling spectacle and instruction performed by the theatrical Gothic. The Gothic aesthetics disrupted the communicative interaction between audience and character, as the heroes were discovered to be no longer (nor necessarily) virtuous and benevolent models. At the same time, the neoclassical tenet of verisimilitude as adherence to real and probable incidents came to be infringed, as credibility increasingly gave way to the marvellous, and often to the supernatural.

If we look at the entries from John Genest's notes for the 1790s, the period here under scrutiny, we regularly meet with judgements which testify to the critic's aversion to, as well as his (generic) bafflement at, confronting dramatic forms which refused to conform to his aesthetic tenets. Amongst the most recurring adjectives used by Genest we find "indifferent" and "poor", in a disparagement which terminates with "contemptible" and downright "vile". Authorial misjudgement ("[the work] does its author little credit") is on occasion

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[66] Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, cit., p. 108. The emphases are mine.

[67] The eighteenth-century stage system of cuts and traps is explained in detail in Booth, "Theatre and Actors", *The Revels History of Drama in English*, cit., pp. 69-79. The device of the so-called "Vamp trap" – used for the first time in J.R. Planché's melodrama *The Vampire; or, the Bride of the Isles* (English Opera House, 1820)– is described in M. D. Purinton, "Theatricalized Bodies and Spirits. Techno-Gothic as Performance in Romantic Drama". *Gothic Studies*, Monographic Issue on "Reanimating Gothic Drama". Guest Editor J. Cox, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2003), pp. 134-55, partic. pp. 139-145. I discuss the mutual influence of pantomime and the narrative forms of Gothic supernaturalism in Part III of this thesis.

accompanied by the mention of the audience's debased taste. This is the case with *The Surrender of Calais* by George Colman the Younger (Haymarket, 30 July 1791), which was "acted 28 times; has met with much greater success than it deserved; [being a] jumble of tragedy, comedy and opera, with a ridiculous attempt at obsolete language".

In the "Preface" to the comedy *The Town Before You* (1795), Hannah Cowley expresses a condemnation of contemporary drama which recalls Genest's. Cowley announces her intention to withdraw "[f]rom a Stage, in such a state":

> O! Genius of polish'd age, descend – plant thy banners in our Theatres, and bid ELEGANCE and FEELING take place of the *droll* and the *laugh*, which formerly were found only in the Booths of *Bartlemy* Fair, and were divided between *Flocton* and *Yates*! […] Let Sadler's Wells and the Circus empty themselves of their performers to furnish our Stage; the expence to Managers will be less, and their business will be carried on better. The UNDERSTANDING, DISCERNMENT, and EDUCATION, which distinguish our modern actors, are useless to them; - strong muscles are in greater repute, and grimace has more powerful attraction.[68]

From these testimonies we may conclude that the change in the theatre audiences which followed the economic boom of the end of the century contributed to change profoundly the functions and forms of the theatre. While the anonymous reviewer of *Scots Magazine* complained that "[t]he visitor of the Theatre now no longer sees a rational entertainment, or receives lessons of morality, but is doomed to sit all night long beholding what is hardly a suitable amusement for the nursery" (June 1799), these sentiments were clearly not shared by all the playwrights, in particular by those who had succeeded in lucratively adapting their works to the changing tastes. Among these was George Colman the Younger, later the Royal Examiner of Plays, who ironically acknowledged the popular love for "pageantry and show" with a teasing provocation:

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[68]   H. Cowley, *The Town Before You* (London, G. Woodfall for Longman, 1795). Emphases in the text. During the same years Samuel Coleridge advocated "the redemption of the British stage […] from horses, dogs, elephants, and the like zoological rarities," and speculated why Charles Maturin had chosen to bring on stage "a number of mute dramatis personae [who] move[d] in and out continually," noting that "for [their] presence, there is always at least this reason, that they afford something to be *seen*, by that very large part of a Drury Lane audience who have a small chance of *hearing* a word" (Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* Nigel Leask (ed.) London: Everyman, 1997,, pp. 352-53). The italics are in the text.

Let your Shakespeare and Jonsons go hang, go hang!
Let your Otways and Drydens go drown!
Give us but Elephants, and white Bulls enough,
And we'll take in all the all the town.

Brave boys![69]

The mixed association of sensationalism and legitimate drama typical of the late eighteenth-century stage, and of Gothic, is aptly summed up by Jeffrey Cox:

The Gothic drama, trailing its debts to the novel, to other literary forms, and to the developing tactics of stage sensationalism, was seen as an impure generic hybrid, a kind of *monstrous form* oddly appropriate to the chamber of horrors it displayed on stage.[70]

Here Cox's words inadvertently echo the linguistic discomfort displayed by a theatre historian as late as 1946. The monstrosity of Gothic was constructed, and accepted, by many critics. For instance in his discussion of late eighteenth-century melodramas, Jeremy F. Bagster-Collins complains: "[George] Colman [the Younger] undoubtedly had no idea of the tremendous power of the *monster* which he and other Frankensteins, such as Reynolds, Dibdin, Boaden, and later Holcroft, Morton, Moncrieff and others, were helping to create by their apparently innocent contributions to an illegitimate drama which was *neither tragedy, comedy, farce, nor opera, but a jumble of all four*"[71] The ideological and even linguistic influence of Genest's early attacks remains still evident a century and a half later.

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[69] Both the excerpts form *Scots Magazine* and the lines from Colman's pantomime *Sylvester Daggerwood; or, New Hay at the Old Market* (opening night, Haymarket Theatre, 9 June 1799) are taken from Roy (ed.) *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit., respectively Document no. 81, "Spectacle and the distortion of the stage's function, 1799", p. 114 and Document no. 80, "The enlarged patent theatres and their effects on tastes and perception, 1795", p. 113, both from chapter "Repertoire, taste, and audience". As I show in the table of Boaden's infra-theatricality and inter-theatricality (see below, pp. 119-134), *Sylvester Daggerwood* played at the Haymarket along with several Gothic plays, as it did for instance on September 6 and 9, 1797 when it followed Boaden's *The Italian Monk*, with *Children in the Wood* and *Peeping Tom* playing as afterpieces.

[70] J. Cox, "English Gothic Theatre", in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, J. Hogle (ed.), (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 128. The italics are mine. For a discussion of the French Revolution as a monster, see R. Paulson, "Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution", *English Literary History* 48 (1981), pp. 532-54.

[71] Jeremy F. Bagster-Collins*, George Colman the Younger, 1762-1836*, Morningside Heights, NY: King's Crown Press, 1946, p. 59.

A well-known contemporary cartoon, significantly entitled "The Monster Melodrama" (issued in *The Satirist*, 1817), visually represents the testing of the boundaries between "illegitimate" and "legitimate" theatre enacted by spectacle. Melodrama is represented as a many-headed tailed monster that suckles a motley array of actors, characters and playwrights such as Thomas Dibdin, Mother Goose, Joseph Grimaldi, and Carlo the Dog, as it ruthlessly trudges on two scrolls inscribed with "Shakespear's works [sic]" and "Regular drama".[72] It is worth noting that –perhaps on purpose– this print appropriates and rewrites the traditional Gothic trope of the scroll bearing inscribed treasured remnants of the past –signs of familial heritage and history frequently retrieved by the Gothic characters. In my opinion, visually inscribing the name of Shakespeare on one of the manuscripts is particularly significant. I suggest that the cartoon positions the Bard as one of the textual ghosts of Gothic drama– a haunting or alternatively, a displaced, presence on the contemporary stage. In so doing, I suggest, this echo casts the cartoon into the context of the Romantic Shakespearian hauntology to which the work of both Radcliffe and Boadens as well as other Gothic stage appropriators bear testimony.[73]

The role of the Shakespearean tradition in the spectacular representation of on-stage supernatural was clearly advocated by Shakespearean connoisseur James Boaden in the "Epilogue" to *Fontainville Forest*. As we shall see in detail in Chapter Three, *Fontainville Forest* showcased Boaden's spectacular appropriation of Shakespearean supernaturalism, achieved by way of Ann Radcliffe.

> Think you, our friends, one modern ghost will see,
> Unless, indeed, of Hamlet's pedigree:
> Know you not, Shakespeare's petrifying pow'r

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[72] The print is discussed in several recent studies of late Georgian popular theatre. See, amongst these, Cox and Gamer, "Introduction", *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., pp. x-xi, and the analytical comment therein. The cartoon should be contextualised within the eighteenth-century graphic tradition of attacks against physical entertainments of which "A Just View of the English Stage" by William Hogarth (1724, Figure 2) is one of the earliest, as well as most accomplished, examples.

[73] For the concept of hauntology see Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: the State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International.* Translated by Peggy Kamuf; with an introduction by Bernd Magnus and Stephen Cullenberg (New York-London: Routledge, 1994).

Commands alone the horror-giving hour?[74]

I shall take up again Gothic stage appropriations of the supernatural. What I wish to contend here is that "The Monster Melodrama" cartoon articulates the dangerous connection between generic monstrosity and the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century stage. In *The Satirist*'s vision of melodrama, the language and iconography of monstrosity interconnect with the themes, forms and models of the Gothic at more than one signifying level, transforming a conceptual matter into a category of theatrical performance.

Finally, if we turn to the status of dramatic authorship, we may discover one final facet of the Gothic spectacular monstrosity. Among the most-often quoted contemporary attacks on the late eighteenth-century love of spectacle, we find those mounted by Richard Cumberland, a distinguished playwright author of such sentimental comedies as *The West Indian* (Drury Lane, 1771) and problem plays like *The Jew* (Drury Lane, 1794), whose well-established dramatic output was being slowly up-staged by the innovative spectacular extravaganzas.

> Since the stages of Drury Lane and Covent Garden have been so enlarged in their dimensions as to be henceforward *theatres for spectators* rather than *playhouses for hearers*, it is hardly to be wondered at if their managers and directors encourage those representations, to which their structure is best adapted. The splendour of the scenes, the ingenuity of the machinist and the rich display of dresses, aided by the captivating charms of music, now in a great degree supersede the labours of the poet. There can be nothing very gratifying in watching the movements of an actor's lips, when we cannot hear the words that proceed from them: but when the animating march strikes up, and the stage lays open its recesses to the depth of a hundred feet for the procession to advance, even the most distant spectator can enjoy his shilling's-worth of show. […] On the stage of Old Drury in the days of Garrick the moving brow and penetrating eye of that matchless actor came home to the spectator. As the passions shifted, and were by turns reflected from the mirror of his expressive countenance, nothing was lost; upon the scale of modern Drury many of the finest touches of his act would of necessity fall short. The distant audience might chance to catch the text, but would not see the comment, that was wont so exquisitely to elucidate the poet's meaning, and impress it on the hearer's heart.[75]

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[74] J. Boaden, "Epilogue to 'Fontainville Forest' By the Author of the Play". *Fontainville Forest*, in *The Plays of James Boaden*, cit. p. 69.

[75] R. Cumberland, *Memoirs of Richard Cumberland. Written by Himself. Containing an Account of His Life and Writings, Interspersed with Anecdotes and Characters of Several of the Most Distinguished Persons of the Tim., with whom he has had Intercourse and Connection*, 2 vols. (London, 1807), vol. II, p. 384 *et* foll. [modern reprint *The Memoirs of Richard Cumberland*. Two Volumes in One. Edited by Richard Dircks. New

Cumberland's argument, that "[t]he splendour of the scenes, the ingenuity of the machinist and the rich display of dresses, aided by the captivating charms of music, now in a great degree supersede the labours of the poet," touches on another aspect of the destabilization of dramatic tradition operated by the Gothic theatre. This new dynamic miscellany of literary and extra-literary languages (the narrative, the visual, and the aural) radically challenged the concept of dramatic authorship. The collective nature of production was now brought to the fore, as suggested by Matthew G. Lewis "Advertisement" to *Timour the Tartar* (Covent Garden, 1811).

> This trifle was written merely to oblige Mr. Harris, who prest me very earnestly to give him a Spectacle, in which Horses might be introduced; […] For [the applause] which it obtained in London, it was clearly indebted to the magnificence of the Scenery and Dresses, to the exertions of the Performers, and above all to the favour with which the Horses were received by the Public.[76]

This "fundamental tension between play-text and play-performance"[77] freed the work of art from its textual constraints, and rendered the nature of the Gothic performative event ephemeral and impermanent –on one hand increasing critical disregard, and on the other, most importantly, "destabiliz[ing] notions of authorship and originality in the Romantic period".[78]

The Gothic was thus monstrous at various interconnected levels: form, themes, and authorial functions. The (textual) spectres it conjured were many indeed, all of them disruptive of contemporary aesthetic and literary theories. Yet in the history of the Gothic the one spectre that remained long invisible –a spectre

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York: AMS Press, 2002. Mine the italics. The terms of Cumberland's critique clearly foreshadows Romantic antispectacularism, as expressed for instance by Leigh Hunt's satirical review of the acting capabilities displayed by the horses in the 1811 revival of *Blue-Beard*, for which see "Appendix: Contemporary Reviews and Comments", Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., pp. 338-340.

[76] Cox and Gamer, *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama,* cit., p. 98.

[77] This phenomenon was caused also by the 1752 Entertainment Act, a law requiring – amongst other things – the licensing of all entertainment within 20 miles of London. The quote is taken from Gamer, "Authors in effect: Lewis, Scott, and the Gothic Drama", cit., p. 840. In this suggestive essay, Gamer asks us to rethink the word "spectre" that marks the title of Lewis's play by examining the pun Wordsworth made on it, "[Wordsworth's] point being that he sees nothing in the *text* of Lewis's play to account for its success. […] the sources of the play success are its stage workers – the actors, carpenters, painters, costumers, and musicians paid to produce the play for performance" (ibid., p. 835).

[78] Ibid., p. 833.

in its right- was the stage; and it is now to the forms of Gothic drama and the spectrality of drama in Gothic that we turn our investigation.

3.2   Germany, the Elizabethans and the Spectres of Appropriation

In the latter part of the twentieth-century the division between the 'literary' and the 'theatrical' approach to the study of drama has dominated by and large Romantic dramatic scholarship. Such scholars as Jeffrey Cox, Paul Ranger, Catherine Burroughs, and Marjean D. Purinton are among those who support a performance-based approach that focuses on the practicalities of staging, Catherine Burroughs for one enjoins:

> those of us who study women playwrights around 1800 need to consider how the scholarship on these writers by literary critics in Romantic studies has affected – and will continue to affect – the presentation and reception of this material. Why, for instance, does the 'literary' over the 'theatrical' content of Romantic playwrights dramaturgy continue to be emphasized in scholarship to the point where – for instance – closet drama by women gets more attention than the actual performances of women's plays on London and provincial stages?[79]

The opposite opinion is maintained by Thomas Crochunis, who suggests that,

> in our hurry to recover theatrical performances, we ignore textual forms of dramatic discourse, directing our attention away from the page toward the theatre of a play's original era. However, the text of a Gothic drama, especially from an age in which plays were increasingly published either before or after performance, exhibits its own revealing rhetoric and sequences of gestures[80].

Scholarship from at least the 1990s onwards seems to have paid more and more attention to the theatrical dimension of Romantic dramaturgy (or the alleged lack thereof), However, in the eighteenth century it was the issue of the originality of Gothic that in fact remained a much debated question, particularly for those critics that espoused the Romantic aesthetic theories. These, commencing as early as 1759 with Edward Young's pre-Romantic *Conjectures upon Original Composition*, prized creative genius over imitation and close adherence to the classical rules. The Gothic novels were considered well-oiled formula fictions,

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[79] C. Burroughs, "Teaching the Theory and Practice of Women's Dramaturgy", cit., p. 4. Accessed on September 19, 2003).

[80] T. Crochunis, "Writing Gothic Theatrical Spaces," *Gothic Studies*. Monographic Issue on "Reanimating Gothic Drama", Guest Editor Jeffrey Cox. Vol. 3, No. 2 (2003), p. 156.

composed according to a well-defined, and easily reproducible, narrative "recipe"[81] which recycled stock situations, themes and forms.

The Gothic plays were repeatedly attacked for similar reasons. Coleridge for instance dismissed the most popular Gothic success of the 1790s, Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*, by pointing out the derivative nature of the play. As he declared in a famous letter to Wordsworth, "[t]he merit of the Castle Spectre consists wholly in it's *situations*. These are all borrowed, and all absolutely *pantomimical*. […] The whole plot, machinery, & incident are borrowed […]."[82] The outcry against *The Castle Spectre*'s lack of originality was similarly taken up by the reviews of the play, notably those published in 1798 in *Critical Review* and *Analytical Review*.[83]

In the context of an enquiry into the Gothic appropriations, the derivative nature of the genre must be associated with contemporary authorial hierarchies. The contemporary debate about *intellectual* property was seen as profoundly linked with the usurpation of *material* property at the heart of many Gothic plots. Lauren Fitzgerald, for instance, has pointed out Matthew Lewis's plagiarism of Ann Radcliffe's work as follows:

> Lewis is a villain who attempts to appropriate illegitimately the property of a Gothic heroine. […] he has plundered Radcliffe's property, engaging in a violence similar to that which Osmond threatens Angela [sic] when she rejects his attempts to woo her and to legitimise his relationship to the castle; Lewis might not have attempted to 'obtain' Radcliffe herself by 'force', but he has succeeded in plundering her page.[84]

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[81] See the well-known satire 'Terrorist Novel Writing' (1798): "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 desperados, '*quant suff.*" Noises, whispers and groans, threescore at least." Reprinted in Clery and Miles (eds.), *Gothic Documents*, cit., pp. 183-84.

[82] S.T. Coleridge, *The Collected Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge,* Edited by Earl Leslie Griggs. 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956-71), Vol. I, p. 379. Coleridge's quotation comes from Allard, "Spectre, Spectators, and Spectacle", cit., p. 249.

[83] *Critical Review*, ns 22 (1798), pp. 76-78, and *Analytical Review*, 23 (1798), pp. 179-91.

[84] As Fitzgerald has contended elsewhere, Radcliffe's novels detail the struggle of the heroine with the villain over family inheritance – be this title or property – in a gendered battle that is taken up over and over by the critics of the Gothic and curiously transformed into (or rather translated as) a real *textual* battleground. According to Fitzgerald, "reading the criticism of their novels […] also suggests that the Gothic, in fact, explains the criticism as much as the criticism explains the Gothic […]. A tale [that] begins the moment that

In this aesthetic climate the explicit, at times blatant, intertextuality of Gothic –with the appropriation, recycling, and transformation of themes and forms it performed- was looked upon with suspicion, if not downright condemnation. Two were the main points of attack as far as the stage was concerned. On the diachronic level, Gothic drama heavily borrowed from –and apparently corrupted– the works of both the Elizabethan and the Jacobean playwrights. On the synchronic level, Gothic dramas recycled the literary motifs, narrative configurations and actantial structures popularised by contemporary German plays.

As early as 1921 Clara McIntyre provocatively wondered "Were the 'Gothic Novels' Gothic?" In her essay McIntyre notes that "the rise of the Gothic novel coincides roughly with a distinct revival of interest in Elizabethan drama", which includes contemporary editions of several so-called minor Elizabethan dramatists (Middleton, Massinger and Webster amongst the others) as well as Shakespeare. McIntyre makes a list of motifs common to the two forms: death by poison, the theme of revenge, the presence of a villain, the use of the supernatural. She concludes:

> one is justified in recognizing the Elizabethan influence upon Mrs. Radcliffe in her decidedly Romantic structure; in her general choice of theme, especially her attitude toward death and toward the supernatural; in many situations that distinctly recall situations in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries; and, perhaps more strikingly of all, in the one distinctive type of character which she developed –that of the 'villain-hero.'[85]

G. Wilson Knight continued this trend of strong condemnation of the Gothic drama by supporting a negative –if not at times openly dismissive– view of the Gothic themes and forms, regarded as merely imitative. In accordance with

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that Lewis decided to write *The Monk* and in it, Radcliffe becomes the heroine to a villain who is remembered, not coincidentally, as "Monk" Lewis almost as often as he is referred to as Matthew Gregory" (L. Fitzgerald, "The Gothic Villain and the Vilification of the Plagiarist," *Gothic Studies*. Monographic issue on "Gothic Ex/changes". Guest Editors Terry Philips and Sue Zlosnik. Vol. 7, No. 1 (2005), p. 11). The derivative nature of Lewis's Gothic is discussed, among the others, by David Punter (*The Literature of Terror*, cit.) and Kari J. Winter ("Sexual/Textual Politics of Terror: Writing and Rewriting the Gothic Genre in the 1790s", in K. A. Ackley (ed.), *Misogyny in Literature. An Essay Collection*, New York-London: Garland, 1992, pp. 89-104).

[85] C. McIntyre, "Were the 'Gothic Novels' Gothic?", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, Vol. 36 (1921), p. 646 and p. 665.

previous critiques (amongst which Coleridge's), the plays examined by Wilson Knight are hardly ever considered as original contributions in themselves. Rather, they are discussed as derivative in what is perceived to be their relation to their Elizabethan and Jacobean models.[86] So certain is the critic of the influence borne by the narrative upon the dramatic Gothic as to evoke Greek precedents: "Only the narrative-prone Homeric epic in its influence upon subsequent Greek drama can better illustrate a similar cause-and-effect between differing yet related genres."[87]

More recently, Paula Backscheider elaborated on Wilson Knight's hypothesis, by noting that "critics beginning with Samuel Johnson[88] have located similar strategies, characters, and themes in the plays of John Dryden, Thomas Otway, and their contemporaries."[89] This cultural fascination worked according to a binary intertextual circuit. English domestic dramatists influenced mid-century German playwrights. Simultaneously, German sentimental drama became popular in England through the translations and adaptations of the works of August von Kotzebue.[90]

Backscheider's consideration leads us on to the second cultural influence behind Gothic drama. Twentieth-century commentators are interested in pointing out the debt Gothic drama owes to its English dramatic forebears. Romantic critics, conversely, attacked Gothic drama for ideological and political reasons by highlighting its similarities with the German *Sturm und Drang* drama. According to a widespread reactionary assumption, the so-called jacobinical drama imported from Germany –"culturally invasive [and] morally corrupting" in Michael

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[86] Wilson Knight, "The Gothic Play" in Thomas M. Harwell (ed.) *The English Gothic Novel: A Miscellany in Four Volumes. Volume 4: Collateral Gothic 2*. Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Americanistik Universität Salzburg, 1986p. 2.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Here Backscheider refers to Johnson's *Lives of the Poets,* 1779-1781.

[89] *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 154.

[90] L. Fietz, "On the Origins of the English Melodrama in the Tradition of Bourgeois Tragedy and Sentimental Drama: Lillo, Schröder, Kotzebue, Sheridan, Thompson, Jerrold", in Michael Hays and Anastasia Nikolopoulou (eds), *Melodrama. The Critical Emergence of a Genre* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999).

Gamer's words[91]– would provide the English Gothicists with encouragement to subvert church and state as well as class and gender relations. This disruption, intensified by the social upheaval and mutiny circulating across Europe, might eventually jeopardise England's own democracy and social structure.

The *Sturm und Drang* dramas that brought to England the "pernicious barbarism and Kotzebuisms in morals and tastes" recalled by Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* circulated mostly in translation.[92] As we have mentioned before, Matthew Lewis was himself was the author of several translations from the German. He translated some *Sturm und Drang* plays, amongst which Schiller's famous *Der Geisterseher (The Ghostseer*, 1788) as well as a number of *Schauerromane*. Both of these genres were later drawn upon in *The Monk*.[93]

During the 1790s and the early 1800s, the Gothic theatre of high sensationalism was thus particularly attacked by those critics who linked it with the uncontrolled political innovation arriving from across the Channel. Predominantly, this group included the social commentators involved in the campaign begun in 1797 by the conservative *The Anti-Jacobin; Or, Weekly Examiner* along with the reviewers employed by the *Monthly Mirror* and the *Dramatic Censor*.[94] Many contemporary commentators also saw an affinity between theatrical and revolutionary events. One amongst many, in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790) Edmund Burke famously underlined the quick succession of laughter and tears that accompanied the revolutionary incidents in France. In Burke's vision history itself was constructed along the lines of stage

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[91] Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit, p. 102.

[92] The *Sturm und Drang* movement took its name from the homonymous play by Friedrich Maximilian Klinger (1770). It came to be identified initially with Goethe's *Goetz von Berlichingen* (1773), and later, after Johann Christoph Friederich Schiller's drama *Die Räuber* (1781), with the tradition of the *Räuberromane*. Eleven of August von Kotzebue's plays were translated into English by Benjamin Thompson and published in the six volumes of *The German Theatre* (1797-1801). Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, cit., pp. 332-33. See also ibid., p. 335.

[93] D. L. Macdonald. *Monk Lewis. A Critical Biography*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000, p. 105.

[94] Whilst the *Monthly Mirror* campaigned for the reform of the office of the Licenser of Plays, the *Dramatic Censor* "directed its first issues at German drama", whose productions and adaptations were seen as the means through which the "northern invaders" corrupted native national(istic) English taste by chasing Shakespeare and the other national dramatists away from their autochthonous stage. See Gamer*, Romanticism and the Gothic,* cit., p. 128-29.

appropriation. The tragicomic hotchpotch of the French Revolution reminded him of the jumble of scenes and sensations that characterized the contemporary English stage:

> All circumstances taken together, the French revolution is the most astonishing that has hitherto happened in the world. […] Every thing seems out of nature in this strange chaos of levity and ferocity, and of all sorts of crimes jumbled together with all sorts of follies. In viewing this monstrous tragic-comic scene, the most opposite passions necessarily succeed, and sometimes mix with each other in the mind; alternate contempt and indignation; alternate laughter and tears; alternate scorn and horror.[95]

German models were also attacked on moral grounds, as stated famously by Samuel Coleridge: "the whole secret of the modern jacobinical drama (which, and not the German, is its appropriate designation,) and of its all popularity, consists in the confusion and subversion of the natural order of things in their causes and effects."[96] "Jacobinical drama" challenged the educational value of theatre. Coleridge denounced the corrupting influence of creating morally ambiguous characters whose predicaments attracted the readers' and the spectators' sympathies. Moral intelligibility itself was destabilised by the presence of these mixed, yet "desirable"[97] characters, which were common to both plays and novels. The moral dilemmas of these villains –devised to attract the audience's sympathy– rendered Gothic drama morally suspect, thus giving rise to accusations of corruption, disruption and immodesty amongst the spectators.

This Gothic hauntology brought along other spectres, which overstepped the limits of the page to affect the *status quo* at large. The illegitimacy of the various

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[95] E. Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Edited with and Introduction and Notes by L. G. Mitchell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 10. Burke further discusses the French Revolution with reference to Aristotelian poetics: "we are so made as to be affected at such spectacles with melancholy sentiments upon the unstable conditions of mortal prosperity, and the tremendous uncertainty of human greatness; because in those natural feelings we learn great lessons; because in events like these our passions instruct our reason [...]. We are alarmed into reflexion; our minds (as it has long been observed) are purified by terror and pity; our weak, unthinking pride is humbled under the dispensation of a mysterious wisdom. – Some tears might be drawn from me, if such a spectacle were exhibited on the stage" (ibid., pp. 80-81). There follows a discussion of contemporary politics in dramatic terms (pp. 81-82).

[96] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, cit., p. 342.

[97] Cox, "Introduction. Reanimating Gothic Drama", *Gothic Studies*, Monographic Issue on "Reanimating Gothic Drama". Guest Editor Jeffrey Cox. *Gothic Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2 (2003), p. 109. See Coleridge, "A Critique of *Bertram*", in *Biographia Dramatica*, cit.

artistic forms in which the Gothic found expression on page and stage alike threatened to be accompanied by even more dangerous manifestations of social and moral illegitimacy as the audiences were faced by a moral vision which challenged positive empathic identification. As conceived in the reflections on Terror expressed by Anna Laetitia Aikin (later Barbauld), the so-called "old Gothic romance" sought no moral justification for the recreational pleasure it elicited in the audience. The sublime was severed from the moral, with important implications for the future development of the Gothic villain-hero.

> The painful sensation immediately arising from such a scene of misery, is so much softened and alleviated by the reflex sense of self-approbation on attending virtuous sympathy, that we find, on the whole, a very exquisite and refined pleasure remaining, which makes us desirous of again being witnesses to such scenes, instead of flying with them with disgust and horror. […] But *the apparent delight with which we dwell upon objects of pure terror, where our moral feelings are not in the least concerned*, and no passion seems to be excited by the depressing one of fear, *is a paradox of the heart*, much more difficult of solution.[98]

In undermining patent drama, 'illegitimate' dramatic forms thus became the cultural metaphors of the plebeian, disorderly and ultimately pernicious socio-political revolt, which was overturning legality and sovereign government across Europe.

3.3 *The Several Masks of Dramatic Ideology.*

A final explanation of the long-standing critical, editorial and academic inattention to the Gothic theatre may be imputable to the widespread neglect of nineteenth-century drama which persisted for a long time in literature courses and academic publishing alike. Cox conclusively explains that the student of the period is barred from gaining an accurate perception both of the dramatic output of the age by what he calls a "dramatic ideology". With this term Cox refers to an a-historical construction meant to mirror Jerome McGann's idea of "romantic

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[98] A.L. Aikin, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror", cit., p. 281. Mine the italics.

ideology".[99] In Cox's view, dramatic ideology has two tenets: "a small number of great figures are seen as speaking to one another across the ages […]. The rest of dramatic history is largely condemned to silence."[100] Further, Cox takes up the issue of originality by pointing out that according to his critical framework, "canonized plays are presented as having more in common with their great precursors and descendents than with the dramatic and theatrical cultures within which they were created."[101]

Recently, Jacky Bratton has proposed a cogent reading of late eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century theatre history, which she perceives as the result of the "hegemonic negotiation taking place at many levels in British culture" in the early 1830s. [102] In Bratton's influential version of 'dramatic ideology' –which she labels the theory of 'the Decline of the Drama'– during those years the Select Committee Appointed to Inquire into the Laws Affecting Dramatic Literature (1832) chaired by Edward Bulwer Lytton was entrusted with the strongly ideological task of evaluating and reforming the patent system still operating in London. The Committee ultimately supported "the multiplication of intimate small stages"[103] and defended the idea of a 'dramatist's theatre' based on the Shakespearean tradition. As explicated by the contemporary commentator, John Payne Collier, this policy had the aim to encourage the public to "visit those theatres where they would hear the best plays acted in the best way […] in smaller theatres than those that are now erected."[104]

Bratton's argument that the theatre of 'textual purity' enforced by the Committee "where popular entertainment was the enemy of the verbal perfection

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[99] J. J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

[100] Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., p. 3.

[101] Ibid.

[102] J. Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 10.

[103] Ibid, p. 88.

[104] See the papers on the Select Committee and its Report, in Documents nos. 9 "The Select Committee examines some of the monopoly issues, 1832", chapter "Theatre, the Law and Management Practice", in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit., p. 14. Charles Macready's comments are also of interest as regards theatrical morphology and acting (ibid., pp. 15-16).

of the text"[105] is of obvious relevance for a re-appraisal of the Gothic stage, which often developed beyond the topographical as much as generic boundaries of the two metropolitan monopolists.

> The Committee was particularly pertinacious in trying to get professionals to condemn the large size of the patent theatres, and to endorse their own reading of its significance –that large theatres encouraged spectacular melodrama, rant and poor acting, and vitiated public taste, and that if the minor theatres were permitted to stage good plays, then cheaper prices, intimate dramas and less expense in smaller spaces would revive the popularity of theatre-going and enable the stage to contribute to public education.[106]

There follows that the history of the English theatre that was written by the gentlemen historians of the Select Committee is subjective and prejudiced, viewed through the monocle of legitimate theatre.

Bratton's theory has important consequences for my enquiry into stage appropriations. The historiographical construction she delineates in the above passage has had, in my opinion, significant influences on the perception of Gothic. The relevance and the range of the heterogeneous materials which composed it appear to have been understated and misconstrued, with the result of obscuring the rich dramatic scene which constituted Gothic drama. For instance, Revd. John Genest, a retired Church of England curate, wrote *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830* (1832), a mastodontic *oeuvre* in ten volumes that, however, charts predominantly the licensed productions, with the consequence of sidelining many of the popular non-textual works, which in fact proliferated in the minor theatres where both Gothic and Gothic-influenced shows thrived. For many years surveys like Genest's *Account* or James Boaden's *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq. Including a History of the Stage, from the Time of Garrick to the Present Period* (1825) remained the standard sources of theatre and thespian history for a period that

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[105] Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, cit,. p. 88. See the Document no. 10, "Report of the Select Committee, 1832", chapter "Theatre, the Law and Management Practice" in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit.: "In examining the state of the Laws affecting the interests and exhibition of the Drama, Your Committee find that a considerable decline, both in the Literature of the Stage, and the Taste of the Public for Theatrical Performances, is generally conceded" (p. 16).

[106] Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, cit, p. 89.

stretched over many decades, including the 1790s. It is thus possible to assume that the critical attitude of these two literary figures contributed in shaping how the stage of the era was perceived by the later generations.

A further explanation of the dramatic ideology that contributed for a long time to the critical dismissal of the Gothic drama and to the marginalisation of Gothic stage-page intertextuality must be sought in the modest artistic status of many of the professionals involved in its making. Like several other phases of dramatic history, the Gothic drama does not seem, at first glance, to count great figures amongst its practitioners. As I have explained, their works were often linked with unpatented and often non-textual forms of entertainment. As claimed by Jane Moody,

> Romantic tragedy has remained the unquestioned cultural apex of late Georgian drama, and the closet the definitive location of authentic Romantic performance. Theatres, by contrast, are briskly dismissed as places of noise, dirt, spectacle and unbridled sexual commerce, where Shakespeare was being mangled into opera, and ignorant audiences preferred performing dogs to the pleasures of Sheridan and John Gay.[107]

As Moody's argument implies, a problem in the long-established critical dismissal of the Gothic drama is caused by the split between "high" and "low" cultural forms, which tends to edge out of their ranks many popular authors. The presence of numerous late nineteenth-century masterworks helped to enforce a teleological view of the whole century, which many considered only as an introduction to late Victorian and realistic drama: "[d]rama between Sheridan and Shaw is thus seen as a dismembered corpse, its poetic head in one place and its theatrical body residing in appropriately corrupted state elsewhere."[108]

Partial and ideological as it may appear to the less-prejudiced eyes of the present-day scholar, it was in fact the social and historiographical

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[107] J. Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London,* cit., pp. 2-3.

[108] Cox and Gamer, "Introduction", in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. x. On this, see also J. Bratton: "[p]re- and early twentieth-century accounts of melodrama and of the theatre which spawned it are obvious part of the Modernist project, the moment when the 1830s attempt to take possession of the stage for a particular class fraction came to fruition, with the important plays of Ibsen and all that stood for" (*New Readings in Theatre History*, cit., p. 12).

(re)constructions of the English legitimate stage in the early part of the century handed down by such historians of English drama as James Boaden and John Genest that became canonical. I suggest that the fact that unpatented drama remained uncharted for a very long time has effectively limited the examination of the cultural and aesthetic process which I call 'stage appropriation.' When the stage appropriated the *novel*, this exchange often took place away from the licensed theatres. When the novel appropriated the *stage*, it was prevalently those mixed forms regarded as non 'authentic' and illegitimate –the visual spectacles, the optical shows and the pantomimic extravaganzas- that were adopted.

The student of stage appropriations is challenged by the emergence of a tradition of strongly visual, anti-idealist theatre, often suspiciously corporeal -a theatre that physically sensationalised for the pleasures of the eye and constantly re-proposed a limited set of dramatic mechanisms, tropes and characters according to a rhetoric of proto mass reproduction. Ultimately, the study of stage appropriations challenges and at times collides against several controlling preconceptions about late eighteenth-century drama and fiction, at both the textual and transtextual levels.

A Chronology of the Gothic Drama: Its Limits of Demarcation

Most critics are interested in providing clear chronological limits to the Gothic drama. Although the import of such a taxonomic approach is debatable, nonetheless I believe that their considerations may be significant when trying to establish why and how certain thematic and formal aspects characterising classical, Elizabethan and early eighteenth-century theatre were re-elaborated – with significant shifts in emphasis– and came to express the late eighteenth-century new aesthetics and world view.

4.1 *The Mysterious Mother*

Since Bertrand Evans's 1947 study, Gothic drama is usually described as starting in 1768 with the private printing of Horace Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother* and ending with Percy Bysse Shelley's *The Cenci* in 1819. Both of these dramas are studies of unhealthy sexuality, power and uninhibited desire in claustrophobic domestic settings.[109] Incest and other typologies of forbidden sexuality amongst kinsmen often recur in Gothic narratives, both on stage and on the page, as we shall see in *The Romance of the Forest*, *Fontainville Forest* and, notably, *The Monk*. Consequently, they cannot be taken to be exclusive of Walpole's and Shelley's dramas, and ought to be read in fact as manifestations of the excess –not exclusively of erotic cast– typical of Gothic.

The Mysterious Mother –a blank-verse tragedy privately printed and circulated for many years– remained unperformed for over two centuries, thus

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[109] Baines and Burnes, "Introduction", cit., p. xi. The Gothic troping of incest is discussed in Ruth Perry, "Incest as the Meaning of the Gothic Novel", *The Eighteenth Century Theory and Interpretation*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (1998), pp. 261-278. As to the interest contemporary dramatists showed for abnormal states of mind, see Joanna Baillie's theory of the *Diable boitteux* as expressed in the *Introductory Discourse* to the first edition of *Plays on the Passions* (1798): "To lift up the roof of his dungeon, like the *Diable boitteux*, and look upon a criminal the night before he suffers, in his still hours of privacy, when all that disguise, which respect for the opinion of others, the strong motive by which even the lowest and wickedest of men still continue to be moved, would present an object to the mind of every person, not withheld from it by great timidity of character, more powerfully attractive than almost every other" (J. Baillie, *Plays on the Passions*, cit., p. 70).

proving an oft-underrated trendsetter.[110] However, the complex publishing history of *The Mysterious Mother* indicates that the play was relatively well-known. First printed in fifty copies at Walpole's private press at Strawberry Hill in 1768, it had subsequent reprints in 1770 (to be included in an edition of Walpole's works which never reached the market), and then in 1781 at the hands of the publisher James Dodsley in the attempt to forestall an anonymous piracy. Parts of the tragedy were published without authorisation on the *St. James's Chronicle* nos. 8-10 (15-17 November 1781), and *The Public Advertiser* (8 November 1783). The tragedy eventually appeared in pirated editions in Dublin in 1791 (by Archer, Jones and White, not suppressed by the author), in London in 1796 and posthumously in 1798 in the authorised five-volume edition of Walpole's *Works* edited by Mary Berry.[111] We may also note that the real number of manuscript copies made from the original presentation copies circulated among Walpole's friends remain to date unknown. The play is referred to in various occasions in Walpole's monumental *Correspondence*. Here the author recorded several comments and suggestions coming from his friends about the possible staging of the drama or its translation into French as well as annotations about the private readings he gave *sub rosa* in selected circles.

As a result, it is obvious that by the 1790s, the period here under scrutiny, despite restricted public circulation, the readership of the play had become reasonably wide. After the London publication in 1796, critiques of the play

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[110] The play was staged for the first time at the Citizen Theatre (Glasgow), 3 to 24 February, 2001. The *Guardian* theatre critic, Elizabeth Mahoney, gave a particularly biting review of this "unperformed stinker". Although she praised the performances of the actors (in particular, Angela Chadfield as the Countess and Estelle Morgan as Adelisa) and "the evocative set", Mahoney stigmatised "Walpole's stultifying blank verse" and suggested that his "target is not the mother and son's crime but clerical corruption", by highlighting the relationship of the Countess with her religious advisor (ironically named Benedict) over the incestuous one with her son. The review [online] is available from http://www.guardian.co.uk/Distribution/Redirect_Artifact/0,4678,0-432855,00html . Accessed on July 8 2005.

[111] See P. Sabor, " 'An Old Tragedy with a Disgusting Subject': Horace Walpole and *The Mysterious Mother*", in Paul Hyndland and Neil Sammells (eds.), *Writing and Censorship in Britain* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 92-96; Baines and Burnes, "Notes on the Texts", in Baines and Burns (eds.), *Five Romantic Plays*, cit., pp. xxx-xxxi; F. Frank, "Introduction", in H. Walpole, *'The Castle of Otranto. A Gothic Story' and 'The Mysterious Mother'*, edited by F. Frank (Peterborough: Broadview, 2003, pp. i and xv).

appeared also in German, making clear that "[f]ar from being the preserve of a handful of Walpole's friends, *The Mysterious Mother* had now made its way to European, as well as English, readers and reviewers."[112]

It is interesting to note that Ann Radcliffe intertextually insinuates the threat of incest –that arch-Gothic motif– by recurring to selected citations from Walpole's tragedy. This is quoted once as the epigraph to chapter 2 of *The Romance of the Forest*, and three times in *The Italian*, as an epigraph for the chapters 1, 4, and 9 in Book I, in positions of considerable paratextual relevance. Despite the complex bibliographical history of the drama, it is clear that Radcliffe must have deemed the general public sufficiently familiar with the themes and forms of *The Mysterious Mother* to include the play in the complex transtextual network she devised for her works. If the canonical aim of this intertextual web was to place Radcliffe's *oeuvre* in the strongly connoted tradition of the 'literature of genius',[113] as Emma Clery points out, the choice of a drama based on incest must also have operated as a form of metatextual criticism, with strong implications both on the formal and thematic level of Radcliffe's novels.

4.2 *Generic Ambiguities: The Countess of Narbonne as a Prototype of the Gothic characters*

Despite its limited circulation, we can affirm that *The Mysterious Mother* was to become a model of tragic form in the Romantic period, "the one really great tragedy that was written in the later eighteenth century," in George Haggerty's words.[114] Not only does the tragedy presents what were to become the surface stock features of the genre (the location is an ancient, desolate castle where the passion-driven, guilt-ridden characters are haunted by a mysterious past evil, kept ablaze by the plotting of a persecuting religious figure), but also its most

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[112] "Appendix A" in Frank's edition of H. Walpole, *The Mysterious Mother*, cit., p. 103.

[113] Clery, *Women's Gothic*, cit., pp. 54-59.

[114] Haggerty, Review of H. Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, edited by M. Gamer and H. Walpole, *'The Castle of Otranto' and 'The Mysterious Mother'*, edited by F. Frank, cit., p. 111.

sensational aspects, including the on-stage suicide of the female protagonist. As we read in the Advertisement for the 1798 edition of the play,

> Of the present tragedy we may boldly pronounce, that for nervous, simple, and pathetic language each appropriated to the several persons of the drama; for striking incidents; for address in conducting the plot; and for consistency of character uniformly preserved through the whole piece; it is equal, if not superior, to any play of the present century.[115]

In what is the first avowedly Gothic drama of the century, Walpole thus deployed all the superficial accoutrements of the genre −architectural, atmospheric, and actantial− which were given appropriately strong linguistic expression. The audience is made aware that these signs must in fact be theatrically framed, and perceived as the on-stage ostension of the darker horrors of the soul. The accumulation of atrocious horrors −with suggestive reticence Walpole speaks of a "disgusting" subject recorded with a pen dipped in "terror"[116]− reaches a climax with the madness of the leading character, the scarcely-repentant incestuous countess of the title who is simultaneously the monstrous mother, mistress and mother-in-law of her own son Edmund (V.i. 321-22).[117] In Haggerty's words, it is Walpole's "sexualised family" that becomes "a theatrical event".[118]

The poetics at the core of *The Mysterious Mother* challenges clear-cut divisions between vice and virtue, and questions the concept of poetic justice from a new perspective −all the more revolutionary when linked to the gender of its protagonist. It is not difficult to recognise in the Countess of Narbonne the traits

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[115] Advertisement from the Publishers, 1798 edition of *The Mysterious Mother*, quoted in Frank, "Introduction" in H. Walpole, *The Mysterious Mother*, cit., p. xxiv.

[116] Respectively H. Walpole, "Preface to the 1781 Edition" dated 21 April 1781, and "Prologue". *The Mysterious Mother*, in Baines and Burns (eds.), *Five Romantic Plays*, cit., p. 2 and p. 4. Similarly, in the "Postscript" to the play, the author condemns his subject as "horrid", ibid., p. 65.

[117] Walpole, *The Mysterious Mother*, cit., p. 59.

[118] G. Haggerty, "Psychodrama: Hypertheatricality and Sexual Excess on the Gothic Stage", *Theatre Research International* Vol. 28, No. 1 (2003), p. 3. In his closing speech, Edmund himself famously describes the tragic events of his life as a "theatre of monstrous guilt" (V.i). See Walpole, *The Mysterious Mother*, in Baines and Burns (eds.), *Five Romantic Plays*, cit., p. 62.

of the divided character of Gothic drama; what is important to note, though, is that in later narratives the Gothic divided characters are usually male.

Cox's claims that in the Gothic drama "women were either terrorized and mad, or stoic and indomitable, but they were always passive"[119] ought to be somewhat re-adjusted to include such characters as the Countess of Narbonne. Her aesthetic anomaly is denoted by an enduring will to sin, which Walpole strenuously upheld against all moral curbing. He was finally forced to yield to a tactic of containment through death –a final-act ploy that reassuringly enacted or, more appropriately, *mimed* a conventional masquerade of femininity. In her own paradoxical way, the Countess of Narbonne held the germs of a type of proactive femininity, which foreshadows another stock character of Gothic drama: the upbeat, and unfailingly virtuous, Gothic heroine on which Boaden's Adeline is modelled.

4.3 *The Taming of the Monster.*

Walpole's drama was shocking both thematically and stylistically, relying as it did on forbidden topics (mother and sibling incest) and sensationalism. In the *Preface* to the tragedy the author notes a hiatus with traditional Greek and French models (l. 1 and ll. 23-24), a breach further claimed in the "postscript":

> [The character of the Countess] is certainly new, and the cast of the whole play unlike any other that I am acquainted with. […] I was desirous of striking a little out of the common road, and to introduce some novelty to our stage. […] I have chalked out some paths that may be happily improved by better poets and men of more genius than I possess; and which may be introduced in subjects better calculated for action than the story which I have chosen.[120]

In view of this, it is commonly agreed that Walpole's new dramatic type - revolutionary in both content and form– challenged the traditional idea of tragedy, thus providing a clear point of departure. As claimed by Paul Baines and Edward

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[119] Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., p. 53.

[120] Walpole, *The Mysterious Mother*, in Baines and Burns (eds.), *Five Romantic Plays*, cit., pp. 67-68.

Burns, *The Mysterious Mother* "was ideally placed to initiate new trends in the theatre."[121]

If the early time limit of the Gothic drama is then more or less definite, no explicit marking can in fact be chosen to indicate the end of the vogue. However, it is usually accepted by most critics that

> Gothic drama –while it arises with Walpole and continues as a theatrical form throughout the nineteenth century– has two key historical moments, one during the 1790s and one around 1815. […] I contend that it is only during the period organised around this period [the fall of the Bastille and the fall of Napoleon] that the Gothic drama achieved its full power.[122]

Amongst those critics interested in providing a precise end to the stage Gothic, Paul Ranger indicates the year 1820. In his reading no ground-breaking new work was staged after that date, "although one or two interesting spectacles were put on as 'out of due time.' "[123] Similarly, Joseph Donohue's emphasis on the character's mental states also culminates around 1820,

> by which time Kemble and Mrs. Siddons had retired from the stage; Hazlitt had ended his career as a day-by-day reviewer; Kean had established himself as the foremost subjective actor of the day; and Macready had made his mark as the hero of Sheridan Knowles' *Virginius* – a drama so thoroughly Victorian, in spite of its early date, that to follow its tendencies would be to find no culmination short of the early plays of Shaw […].[124]

In general terms, however –and rightly so– critics are wary of naming prescribed and clear-cut chronological divides. This choice, which quite appropriately shifts back the framework of enquiry from chronology to epistemology, reflects the paradigm shift, which intervened in culture in the early decades of the nineteenth century.

During the 1820s domestic melodrama gradually took the place of the Gothic as the dominant form of serious popular drama. The strong moral qualities

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[121] Baines and Burns, "Introduction", ibid., p. xi.

[122] Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., p. 8.

[123] Ranger, *Terror and Pity Reign in Every Breast*, cit., p. v.

[124] Donohue, *Dramatic Character in the English Romantic Age*, cit., pp. 5-6.

of the genre –which celebrates the predictable triumph of innocent virtue and the redressing of evil and injustice– supports the restoration of conservative order in the face of revolutionary change and individual or collective revolt. For this reason Cox believes that Gothic drama and melodrama are profoundly different in as much as the first embraces sensationalism, the excessive and the extreme, whilst the latter reinforces the norm and the convention.[125]

The ideological and cultural reaction worked by melodrama aims at diverting the audience's sympathy and helps in transforming the passions experienced by the villain-hero –greed, lust and other 'excessive', antisocial, yet highly spectacular drives– into straightforward monstrosity.[126] Whilst the Gothic engages with strong individualism, unbound eroticism, revolt and sensationalism, domestic melodrama celebrates contained sexuality, order, family values and it represents human *hybris* as monstrosity. (The title of Richard Brinsley Peake's play, *Presumption; or The Fate of Frankenstein*, English Opera House 1823, would be a case in point.) While Gothic drama thus opened as a *generic* monster, its spectacular peak and only too predictable consequence –the arrival of monstrosity on stage– paradoxically signalled the decline of the genre into the apparently more tamed themes of melodrama.

In conclusion we may notice that in the context of the present enquiry, discussions about the chronology of the Gothic are useful in as much as they highlight how this literary form gave expression to the new sensibility and world view which emerged during the second half of the eighteenth century. The aesthetics of the supernatural, spectacular monstrosity and the spirit of revolt that

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[125] Ibid., pp. 41-42.

[126] The Gothic discourse of moral philosophy significantly challenges and subverts the Enlightenment one, in particular the theory of the 'unsocial passions' put forward in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759) by Adam Smith. Smith argued that, "[m]ankind, […], have a very strong sense of the injuries that are done to another. The villain, in a tragedy or romance, is as much the object of our indignation, as the hero is that of our sympathy and affection. We detest Iago as much as we esteem Othello; and delight as much in the punishment of the one, as we are grieved at the distress of the other" (quoted in "Appendix A: The Moral Writers", in Baillie, *Plays of the Passions*, cit., p. 403)

shape the dramatic Gothic signal a profound revision of the themes and forms of eighteenth-century dramaturgy as much as a gap with the domestic interest and strong conservative cast of the early nineteenth-century melodrama. Thus we may conclude that the investigation of the thematic and formal characteristics of the genre rather than its chronological mapping should guide the appreciation of the Gothic, which ought to be perceived as a discursive site rather than a chronologically constrained literary phase. For the purposes of the present enquiry into the stage appropriations of the Gothic it is important, finally, to point out that when the Gothic supposedly became outmoded on the stage it did not actually fade away. As the final chapter of this works points out,[127] Gothic dramas were refashioned as they relocated on to the pages of such trade Gothic publications as chapbooks, miscellanies and other cheap popular booklets.

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[127] See "Concluding Notes on the Re-mediations of the Gothic Drama", p. 283.

The Gothic Drama. A Survey of Criticism

Among the historians of the English Gothic drama, Jeffrey Cox has provided the scholar of the period with the most comprehensive taxonomy of study, imparting much-needed historical as well as theoretical import to Gothic drama criticism. According to the theatre historian, two main trends of analysis may be identified: the atmospheric, and the thematic. The first approach investigates the signifiers of the Gothic, its so-called appurtenances. This apparatus of stock settings, characters and situations -Paula Backscheider calls them the "cultural icons"[128] of the genre- may be systematised in a series of recurring patterns that were clearly recognisable and already codified at the end of the eighteenth century.

Satiric and often ideologically-biased recipes of the motifs and styles to (re)produce and manufacture Gothic novels became common in the late 1790s.[129] The tiles of many of such attacks, for instance "The Terrorist System of Novel Writing" (1797) and "Terrorist Novel Writing" (1798), explicitly evoked aesthetic categories as well as historical events in their reference to the term *terror*, which through its paratextual spreading works as a form of semiotic and semantic echo of then current anxieties. One such catalogue was also contained in Samuel Taylor Coleridge's famous critique of Maturin's *Bertram*:

> Now we have only to combine the bloated style an peculiar rhythm of Harvey […] with the strained thoughts, the figurative metaphysics and solemn epigrams of Young on the one hand; and the loaded sensibility, the minute detail […] of Richardson on the other hand; and then to add the horrific incidents, and mysterious villains […] – to add the ruined castles, the dungeons, the trap-doors, the skeletons, the flesh-and-blood ghosts, and the

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[128] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 154. For a far from exhaustive catalogue of the main Gothic motifs, see Tracy, *The Gothic Novel 1790*-183, cit. A recent guide book to the Gothic invites the student of the genre to think of its traditional key motifs and recurrent figures in a progress of diachronic evolution. The only traditional theme included the editors is "The Haunted Castle", a theme which is now flanked by such new topics as "Hallucination and Narcotics" and "The History of Abuse". See D. Punter and G. Byron (eds.), *The Gothic* (London: Blackwell, 2004). Interestingly, no examples referring to Gothic drama and theatre are included in the key texts selected in *The Gothic*.

[129] Wright, "Haunted Britain in the 1790s", cit.

perpetual moonshine of a modern author [...] – and as the compound of these ingredients duly mixed, you will recognize the so called *German* Drama.[130]

Starting from Coleridge's list of mass-market appurtenances, Jeffrey Cox maintains that we can analyse the Gothic plays as a well-identified and identifiable body of drama.

> Such definitions [i.e. the atmospheric approach] discover the Gothic in its settings, stock characters, and conventionalised situations; in the works of Montague Summers [*The Gothic Quest*, 1938] and Eino Railo [*The Haunted Castle*, 1927], for example, we are offered massive compendia of Gothic devices. At its most limited such an approach can produce merely a list of atmospherics, but other studies, as Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* [1980], emphasize the recurrence of motifs in order to understand the way they structure a comprehensible literary world, virtually a modern, popular myth. When these conventions are taken seriously for themselves, this approach offers a semiotics of the Gothic as a closed and self-coherent system of atmospheric signs.[131]

The second strategy suggested by Cox to catalogue the Gothic is more concerned with the themes of the genre, the signified behind the appurtenances. Cox affirms that Gothic writing attempts to embody those extreme features of the psyche (desires/psychological themes), the social order (politics/political themes), or the cosmos (the numinous/supernatural themes) that are "least susceptible to representation and least reliable to be controlled and assimilated."[132] In his opinion, the Gothic emerges any time the great tradition of the realistic novel -no longer able to express the spirit of the age- attempts to thematize and represent in coherent patterns those very features that defy control. By thematizing those aspects of the real that resist containment within the historical or the social tradition, the Gothic explores "the Absolute and the Chaos", making emotional

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[130] Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, cit., pp. 334-35. In his turn, Coleridge apparently decried whilst in fact appropriating and re-proposing the mass-market markers of Gothic writing in "Christabel" (1797-1800), which artfully exploits and concurrently subverts the codified signifiers of the form. See, among the discussions of Coleridge's Gothic-influenced verse narratives, Miles, *Gothic Writing,* cit., pp. 177-182. For a reading of Coleridge's reviews of characterization, plot and stimulation effects in *The Monk*, *The Italian* and Mary Robinson's *Hubert de Sevrac* (reviews which appeared on the *Critical Review*, February 1797-August 1798), see Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit., pp. 99-103.

[131] Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., p. 6.

[132] Ibid., p. 7. Devendra Varma was the first critic to maintain that "the Gothic novels arouse out of the quest for the numinous. They are characterized by the awestruck apprehension of Divine immanence penetrating diurnal reality" (*The Gothic Flame: Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England: Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration and Residuary Influences*, London: Arthur Baker, 1957, p. 211).

and intellectual sense of otherwise disrupting and unsettling historical, political and social events.[133]

Cox does not deny that the Gothic drama shares with the novel "the same thematics of the extreme in its exploration of the supernatural, the psychological, and the political".[134] He does, however, contend that it had to negotiate with three categories that ought to be perceived as characterising contemporary theatre practice. These were the far-reaching morphological changes in the theatres (institutional aspect), the shifting hierarchy of dramatic forms (generic issue), and finally the dramatically disrupted ideological context of production and reception, connected with the social nature of the drama (social subtext). As a consequence, "[a]s an immensely successful theatrical form, [the Gothic drama] provides us with a way of glimpsing how a number of key social and cultural concerns of the day were represented in a popular art form."[135]

Not surprisingly for a genre that reached its peak in the years immediately after the French Revolution, the struggle against ancient institutions and the powers of the past are characteristics of Gothic. Gothic signifiers and signified reflect the anxieties of the eighteenth-century *fin-de-siècle*: social and historical episodes are given analogies at either the textual or the tropological level. The enclosed, prison-like space dominated by an evil figure of power –be it the topology of the castle, convent, sepulchre or even forest– is the staple scene of murderous events. These architectural and topographical signs embodied the idea of a crumbling, constricting past that still tried to project its influence not only on the present but also the future. Past deeds are crucially irrevocable and "ruins act as [their] symbol".[136]

The dramatic trajectory of liberation of /from enclosed spaces -a political statement in itself- is a recurrent moment in the Gothic plot, particularly in the

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[133] Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., p. 6. See also Taylor, *The French Revolution and the London Stage*, cit.
[134] Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., p. 6.
[135] Cox, "Reanimating Gothic Drama", cit., p. 109.
[136] Wilson Knight, "The Gothic Play", cit., p. 4.

1790s.[137] The conventional happy ending (which derived from the romance formula) took on a symbolic value as it came to stand for a movement towards ritualistic rebirth, liberation, and a free future –along the lines of Northrop Frye's spring archetype- which often took place in an open natural setting.[138] The flight from closed to open spaces (and, metaphorically, from the past to the future) may be seen as one of the backbones of the genre. In this sense, the Gothic plays are generically mixed as they combine three tiers of elements: romance (the topographical as well as ideological movement from confinement to liberation), comedy (the final union of the lovers which implies the redressing of past crimes and the reordering of society), and tragedy (the villain-hero's subtext).

Whereas the Gothic novels acknowledge the existence of evil, which is even allowed to triumph in the most radical forms of Gothic such as *The Monk*, in the Gothic drama the unfailing happy conclusions were meant to reassure the audiences. The euphoric final scene often reinstated the rightful powers, provided poetic justice and froze the characters in a concluding tableau "that fixe[d] relationships in an orderly world."[139] As Backscheider has suggested,

> [i]n contrast to the novel, the gothic drama represents a world that can be suspected of allowing hideous suffering and unrequited virtuous and villainous acts but finally reassures audiences that a benign order infuses every aspect of the universe and, incidentally, provides the poetic justice that consumers of popular literature demanded. […] Most important, in almost every case, the heroine marries the brave young hero, the poor are given good employment, and long-suffering good servants are rewarded; Lewis's formula holds, and every part of the audience is gratified.[140]

In line with the theory that historical events and figures found a counterpart in the Gothic, David Worrall maintains that Gothic dramas were a covert comment on the contemporary British political situation. These dramas, he suggests, were re-workings of the foreign Jacobin Terror, which were re-proposed

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[137] Taylor, *The French Revolution and the London Stage*, cit., p. 94.

[138] N. Frye. *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). See the application of Mona Ozouf's analysis of revolutionary space (*Festivals and the French Revolution*, transl. Alan Sheridan, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988) to the dramatic Gothic in Cox, "Introduction", *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., pp. 20-22.

[139] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 180.

[140] Ibid.

under the guise of the Pittite Terror repressing domestic political radicalism in the 1790s. The generic fluidity typical of the Gothic, which "encompassed high seriousness and low comedy,"[141] is perceived by Worrall as a particular strength of the genre, as aptly illustrated by the mixed form of the "political supernatural", a body of folk operas and extravaganzas which included Lewis's operatic spectacle *One O' Clock, or the Knight and the Wood Demon* (Drury Lane, 1 April 1807). According to Worrall, the folksy register of the operatic dramas gave dramatic representation to the anxieties "figured within the psyche of contemporary political mentalities," and demonstrated that "even theatrically extravagant spectaculars could be politically conscious."[142]

The ability of Gothic to be "a vehicle of political culture"[143] is proven by the recurrent presence of a servant or a rustic, a figure endowed with a positive function that seems to propose a new "democratic ethos of natural equality."[144] Biological experiments at the end of the century offered objective corroboration for the theory of sensibility –a democratic mode of perception and feeling addressed in many treaties of the age, starting from Burke's philosophical *Enquiry*. The egalitarian potential of feeling –a faculty that science now proved belonged to all human beings- shaped the cultural discourse of the age and invested also Gothic in its concern with class politics. For instance, Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*, a play which reflects the late 1790s move towards supernatural spectacularism, is remarkable for the inclusion of the black characters, Saib and Hassan, who openly "express anti-colonialist sentiments" and are endowed with "tragic sensibility."[145] Lewis's apparent challenge to current

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141 Worrall, "The Political Culture of Gothic Drama", cit., p. 96.

142 Ibid., p. 97 and p. 98.

143 Ibid., p. 97.

144 J. Cox, "Romantic Drama and the French Revolution". In Keith Hanley and Raman Selden (eds.), *Revolution and English Romanticism. Politics and Rhetoric* (Hemel Hempstead (Herts.)-New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf-St. Martin's Press, 1990), p. 250.

145 Ibid. p. 99.

dramatic conventions illustrates how generically mixed forms of successful entertainment could turn into "an unexpected vehicle for liberal radicalism."[146]

Paula Backscheider's *Spectacular Politics* offers a critical approach similar to the one endorsed by Worrall Her theory of literature in society examines Gothic writing as a hegemonic apparatus and an artistic form that testifies to the artists' active participation in society. *Spectacular Politics* investigates how literature functions in times of social upheaval by being invested with the ideological function of strengthening both the political and the civic *status quo*. The relationships between the dominant ideology and popular cultural forms, Backscheider maintains, may be better assessed through mass culture texts, which have the greatest possibility of reconfiguring society by force of their sheer popularity.

Gothic drama was the form that best "exercised, released, and contained the anxieties of the time, the fantasies and the fears of the age."[147] In this sense, Backscheider's conceptualisation reminds me of the model of *energia* offered by Stephen Greenblatt's theory of Renaissance drama. According to Greenblatt, "we identify *energia* only indirectly, by its effects." Greenblatt continues,

> it is manifested in the capacity of certain verbal, aural, and visual traces to produce, shape and organize collective physical and mental experiences. Hence it is associated with repeatable forms of pleasure and interest, with the capacity to arouse disquiet, pain, fear, the beating of the heart, pity, laughter, tension, relief, wonder.[148]

Moving along the lines of Greenblatt's *energeia*, I suggest that the Gothic mode(l) elicited, contained and finally deflected popular anxieties. It addressed a large number of men and women of different background and classes, who were in turn frightened and exalted by their experience -ultimately socially cowed and *energised* by its use and perusal.[149]

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[146] Ibid.

[147] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, p. 151.

[148] S. Greenblatt, *Shakespearian Negotiations*, cit., p. 6.

[149] The interaction between the members of the audience and the audience-stage interaction is an important field of interest for theatre semioticians. See K. Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, cit., M. de

The Gothic cultural form suited the times as it challenged the limits of the predictable, the natural, and the possible in an age of widespread insecurity and uncertainty. The pleasures of repetition given by formula narratives transformed a disquieting experience into a contained and containable event. As Backscheider pointedly maintains, Gothic may be defined as a "theatre of identification"[150] which bombarded the senses. Tragic and thrilling episodes –suggestive for their immediacy- were juxtaposed to disillusioning devices such as characters providing comic relief or droll epilogues, which worked as in a *Verfremdungseffekt* to reassure the audience of the fictionality of the events. Finally, the formulaic plots of the dramas assured poetic justice and the comforting re-establishment of order. The Gothic performances socialized the spectators and heightened their sense of communion, in a participatory ritual, which was mirrored in and amplified by the enlarged structure of the end-of-the century theatres.

Marinis, "Dramaturgy of the Spectator", cit., S. Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, cit. This aspect is discussed in detail in the introductory section of the thesis.

[150] Ibid., p. 229.

SECOND PART

No translation would be possible if in its ultimate essence it strove for likeness to the original. For in its afterlife – which would not be called that if it were not a transformation and a renewal of something living – the original undergoes a change.

Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations**

An Evening at the Theatre in the 1790s: the Languages of the Stage and the Page.

The variety of performances available to late eighteenth-century theatre-goers -a programme recently defined as a "whole show"[1]- may be compared to the multiplicity and diversity offered by television on any given evening as viewers are bombarded in incoherent succession by multiple sensory inputs -news, variety shows, comic films dramas and soaps, games, information, reality shows, and music- which they attend to in their entirety or, more often, in parts. It is here tempting to draw a preliminary analogy with the Gothic narrative method, and particularly with the generic "kleptomania"[2] devised by Ann Radcliffe, which combined hierarchically diverse elements such as lyrical poetry, landscape descriptions, dramas, and components of mystery narrative. In similar fashion, in its innovative mixture of Shakespearian allusions and landscape art, popular airs and stage technology, antiquarianism and music, the Gothic dramatic evening activated different modes of literacy, perceived and digested by the public in their entirety or partially, but still with unchanging relish. This eclecticism is reconstructed in the next pages through the tables of Boaden's intertheatricality (pp. 119-134), which should be constantly referred to whilst reading the following reconstruction.[3]

An evening at the theatre in the late eighteenth-century began around six and, depending on the day's program, ended four or five hours later. Playgoers could choose to sit through the whole program; late-comers, paying half-price

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[1]*Epigraph. W. Benjamin, *Illuminations* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 73.

[1] G. W. Stone (ed.). *The Stage and the Page: London's 'Whole Show' in the Eighteenth-Century Theatre*, (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1981). See also J. Donohue, "The Theatre of the 1790s", *Theatre in the Age of Kean*, cit., pp. 8-30 and the essential reconstruction by Jeffrey Cox, "Spots of Time: The Structure of the Dramatic Evening in the Theatre of Romanticism" (*Texas Studies in Literature and Language,* Vol. 41, No. 4 (1999), pp. 403-25).

[2] Clery, *Women's Gothic*, cit., p. 57.

[3] For a detailed discussion of my theory of intertheatricality and infratheatricality, see the following sub-section of this work.

tickets, could enter after the third act, when they would swarm in noisily, breaking the dramatic illusion. This possibility complicates somewhat the configuration of reception of the theatrical event and makes us reflect further on the composite nature of spectatorship at the time. For instance, the practice of admitting 'half price' spectators had the effect of attracting a new typology of play-goers whose presence, expectation and commercial potential any savvy playwright ought to bear in mind. As recalled by Thomas Dibdin:

> Half-price is a very proper privilege for those whose time do not afford them the opportunity of visiting the theatre earlier; but it is often the bane of an author, on the first night of a five act play. The newcomers know nothing of the foregone part of the drama; and having no context with which to connect allusions in the fourth of fifth act, are apt to damn, without consideration, that which they are no judges of [...].[4]

Bearing this in mind, therefore, it would be tempting to speak of not one, but several audiences, for whom the Gothic play –and its theatrical packaging- may have represented the whole just as likely as a part of a series of entertainments enjoyed in the course of one fashionable evening. Quite pointedly, Jacky Bratton also notes that in case of the Haymarket playgoer, "the price of the ticket was not important" and often "many audience members entered at will on a season ticket."[5] From a business prospective, billing flexibility established a new economic discourse of spectacle in which the spectator became "the self-conscious purchaser of cultural goods and visual pleasure."[6]

Allowing a late entry to performances in progress signified that plays, especially tragedies, were conceived as being divided into segments. A play was not experienced exclusively as an organic whole, building to an ending which satisfied the audience's sense of poetic justice, but as a series of segments. These might be enjoyed individually either as "spectacles" -for their content of songs, music, dancing, and pageantry- or for the emotionally-charged and codified

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[4] Document no. 100, Thomas Dibdin, "The significance of the half-price audience, 1800", in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit., p. 133.

[5] Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, cit. p. 47.

[6] Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London*, cit., p. 154.

performance of the actors in the climatic scenes. Since plots were quite predictable in terms of their story, these single segments could be enjoyed by spectators whose familiarity with similar plays (*intertextual* and *intertheatrical* knowledge) and grasp of the situational context allowed them to follow and often anticipate the action.

A typical evening at the theatre at the end of the eighteenth century began with a musical performance as an opening, followed by a prologue and more music, then by a mainpiece in five acts, each one separated by intervals of approximately seven minutes during which dances, imitations, and comic monologues (*entr'actes*) were performed. Next came a brief recitation in verse, spoken by all the characters that had appeared on stage, in which the moral of the play (or tag*)* was emphasized; an epilogue followed by a shorter play, called an afterpiece*,* divided into two acts, usually of a different genre than the mainpiece and often preceded by another prologue.[7] For example, if the five-act play had been a drama, then the audience could expect to conclude the evening with a comic performance. The similarity with the structure of some Gothic novels is immediately clear. For instance, in *The Monk* Lewis skilfully juxtaposed episodes of horror, comedy and pathos. This varied arrangement as typified by the scenes set in Antonia's apartment after her mother's death in which Elvira's superstitious fears are put in contrast with the girl's sad reflections on her departed mother and Antonio's sensual passions.[8]

Theatrical repertoires confirm this reconstruction. For instance, on November 18th, 1794 Covent Garden put on stage a double bill with Boaden's Gothic adaptation *Fontainville Forest* and the musical afterpiece, *Hercules and Omphale* composed by James Byrne. This latter production, described by *The London Stage* as a ballet "the most magnificent exhibited on the English stage for

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[7] Cox and Gamer, "Introduction", in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit.

[8] Lewis, *The Monk*, vol. III, ch. ii.

many years"[9] opened that night with a grand display of mythological characters, processions and even on-stage horses. Expectations must have run high enough concerning the potentiality of these two shows as the Covent Garden management chose to run them against one of Drury Lane's guaranteed successes, *Othello*, regularly revived since 1785 with John Philip Kemble acting the Moor to Sarah Siddons's Desdemona.[10]

Theatrical bills also included pantomimes, usually harlequinades. On April, 26th 1794 *Harlequin and Faustus, or The Devil will have his own* appeared as an afterpiece with *Fontainville Forest*. On January, 8th 1796 Boaden's adaptation was coupled with another harlequin show, John O'Keeffe's *Merry Sherwood; or, Harlequin Forester*. This entertainment contemplated both "pantomimic" and "vocal characters" (as we read in the advertisement), thus being similar to a speaking pantomime, a type of mime and opera pastiche which was increasingly popular in this period. Interestingly, theatre historian Linda Troost specifies that O'Keeffe's pantomime had striking political undertones, which would not be missed by the middle-class audience. The final Grand Scene representing "The Triumph of Archery" through the victory of Robin Hood in fact staged the triumph of England over the French.[11] Contemporary theatrical repertoire thus attests that, far from being escapist shows, entertainments could in fact be rich of topical allusions, which magnificently appropriated for the stage –often in disguised fashion- contemporary political or historical events.

Reading theatre playbills may also give us an idea of the type of decoding activity and competence expected of the contemporary audience, a fact that bears

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[9] Charles Beecher Hogan (ed.), Vol. 3, pt. 5, *1776-1800* of William van Lennep … [*et al.*] (eds.), *The London Stage, 1660-1800. A Calendar of Plays, Entertainment & Afterpieces, together with casts, box-receipts and contemporary comment, compiled from the playbills, newspaper and theatrical diaries of the period.* With an introduction, by Benn Ross Schneider Jr.; foreword by George Winchster Stone Jr. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968), p. 1705.

[10] A description of a contemporary American performance of Hercules and Omphale confirms the grandiosity of the production. See Lynn Matluck Brooks, "A Decade of Brilliance: Dance Theatre in Late-Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia", *Dance Chronicle*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (1989), pp. 358-59.

[11] Linda V. Troost, "Robin Hood Musical in Eighteenth-century London", In Thomas G. Hahan (ed.), *Robin Hood in Popular Culture. Violence, Transgression, and Justice* (D.S. Brewer: Cambridge, 2000), p. 263.

direct influence on my theory of stage appropriations.[12] The playbill I discussed in Chapter I (Fig. 1) illustrates precisely the point I am making here. In the 'whole show' offered by Covent Garden on December 9th, 1816 Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* shares the stage with a musical drama called *The Slave*, and the popular Oriental Gothic of *Bluebeard*. We have already noticed that the leading men of the company would change character as well, moving from King John to Brutus. We can conclude that in a typical evening at the theatre tragedy and farce, recitation and song alternated, thereby guaranteeing a constant income to the managers.

The two chronological watersheds signalled by the opening and closing of the curtain enclosed a multiform proposal, in constant renewal, influenced and determined by the bills of other theatres, as well as by important events of the day. This latter social text bears witness to the immediacy of the theatrical response to contemporary issues. Historical events were often immediately and spectacularly transported to the stage, capitalizing on the emotional response of the audience.[13] As Jeffrey Cox has rightly pointed out, "plays on a multiple bill took on aspects of the other dramatic forms surrounding them."[14] In actuality, the changing nature of the theatrical public must provide a further explanation. The theatre in the 1790s reflected mood and societal changes. Thus generic mobility and the constant novelty of the shows may be also explained in terms of the need to cater for audiences whose tastes and identity were not homogeneous and certain. The effects of the volatility of the audiences have been highlighted by Victor Emeljanow:

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[12] See Moody's description of contemporary playbills as "miniature review[s], [...] and dramatic manifesto[s], ingeniously synthesising fact and puff, jokes and information," *Illegitimate Theatre in London*, cit., p. 154 *et* foll. A spectator-oriented innovative approach to reading theatre playbills is also offered in Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, cit., pp. 36-66. Bennett has articulated the role of the playbills in connection with audience activity as follows: "Certainly the amount of information and the signposts a programme presents acts as a significant stimuli to the audience's decoding activity prior to any presentation of a fictional on-stage world" (*Theatre Audiences*, cit., p. 138).

[13] For instance, see the discussion of the theatre responses to the Battle of Trafalgar (25 October 1805). The first of these, an interlude entitled *Nelson's Glory* by Thomas Dibdin, appeared only four days later. Taylor, *The French Revolution and the English Stage*, cit., pp. 183-87.

[14] J. Cox, "Spots of Time", cit., p. 407.

> If the fashionable and expensive boxes were empty, the pit and galleries needed to be filled and this could best be achieved by, on the one hand, constant changes in repertoire, and, on the other, by the variety of different attractions within any given performance, which matched the mobility and heterogeneous nature of the spectators (in which equation the addition of a new audience component at 'half price' was a significant complication).[15]

What I hope to have shown is that the dynamic mixing of genres and forms implied that the perception of tragedy was filtered through pantomime; comedy was interpolated with dramatic monologues, while a tragic ballad could follow a historical procession with horses and knights –according to an ambiguous, yet apparently effective "curious mixture of *utile* and *dulce.*"[16]. Play texts were manipulated, broken into fragments and reassembled according to the needs of the evening, and most particularly, according to the tastes of the spectators, especially those crowding the pit and the gallery, who brought far greater profits to the theatres than did the more refined spectators in the boxes.

1.1   A Mesh of Buried Connections: Introductory Notes on the Inter-theatrical and the Infra-theatrical.

A the site of generic and cultural mongrelization, the late Georgian stage was born of the fruitful interaction of high and low cultural forms, poetic drama on the one hand, and commercial entrepreneurship and spectacle on the other. The mobility in the billing of performances faithfully reflected the emotional mobility intrinsic in the plays themselves and the emotional mobility required of (and by) the spectators. Thus, it is evident that for most members of the audience, the experience of the Gothic performance was not an autonomous one. Rather, it was conditioned by the immediate theatrical context of the evening and by what was

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[15] V. Emeljanow, "Introduction", in Section III, "Repertoire, Taste and Audiences", Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre*, cit., p. 112.

[16] Anonymous review of T. Dibdin, *Harlequin and Humpo; or, Columbine by Candlelight*. *The Times* No. 8795 (28 December 1812, p. 3) in "Appendix: Contemporary Reviews and Commentary", Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 383.

playing at the other theatres –what I call the *infra- theatrical* and *inter-theatrical* billing- according to a form of theatre intertextuality that I call *intertheatricality*.[17]

In my theory, the term "infra-theatrical" indicates the multiple items offered on the one bill in one night at the *one theatre* (vertical or synchronic view). Similarly, "intertheatrical" indicates the multiple items simultaneously on offer on the various bills at the *various theatres* –patented and unpatented– in the one night or during a certain span of time (horizontal or diachronic view). To paraphrase Jacky Bratton, who has devoted important pages to a definition of intertheatricality, every performance –verbal and non-verbal, dramatic and spectacular– is a signifier, "which, like all signifiers, has a meaning only as part of a system of relationships"[18]. I would further contend that due to the nature of the late eighteenth-century theatre experience –an experience which was individual as well as shared and communal- it may be more apt to speak of multiple and variable *intertheatricalities* rather than one form of monolithic intertheatricality.

As this suggests, seeing two (or more) different shows on the same night or the same play mounted at two (or more) different venues –legitimate and illegitimate- would necessarily affect the individual reception. Reviving a well-established play immediately before the production of a new play by the same author was another fairly common practice. In fact, some authors strived to construct new characters based on the interpretations the star actors had given in other plays. Acting, we may assume, was inter-textual in the sense that it borrowed from techniques used in the context of one given performance as well as at the infra-theatrical and inter-theatrical levels (respectively, *infra-playfulness* and *inter-playfulness*).[19] As recorded by Boaden

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[17] The definitions *infra-theatrical* and *inter-theatrical*, hence *intertheatricality*, have been elaborated by the author. Jacky Bratton's conceptualization of intertheatricality as the "theorisation of the transactions in the theatre" (*New Readings in Theatre History*, cit., p. 36) slightly re-focuses my definition by giving attention to playbills.

[18] Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, cit., pp. 39-40.

[19] For "inter-playfulness" see Pavis, *A Dictiornary of Theatre*, cit. Entry "Play and Counterplay". The term *infra-playfulness* is a coinage of the author based on inter-playfulness.

The revival of *The Count of Narbonne* at Drury Lane Theatre was the precursor of a new tragedy by Captain Jephson, called *Julia*. The exertions of Mrs. Siddons and her brother in the former play had suggested to the ingenious author a second display of her powerful talent, in which the passions should be touched in a deeper and more alarming key […]..[20]

Managers and actors were perfectly aware of this interplay, which was striven after and carefully invested in, as attested by the famous –and well-publicised– theatrical combats between leading actors and actresses over the interpretation of the same role in two competing houses at the same time (e.g. Henderson vs. Kemble, Siddons vs. Crawford) that spice up thespian anecdotes.

In the context of stage appropriations, intertheatricality brings into sharp focus the spectators' horizon of expectations and their encyclopedic knowledge, which *may* or *may not* have been mediated. The knowing spectator *possibly* moved between 'source texts' and 'adaptations', hypertexts and hypotexts –in an intersemiotic transferral which often implied the overturning of generic and cultural hierarchies. This was precisely the case of *The Monk*, cunningly abridged and transformed by Charles Farley into the Grand Ballet entitled *Raymond and Agnes* (Covent Garden, 1797). With great sense of timing, *Raymond and Agnes* went on stage as the reviewers ferociously attacked *The Monk* for diablerie, pornography, and blasphemy -probably benefiting in some form from the éclat and uproar surrounding its hypotext. In the case of appropriation, the audiences' intertheatrical re-adjusting of a performance is thus complemented by its intertextual re-positioning, which may have accompanied and at times even guided the reception of the show, directly informing the different levels of theatrical interaction.

As I have argued, the "evening at the theatre" may be visualized as a system or combination of signs. Its dynamic dimension means that each sign (or cultural fragment) stands in a dynamic relation to the signs preceding and following it. From a semiotic point of view, it is recognized that every sign has meaning only by virtue of its place in the sign system. The "Gothic evening at the theatre" may

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[20] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons*, cit., p. 362.

thus be imagined as a complex combination of signs –a complex theatrical signifier for a complex theatrical signified. Finally, we may maintain that infra-theatricality and inter-theatricality powerfully invest the architext of both source and target text as well as the metatext, significantly informing generic coding and textual perception. They contribute to returning to theatre history a new inter-textual and extra-textual dimension -what I call the *ultra-textual* freedom of the stage- able to transcend the limits of textuality.

1.2 James Boaden's stage-to-page adaptations. A Case Study of Gothic Inter-theatricality in the 1790s.

The following pages attempt a reconstruction of late eighteenth-century intertheatricality by focusing on the three Gothic adaptations by James Boaden that were staged in the 1790s. They are *Fontainville Forest* (Covent Garden, 1794), *The Italian Monk* (Haymarket Theatre, 1797), and *Aurelio and Miranda* (Drury Lane, 1799). The three adaptations are particularly relevant because they were produced at the three Theatre Royals. Thus an analysis of their intertheatrical positioning provides us with a reliable body of evidence as far as the repertoire of the patented theatres goes. Where relevant, inter-theatricality has been recorded in the last column to the right of the tables. The acronyms CG and DL respectively stand for Drury Lane Theatre and Covent Garden Theatre.

The following tables illustrating the intertheatricality of Boaden's dramas result from the comparison of the information enclosed in Vol. 3, pt. 5, *1776-1800* of *The London Stag*e with the entries for the decade 1790-1799 in John Genest's *Some Account of the London Stage*[21] -the two documents I referred to for my reconstruction of what I call 'the Gothic evening'. I matched up the information contained in the above repositories to the Theatrical Register published monthly in *Gentleman's Magazine.* The inevitable limits of any such a reconstruction are apparent. Despite their attempt at comprehensiveness, these documents list very

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[21] Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage*, cit.

few of the performances staged beyond the patent houses. This limitation is particularly restricting if we look at a period, such as the one here under scrutiny, when illegitimate theatre was deeply challenging the monopolistic structures. Researchers are confronted by an often fragmentary body of evidence that corrupts and strongly limits our perception of contemporary *real* intertheatricality −as opposed to its *select* transmission and construction.

A further methodological issued is raised by censorship. In 1737 Robert Walpole's Licensing Act marked the enforcement of dramatic censorship through the figure of the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays. The Licensing Act established that before bringing a work on any patented stage, fourteen days before performance every playwright had to submit for approval a manuscript copy of his work. Thus, the stage became subject to prior (textual) censorship, and the plays had to be licensed before being performed. Such uncomfortable topics as, for instance, religion, domestic or foreign politics, gender relations or issues of moral conduct would be habitually deemed unfit for representation. This condition was particularly evident in times such as the 1790s when contemporary allusions might touch on sensitive issues. Indeed, as Tracy Davis has succinctly summarized, "Censorship was sufficiently prevalent by 1793 that almost all political comment was excluded from the drama."[22] The press, we may notice in passing, was not subject to the same institutional control, and this explains why published scripts or manuscripts often differed from later printed version of the same drama.

Recent histories of the unpatented theatre in London have, however, pointed out that non-scripted texts often permitted −albeit obliquely- a certain degree of political licence, particularly during times of political and social ferment.[23] Furthermore, as we have previously seen, as far as modern theatre is concerned the concept of 'text' itself −with the ensuing value judgements that accompanied it

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[22] J. Cox, "Romantic Drama and the French Revolution", cit., p. 245.

[23] Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London,* cit., p. 225. On transgression in melodrama, see also ibid., p. 106 *et* foll.

until at least the latter half of the previous century- is to be significantly questioned as it implies fixity and a permanence which do not belong to the performative.

I suggest that the holistic reappraisal of Gothic inter-theatricality might be achieved if the evidence given by traditional sources such as Genest or *The London Stage* may merge with other archival evidence and documents, including journalism, thespian biographies, and playbills. Various forms of iconographic testimonies (particularly, theatre iconology) may be also valuable means to reconstruct the illusive performative, as I have tried to show in the course of the present enquiry. Finally, infra-theatricality may also testify how contemporary theatre practitioners successfully managed to negotiate and circumvent governmental censorship.

Date	Theatre	Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts	
25 March 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*	Opening night. With new scenes and dresses.	*The Poor Soldier*	A Comic opera in two acts. Opened 1 October 1793					£263 19s. 6d.	
27 March 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Comus*	Opened 29 October 1793	Singing				£311 14s 6d	
29 March 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Hartford Bridge; or, The Skirt of the Camp*	Opened on first night of 1793-94 season	Dancing				£297 17s	Benefit for the Author
1 April 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*The Highland Reel*	A musical romance. Opened 10 October 1793					£295 9s 6d	
3 April 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Harlequin and Faustus; or, The Devil will have his Own*	1793 Christmas Pantomime					£276 7s	

Date	Theatre	Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts	
5 April 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*The Irishman in London*	Formerly, appeared along with *The Castle of Andalusia* (both opened on 25 September 1793)					£294 19s 6d	Benefit for the Author
10 April 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Netley Abbey*	Operatic farce by William Pearce. Opening night					£399 5s 6d	DL *Redemption: A Sacred Oratorio selected from the Great and Favourite Works of Handel*
22 April 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Netley Abbey*						£175 14s 6d	DL: *Macbeth*

Date	Theatre	Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts	
26 April 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Harlequin and Faustus; or, The Devil will have his Own*	Opened on 19 December 1793					£138 10s	Benefit for the Author. DL: *The Distress'd Mother* and *No Song No Supper* (opening night)
1 May 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*British Fortitude and Hibernian Friendship; or, An Escape from France*	Opened on 29 April 1794	*Netley Abbey*				£172 14s	DL: *King Henry VIII* (Palmer), opening night
3 May	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*British Fortitude and Hibernian Friendship; or, An Escape from France*		*Netley Abbey*				£142 4s	DL: *The Siege of Belgrade* and *The Miller of Mansfield* (opening night)

Date	Theatre	Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts	
2 June 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Annette and Lubin*	Opened on 13 November 1793	*The Sicilian Romance; or, The Apparition of the Cliffs*	Henry Siddons's free adaptation of Ann Radcliffe's novel. Opened on 28 May 1794			£118 15s 6d	DL: *Macbeth*
6 June 1794	CG	*The Travellers in Switzerland*		*The Sicilian Romance; or, The Apparition of the Cliffs*		Dancing		*Fontainville Forest*		£195 19s	DL : *Douglas* (Kemble-Siddons)
18 June 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*A Loyal Effusion*	Musical entertainment with dialogue. Opened on 4 June	*The Sicilian Romance*		*Representation of the Engagement and Defeat of the French Navy, by the British Fleet under the Command of Lord Howe.*	Opened 13 June. Event happened on 1 June.		Theatrical Fund
6 October 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Harlequin and Faustus*						£132 2s 6d	DL: *Henry V* and *Lodoiska*

Date	Theatre	Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts	
18 November 1794	CG	*Fontainville Forest*		*Hercules and Omphale*	Afterpiece with music. Opened on 17 November 1794. The Scenery, Machinery, Dresses and Decorations are entirely new.					£269 4s	DL: *Othello* (Kemble-Siddons)
8 January 1796	CG	*Fontainville Forest*	Compressed into 4 acts by the Author	*Cross Purposes*	Opening night. Reduced to 1 act	*Merry Sherwood; or, Harlequin Forester*	Pantomimic characters and Vocal characters. Opened on 21 December 1795			£217 0s 6d	DL: *The Pirates*

Table 1. Boaden's intertheatricality. *Fontainville Forest*

Date		Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts
15 August 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*	Opening night. With new Music, Scenery, Dresses and Decorations. Scenery by Marinari and Rooker.	*The Deaf Lover*	A Farce in two acts. Opened on 15 June 1797					
16 August 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*Rosina*	A comic opera. Opened on 15 July 1797					
18 August 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*The Agreeable Surprise*	A Comic opera. Opened on 13 June 1795					
19 August 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*The Children in the Wood*	By Th. Morton. Opening night	Singing				
23 August 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*The Padlock*	A comic opera. Opening night					
26 August 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*The Children in the Wood*						

Date		Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts
30 August 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*A Mogul Tale*	Opening night					
2 September 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*Sylvester Daggerwood*	Opened 9 June 1795	*The Children in the Wood*				
6 September 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*Sylvester Daggerwood*		*Peeping Tom*	A comic opera. Opened on 12 June 1797	Singing		
9 September 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*The Guardian*	Opening night					
12 September 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*Rosina*						
14 September 1797	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*The Village Lawyer*	Opened on 11 September 1797					

30 May 1798	DL	*The Italian Monk*		*The Follies of a Day*	Opening night	*Blue Beard*	Opened 20 February 1798			£435 2s 6d	Benefit for Miss de Camp. DL: *Disinterested Love* (£261 2s 6d)
30 June 1798	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*My Grandmother*	Musical entertainment. Opened 21 June 1798						
9 July 1798	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*The Agreeable Surprise*	Opened 18 June 1798						
13 July 1798	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*No Song No Supper*	A comic opera in two acts. Opening Night						

Table 2. Boaden's intertheatricality. *The Italian Monk*

Date			Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts	
29 December 1798	DL		*Aurelio and Miranda*	Opening night. With new Music, Dresses and Decorations. Scenery by Capon	*The Children in the Wood*						£271 16s	DL: *Laugh When you Can*
31 December 1798	DL		*Aurelio and Miranda*		*Blue-Beard*						£274 1s	DL: *Ramah Droog*
1 January 1799	DL		*Aurelio and Miranda*		*The Prize; or 2,5,3,8.*	Musical farce. Opened on 22 September 1798	Singing				£127 6s	DL: *Laugh When you Can*
2 January 1799	DL		*Aurelio and Miranda*		*Blue-Beard*		Singing				£242 7s 6d	DL: *Lovers' Vows*
3 January 1799	DL		*Aurelio and Miranda*		*Blue-Beard*		Singing				£208 9s 6d	DL: *Laugh When you Can*
4 January 1799	DL		*Aurelio and Miranda*		*Blue-Beard*		Singing				£179 1s 6d	DL: *Ramah Droog*

Date		Play	Notes	Play	Notes	Other entertainments	Notes	Play	Notes	Receipts
9 July 1799	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*Fortune's Frolick*	Opened on 20 June					
17 July 1799	HAY	*The Italian Monk*		*All in Good Humour*	A dramatic piece in one act. Opening night	*The Castle of Sorrento*	Opera by Henry Heartwell and George Colman the Younger. With new Scenes, Dresses, Decorations			

Table 3. Boaden's intertheatricality. *Aurelio and Miranda* **and** *The Italian Monk*

I contend that both intertheatricality and infratheatricality give us access to dimensions of the contemporary repertoire –and of culture at large- which ought to be reappraised in order to achieve a genuinely new taxonomy of stage Gothic. We may draw our example from the Covent Garden bill for June,18th 1794 which was made up of three productions apparently without any connections to each other. (See Fig. 4, "Theatrical Register", *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1794). The mainpiece, *Fontainville Forest,* was followed by Charles Didbin's interlude *A Loyal Effusion*, then by Henry Siddons' *The Sicilian Romance*. The closing show was a *Representation of the Engagement and Defeat of the Fench Navy, by the British Fleet under the Command of Lord Howe.* Infra-theatricality shows that Thomas Harris, the Covent Carden manager, had chosen to pitch together two Radcliffean adaptations in the one night. This choice is made particularly relevant by the fact that in May 1794 –only a few days earlier- Radcliffe had published her exceptionally successfull *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the book that established her reputation as the most successful English novelist of the time.

The *Representation of the Engagement and Defeat of the Fench Navy, by the British Fleet under the Command of Lord Howe*, on the other hand, confirms the timeliness of many stage shows, as well as the possibility of including political undertones that managed to by-pass censorship. The entertainement had opend on June, 13th –less than a fortnight after the actual defeat of the French fleet on the "Glorious First of June".The British naval victory soon achieved near-mythical status: for instance, the engravings of Mather Brown's oil of the episode ('Lord Howe on the Deck of the 'Queen Charlotte', 1 June 1794')[24] were some of the best-loved patriotic images of the time, and had a prominent place in many English homes. In November, 1794 the *Gentelman's Magazine* published an ode by Robert Strong, whose opening lines run:

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[24] A reproduction of the oil may be accessed at
http://www.nmm.ac.uk/mag/pages/mnuExplore/ViewLargeImage.cfm?ID=BHC2740 The action of the fleet is framed in the background of the painting, and may give an idea of the scenery possibly used for the maritime entertainment.

> Rejoice, rejoice! – the battle's done:
> *Britannia* crowns her favourite Son.
> No more the *Gallic* ensign flies,
> Deep humbled are our enemies,
> Our hardy tars return on shore,
> Triumphant, as in the days of yore.
> >   *Chorus*
> With cheerful hearts let Britons sing,
> Long Live *Britannia*; and *God* save the *King*![25]

On June, 18th 1794 –the evening here under scrutiny- the *Representation of the Engagement and Defeat of the Fench Navy* followed *A Loyal Effusion*, an interlude composed to celebrate the birthday of George III which had premiered on June, 4th. In different ways, both Didbin's effusion and the grand commemoration of Britain's naval victories and heroes may be recognised as important weapons in the propaganda armoury of the Hanoverian government. Interestingly, after the naval victories of 1797 celebratory writings of nautical topic would in fact be called "loyal effusions".[26]

Infra-theatrical connections are even more signifying if we remember that both *The Romance of the Forest* (Radcliffe's hypotext) and *Fontainville Forest* (Boaden's hypertext) are set in France. Their (male) protagonists are the debauched Marquis de Montalt, a corrupted representative of the iniquities of the Ancien Régime, and a spendrift and tormented gambler, Pierre de la Motte, in flight from Paris, "from his creditors the persecutions of the laws."[27] With no apparent connection with each other, three of the shows on the Covent Garden bill for June, 18th 1794 –a Gothic romantic fantasy, a celebratory interlude, and a nautical representation- managed to establish covert and mutually significant relationships. In particular, all of them appropriated and performed in different

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[25] R. Strong, "On the Glorious VICTORY of the BRITISH FLEET, under the Command of EARL HOWE, on the FIRST OF JUNE, 1794". *Gentleman's Magazine,* November, 1794, p. 1038. May be accessed at http://britishperiodicals.chadwyck.co.uk/articles/displayItem.do?FormatType=fulltextimages&BackTo=journalid&QueryType=articles&QueryIndex=journal&ResultsID=1229E613EE814A8FB4&ItemNumber=95 Accessed April, 24th 2009.

[26] Linda Pratt, **"**Naval Contemplation. Poetry, Patriotism and the Navy 1797-99", *Journal for Maritime Research*, 2000, available at http://www.jmr.nmm.ac.uk/server/show/conJmrArticle.22/viewPage/2 Accessed October, 20th 2008.

[27] A. Radcliffe, *The Romance of the* Forest, cit., p. 1

(and hybrid) guises and at different levels the ghosts of Catholic Europe –in this case, France- a strong theme of Gothic. On June, 18th 1794 the fears of losing hard-won liberties and the nightmares spreding across the Channel were raised on the Covent Garden stage, only to be dispelled and exorcised not just one but three times. With a final touch of irony we may add that the dramatic muses must have indeed approved and applaudeded Harris's choice since the 'whole show' staged on June, 18th had been (cleverly) chosen to support the Covent Garden theatrical fund.

A Pathognomic Theatre: The Body of the Actor and the Contemporary Theories of Acting

If we now turn to the contemporary aesthetics of representation as connected to the theory of acting, we may note that both tragedy and pantomime became important in the highly emotional Gothic performance. The Shakespearean characters had already given the tragic actors the possibility of displaying strong emotions through a codified gallery of mimic signs. Traditionally, the players would portray their passions in-between their speeches through pantomimic devices, in what may be called an imitational style. This acting technique found a theoretical counterpart in the contemporary social and biological discourses of the body, which maintained that the body (especially the actor's) could fully express itself through an array of mimic emotions.[28] This method was enhanced by the use of picturesque poses, i.e. tableaux/freezes that illustrated particular episodes which became more common during the eighteenth century with the rise of the pictorial stage. Interestingly, these picturesque poses were reminiscent of the contemporary vogue for artistic attitudes popularised in high society by Lady Emma Hamilton, which many critics see as derivative of ancient pantomime. John Wilton-Ely, in particular, compares Emma Hamilton's dramatic improvisations to a pioneering form of performance art.[29]

Tableaux usually characterised a climactic segment in the drama such as the final scene. Their fixity and the suspension of action must have highly impressed the audience, as suggested by the final tableau of *Raymond and Agnes; or, the Bleeding Nun of Lindemberg*, a spin-off of *The Monk*:

> [Robert] *aims a dagger at* [Agnes] – she *screams, and falls on her knee*. Raymond, Theodore, *and* Marguerette *rush in*. Robert *falls by Raymond's dagger – he rises, and aims at* Raymond –Marguerette *seizes a pistol, and shoots him*. Theodore *overcomes* Claude. Jaques *is shot by another pistol from* Marguerette. Raymond *and* Agnes *embrace. The* Bleeding Nun *appears in the centre at the back –she blesses them – they kneel. Tableau.*

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[28] See J. Roach, *The Player's Passion*, cit.

[29] J. Wilton-Ely, "Emma at Home: Lady Hamilton and Her "Attitudes". Public lecture available at http://www.pba.org/afn/event.php?forumEventId=231 Accessed in October, 2008.

Dramatic tableaux, often made more effective by special lighting effects, were quickly adopted by the Gothic novelists. Among these, Lewis appropriated the visual and physical lexicon of the dramatic tableau in a very effective rescue scene in *The Monk* (Vol. III, Ch. iii). This scene takes place in the dark, inside the Sepulchre of the Capuchins. The protagonists are a group of "Females, their white Garments streaming in the blast".

> During this conversation, the Nuns had thrown themselves into various *attitudes*: One knelt, and addressed herself to heaven; Another hid her face in the lap of her neighbour; Some listened motionless with fear to the discourse of the supposed Assassin; while Others embraced the Statue of St. Clare, and implored the protection with frantic cries.[31]

As the narrative reaches a key point, Lewis freezes it in a moment of lingering visual climax. On the level of narrative mode, third-person narration approaches the form typical of *staging* directions. With the term 'staging directions' I indicate the *pre-staging* instructions or the instructions for a *possible* staging.[32]

It is worth noticing, however, that throughout the scene as narrative pace ostensibly slows down, sensorial stimulation is maintained. Within the narrative freeze frame created by Lewis, the highly theatrical habits of the nuns are visually evoked; their loud cries and prayers mentioned. "The beams of a Lamp" dart upon the face of the fugitive female who is approached by Lorenzo in her flight. Importantly, the face of the beautiful Virginia de Villa-Franca, the fugitive lady, is dramatically lit up by the one single shaft of light, which appropriated for the page the dramatic chiaroscuro light effects of 'sublime' painting, such as the figures by Salvator Rosa (1615-1673) and Joseph Wright 'of Derby' (1734-1797).[33]. Arguably, Lewis envisioned his scene with the eye of a theatre adept, as

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[30] Grosette, *Raymond and Agnes, or The Bleeding Nun of Lindenberg* (London: Duncombe, n.d.), p. 26.

[31] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit. The quotations come from pp. 360-61; the italics are mine.

[32] Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre*, cit. Entry "Stage directions", pp. 355-58.

[33] See for instance *An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump* (1768), constructed around a group of spectators dramatically lit by the light of a single candle. Available from

if he realised the necessity for Virginia/the actor's face to be clearly visible to the readers/audience. This example, I contend, provides an example of how the page appropriated the forms of the stage; it thus expresses what I have defined in the Introduction to this study the *ur-theatricality* of the Gothic novel.

Georgian theories towards attitude and speech were based on the concept of Nature, which in fact did not indicate reality as such, but rather an idealised version of it, purified of all imperfections and strongly suggestive of the emotions. The lexicography of expressions compiled in 1698 by Charles Le Brun (*Méthode pour apprendre à dessiner les passions*, publ. *c*.1702) provided the fine artists with precise visual norms towards the iconical and plastical representation of twenty-four passions. The treatise, which was strongly indebted to Descartes' *Les passions de l'âme* (1649), appeared in English translation in 1734 with the title *A Method to Learn to Design the Passions*.[34] The Georgian actors could refer to classical statuary or galleries of codified poses that signified such various emotions as grief, fear, horror, and joy, exactly as in Charles Le Brun's heads. For instance, in *The Elements of Dramatic Criticism* (1775) theatre critic and historian William Cooke recommended the study of the following masterpieces: for the actors the two Antinouses, Hercules Farnese, Apollos Belvidere and de Medici,

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http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/joseph-wright-of-derby-an-experiment-on-a-bird-in-the-air-pump Accessed on March, 20 2006.

[34] *A Method to Learn to Design the Passions* remained the most influential reference book for actors and painters alike throughout the eighteenth century along with a small number of essays: Samuel Foote's anonymous *A Treatise on the Passions, so far as they regard the Stage* (1747), John Hill's *The Actor, or a Treatise on the Art of Playing* (1750, revised and extended in 1755), Roger Pickering's *Reflections upon Theatrical Expression* (1755), and, finally, Aaron Hill's essays in *The Prompter* (1734-36) and *The Art of Acting: deriving rules from a new principle, for touching the passions in a natural manner.* (1746). In 1769 *The Art of Acting* was adapted into French by Antonio Fabio Sticotti as *Garrick, or les acteurs anglais*, prompting Diderot to write his famous *Paradoxe* (*Paradox on the Actor*, c.1773). See M. Shortland, "Unnatural Acts: Art and Passion on the Mid-Eighteenth-Century Stage", *Theatre Research International*, Vol. 12, No 2 (1987), pp. 93-110 and G. Taylor, " 'The Just Delineation of the Passions': Theories of Acting in the Age of Garrick", in K. Richards and P. Thompson (eds.), *Essays on the Eighteenth Century English Stage* (London: Methuen, 1982), pp. 67-69. As suggested in my discussion of Baillie's poem, "To Mrs. Siddons" (pp. 139-141), Hill's *The Art of Acting* valued empathy and intuition over imitation, thus pointing to more Romantic cultural values. It does not surprise then that it remained popular for many years and had a reprint in 1821.

Caracalla, Fighting and Dying Gladiators, for the actresses Venus de Medici, Venus de Calipaedia, Diana, Flora, and The Graces.[35]

A few years after their appearance in print, twelve among Le Brun's heads were etched by Francis Hayman -a scene designer, painter, as well as long-standing collaborator of Garrick's, of whom he also made a very famous portrait– and were collected in an actor's manual called *Dodsley's Preceptor* (1748), thus highlighting the didactic purpose proper of these practical lists.[36] Le Brun's representation of "Fright" was also the model of the mask of Terror behind Sarah Siddons's throne in Joshua Reynold's "Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse" (1784).

The complex yoking of emotionalism with judgment and experience (already expressed in John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 1690), sensibility and physiology –ultimately, in eighteenth-century terms, Nature and Art– represents one of the formal expressions of Enlightenment empiricism in the theatre.

During the so-called 'Age of Garrick' the debate about the actor focused on whether the player "experienced genuine emotion while he is performing or it merely represented it technically."[37] Diderot's *Paradoxe* crowned Garrick actor *sublime* because he succeeded in showing perfect self-possession and technical control but no sensibility (*nulle sensibilité*, as the French philosopher put it).[38] The vitality of Garrick's interpretation relied on total physicality and constantly changing facial expression, which succeeded in giving bodily form to the kinetic flux of the Passions in a display of virtuous duality (the player's

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[35] See A. S. Downer, "Nature to Advantage Dressed: Eighteenth-Century Acting", *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, Vol. 58 (1943), p. 1028.

[36] The Enlightenment discussion on the passions was influenced by the Scottish moral philosophers and the empirical school, as in the works of Francis Hutchenson (*An Essay on the Nature and Conduct of the Passions and Affections*, 1728), David Hume (*Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739-40), and Adam Smith (*Theory of Moral Sentiments,* 1759).

[37] J. Benedetti J., *David Garrick and the Birth of Modern Theatre* (Methuen, London, 2001), p. 182.

[38] See J. Roach, *The Player's Passion*, cit., pp. 134-142.

identification/self-alienation) that was pointedly described by James Boswell as a kind of double feeling (*London Magazine*, 1770).

Approaching the end of the century, however, the new Romantic aesthetic principles applied to the representational arts brought forth an innovative typology of acting, a development of Garrick's naturalistic style, which was aptly described by James Boaden with the label "heart in action."[39] Joanna Baillie's poem "To Mrs Siddons" (publ. 1823) gives us a fascinating posthumous description of the late eighteenth-century acting techniques. Hinging on the correlated categories of impetuous dynamism and grand stasis, the poems testifies to how the "tragic queen ['s] mightiest spell"[40] worked.

To Mrs Siddons	Semiotics of the passions	
The impassion'd changes of thy beauteous face,	FACE	Partial texts + emotions influencing the player's imagination = organic totality of the dramatic role
Thy stately form, and high imperial grace,	FORM, DEMEANOUR	
Thine arms impetuous toss'd, thy robe's wide flow,	BODY MOVEMENT, COSTUME	
And the dark tempest gather'd on thy brow,	COUNTENANCE PATHOGNOMY	
What time thy flashing eye and lip of scorn	EYE, LIP	
Down to the dust thy mimic foes has borne,		
Remorseful musings, sunk to deep dejection,	AIR	
The fix'd and yearning looks of strong affection,	LOOKS	
The *active* turmoil a wrought bosom rending,	SYMPATHETIC IMAGINATION	
When pity, love, honour are contending:	PRIMARY PASSIONS[41]	
They who beheld of this, right well, I ween,		
A lovely, grand, and wondrous sight have seen.[42]	**SIDDONS AS A SYSTEM OF MULTIPLE LINGUISTIC, EMOTIONAL, AND GESTURAL SIGNS**.	

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[39] J. Boaden, *The Life of Mrs Jordan including Original Private correspondence, and numerous anecdotes of her contemporaries*, 2 vols. (Edward Bull, London, 1831), vol. I, p. iii.

[40] Baillie, "To Mrs. Siddons", in A. Mellor and R. Matlak (eds.) *British Literature, 1780-1830* (Fort Worth-London: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996), p. 497, ll. 6 and 40.

[41] In *An Essay on the Art of Acting* Aaron Hill analysed the passions into ten, Joy, Sorrow, Fear, Scorn, Anger, Amazement, Jealousy, Revenge, Love, and Pity.

[42] Baillie, "To Mrs. Siddons", cit., ll. 11-22.

Joanna Baillie's theatrical skills focus on Sarah Siddons's aesthetics of representing, with which Baillie must have been very familiar since the actress played Jane de Monfort with great acclaim. In the above passage Siddons's acting style is presented as a multicoded system that can be anatomised almost scientifically, as if it were a pathognomic theatre. Firstly Baillie emphasizes the actress's look. Then she considers the gestural, body and facial codes Siddons activated, for the benefit of the ideal (arguably, play-going) reader. Baillie maps the actress's body: precise references to the "face", "arms", "brow", "eye", "lip" of Siddons chart the visual stimuli to which the reader/spectator is exposed.

Baillie then turns her attention to the actress's declamatory art in an analysis that adheres to what Aaron Hill termed the 'primary passions' (Joy, Sorrow, Fear, Scorn, Anger, Amazement, Jealousy, Revenge, Love, and Pity). After specifically mentioning "pity" and "love", Baillie details Siddons's changing passions as expressed through the player's tone of voice and manner of utterance (underlined in the passage):

> Thy *varied* <u>accents</u>, rapid, fitful, slow,
> <u>Loud</u> **rage**, and **fear's** snatch'd <u>whisper, quick and low</u>,
> The burst of <u>stifled</u> **love**, the wail of **grief**,
> And <u>tones</u> of high command, <u>full, solemn, brief</u>,
> The *change* of voice, and <u>emphasis</u> that threw
> Light on obscurity, and brought to view
> Distinctions nice, […].[43]

A similar description of Siddons' embodiment of emotional variety (indicated in italics in the above passage) is suggested by Helena Maria Williams's "Sonnet to Mrs Siddons" (1786): "Repeat the tones each *changing* passion gives, / Or mark where nature in thy action lives, / Where, in thy *pause*, she speaks a pang untold!"[44] Significantly, in a further exemplification of the reciprocal

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[43] Baillie, "To Mrs. Siddons", cit., ll. 23-29.

[44] In Helen Maria Williams. *Poems*. In two volumes. Vol. 2 (London: printed by A. Rivington and J. Marshall, for Thomas Cadell, 1786), pp. 161-62 (ll. 6-8). The italics are mine. Available from *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. Available at

relationships between genres and forms that characterises the late Georgian age, the sub-genre of thespian poetry appropriates theatre writings. In effect anatomies of men and women actors similar to those offered by Williams and Baillie frequently occurred in contemporary theatrical accounts. For instance, Boaden quotes an anonymous portrait of Mrs Siddons, which describes as in a list the actress's figure, face, countenance, voice, eye, and memory.[45]

The documents relating to Siddons's acting suggest that the Romantic actors and actresses would keep each stance for a certain length of time, changing to another attitude with every new emotion. This succession increased during the final act, during which the actors employed their most famous claptraps to make the audience weep, startle and shudder. One detailed example is recorded in William Macready's recollection of Siddons as Mrs. Beverley in Edward Moore's *The Gamester* (1753), one of her leading roles. The passage is reported in the table below, in the left hand-side column; the semiotic analysis of the passage is in the right hand-side column.

The **climax** to her sorrows [Sarah Siddons as Mrs Beverley in *The Gamester*] and sufferings was in the dungeon, when on her knees, holding her dying husband, he dropped lifeless from her arms. Her glaring eyes were fixed in stony blankness on his face; the powers of life seemed <u>suspended</u> in her; her sister and Lewson gently raised her, and slowly led her resistless from the body, her gaze never for an instant averted from it; when they reach [sic] the prison door she stopped, **as if awakened from a <u>trance</u>**, uttered a <u>shriek</u> of agony **that would have pierced the hardest heart**, and <u>rushing</u> from them, <u>flung</u> herself, **as if for union in death**, on the prostate form before her.[46]	CLIMAX GAZE GAZE *POINT* [stop-shriek-fling] AUDITOR'S INFERENCES PLAYER'S PLASTIC IMAGINATION
	RECEPTIVE DISPOSITION: ADMIRATION AND COMPASSION

http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW3313196402&source=gale&userGroupName=glasuni&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE .Accessed on 19 June 2009.

[45] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons*, cit. pp. 170-71.

[46] W. C. Macready's *Reminiscences, and Selections from his Diaries and Letters*, ed. by Sir Frederick Pollock, London, 1875, vol. I, p.p. 55-56, cit. in ibid. p. 1019. All emphases are mine.

The alternation of static poses and dynamic movement is verbally conveyed through the juxtaposition of terms referring respectively to freezing motion (*suspended* and *trance*, underlined in the above passage) and action (*shriek*, *rushing* and *flung*, in underline in the above passage), this latter as suggested through both sound and movement. The player's "plastic imagination" is conveyed by William Macready (the author of the recollection, himself a very successful actor) through an "as if" construction (indicated in bold in the above passage). I use the term 'plastic imagination' (referred to in the final line of the right hand-side column) to define the process through which the actor believed himself *possessed* by a specific passion. According to Aaron Hill, this process started from the imagination through the muscles of the body to the sound of the voice and the disposition of the gesture. The resulting effect was a sort of *enthusiasm*, in its etymological sense of *divine possession* and *inspiration*, a state which in fact directly refers to the epithet used by Helena Maria Williams for the god-like Siddons, saluted as the "divine enthusiast".[47]

We may infer from Macready's recollection that by the time Mrs. Siddons as Mrs. Beverley had sunk to the ground the auditor's pattern of identification with the character would have reached the highest stage of "admiration" and "compassion".[48] This decisive moment corresponded to a point of climax in the interactive circuit of theatrical communication, simultaneously investing the character, the actress and, probably, the audience. As Ellen Donkin notes, "These were the scenes in which [the actress] made her "hits," or "points," as they were called. Necessarily, any such scene was carefully contained and rationalised by the plot. But to judge from various memoirs and reviews, in spite of this

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[47] Williams, "Sonnet to Mrs Siddons", cit. (l. 11).

[48] The auditor's patterns of identification with the heroine I use here are drawn from H. R. Jauss's *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

containment, these scenes resonated in memory long after the details of the plot were forgotten."[49]

A similar narrative crescendo played out through the body of the characters is envisioned by Lewis for one of the most memorable scenes of *The Monk* - Ambrosio's rape of Antonia, a beautiful girl whom he soon after discovers to be his long-lost sister. The underground vault where the girl is held prisoner is characteristically lit by "the pale glimmering of the Lamp."

> Antonia's shrieks were unheard: Yet She continued them, nor abandoned her endeavours to escape, till **exhausted** and out of breath She **sank** from his arms upon her knees, and once more had recourse to prayers and supplications. [...] taking advantage of her situation, the Ravisher threw himself by her side: He <u>clasped</u> her to his bosom almost **lifeless** with terror, and **faint** with strugglings. He <u>stifled</u> her cries with kisses, treated her with the <u>rudeness</u> of an unprincipled Barbarian, proceeded from freedom to freedom, and in <u>the violence of his lustful delirium</u>, wounded and bruised her tender limbs. Headless of her tears, cries and entreaties, He gradually made himself Master of her person, and desisted not from his prey, till He had accomplished his crime and the dishonour of Antonia.[50]

The alternation of stasis and motion, which we have seen was at the core of contemporary acting, is here mastered by Lewis at both the level of form and character description. As Antonia becomes more passive and helpless, to the point of being nearly unconscious when she is raped (a moralistic device through which Lewis signifies her delicacy and maidenly lack of cooperation with the lustful Monk), Ambrosio's erotomania escalates.

Antonia's passivity (in bold in the above passage) is juxtaposed to Ambrosio's erotic frenzy (underlined in the above passage). This latter is conveyed through a sequence of short coordinate clauses (*He stifled*, [he] *treated*, [he] *proceeded*, [he] *wounded and bruised*) with a twofold function -conative and phatic- which assures continuous contact and empathy between readers and characters. The asyndetic clauses are constructed as a series of rapid "hits" -in the theatrical jargon of the age- which culminates in bathetic post-copulative reversal.

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[49] E. Donkin, "Mrs. Siddons Looks Back in Anger: Feminist Historiography for Eighteenth-Century British Theatre". In Janelle G. Reinelt and Joseph Roach (eds.) *Critical Theory and Performance* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), p. 278.

[50] M. Lewis, *The Monk*, cit. vol. III, ch. iv, pp. 383-84.

In the last but one sentence of the above passage Antonia reawakens into (vocal) activity ("tears, cries, entreaties"), while the Monk, once his lust is satisfied and "the storm of passion"[51] is over, now sinks under the burden of the "horror and disgust to which his soul was prey."[52]

On the formal level, the juxtaposition of two such scenes of criminal obsession and subsequent repentance attempts to contain the excesses of the Monk's multiple sins –religious, familial, and societal. Typically, Lewis has recourse to the semiotics of the body to convey Ambrosio's attempt at atonement.

> 'Spare me! Spare me!' She murmured with difficulty.
> 'Silence!' cried the Friar madly, and *dashed her upon the ground* --[53]

By pushing the body of Antonia away from him, Ambrosio tries to displace –both physically and psychologically- the signs of his own transgression.

If we now focus on the actor's art of non-verbal expression, reviews and accounts make clear that approaching the end of the century the relation between passion and expression was transformed. The feelings of the audience were no longer captivated by the display of a body that was supremely expressive, immediate and mobile but rather classical, static, majestic -in a word, sublime The playwrights of 1790s were very familiar with the codified acting styles of the major actors of the time, which were perfected in idiosyncratic, distinct ways.[54] Both authors and auditors relied on and expected to recognize the acting skills of the different performers, and obviously, this familiarity jeopardised the illusion of the spectacle, which was enjoyed as an *aesthetic* experience.

Paula Backscheider has convincingly argued that the subliminal presence of machinery and the awareness of the acting/staging codes rendered the Gothic play

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[51] M. Lewis, *The Monk*, cit. vol. III, ch. iv, p. 386.

[52] Ibid.

[53] Ibid. The italics are mine.

[54] See the reference to inter- and infra-playfulness in the previous section of Part II, p. 117.

a safely contained event.[55] The codified conventions of pantomimic slapstick and stage trickery were in turn exploited to make sure the audience knew that violence and harm were innocent and risk-free. A typical example of this is given by Dibdin's comic pantomime *Harlequin and Humpo*.

> *Music: No 32. […] A branch breaks and a figure of the Clown falls out of the tree behind a part of the foliage, & c-*
>
> *Music: No 33. Andante leg brokio. From whence the real Clown is brought piteously roaring and with all his bones broken*.[…]
>
> *Music: No 36. Andante Comico. Clown enters, led on by Pantaloon & Lover and takes care to let the audience see that he is not really hurt*.[56]

Matthew G. Lewis underlined the harmless make-believe of even the most gripping scenes of the Gothic dramas, when the on-stage confrontation between characters gave the impression of escalating to physical aggression and belligerence. In the epilogue to *The Castle Spectre* Dorothy Jordan in the character of Angela comes on stage to deflate the tension of the play with the following light-hearted speech:

> Osmond by this arrived at Charon's ferry,
> My honour saved, and dad alive and merry,
> Hither I come the public doom to know,
> But come not uncompell'd—the more's my woe!
> E'en now, (oh! pity, friends, my hard mishap!)
> My shoulder felt a Bow-Street runner's tap,
> Who, while I shook with fear in every limb,
> Thus spoke, with accent stern and visage grim—
> 'Mistress!' quoth he, 'to me it given in trust is,
> 'To bring you straight before our larned Justice;
> 'For, know, 'tis said, to-night, the whole town o'er,
> 'You've kill'd one Osmond, alias Barrymore.'[57]

The sustained comic tone of the epilogue is increased by the extra-textual reference to London's "Bow-Street runners", which recontextualizes and updates for the enjoyment of the audience the themes of law, justice and surveillance

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[55] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., pp. 183-87.

[56] Dibdin, *Harlequin and Humpo* (scene VIII), in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 215.

[57] Lewis, "Epilogue", *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. v.

present in *The Castle Spectre*. Lord Osmond's brutality and the horrors of his death are deflated and defused by their nightly serialization, equivalent to a type of comforting mechanical reproducibility.[58]

> Now as for Osmond –at that villain's name.
> I feel reviving wrath my soul inflame.
> And shall one short and sudden pang suffice
> To clear so base a faul, so gross a vice?
> No! To your bar, dear friend, for aid I fly!
> Bid Osmond live again, again to die;
> Nightly with plaudits loud his breath recall,
> Nightly beneath my dagger see him fall,
> Give him a thousand lives! And let *me* take them all.[59]

If we now turn to the pragmatics of enunciation, we may notice that the tongue-in-cheek of Jordan's words is increased by the artificiality of the rhyming couplets of the Epilogue. These contributed to frame the dramatic *fabula,* now distanced in the memory of the audience, and they prevented the spectators from identifying any longer with the plight experienced by Angela, Jordan's on-stage *persona*.

The insertion of comic relief provided by faulty mechanical contrivances, damaged scenery or simply poor acting collaborated to jeopardize the illusion, without diminishing, however, the recreational pleasure of the spectators. This was the case of the opening night of *Blue-Beard*, in which Gothic sublime and bathetic acting contributed to creating a truly memorable performance, as recalled by the anonymous reviewer of *The True Briton*: "[t]he awful interior of the sepulchre, was mingled with ludicrous sensations, by the *staggering motion* of the *Skeleton*, who seemed as if, to guard against the *damps* of the place, he had taken a drop too much."[60]

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[58] W. Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit: drei Studien zur Kunstsoziologie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969). Orig. composed in 1936.

[59] Lewis, "Epilogue", *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. vi.

[60] Review of the opening night performance of *Blue-Beard*. *The True Briton* no. 1,581 (17 January 1798), p. 3 in "Appendix: Contemporary Reviews and Commentary", Cox and Gamer*, The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 332. The italics are in the text.

Where the Gothic verisimilar staging manufactured an illusion of truth, codified acting, paratextual evidence and theatre reviews in fact suggest that the audience could leave the auditorium comforted by the awareness of the truth of illusion.

In conclusion, contemporary acting manuals show that a wide stance and grand gesture were preferred. This can be also inferred from the cavernous end-of-the-century theatres. At the same time, in contemporary acting theory freeze poses would alternate with dynamic scenes, thus interchanging statuesque stasis and activity, silence and speech. Paul Ranger maintains that the Gothic playwrights "had current styles of performance firmly in mind and utilised these"[61] for the story. I want to suggest that the dramatists were very much aware of scenic effects, acting techniques, and the tastes of the audience, who actively participated in the communicative circuit. Also, I suggest that Ranger's contention may be applied to many Gothic writers, including the novelists. The increase in spectacle (especially after the building of the new Drury Lane in 1794) implied a stronger emphasis on visual rather than verbal elements, as subtlety and detail gave way to grand presentation, thus raising the role of the stage machinists and suggesting the need for a thereafter essential figure -the stage coordinator. Acting was also influenced by the changes in the theatrical morphology: projection became essential, and so did externalisation. In my opinion such significant changes in the theories of representation reverberated throughout contemporary culture -on the stage and the page alike.

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[61] Ibid., p. 104.

Intersemiotic Translation and Appropriation. An Exploration of Sound, Scenery, Light, and Costume in the Gothic Dramas and Novels of the 1790s.

Approaching the end of the century the mutually illuminating cross-fertilisation of verbal and non-verbal forms became a recurrent element in the contemporary aesthetic and literary discourses and practices. Making the non-verbal intelligible (and readable) means transforming it into a linguistic code. According to Roman Jakobson, the interpretation of "verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems is called intersemiotic translation or *transmutation*".[62] For present purposes, intersemiotic translation will also indicate the opposite procedure, that is to say the interpretation of non-verbal signs by means of signs of verbal sign systems.

The first semiotic resource we may wish to think of in terms of intersemiotic translation is the body. As far as the intersemiosis of the body goes, we may notice that during the eighteenth century the non-verbal became textualised through normalising handbooks containing illustrations, tables and diagrams. Such prescriptive manuals, which tried to capture on the page the 'lost-in-the-making' fleetingness and infinity of movement, included treatises on physiognomy, guides to stagecraft, texts on rhetoric as well as acting manuals, (these latter discussed in the previous section of this thesis).[63] All such works became part of the period's cultural imagination, suggesting the existence of a broad readership made of people interested in thinking and reading about the stage. Examples of these know-to guides to expressive movement (*orchesis*) may be met with throughout the century; they cover many artistic disciplines, going from *Chronomia; or a Treatise on Rhetorical Delivery* by Gilbert Austen

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[62] See R. Jakobson, *Selected Writings. 2. Word and Language* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971).

[63] For the eighteenth-century production of a science of order, see M. Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London: Tavistock, 1970).

(published in 1806 but composed in the late 1700s)[64] on the system of gesture to John Weaver's *Orcheosography, or, the Art of Dancing, by Characters and Demonstrative Figures*, the translation of a French manual (publ. in 1706) which noted the steps of a dance in the same manner of a score. *Orcheosography* also had a pocket abridgement; I reproduce below one of the diagrammatic drawings therein (Fig. 5).[65]

5. John Weaver. *A small treatise of time and cadence in dancing*. An abridgment of *Orcheosographia*.[66]

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[64] P. M. Spoel, "The Science of Bodily Rhetoric in Gilbert Austin's 'Chironomia'", *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (Autumn, 1998), p. 5.

[65] Weaver's *Orcheosography* is available at http://www.pbm.com/~lindahl/weaver/orchesography/ Accessed December, 18 2007.

[66] J. Weaver, *A small treatise of time and cadence in dancing, reduc'd to an easy and exact method.* Shewing how steps, and their movements, agree with the notes, and division of notes, in each measure (London: 1706), p. 9. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. Available from http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CB127760845&source=gale&userGroupName=glasuni&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE . Accessed December, 18 2008.

The above intersemiotic forms positioned themselves within the realm of what we may define *legitimate spectacle*, in the halfway domain between physical spectacle and rhetorical drama, stage and text. In terms of the audience, the increasing appeal of the end-of-the-century cross-fertilization of artistic languages is proven by the fact that the London playhouses were expected to provide short and moderately priced brochures to their entertainments. These "pamphlets [...] typically contained descriptions of the action and, perhaps most importantly, the verbal (and sometimes the musical) texts of the songs as well as sketchy description of the stage action"[67]. The booklets often included a descriptive *Prospectus* and usually had designations with variants on the *The Songs, duets, glees, and chorusses* formula title. John O' Brien explains:

> such texts nonetheless seem designed not to replace the live performance but to serve as an aide-mémoire for those who have already seen it. […] In a sense, such texts promote the value of the print by proposing to realize the performance in a way that theatre itself […] never can, allowing the reader to create a perfect performance in the theatre of his or hers mind's eye.[68]

Similarly, approaching the end of the century there appeared a small number of collections of songs popularized in dramas and entertainments, such as *The London complete songster; or musical boquet [sic]. A selection of the modern and approved songs, glees, airs, &c. that are sung at the Theatres Royal, and other places of polite amusement* (1775) and *Crosby's modern songster, :being a selection of the most approved songs airs &c. from the late operas with many favorite songs, sung at the different places of public entertainment* (publ. between 1790 and 1795).

As I will go on to argue, the examination of the practices of intersemiotic translation -of which I have given a brief example in terms of the "corporeal semantics"[69] of the performer's body- opens particularly interesting possibilities

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[67] J. O'Brien, *Harlequin Britain*, cit., p. 113.

[68] Ibid., pp. 113-14.

[69] H. Ruthrof, "Translation from the Perspective of Corporeal Semantics", in S. Petrilli (ed.), *Translation, Translation* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2003), pp. 69-86.

for the appropriative reading of Gothic hypotexts and hypertexts. In particular, the study of intersemiotic translation makes explicit aspects of intertextuality otherwise implicit. The following sections will explore the conversational interplay of four semiotic resources in the Gothic dramas and novels of the 1790s: sound resources, scenery, lighting and visual effects, and costume.

1   Speech, Music, Sound. An Example of the Stage Appropriation of the Gothic Novel.

The morphological and generic changes taking place on the English stage in the latter part of the eighteenth century brought along several advances in the theatrical techniques and the aesthetics of representing, which came to rely more and more heavily on the highly-wrought display of the passions. Musical accompaniment gained importance; at the same time visual and aural special effects became particularly elaborate. As a result, the roles of the composer and the scenic artists became central.

According to music historian Aubrey Garlington jr., the early English Gothic operas did not employ descriptive music as a comment on stage action. For instance, in John O' Keeffe's *The Banditti; or, Love's Labyrinth* (Covent Garden, November 1781) the musical score -a collection of diverse pieces of secondary importance by Dr. Arnold– was only "an added feature, seemingly incidental to the plot, and no attempt is made to portray musically any of the rather wild happenings on stage."[70] The situation remained pretty similar also with the well-received Gothic opera *The Haunted Tower* (Drury Lane, November 1789), libretto by James Cobb, and music by Stephen Storace.

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[70] Garlinton jr., "'Gothic Literature and Dramatic Music in England', cit., p. 52. *The Banditti; or, Love's Labyrinth* may be accessed via the Gale *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* at http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW110071997&source=gale&userGroupName=glasuni&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE

Documentary evidence suggests that at the close of the 1780s dialogue was more important than music, even in case of the operatic entertainments and productions with sung recitatives; dramatic action was still conveyed through stage machinery and action rather than music. It is interesting to note, though, that approaching the 1790s music tended to become a self-sufficient language, available to buy separately, as advertised in the printed text of *The Haunted Tower* where we read that "The Music of this opera is now published, and may be had at the theatre".[71]

At the beginning of the 1790s musical historical plays such as George Colman the Younger's *The Battle of Hexham* (Haymarket, August 1789) and *The Surrender of Calais* (Haymarket, July 1791) contributed to the diffusion of lucrative musical-dramatic entertainments, constructed according to the particular dramatic style mingling history, sentiment and music that came to be called "three-act Colman drama" or "Summer drama" (we must remember that the Haymarket held a licence only for the Summer period). In their turn, successful Gothic plays such as Colman's *The Iron Chest* (Drury Lane, March 1796) and Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (1797) were quick to incorporate important musical episodes; it must be pointed out that in the above examples music offered commentary on action rather than feeling. In the very same years, however, the dramaturgical potential of music started to emerge beyond doubt. For instance, we know that Michael Kelly's musical score made up a great part of the success enjoyed by Colman's *Blue-Beard* (Drury Lane, January 1799), as gratefully admitted by the dramatist himself in the *Introduction* to the play:

> I have given an opportunity to Mr. Kelly of fully establishing his reputation, as a Musical Composer, with a Publick, whose favour he has long, and deservedly experienced as a Singer. Crowded houses have testified the most strong, and decided approbation of his

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[71] J. Cobb, *Songs, duets, trios, and chorusses, in The haunted tower. A comic opera, in three acts, as performed at the Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane* (London, 1789), p. 1. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. Available from http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW116275941&source=gale&userGroupName=glasuni&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE

original Musick, in *Blue-Beard*; and amply applauded his taste, and Judgement, in Selection.[72]

As well as testifying to the contemporary diffusion of various forms of musical entertainments, the growing role of music highlights the eminently extra-textual –and thus ephemeral- dimension of the early Gothic drama. As confirmed by the published texts of the plays I have just mentioned, musical accompaniment was infrequently recorded. This fact suggests that, possibly, music remained incidental to the stage situations up until the end of the century.

The hierarchical status of word and music was challenged profoundly in 1802 when Thomas Holcroft brought on the Covent Garden stage *A Tale of Mystery: A Melo-Drame* (November 13, 1802), the adaptation of Guilbert de Pixérécourt's *Coelina ou l'Enfant du mystère* (Ambigu-Comique, September 1800). The music of the play was by Thomas Busby, later the author of a well-known *Complete Dictionary of Music* (1806) in which we can read the following definition of "melodrama": "A modern species of Drama in which the powers of instrumental music are employed to elucidate the action, and *heighten the passion of the piece*."[73] Contemporary evidence makes it debatable to presume that only with *A Tale of Mystery* did the musical text become signifying; however, it is reasonable to assume that after Holcroft's innovations, music and songs could be more rarely separated from the play, and enjoyed as individual (or partial) texts in private performances or in the closet. In this respect, the stage directions of *A Tale of Mystery* are highly revealing:

> *Music, to express discontent and alarm.* (I)
> *Music, to express pain and disorder. (*I)

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[72] G. Colman, "Introduction", *Blue-Beard; or Female Curiosity!*, in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., pp. 77-78.

[73] The full text of Busby's *Complete Dictionary of Music,* 3rd ed. (London: printed for Richard Phillips, 1811) is available in digitalized form at http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=uwI6AAAAIAAJ&dq=Thomas+Busby,+Complete+Dictionary+of+Music&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=uEM43V8Zw7&sig=avqnM3QKnCdyUWp8-8-8KXolbTI&hl=en&ei=RkeNSqmaEZ7bjQew26HrDQ&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=1#v=onepage&q=melo&f=false . Accessed January, 8 2009. The quote in the text has no page.

> *Music loud and discordant at the moment the eye of* Montano *catches the figure of* Romaldi. (I)

> *The stage dark: soft music, bur expressing first pain and alarm; then the successive feelings of the scene.* (I)

> *The music expresses confusion and pain of thought.* (II)

> *Music of painful remorse.* (II)[74]

In melodrama music came to express, instead of simply accompanying, the emotions of the silent characters. The anonymous reviewer of the *Morning Chronicle* immediately recognised the originality of a work "unlike anything that has hitherto been brought out upon the English stage": "[t]he sudden change [between scenes of pathos, gaiety, or of show], instead of occasioning an unpleasant shock to the feelings, only serves to heighten the effect of each particular part of the entertainment, from the contrast between what goes before, and what follows"[75]

As we have seen, predominantly musical and non-scripted texts developed verbal –almost narrative- structures; narrative-based texts, on the other hand, incorporated musical elements. In the late eighteenth-century aesthetic system music and other non-mimetic arts were strongly associated with the workings of imagination. It would be tempting to say that their growing importance in drama paralleled the innovative use of musical elements in Ann Radcliffe's novels. In Radcliffe's poetics the virtuous characters' emotions are often soothed or elevated by listening to or performing on a musical instrument, as in the case of Julia Mazzini, Adeline or Emily de St. Aubert, and their lovers. I suggest that Radcliffe conceived her novels as intersemiotic texts, that is to say as an integrated art form in which poetry, music, stage effects, landscape and narrative found unification. This narrative strategy followed a discursive practice similar to the one adopted by contemporary drama.

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[74] T. Holcroft, *A Tale of Mystery: A Melo-drame*. As Performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. 3rd ed. (London, printed by and for J. Roach, 1813). The stage directions respectively come from pp. 9, 14, 18, 23, 27, 35.

[75] Document 86b, chapter "Repertoire, taste, and audience", in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre, 1789-1860*, cit., p. 119.

Rictor Norton, one of Radcliffe's biographers, records that Radcliffe frequently attended the operas as well as concerts of sacred music. Radcliffe's visits to the theatre, in particular Drury Lane, and the opera became very frequent during the season 1790-91, "while her husband worked for the *Gazetteer*,"[76] probably writing opera reviews. The year 1791 coincided with the great Handel season. Norton comments that Radcliffe drew the inspiration for several episodes in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* from Haendel's operatic re-workings of Ariosto and Tasso, as well as of the Davenant-Dryden *The Tempest, or The Enchanted Island* (originally produced at the Duke's Theatre, November 1667).[77] These biographic particulars are significant for the present enquiry in as much as they suggest not only Radcliffe's familiarity with music, but also, more importantly, her awareness of the practices of intersemiotic recycling underlying the contemporary cultural discourse.

A Sicilian Romance (1790), Radcliffe's second novel, is built around sensoriality. While sight becomes increasingly less effective and unreliable (as tapers flicker darkness envelops the characters, on both the physical and the metaphysical level), hearing provides the only reliable hermeneutical clues. In the novel sound and music have no longer a simply decorative function; in fact, they participate in the meaning-producing effect of the story.

Mystery and terror are conveyed through sound effects, whose intensity now increases and now decreases, terrifying Julia Mazzini and her companions with sinister forebodings.

> They descended, and had hardly reached the bottom when they heard a loud noise at the door above, and presently the voices of several people. […] The noise above increased. […] As [Julia] hung upon Ferdinand, Hippolitus vainly endeavored to sooth her –the noise suddenly ceased. They listened, dreading to hear the sound renewed; but to their utter astonishment, the silence of the place remained undisturbed. They had now time to breathe, […] when the noise was renewed with increasing violence.[78]

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[76] Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, cit., p. 62.

[77] Ibid, pp. 63-64.

[78] Radcliffe, *A Sicilian Romance*, Alison Milbank (ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 67.

In the following passage music coordinates the other signifying systems -light effects, scenery, and sound effects. It directly acts on the spectators' imagination and conveys Radcliffe's own type of novelistic 'whole show', while narrative discourse seems to transcend from the condition of *pictorialism* to that of *picturesque staging*.

> The night was still, and not a breath disturbed the surface of the waters. The moon shed a mild radiance over the waves, which in gentle undulations flowed upon the sands. […] and as she mused, she heard the dashing of distant oars. Presently she perceived upon the light surface of the sea a small boat. The sound of the oars ceased, and a solemn strain of harmony (such as fancy wafts from the abodes of the blessed) stole upon the silence of the night. A chorus of voices now swelled upon the air, and died away at a distance. In the strain Julia recollected the midnight hymn to the virgin, and holy enthusiasm filled her heart. The chorus was repeated, accompanied by a solemn striking of oars. A silence of exstacy stole from her bosom. Silence returned.[79]

The Gothic drama replicated the synaesthesic practices of the Gothic novel, in which sound was as important a sense as sight as well as a fundamental element of the textual hermeneutics.[80] The comparison between a passage from *The Italian* and its adaptation, Boaden's *The Italian Monk*, shows the transferral on to the stage of the interaction of the visual with the aural characterising the Radcliffian Gothic.

> The Marchesa happened, as he said this, to cast her eyes upon the inscription over a Confessional, where appeared, in black letters, the awful words, '*God hears thee!*' It appeared an awful warning. Her countenance changed; it had struck upon her heart. […] 'What noise is that?' said the Marchesa, interrupting him. They listened. A few low and querulous notes of the organ sounded at a distance, and stopped again. 'What mournful music is that? Said the Marchesa in a faultering voice, 'It was touched by a fearful hand! Vespers were over long ago!' […] The organ sounded faintly from the choir, and paused, as before. In the next moment, a slow chaunting of voices was heard, mingling with the rising peal, in a strain particularly melancholy and solemn. 'Who is dead?' said the

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[79] Ibid., p. 58.

[80] Contemporary ideology constructed vision as a site of surveillance as well as a channel of expressiveness. The theorisation of the gaze emerges in the Lockeian doctrine of sensoriality, and gains metatheoretical ground throughout the century in such chronologically distant and diverse works as Joseph Addison's *Spectator* essays on "The Pleasures of Imagination" (n. 409 and 411 to 421), Mark Akenside's poem *The Pleasures of Imagination* (1746), Eliza Haywood's *Fantomina* (1725), Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa* (1747-48) and Frances Burney's *Camilla* (1796). See in particular "The Pleasures of the Imagination", essays No 412, "How the imagination is affected by the survey of outward objects: the primary pleasures", and No. 415, "Primary Pleasures: architecture, the art most immediately producing such imaginative pleasure". "The Pleasures of Imagination", R. Steele and J. Addison, *Selections from 'The Tatler' and 'The Spectator'*, A. Ross (ed.) (Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1988).

> Marchesa, changing countenance; 'it is a requiem' […] They listened in silence. The Marchesa was much affected […] 'That body is now cold,' said she to herself, 'which but an hour ago was warm and animated! Those fine senses are closed in death! And to this condition would I reduce a being like myself!"[81]

In *The Italian Monk* the sinister exchange between the Marchesa and Schedoni –a magisterial display for the artistic ability of Radcliffe, who subtly hints at the scheming pair's intentions without actually having them utter their real feelings– is much simplified, whereas the role of music becomes central. As explained by Boaden, "Dr. [Samuel] Arnold looked into Gluck for a sublime chorus of nuns, and wrote, himself, in a very powerful manner."[82] The time of the action is night: the setting, "A Convent", in front of a shrine.

> *Marchioness*: Well, for the place: you mention'd a lone house.
> *Schedoni*:　　True: In a chamber of that house, there is ---
>
> *(Low music heard.)*
>
> *Marchioness*: **What noise is that?** ---'Tis melancholic music,
> 　　　　　　 Touched by a fearful hand.
> *Schedoni*:　　Within that chamber
> 　　　　　　 There is a secret door.
> *Marchioness*: Fram'd for what purpose?
> *Schedoni*:　　Suffice it that 'tis apt for our design.
> 　　　　　　 A passage leads thence to the sea – at night
> 　　　　　　 Its waves will leave no print of what has pass'd.
>
> *(Low music and solemn.)*
>
> *Marchioness*: **Again. – It is a requiem --- one departed.**
> *Schedoni*:　　Heaven's peace be with him. I am summon'd hence. ---
> 　　　　　　 Rely on my affection and my zeal.
> 　　　　　　　　　　　　　　　[*Exit
>
> *(Music again)*[83]

As well as providing mood to the locale, music modalizes the action and assures the dramatic transition from one dramatic moment to the other. It heightens the agitation of Boaden's Marchioness, who experiences a change of heart (indicated in bold in the quotations) each time the strain is heard. The solemn melody

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[81] Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, cit., pp. 176-77.

[82] J. Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq. Including a History of The Stage, from the Time of Garrick to the Present Period* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, Brown, and Green, 1825), vol. II, p. 201.

[83] J. Boaden, *The Italian Monk*, cit., Act II (scene i), p. 33.

operates the sudden reawakening of the conscience of the noblewoman, who becomes penitent and fearful whilst hearing the notes of the Requiem Mass. Moved by the solemn strain she begs Schedoni to hold in his resolution –to no avail. Musical references counterpoint her closing monologue and heighten its effects. As the Marchesa makes clear in the last line of the quotation, music has had a cathartic function and has in fact rectified her:

> *Marchioness*: 'Tis a first requiem, and the soul but just
> Escap'd its its fleshy dwelling. That is cold,
> Cold now and still, which but an hour gone by
> Was fill'd with mind, and throbbing with sensation.
> And what am I? --- the enemy of life!
> Come here to plot, perhaps against a *soul*!
> **Return, Schedoni!** No! He hears me not.
> How fleeble are our strongest resolution!
> While passion rul'd my distracted frame,
> It found not, or it conquer'd all my scruples;
> One feeble note, a sound, an airy breath,
> Strikes on the heart, and wakes my slumb'ring pity. [...]
>
> [*Exit*[84]

The musical sub-text of *The Italian Monk* embeds a double-coded comment to the characters' diverging frames of mind. Boaden's Schedoni relates with the straightforward funerary imagery of the Requiem, and interprets the strain as a sign of Ellena's impending death. Conversely, the Marchionness, who has by now grown remorseful and would fainly spare the girl, identifies with the secondary meaning of the liturgical service, whose introit in actual fact begins with a plea for divine mercy and peace: "Requiem aeternam dona eis, Domine" that translates as "Grant them eternal rest, O Lord."

The use of contrapuntal music must have quickly established itself as a convention, as shown by another contemporary play, Harriet Lee's three-act *The Mysterious Marriage; or, The Heirship of Roselva* (publ. 1798). This drama entertains no transtextual relation with either Radcliffe's or Boaden's texts. Arguably, the analogous function of music in this play shows that signifying

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[84] Ibid.

musical accompaniment had become part of the standard dramatic overcoding of the Gothic.

In *The Mysterious Marriage* the prayers sung by the chorus ("Peace to the lovely and the good") operate as a type of mournful comment on the murder of the virtuous Constantia; at the same time, the hymn intimates to the characters that a crime has just been committed. In this sense music has an analeptic function, functioning as a form of flashback:

> (*Chorus at a distance*)
>
> | | Peace! |
> | --- | --- |
> | *Rodolphus*. | List, I pray you! |
> | *Chorus*. | Peace to the lovely and the good. |
> | *Rodolphus*. | 'Tis heav'nly music, sure! |
> | *Osmond*. | Alas! Mere mortal, |
> | | Waling mortality! [...] |
> | *Semi-chorus*. | Pain and sorrow now are o'er: |
> | | The eye that wept shall weep no more. |
> | | No more the anxious heart shall sigh, |
> | | Whelm'd in doubtful ecstasy. [...] (III.i)[85] |

The musical element was also relevant in the renegotiation of the generic hierarchies of the Gothic. It operated as a connection between legitimate and illegitimate forms, thus (re)inventing a cultural status and an elevated tradition for the vilified Gothic dramas. A remark from Boaden's *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons* may help clarify my contention. Boaden –always eager to improve the literary *pedigree* of his work- justifies his overuse of quotation as follows: "Whoever attempts to paint the momentary beauties of elocution and personal expression must ask aid from the exact language uttered; the reference from the actor to the poet is perpetual."[86] In short, if an artist wishes to achieve a happier result, Boaden implies, he may simply quote from the works of his fellow authors.

It might be tempting to translate Boaden's artful *excusatio propter infirmitatem* from the realm of quotation to that of adaptation. Both textual

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[85] H. Lee, *The Mysterious Marriage; or, The Heirship of Roselva* (publ. 1798), in Franceschina (ed.), *Sisters of Gore*, cit., p. 102.

[86] J. Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons*, cit., p. xiii.

practices transform the hypotext (be it written, recited or played) at both the level of signifier and signified. Musical and literary quotations and/or re-castings may operate as a type of generic ennoblement, which elevates the lower-class status of the (Gothic) hypertext recurring to the 'higher' cultural context of the source texts. Instead of adapting itself to its *new* context, the 'high' musical quotation looks back to its *source* context, which reinforces the weaker generic status of the target text.

As significantly noted by E.J. Clery, the intertext of Radcliffe's novels –her "literary banditry" of epigraphs, and literary quotes, both poetic and dramatic– is a fundamental aspect of the author's strategy to ennoble the low cultural status of the Gothic romance tradition.

> The epigraphs and casual quotations from the established literature of the sublime is the mark of Radcliffe's 'inner worth' as a writer. Even as she traffics in the critically 'illegal' excesses and improbabilities of romance fiction, she creates an authorial persona of the noble outsider in a fallen world of commodified literary production through her display of cultivated sensibility, her dramatized admiration for her 'kidnapped' texts from Shakespeare, Milton and company.[87]

In Radcliffe dramatic and poetic quotations operate on two interconnected levels: whilst expressing both the author's and the characters' feelings –and, accordingly, hers/theirs literary worth- they also claim a higher generic and cultural status for the novel.

I would argue that in the Gothic dramas the insertion of musical quotations may constitute an attempt at fusing popular appeal with generic status similar to the one envisaged by Ann Radcliffe. The melodies used in the Gothic plays were often set to well-known ballads and musical airs of the time, which would be easily recognised by the audience and would provide appropriate comment and extra-textual layering to the performance. This procedure was in fact not a characteristic of Gothic; it partook of a circuit of musical re-cycling and dissemination that found expression in such anthologies of songs from contemporary musical productions as *The Apollo: being an elegant selection of*

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[87] E. J. Clery, *Women's Gothic*, cit., p. 54.

approved modern songs, favourite airs from celebrated operas, &c. to which are prefixed, twelve new and original songs (never before published) written to beautiful & familiar tunes (1791). As far as Gothic goes, the air sung by Clifford in Act I, scene i of Francis North's *The Kentish Barons* (Haymarket, June 1791) imitates Catullus's "Ille mi par esse deo videtus", in its turn an imitation of Sappho.[88] We also know that James Boaden and Thomas Atwood set some of the song of the musical romance *Ozmyn and Daraxa* (Drury Lane, March 1793) to music by Michael Kelly and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.[89] John Franceschina further notes that in the comic opera *The Ward of the Castle* (Covent Garden, October 1793), a Miss Burke wrote a monologue that drew its inspiration from Robert Burns's song, "Green Grow the Rushes O". Arguably, Burns's ballad must have been selected for its popular appeal as it has no evident connection with the plot of Miss Burke's drama. This contention, I believe, is supported by the presence in the comic opera of other popular tunes as such a song set "To the Air 'Ah per me' by Giardini", with the function of musical leitmotif, and an air set "To the Tune of 'I'll tell you a story that happened of late' ".[90] According to Franceschina the presence of a "trio between the Duke, Matilda, and Jacquinetta to the tune of "Che Farò" from Gluck's, *Orpheus and Eurydice* (1762) is also particularly significant." [91] This opera had been recently performed at the Covent Garden in occasion of Mrs. Billington's benefit and it must have certainly been recognised by the audience.

  As suggested by the above examples, the Gothic novels and dramas activated a mechanism of appropriation through the textual incorporation of past

[88] Cox, (ed.), "introduction", in *Seven Gothic Dramas*, cit., p. 91, n. 13.

[89] T. Maynard, "James Boaden", cit., p. 27. See "Song and Choruses", in *The Plays by James Boaden*, cit.

[90] Mrs. Burke. *Songs, duets, choruses, &c. in The ward of the castle. A comic opera, in two acts.* Performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent-Garden. London, 1793), pp. 6 and 9. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online.* Gale. Available from http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW114021634&source=gale&userGroupName=glasuni&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE Accesses February, 18 2009.

[91] Franceschina, "Introduction" to Miss Burke's *The Ward of the Castle*, in Franceschina (ed.), *Sisters of Gore*, cit., p. 21.

musical texts which contributed to the canonical aggrandizement of the hypertext, effecting/affecting even its architextual positioning. In connecting the classical myth of Orpheus and Eurydice with the Gothic plot of the Count and Matilda, *The Ward of the Castle* intertextuality achieved the (anticipated) ennoblement of Miss Burke's comic opera. A similar elevation in cultural status was also achieved through the transversal, yet easily recognizable musical reference to the Gluck 'high' musical text, alluded to for the enjoyment of the genteel spectators. Finally, the democratic and anti-hierarchical nature of appropriation guaranteed the presence also of well-known popular airs, readapted to the Gothic context, which could be recognised and decodified by those members of the audience who had only a mediocre musical education.

As I tried to show, by enacting a powerful mongrelization and recreation of genres the Gothic performance complicates and undermines all long-established notions of intellectual ownership. Not only does the Gothic stage thrive on *synchronic* intergenericity; it also promotes a *diachronic* dissemination of authorship through cultural appropriation/reinvention and a type of revitalising omnivorousness. Quotations, including musical quotations, cooperate with this dynamic interplay.

We may conclude that music in the Gothic performance operated on a double level: on the one hand it gave mood to the play (which was often remembered for its melodies and songs), on the other it positioned the play within the contemporary 'high-brow' musical canon, into whose elevated status it elicited legitimate –albeit indirect- inclusion. Music varied its earlier function of breaking-up device that offered relief -for instance through comic songs- and turned it into a highly emotional ingredient that played a major function in the coordinated nature of the later Gothic shows. From providing a distancing effect music in fact came to increase audience engagement. "Melo-Drame" became the dominant expression of the thematic and formal changes in the drama that I have

illustrated, with music and non-verbal effects becoming increasingly integrated features keyed to illustrate the on-stage events and emotions.

3.2   The Rise of the Scenic Artist

The scholar of scenery up to 1780 is hindered by iconographical scarcity, particularly as far as the representations of the scenes are concerned.[92] Theatre accounts and other stage documents, however, lead us to believe that theatre managers were willing to spend money mostly on the staging of pantomimes or similar entertainments. Hardly any theories of the *mise en scène* are recorded for the above period; as we approach the end of the century we meet with numerous testimonies that show that more attention was being paid to the visual aspects of production. Drury Lane employed up to nine painters at a time (amongst whom Thomas Greenwood, Thomas Frederick Lupino and William Capon); however, Covent Garden's superior effort at elaborate staging is testified by the larger number of artists at work there. In the 1794-95 season Covent Garden had a maximum of twenty-six stage artists, and a number that constantly remained above ten in the whole 1792-1800 period.[93]

Contemporary theatrical reviews are careful to record the details of the scenographies created by the celebrated scene painters of the day. We learnd that the scenery devised by Michael Angelo Rooker (1743-1801, chief designer for the Haymarket from 1778 to approximately the end of the century) for Colman's *The Surrender of Calais* afforded "undeniable evidence of the superior powers of his pencil" (*London Magazine*, August 1791). For Colman's *The Mountaineers* (August 1793) Rooker made sure that"[t]he distinctions of situation, time, costuming, and architecture, so rarely attended to by the painters at the winter theatres, are here observed with critical exactness" (*Thespian Magazine*, September 1793).[94] Of similar standard was the praise for the work of such celebrated artists as Philippe de Loutherbourg, Drury Lane designer-in-chief from

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[92] A. Nicoll, *The Garrick Stage. Theatres and Audience in the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), p. 144

[93] See S. Rosenfeld and E. Croft-Murray, "A Checklist of Scene Painters Working in Great Britain and Ireland in the 18th Century", *Theatre Notebook* Vol. 19, No 4 (1965), pp. 130-146

[94] Ibid., pp. 144-45. For the work of Rooker, see also Patrick Conner, *Michael Angelo Rooker, 1746-1801* (London: B.T. Batsford in association with the Victoria & Albert Museum, 1984).

1771 to1781, who headed a group of stage artists including scene painters, machinists, musicians and costume designers. De Loutherbourg would "harmonise his work with composer and ballet master [and] would require control over workmen. This overall supervision of the whole setting was a new concept which would harmonise hitherto diverse elements."[95] This approach had not been applied to the English stage since the masques of Inigo Jones.

Reviews and theatrical memoirs discuss stage decorations as a reflection of contemporary taste. "Stage productions were dominated by visual elements that mirrored the prevalent aesthetic concerns, and the emphasis placed on pictorial, evocative, and spectacular settings revolutionized the significance that scenic artists had in the context of dramatic presentation," explains Alicia Finkel.[96] It must also be born in mind that the increased size of the end-of-the-century stage required bulkier scenery, as noted by James Boaden:

> The present stage required scenery, certainly, thirty-four feet in height, and about forty-two feet in width, so that an entire suite of new scenes was essential on great occasions, though where *display* was not material, the old pierced flats might be run on still, and the large gaps between them and the wings, filled up by any other scenes drawn forward, merely "to keep the wind away".[97]

According to theatre historian Paul Ranger, the stock nature of the landscapes of the Gothic dramas "enabled the theatre-goer to recognise the Gothic quality of a play."[98] Scenery represented both natural and architectural spaces. The number of the natural settings, rather limited in range (generally a wood, a forest, or a mountain, all locations connected to Burke's theory of the Sublime), were strongly influenced by the current vogue for picturesque travelogues and loco-descriptive poetry, in which the writers recorded their emotional response to

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[95] Rosenfeld and Croft-Murray, "A Checklist of Scene Painters", *Theatre Notebook*, Vol. 19, No 3, cit., p. 106. Philippe-Jacques de Loutherbourg (Strasbourg 1740 - Chiswick 1812) studied art in Paris. In 1763 he became a member of the French Academy. As the travelled on the Continent, he was brought in contact with the works of many celebrated stage designers, who made him familiar with the rules of scenic perspective. In 1782 he was elected a member of the Royal Academy in recognition of his work in landscape painting.

[96] A. Finkel, *Romantic Stages. Set and Costume Design in Victorian England* (Jefferson-London: McFarland, 1996), p. 1.

[97] Boaden, *The Life of Mrs. Jordan*, cit., vol. I, p. 254.

[98] Ranger, *Terror and Pity Reign in Every Breast*, cit., p. 20.

majestic and untamed natural scenery. For instance, commenting on de Loutherbourg's scenery for the popular holiday pantomime *The Wonders of Derbyshire* (1779) Michael Angelo Rooker noted that "never were such romantic and picturesque paintings exhibited in that Theatre before." The act drop, he continued, "gave you an idea of the mountains and waterfalls, most beautifully executed, exhibiting a terrific appearance."[99]

Scene design was influenced by various fields of the creative arts such as prose writings, aesthetics treatises, and verse narratives, which, in their turn, drew inspiration from and re-elaborated the very same cultural sources of the dramas, above all landscape painting and travel literature. In set design the spectators could recognise and appreciate theories and perceptions explored in various guises in a number of "sister arts"[100] –and across the gamut of transcodifications. On the lexicological level we may notice, for instance, that *tableau*, the freeze pose used as a form of visual and plastic shorthand to ostend the actors' emotions, is the French word for *picture*; the very fashionable term *picturesque* itself is a transparent derivation of *picture*. In this climate it will not be a surprise to know that landscape was appreciated through an optical device called 'Claude' glass. This convex viewing instrument -"tinted smoky grey"[101]- offered an atmospheric view of a real natural scene. The picture -uniform in tone and with neat outside limits- looked like a painting or a picture-framed stage. Ann Radcliffe herself used an optical instrument similar to a 'Claude' glass during her travels:

> [she] carried a telescope with her on her trips, not only to see things close up, but often to judge the effect of a scene 'as through a telescope reversed'. Her novels in due

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[99] Quoted in Rosenfeld and Croft-Murray, "A Checklist of Scene Painters", *Theatre Notebook* Vol. 19, No. 3, cit., p. 109. A drop was a kind of flat scene, or curtain. It had a mechanism "where the canvas is furled, or unfurled upon a roller, placed either at the top or the bottom of the scene". See Document no. 173a, "The mechanics of staging, 1803-79" in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre*, cit., p. 228.

[100] See J. Hagstrum, *The Sisters Arts: The Tradition of Literary Pictorialism and English Poetry from Dryden to Gray* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1958). On the relation of narrative and pictorial arts in the nineteenth century, see also Martin Meisel, *Realizations. Narrative, Pictorial, and Theatrical Arts in Nineteenth-century England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983).

[101] C. Baugh, "Philippe James [sic] de Loutherbourg and Early Pictorial Theatre: Some Aspects of its Cultural Context", in J. Redmond (ed.), *The Theatrical Space*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 116.

course provided the subjects for ten paintings and drawings exhibited at the Royal Academy.[102]

Increased scenographic realism must be contextualised within the contemporary economics of consumption of new forms of popular visual culture, of which the panoramas and similar visual entertainments would become the most spectacular examples. The appropriation of picturesque scenery for the stage, I shall argue, contributed to the democratisation of such elitist travel experiences as the Grand Tour by offering them up to the pleasures of the popular bourgeois audience.[103] In this sense the theatrical appropriation of apparently elitist cultural experiences reflects a cultural trend of the end-of-the-century British metropolitan culture, as shown, among the others, by the changing and expanding nature of the public attending theatres or other popular artistic enterprises as the Boydell Shakespeare Gallery.

This cultural mechanism of cultural appropriation and intellectual exchange has an important consequence in terms of my study. Through the urban circulation of culture, not only did 'high' art move out of the educated spheres, but other less reputable visual artistic forms –such as those connected with the theatre– were admitted into the realm of 'high' art. The implications of this twofold process of cultural exchange have been highlighted by Judith Pascoe, who has argued that Boydell's "gallery had the effect of bringing [high] art to a mass audience, both through the exhibition of paintings in a public hall that could be entered by anyone with the modest price of admission and, more important, through the reproduction of engravings."[104]

In the context of my enquiry, it is worth noting that the popular consumption of landscape sights –we may call it the 'spectacularization of topography'- by way of scenography diverged from its high-brow counterparts by virtue of both its themes and forms. Its subjects were mostly British topographic landmarks instead

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[102] Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, cit., p. 76.

[103] See D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real*, cit., p. 103.

[104] J. Pascoe, *Romantic Theatricality. Gender, Poetry, and Spectatorship* (Ithaca-London: Cornell University Press, 1997), p. 206.

of Continental vistas and monuments; furthermore, this consumption took place in the social space of the auditoria. Scenography would be consumed in two interconnected ways. As a social art form, it would be shared and viewed collectively, and enjoyed for its realism. At the same time, its rich narrative associations would connect it with the symbolically evocative and deeply interiorised landscapes of the Gothic novels, thus operating as a transvaluation mechanism with a powerful idealistic drive.

It is indeed debatable whether only a limited part of the spectators was educated enough to respond correctly to landscape iconographism and symbolism, and as such to appreciate a significant part of the performed spectacle. [105] According to Paul Ranger, these spectators predominantly belonged to the moneyed classes -particularly the aristocracy and the upwardly-mobile sections of the wealthier bourgeoisie- who were engaged in travel and could afford to purchase paintings and prints. On the contrary, according to Gillen D'Arcy Wood in these same years "the Georgian elite's love affair with the visual poetry of landscape reached the urban middle class."[106] This more fluid interpretation of the circulation of culture is shared by John Brewer. He authoritatively contends that the contemporary audience, particularly the ladies, benefited of an artistic education through the extensive circulation of contemporary newspaper magazines and inexpensive art treatises.[107]

It would seem appropriate to affirm that the idea of the *material possession* of art maintained by Paul Ranger may be helpfully enlarged to include the notion of *cultural possession* at large. The popular periodical literature and the visits to the art galleries may have in fact significantly contributed to the social construction of the discourses of art and culture as well as to the widespread circulation of artistic news and facts –making the pictorial and literary references

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[105] See Ranger, *Terror and Pity Reign in Every Breast*, cit., p. 20.
[106] D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real*, cit., p. 103.
[107] J. Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination. English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997).

inherent in scenery recognizable and 'readable' for a reasonably large part of the theatrical audience.[108]

If we not turn to stage sets and props, we realise that from being indeterminate and scarcely accurate the theatre signs of the Gothic past steadily became more precise and realistic. In point of fact, with the late eighteenth-century development in stage aesthetics, the vague medieval atmosphere of the early Gothic experiments was supplanted by an antiquarian interest in historical authenticity. The mutation in the functions of stage design reached a key point under the management of John Philip Kemble with William Capon, principal scene designer at Drury Lane. The antiquarian Capon brought on stage full-sized copies of ancient real buildings with historically correct drawbridges, battlements, towers (often practicable), and monumental naves. "He copied old buildings with meticulous care for his scenery,"[109] summarize theatre historians S. Rosenfeld and E. Croft-Murray.

Capon's ability as a draughtsman is recorded by his sketchbooks, in which the artist described even "the type of stone used and the effects of light in particular buildings."[110] His unsurpassed reputation as the stage architect and scene painter of the Gothic was crowned with the backcloth painting of Madrid Cathedral Church in James Boaden's *Aurelio and Miranda* (I. i), and the interior of the "Convent Chapel, of old Gothick architecture"[111] in Baillie's *De Monfort*, a "massive, superbly decorated interior [with nave, choir, and side aisles], 56 feet

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[108] On this aspect of eighteenth-century culture see also Neil McKendrick, John Brewer, J.H. Plumb (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: the Commercialization of eighteenth-century England* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

[109] S. Rosenfeld and E. Croft-Murray, "A Checklist of Scene Painters", *Theatre Notebook*, vol. 19 (1965), cit., pp. 14-15. The critics quote, among the others, "1794 Chapel of pointed architecture for oratorios; […] painted scenes for *Richard III* for New Beaufort Square Theatre, Bath; ancient ante-chamber in old Palace Yard about 1556; entrance to Tower; ancient council chamber; inside of courtyard and of ancient fortress; ancient plain chamber; […] *Richard III*, state chamber, vaulted chamber, baronial and Tudor halls; *Iron Chest*, Gothic library." See also Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, cit., 1: p. 101.

[110] A. Finkel, *Romantic Stages*, cit., p. 8.

[111] Baillie, *De Monfort* (IV. ii), in *Plays on the Passions*, cit., p. 363.

wide, 52 feet deep, and 37 feet high."[112] As remarked by Boaden, "[t]he structure, for it really was one, that latter years saw erected for the play of De Monfort, would have been condemned as unnecessary, or pronounced impracticable by the artists of Garrick's theatre."[113] As well as expressing the coeval evolution in dramaturgy, Capon's works appropriate for the stage that novel desire to explore and represent a non-classical past that is the basis of the Gothic aesthetics.

The early disregard of historical accuracy in the buildings and costumes signified that originally "the interest of the audience lay in the characters and situations."[114]This was clearly the case for the precursors of Gothic dramas, which only aimed at recalling a vague medieval atmosphere. At a later stage, despite the attention devoted to the reconstruction of historically accurate scenery, accuracy and detail paradoxically remained unnoticed since in most cases "applause was for the spectacular nature of Capon's settings, not their veracity."[115] When mistakes in scene details were made, it was in fact only a handful of spectators who would be able to recognize them. Representational accuracy was a matter of contention only with the antiquarians in the audience, who condemned in the press any easy approximation to historical verisimilitude. Between February 1799 and June 1802, for instance, the influential *Gentleman's Magazine* published a series of critical articles signed "An Artist and Antiquary." Dedicated to the staging inaccuracies of both Colman's *Feudal Times* (Drury Lane, 1799) and *The Castle Spectre*; these commentaries were aptly entitled "Of the impropriety of theatrical representations as far as they relate to the scenery, dresses, and decorations, when brought forward as illustrations of the antient history of this country."[116]

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[112] Finkel, *Romantic Stages*, cit., p. 9.

[113] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq.*, cit., vol. I p. 280.

[114] Ranger, *Terror and Pity Reign in Every Breast*, cit., p. 5.

[115] Ibid., p. 5

[116] The articles may be accessed in digitalised form at the URL.
http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?url_ver=Z39.88-2004&res_dat=xri:bp:&rft_dat=xri:bp:journal:e591

The rules of perspective were common to both scene design and landscape sketches, both of which were constructed on the five planes of foreground, middle ground, background, sides and view, as exemplified by the following graphic stage direction in Matthew Lewis's *Adelmorn, The Outlaw* (Drury Lane, 1801):

> SCENE II. *A Forest;* <u>*on one side*</u> *a Cavern;* <u>*on the other*</u> *a natural Cascade. A Cottage is seen* <u>*through the trees*</u>.[117]

Perspective was employed with great effects also in Act I, scene i of *Bluebeard* (Drury Lane, 1797), a popular afterpiece recurrently played along with Boaden's *Aurelio and Miranda* (see tables of intertheatricality, *supra*):

> *The Sun rises gradually. – A March is heard at a great distance. – Abomelique, and a magnificent train appear,* <u>*at the top*</u> *of the Mountain. – They* <u>*descend*</u> *through a winding path: -* <u>*Sometimes they are lost to the sight*</u>*, to mark the irregularities of the road. The Musick grows stronger as they approach. – At length, Abomelique's train range themselves* <u>*on each side*</u> *of the Stage, and sing the Chorus, as he* <u>*marches down*</u> *through their ranks. – The Villagers come from their Houses.*[118]

Cox and Gamer explain:

> With perspective painting, with a child playing Abomelique at a distance, and with pasteboard horses operated by machinists, the theatre could provide the illusion of watching the procession from a distance, which is then lost from view at the turn of the road, allowing the real procession here to come on stage.[119]

The *Bluebeard* stage directions show that the use of perspective for interiors and exteriors, orchestrated stage floor, upper stage space, and well-lit cut-out scenes –placed one behind the other to convey a merging view- would increase three-dimensional verisimilitude. The wonders of staging united with this 'reality

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[117] M. G. Lewis, *Aldemorn the Outlaw: A Romantic Drama* (I. ii). Available from http://www.unipr.it/arpa/dipling/DL/Adelmorn/Adelmorn_text.html Accessed on December 2, 2006. The emphases are mine.

[118] Colman, *Bluebeard*, in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., pp. 80-81. The emphases are mine.

[119] Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., n. 23 p. 80.

effect' principally aimed at inducing an emotional response in the spectator, what de Loutherbourg called "a new sensation upon the public."[120]

The improved financial situation of the scene designers testifies to their enhanced artistic status as well as to the managers' commitment to spectacular innovations. From being paid by the piece, the day or the week, they began to be salaried more regularly, and some of them were raised to command excellent earnings. The names of celebrated scenic artists started to appear regularly on playbills and they were often printed "in larger type than that used for the names of the principal actors and much larger than the type used for the author's names"[121]. The typographical prominence of these names implies that the reputation of the scenographers had become an important element in pre-production. Their skills now represented an attraction for the theatregoer, significantly shaped his/her horizon of expectations and anticipated his/her spectatorial pleasures. A good example is provided by the playbill of the first edition of Kemble's musical opera *Lodoiska* (Drury Lane, June 1794), which explains in attractive detail:

> Act I. The *Scene* is painted by MR. [Thomas] GREENWOOD, and his assistants. Act II. The *Scene* is painted by MR. [Thomas] MALTON, and MESRSS. [Thomas] LUPINO and [J.] DEMARIA, his assistants. Act III. The *Scenes* are painted by MR. GREENWOOD; and the *Machinery* is invented by MR. CABANEL. The *Dresses* and *Decorations* are designed and executed by MR. JOHNSTONE, and MISS REIN.[122]

The coordinated nature of the Gothic-like and historical shows is also illustrated in the playbill of James Cobb's, *The Siege of Belgrade* (see Fig. 6). This

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[120] Baugh, "Philippe James [sic] de Loutherbourg and Early Pictorial Theatre", cit., p. 127. Abomelique's procession was applauded as "exceed[ing] any thing of the kind we have for a long time witnessed," being "natural and magnificent" and "well managed and grand". See the reviews of the opening night performance, respectively in *The Morning Herald* no. 5,406 (17 January 1798), p. 2 and *The True Briton* no. 1,581 (17 January 1798), p. 3. Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, p. 330 and p. 332), and the review of the 1811 revival of the play, *The Morning Post* no. 12,497 (19 February 1811), p. 3 in ibid., p. 334.

[121] A. Finkel, *Romantic Stages*, cit., p. 9. On the importance of playbills in theatre history see Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London*, cit. and Bratton, *New Readings in Theatre History*, cit.

[122] The playbill is quoted in Thomas, "Stage Decorations of London Theatre", cit., n. 7 p. 68.

iconographic document argues for the relevance of illusionism in terms of the drawing potential of a performance.

6. James Cobb, *The Siege of Belgrade; an Opera in Three Act, as performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane*, (London: printed & sold by J. Dale, [1791]) RCM Library, H380/2. Available from http://www.cph.rcm.ac.uk/Virtual%20Exhibitions/Music%20in%20English%20Theatre/Pages/Caption6.htm

The playbill for *The Siege of Belgrade* recalls the integrated nature of the pseudo-Gothic or Medieval-inspired mongrel plays of the end-of-the-century. While the name of the James Cobb, the playwright, is not cited in the playbill, being in fact metonymically represented by the title of the dramatic opera he composed, two other dramatic systems –music and scenography- are advertised both directly (through mention of "The Music principally composed by Stephen Storace") and indirectly, by means if the visual reproduction of one of the elaborate sets of the opera, possibly the opening view of the Turkish and Austrian camps outside

Belgrade: "*Village of Servia, with the Danube; on one side the Turkish camp, on the other the Austrian, which appears at a distance*" (I. i).[123]

It was not rare for a dramatist to acknowledge thankfully the contribution given by the stage artists to the success of a play which relied heavily on stage and technical effects, as in the case of *Blue-Beard*:

> […] I have done some good. […] I have brought forward *Young Greenwood* (a Scene-painter of Nineteen!) to shew Design, and execution of uncommon promise: -
> And *Johnstone*, a *classical* Machinist, (a *rara avis*, alas! In Theatres) has added another Wreath to his well-earn'd laurels.
> I have made the Dialogue and Songs (such as they are) subservient to the above-mention'd Artists: - and, no men, surely, ever made better use of a vehicle.[124]

By the end of the 1790s the Gothic theatrical text had established itself as the technically-advanced result of the coordination of several codes and partial texts. The dramatic text was merely one of them -possibly, not even the most important one. We realise this also from the *Prologue* to Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*, where visual and sound effects are evoked (in bold in the passage).

> Far from the haunts of men, […]
> A fair enchantress dwells, Romance her name.
> She loathes the sun, or blazing taper's light:
> **The moon-beamed landscape and tempestuous night**
> Alone she loves; and oft, with **glimmering lamp**,
> **Drear forests, ruined aisles, and haunted towers**,
> Forlorn she roves, and raves away the hours.
> Anon, when **storms howl loud and lash the deep**,
> Desperate she climbs the **sea-rock's beetling steep**;
> There wildly **strikes her harp's** fantastic strings,
> **Tell to the moon** how grief her bosom wrings,
> And while **her strange song** chaunts fictitious ills,
> In wounded hearts Oblivion's balms distils.[125]

In his final address "To the Reader", Lewis farther acknowledges that his work had been primarily a successful *performance* by stating that

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[123] J. Cobb, *The Siege of Belgrade.* A comic opera, in three acts, as it is performed at the Theatres Royal, London and Dublin (Dublin: printed, and sold by the booksellers, 1791), p. 3. Available from *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale. URL: http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO

[124] Colman, "Introduction", *Blue-Beard, or Female Curiosity!*, In Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 78.

[125] M. G. Lewis, *Prologue*, *The Castle Spectre 1798*, Jonathan Wordsworth (ed.), (Woodstock Books: Oxford-New York, 1990) p. iii. The emphases are mine.

> its success on the stage […] does not prevent my being very doubtful as to its reception in the closet, when divested of its beautiful music, splendid scenery, and, above all, of the acting, excellent throughout.[126]

A few years later, in what is considered to be the first example of British melodrama, Holcroft conclusively reminds the audience that by then no dramatist could overlook "the Performers, the Composer of the Music, the Scenery, and the Dances; all of which, *in representation*, have so essentially contributed to success. I acknowledge their respective aid with pleasure."[127] The dramaturgical potential of the non-verbal languages of the stage could be contested no longer and paradoxically, even the dramatists and managers now relied more on scenery and effects than they did on dialogue and acting.

We can assume that in its earlier phases scenery provided ornamentation, contributing to the mimesis of the framework of the action. This scenographic illusionism ought to be contextualised within the visual culture of verisimilitude arising between the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century –an epistemic shift that cultural historian Gillen D'Arcy Wood has defined with the name "the shock of the real."[128] Thomas Malton's *A Complete Treatise on Perspective in Theory and Practice on the Principles of Dr. Taylor* (London, 1775) informs us that during the latter part of the century decoration became an integral element of action. "It is somewhat surprising," writes Malton, "that all who are concerned or in any way engaged in scene painting, do not make perspective their immediate study; being the basis, the very soul and existence of their profession."[129] Picturesque landscapes in particular were adapted to perspective interiors, creating a sense of place that was at the same time illusionistic and remote, universal and particular:

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[126] Ibid., p. 103.

[127] Thomas Holcroft, "Advertisement", *A Tale of Mystery,* cit., p. vi. Mine the italics.

[128] G. D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real*, cit.

[129] Quoted in Thomas, "Stage Decorations of London Theatres", cit., p. 70.

The proscenium formed a natural frame, and the wings were the inevitable side screens of irregular rock, trees, cottages, etc., conventionally employed in all picturesque art. Ground-rows and cut-cloths assisted in building up the foreground and middle distance, while the back scene was a fine perspective view of mountains, lake, or seacoast. Once the artists had mastered the tricks of breaking up the scene to give the illusion of great depth, the opportunities of painting effective sets in the picturesque style were greatly enhanced. With a fair degree of realism in the painting and lighting, nature could scarcely be seen in the theatre, except as "picture-like".[130]

The use of pictorial long vistas had already made familiar the concept of receding planes, which seemed "composed of wings and back-drops."[131] In point of fact some passages written by the Rev. William Gilpin (*Observations on the River Wye…Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty; Made in 1770*, 1782, and *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, 1798) describe picturesque natural views as if they were theatrical scenes or set of wings. This similarity surfaces in the works of many Gothic authors. One example of the intersemiosis novel/drama/painting along the lines of the picturesque is given by the ruined Cistercian Netley Abbey (near Southampton) which Ann Radcliffe visited sometime in the early part of her life. Norton maintains that the Abbey "is the model for the ruined cloisters in [Radcliffe's] novels."[132] The picturesque ruins of Netley Abbey – central in the development of a landscape tradition with strong connections with the Radcliffe school of Gothic- were illustrated in Gilpin's *Observations on the Western Parts of England*, and reproduced in many aquatint views throughout the 1790s. In 1795 one Richard Warner wrote the novel *Netley Abbey. A Gothic Story*; only one year earlier William Pearce had composed an operatic farce of the same name, which was produced at Covent Garden in 1794. It must be pointed out, though, that this latter work has no overt Gothic connections, being in fact a play of maritime topic. It is interesting to realize that Pearce choose a very allusive title which the spectators would immediately situate within a highly evocative cultural context. *Netley Abbey* played as the afterpiece

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[130] Ibid., p. 76.

[131] Ranger, *Terror and Pity Reign in Every Breast*, cit., p. 11.

[132] Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, cit., p. 75.

to *Fontainville Forest* throughout April and May 1794 (see tables of Boaden's inter-theatricality, pp. 119-134).

Approaching the end of the century, then, we find several scene painters who were engaged in the realisation of scenery based on their own sketches of landscape views. Both the titles of de Loutherbourg's *The Wonders of Derbyshire* and Robert Andrew's *Penmaenmawr* (1794) suggest strong topographical associations with those British regions that were becoming well-known tourist areas. This growing interest in the exact reproductions of recognizable British topographic landmarks for the scenery confirms the aesthetic detachment with which the Gothic productions were enjoyed. In a sort of scenographic 'double-coding' Gothic scenery mixed the unfamiliar signs of long-gone ages or the alien (even though in domesticated guise, as in the case of the Oriental Gothic) with recognisable signs from the everyday world of the audience. This formal coding mixed 'high' and 'low' cultural forms –in our case the first-hand documents describing the Grand Tour of the elite along with their dissemination and consumption in popular magazine and prints- and required the ability of the reader to presuppose the cultural and visual intertext of the contemporary stage arts.

If we now take a closer look at the reviews and other contemporary records of the stage a distinct story seems to surface from beneath the standard theory of the late-Georgian scenographic realism. This subtext appears useful in reconstructing the pragmatics of the Gothic performance in terms of appropriation. I would like to suggest that the analytical approach of the antiquarians in the audience seems to imply a theory of aesthetic detachment in which the spectators' suspension of disbelief may be challenged by the necessary critical awareness of the dramatic illusion. Arguably, this more objective stance of play-going and vision seems to run counter to the prevailing tendency in scene design and stage machinery, which made every effort to secure dramatic illusionism. In pointing out this contradiction Backscheider reminds us that "[t]he plays and sets were, after all, manmade. In fact, in contrast to playgoers who may

have wanted maximum illusion, playwrights seem to have shared the desire of eighteenth-century novelists for analytical and reflective auditors."[133]

James Boaden was one of the stage practitioners most aware of the pragmatics involving the Gothic author, auditor, and artist of the stage. My tentative reconstruction of the contexts of production and reception of the Gothic drama may benefit from reporting Boaden's opinion in full:

> But neither tragedy nor comedy ever seemed with me to derive a benefit proportioned to the pains that have been taken in the scenic department of our stages. When the scenes are first drawn on, or the roller descends, the work exhibited is considered a few moments as a work of art – the persons who move before it then engross the attention – at the exit it is raised and drawn off, and is speedily forgotten, or seen with indifference the second time. If the perspective, as to the actor standing in front of the scene, was so accurate that the whole effect should be delusive, and the impression be of actual sky, and land, and building (though an objection will always remain to the abrupt junction of the borders with the tops of the scenes – the wings, and the scoring lines where the flats meet each other, - the grooves in which they move, the boarded stage and other difficulties hitherto insurmountable,) I could understand the object of those who spend so much money in the elaboration – but I confess I am of the opinion, that they should never do more than suggest to the imagination; and that it would not be desirable that the spectator should lose his senses to the point of forgetting that he is in a regular theatre, and enjoying a work of art invented for his amusement and instruction by a poet, and acted by another artist of corresponding talent called a player. All beyond this is the dream of ignorance and inexperience.[134]

Boaden's theory clearly harks back to Samuel Johnson's *Preface* to the 1765 edition of the works of William Shakespeare. Here the critic argues that the audience is fully conscious of the fictionality of the on-stage events and is moved by them only because they are *potentially* rather than *actually* true: "[i]mitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mistaken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind."[135]

It is my opinion that the shifting divide between the anti-rational participation of the emotions and the rational detachment of the perceptive senses seems to recycle for the stage the mechanism of the 'explained supernatural' that was being perfected in these very same years by Ann Radcliffe, and, albeit with

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[133] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 171.

[134] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons*, cit., p. 403.

[135] S. Johnson, "Preface to Shakespeare", in W. Ralegh (ed.), *Johnson on Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford, 1928), p. 28.

less success, by the minor novelists who wrote in her shadow. With the expression 'explained supernatural' we mean the final discovery that all the unexplained events in the story are due to no supernatural agency but rather to totally rational conditions or manmade trickery. The dramatic/narrative parallel I draw may be better appreciated if we turn to the words of Anne McWhir. She argues that "while we are invited to judge we are also expected to suspend disbelief: our rational judgment and our aesthetic response are opposed to each other."[136] We may wish to add to this contention that the etymology of the word *verisimilitude*, the Latin word *verisimilitudo*, is itself a compound of two terms, *verus* and *similis*, respectively meaning *true* and *similar*. Ironically, what we are left with are the two opposite sides of the same coin: an event, a situation, or a character may be intrinsically (and simultaneously) 'truth-like', but also 'like truth', that is to say '*almost* true'.[137] In their harnessing of realism and illusionism, truthfulness and deception -semantically conveyed also by the oxymoronic formula 'explained/supernatural'- both Gothic novels and Gothic dramas powerfully addressed the uncertain hermeneutical nature of truth and knowledge at the end of the eighteenth century.

As I have tried to show, scenery played an intrinsic part in the Gothic action. The receding forestage areas implied a greater contact of the actors with the decorated setting, in a movement from forestage to upstage which created a new spatial typology. Now the players started moving *in* the scenery instead of *against* it. Dramatic space tended to coincide more closely with stage space, contributing to the development of a more realistic performance. Later, the

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[136] A. McWhir, "The Gothic Transgression of Disbelief: Walpole, Radcliffe, Lewis", in Kenneth Graham (ed.), *Gothic Fictions*, cit., p. 36.

[137] The *OED* (second edition 1989) offers three definitions of *verisimilitude*. The first reads: "[...] the fact or quality of being verisimilar; the appearance of being true or real; likeness or resemblance to truth, reality, or fact; probability"; the third "A statement, etc., which has the mere appearance or show of being true or in accordance with fact; an apparent truth."

removal of the proscenium doors completed the absorption of the actors in the scenic space.

If the constructed scene could not adequately achieve a particular effect, a painted drop-cloth could be employed, in which case the characters had to create the atmosphere of the location with their words. Accordingly, we may assume that in its early stage the Gothic was still evocative and rhetorical rather than pictorial. Illusionism became pre-eminent only in its later phase, when perspective-layered interiors working on hinges and grooves, and advancement in lighting techniques managed to recreate a more realistic sense of place. Formal neo-classical perspective and stage settings were commonly broken up in a more natural fashion by the use of ground rows and other various irregularly placed pieces.

The alternation of the realist and the supernatural could be achieved by means of scenography, practicables, and stage machines. Transparencies (illuminated fabric screens of different colours), gauze curtains placed in front of a character to create the effect of fog or an eerie atmosphere, and silk screens placed before lights were imported from the pantomimic shows onto the legitimate stage. (It is no coincidence that in a further example of the coeval talk between arts, experimentation with the new translucent pigments of watercolour became common in this same period.)[138] In effect it must be brought in mind that pantomime, another language from which the Gothic drama heavily drew, had already educated the audience to a detached appreciation of the wonders of scenery and special effects. This form of spectacular realism found counterparts first in the Eudophusikon,[139] a text-less and actor-less theatrical exhibit

[138] Baugh, "Philippe James [sic] de Loutherbourg and Early Pictorial Theatre", cit., p. 116.

[139] De Loutherbourg's miniature Eidophusikon (first exhibited in various rooms in 1781, and then in 1786 and 1787) was a theatrical exhibit with no players in which the performance consisted exclusively of scenic effect. The effects devised by de Loutherbourg give an idea of the techniques employed on the patent stages: "Showed set of five scenes interspersed with four transparencies and musical interludes composed by Michael Arne. With them continued experiments with lighting, representation of times of day, movements of clouds. For last stretched painted linen on frames twenty times the size of tiny stage [6 ft. wide and 8 ft. deep] and raised them diagonally on rolling machines to show clouds rising from horizon at varying speeds. Painted semi-transparent and lit from in front by lamps concealed in proscenium; transparencies lit from behind by powerful Argand lamps. Different times of day suggested by coloured strips of stained glass before line of lamps which threw varied tints onto the scenery. Also contrived to suggest miles of recession in small place"

immensely popular the 1780s, and later in Robert Barker's panorama (which appeared on stage in *Harlequin and Cinderella*, Covent Garden 1820) and Bontou and Daguerre's diorama (which arrived in London in 1823).

In keeping with the bisemic nature of the term *verisimilitude* which I have recalled earlier, the use of special effects was also twofold and somewhat contrasting. They might be exploited to represent seasonal and meteorological effects, thus increasing realism, but at the same time, they may also convey an aura of supernatural magic to the stage. As contemporary landscape painting started to become less referential and more dream-like, visual perception shifted from iconographism to emotionalism. In similar fashion, special visual effects slowly shifted towards the visionary. In such a way this skilful scenographic juxtaposition of sublime and picturesque scenery tried to appropriate for the stage "the Janus-face of the world."[140]

The juxtaposition of sublime and picturesque scenes, the quick succession of transparencies, spectacular transformations, the crafty exploitation of the stage openings: the Gothic spectacular paraphernalia visualised in front of the spectators -and appropriated for the stage- the obscure issues and forces that lie beneath and beyond the phenomenal world as well as within man, and reasserted the presence of beings which rationality cannot account for. An elaborate stage direction from George Colman's dramatic romance *Blue Beard* effectively shows how scenography and machines could be used to stage the intrinsic ontological uncertainty at the heart of Gothic, of which the supernatural is the most recognisable and most frequently discussed feature. The murderous Abomelique enjoins his wife-to-be Fatima never to enter the Blue Chamber, the atrocious site of his uxoricidal crimes. Never was command more useless. At the simple turn of

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(S. Rosenfeld and E. Croft-Murray, "A Checklist of Scene Painters", *Theatre Notebook*, Vol. 19, No 3, cit., p. 110). Very interestingly, Thomas reports that "[t]o exquisite details in the construction of parts of the setting and to care in management of color and light, De Loutherbourg managed to add sound effects which led one commentator to speak of his developing the 'picturesque of sound' " ("Stage Decorations of London Theatres", cit., n. 45 p. 78). This claim is all the more relevant in consideration of the increasing role played by music in end-of-the-century theatre and drama, see the previous section on "Speech, Music, Sound. An Example of the Stage Appropriation of the Gothic Novel."

[140] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 171.

a magical key in the lock of the fateful door, Abomelique's chamber of horror actually surfaces from beneath and behind the stage space, not only showing but actually bringing on stage the fragile and ever-shifting divide between life and death, natural and supernatural, Eros and Thanatos in the Gothic discourse. In the passages below I shall indicate in bold those terms which refer to stage changes and transformations.

> (*SHAKABAC puts the key to the lock. The door instantly **sinks**, with a tremendous crash, and the Blue Chamber appears, streaked with vivid streams of blood. The Figures in the pictures over the door **change** their position and ABOMELIQUE is represented in the action of beheading the beauty **he was before supplicating**. The pictures and devices of love change to subjects of horror and death. The interior apartment – which the sinking of the door discovers – exhibits various tombs in a sepulchral building, in the midst of which ghastly and supernatural forms are seen, some in motion, some fixed. In the centre is a large skeleton seated on a tomb, with a dart in his hand, smiling, and, over his head, in characters of blood, is written: 'THE PUNISHMENT OF CURIOSITY'*) (I. Iii)[141]

The following stage directions make the duality of reality tragically unmistakable:

> At the end of the duet, FATIMA puts the key in the door, which instantly **sinks** and discovers the interior apartment as at first represented. The inscription on the skeleton's head is now 'THE PUNISHMENT OF CURIOSITY'. The Blue Chamber undergoes the same **change** as in the first instance. FATIMA and IRENE shriek, run to each other, and hide their heads in each other's bosom. At this moment, SHACABAC appears at the top of the staircase, then runs down hastily. As he descends, the door **rises** and the chamber **resumes** its original appearance. (II. v)[142]

The skeleton that magically appears on stage at the turn of the key heightens the fact that Gothic dramas could transpose in three-dimensional space –with Eco we could say that they *ostended*[143]- the emotions, fears and phobias the novels evoked on the page. Stage traps enabled objects and actors seemingly to appear and to disappear from the stage, challenging with their deceptiveness both sight – the privileged system of knowledge in the eighteenth-century episteme- and materiality. Making tangible and appropriating for the stage the illusoriness and elusiveness of reality must have had a forceful impact on the contemporary

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[141] G. Colman, *Blue Beard, or Female Curiosity*, in *Plays by George Colman the Younger and Thomas Morton*, cit., p. 192. The emphases are mine.

[142] Ibid. pp. 202-203. The inscription "The punishment of curiosity" may have been written in phosphorous, according to a convention used in pantomimes. See scene XV of Dibdin, *Harlequin and Humpo*: "Music: No. 64. […] The words "Be Bold" appear in transparent letters in the Rock". Cox and Gamer suggest: "The printed version indicates that these words were also spoken by an offstage voice" (*The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., n. 61 p. 219).

[143] Eco, "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance", cit.

audience, particularly when these close encounters and epiphanic revelations were surrounded by an aura of spectacular supernaturalism, amid smoke or sundry special effects as in the final scene of *The Castle Spectre*.

The complex epistemological configuration I have retrieved in Gothic dramas may be also located in many illustrations of the Gothic novels -often used as the eye-catching frontispieces of the volumes- which seem to offer a pocket-size, 'one frame' metonymy of the stage spectacles themselves.

ROUND TOWER.

7. C. F. Barrett, *The Round Tower: or, The Mysterious Witness, an Irish Legendary Tale of the Sixth Century* (London: Tegg and Castleman, 1803). Chapbook frontispiece. Available from http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/collections/sadleir-black/goldapx.html

In this illustration from the chapbook *The Round Tower, or The Mysterious Witness* the preternatural apparition acting as the focus of the plate materializes amid clouds and sulphurous smoke. The sense of terror experienced by the two astonished onlookers in the illustration –visually expressed though the grammar of the body miming the signs of awe and wonderment- must have been reassuringly distant from the one experienced by the buyers of the book, who could possess

and consume the paper thrills given by such Gothic horrors at a cheap price and in the safety of their own homes.

In conclusion, we may say that approaching the end of the century the functions of Gothic scenery varied. Initially, scenery was the mimesis of the context of action, often with props or practicables which were used for certain operations. In a later phase ornamentation became secondary, and scenery also gave an image of the play's emotional universe, often recurring to music and lighting effects. More importantly for the present inquiry, I suggest that scenery and stage set –the system of technologically-advanced, shifting signifiers of Gothic drama- appropriated for the stage the epistemological doubts, the anti-rationalism, and the terrors of Gothic to which they offered three-dimensional, live homologies. The "epistemology of the irrational"[144] identified by Peter Brooks as the *nucleus* of Gothic finds verisimilar actualisation on the stage. As in a distorted mirror, the spectacle we see can be uncannily alien and known, at one and the same time both tantalisingly true and reassuringly un-true.

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[144] P. Brooks, "Virtue and Terror: 'The Monk'", in Fred Botting and Dale Townshend (eds.), *Gothic. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies.* Vol. II. *Eighteenth-century Gothic: Radcliffe, Reader, Writer, Romancer* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 202

3.3   *Lighting and Weather Effects*

Once the Gothic stage design and scenic conventions became established, the public grew accustomed to recognise specific elements situating the scene (for instance the cascade, the cavern, the hut of the banditti, the forest), and to anticipate their importance for the plot. As we have seen, the audience also became familiar with the dramaturgical and semiological potentials of several auxiliary non-verbal elements, including lighting. As one among several stage enunciators, lighting could be used to signal the modalities of action, to provide comment on action, and to create atmosphere.

After Garrick's realistic revolution at mid-century, lighting became integral to staging. The numerous wax candles illuminating the auditorium remained lit throughout the performance. (Gas was introduced as a means of illumination only in 1817.) We understand from a present-day reconstruction of contemporary stage action that lighting effects passed from being merely decorative to meaning-producing, also as a consequence of the progress of technology:

> We can be sure that there was a constant increase in the volume of light placed at the disposal of machinists, that the machinists learned better how to mass lights at different areas of the stage while keeping other areas in shadow, and that they made some progress in mastering the control of both the color and the volume of light during a scene.[145]

The forestage was darkened or illuminated, as necessity required, with concealed lighting points behind the flats and the sides, and a row of footlights extending in apertures all along the forestage (the so-called 'footlight traps', which allowed for raising and lowering the footlights).[146] One of the principal effects of directional lighting was that it focussed the attention on the stage –and thus not only on the actors, but also on stagecraft. Widely lit auditoria also meant that special effects were needed for the reproduction of natural phenomena such

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[145] Russell Thomas, "Contemporary Taste in the Stage Decorations of the London Theatres, 1770-1800". *Modern Philology.* Vol. 42 (1944), p. 72.

[146] See the document no. 173a, "Apertures of the Stage" in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre,* cit., in partic. p. 227.

as thunderbolts, hailstorms and rain.[147] In point of fact such extra-musical and visual effects were much appreciated, and they are regularly enclosed in the printed versions of the dramas as well as in the Gothic opera *libretti*.[148] Reviewers also paid due attention to weather phenomena, thus proving the interest of the audience: for instance, *Farley's Bristol Journal* (April 6, 1782) reports that for *The Count of Narbonne* Thomas French had devised lightning whose "appearance […] through the church window had an astonishing effect."[149]

Coloured silk screens could convey chromatic change and evanescent effects. Originally very popular in ballets and pantomimes, they later became expedient in the ever more frequent representations of the supernatural.

> *Music: No. 12. Allegro Brillante. The stage from having been made as dark as possible, is enlighten'd by a most brilliant cloud containing a Sun – in front of which stands the Fairy Aquila, who descends in a Parallel from the Panel opposite that which produced the other Fairy. [...]*[150]

Lighting effects became central also for expressing the contrast between light and shade. Shafts of light would illuminate some characters, increasing the relevance of particular situations or stage space, as exemplified by Joanna Baillie's careful use of stage lighting in the climactic scenes of *De Monfort, A Tragedy* (1798):

> *The inside of a Convent Chapel, of old Gothick architecture, <u>almost dark</u>; <u>two torches</u> only are seen at a distance, <u>burning</u> over a new-made grave. The noise of loud wind, beating upon the windows and roof, is heard. ... Enter a procession of Nuns, with the Abbess, <u>bearing torches</u>.*
>
> *A folding door at the bottom of the stage is opened, and enter Bernard, Thomas, and the Other two Monks, <u>carrying lanterns in their hands</u>, and bringing in*

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[147] See for instance the stage directions for Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery*: *"The increasing storm of lightning, thunder, hail, and rain becomes terrible. Suitable music.* […] *Music, Hail, &. Continue; after a pause,* [Romaldi] *raises his head. More fearful claps of thunder are heard, and he again falls on his face. The storm gradually abate."* (*A Tale of Mystery*, cit., pp. 34-35). An excellent introduction to the late eighteenth-century stage practice is provided by Charles Beecher Hogan, "Introduction" to *The London Stage, 1660-1800*, Vol. 3, pt. 5, *1776-1800*. In William van Lennep, William … [*et al.*] (eds.) *The London Stage, 1660-1800* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968, pp. lv-lxxii).

[148] Garlinton jr., "'Gothic Literature and Dramatic Music in England', cit., p. 53.

[149] S. Rosenfeld and E. Croft-Murray. "A Checklist of Scene Painters". *Theatre Notebook*, Vol. 19, No 2, cit., p. 56.

[150] T. J. Dibdin, *Harlequin and Humpo* (scene II), cit., in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, p. 211.

De Monfort. They are likewise followed by other Monks. As they lead forward De Monfort <u>the light is turned away, so that he is seen obscurely</u>; but when they come to be in front of the stage <u>they all turn the light side of their lanterns on him at once, and <u>his face is seen</u> in all the strengthened horrour of despair, with his hands and cloaths bloody.[151]

George Haggerty comments: "[t]he spectral presence of De Monfort here –Baillie is insistent about the exact lighting for the effect she seeks– places him in a realm that is almost supernatural."[152] The pointed light upon the face of the nobleman has the effect "to disembody him and to render his despair *more visually powerful* than it would otherwise be."[153] Perfectly aware of contemporary taste, which lay within entertainment, Baillie devised a strikingly visual *mise en scène* and a scenic organization "powerfully drawn to the image".[154] As Baillie writes:

> The Public have now to choose between what we shall suppose are well-written and well-acted plays, […]; and splendid pantomime, or pieces whose chief object is to produce *striking scenic effect* […]. So situated, it would argue, methinks, a very pedantic love indeed for what is called legitimate drama, were we to prefer the former. A love for active, varied movement, in the objects before us; *for striking contrasts of light and shadow*; for splendid decorations and magnificent scenery; is as inherent in us as the interest we take in the representation of the natural passions and characters of men […].[155]

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[151] J. Baillie, *De Monfort*, IV. ii and iii. *Plays on the Passions*. Peter Duthie, (ed.), pp. 362 and 368. All the emphases are mine.

[152] G. Haggerty, "Psychodrama: Hypertheatricality and Sexual Excess", cit., p. 30

[153] Ibid.

[154] Cox and Gamer, "Introduction". In Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 373.

[155] Joanna Baillie, "To The Reader". *A Series of Plays*. Vol. 3. (1812). (*The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 373. The italics are mine.) Her assertions appear in stark contrast with the so-called "closet paradigm" which appears already established only a decade later, as testified by Elizabeth Inchbald's "Remarks" on *De Monfort*: "This drama, of original and very peculiar formation, plainly denotes that the authoress has studied theatrical production as a reader more than as a spectator; and it may be necessary to remind her – that Shakespeare gained his knowledge of the effect produced from plays upon an audience, and profited, through such attainment, by his constant attendance on dramatic representations, even with the assiduity of the performer" ("De Monfort", in *Remarks for the British Theatre*, cit., pp. 5-6). The necessity of reconsidering closet drama is clearly called for by the contemporary tradition of dramatic readings, of which Boaden gives us a suggestive reconstruction, strongly challenging any neat division between dramatic and theatrical practices and highlighting the role of lighting in contemporary performance. Mrs Siddons's delivery in the Argyll Rooms was "simple and yet dignified": "in front of what was the orchestra [...] *a reading-desk with lights was placed*, on which lay her book, a quarto volume printed with a large letter. [...] I will notice one happy effect, accidental or designed (probably the latter), which should invariably enter among the preparations of the apartment. A large red screen formed what painters would call a background to the figure of the charming reader. She was dressed in white, and her dark hair *à la Grecque* crossed her temples in full masses. *Behind the screen a light was placed, and, as the head moved, a bright circular irradiation seemed to wave around its outline*, which gave to a classic mind the impression that the priestess of Apollo stood before

This visual technique appropriated for the stage contemporary painting and visual spectacles. As we have seen the use of strikingly uplit figures was typical of the art of such markedly theatrical painters as Salvator Rosa (for instance in *The Crucifixion of Polycrates*, c.1663-64), Joseph Wright of Derby and later, in many oils by J.M.W. Turner. Even de Loutherbourg's visionary *eudophusikon* was described with Burkean tones in the *Whitehall Evening Post* of March, 1st 1781: "The last scene is a *Tempest*, which is progressively brought on by a variation of sky […] the wonderful sky […] the forked lightning pervading every part of it, together with the imitative peals of thunder, produces an effect that astonishes the imagination"[156] Striking visuality was also recurrently employed in contemporary novels, thus signalling another appropriative circuit between sister arts (drama-novel-painting). I believe that it may have been a keen sense of stage impact that suggested to Lewis the effect a pointed light would have upon the face of the sinning Ambrosio, with the result of rendering the monk's crimes more *visually* powerful –and thus of greater *moral* force- than they would have otherwise been. In the central scene of the temptation of Ambrosio, a ray of moonshine spotlights the beauty of Matilda's breast, which the cleric wrongly interprets to represent metonymically the erotic pleasures opening up in front him.

> The Friar's eyes followed with dread the course of the dagger. [Matilda] had torn open her habit, and her bosom was half exposed. The weapon's point rested upon her left breast: And Oh! That was such a breast! *The Moon-beams darting full upon it*, enabled the Monk to observe its dazzling whiteness. (vol. I, ch. ii)[157]

Elsewhere the contrast between light and shade –life and death- comments on action by representing in visual terms Ambrosio's unrelenting descent into moral darkness:

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you uttering the inspiration of the deity in immortal verse" (*Memoirs of Mrs Siddons*, cit., pp. 457-58 and p. 462. The emphasis is mine).

[156] Finkel, *Romantic Stages*, cit., pp. 6-7.

[157] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit. p. 65.

> The Grate was slightly fastened on the outside: [Ambrosio] raised it, and *placing the Lamp upon its ridge*, bent silently over the Tomb. By the side of three putrid half-corrupted Bodies lay the sleeping Beauty. (Vol. III, ch. iv)[158]

Lights are also used in a tragic –and almost ironic- inversion of classic *reconnoissance*:

> As Lorenzo stooped to raise her, *the beams of the Lamp struck full upon his face*. 'Almighty God!' [Agnes] exclaimed; 'Is it possible! That look! Those features! Oh! Yes, it is, it is...' (Vol. III, ch. iii)[159]

Perfectly aware of the dramaturgical potentials of light, Lewis seems to have devised a strikingly visual *mise en scène* for his fiction, which he invites his implied reader to stage in the theatre of his mind.

Other special effects popularised by the Gothic stage would be weather effects such as thunderstorms, lightning, and gusts of wind, all of which created a juxtaposition between the power of nature and human frailty, security and danger.[160] The discourses of the Sublime applied to natural and weather phenomena came to inform eighteenth-century aesthetics through John Dennis's groundbreaking "The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry" (1704) and later on with Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry*, in particular the section on "Sound and Loudness" (part II, section XVII).[161] The representation of menacing natural phenomena was a source of inspiration which led the characters, and vicariously the audiences, to the Sublime, as in this exemplary sentence from *The Romance of*

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[158] Ibid., pp. 378-379.

[159] Ibid., p. 372.

[160] Document 173c "Sea machinery", "The Mechanics of Staging, 1803-19", in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre*, cit., p. 231.

[161] Dennis's list of terror-inspiring objects included "Thunder, Tempests, raging Seas, Inundations, Torrents, Earthquakes, Volcanos" (London: printed for Geo. Strahan, and Bernard Lintott, 1704, pp. 87-88). Burke famously elaborates the same natural sources of the Longinian sublime: "[e]xcessive loudness alone is sufficient to overpower the soul, to suspend its action, and to fill it with terror. The noise of vast cataracts, raging storms, thunder, or artillery, awakes a great and awful sensation in the mind, though we can observe no nicety and artifice in those sorts of music". E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, Part I, section VII "Of the SUBLIME" (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990), p. 75.

the Forest: "the thunder murmured along the alps; and the dark vapours that rolled heavily along their sides heightened their dreadful sublimity."[162]

The artificiality of scenic representation was made evident –and thus partially exposed- by its visual relation to landscape painting and by an apprehension which was made secure "when viewed from a safe distance."[163] Paul Ranger's comment pertinently draws contemporary dramaturgy within the sphere of the Sublime. As famously theorised by Edmund Burke, "when danger or pain press too nearly, they are incapable of giving any delight, and are simply terrible; but at certain distance, and with certain modifications, they may be, and they are delightful."[164]

The fascination for awe-inspiring meteorological effects and their relevance for the contemporary aesthetics were recorded not only in novels and painting, but also in poetry as illustrated by Joanna Baillie evocative poem, "Thunder" (1790):

> Wild creatures of the forest homeward **scour**,
> And in their dens with fear unwonted cow'r.
> Pride in the lordly palace is forgot,
> And in the lowly shelter of the cot.
> The poor man <u>sits</u>, with all his family round,
> In awful expectation of thy sound.
> Lone on its way the trav'ller <u>stands</u> aghast,
> The fearful looks of man to heav'n are cast,
> When, lo! They lightning gleams on high,
> As **swiftly** turns his startled eye,
> And **swiftly** as they **shooting** blaze
> Each <u>half performed motion stays</u>,
> Deep awe, all human strife and labour <u>stills</u>,
> And they [sic] dread voice alone, the earth and heaven fills.[165]

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[162] Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, cit., p. 266.

[163] Ranger, *Terror and Pity Reign in Every Breast*, cit., p. 40. For a divergent contemporary opinion, see Coleridge's critique of *Bertram*'s "unearthly storm" (*Biographia Literaria*, cit., p. 343). Here Coleridge seems to take up the criticism of contemporary stagings of the Dryden-Davenant operatic *The Tempest* (amongst which De Loutherbourg's own), a rendition that was revived throughout the century with increasingly elaborate machinery. In particular, an increasingly spectacular opening storm and shipwreck had taken the place of many of the most evocative lines of the original Shakespeare play. See Allen, "Irrational Entertainment in the Age of Reason", cit., p. 108.

[164] E. Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, Part I, section VII "Of the SUBLIME" (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1990), pp. 36-37.

[165] Joanna Baillie, "Thunder" (ll. 13-26), in Anne K. Mellor, Richard E. Matlak (eds.), *British Literature, 1780-1830 (*Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace College Publishers, 1996), pp. 437-38.

In the poem the background noise of the thunder offers pacing to Baillie's lines. As I would argue, the peals achieve an effect comparable to the one weather phenomena (such as lightning) had on stage. Baillie conceives her lines around the typical Gothic juxtaposition of stasis and motion, safety and danger through the montage of coordinated dramatic vignettes (each one of the length of one sentence) characterised by movement (indicated in bold in the passage) or stillness (indicated in underline). The strong beat of Baillie's couplets appropriates through rhyme, rhythm, and sound (for instance, alliteration and assonance) the sense of awed fear and ominous apprehension that we find in the Gothic *mise-en-scène*, with marked connotative effects.

On stage the aesthetic function of the ravaging natural phenomena was twofold. On the one hand, pathetic fallacy established a relationship between emotions and mental states, human nature and natural phenomena, as in this passage from *The Mysterious Marriage*:

> *Osmond* (*entering*). My Lord!
>
> *Count* (*to himself*). The heav'ns, methinks, do lour!
> And guilt, that still endengers superstition,
> Doth whisper that thy frown on this day's deed!
> The time is changed, good Osmond!
> *Osmond* To wonder!
> The moon, so lately ris'n, is lost. – The air,
> Heavy and thik, is sunk to sudden stillness:
> While the streaked bosom of yon nitrous clouds
> Portends intestine war – (III. ii) [166]

On the other hand, thunderstorms (or other similar visual effects) could be used to create atmosphere, comment on action or, when referring to later episodes, they would operate as a codified form of 'flashforward' or prolepsis, referring to a future event in anticipation.

> *Florian* Monks may reach heav'n, but never came from thence.
>
> [*Violent storm of thunder and lightning*.
>
> *Martin* Will this convince thee! Where's the gossip dream?

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[166] Lee, *The Mysterious Marriage*, in Franceschina (ed.), *Sisters of Gore*, cit., p. 101.

	The village-fable now? Hear heav'n's own voice
	Condemn impiety!
Florian	Hear Heavn's own voice
	Condemn imposture!
Edmund	Here end your dispute.
	The storm comes on.
Martin	Yes, you do well to check
	Your comrade's profanation, lest swift justice
	O'ertake his guilt, and stamp his doom in thunder.
Florian	Father, are thou so read in languages
	Thou canst interpret th'inarticulate
	And quarrelling elements? What says the storm?
	Pronounces it for thee of me? Do none
	Dispute within the compass of its bolt
	But we? Is the same loud-voic'd oracle
	Definitive for fifty various brawls?
	Or but a shock of clouds to all but us? [….][167]

Through the appropriation of the classic myth of Zeus, the god of thunder, the rolling of thunder metonymically resounds with the voice of the deity that condemns the impious deed of the Countess of Narbonne, thus imparting upon the spectators' imagination the idea of doom and impending catastrophe.

The presence of signifying meteorological special effects also characterises *Fontainville Abbey*. They exemplify how the stage appropriated the Gothic novel, transforming into spectacle and ostension some of its recurring features. Act IV of Boaden's adaptation opens with the following magnificent stage indications.

SCENE – *The Hall (dark)*

Violent Thunder and Light'ning, the Abbey Rocks, and through the distant Windows one of the Turrets is seen to fall, struck by the Light'ning.

Enter the MARQUIS, *wild and dishevell'd.*

(IV. i)[168]

The situation is all the more remarkable because this is a completely new insertion devised by Boaden. The opening soliloquy is paced by deafening peals of thunder, and flashes of lightning which must have provided a type of visual and acoustic

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[167] H. Walpole, *The Mysterious Mother* (II. ii). *The Castle of Otranto' and 'The Mysterious Mother'*, cit., pp. 200-01.

[168] Boaden, *Fontainville Forest*, cit., 41.

punctuation. The achieved affect would be to intensify as well as coordinate the rapid tempo of the enunciation with the actor's attitudes.

> *Marquis* Away! Pursue me not! Thou Phantom, hence!
> For while thy form thus haunts me, all my powers
> Are wither'd as the parchment by the flame,
> And my joints frail as nerveless infancy.
>
> *(Light'ning.)*
>
> See, he unclasps his mangled breast, and points
> The deadly dagger. – O, in pity strike
> Deep in my heart, and search thy expiation:
> Have mercy, mercy! (*falls upon his knees.)* Gone! 'tis an illusion.[169]

The first line, segmented into three short exclamational sentences, opens the soliloquy with a pointed Shakespearean reference. The Marquis's injunction recalls *Macbeth* (III. iv. 105-6), "Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence" This implied reference has the result to make surface Macbeth's haunting by the ghost of Banquo. At the metatextual level, the echo also refers to *Fontainville Forest*'s hauntology, in particular to Boaden's complex relation with both Shakespeare and Shakespeare's legacy in the form of John Philip Kemble's contemporary revisions of the Bard. I shall address in detail in the final part of this study the composite inter-theatrical relationship between Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* and Kemble's 1794 production of *Macbeth*. Here it may suffice to point out that in this passage the 'high-brow' Shakespearian allusion reverberates with and is enhanced by the wide-ranging multisensorial display of the Gothic spectacle, thus stressing the sensorial aspect of the *mise-en-scène*.

The dramatic *incipit* of Act IV of *Fontainville Forest* condenses and highlights the various functions of weather phenomena in Gothic. The violence of thunder and lightning expresses the mental and emotional state of the Marquis de Montalt, haunted by the vision of the brother he has killed, and persecuted by remorse, one of the main themes of Gothic. The sublime display of special visual and sound effects also comments on action, as the violence of Nature parallels the

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[169] Ibid.

passions raging in the nobleman's breast. Finally, the collapsing of a turret in the background, struck by a bolt of lightning, metonymically signifies –and visually anticipates- the impending fall of the aristocrat, who will 'fall to pieces' and be annihilated through the intervention of heavenly Providence. In this sense, violent natural phenomena advance the plot of the paly

This completely new scene in *Fontainville Forest* proves that Boaden was aware of the dramaturgical and semiological potential of weather effects, which he grafted on to an authoritative Shakespearean sub-text. He uses them to punctuate the entrance of his character, making it more spectacular; they anticipate the Marquis' final demise with their promise of codified poetical justice, thus reassuring the audiences and simultaneously, thrilling them. In this sense, we may contend, weather effects had a cathartic function, manipulating the emotional state of the theatre audience. Finally, like all non-scripted components of theatre, sensorial signifiers such as weather and light effects remind us that the Gothic drama was not only an oral but also an aural and a visual event. In the same way as theatre cannot be reduced to dramatic literature, so, I contend, cannot the Gothic novels be reduced merely to the 'verbal' or the 'textual'. By plunging the audience in the visual and the aural, Gothic drama makes emerge the performative and the *ur*-intertheatrical inherent in Gothic.

3.4   *Costume*

Spectacle gained momentum from historic accuracy in costume design, an innovation imported by David Garrick and developed by John Philip Kemble.[170] Growing interest in costume antiquarianism is testified by the appearance in print of a handful of reference works used by costume makers. Among these Joseph Strutt's illustrated *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England* (1796) became a recurrent source of reference for such stage practitioners as the authoritative costume historian and playwright James Robinson Planché, who himself published *The History of British Dress* in 1834.[171]

Robert Jephson's *The Count of Narbonne*, the adaptation of *The Castle of Otranto* staged at Covent Garden Theatre in 1781, provides a pioneering example of historical accuracy in stage costumes. According to a well-known thespian anecdote, on the *première* of Jephson's play Horace Walpole himself helped to instruct the stage artists and even lent one of the actors a real historical costume from his antiquarian collection at Strawberry Hill. It does not come as a surprise, then, that by the time Edmund Kean had become the rising tragic star, "[s]everal gentlemen of acknowledged taste and information supplied the new Roscius with designs for his own wardrobe, and the proprietors of the theatres were not behindhand in their endeavours to assist the illusion of the scene."[172]

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[170] Nicoll, *The Garrick Stage*, cit., p. 144 *et foll*. See Elizabeth Inchbald's "Remarks on *Macbeth*", in *Remarks on the British Theatre* (Delmar: Scholar's Facsimiles and Reprints, 1990), p. 48.

[171] The title of the study was *A Complete View of the Dress and Habits of the People of England from the Establishment of the Saxon in Britain to the Present Time: Illustrated by Engravings Taken from the Most Authentic Remains of Antiquity*, The 1842 reprint of the book (in 2 vols.), edited by Planché, may be downloaded as a pdf. file at http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=ME8nAAAAMAAJ&dq=A+Complete+View+of+the+Dress+and+Habits+of+the+People+of+England&printsec=frontcover&source=bl&ots=jP_O8uiL-g&sig=acYclBcmHvQUPbZbsVJDF_6CIEY&hl=en&ei=Qhh0Su6DLtzajQe8rNioBg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=3#v=onepage&q=&f=false . Accessed in October 2008.

[172] Document 199, "Developments in Shakespearean costuming in the early nineteenth century", in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre*, cit., p. 257.

Historical studies such as Strutt's as well as contemporary documents (iconographical evidence, reviews, playbills, and theatrical memoirs) concur in establishing that approaching the end of the eighteenth century costume had become the object of a systematised account for the benefit of antiquarians, costume designers and the audience at large. In keeping with the overall development in the roles of stage artists, also "[c]ostume designers broke through the cloud of anonymity [...], to become active and recognized members of creative productions teams."[173] Accurate descriptions of stage costumes appeared increasingly often in the printed copies of the plays as an integral part of the stage business. Their inclusion is particularly relevant in the case of adaptations as it signals that the printed work was presented in the context of the stage work, whose visual experience was evoked and intentionally recreated for the enjoyment of the reading public.

Costume

DON FELIX - Brown Spanish Doublet and Breeches – rich spangled cloak – russet shoes, with rosettes.
DON RAYMOND – Light blue velvet and silver tunic – white vest and tights – russet boots – ruff – sword – black velvet hat, with white ostrich feathers.
THEODORE – White kerseymere doublet, vest and pantaloons, trimmed with blue satin and black velvet binding – sword – russet boots – black hat and feathers
CONRAD – Yellow doublet, trunks and vest, trimmed with blue and red binding – blue hose – russet boots – collar and hat to match.
BAPTISTA – Brown tunic, vest and trunks – red hose – russet shoes – gray wig – black hat and feathers – dagger, & c.
ROBERT – Plum-colored ditto.
JAQUES – Iron-gray ditto.
CLAUDE – Blue jacket – yellow vest – leather breaches – large French boots – glazed hat – hand whip.
MARCO – Salmon-colored doublet, vest and trunks, trimmed with blue and black binding, and bell buttons – blue hose – russet shoes – collar – hat and feathers to match.
AGNES – *first dress*: White satin slip, over a white leno [sic] dress – white hat and feathers – white satin shoes. *Second dress*: same as the Bleeding Nun.
CUNEGONDE – Old-fashioned bottle-green dress, with point-lace trimming – kerchief and apron – witches'-cut hat – high-heeled shoes.
URSULA – Monastic black dress, with a large white covering or cap for the head.
MARGUERETTE – Dark blue stuff body, petticoat, & c., trimmed with red binding – dark shoes – a blue ribbon run through the hair.

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[173] Finkel, *Romantic Stages*, cit., p. 2.

THE BLEEDING NUN – White muslin – beads, cross and dagger.[174]

It is here interesting to note a precise form of contemporary costume coding, which flanked codified acting and typecasting in the making of the Gothic dramatic formula. Agnes, the leading female character of *Raymond and Agnes; The Travellers Benighted*, significantly dons body and head garments in white – the codified dress colour of tragic heroines. This convention is confirmed by the costume list of H. W. Grossette's *Raymond and Agnes: or, The Bleeding Nun of Lindenberg*, another spin-off of the *The Monk* inset tale, which reads: "AGNES: *first dress*, plain white muslin, with veil, &c. *second* white satin body and slip, with silver embroidery, 3rd as Spectre."[175] In effect by the time *Raymond and Agnes or, The Bleeding Nun of Lindenberg* was staged, the iconographic tradition of the white-clad heroine had become a well-established and dependable vestmental convention, as recalled by Puff in *The Critic* (Drury Lane, 1779) by Richard B. Sheridan.

Puff	[…] Now enter Tilburina! –
Sneer	Egad, the business comes on quick here.
Puff	Yes, Sir – now she comes in stark mad in white satin.
Sneer	Why in white satin?
Puff	O Lord, Sir – when a heroine goes mad, she always goes into white satin – don't she, Dangle?
Dangle	Always – it's a rule.
Puff	Yes – here it is – [*looking at the book*] 'Enter Tilburina stark mad in white satin, and her confidant stark mad in white linen.' (II. iii)[176]

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[174] *Raymond and Agnes; The Travellers Benighted; or, The Bleeding Nun of Lindemberg*, French's Standard Drama. The Acting Edition no. 191. The play may be only tentatively attributed to Matthew G. Lewis. French's edition attributes the authorship of this dramatic piece to "Matthew Gregory Lewis. Author of 'The Castle Spectre,' 'Venoni,' 'One O'Clock,' 'Rugantino' &." Similarly, Bertrand Evans includes "*Raymond and Agnes* (Norwich, Nov. 1809)" among the plays by Lewis (*Gothic Drama*, cit., p. 145). Of a diverging opinion is David Lorne Macdonald, who succinctly states, "Attributed to Lewis only tentatively in the Larpent collection catalogue, it is not by Lewis" (*Monk Lewis, A Critical Biography*, cit. p. 244).

[175] Grosette, *Raymond and Agnes: or, The Bleeding Nun of Lindenberg*, cit. The colour white as a general hue for leading female characters is confirmed by the stage costume list of *Blue-Beard*, which reports "white muslin under dress and trousers" for both Fatima and Irene (Item 34, "Appendix. Contemporary Reviews and Comments", in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 341).

[176] R. B. Sheridan, *The Critic, or A Tragedy Rehearsed*. In *The Dramatic Works of Richard B. Sheridan*, Cecil Price (ed.), (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), vol. II: p. 548.

In *Raymond and Agnes; The Travellers Benighted* the fluttering white fabric of Agnes's gown further evokes the suggestive stage costume created for the ghost of Evelina in *The Castle Spectre*, described in the list of costumes for the performance as "a plain, white muslin dress, white head dress, or binding under the chin, light loose gauze drapery."[177] The Bleeding Nun costume, "White muslin – beads, cross and dagger", was itself codified, and became part of the standard visual lexicon of the female ghostly apparitions which transmogrified from visual code to visual code. An instance of the re-mediation of the Nun's costume is given by a surviving Gothic slide from Etienne-Gaspard Robertson's Phantasmagoria at the Convent des Capuchines, Paris (approx. 1799) (Fig. 8).[178]

8. The Bleeding Nun of Lindemberg, a coloured slide from Etienne-Gaspard Robertson's Phantasmagoria. Available from http://users.telenet.be/thomasweynants/phantasmagorie2.html

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[177] M. G. Lewis, *The Castle Spectre*, in S. Winschhusen (ed.), *The Hour of One. Six Gothic Melodramas* (Gordon Fraser: London, 1975), p. 11.

[178] For a richly illustrated introduction to *phantasmagories*, see M. Heard. *Phantasmagoria. The Secret Life of the Magic Lantern* (Hastings: The Projection Box, 2006).

The existence of the preternatural Bleeding Nun, one of Lewis's examples of *unexplained* supernatural -the sign of a deceptive materiality which is in fact ghostly- may be performed recurring to some fluid, almost metaphysical, enunciators: an evanescent white costume, lighting, and, possibly, music. In the unpredictable –and deeply parodic- visual lexicon of *The Monk* unstable signifiers give shape and force to the signifieds, considerably complicating the form/content dialectic. Appropriating the character of the Nun for the stage posed the risk of giving her a materiality, which Lewis intentionally constructed as a liminal and open creation.[179] In the final part of this study, we shall see how James Boaden addressed through costume, lighting, and musical effects the same problem of staging a preternatural, insubstantial presence in *Fontainville Forest*.

    Also of interest is the shorthand formula "& c" used in *Raymond and Agnes; The Travellers Benighted* to describe the costumes of the two servants, Baptista and Marguerette. It may suggest that established vestmental and iconographic conventions were also existent for the servant characters. This hypothesis is confirmed by the list of costumes in Grossette's *Raymond and Agnes*, which described Theodore's habit as follows: "Smart Spanish livery, as Leporello."[180] The costuming practice of a recognisable 'Leporello-style' servant's uniform validates my idea of the Gothic stage as the *locus* of generic mongrelization, born of the heteroglot intersection of lower-class as well as more refined cultural forms. These are evoked –and appropriated– through the reference to the figure of the handy domestic in Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's masterpiece, *Don Giovanni* (1787).[181] As in the case of musical quotations, the Gothic stage finds

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[179] The description of the Nun is constructed around her un-materiality, comparable to a semantic lacuna or a gap, expressed through a chain of oxymorons, negations, and negative adjectives: "I beheld before me an animated Corse. Her countenance was long and haggard; Her cheeks and lips were bloodless; The paleness of death was spread over her features, and her eye-balls fixed steadfastly upon me were lustreless and hollow" (Vol. II, ch. i), Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., p. 160.

[180] Grosette, *Raymond and Agnes: or, The Bleeding Nun of Lindenberg*, cit.

[181] A contemporary historically accurate costume for Leporello (New York City Opera's March 2002 production of Don Giovanni) may be seen at http://www.columbia.edu/itc/music/NYCO/dongiovanni/costumes.html#leporello (accessed on 10 August 2006).

ennoblement through the omnivorous appropriation of various cultural formations of varying generic status, which are absorbed and re-adapted to cater for a wide and diversified audience.

James Boaden's *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons* provides another testimony of the growing importance of costuming. After noting Siddons's innovative shroud-like white costume for the sleep-walking scene of *Macbeth*, Boaden writes,

> There is a mezzotint print in existence of Garrick and Mrs Pritchard in the scene after the murder of Duncan. *The ridiculous (not because inaccurate, but because unpicturesque) costume of Garrick does all that dress can do to defeat the startling terror of his countenance* [...]. It is difficult to imagine how such a consummate artist as Garrick could play Gloucester, Richard the Third, who lived in the year 1480, in what is called a shape, and yet act Macbeth, who I think murdered Duncan 440 years earlier, in a general's uniform of the reign of George the Second. However, the fact is unquestionable, and he so acted it all his life.[182]

Boaden's anecdote makes clear that the new representational aesthetics to which he refers considered costuming one of the important partial texts composing the dramatic system. Its fidelity was seen by the contemporaries as an essential element to achieve illusionistic representation –a signifier for the complex theatrical signified of the performance. As explained by Boaden, a wrong choice of clothing would irreparably mar the overall effect of terror of sought by the artists.

Praise or censure for the characters' attires regularly appeared in the press along with remarks on decoration, music, and machinery. *The Morning Herald* writes:

> MRS. CROUCH looked divinely, and her dress, which was becoming and decent, formed a striking contrast to the indelicacy to which Miss De Camp had recourse, to display the symmetry of her person.[183]

Elsewhere we read:

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[182] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons*, cit., p. 316. Mine the italics.

[183] Review of the opening night performance of *Blue-Beard*. *The Morning Herald* No. 5,406 (17 January 1798), p. 2. "Appendix: Contemporary Reviews and Commentary", in Cox and Gamer (eds.)*, The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 330.

> Why must Richard, in his state of Duke of Gloucester, of king, and when he is about to take the hostile field, appear in one and the same dress? Why does he wield a truncheon? I must answer. The galleries […] would not know Richard in a new dress, or closed in complete steel; and would not be satisfied to see a king going to battle with any other insignia than what is depicted on signs at alehouse doors for the principal characteristick of a modern commander.[184]

At the same time, from being heavy and cumbersome costuming slowly became more suitable for stage movement. This simplification implies that acting itself had changed from the statuesque towards the dynamic. Changes in both female stage costuming and fashion were the surface signals of important epistemic mutations. According to Catherine Spooner, "[i]n the last decade of the eighteenth century, women's clothing underwent a series of radical changes that costume historians often describe as comparably revolutionary to fashion as the French Revolution was to politics."[185] The chemise dress and the style *à l'Anglaise* popularised the image of a woman whose liberation from the traditional values of bourgeois patriarchy was symbolised by the relinquishing of woman's body prison -the corset. As movements became more unrestrained, exposure increased, and the reference to the alluring female body came to enliven regularly both the Gothic page and stage.

In discussing Radcliffian fashion, Spooner notes that "the appeal for pity and protection through the revealment of the female form and, most significantly, the breast, is made more explicit in *The Romance of the Forest*."[186] In the novel Adeline's disarray is complemented and made more effective by the presence of a disinterested male spectator, Monsieur La Motte. The man seems to be attracted to the girl out of humanity and compassion rather than sexual passion.

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[184] Document 197, "Incongruities in dressing the stage" in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre,* cit., pp. 254-55. For a fascinating description of an actress's fashionable costuming, see Mary Robinson's *Memoirs of the Late Mrs Robinson, Written by Herself* (ed. Mary Elizabeth Robinson, London: 1801), which describes with precision and an eye for graphic detail Robinson's fantastic attires. The on-line electronic version of the 1856 edition of the *Memoirs* may be accessed at http://digital.library.upenn.edu/women/robinson/memoirs/memoirs.html (accessed on 10 August 2006).

[185] C. Spooner, *Fashioning Gothic Bodies* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), p. 24.

[186] Ibid., p. 39.

> This ejaculation was interrupted by a noise in the passage leading to the room: it approached – the door was unlocked – and the man who had admitted La Motte into the house entered, leading, or rather forcibly dragging along, a beautiful girl, who appeared to be about eighteen. Her features were bathed in tears, and she seemed to suffer the utmost distress. […] She sunk at his feet, and with supplicating eyes, that streamed with tears, implored him to have pity on her. Notwithstanding his present agitation, he found it impossible to contemplate the beauty and distress of the object before him with indifference. Her youth, her apparent innocence – the artless energy of her manner forcibly assailed his heart […].[187]

It is arguable that staging could challenge the sensitive disinterestedness of the Radcliffean Ideal Spectator, contributing to turn the body of the actress who interpreted Adeline into the object of (male) spectatorial scopophilia. It is not a coincidence that in *Fontainville Forest* as soon as Mme Lamotte sees Adeline, her kindness is immediately supplanted by the jealously inspired in her by the sight of the beautiful stranger. This latter was played by the Covent Garden leading lady, Elizabeth Pope (*neé* Younge), who probably came on stage in a fashionably revealing costume.

<div align="center">

Enter Lamotte supporting Adeline.

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Lamotte	Receive this fair unfortunate with kindness.
[…]	
Madame	Lady, take my arm to assist you.
Adeline	Gratefully. – I was born to trouble others.
Lamotte	Her spirits are violently agitated;
	But kindness will restore her mind its tone.
Madame	Scarce did I ever see a face so beauteous!
Lamotte	The remark is womanish; I never knew
	Distress more poignant – […] (I. i)

Staging the beauties of a female body in a revealing dress would have certainly (re-)evoked a female corporeality that Radcliffe's novels seem in fact only to suggest.[188] In addition, it would highlight the body's sexual aspects, thus making

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187 Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, cit., pp. 5-6.

188 Y. Shapira, "Where the Bodies Are Hidden: Ann Radcliffe's 'Delicate' Gothic", *Eighteenth Century Fiction* Vol. 18 No. 4 (2006), pp. 453-476. Quite different, on the other hand, is the description of the female body in *The Monk*. From their first meeting in Madrid Cathedral Lorenzo's gaze sexualizes Antonia's veiled form, transforming the girl into an erotic object made more seducing by her simple habit. The dress, in white and blue, evokes the colours traditionally associated with the Virgin Mary's dress and veil: "Her features were hidden in a think veil; But struggling through the crowd had deranged it sufficiently to discover a neck which for symmetry and beauty might have vied with the Medicean Venus. [...] Her bosom was carefully veiled. Her dress was white; it was fastened by a blue sash, and just permitted to peep out from under it a

more effective the persistent threat of sexual harassment of which Boaden's Adeline is the victim.

The change in representational aesthetic was particularly relevant for the tragic actresses' acting techniques, as pointed out by costume historian Aileen Ribeiro: "The ornate dignity of [baroque costume] was appropriate to the mainly static, declamatory style of acting which the opera and the great tragic roles in the theatre involved."[189] Furthermore, the long trains of the majestic stage costumes implied the existence of an on-stage attendant. This figure functioned as a train-bearer, running after the actresses as these "hurr[ied] from one side of the stage to another,"[190] thus jeopardising dramatic verisimilitude. Sarah Siddons was responsible for making popular a simpler style of costuming that did not hinder the physical representation of the passions. As recalled by James Boaden:

> The actress had formerly complied with fashion, and deemed the prevalent becoming; she now saw that tragedy was debased by the flutter of high materials, and that the head, and all its powerful action from the shoulder, should never be encumbered by the monstrous inventions of the hair-dresser and the milliner.[191]

The movement, dynamism, and energy of the end-of-the-century representational practices reflect and significantly respond to the ideologies and aesthetics of Romanticism, thus giving plastic and visual representation to the epistemic changes occurring in the latter half of the eighteenth century. The receding forestage space –and hence, the greater proximity between actors and audience- implied that realism in costume was essential:

> This 'being one' with the audience made the practice of contemporary clothes utterly logical and right for the shared space. […] Ultimately, the performer just had

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little foot of the most delicate proportions" (vol. I, ch. i). Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., p. 9. Lewis appropriates the fashion system of Catholic visual imagery and overturns it. To better understand the parody of Marian imagology in *The Monk*, see Annemarie Weyl Carr, "Threads of Authority: the Virgin Mary's Veil in the Middle Ages", in S. Gordon (ed.), *Robes and Honor: the Medieval World of Investiture* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 59–93.

[189] A. Ribeiro, "Costuming the Part: A discourse of Fashion and Fiction in the Image of the Actress in England, 1776-1812", in Robyn Asleson (ed.), *The Notorious Muse: The Actress in British Art and Culture 1776-1812*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 112.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs Siddons*, cit., pp. 179 and 402.

aesthetically and physically to 'fit in' and be unified –perhaps even controlled– as another element in the pictorial world created in the theatre.[192]

As we understand from Baugh's words, costume design had come to be invested with a precise role in the project of scenic harmonization of the late eighteenth-century stage artists.

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[192] Baugh, "Philippe James [sic] de Loutherbourg and the Early Pictorial Theatre", cit., p. 122.

Staging the Signifiers of the Gothic.

The term 'intergenericity' defines an aesthetic phenomenon by which diverse genres blend and reciprocally shape. This trend that, as I have explained, characterises Gothic as well as late eighteenth-century culture at large. It may be arguably ascribed to the fact that at the time literary genres were fluid, still in the process of taking shape and mutually relocating themselves. The multiple forms of Gothic proved no exception –they were eclectic, hybrid, changeable and often multilayered. As we have seen in our discussion of contemporary intersemiotic practices, works were transcodified from one language to the other -ballet and narrative prose, landscape painting and poetry, comic opera and pantomime- across the gamut of the arts.

Although the Gothic had no generic consistency, the presence of ubiquitous signifiers and recurrent structures of feeling would provide a unifying frame, confirming the similarities that existed between related artistic forms.[193] Formal diversity was thus counterbalanced by the recurrence of stock characters and motifs, narrative and dramatic structures, and systems of signs (including music and scenery) -all of which were integral to the plot. The audiences learnt to recognise and decode these recurrent elements –they knew what to expect *from* them and they were aware of the emotional and physical response that in turn was expected *of* them.

Plots and Actants

The narrated situations of stage Gothic -organised according to patterns of repetition owing much to a simplified "configuration of [the] characters"[194]- were few and recurrent. As in an early form of formula fiction, the aesthetic mechanisms presiding over the process of recognition and recollection contributed to increase the pleasure of the audiences and, simultaneously, to deflate the effect

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[193] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., pp. 154-55.

the on-stage fears had on the spectators. Amongst the most common lines of action, we might recall the use of mistaken identity and disguise, and the discovery of long-lost relatives as well as the significance of such objective correlatives as the weapon (usually, a bloodstained dagger) -the index of a past or present crime

If the plots, landscapes and the appurtenances of both Gothic novels and dramas were little more than conventions, so were also the characters. These might be grouped in a configuration of actants[195] which included the romantic hero, the persecuted heroine (as a rule in flight from the ruthless villain), and the divided character (otherwise known as the reformed protagonist). This basic actantial model implied "predictable casting decisions and acting styles."[196] Each dramatic type was in effect characterised by precise acting specifications, thus increasing the possibility of typecasting. At the same time theatrical conventions activated horizons of expectations which elicited the audience's anticipation for the character played by a specific actor/actress, as recalled in Lewis's "Prologue" to *The Castle Spectre*.

> Next choosing from great Shakespeare's comic school,
> The gossip crone, gross friar, and gibing fool –
> These, with a virgin fair and lover brave,
> To the young author's care the enchantress gave;
> But charged him, ere she blessed the brave and fair,
> To lay the exulting villain's bosom bare,
> And by the torments of his conscience show,
> That prosperous vice is but triumphant woe.[197]

The dramatists might decide to build a plot exploiting the well-known acting skills of particular actors and actresses, thus relying heavily on 'inter-

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[194] Ibidem, p. 188.

[195] With the term "actant" I simplify what Pavis calls "roles" (or the intermediate level of existence between actants and actors): " 'Roles' are figurative, animate entities which are nevertheless general and exemplary (e.g. the braggart, the noble father, the traitor). Role is part of both the deep narrative structure (e.g. traitors always do X) and the surface of a texts (a "Tartuffe" is a specific kind of traitor)." See the entry "Actantial Model" in Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre*, cit., pp. 4-7. The citation is taken from p. 7.

[196] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 156.

[197] Lewis, "Prologue", *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. iv.

playfulness'[198] and the audience's intertheatrical horizon of expectation; all these variables contributed to shape the economy of theatrical production and reception (audience-actor interaction). The audience seemed to enjoy the pleasures of recognition; however, as I have explained in Part I of this study, critics and reviewers were more critical of the Gothic stock motifs, which invested in hothouse recycling and imitation rather than originality.

As just mentioned, the dramatic action prevalently focused on usually three to four main characters, which embodied the major dramatic types of the Gothic: the villain-hero, the persecuted maiden and the young lover. In some cases we may add the reformed protagonist to this list. In opposition to the Gothic novel, the dramatic lover -whom the Gothic context of reception would normally cast as the nominal hero of the story– was often a rather ineffective figure, acting as a mere foil to his co-protagonists. This choice contributed to focus the attention of the audience on the heroine's actions, the villain's assaults, and, but only to some extent, on the moral dilemma experienced by the divided hero. This actantial structuring suggests that the communicative circuit privileged by Gothic drama fostered a receptive pleasure that relied on both identification and transgression, simultaneously uniting affective proximity with cathartic distancing. At the same time, in the denouement of the story the aristocratic villain's reassuring defeat well responded to the societal changes involving the spectators, who more and more often were members of the working classes.[199]

Actant I. The Young Lover.

The model for the Gothic young lover may be found in the eighteenth-century "man of feeling", the oversensitive and almost feminine male protagonist of Henry McKenzie's eponymous novel (1771). This feminised hero firmly places the Gothic within the tradition of sentimentality, a cult(ure) which condemned an

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[198] See Section Two, pp. 117.

[199] See "Audiences: Composition and Behaviour", in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary*, cit., pp. 137-58.

excessively 'masculine' behaviour –embodied by the violent, lustful, and undomesticated conduct of the villain– and, conversely, celebrated the delicacy, self-control and private suffering of the male type known as the *homo clausus*.[200] A type of emasculated and vulnerable male –himself the victim of the persecutions of the villain– the young hero is loved and eroticised by the heroine as a result of his victimization.[201] A paradigmatic example is offered by Adeline's vision of her lover Theodore –a hallucination which turns into a form of "spectralization"[202]:

> Even when sleep obliterated for a while the memory of the past, his image frequently arose to her fancy, accompanied by all the exaggerations of terror. She saw him in chains, and struggling in the grasp of ruffians, or saw him lead, amidst the dreadful preparations for execution, into the field: she saw the agony of his look and heard him repeat her name in frantic accents, till the horrors of the scene overcame her, and she awoke.[203]

Compare this imagery with Fatima's morbid fantasizing of her lover Selim in Colman's *Blue Beard*:

> *Song*. FATIMA
>
> [...] Methought that my love, as I lay,
> His ringlets all clotted with gore,
> In the paleness of death seemed to say,
> 'Alas, we must never meet more' (I. iv)[204]

In both cases Fatima's and Adeline's imagination is the focus of the both the author's and the reader's attention. Theodore and Selim become the objects of the heroines' daydreaming activity: they are no longer perceived as real figures but rather as "an image, an icon" [205], more real in the imagination than they are in reality.

[200] For the gender revisions enacted in the Gothic novel, see Long Hoeveler, *Gothic Feminism*, cit., pp. 27-35.

[201] See G. Haggerty, *Unnatural Affections. Women and Fiction in the Later Eighteenth Century* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), 1998, pp. 158-204.

[202] Castle, "The Spectralization of the Other in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*", cit., pp. 231-253.

[203] Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest*, cit., p. 259.

[204] Colman, *Blue Beard*, cit., p. 193.

[205] Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, cit., p. 86.

The figure of the young dramatic lover explores a world of different desire, opposed to the one enacted by the utterly aggressive villain-hero. According to George Haggerty, this sentimental drive revises heteronormative relations, and opens up a space in the textual configuration –beyond the expectations of masculine power– where an innovative gender relationship may develop between man and woman. I find this reading particularly useful for an analysis of the Gothic drama. In effect in the plays the lines of dramatic action follow the villain's drive for power rather than the young lovers' search for love.

As the innovative actantial model of Gothic drama suggests, the plots stress the feminised subjectivity and weakened role of the dramatic lover. As a consequence, in Gothic dramas hardly any importance is given to the sentimental sub-plot which characterises the Gothic novels.

Actant II. The Villain.

The Gothic villain-hero –a usually attractive, anguished, and self-examining character– is the real dramatic protagonist. He is driven to action by lust and strong appetites, carnal as well as material, along the lines of the sublime villainy envisaged by Hugh Blair in *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres* (1782):

> If the extraordinary vigour and force of mind be discovered, we are not insensible to a degree of grandeur in the character; and from the splendid conqueror, or the daring conspirator, whom we are far from approving, we cannot with-hold our admiration.[206]

As a libertine, he extols the joys of 'natural' (unrestrained or instinctual) behaviour. His violent passions cross his countenance and shape his "dastard

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[206] *Lectures on rhetoric and belles lettres.* By Hugh Blair, D.D. & F.R.S. Ed. one of the Ministers of the High Church, and professor of rhetoric and belles lettres in the University of Edinburgh, (Philadelphia: from the press of Mathew Carey, 1793), p. 52. Marlies Danziger sketches a brief, but interesting reconstruction of the figure of the villain-hero, tracing a suggestive ancestry that discusses the morally discordant reflections on sublime actions in such works as *On the Sublime* by Longinus, *Réflexions sur la poétique* by Fontanelle (publ. in 1742), and *Dissertations Moral and Critical* by James Beattie (1783). See "Heroic Villains in Eighteenth-Century Criticism", *Comparative Literature* Vol. 11 (1959), pp. 35-46.

brow", in Harriet Lee's memorable definition.[207] A celebrated example is Schedoni's physiognomic characterisation:

> There was something in his physiognomy extremely singular, and that cannot be easily defined. It bore the traces of many passions, which seemed to have fixed the features they no longer animated.[208]

This pathognomic theatre of the passions found expression through a bombastic, emphatic and energetic acting, which suited well the enlarged theatres and deeper stages of the 1790s.

Torn between contrasting feelings of (illicit) love and hatred (perceived social and familial slights), the villain is tormented by remorse. (Interestingly, the word *remorse* was also used as the title of Samuel Coleridge's play produced in 1813 at the Drury Lane Theatre.) Compunction is often accompanied by two other motifs of the Gothic: sublime guilt and haunting mystery. Osmond's first soliloquy in *The Castle Spectre* is a case in point:

> *The folding-doors are thrown open:* SAIB, HASSAN, MULEY, *and* ALARIC ent*er, preceding* EARL OSMOND, *who walks with his arms folded, and his eyes bent upon the ground.* SAIB *advances to a sopha, into which, after making a few turns through the room*, OSMOND *throws himself. He motions to his attendants, and they withdraw. He appears lost in thought, then suddenly raises, and again traverses the room with disordered steps.*

> *Osmond.*   I will not sacrifice my happiness to hers! For sixteen long years have I thirsted; and now when the cup of joy again stands full before me, shall I dash it from my lip? No, Angela, you ask of me too much. Since the moment when I pierced her heart, deprived of whom life became odious; since my soul was stained with his blood who loved me, with hers whom I loved, no form has been grateful to my eye, no voice spoken pleasure to my soul, save Angela's, save only Angela's! Doting upon one whom death has long clasped in his arms; tortured by desires which I never hoped to satisfy, many a mournful years has my heart known no throb but of anguish, no guest but remorse at committing a fruitless crime. […] Because my short-lived joy may cause her eternal sorrow, shall I reject those pleasures sought so long, desired so earnestly That will I not, by Heaven![209]

[207] Lee, *The Mysterious Marriage*, (II. i), in Franceschina (ed.), *Sisters of Gore*, cit., p. 87.

[208] Radcliffe*, The Italian*, cit., p. 81.

[209] Lewis, *The Castle Spectre* (II. i), cit., pp. 23-24.

As emphasized by Osmond's soliloquy, the villain's conscience is tormented. The clear-cut moral polarization of the Gothic works in such a way that in the end he may only repent or die. Backscheider contends that the in Gothic the villain is unfailingly brought back within the community in order to reinforce harmony and reinstate societal order:

> The plays begin by establishing the tyrannical personality against whom all other characters (and groups) are opposed. He is the 'problem' the play must resolve, and he must be brought back within the community or expunged from the universe in order to allow the harmonious natural order that the play represents as its conclusion.[210]

In Backscheider's reading, the villain's repentance highlights the implicit presence of virtue in every man, thus linking up to the moral theories of the Earl of Shaftesbury, Francis Hutcheson and other eighteenth-century moral philosophers. Backscheider's theory, though, correct as it is, must be somewhat enlarged. Indeed, it holds true for the plots of Gothic that privilege narrative closure, in particular Ann Radcliffe's. However, it is just as evident that it does not apply as neatly to all the Gothic output of the 1790s. From a socio-historical point of view, it ought to be re-contextualised within the dramatic sway experienced by the public opinion when the revolution in France turned from a sense of exhilarating freedom to the nightmares of the Terror. For instance in the most controversial novel of the Nineties, the villainous Ambrosio is intercepted just as he is about to invoke God's mercy. Not only is Ambrosio refused reintegration into society, he is also meted out a grandiose punishment, reminding us of the significant shifts in emphasis the Gothic underwent as the decade progressed.

The villain stands for an oppressive and corrupted form of law. He is the representative of an aristocracy in decline and his power is often illegal, as he has usurped it. What makes this configuration morally dubious, and yet irresistibly exciting is the fact that the villain's excesses –what we may define as his liberated selfhood- seem to express that revolt against societal codes and authority which is

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[210] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., 195.

one of the *nuclei* of Gothic. The impetus under which he strives to guarantee his status and ill-gained property often opposes him to a young woman, whom he desires as an object to possess. The function of the heroine is to confer legality through marriage on the villain's illegal claims –to wed social propriety to his unlawful property.[211] This situation is complicated by the recurrent dramatic device according to which the heroine is often unbeknownst to her a close relative of the villain, thus adding the possibility of incest to the list of the villain's evil transgressions.

Actant III. The Heroine.

The heroines of the Gothic are objects of desire, and they seemingly conform to the ideal gendered model that has been defined as the 'domestic woman.'[212] Their function is to reawaken moral sense, repentance and benevolence in the bosom of the villain, who is unfailingly attracted by their looks, uncannily reminiscent of the face of his former lover or a wronged female relative. This physical-aesthetic peculiarity transforms the Gothic heroines into icons, and signifies their function as cultural objects.

The Gothic female protagonist is associated with the beauty of the picturesque and the tenderness of sensibility, the capacity for rational feeling that in eighteenth-century terms was a sign of refinement, human sympathy, virtue, and perceptiveness. This moral and generic construction juxtaposes her to the majesty and cruel sublimity of the villain, thus reproducing the alternation of

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[211] Here I purposefully miscast Tony Tanner's theory on the function of marriage in the Jane Austen novels, by re-proposing it as a parodic counter-function of the Gothic plot. See T. Tanner, *Jane Austen* (Basingstoke-London, Macmillan, 1986), in particular ch. 4, "Knowledge and opinion: *Pride and Prejudice*" (pp. 103-141). The interdependence between the perpetuation of material goods and the marital obligations of the children of propertied families, especially as far as the rights of primogeniture went (what we may loosely define the institutional forms of 'the patriarchal system') is cogently questioned and criticised in Mary Wollstonecftaft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790)*,* whose argument is in my opinion strictly relevant to the Gothic of the 1790s, at least as far as Radcliffe's version of it is concerned.

[212] See V. Jones (ed.), *Women in the Eighteenth Century. Constructions of Femininity* (London-New York: Routledge, 1990) and, more recently, on the constructions (and constrictions) of contemporary female sociability, Elizabeth Eger, Charlotte Grant, Clíona Ó Gallchoir and Penny Warburton (eds.),*Women, Writing and the Public Sphere 1700-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

beautiful and sublime -exploited also, as we have seen, in scene painting–[213] established by Burke's *Philosophical Enquiry.*

Radcliffe's heroine is cultivated, musical, and appreciative of nature and art. She despises the villain; as a consequence she is more than just a foil to his figure. Her contempt of the villain's power, wealth and grandeur bestows on her "a species of *transferred sublimity*."[214] It is, indeed, true that the Gothic heroines are victimised –subjected as they are to persecution, threats, abduction, down to physical (and sexual) annihilation through impending rape and death. In a display of constant sensibility, their aim is to safeguard their virtue and to protect those who are more unfortunate than they are. However, when it comes to property, they can stubbornly defend their legal rights, as proved by Emily in *The Mystery of Udolpho*. If on the superficial level the heroine may indeed appear as a "potential victim […] confined, badgered, pursued",[215] she in fact emerges as a potential agent –a character capable of assuming more resisting agency and determined to survive in a highly gendered world.

This latter contention is particularly evident when we look at the stage Gothic. In point of fact I suggest that the Gothic heroines' spirited resourcefulness appears to embody the epoch-making gender renegotiations that mark the latter part of the eighteenth century. For instance, Adeline, the young heroine of *Fontainville Forest*, accepts to take upon herself the vengeance of her murdered father. Similarly, the virtuous Angela in *The Castle Spectre* can finally obtain personal vengeance by stabbing the villainous Osmond, who has usurped the rightful place of her father Reginald. In the climax scenes of respectively *Fontainville Forest* and *The Castle Spectre* both Adeline and Angela seek –and, more importantly, they obtain- justice, thus reclaiming for women rational as well as political agency.

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[213] See the section on scenography in Part II of the thesis.
[214] Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, cit., p. 68.
[215] Ibid.

> [*Drawing his sword, Osmond rushes upon* Reginald, *who is disarmed and beaten upon his knees; when at the moment that* Osmond lifts *his arm to stab him,* Evelina's Ghost *throws herself between them:* Osmond *starts back, and drops his sword.*]
> Osmond   Horror – What form is this?
> Angela   Die! – [*Disengaging herself from* Hassan, *she springs suddenly forwards, and plunges her dagger into* Osmond's *bosom, who falls with a loud groan, and faints. The Ghost vanishes:* Angela *and* Reginald *rush into each other's arms.* (V. iii) [216]

Angela's violent act of vengeance takes place simultaneously with the appearance of Evelina's ghost in the climactic scene of the play. This correlation suggests the influence on the stage Gothic of the 1790s of such a generically-disruptive figure as Charlotte Corday, the "angel of assassination"[217] who stabbed Jean-Paul Marat in 1793. Arguably, Lewis's drama appropriates for the stage the echoes of this threatening, yet deeply significant historical figure to whom Lewis gives a suitably spectacular (and reassuringly de-historicised) make-over. As suggested by *The Castle Spectre,* the forms of appropriation applied to the vindictive Gothic heroine indicate some of the possible ways the stage had to circumvent the Examiner's censorship, representing in less recognizable –and apparently more acceptable- forms contemporary historical events as well as current social anxieties.

In respect of the positive role ascribed in melodrama to humble figures, we may also notice that lower class female characters became central in administering poetic justice, as shown by the final scene in William Grossette's *Raymond and Agnes*. It is the maid Marguerette who shoots dead the robbers threatening Agnes with rape and murder: *"*Marguerette *rushes in [...] seizes a pistol, and shoots* [Raymond]. Theodore *overcomes* Claude. Jaques *is shot by another pistol from* Margueretta*"* (II. vi).[218] The dramatic import of the episode is stressed by the fact that the shooting scene was immediately followed by the final fall of the curtain.

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[216] Lewis, *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. 98.

[217] The quotation comes from Adriana Craciun, "The New Cordays: Helen Craik and British Representations of Charlotte Corday, 1793-1800". Adriana Craciun and Kari E. Lokke (eds.) *Rebellious Hearts. British Women Writers and the French Revolution* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2001), p. 202.

[218] Grossette, *Raymond and Agnes*, cit., p. 26.

By reflecting on the contemporary politics of representation, the social and cultural contexts of reception, and –not least– the construction of gendered roles on stage and page alike, stage Gothic may lead us to question somewhat the conventional perception that the Gothic women were, both on stage and off, passive.

Edifices.

Gothic edifices could many a tale unfold –to borrow the words of King Hamlet to his son (*Hamlet* I. v. 19). They speak to the characters and the audience, connecting ancient crimes with their forthcoming redress. As a bridge between past and future, they put humankind in the flow of time, connecting history and individual story and placing them within the providential framework of divine retribution.

Buildings, particularly castles and dungeons, may be endowed with the function of symbolic objects. They conjure up and expand the villain's power, of which they are the spatial transubstantiation, and they reflect his mental and social conditions. As in a proto-modern deconstruction effect, objects and abodes in Gothic risk to lose their referential nature –they are signifiers whose signifieds are slippery and elusive to the point that their known function is negated and dramatically reversed. Buildings do not offer shelter and security any longer; rather they manifest their hidden potential for incarceration.

The architectural sublime of the Gothic edifices has a twofold function. As I have mentioned, they bespeak the immense power of the villain. Also, they challenge the forms and functions of the natural sublime of divine origin to which they operate as an implicit counterpoint. In this sense they provide visual and plastic embodiment of the antagonist's profane *hybris*. The juxtaposition between the sublimity of nature and the decay of the man-made buildings conveyed the power of the natural world as well as the helplessness of man.

As the perfect models of Gothic architecture, castles can be considered a scenographic specimen of the way in which the complex Gothic dramatic text worked. The special effects they permitted (e.g. explosions or the collapsing of stage elements) showed the close cooperation of scenic artists, machinists and the acting-manager. On-stage turrets, bridges and similar architectural projections were practicable three-dimensional structures, which could be scaled or crossed by the players and the extras, as shown in the advertisement for *Bluebeard* (Fig. 9).

9. George Colman, *The Grand Dramatic Romance of Blue Beard, or, Female Curiosity*, Available from
http://www.cph.rcm.ac.uk/Virtual%20Exhibitions/Music%20in%20English%20Theatre/Pages/Caption4.htm

At the level of text, we may add, references to location grew more frequent, appearing regularly in the titles of the works (*The Castle Spectre* being such an example) as well as in dialogue, sometimes through deixis and as frequently through direct references.

To sum up, we may affirm that in Gothic drama "action gained an impetus from structural scenery."[219] On the symbolical level the Gothic buildings, particularly the castles, emerged as a complex architectural metaphor, connoted in ways that went well beyond their artistic dimension. They visually and plastically represented both the physics and the metaphysics of the Gothic -the obscurity beyond the everyday world and the unintelligible meanings that hung over reality.

The (On-Stage) Presence of the Past

The villain is made vulnerable by the fact that usually to obey his 'over-reaching' drives and his unleashed passions he is ready to commit (or has already committed) a secret crime. This felony –the "untold tale" (*The Mysterious Mother*, I. iii) that the plot in fact recounts- is hinted at in dialogue, usually by handy secondary characters who have long lived on the site of the crime. (Typically, they are old and garrulous retainers). Alternatively, the past is discovered in narrative summary. This form of *narrativised past*[220] –a secondary text in the play text, in many respects comparable to a miniature narrative- is often conveyed by means of a précis. In such synoptic sections of the drama *mimesis* is supplanted by *diegesis* (in the past tense), as if the audiences were suddenly challenged by the presence of the snippet of a novel.

> *Motley.* You must know that there is an ugly story respecting the last owners of the castle –Osmond's brother, his wife, and infant child, were murdered by banditti, as it was said: unluckily the only servant who escaped the slaughter, deposed, that he recognised among the assassins a black still in the service of Earl Osmond. The truth of this assertion was never known, for the servant was found dead in his bed the next morning. (I. i)[221]

The villain's 'not-quite-so-nameless' crimes may be also visualised by using some objective correlatives of his guilt. These symbolic articles may be a

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[219] Ranger, *Terror and Pity Reign in Every Breast*, cit., p. 70.

[220] For a definition of "narrative" see P. Pavis: "strictly speaking, as used in theatre criticism, a narrative is the speech of a character relating an event that occurred *off stage*"(*Dictionary of the Theatre*, cit., p. 229, the italics are in the text).

[221] Lewis, *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. 10.

bloodstained weapon, an heirloom, a tell-tale miniature, or, more importantly, a highly spectacular on-stage ghost -all haunting signs from an ineffectively repressed (now 'de-monstrated') past shown by metonymy or metaphor (*ostensive past*). As well as acting as reminders of the villain's guilt, these symbolic objects also suggest his possible future atrocities (*ostensive future*). I suggest that such visual signs are spectres from former times,[222] uncanny presences reluctantly summoned from the obscure corners in the psyche of the evil protagonist which are made accessible to the senses, and transubstantiate into stage objects. As suggested by E. J. Clery, "uncanny phenomena exist in the present as signs and relics of a primordial crime."[223] The future may exist only once the displaced past is finally acknowledged, embraced, and rectified.

In *Fontainville Forest* the textual nature of this *narrativised past* is made manifest by a scroll, which tells the story of Adeline's father:

> Adeline   At last I am alone! And now I may venture
> To look at the contents of this old manuscript.
> A general horror creeps thro' all my limbs.
> And almost stifles curiosity. (*Reads*.) (III. iv)[224]

Throughout the apparition scene of her father's ghost, Adeline holds this manuscript in her hands. In *Fontainville Forest* the story of the Elder Montalt is thus the object of a double ostension –by means of the manuscript as well as through the presence of the Phantom.

The indexical nature of the old scroll is patent: it metonymically represents Adeline's father, who wrote it in the first person and who now speaks through it:

> Adeline   [...] "O you, whate'er you are of human kind,
> "To whom this sad relation of my woes
> "Shall come, afford your pity to a being,
> "Shut from the light of day and doom'd to perish." --- (III. iv)[225]

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[222] See Castle, "The Spectralization of the Other in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*" in Nussbaum and Brown (eds.), *The New 18th Century*, cit., pp. 231-53.

[223] Clery, *Women's Gothic*, cit., p. 59.

[224] Boaden, *Fontainville Forest*, cit., p. 38.

[225] Ibid.

After this speech the Phantom briefly appears on stage; at that point there is no need for him "a tale [to] unfold", as is the case of the royal Dane in *Hamlet* (I. iv. 15). In *Fontainville Forest* the convention of the old manuscript –the sure-fire source of the Gothic story from *The Castle of Otranto* to *The Italian*- gets real stage actualization. The past turns into an actual textual relic haunting the present -a relic that the protagonist can in actual fact *hold* in her hands.

The Signs of Identity. The Indexical and Iconical Functions of Objects.

The female bodily part which received particular attention was the breast, an element which always had a prominent function in the contemporary dramaturgy and dramatic illustrations. Catherine Spooner agrees that the display of the breasts was a recurrent device of the Gothic writers, who used it in order to convey an appeal for pity and protection on behalf of their persecuted heroines.[226] The dramatists often coupled emphasis on the female bosom with stress on the villain's piercing gaze.[227] In *Fontainville Abbey* the ocular violation of which Adeline is the victim foreshadows the horrors of the physical rape of which she is in danger:

> *Marquis.*   I have heard too much; and my impetuous love
> Now grasps its choicest good - In vain <u>this</u> struggle!
> How lovely is <u>this</u> terror! By my transport
> It heightens the bewitching charm of beauty,
> And lends ten thousand graces to that bosom. (IV. ii)[228]

Another such example of female vulnerability expressed through the body is found in the confrontation scene in Boaden's *The Italian Monk*.[229] In this episode Ellena is almost stabbed in her sleep by the looming Schedoni.

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[226] Spooner, *Fashioning Gothic Bodies*, cit., p. 39. For a discussion of contemporary costuming, see the previous section of this thesis.

[227] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 192.

[228] Boaden, *Fontainville Forest*, cit., p. 50.

[229] Ellena de Rosalba was played by the twenty-year old Maria Theresa De Camp, who had already gained experience in Gothic on-stage heroinism having starred, among the others, as Adelaide in *The Count of*

> *Schedoni enters with the lamp.*

> Schedoni   Yes, she's asleep! Fie on these shaking joints!
> Does not my interest tell me she must die?
> Hush! Sure she speaks! – She will never speak more.
> Oh! Such weak thinking will unman me quite.
> How deep that sigh! Her whole frame seems convuls'd. –
> Can I remove her robe and not awake her –

> *(He looks at her beast, and seeing a Picture starts; then eagerly detaches it, drops the Dagger, and shuddering draws back in an Agony of Horror)*[230]

The sexually charged subtext of this scene made it a centre piece for other popular spin-offs of Radcliffe's novel. Among these was *The Midnight Assassin; or, the Confessions of the Monk Rinaldi* (1802), one of several anonymous chapbooks that drew a more or less vague inspiration from *The Italian*. Henceforward I shall discuss the very well-known (and eye-catching) frontispiece of this chapbook (Fig. 10), which illustrates the central episode of the story.

Narbonne, Judith in *The Iron Chest*, and Irene in *Blue Beard*. The role of Schedoni was taken by the old John Palmer, one of Boaden's favourite actors (Boaden, *Memoirs of John Philip Kemble,* cit., vol. 2, p. 221).

[230] Boaden, *The Italian Monk* (II, vi), cit., p. 51.

10. Frontispiece. *The Midnight Assassin; or, the Confessions of the Monk Rinaldi, containing a complete history of his diabolical machinations and unparalleled ferocity* (1802,) chapbook version of *The Italian*. Available from http://www.lib.virginia.edu/small/collections/sadleir-black/goldapx.html

As shown in the frontispiece of *The Midnight Assassin*, which follows almost *verbatim* Radcliffes' hypotext as well as Boaden's stage directions, the mammary iconography put on show both woman's feeling heart and her seductive body, underlining at the same time her sexuality as well as her vulnerability. In the illustration from *The Midnight Assassin* the spectacle of feminine helplessness is increased by the light chemise dress in cotton and muslin worn by Ellena. The disarray in which she is depicted crucially uncovers –right at the centre of the picture- the all-important miniature, at one and the same time the icon and the index of Ellena's identity and family history. Also, the unambiguous chromatics

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and effective chiaroscuro of the image visually juxtapose the whiteness of Ellena's skin –a sign of the ontological, snow-white purity of the girl, which is accentuated by her apt surname de Rosalba- to the material and moral darkness that envelops the monk. The scene, we may finally note, is constructed like a stage set, complete with lighting effects and a bed drape which is in fact quite similar to a curtain.

The illustration, I contend, makes a compelling case for the articulation of the visual impact the display of the body of Maria Theresa De Camp / Ellena in *The Italian Monk* must have had on the contemporary theatre-goers. The scene (and, possibly, also the illustration from the chapbook, which so openly echoes its multiple source texts) prove the relevance and implications of intertextual reading/decoding for the audience of Gothic. In 1795 Miss De Camp, one of the Drury Lane beauties, had been the object of a much-publicised attempted rape at the hands of John Philip Kemble, who had burst into the actress's dressing room in the hope to seduce the young actress. Arguably, the scandal must have been fresh in the minds of the theatre-going public who must have probably heard of - or possibly even read- Kemble's subsequent humble apology published in *The Times* in January 1795.[231] In the performance of a truly Gothic shift of identity, which James Boaden may have been quickly to grasp and capitalise on, the beauty and vulnerability of the fictional and real persecuted maiden(s) -Maria Theresa De Camp / Ellena- ambiguously overlap, substitute and mutually define each other.

Most interesting for the present purposes is the connection established by Eve Kosofsky Sedgiwick between the imagery of the female body and the veil in Radcliffe's and Lewis's work. Both the veil and the body, Kosofsky Sedgiwick argues, are surfaces of dazzling whiteness that wait to be written on. Importantly, she continues, veils, "like flesh, are suffused and marked with blood."[232] Ellena's

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[231] A. Scullion, "Politesse and the woman at risk: the social comedies of Marie-Thérèse De Camp", *Comparative Drama* Vol. 38 No 2/3 (2004), p. 235.

[232] E. Kosofsky Sedwick, "The Character in the Veil. Imagery of the Surface in the Gothic Novel." In F. Botting and D. Townshend (eds.) *Gothic. Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, Vol. II.

miniature pertains of the metonymic slippage veil/body indicated by Kosofsky Sedgiwick. If, indeed, the woman's' flesh, and the garments that cover her, are white surfaces that receive some sort of imprint through writing, I contend that the miniature in *The Italian*/*The Italian Monk*/*The Midnight Assassin* (this associative chain could proliferate *ad infinitum*) has a comparable function. The term *miniature* itself bespeaks this connection. *Miniature*, we may remember, originally comes from the Latin *miniare*, "to paint red," which is in its turn a derivative of *minium*, or "red lead," a substance used in ancient times to make red ink.

The illustration from *The Midnight Assassin* I have briefly examined in relation with its hypotextual sources represents an exemplary moment in Gothic. The image freezes and sublimes the circulation of the Gothic signs and the circuits of appropriation and re-appropriation the signifiers underwent across the media. The highly theatrical iconography of the Bleeding Nun, whose "dress was in several places stained with the blood that trickled from a wound upon her bosom"[233] as much as Evelina's "white and flowing garments spotted with blood" (*The Castle Spectre* IV. ii)[234] appear uncannily reminiscent of the imprint on Ellena's miniature. As a legible text written in illuminated, 'blood-red' hieroglyphs the miniature signals the Gothic heroine past history. In this icon we may discern the rules of appropriation of signs as well as the rules of the mutation, spread, dissemination, transferral presiding over these same signs-which were dominant in the Gothic configurations of text, image, and drama.

Eighteenth-century Gothic: Radcliffe, Reader, Writer, Romancer (London-New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 154.

[233] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., vol. II ch. I., p. 138.

[234] Lewis, *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. 79.

THIRD PART

O *Fear*, I know Thee by my Throbbing Heart,

Thy with'ring Pow'r inspir'd each mournful Line,

Tho' gentle *Pity* claim her mingled Part,

Yet all the Thunders of the Scene are thine.

William Collins, "Ode to Fear" (c.1746)*

Practising the Appropriation of the Gothic Stage:
Three Case Studies

"To Ears of Flesh and Blood": Ann Radcliffe's Stage Hauntings

> [...] But that I am forbid
> To tell the secrets of my prison-house
> I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood
> Make thy two eyes like starts start from their spheres,
> Thy knotted and combined locks to part,
> And each particular hair to stand on end
> Like quills upon the fretful porpentine:
> But this eternal blazon must not be
> To ears of flesh and blood. List, list, O, list!
> If thou didst ever thy dear father love--.
>
> *Hamlet* (I. v. 18-28)

Drama critic and Shakespearian connoisseur James Boaden (1762-1839), is now a nearly forgotten literary figure, almost exclusively remembered as the author of five once famous theatrical biographies.[1] In addition to his work as biographer and translator (*The Voice of Nature, A Play in Three Acts*, Haymarket 1803, transl. of L. C. Caigniez's *Le Jugement de Salomon*, 1803), Boaden has made a modest contribution to the world of letters with a handful of original plays of his own. *The Secret Tribunal* (Covent Garden, 1795) possibly remains the most interesting of them due to the influence it had on both *The Italian* and *The Monk*.[2]

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* Epigraph: W. Collins, "EPODE" of "Ode to Fear" (c. 1746), in *The Works of William Collins*, R. Wendorf and C. Ryskamp (eds.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 28, ll. 42-45.

[1] *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq.* (1825); *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons* (1827); *The Life of Mrs Jordan* (1831); *Memoirs of Mrs. Inchbald* (1833) and *The Private Correspondence of David Garrick : with the Most Celebrated Persons of his Time* (1831). All the biographies were published in London.

[2] For Boaden's biography ad details of his literary production, see Steve Cohan, "Introduction", *The Plays of James Boaden*, cit., pp. v-lxv and Temple Maynard, "James Boaden", cit.

More relevantly for our purpose, during the 1790s Boaden composed and staged three adaptations of the most successful Gothic novels of the period. Initially, Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Italian* were brought on stage, respectively as *Fontainville Forest* (Covent Garden, 25 March 1794) and *The Italian Monk* (Haymarket, 17 August, 1797). Later Boaden's interest in Matthew Gregory Lewis's sensational novel -already implied by the hotchpotch title *The Italian Monk*, which intentionally searched for a literary pedigree in both Radcliffe's and Lewis's works- was further exploited in *Aurelio and Miranda* (Drury Lane, 29 December 1798). This drama was initially presented to John Larpent with the simple –yet unmistakable- title, *The Monk*. The original title, though, is erased in the Larpent copy.[3] As implied by this attempt at preventive self-censorship, *Aurelio and Miranda* rather injudiciously aimed to sanitise its controversial and morally "impure"[4] source text -in keeping with Lewis's other contemporary sentimental revisionings.[5]

Boaden's mid-life dramatic re-fashioning may be indeed ascribed to his lifelong involvement with the London Theatres Royal, in his triple role of stage-struck spectator, enthusiastic editor, and discriminating theatre contributor (under the pseudonym of Thespis) to the daily newspaper *The Oracle; or Bell's New World*. As well as bringing him in contact with the leading actors of the day, whose individual dramatic abilities he learned to discern and appreciate, Boaden's activity permitted him to become aware of the rapidly shifting tastes of the late eighteenth-century audiences, more inclined towards illegitimate dramatic forms that privileged spectacularism and dramatic gigantism. As noted by his modern biographer, Temple Maynard, "Boaden was sensitive to the necessities of

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[3] See entry 1232 *Aurelio [and Miranda]* in *Catalogue of John Larpent Plays*, available at http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf1h4n985c&chunk.id=odd-1.8.3&brand=oac.

[4] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons*, cit., p. 425.

[5] For a discussion of *The Monk*'s multiple textual afterlives see Evans, *Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley*, cit., pp. 132-161; Summers, *The Gothic Quest,* cit., pp. 210-35; André Parreaux, *The Publication of 'The Monk'*, cit.

dramatic presentation, and his manipulation of stage effects certainly contributed to the enthusiastic reception of his plays."[6]

As we have already noted in our survey of coeval criticism of Gothic, "effect" was one of the favourite terms to describe the theatre of the 1790s. In his biography of John Philip Kemble Boaden states that the vision that comes to Queen Katherine in Act IV, scene ii of *Henry VIII* had been excellently illustrated by Henry Fuseli (Fig. 11). Also in this case the term that seems to capture the essence of the product is the same: "Look at the *effect* of these circling and ascending spirits in Mr. Fuseli's picture of the scene," are the words with which Boaden instructs his Ideal Reader.[7]

11. Henry Fuseli, *Queen Katherine's Dream*, exhibited 1781 (Fylde Borough Council). Available from http://www.tate.org.uk/britain/exhibitions/gothicnightmares/rooms/room6.htm

Similarly, as regards George Colman's *Bluebeard*, Boaden remarks:

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[6] T. Maynard, "James Boaden", cit., p. 27.
[7] J. Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble,* cit., vol. II, p. 121. The italics are mine.

> The critic, who, in the preface to the Iron Chest, had made himself so merry with the ponderous machinery, the splendid processions, the elephants and the triumphal cars of Drury Lane Theatre, was induced to lend himself to the great work of corrupting the public taste, and succeeded beyond all competition in the dramatic romance of Blue Beard. [...] It is dramatically drawn out by Mr. Colman, *with striking effect* and occasional pleasantry.[8]

Most interesting for the purpose of my enquiry is the fact that after his relatively short-lived spree as an adaptor, Boaden moved on to the realm of Shakespeariana with the publication of three studies: *A Letter to George Steevens, Esq. Containing a Critical Examination of the Papers of Shakespeare* (London, 1796), *An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Various Pictures and Prints, Which from the Decease of the Poet to Our Own Times Have Been Offered to the Public as Portraits of Shakespeare* (London, 1824) and *On the Sonnets of Shakespeare* (London, 1837). As an amateur Shakespearian philologist and critic, he was instrumental in shaming Samuel and William Henry Ireland's forgeries; a few years later, as I have mentioned, his influential thespian biographies contributed to the formation of the Romantic dramatic canon.

Despite these strong links with the legitimate world of the metropolitan theatres, however, Boaden was fascinated by spectacle and the lower class forms of entertainment which had quickly risen to success outside the London patented stage. His three adaptations testify to the multiple afterlives, generic transmutations and extra-literary negotiations enacted by the Gothic texts. I suggest that retrieving the textual plurality of Gothic implies the rediscovery of the inescapable metatextual dimension implicit in textual dialogism. The multiple languages present within Boaden's adaptations express a cultural negotiation that transforms the drama into the hypertextual intersection of pre-existing legitimate and illegitimate cultural echoes –in my terms, the visual, spectacular and theatrical ghosts that haunt the Gothic cultural products.

I argue that the analyst of the Gothic stage appropriations should investigate not only the generic context of Boaden's play, but also wonder what the audience and the critics –both those knowing and those unfamiliar with the source text-

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[8] Ibid., p. 208. The italics are mine.

actually saw on stage as well as what they recognised. This contextual framing, I suggest, is crucial for an understanding of *Fontainville Forest*. How far and how much did the familiarity with the novelistic hypertexts bear upon the reception of their dramatic adaptations? And how much did the Gothic playwrights rely on this previous knowledge, or on the departure from the narrative version of the story? What can inter-theatricality and extra-literary intertextuality teach us about *Fontainville Forest*? And, finally, how did they inform the themes, form and stage actualisation of the drama? The negotiations enacted by Boaden's stage practice with contemporary theatrical illustrations (notably, Henry Fuseli's "Hamlet and the Ghost", 1789) and competing Shakespearean performances (in particular *Macbeth*, new Drury Lane Theatre, 22 April 1794) may help us focus on the closing gap between contemporary notions of legitimacy and illegitimacy and in so doing bring back to light the Gothic textual plurality.

1.1 Transformation, reduction, amplification: on appropriating Radcliffe.

In 1794 Boaden adapted for the Covent Garden stage Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* to great public acclaim and as much critical abuse. As illustrated in the tables for Boaden's intertheatricality in Part II of this study (pp. 122-131), the drama was performed thirteen times as a mainpiece and once as an afterpiece in its first season (25 March 1794 to 18 June 1794), and was revived with good success in the following years. The choice of the source text must have obviously been intentional for Boaden, since *The Romance of the Forest* was praised so widely at the time of its publication that it even encouraged Radcliffe to drop any previous reticence in acknowledging her work, whose authorship was announced in the opening page of the second edition, published in 1792. Interestingly, though hardly surprisingly, *affect* and *effect* –the inner world of the emotions and the implied stage possibilities of their actualisation and ostension- were the aesthetic coordinates Boaden evaluated most in Radcliffe's novels. "Mr.

Boaden had read the Romance of the Forest with great pleasure, and thought that he saw there the ground-work of a drama of more than usual *effect*,"[9] he recalled in one of his biographical narratives.

By 1794 Radcliffe's novel had already reached its fourth edition, with rave critical appreciations published, among the others, by the *Critical Review* and the *English Review*.[10] Significantly, not only was *The Romance of the Forest* the first of Radcliffe's novels to be adapted for the stage (although published in 1789, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* was not dramatised until George Manners' *Edgar, or Caledonian Feuds*, Covent Garden, 1806),[11] it must be also considered as a trendsetter as regards Radcliffe's dramatic afterlives. As *The Mysteries of Udolpho* was awaiting publication, the successful production of *Fontainville Forest* was immediately followed in the same season by Henry Siddons's stage version of *A Sicilian Romance*, entitled *The Sicilian Romance, or The Apparition on the Cliffs* (Covent Garden, 28 May 1794). Only half a year later it was the turn of Miles Peter Andrews's opera, *The Mysteries of the Castle* (Covent Garden, 1 January 1795), which was loosely based on *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.[12] Boaden may be thus considered the first, but certainly not the last, of a long series of Gothic appropriators who *realised* the stage potential of Radcliffe's novels not only comprehending their stage viability and possible success but also, most significantly, bringing on stage -and thus physically actualising in dramatic form- their narrative mechanisms.

Inter-theatrical evidence shows that in the middle of the 1790s the draw of the generically lower-class Gothic dramas and entertainments put on at the Covent Garden by the manager Thomas Harris was such that they were able to compete with the more titled Shakespearian productions and the inexhaustible "treasures of

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[9] Ibid., p. 96. The italics are mine.

[10] Rogers (ed.), *The Critical Response to Ann Radcliffe*, cit., pp. 5-7.

[11] Ibid., p. xxvi.

[12] See W. Thorpe, "The Stage Adventures of Some Gothic Novels", *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, vol. 43, No. 2 (1928), pp. 476-86.

our ancient authors"[13] presented at the new Drury Lane by John Philip Kemble. As recorded in *The London Stage* the box-receipts for *Fontainville Forest* were £263 12*s.6d.* for the opening night, £311 14*s.6d.* for the second night, with a peak of £399 5*s.6d.* on April, 10th 1794, when it was billed with the opening of William Pearce's *Nettley Abbey*. Meanwhile at Drury Lane *Macbeth* drew £648 11*s.* on its opening night (April, 22 1794), and remained constantly above £460 on the following nights.[14] Although the draw of *Fontainville Forest* was later strengthened with a new afterpiece -Thomas Dibdin's successful pantomime *Harlequin and Faustus*- it must be pointed out that in the month following the opening of *Macbeth* the Covent Garden receipts remained considerably lower than they had previously been. It would thus appear that Henry Siddons's adaptation, *The Sicilian Romance*, was the Covent Garden's end-of-the-season answer to the economic success of Drury Lane's *Macbeth*.

Despite the interest the announcement of a dramatization must have had for the contemporary theatregoing public, the transmigration of *The Romance of the Forest* on to the stage must have been far from easy as the novel presents specific adaptation problems. The contemporary reviewers, for instance, noted that the novel firmly established Radcliffe's reputation for the poetical description of landscapes. Praise for pictorialism was, however, accompanied by criticism: although original in their novel ability of joining poetry with narration and landscape art, the sundry descriptive passages were often considered prolix and, in a few cases, even tedious. The numerous inset poetic texts were similarly objected to: for instance, Deborah Rogers recalls that "the verses were thought to detract from the narrative, even by those, like Mrs Barbauld who, in 1810, praised the poetry but feared that it received too little attention embedded in the novels."[15] More significantly, Boaden faced the problem of bringing on stage, and thus

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[13] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble,* cit., vol. II, p. 97.

[14] The above data comes from Season 1794-95 in Charles Beecher Hogan (ed.), *The London Stage*, Part V: *1776-1800*, cit.

[15] Rogers (ed.), *The Critical Response to Ann Radcliffe*, cit., p. xxxi.

visualising, the apparently marvellous occurrences that Radcliffe deftly left to her readers' –as well as her heroine's– imagination.

The presence of all the cultural icons of the Gothic tradition makes the plot of *Fontainville Forest* highly formulaic. In a forest outside Paris, Adeline, a beautiful orphan, is given by ruffians over to the Lamottes, a family in flight from Paris. They seek shelter in a crumbling Abbey, property of the Marquis Philippe de Montalt who, unbeknownst to Adeline, is the girl's uncle as well as the murderer of her father, the rightful heir to the family fortune and title. Both the young Louis Lamotte and de Montalt fall in love with Adeline; the latter demands Old Lamotte help him trick the girl into a mock marriage. In case of refusal, he threatens to betray the family and desert Lamotte, who attacked him in the forest. Hence Lamotte's moral dilemma, whether to abandon Adeline to the lust of the Marquis, to whom he is under obligation, or to defy the nobleman, thus jeopardising his own and his family's safety.

Aware of the fact that the three-decker format offered a novelist a much broader canvas as it allowed him or her to "explore" in detail his/her subject, Boaden preferred to focus on the first part of the novel so as to "touch [everything]."[16] He immediately decided he would rely on the extra-literary impact which could be achieved by virtue of the spectacular collaboration of stagecraft, scenery, music and acting.

> The dramatic author has only at most five short acts to display all the peculiarities of his characters, however diversified in what our fathers called their humours. Here he has great aid, it is true, in the admirable skills of his actors, who, from the possession they take of a part, or allow a part to take of them, in the first word they utter convey 'a whole history,' and by their dress and action place the living being absolutely before you. The fable, however, neither abruptly nor languidly, must be completely developed and concluded in the short compass of eighty or a hundred pages [...].[17]

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[16] Both quotes are from Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, cit., vol. II p. 144.

[17] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons*, cit., pp. 161-62. For a similar opinion see Colman's remarks on *The Iron Chest*, his dramatization of William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*: *"*The novel writer and the dramatist arrive at the same point by two different roads; the first interests you, by expanding its matter; the latter wearies you, if you do not condense it. Minuteness of detail, and a slow development of the main characters and events, by previous narration, and foregoing occurrences, heightens the effects of a Novel: - a Play must plunge in medias res; must avoid (or at all events curtail) narratives as much as possible; - must bring forward its dramatis personae with little or no preparation, and keep attention alive by brevity of dialogue, and

Great actors and admirable acting could not, however, guarantee the success of a play, as Boaden was soon to discover with *Aurelio and Miranda*, with John Philip Kemble and Sarah Siddons in the leading roles, a play which stood out as "remarkable for the utter failure of the fourth and fifth acts."[18] In the latter chapters of Lewis's novel the multiple sentimental subplots are flanked by a growing recourse to supernaturalism, which culminates in the diabolical visions in Book III, Ch. v; conversely, in the last two acts of *Aurelio and Miranda* Boaden abjures supernatural Gothicism in favour of sentimentalism. The fiasco of *Aurelio and Miranda* resulted from the sentimental transformation devised by Boaden, who intentionally purged the strong anti-sentimentalism sustained by Lewis's ending. "The audience," correctly notes Temple Maynard, "anticipating the Gothic horrors of Boaden's source, led to expect them from the initial presentation in the first three acts, were simply disappointed in the denouement."[19] It is ironic that Boaden's failure arguably derived from his application of Radcliffe's techniques to his last theatrical version of Gothic.

The textual juxtaposition of some passages taken from *The Romance of the Forest* and *Fontainville Forest* might be of help when drawing a sketchy illustration of Boaden's adaptation strategies. Accordingly, throughout the following discussion I shall be referring to the four tables that I have included at the pp. 336-339. The selected passages and the conventions to which they make reference contribute with examples drawn from *The Romance of the Forest* and *Fontainville Forest* to the broad empirical research presented in Part II of this study. The tables have the function of making as graphically straightforward as possible the relationships between some passages from *The Romance of the Forest* with the corresponding passages from *Fontainville Abbey*. (References to the exact textual *loci* of, respectively, novel and drama may be found in the

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rapidity of action: - The difficulty, therefore, of transplanting a Novel, chapter after chapter, from the Library to the Theatre, is very obvious" (the quotation comes from Bagster-Collins, *George Colman the Younger,* cit., pp. 86-87).
[18] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs. Siddons*, cit., p. 425.
[19] Maynard, "James Boaden", cit., p. 34.

second horizontal line of each table.) In the column in the far left, headed with the tag "In-signs of the novel's *ur*-intertextuality", I have indicated the multiple languages covertly present in Radcliffe's novel. When citing passages from *The Romance of the Forest* and *Fontainville Abbey* bold characters and italics will be used throughout to highlight those textual segments (including phrases and words), which correspond to the indications given in the column on the far right.

All the passages in the four tables have been chosen as the illustrations of specific features of the two types of Gothic texts –narrative and dramatic- here under investigation. In particular, the dramatic scenes have been selected to exemplify the generic and institutional framework of the Gothic in their relation to stage adaptation. The first table, "Textual thresholds: appropriating the fantastic", refers to the transferral on to the stage of the "modal formulae"[20] through which Radcliffe indicates the hesitation typical of the fantastic discourse. The second table, "The stages of harassment" draws attention to such indexical forms as gestuality, the proxemic relationships between characters as well as acting conventions in both the novel and the drama. The third table, "The spectres of conscience/the Spectre of conscience" compares the hallucinations and visions experienced by respectively Radcliffe's and Boaden's tormented Marquis. Finally, the fourth table, "The pathognomic body", selects two textual fragments to show how the novelistic text is indexical (in the sense that it bears inscribed the signs of expression as well as facial, bodily and gestural directions), and how this physical shorthand ostends the characters' emotional and psychological state

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[20] The concept of the fantastic as the unresolved hesitation between supernatural and realism comes from T. Todorov. *The Fantastic: a Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1973).

In-signs of the novel's *ur*-intertextuality	Ann Radcliffe *The Romance of the Forest* Vol. II, ch. viii	James Boaden *Fontainville Forest* II. iv
Sound effect Scenery Perception – hypothesis Perception – hypothesis Imagination Perception Scenery Perception; scenery Hypothesis Movement Scenery fect (*eudophusikon*) Chiaro-scuro effects	The **wind** was high, and as it **whistled** through the **desolate apartment** and **shook the feeble doors**, [Adeline] often started, and sometimes *even thought* she heard sighs between the pauses of the gust; but *she checked these illusions*, which the hour of the night and her melancholy *imagination* conspired to raise. As she **sat musing**, her **eyes** fixed on the opposite wall, she perceived the **arras**, with which the room was hung, **wave** backwards and forwards; [...]. She observed a **door** on the opposite side of the apartment; and after some moments of hesitation, gained courage, and determined to pursue the inquiry. "A mystery *seems* to hang over these chambers," said she, "which it is, perhaps, my lot to develope; I will, at least, see to what the door leads." [...] Unable to quit the place, she **sat down** on some old **lumber** to recover herself, while her spirits were *nearly* overcome by a superstitious dread, such as she had never felt before. […] a heavy cloud was driven **over the face of the moon,** and all without was perfectly **dark**: she stood for some moments waiting a returning gleam, but the **obscurity** continued.	*An apartment* *Adeline (after a pause)* The night is **rough,** And through these **shatter'd casements,** The **wind** in shrilling blasts sweeps the old **hangings**. *Whether* the place alone puts such *thoughts* in me, I know not; but asleep, or waking, still Conviction haunts me, that some mystery Is wrapped in these chambers, which my fate Will have me penetrate. --The falling **gust** With feeble tone expires *like* dying sighs— The **tap'stry** yonder shakes, *as tho'* some door Open'd behind it *(takes her lamp)* Ha! 'tis so; the bolt, Tho' rusty yields into my hand; I'll see To what it leads. -How, if I sink with fear? And so benumb'd life freeze away in horror? No matter, powerful impulse drives me onward, And my soul rises to the coming terror. *Exit*

Adaptation. #1. "Textual thresholds: appropriating the fantasti

In-signs of the novel's *ur*-intertextuality	Ann Radcliffe *The Romance of the Forest* Vol. IL, ch. viii	James Boaden *Fontainville Forest* IV. iv
Oratory Utterance Mien Movement Gesture, proxemic relations Movement Movement Gesture Movement Movement, gesture Movement, gesture	Adeline knew too well what would be the purport of the Marquis' discourse, and his words soon increased the confusion which her fears had occasioned. While he was **declaring** the ardour of his passion in such terms, as but too often make **vehemence** pass for sincerity, Adeline, to whom this declaration, if honourable, was distressing, and if dishonourable, was shocking **interrupted** him and thanked him for the offer of a distinction, which, with a modest, but determined **air**, she said she must refuse. [...] Adeline continued to **move** towards the **door**, when the Marquis **threw himself** at her feet, and **seizing** her hand, **impressed** it with kisses. She **struggled** to disengage herself. [...] She again **attempted** to go, but the Marquis **prevented** her, and, after some hesitation, again urged his suit, though in terms that would no longer allow her to misunderstand him. Tears swelled into her **eyes** [...]	*Adeline's Apartment* *Adeline.* My Lord I beg you leave me! nor provoke The language must displease you. *Marquis.* No! Ev'n now My passion chides me for this dull delay, And bids me seize the tempting treasure here, Nor idly waste entreaties when my pow'r May force compliance. *Adeline.* Hear me, I conjure you. *Marquis.* I have heard too much; and my impetuous love Now grasps its choicest good - In vain <u>this</u> struggle! How lovely is <u>this</u> terror! By my transport It heightens the bewitching charm of beauty, And lends ten thousand graces to <u>that bosom</u>.

Adaptation #2. "The stages of harassment: movement, gesture, acting conventions".

	Ann Radcliffe *The Romance of the Forest*	James Boaden *Fontainville Forest*
In-signs of the novel's *ur*-**intertextuality**	Vol. II, ch. viii and vol. III, ch. xxiii	IV. i

Utterance
 	
Countenance
 	
Scenery, sound effect
	The Marquis, in the mean time told La Motte, with great **agitation**, that he recollected having appointed some persons to meet him upon business of importance, early in the morning, and it was, therefore, necessary for him to set off for his chateau immediately. As he said this, and desired that his servants might be called, La Motte could not help observing the ashy **paleness** of his countenance, or **expressing** some apprehension that his Lordship was ill. [...] It is probable, that on the night of his abrupt departure from the Abbey, **the solitary silence and gloom of the hour**, in a place which had been the scene of his former crime, called up the remembrance of his brother with a force too powerful for fancy, and awakened horrors which compelled him to quit the polluted spot. If it was so, it is however certain that **the spectres of conscience** vanished with the darkness [...].	*The Hall (dark)*
		
		Violent Thunder and Ligh'ning, the Abbey rocks. and through the distant Windows one of the Turrets is seen to fall, struck by Lightning.
		
		Enter the Marquis, *wild and dishevell'd*
		
		Marquis. Away! Pursue me not! Thou Phantom, hence!
		   For while thy form thus haunts me, all my powers
		   Are wither'd as the parchment by the flame,
		   And my joints frail as nerveless infancy.
		                  (Light'ning)
		   See, he unclasps his mangled breast, and points
		   Thee deadly dagger.- O, in pity strike
		   Deep in my heart, and search thy expiation;
		   Have mercy, mercy! ***(Falls upon his knee.)***
		         Gone! 'tis an illusion.

Adaptation #3. "The spectres of conscience/the Spectre of conscience".

In-signs of the novel's *ur*-intertextuality	Ann Radcliffe *The Romance of the Forest* Vol. III, ch. xv	James Boaden *Fontainville Forest* V. ii

Countenance
 	
Countenance <-> mind
	La Motte remained in his chamber till supper obliged him to descend. At table his wild and haggard **countenance**, which, in spite of all his endeavours, **betrayed** the disorder of his mind, and his long and frequent **fits of abstraction** surprised as well as alarmed Madame La Motte.	*The Hall. A small gate Seen*
		
		Madame Lamotte. Why have you left your chamber thus, my husband;
		     Wherefore these haggard **looks**, as though despair
		     Usurp'd the seat of murderous suggestion?
		     Your vacant **eye** rolls its still cheated sense,
		     And **you seem** wrapped in horror.
		Lamotte. Frenzy, wife,
		     Presses upon my brain - Hark, some one knocks!

Adaptation #4. "The pathognomic body".

My discussion of the transmigration of *The Romance of the Forest* on to *Fontainville Forest* will address some specific features of Radcliffe's poetics –a selection which I hope will prove expedient to retrieve the forms of stage appropriation enacted by Boaden's earliest Gothic drama. Accordingly, I will be concentrating on three complementing aspects of the Radcliffean Gothic: 1) the poetical description of the landscapes, 2) the interspersed intertexts Radcliffe employed as metatextual commentary and, finally, in greater detail, 3) Radcliffe's use of the explained supernatural and its revision at the hands of Boaden. In keeping with the general argument of my study, I shall approach this latter aspect of Boaden's adaptation technique from a contextual, specifically extra-literary and inter-theatrical perspective.

Location and Setting.

One of the major alterations devised by Boaden may be illuminating to understand his practice of stage appropriations. In *Fontainville Forest* the suitably Gothic Abbey is emphasised at the expense of the heroine's long wanderings through scenic parts of France and Switzerland, a journey that covers ten out of twenty-six chapters in the novel (effectively, the third volume of the book). The drama's topographical compactness is anticipated by the title, which draws attention to the two dramatic settings: a specific natural location (Fontainville Forest) and, implicitly, the edifice therein (Fontainville Abbey). This symmetry between man-made and natural locations also has a structural correspondence. The Forest and the Abbey are the settings for the first scene of respectively Act I and Act V.

As well as being respondent to the unity of place, Boaden's choice is textually coherent as the house symbol is always present in Radcliffe's novels. The Abbey, one of the Gothic stock locales, represents the enclosed space, scene of murderous events, which became a staple element of the genre. At the same time, the single, claustrophobic location devised by Boaden intensifies Adeline's

loneliness. Its forlornness *demonstrates* the girl's solitude,[21] ostending the multiple threats –sexual, societal and familial- experienced by Radcliffe's Adeline. In this sense the Abbey heightens the audience's ideas of dramatic character; it also appropriates the function of scenery in Radcliffe, which had the purpose to "prepare and interest" the readers for the fate of the characters.[22]

The narrower topological focus chosen by Boaden also seems to imply that little emphasis is given to Adeline's emotional response to the beauty of Nature or to her aesthetic appreciation of the sublime, and thus to the display of that uniquely informed sensibility which is the trademark of the ever-virtuous Gothic maiden. However, Radcliffe's poetic interruptions and her descriptive strategies are transmodalised into scenography, in particular in the wood scenes in Acts I and V. In Act V, scene i scenery is accompanied by suitable lighting effects to create atmosphere: "*The Forest (Moonlight).*"[23] Steve Cohan quotes a contemporary commentator who enthused, " 'The scenes in the forest' generated ' so much applause,' in part because of the acting, in part because 'the scenery was appropriate and had a fine *effect'*."[24] As his notes on contemporary scenery remind us, Boaden was aware that the pictorial representation of natural landscape was essential for the success of a Gothic performance. For instance, he remarks about *The Iron Chest* (Drury Lane, March 1796) how "[George] Colman found in Gilpin's Forest Scenery some poachers, and other persons of a picturesque cast, that enabled him to compose a picture as though some anachronism had combined Salvator Rosa with Spagnoletti."[25]

Plot, characters, and acting conventions.

In the play after forcefully challenging the villainous Marquis de Montalt, Adeline effectively defies his sexual advances, as she willingly takes upon herself

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[21] For dramatic *demonstration* see Eco, "Semiotics of Theatrical Performance", cit, and Elam, *The Semiotics of Theatre and Drama*, cit., pp. 26-27.

[22] Ann Radcliffe, "On the Supernatural in Poetry", in Norton (ed.) *Gothic Readings*, cit., p. 312.

[23] Boaden, *Fontainville Forest*, cit. p. 57.

[24] Cohan, "Introduction", cit., p. x. The emphasis is mine.

[25] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble,* cit., vol. II p. 156.

the task of revenging her murdered father's assassination in a scene which re-writes (and re-genders) *Hamlet* (I. iv).

> *Adeline*   Nay, let no thought of me withhold your purpose;
> My boding spirit tell me that a great,
> A mighty vengeance works to punish guilt?
> Shall my weak fears prevent or thwart its aim?
> No! For against all artifice I am steel'd
> By horror and aversion; and the force
> That violates my honour quinces life;
> They can never be sundered. (IV. ii)[26]

In keeping with the drive of most Gothic dramas, Boaden amplifies the political sub-plot inherent in Radcliffe's novel (the repossession of the heroine's property, dishonestly embezzled by the villain), while the romantic one becomes but accessory. Significantly, immediately after Adeline has completed the above speech, she is separated from Louis, who departs accompanied by the girl's farewell words: "Adieu, my brother, prosperous be your journey" (IV. ii).[27]

The stage adaptation also returns the characters to their status of actants by operating an expedient simplification at the level of the characters' functions. As a consequence, the two redundant sentimental *acteurs* of the novel, Theodore LaLuc and Louis La Motte, who have a tautological and interchangeable function, conflate in one single figure, Louis Lamotte, *Fontainville Forest*'s dramatic young lover. On the level of the *fabula*, the disappearance from *Fontainville Forest* of the LaLuc sub-plot contributes to making Boaden's new configuration of characters indispensable.

Boaden's Louis appears even more ineffectual than his novelistic counterpart (Radcliffe's Theodore), thus contributing to focus the attention of the audience entirely on the moral dilemma experienced by the divided hero, the ill-advised (but rehabilitated) Old Lamotte, and on the heroine's actions. Casting decisions confirm the strong role of Adeline in the drama. She was played by Elizabeth Younge, an esteemed actress of great versatility that excelled in tragic

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[26] Boaden, *Fontainville Forest*, cit., p. 43.
[27] Ibid., p. 44.

roles (such Monimia in Thomas Otway's *The Orphan*); she was also one of the Covent Garden highest paid actors. Until Garrick's death she played at Drury Lane, where she covered a large number of Shakespearian roles such as Beatrice in *Much Ado about Nothing*, for which she received particular praise.[28] Younge was one of Boaden's favourite actresses; he wrote that "she was born to ornament a court"[29]. She was undoubtedly the best known as well as the best loved actor in *Fontainville Forest*.

On the macrolevel of the play text, the novel actantial structure is confirmed by the breakdown of the character's on-stage presence. Lamotte, Adeline and the Marquis are on stage respectively for 13, 10 and 9 scenes out of 20. Not only do Louis and Hortensia Lamotte appear in 6 scenes only; more importantly Louis does not appear at all in Act I, an absence that seems to confirm the separation – and different standing- of the Gothic and the romantic sub-plots in *Fontainville Forest*. On the contrary, Peter, Louis' servant, is present in one scene in each act, thus confirming the importance of the servant figures in the new melodramatic discourse. Peter was played by Thomas Hull, erstwhile playwright and an actor with a sound reputation who "continued to play significant parts but was seldom the motor of the action."[30] Interestingly for the purpose of this study, Hull, Younge, and William Farren, the seasoned actor who played Montault, had considerable experience of Shakespearian roles, often gained with Garrick at Drury Lane.

The number of lines allotted to each character in the play is particularly informative. Both Adeline and the Marquis have 331 lines each out of a grand total of 1,536. Lamotte is the character who has the highest number of lines (430). Boaden makes his character more sympathetic than his novelistic source, emphasising on the one hand the financial plight of the man (expressed in

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[28] John F. Cox (ed.), *Much Ado about Nothing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 15. In the list of *dramatis personae* in the play, Mrs Younge appears with her married name, Mrs. Pope.

[29] Boaden, *Memoirs of Mrs* Siddons, cit., vol. I, p. 204.

[30] T. R. Griffiths, 'Hull, Thomas (1728–1808)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Available from http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14109 Accessed June 2009.

monologue in Act I) and on the other the guilt that accompanies him at all time. In this respect La Motte's ruthless blackmailing of Adeline in *The Romance of the Forest* (vol. II, ch. viii) may be usefully compared to his dramatic counterpart's attitude as described in the last act of *Fontainville Forest*:

> "I shall only request, that, since you are acquainted with the emergency of my circumstances, you will conform to them, and not, by an ill-time resentment, expose me to the enmity of the Marquis. [...]If, for instance, the marquis should hereafter avow a serious passion for you, and offer you his hand, would no petty resentment, no lurking prepossession for some more happy lover prompt you to refuse him?" [...] "You have, indeed, Sir, named the only means I should reject of evincing my sincerity. [...]" La Motte looked displeased. "'Tis as I thought, said he; "these delicate sentiments make fine appearance in speech, and render the person who utters them infinitely amiable; but bring them to the test of action, and they dissolve into air, leaving only the wreck of vanity behind."[31]

Boaden's version is significantly more sentimentalising:

> *Madame*   Alas! Lamotte, I tremble to enquire
> The cause of this confusion – but our Adeline –
> *Lamotte*   Was on the precipice's very verge,
> And but this flight, no power could save her.
> Hortensia, O thou never wilt believe
> To what a wretch accurs'd, thy fate has joined thee.
> I pledg'd my hopes, my life to yonder Marquis,
> To murder her tonight. [...]
> Know, that to save thee from the gripe of hunger,
> One fatal morn I rush'd into that wood
> Bent upon plunder – Damning infamy
> Soon pointed out the subject, [...]
> I won my error; dearest love, forgive me.
> [...] Come,we'll make short preparation;
> Then, if this savage, eager after blood,
> Roam not the forest, 'ere the peep of day,
> We'll trust ourselves on foot to mercy's care. (V.ii)[32]

In addition, it is possible to assume that Lamotte's longer stage presence and higher number of lines let the audience share in –and, arguably, feel sympathetic with - his moral dilemma.

Adeline, the Marquis and Lamotte have a considerable number of monologues each. In *Fontainville Forest* monologues have different dramaturgical functions. They may convey the character's emotions or reflections,

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[31] Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest,* cit., pp. 125-26.
[32] Boaden, *Fontainville Forest*, cit., p. 59.

as in Lamotte's monologues in Act I describing in turn the man's desperation, his exhilaration at the approach of the convoy he wants to rob, and his remorse. Monologues may also convey decision, as in Adeline's fundamental monologue in (III, iv), where she pledges to avenge her father. Finally, passions, terrors and hallucinations may find expression in monologue, too as in the Marquis' speech in Act IV, scene i (Table 3: "the Spectres of Conscience"). This monologue associates the events of the past with the present emotions of the Marquis; accordingly it has a double function, narrative or informative as well as lyrical.

In all the dramatic passages I have selected for analysis (Tables 1 to 4), the absence of the dramatic lover is particularly relevant. The dramatic action focuses on the three characters, which best embody the dramatic types of the Gothic: de Montalt as the villain-hero, Adeline as the persecuted maiden, and Lamotte as the reformed protagonist. In Table 4 the villain is opposed to the young heroine, whom he desires as an object to possess. This confrontation between virtue and vice is sexualised through the actors' bodies: the mesmeric male eye of the Marquis (Table 3) -channel of expressiveness and a site of surveillance- is juxtaposed to the female bosom (Table 4), the body part that fleshes out both Adeline's sexuality and her vulnerability. The villain, torn between contrasting feeling of love and hatred, is tormented by remorse (Table 4). In the passage the exclamation marks paralinguistically connote the Marquis' speech, emphasising the contemporary lofty manner of delivery. Punctuation also reminds us that the changes in the theatrical morphology made projection and grand gesture essential.

I have previously remarked that the pantomimic language had educated the audiences to a detached appreciation of the wonders of scenery and special effects. In the dramatic passages selected strong reliance on physical gesture couples with numerous scenographic effects, which aimed at creating an emotional response in the spectators. In keeping with the forms of Gothic staging, the "collapsing Turret seen through distant windows" mentioned in the stage directions of Table 4 indicates a feature of the prospective-layered scene interiors and it underlines the vital role of machinists and stage hands. Visual and sound

effects (here, thunder and lightning) also have the function of juxtaposing the power of nature to the helplessness of mankind.

On-stage supernaturalism and the evidence of inter-theatricality: *Shakespeare, Radcliffe, Kemble, Boaden.*

Boaden's controversial decision to include the presence of an on-stage ghost must be considered daring and its success far from forgone. Although three years later Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* was soon to celebrate the official entrance of ghosts among the *dramatis personae* of the Gothic drama, in 1794 Boaden could draw inspiration for the representation of the sublime supernatural almost exclusively from the Shakespearean tradition, in particular as regards *Hamlet*: "Even the most spectacular of Gothic dramas had avoided representing ghosts on stage, and exceptions to this unwritten rule were rare," explains Michael Gamer.[33] It does not come as a surprise, then, that most coeval reviewers opposed the unorthodox otherworldly insertion. Typically, Genest stated: "this is a moderate play by Boaden –the plot is professedly borrowed from the Romance of the Forest– the last scene of the 3d act is rendered contemptible by the introduction of a Phantom."[34] Thomas Harris himself was "so nervous about having the ghost in the play that [he] persuaded Boaden to cut most of the lines to speed it along."[35]

In effect the inclusion of a preternatural appearance would play a significant part in erasing the evermore flimsy dividing line separating legitimate drama from the illegal universe of sensorial stimulation and spectacle. As we have seen this cultural phenomenon was creating a widening rift between critical respectability and public popularity, dramatic theory and theatrical practice, contributing to the inexorable sliding away of the contemporary theatre from 'words' towards gestures, images, and special effects -the province of the popular entertainments thriving in the transpontine venues of the capital.

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[33] Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic.* cit., p. 131.
[34] Genest, *Some Account of the English* Stage, cit., Vol. VII, p. 163.
[35] Cohan, Introduction, *The Plays of James Boaden,* cit., p. xv.

The dramatic relevance of what I define the "unity of emotion" of Boaden's adaptation is convincingly illustrated by the staging of the supernatural, a controversial issue which represents one of the distinctive points of Boaden's Radcliffean recreation. Whereas in *The Romance of the Forest* Radcliffe explains away her heroine's fears as the effects of her overstrained sensibility and wild imagination, in *Fontainville Forest* Boaden insists on embodying Adeline's anxiety through an on-stage ghost, which directly addresses her, crucially, in the central part of the play.

Adeline	At last I am alone! And now may venture
	To look at the contents of this old manuscript.
	A general horror creeps through my limbs,
	And almost stifles curiosity. (*Reads*)
	'[...] They seiz'd me as I reached the neighbour wood,
	[...] Yet, O my brother, I had never wrong'd you.'
	His brother! What, yon Marquis?
Phantom	Even he (*heard within the chamber*)
Adeline	Hark! Sure I heard a voice! No, 'tis the thunder
	That rolls its murmurs thro' this yawning pile. [...
Phantom	O Adeline!
Adeline	Ha! sure I am call'd! No, all are now at rest.
	How powerful is fancy! (III. iv)[36]

On the surface, the structure of the heroine's experience would appear to follow the same narrative formula as the Radcliffean 'explained supernatural.' In the above passage, Adeline repeatedly invokes sensorial evidence in order to refute her fears and condemn them as unjustified. However, every time she turns to scientific and philosophic scepticism, the Phantom challenges her enlightened notions and her avowals of empiricism. Once her feelings have been stirred by the emotional and highly participative reading of the sorrowful tale of her father, both Adeline's sense and her sensibility are ready to acknowledge the reality of the supernatural sounds she is hearing. In a truly cathartic moment, terror overwhelms Adeline as pity moves her. This moment coincides with the apparition of her father's ghost:

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[36] Boaden, *Fontainville Forest*, cit., pp. 38-39.

> Adeline   My sense does not deceive! awful sounds!
>   Twas here he fell!
>
> [*The phantom here glides across the dark part of the Chamber, Adeline shrieks, and falls back. The Scene closes upon her.* (III. iv)[37]

Although the lofty appearance majestically "floated along like a shadow"[38] in front of the footlights only for a few moments, the sudden shock experienced by the breathless public must have been artfully amplified by the falling of the curtain. This dramatic convention recodified for the stage Radcliffe's narrative suspense, making it all the more shocking through its proximity to the violently catastrophic opening of the following act.

<div align="center">

SCENE – *The Hall (dark)*

</div>

> *Violent Thunder and Light'ning, the Abbey Rocks, and through the distant Windows one of the Turrets is seen to fall, struck by the Light'ning.*
>
> *Enter the* MARQUIS, *wild and dishevell'd.*
>
>   (IV. i)[39]

In an adaptation of the ghost scene in *Hamlet*, directly evoked in the Epilogue to the play spoken by Mrs Younge in the character of Adeline,[40] de Montalt's phantom comes back from the dead to demand a vengeance that his daughter promises to give him:

> Adeline   Nay, let no thought of me withhold your purpose;
>   My boding spirit tell me that a great,
>   A mighty vengeance works to punish guilt?
>   Shall my weak fears prevent or thwart its aim?
>   No! For against all artifice I am steel'd
>   By horror and aversion; and the force
>   That violates my honour quenches life;
>   They can never be sundered [...]
>
>   (IV. ii)[41]

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[37] Ibid, p. 40.
[38] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq.*, cit., vol. II, p. 119.
[39] Boaden, *Fontainville Forest*, cit., p. 41.
[40] Ibid., pp. 69-70.
[41] Ibid., p. 43.

As well as offering evidence of important extra-textual traffic and precise contextual references (for instance, the role played by the late eighteenth-century pictorial supernaturalism),[42] Boaden's choice highlights a crucial feature of his adaptational practice. In Radcliffe's novels the character's consciousness offered a filter between the narrated events and the reader, who shared in the protagonist's uncertainties. Boaden realised that this mechanism could not work in a play, a less mediated event which obliged the artist to choose whether admitting or banishing the supernatural. "Perhaps, when the attention is once secured and the reason yielded, the passion for the marvellous had better remain unchecked,"[43] the playwright later recommend in his *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*.

Boaden firmly believed that the audience would appreciate the spectacle as a work of art, an artistic illusion composed by a playwright and acted by players, thus rejecting and deflating any accusation of irreligious or unenlightened inspiration. As he explains in his remarks on *The Count of Narbonne*, the Gothic play which had already brought preternatural events on the stage, Walpole's novel remained superior to the drama, where "the supernatural was rather hinted than shewn."[44] Jephson, Boaden contends, "was not the man to describe the magic circle." He failed "in one great spring of tragic emotion –*terror*, he was not gifted in any striking degree with the other– *pity*."[45] A self-styled "venturous bard",[46] Boaden now rose up to the challenge and attempted to "ascertain whether the failure of others had not proceeded from defective preparation of the supernatural incident, or from its imperfect or vulgar exhibition."[47]

On the metacritical level we might contend that Boaden appropriated for the stage the expectations of future horrors and the dreadful anticipations experienced by Radcliffe's heroines and, vicariously, by her readers. The ghost transubstantiates both Adeline's and the readers' curiosity, of which it offers not

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[42] For pictorial supernaturalism see Myrone (ed.), *Gothic Nightmares*, cit.
[43] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, cit., vol. II, p. 97.
[44] Ibid., vol. I, p. 277.
[45] Ibid., p. 278.
[46] Boaden, "Epilogue to *Fontainville Forest*", in *The Plays of James Boaden*, p. 69.
[47] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, cit., vol. II, p. 97.

only the stage actualisation, but also the aesthetic fulfilment. In this sense Boaden offers a cultural response to the Radcliffean poetics, which was often criticised for exploiting the readers' high-strung expectations, turning them into bathos. This sense of frustration was clearly perceived by Boaden, who wrote:

> even in romance it may be doubtful, whether there be not something *ungenerous* in thus playing upon poor timid human nature, and agonising it with false terrors [...] Perhaps, when the attention is once secured and the reason yielded, the passion for the marvellous had better remained unchecked.[48]

On the level of inter-theatricality we may notice that *Fontainville Forest* was produced a few weeks after the inauguration of the new Drury Lane (12 March 1794). Haunted by his personal version of the 'ghost of the Bard,' to whose memory he had dedicated the renovated edifice, the actor-manager John Philip Kemble had chosen to present a version of *Macbeth* in which Banquo's ghost did not appear on stage. This decision ran counter to a dramatic tradition that had become the established fare for over a decade. We may argue that in choosing Hamlet's ghost as his model, Boaden implicitly tried to equate his dramatic powers not only with those of Shakespeare, but also with those of Kemble -one of the Bard's putative successors- of whom Boaden was to write a celebrative biography. Although the star actor had been actively engaged in "marketing himself" as the repository of the cultural memory of the Bard and "the true heir to the legacies of Shakespeare and the English stage,"[49] it was evident that he was significantly "re-imagining"[50] this tradition through the introduction of untraditional musical accompaniment and other forms of spectacular overcoding (vestimentary, cosmetic, pictorial). The exalted analogy with the "great masters"[51] of the past and the present times was therefore possible, and Boaden's dramatic ambitions became justified. The Epilogue to *Fontainville Forest* is conclusive is this respect:

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit., n. 26, p. 235.

[50] J. Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text. Shakespeare, Adaptation, & Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory* (The University Press of Kentucky: Lexington, 1995).

[51] Boaden, Introduction to *The Cambro-Britons* (Haymarket, 1798), in *The Plays of James Boaden*, cit., p. iii.

Know you not, Shakepeare's petrifying pow'r
Commands alone the horror-giving hour?
[…]
You mean to sanction then your own pale sprite,
By his "that did usurp this time of night:"
"I do, he answer'd, and beg you'll spare
"My injured phantom ev'ry *red*-sea pray'r:
"Why should your terror *lay* my proudest boast,
"Madam I die, if I give up the ghost."[52]

The comparison between *Fontainville Forest* and *Hamlet* is made more explicit in *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*. Here Boaden goes to great length to explain the failure in the representation of the supernatural in that tragedy:

> The great author has written with his highest power; he has displayed unbounded knowledge of effect; [...] and yet, as far as the royal shade himself is concerned, all this charm is dispelled by the heavy, bulky, creaking substantiality of the spirit. Whereas the whole of this "gracious figure" should look as if it was collected from the surrounding air, and ready, when its impression should be made, to melt into thin air again.[53]

In Boaden's opinion, only Henry Fuseli had managed to give an appropriate representation to the sublime insubstantiality of Shakespeare's ghost.

> Perhaps the sublimest effort of painting is the figure of the Royal Dane, as he appeared in the large composition of Mr. Fuseli for the Shakespeare Gallery. [...] How is all this produced? [...] By the artifice of the pallet; by keeping down all too positive indications of substance; *by the choice of a cold prevalent colour, touched slightly with the pale silvery tone of moonlight; by a step gigantic in extent, and action of the most venerable dignity and command*.[54]

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[52] Boaden, Epilogue to *Fontainville Forest*, ibid., p. 69.
[53] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, cit., vol. II, p. 98.
[54] Ibid. The emphasis is mine.

12. *Hamlet*. Act I. Scene IV. "Hamlet, Horatio, Marcellus, and the Ghost." Painted by H. Fuseli, R. A. Engraved by R. Thew." Plate XLIV from Volume II of *Boydell's Shakespeare Prints*. Based on the original painting of 1789. Available from http://shakespeare.emory.edu/illustrated_showimage.cfm?imageid=73

In the passage above Boaden touches on two precise visual components of Fuseli's painting: the grand posture of the ghost and the lighting effects which illuminate it with eerie hues. In so doing, we may argue, he suggests a *dramatic* reading of the picture –a theatrical interpretation that firmly places it in the context of contemporary scenography, acting techniques and, quite symptomatically, also of the late eighteenth-century Shakespearian criticism. This is precisely the striking visual effect Boaden strove to recall in *Fontainville Forest*.

During the first night rehearsal of *Fontainville Forest* "good, honest, jolly Thompson"[55] went on stage in the "clumsy"[56] armour of the contemporary Shakespearian tradition. However, the result was far from satisfying for either Boaden or Thomas Harris, the Covent Garden manager. The playwright thus decided to apply to the figure of his actor the conventions of the pictorial sublime.

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[55] Ibid., p. 117.
[56] Ibid., p. 118.

> The great contrivance was, that the spectre should appear through a blueish-grey gauze, so as to remove the too corporeal effect of a 'live actor,' and convert the moving substance into a gliding essence.[57]

The uncanny atmosphere of Fuseli's painting might be reproduced recurring to special effects and through a costume of a "dark blue grey stuff, made in the shape of armour."[58] Boaden's urgency in giving visual expression to the otherworldly presence must be considered respondent to contemporary scenic practice. Intriguingly, Kemble himself had recourse to transparencies for the procession of the eight kings followed by the ghost of Banquo, who passed behind a transparent screen of black crepe, possibly surrounded by a smoke effect.[59]

Once the dramatist moves from the visual to the aural dimension, however, the problem of translating the imagined into the actual remains. In Boaden's adaptations the ghost was to be played John Follet, "the clown so royally celebrated for the eating of *carrots* in the pantomimes."[60] As an actor of speech-less shows, his strident voice was universally deemed inappropriate to achieve "the great desideratum". The illegitimate mixing of words and gesture, however, seemed to offer a viable solution.

> We therefore settled it, that, in imitation of the ancients, he should be only the MIME, to make the action on the stage, and that poor Thompson, disencumbered from the pilch of the majesty of Denmark, should yet at the wing, with hollow voice, pronounce the two important words; to which the extended arm of Follet might give the consentaneous action.[61]

As Boaden's detailed narrative makes clear, *Fontainville Forest*'s ghost appropriates Radcliffe's novel in a twofold way. The verbal hesitation of the fantastic [of which I have given an example in Table 1] is appropriated and transmodalised into the dramatic language of visual uncertainty –a code that aims

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[57] Ibid., p. 117.

[58] Ibid., p. 119.

[59] See Sir Walter Scott's review, *Quarterly Review* (1826), pp. 227-28 qtd. in J. Donohue, "Kemble's Production of *Macbeth* : Some Notes on Scene Painters Scenery, Special Effects, and Costumes." *Theatre Notebook*, Vol. 21 (1967), p. 70.

[60] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, cit., vol. II, p. 118. The emphasis is in the text.

[61] Ibid.

to place the apparition beyond the "heavy, bulky, creaking substantiality"[62] of the actor's body. Thus, the ghost's insubstantial representation appropriates for the stage Radcliffe's "modal formulae"[63]-the language of uncertainty (Boaden calls it "the doubtful of the narrative")[64] that syntactically and semantically marks the expression of the supernatural.

It is likewise worthy of note the fact that Boaden sought -and apparently found- inspiration in the work of Henry Fuseli, a painter who was at the time elaborating a "distinctly visual idiom"[65] with which to express his idiosyncratic Shakespearean readings. Although Fuseli had established his fame as 'the painter of Shakespeare,' his visionary style set him apart from the more conventional iconographic tradition supported by such masters as Sir Joshua Reynolds, at the time the President of the Royal Academy. Fuseli, we may say, was approaching the cultural establishment and the contemporary aesthetic codes –in particular, albeit not exclusively, as regards his Shakespearian illustrations- with a destabilising spirit and a highly distinctive vocabulary for the representation of the fantastic, which Boaden may have felt (or wished to feel) cognate to his own.

> Fuseli's *The Death of Dido* and *The Vision of Queen Katherine* showed that he was capable of taking morally elevating subjects from well-known classical or quite well-known literary texts, and at the same time of drawing attention to himself by being more extreme and 'poetical' in his treatment of them than the pillars of the artistic establishment, especially Reynolds and Benjamin West.[66]

As we have seen, Gothic relied on formulaic plots and situations, and the spectators' pleasure would be increased by this pattern of repetition. Boaden's terrifying and unexpected apparition would de-familiarize dramatic structure and conventions, thus highlighting Adeline's essential contact, that is crucially set in the central part of the play (III. iv). In this respect, the Phantom may represent the heroine's encounter with her story, her way of coming to terms with her past and,

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[62] Ibid., p. 98.
[63] Todorov, *The Fantastic,* cit.
[64] Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble, Esq.*, vol. II, p. 97.
[65] C. Frayling, "Fuseli's *The Nightmare*: Somewhere between the Sublime and the Ridiculous", in Myrone (ed.), *Gothic Nightmares*, cit., p. 10.
[66] Ibid.

finally, her passage into adulthood. In my reading, the ghost integrates narration into action, and brings the past events concerning Boaden's Philip, Marquis de Montalt –the primordial crime- on the same temporal level of his daughter's present story. Accordingly, the preternatural apparition is endowed with an interaxal function. From a dramatic point of view, it reinstates the unity of action and, partly, the unity of time.

It is significant that as the ostension of what I have defined *Fontainville Forest*'s unity of emotion, the ghost also actualises and at the same time imaginatively negotiates with the culturally prestigious, specifically Shakespearian, dramatic tradition Boaden would quite vocally defend from illegitimate theatre attacks. At the same time the Phantom –a character that is not *physically* part of Radcliffe's narrative economy– metaphorically 'brings back from the dead' and actualises the intersection of the visual, the verbal and the dramatic –as well as the negotiations between higher- and lower-class genres and hyper- and hypo-texts- that I hope to highlight with my enquiry. On the level I have tried to suggest here, not only does Boaden's *Hamlet*-like ghost appropriate the plurality of the Gothic, more precisely it is the ghostly product and it performs the ghostly process of that appropriation.

In my reading, Boaden's ghost is also endowed with one further transtextual function. As previously explained, Radcliffe's poetical descriptions connect with numerous inset texts, which metatextually link up to an emerging literary canon which canonically repositions and aggrandises her version of the Gothic novel. In a staged production, on the other hand, the metatextual link is purposely visual and dramatic, as shown most clearly by Boaden's deliberate revisioning of the ghost scene in *Hamlet* and his direct engagement with the production of *Macbeth* at Covent Garden. I argue that extra-literary intertextuality and inter-theatricality contribute to the canonical repositioning and cultural aggrandisement of Boaden's Gothic play. Consequently, the presence of De Montalt's ghost affects the cultural standing of *Fontainville Forest*. In its dealings with the aesthetic codes of the time

it transforms debased spectacular terror into thrilling awe -a sublime aesthetic experience distanced and safely contained within the stage-frame.

I finally suggest that in *Fontainville Forest* Boaden must have been only marginally concerned with the Enlightenment debate about the existence of ghosts.[67] In my reading, Boaden's phantom is a *fiction* –what we may be tempted to call the stage actualisation of the author's cultural 'family romance'[68]- an artificial *cultural effect* tailor-made for the enjoyment of a public that valued Boydell's volumes, flocked to the Shakespeare's Gallery and hailed Radcliffe as "the Shakspeare [sic] of Romace writers."[69] Responding to a precise ideological function that places *Fontainville Forest* in the context of the forming national dramatic canon, not only does the supernatural transvaluate the heroine's imaginative experience "from low superstition to aesthetic resource,"[70] as maintained by Emma Clery. In case of *Fontainville Forest*, it also operates the generic transvaluation of the drama itself. This is achieved through the strikingly modern and manifestly epochal reconciliation of the late eighteenth-century aesthetic norms with the increasing mass-market commercialisation of the visual,[71] through the grafting of dramatic theory (specifically, as regarded Shakespeare) on to dramatic practice.

For all the above reasons I see *Fontainville Forest*'s Phantom as the embodiment of Boaden's own poetics and his stage appropriation of Radcliffe. In its links with spectacle and late eighteenth-century on-stage supernaturalism the Ghost actualises a traffic with the unpatented stage, whilst adherence to the Aristotelian unities and the Shakespearian tradition reveals the playwright's

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[67] For the discourse of supernaturalism in the latter eighteenth century see J. Voller, *The Supernatural Sublime. The Metaphysics of Terror in Anglo-American Romanticism* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), Terry Castle, *The Female Thermometer: Eighteenth-century Culture and the Invention of the Uncanny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), and Emma J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction,* cit.

[68] For an interesting reading of *The Romance of the Forest* in Freudian terms, see E. Bronfen, "Hysteria, Phantasy and the Family Romance: Ann Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest*," *Women's Writing*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1994), pp. 171-180.

[69] Nathan Drake's 1804 appreciation of Radcliffe in *Literary Hours* is reported as Document no. 38 in Rogers (ed.), *The Critical Response to Ann Radcliffe*, cit.

[70] Clery, *Women's Gothic*, cit., p. 8.

[71] See D'Arcy Wood, *The Shock of the Real*, cit.

dramatic ambitions -his attempt to affiliate his work with the high cultural tradition of the Bard and such contemporary re-creators of his memory as John Philip Kemble and Henry Fuseli. Contextually, Boaden's Shakespearian Phantom appears not so much as a stage illusion as the imaginative embodiment of the author's precise *creative* agenda.

With a powerful dramatic cue that deliberately harks back to and revisions one of Shakespeare's monumental "imaginative tragedies",[72] Boaden's Phantom creatively actualises the ghostly presence and highlights the ghostly product of the Gothic appropriator. As an apt metaphor of Boaden's ideal stage, it enables the affiliation of *Fontainville Forest* with an ennobled cultural tradition -both visual and poetic- and the appropriation of a dramatic vision that went beyond both the earthly and the mundane.

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[72] J. Bates, *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), p. 56.

Change, Transformation, Spectacle: **The Monk** *and the Forms of Georgian Scenic Spectacle.*

Until the publication of David Lorne MacDonald's comprehensive biography in 2001[73] the critical focus regarding Matthew Gregory Lewis's *oeuvre* had privileged the discussion of *The Monk*. The controversy surrounding the publication of the book, its connection with the political situation of the 1790s (for instance, in its relation with the formation of the English nation), the interest surrounding the author's sexuality and public *persona* or, still from a psychological point of view, the discourses of transgression and punishment enacted in/by the novel are some of the diverse critical paths which had been theretofore attempted. However, after the appearance of MacDonald's important biographical study (indebted as it is, often in contending ways, to the early scholarly re-appraisal of Lewis published by Montague Summers in 1938),[74] it is now evident that Lewis was a writer of considerable diversity, working –albeit with intermittent success- in such disparate fields as narrative prose, poetry, dramatic adaptations, translation and editorial work.

Although we may safely maintain that the author's true importance within the Romantic cultural discourse has finally become established and quite widely recognised, yet most critical appreciations of Lewis's work still centre around *The Monk*, leaving his substantial dramatic production on a side[75] This critical trend partly results from the *éclat* ensuing from the bicentenary celebrations for the publication of the novel, as attested amongst the others by the appearance of a special monographic issue dedicated to *The Monk* by the influential online journal *Romanticism on the Net*, where virtually no space at all is given to the discussion

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[73] Macdonald, *Monk Lewis*, cit.

[74] Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, cit. MacDonald's study examines Lewis's *complete* work – a critical feat attempted most notably by Summers. The other two standard bio-bibliographical works on Lewis are Parreaux, *The Publication of 'The* Monk', cit. and L. F. Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961).

[75] Cf. Frederick Frank's comprehensive bibliography of Lewisiana available from http://thesicklytaper.pagedepot.com/LEWIS-GGIII.HTM . Accessed in April, 6th 2006.

of Lewis's dramatic production.[76] *The Castle Spectre* –which at the time of its staging was widely recognised as the most successful theatrical production of the latter part of the eighteenth century[77]– has been only recently studied by a relatively small number of critics. Lewis's theatre is still treated briefly and very occasionally, regularly eclipsed –or rather haunted- by discussions of *The Monk*.[78] Regrettably, little seems to have changed since Montague Summers's remarks dated over eighty years ago:

> During half a century and more, criticism of Lewis, such as it is, obvious and facile to the last degree, for the most part hardly seems to have gone beyond *The Monk*, and hence it has been necessary to consider both the romances and the ballads, and the plays at some length, since consciously or unwittingly he introduced new and essential features both by his prose works, his verse and his dramas into the gothic novel, upon which he excercised so tremendous, one might almost say so illimitable, an influence.[79]

The absence of a scholarly edition of Lewis's plays –a long overdue accomplishment that would celebrate the author's inclusion in the Romantic dramatic canon– is, arguably, connected with the politics of dramatic ideology and the heuristic distinction between popular and *élite* cultural products. As expressed in the rich and varied paratextual evidence Lewis wrote, the author's theatrical production reveals his appreciation of and involvement in the fringe world of the spectaculars and extravagant scenic representations which contributed to contaminate the patented metropolitan theatres with the "ultra-romantic"[80] melodramatic conventions, animal drama and flamboyant staging of the supernatural typical of illegitimate shows. In the note addressed "To the

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[76] "Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*", special monographic issue of *Romanticism on the Net* 8 (November 1997) Guest editor Frederick Frank. Available from http://www.erudit.org/revue/ron/1997/v/n8/index.html .

[77] Evans, *Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley*, cit., p. 144 and J. Glance, " 'Fitting the Taste of the Audience Like a Glove': Matthew Lewis's Supernatural Drama", available from http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/lewis_essay_jg.html. Accessed on 6 January 2004.

[78] Lewis's dramatic works include *The East Indian* (Drury Lane, 1799), *Adelmorn the Outlaw* (Drury Lane, 1801), *Alfonso King of Castille* (Covent Garden, 1802), *Rugantino, or The Bravo of Venice* (Covent Garden, 1805), *Adelgitha or The Fruits of a Single Error* (Drury Lane, 1807), *The Wood Daemon, or the Clock Has Struck* (Drury Lane, 1807 later rewritten by Lewis himself as *One O' Clock! or The Knight and The Wood Daemon*, Drury Lane at The Lyceum Theatre, 1811), *Venoni or the Novice of St. Mark's* (Drury Lane, 1808), *Timour the Tartar* (Covent Garden, 1811).

[79] Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, cit., p. 289.

[80] Ibid., p. 259.

reader" of *The Castle Spectre*, as I have mentioned before, Lewis openly acknowledges the role of scenery and music.[81] Similarly, *Adelmorn* was more appreciated for its extra-textual rather than textual beauties, as recorded in a review in the *European Magazine*:

> Without the dialogue, which is wretched, *Adelmorn* would make a tolerable Ballet, or Pantomime; but as Drama it is far below criticism. [...] The audience, though they rapturously applauded the Composer and Scene Painter, hissed the dialogue almost from beginning to end [...].[82]

In the Advertisement to *Rugantino* Lewis once again candidly ascribed his success "to the Scenery and the Decorations, than which perhaps more splendid have seldom been witnessed on an English Stage."[83]

This intersemiotic mongrelisation of forms -by which legitimate drama became strongly melodramatic and, in its turn, novel was adapted into drama- seems to have gone full circle in *My Uncle's Garret Window*, a short story included in the fourth volume of Lewis's *Romantic Tales* (1808). The story has a telling subtitle "A Pantomimic Tale". The protagonist is a young boy who spends his time watching his neighbours through the windows of their house. The actions he sees are a very "entertaining [...] drama"[84], which comes complete with a "villain"[85]. The show daily unfolds in front of his eyes in a series of living tableaux. The windows work like a picture-frame stage and the characters are seen as if inside a frontal, proscenium arch. "Not that I hear a syllable;" the young boy admits, "but nothing can be more expressive of sarcastic politeness, than the frequent bowing of the head, and the waving of his hand backwards and forwards, while his lips quiver and his eyes flame."[86]

Although he cannot hear the words of his neighbours, the anonymous narrator is nonetheless able to interpret what is happening in the house across the

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[81] Lewis, *The Castle Spectre*, cit. p. 103.
[82] *European Magazine* (May, 4th 1801). Quoted in Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, cit. p. 260.
[83] Ibid., p. 271.
[84] M. G. Lewis, "My Uncle's Garret Window." *Romantic Tales*. (London: printed for D. N. Shury for Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1808), vol. 4, pp. 5-7.
[85] Ibid., p. 6.
[86] Ibid., p. 51.

road simply by following the gestures and expressions of the people he watches from his own house. The tale turns into a dramatic text, as confirmed by the fact that the narrative discourse in the present tense is composed of strings of very short paratactic sentences. These appear to be similar to stage directions, which are interpreted and coordinated by the gaze of the boy.

> Edward starts back; he stands motionless; his eyes burns; he seems to struggle against his feelings. [...] He places one hand upon his heart; he raises the other to heaven with an air of the most determinate resolution; and with every word that he utters, his courage and his enthusiasm appear to increase.[87]

The above example may convey an idea of the transformation that invests *My Uncle's Garret Window* in its entirety. There are no stage directions as such – which conventionally are indicated typographically by the italics; nevertheless, I suggest, the whole tale may be taken as a type of extended paratext. The status of the narrator himself becomes hybrid and permeable: on the one hand he interprets what he sees and mediates it to the reader, becoming a kind of omniscient "super-spectator." In so doing he keeps control over the meaning of the action and he also claims the authority to make this meaning himself. On the other hand the narrator's voice tends to disappear inside the show he is watching, for which, arguably, he acts as a sort of artistic director or even a prompter.

If the genealogies of the novelistic and dramatic influences on the work of an author may be more easily accessible to traditional forms of scholarship (Lewis himself acknowledged on more than one occasion some of his numerous source texts),[88] by contrast visual, aural and extra-literary intertextualities in general are more volatile. Relying on less-than-detailed scripts -very often the first edition of a play is significantly different from the Larpent licensing manuscript– a spectacular play or a para-textual entertainment is textually more ephemeral and, thus, its transtextual relations are not quite so (self-)evident. As John O' Brien has

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[87] Ibid., p. 36.
[88] See for instance, Lewis's own notes to *The Castle Spectre*, cit.

convincingly argued in a different context, "the English stage is not a pregiven object, ready to be discussed and assessed, but a critical and historical problem, one that demands articulation rather than silent or unreflective acceptance."[89]

I contend that the retrieval of the theatrical *ur*-intertextuality of *The Monk* would be significant in a twofold way. First it would be appropriate in terms of a wider textual and contextual analysis of *The Monk*. In this sense an enquiry into the theatrical *ur*-intertextuality of *The Monk* would help the researcher to understand how the novel appropriates and transforms theatre and spectacle at both the level of forms and themes. Second, I would suggest that the discourses of stage appropriation in *The Monk* –projecting as they do the multiple languages of the theatre and the visual shows on to the page- might contribute to the re-integration of the novel itself within its genotype: Lewis's truly intergeneric poetical *corpus* of which *The Monk* seems to have been the monstrous hydrocephalus for too long a time.

2.1   A Theatrical Novel: Play-Acting, Deception, Reversal

As a complex representation of the post-revolutionary climate of ontological uncertainty expressed by the Gothic novel of the 1790s, Lewis's *The Monk* is built around the predominant through-lines of inversion, deception and transformation. As in a spectacular performance of ever-shifting *simulacra*, the power of representation continuously supersedes actuality. Fiction replaces fact and deception replaces truth according to various levels of displacement which may be called the 'signs of the fake'.

In the opening pages of the novel, Madrid cathedral is described as a playhouse -a site for mere entertainment and display- crowded by throngs of loquacious and worldly gazers quite reminiscent of the Georgian theatregoing audiences: "the Women came to show themselves, the Men to see the Women: Some were attracted by curiosity to hear an Orator so celebrated; Some came because they

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[89] J. O'Brien, *Harlequin Britain*, cit., p. 36.

had no better means of employing their time till the play began."[90] On the metacritical level we may argue that, placed as it is at the very beginning of the novel, this crowd of scarcely pious worshippers doubles up as a theatrical audience, who, in its turn, doubles up as Lewis's ideal reading public. As noted by David Punter: "Lewis wants his reader to be impressionable, admiring, *spectatorial*."[91] As in its etymological sense, then, Lewis's church is a *theatre*, literally a "place for viewing," from the Greek *theasthai*, "to behold." As a result, I argue, Lewis's Ideal Readers are constructed as Ideal Viewers -prepared to stage the events of the novel in the theatre of their mind.

In Madrid spiritual and moral fakery presides. As we will soon learn, Ambrosio, the master of these debased religious revels, also partakes of this widespread counterfeiting activity, artfully donning the appearance of dutifulness: "The Abbot, smiling at their eagerness, pronounced his benediction, and quitted the Church, while humility dwelt upon every feature. Dwelt She also in his heart?"[92] In a renegotiation of moral values, religious consolation is superseded by the metaphysical abyss: in a grotesque reversal of the economy of the *Bildungsroman*, the monk Ambriosio -de-formed and corrupted by a zealous and insincere religious education– will eventually confess his sins to the Inquisitors only to find death and damnation instead of redemption in front of God and mankind.

By the end of the novel, the initial sense of general precariousness has expanded on to the ontological level to affect the numinous itself. Even the existence of the supernatural beings becomes a form of inverted (or perverted) revelation: instead of a theophany testifying to the presence of God, supernatural manifestations seal the damnation of the sinners.

With a final theatrical touch, Matilda, the crafty spirit who tempts Ambrosio, skilfully performs all the signs of gendered identity, according to a theatrical model which is reminiscent at one and the same time of the contemporary tradition of the

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[90] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., Vol. I, ch. i, p. 7.
[91] Punter, *The Literature of Terror*, cit., p. 80. The italics are mine.
[92] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., Vol. I, ch. i, p. 20.

disguise plays (a dramatic form which later Lewis exploited with great success in *Rugantino*) as well as the sexual transgression offered by the actresses' breeches parts.

> The Songstress sat at a little distance from his Bed. The attitude in which She bent over her harp, was easy and graceful: Her Cowl had fallen back-warder than usual: Two coral lips were visible, ripe, fresh, and melting, and a Chin in whose dimples seemed to lurk a thousand Cupids. Her Habit's long sleeves would have swept along the Chords of the Instrument: To prevent this inconvenience She had drawn it above her elbow, and by this means an arm was discovered formed in the most perfect symmetry, the delicacy of whose skin might have contended with snow in whiteness. Ambrosio dared to look on her but once: That glance sufficed to convince him, how dangerous was the presence of this seducing Object. He closed his eyes [...].[93]

Objects are endowed of a secret life of their own, too and may be mis-used for self-indulgent or impious motives. For instance the statue of St. Clare, the miraculous patroness saint of the Convent of the Nuns of St. Clare –a plastic reminder of the sway of superstition and the punishments which await those who dare sin against the Mother Church– in fact doubles up as the gateway to the vaults where the nuns have entombed Antonia.

> [Helena] gravely replied, that for time immemorial the Statue had been famous for performing miracles: [...] "All I can say is, that since that time no one has ever dared to touch the Statue: Then do not be fool-hardy, good Segnor! [...]" It struck [Lorenzo], that so particular an injunction was not given without cause, not to touch the arm of the Image. He again ascended the Pedestal [...] he applied his fingers to the knob, and pressed it down forcibly. [...] once again he attempted to move [the image], and succeeded without much exertion. He placed it upon the ground, and then perceived the Pedestal to be hollow, and covered at the opening with an heavy iron gate.[94]

Places of worship, holiness and sanctuary turn into spaces of sin, perdition and supernatural danger. As in the model offered by Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, the Gothic objects and the Gothic spaces have an autonomous double life, thus contributing to represent other facets of the overall dismantling of reason. "Nothing in *The Monk* is what is seems, for anything can slide into the repression of its opposite,"[95]

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[93] Ibid, Vol. I, ch. ii, p. 79.
[94] Ibid, Vol. I, ch. iii, pp. 364-67.
[95] Punter, *The Literature of Terror*, cit., p. 79.

remarks David Punter: life melts into death and the idyll of Raymond and Agnes reawakens as the nightmare of the Bleeding Nun.

As conclusively explained by Jerrold Hogle, each of the above images may "appear as part of a surface, itself a set of deceptions, covering what turns out to be an even deeper and more hidden deception."[96] My argument here is, then, concerned with finding thematic and formal correspondences to the "ghost of the counterfeit" expressed by *The Monk* in the illusionism, stagecraft and sensational effects characteristic of Georgian scenic spectacle.

2.2   A 'Pantomimic' Novel

Lewis informs the apparently harmless and joyous through-lines of artifice and transformation deployed by the Georgian harlequinades and others pantomimic shows of deeply unsettling, fatal –or, as we may even be tempted to say, petrifying-connotations. In point of fact, I contend that the isotopy of inversion invests and reverses the themes and forms of traditional pantomime, of which it provides precise, yet constantly dysphoric reflections.[97] The metatextual import of this formal and thematic reversal is all the more imaginative due to the fact that the action of the pantomime "was rigidly restricted, the plot limited to obligatory elements."[98]

'Ocular' novel *par excellence* -if we want to apply Tzvetan Todorov's definition of the "themes of vision" in the Fantastic[99]- the story of *The Monk* challenges and overturns the deceptions of semblance, exteriority, appearance - bringing to the surface the disturbing truths that hide beneath brittle outer shells. In this respect it is highly significant that the two chapters in the last book in which the crimes of both the Prioress of St. Clare and Ambrosio are discovered take place underground, in the sinister dungeons underneath the vaults of the convent of St.

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[96] J. E. Hogle, "The Ghost of the Counterfeit—and the Closet—in *The Monk*." *Romanticism on the Net*, 8 (November 1997). Accessed on 25 October 2006. Available from http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/ghost.html

[97] For an introduction to the discourses of pantomime in the late eighteenth century cf. T. Niklaus, *Harlequin Phoenix or the Rise and Fall of a Bergamask Rogue* (London: The Bodley Head, 1956) and D. Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element. The English Pantomime, 1806-1836* (Cambridge,Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1969).

[98] Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element*, cit., p. 23.

[99] Todorov, *The Fantastic*, cit.

Clare, and mostly in the dark, in the dim light thrown by ever-flickering tapers, "A deep abyss now presented itself before them, whose thick obscurity the eye strove in vain to pierce. The rays of the Lamp were too feeble to be of much assistance."[100] Sight, the never-failing instrument of knowledge of the eighteenth-century episteme, is proven to be not only fallacious, but even instrumental to eternal perdition. Ambrosio's scopophilia makes him consume his intercourse with both Matilda and Antonia primarily as visual affairs, and the novel is rife with instances of punishments inflicted to those who -prey to *concupiscientia ocularum* – have dared to gaze: "though [Ambrosio] indulged the sense of hearing; a single look convinced him he must not trust to that of sight."[101]

Moving one step beyond the above examples, I contend that *The Monk* is a deeply visual novel, profoundly indebted to such para-theatrical visual exhibits as, for instance, de Loutherbourg's miniature Eidophusikon and his experimental representation of lighting, the times of day, the movements of the moon and the clouds.

As we have seen, approaching the end of the century lighting effects became more elaborate and fantastic. Coloured silk screens and lenses could convey kaleidoscopic fantasies and evanescent effects -very popular in ballets and pantomimes, and later for representing the supernatural. Revolving prismatic colour transparencies and later magic lanterns were used to emit continual-changing supernatural tints, and to create an unearthly ambience. A similar attention to lighting and optical effects may be noted in *The Monk*. Time and again, the events in the novel are given a theatrical background reminiscent of a picturesque painted backcloth and are characterised by the same elaborate visual and aural special effects popularised by contemporary staging techniques.

The portrayal of the gardens of the Abbey of the Capuchins is a masterpiece of *natura naturata*. When suggesting to the reader the enchanted nature of this

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[100] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., vol. III, ch. iii, p. 367.
[101] Ibid., vol. I, ch. ii, p. 78.

physical space, Lewis's depiction seems to describe a *skênographia* -an elaborate painted set.

> In all Madrid there was no spot more beautiful of better regulated. It was laid out with the most exquisite taste; The choicest flowers adorned it in the height of luxuriance, and though artfully arranged, seemed only planted by the hand of Nature [...]. The hour now added to the beauty of the scene. **The full Moon ranging through a blue and colourless sky, shed upon the trees a trembling lustre, and the waters of the fountains sparkled in the silver beam:** A gentle breeze breathed the fragrance of Orange-blossoms along the Alleys; and the Nightingale poured forth her melodious murmur from the shelter of an artificial wilderness. Thither the Abbot bent his steps.[102]

What I am suggesting here is that the description of this garden of delights incorporates a show of magical lights and a 'still and moving images' effect (I have highlighted in bold, in particular, the atmospheric effects of the moonlight) similar to those used in such theatrical experiences as the Eidophusikon. The wonders of such shows –achieved through coloured silk rotating on pivots and the concentrated lights of the Argand lamps- are suggested by a passage from the pantomime *A Christmas Tale* (Drury Lane, October 1776), whose much applauded scenery was also designed by de Loutherbourg. As in the Lewis passage just mentioned, the setting is again an enchanted bower where two lovers, Camilla and Floridor, meet. This is a magical garden in which objects and plants miraculously change colour.

> *Clarissa.*   My fancy teems with a thousand apprehensions, all of my senses are in disorder. I heard or thought I heard strange noises in the air, even now my eyes are deceiv'd, or this garden, the trees, the flowers, the heav'ns change their colours to my sight, and seems to say something mysterious which is not in my heart to expound.
>
> *The objects in the garden vary their colours.* (III. i)[103]

In December 1776 Drury Lane staged a Christmas pantomime by George Collier, *Selima and Azor*, another scenographic effort from the pencil of de Loutherbourg. A contemporary critic pointed out that the use of transparencies in the Act II,

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[102] Ibid., vol. I, ch. ii, p. 50.

[103] D. Garrick. *A new dramatic entertainment, called, a Christmas tale.* In five parts. As it is performed at the Theatre-Royal in Drury-Lane. (Dublin: printed for Messrs. Lynch, Williams, Wilson, and Husband, 1774), p. 17.

scenes iii and iv and the dramatic contrasts "of light and shadows echoed similar effects achieved in easel painting, to the point of blurring the boundaries between canvas and set design."[104] It is interesting to note that materials from both pantomimes were published several times up until the 1800s. If we contextualise Lewis's descriptive passage within the culture of spectacular entertainments of which both *A Christmas Tale* and *Selima and Azor* are examples we may contend that *The Monk* pertains of a process of intersemiotic fluidity and diffusion which seems to establish signifying relationships in the languages of painting, set design, optical shows (all of which re-mediated and popularised by way of their published scripts) and the novel.

The isotopy of the 'optical enchantment' in *The Monk* is further embodied in some magic mirrors that can show the form of somebody's lover. The first of these 'fantascopes' is described in song by a Gypsy fortune teller to Antonia.

> Come, cross my hand! My heart surpasses
> All that did ever Mortal know,
> Come, maidens, come! My magic glasses
> Your future husband's form can show:
>
> For 'tis to me the power is given
> Unclosed the book of fate to see;
> To read the fixed resolves of heaven,
> And dive into futurity.[105]

Similarly, Matilda possesses a "mirror of polished side" through which it is possible to conjure at will the image of the beloved one: "a confuse mixture of colours and images presented itself to the Friar's eyes, which at length arranging themselves in their proper places, He beheld in miniature Antonia's lovely form."[106] These *specula miraculorum* recall the mirror-like gauze transparencies

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[104] Finkel, *Romantic Stages*, cit., p. 6. For the use of transparencies in the pantomime see also the previous section on Boaden's staging of the supernatural.
[105] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., vol. I, ch. i, p. 35.
[106] Ibid., Vol. II, ch. iv, p. 271.

and similar illuminated devices used in pantomimes to recreate visions and apparitions.[107]

The mixture of "colours and images" and the visionary figure mentioned by Lewis also suggest the possible influence of the up-and-coming *sons et lumières* entertainments that were becoming a staple features on both the Paris and the London scene, such as the *ombres chinoises*, the magic lantern shows and later the *phantasmagories* or ghost-shows. The possibility that Lewis may have grafted echoes of the contemporary visual and light shows in some descriptive passages of its novel is substantiated by the cultural context of *The Monk*. Indeed, the interchangeable and mutually influential nature of visual shows and written texts is testified by some popular or 'trade' Gothic publications such as the illustrated *Phantasmagoria; or, The Development of the Magical Deception*, a bluebook printed by Legg and Castleman in 1803 (see the synoptic table in the following Section). *Phantasmagoria; or, The Development of the Magical Deception* offers an 'instant-book' redaction of a number of contemporary visual shows, among which Paul de Philipstal's spectre shows at the Lyceum Theatre, and Mark Lonsdale's phantasmagorias, all of which were being staged with success at the time *The Monk* came out. Although de Philipstal's shows started at the Lyceum "in late 1801 or early 1802", Robert Altick in fact records that "about 1796 Jack Bologna [...] put on a show at the Lyceum called the Phantoscopia."[108]

The time frame of the development of the optical shows both in Paris (where they originally started in the early 1790s) and later in London would make their novelistic metamorphosis consistent with the composition of *The Monk*. Also, the complex cultural and geographical conception of the novel -written during Lewis's various residences across Europe, as he regularly mixed with the French *émigrés*[109] makes the performance of this less-than-overt appropriation something more than just a remote possibility. Perhaps, a contextualization of *The*

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[107] For a discussion of the transparencies in the entertainment *Selima and Azor* see the previous section, and the sections on scenography and light effects.

[108] R. Altick, *The Shows of London*, Cambridge-London: Harvard University Press, 1978, p. 217.

[109] Macdonald, '*Monk' Lewis*, cit., pp. 95 *et* foll.

Monk which is less textocentric and more sensitive to the possible influence of contemporary popular spectacle and visual culture may invite fresh questions about the novel's wide-ranging intertextuality.

As I explained in Part II of this enquiry, contemporary treatises on perspective inform us that during the latter part of the century decoration had become an integral part of stage action. The wonderful change scenes in pantomimes had further contributed to educate the audience to a detached appreciation of the wonders of scenery and special effects. The contrast of sublime and picturesque scenery had more than a decorative or lyrical function. As a matter of fact the juxtaposition I have mentioned of different scenes helped to "capture the Janus-face of the world."[110] This scenographic juxtaposition – central to the aesthetics of the age– is skilfully exploited in *The Monk*. The opening picturesque description of Madrid Cathedral bathed in moonlight is a suggestive architectural scene which could have come straight from the pencil of de Loutherbourg himself, or even from that of William Capon's.

> The faint beams of the rising Moon scarcely could pierce through the gothic obscurity of the Church [...]. The Moon-beams darting into the Church through painted windows, tinged the fretted roofs and massy pillars with a thousand various tints of light and colour. [111]

Colour and light effects operate as a form of visual stimulation for the gazing Lorenzo, whose daydreaming conjures a mental spectacle recalling the visual effects of the phantasmagoria or other optical shows:

> The calm of the hour and the solitude of the place contributed to nourish Lorenzo's disposition to melancholy. He threw himself upon a seat which stood near him, and abandoned himself to the delusions of his fancy. [...] a thousand changing visions floated before his fancy [...]. [112]

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[110] Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, cit., p. 171.
[111] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., Vol. I, ch. i, p. 26.
[112] Ibid., p. 27.

The final panorama of the novel is a description of the awesome Sierra Morena. This last vista of supernatural sublimity is in stark contrast with the picturesque of the above opening passage and conjures far more terrible visions:

> The Objects now before his eyes, and which the full Moon sailing through clouds permitted him to examine, were ill-calculated to inspire that calm, of which He stood so much in need. The disorder of his imagination was increased by the wildness of the surrounding scenery; By the gloomy Caverns and steep rocks, rising above each other, and dividing the passing clouds; solitary clusters of Trees scattered here and there, among whose thick-twined branches the wind of night sighed hoarsely and mournfully; the shrill cry of mountain Eagles, who had built their nests among these lonely Desarts; the stunning roar of torrents, as swelled by late rains they rushed violently down tremendous precipices; and the dark waters of a silent sluggish stream which faintly reflected the moon-beams, and bathed the Rock's base on which Ambrosio stood. The Abbot cast round him a look of terror.[113]

The above examples go in support of my argument in Part II, and confirm that the use of atmospheric lighting was, indeed, central for Lewis. This device had precise on-stage correspondences, as we have seen in detail in the previous chapters. In particular, I would like here to reiterate that shafts of light would illuminate some characters, increasing the relevance of particular situations as well as "the effect both of scenery and of the countenances of the performers."[114] A stage direction from *The Castle Spectre* proves that Lewis was very much aware of the disposition of stage lights and the effects which these would produce to heighten climax. After a separation lasted many years, Angela is reunited with her father, who is imprisoned in an underground vault.

> *A gloomy subterraneous Dungeon, wide and lofty [...] Reginald, pale and emaciated, in coarse garments, his hair hanging wildly about his face, and a chain bound round his body, lies sleeping upon a bed of straw. A lamp, a small basket, and a pitcher, are placed near him. [...]He sinks upon a stone, with his hands clasped, and his eyes bent steadfastly upon the flame of the lamp. [...]*
>
> Reginald [*placing the lamp upon a pile of stones*] Why did Kendric enter my prison? Haply, when he heard not my groans at the dungeon door, he thought that my woes were relieved by death. Oh! when will that thought be verified?

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[113] Ibid., vol. III, ch. v, pp. 438-39.
[114] A. Rees, *Cyclopedia, or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Literature* (1819), Document no. 173, in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre*, cit., p. 227-28.

> *Angela* How sunk his eyes! – How wildly hangs his matted hair on his pale and
> furrowed brow! (V. iii)[115]

In similar fashion, a keen sense of stage impact may have suggested to Lewis how to recreate the effect a pointed light would have upon the face of a character. Here lights are used to increase the shock provoked by another highly emotional agnition scene, this time from *The Monk*:

> 'Spare me!' She exclaimed; 'For Christ's sake, spare me! I am innocent, indeed, I am!'
> While she spoke, her voice was almost choked with fear. *The beams of the lamp darting full upon her face* which was unveiled, Lorenzo recognised the beautiful Virginia de Villa-Franca.[116]

The Bleeding Nun herself comes in sight for the first time as an apparition amidst chiaroscuro and lighting effects, in a scene of great visual impact which, unsurprisingly, would be brought on stage in several productions with steady acclaim: "Scarcely had five minutes elapsed, when the expected light appeared. [...] I fancied I perceived a female figure with a Lamp in her hand moving slowly along the Apartment. The light soon faded away, and all was again dark and gloomy."[117]

The influence of spectacular theatrical entertainments is further demonstrated by the careful acoustic overcodification devised by Lewis, which often provides comment on action. In a spectacular application of the aesthetics of visual excitement made current by the vogue for the *fantasmagories* and other audio-visual exhibits, the novel is complemented by appropriately shocking auditory stimulation:

> Suddenly he was sensible of a violent shock: An earth-quake rocked the ground. The Columns, which supported the roof under which He stood, were so strongly shaken, that every moment menaced him with its fall, and at the same moment He heard a loud and tremendous

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[115] Lewis, *The Castle Spectre*, cit, pp. 88-92.

[116] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., vol. III, ch. iii, p. 361.

[117] Ibid., vol. II, ch. I, p. 155. For a history of the staging of the Bleeding Nun episode, see the Intruduction to this work, p. 21, n. 30.

burst of thunder. It ceased, and his eyes being fixed upon the Stair-case, He saw a bright column of light flash along the Caverns beneath.[118]

Elsewhere we read:

> A volume of dark clouds rose slowly from the ensanguined earth, and ascended gradually, till it reached the vault of the Cavern. At the same time a clap of thunder was heard: The echo pealed fearfully along the subterraneous passages, and the ground shook beneath the feet of the Enchantress.[119]

In *The Monk* not only does the transmodal dissolution of language into sound and music provide mood to the locales and the action, it also becomes a fundamental element in the production of meaning, as shown in these passages with striking Burkean overtones:

> Another hour elapsed, after which the same light again appeared and was lost again as suddenly. It was accompanied by a strain of sweet and solemn Music, which as it stole through the Vaults below, inspired the Monk with mingled delight and terror.[120]

> The Chapel-windows were illuminated. As they stood on the outside, the Auditors heard the full swell of the organ, accompanied by a chorus of female voices, rise upon the stillness of the night. This died away, and was succeeded by a single strain of harmony.[121]

The 'Sublime of sound' here unites with the 'Sublime of light and scenery'[122] to offer a tri-dimensional setting for Ambrosio's evil deeds, whose marked theatrical overtones, I contend, would be clearly identifiable -and thus fully enjoyed- by the knowing readers.

If, indeed, melodramatic overcodification provides *The Monk* with mood, here I wish to suggest further that stagecraft and stage machines seemed to offer the phenomenological actualization of some features of Lewis's Gothic metaphysics, questioning -as if in a spectacular rehearsal- everything that was "known and

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[118] Ibid., ch. iii, pp. 232-33.

[119] Ibid., ch. iv, p. 276.

[120] Ibid., vol. II, ch. iii, p. 233.

[121] Ibid., vol. III, ch. iii, p. 345.

[122] I here intentionally rephrase the words of W. H. Pyne, one spectator of de Loutherbourg's 1782 Pandemonium show, who used the expression "picturesque of sound". The quotation, that comes from E. Hardcastle, [W.H. Pyne], *Wine and Walnuts*. 2 ed. 2 vols (London, 1824), p. 302, is regularly referred to in discussions of the Eidophusikon. In appears, among the other, in Altick, *The Shows of London*, cit, and A. Sargeant, "From 'The Wonders of Derbyshire' to Wookey Hole." *Early Popular Visual Culture*, Vol. 4 No. 2 (2006), p. 103-11.

knowable."[123] I contend that the influence of contemporary scenic spectacle on *The Monk* is intimated by the negotiations and re-elaborations performed by the novel with two specific aspects of the Georgian harlequinades. The first one concerns the role of the benevolent agent of the Harlequinades; the second is the magic wand she invests Harlequin with in the Christmas entertainments. These shows revolved for the most part around a revision of the legend of Dr. Faustus – who signs a contract with the devil to obtain magical powers- as in the case of *Harlequin Faustus or The Devil Will Have His Own* (Covent Garden, 1793), often played as an afterpiece to *Fontainville Forest* (see table of Boaden's intertextuality). I wish to pursue my enquiry by looking at the most spectacular aspect of these harlequinades, namely their extraordinary transformation scenes. As the aspects I have just mentioned suggest, I argue that in Lewis's case the appropriation of the themes and forms of the pantomime contributed to export the metamorphic capacities of the theatrical medium on to the page.

John O'Brien, an historiographer of the eighteenth-century English pantomimes, explains that,

> The chief agent of transformation […] was harlequin himself, whose magic wand or bat served as the instrument through which all transformations took place. It is almost too easy to point to the phallic resonances concentrated in a prop […].

O'Brien continues,

> The typical set scene of an English harlequinade was the scene where harlequin receives the bat from a devil, a wizard, or sorcerer and thereby gains his powers to transform himself and his surroundings as needed. The Faustus entertainment fused this scene with the moment where the Doctor Faustus signs the contract with Mephistopheles pledging his soul in return for receiving the power to transform the material world and to raise the dead.[124]

The stage directions for *Harlequin and Humpo or Columbine by Candlelight!*, "the New Melo-Dramatick Comick Pantomime" penned in 1812 by Thomas John Dibdin and Michael Kelly (the composer who collaborated with Lewis in most of

[123] Voller, *The Supernatural Sublime*, cit., p. 52.
[124] O'Brien, *Harlequin Britain*, cit., p. 109.

his melodramatic extravaganzas), are explicative. The metamorphic scenes in the pantomime are usually introduced by one or two standard formulae:

Harlequin waves his sword /claps his bat $\rightarrow$ a part of the scenery turns into…

$\rightarrow$ the wall pivots to reveal…

$\rightarrow$ the figure becomes animated….

Harlequin strikes [a prop or an element of the scenery],   which sinks (via the trap doors)[125]

At the clap of Harlequin's slapstick, "doors would revolve, shop-front collapse, house change into sentry boxes, goods and people disappear,"[126] as illustrated by this typical stage direction:

> Scene VI *Music : no 29. Harlequin and Colombine re-enter from the Coach maker's shop. Harlequin waves his Sword. The windows of the coach body close, and the whole of it changes to a Balloon in which the Clown, Pantaloon and Lover are carried up & off. N.B.: To prevent its being really loaded, if the Coach body was over a Trap, the characters in it can descend below the stage unobserved by the audience before the balloon rises .*[127]

On the formal level, *The Monk* reverses the basic structure of the harlequinade. As it it was the case with the pantomimes, the opening of the novel imaginatively adapts the Faustus myth; thereafter, though, *similarity* quickly gives way to *reversal*. The revelation of the diabolical nature of Matilda marks the division between the first and the second part of the novel, which is characterised by black magic and supernatural interventions. Ambrosio is endowed with some magical objects, amongst which an enchanted myrtle he uses to penetrate into Antonia's house. In this sense Lewis's adaptation operates a reversal of the opening scenes of the pantomime where, as explained by David Mayer, "intervention by the friendly agent marks the division between the opening and the second of the pantomime."

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[125] All quotations from *Harlequin and Humpo* are taken from the modern reprint in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit.

[126] Nicklaus, *Harlequin Phoenix*, cit., p. 158.

[127] *Harlequin and Humpo*, in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 214.

> To show her regards for the lovers and facilitate their escape from the obdurate elders, the benevolent agent [...] invests the new Harlequin with a magic sword or a bat (actually a slapstick), which as long as it remains in his possession will give him power over his adversaries. The daughter is transformed into Columbine and is committed to Harlequin's protection.[128]

In *The Monk* Ambrosio is helped in his attempt to ravish Antonia by a supernatural agent. The demon Matilda hands over to the cleric a magic branch of myrtle she has received by an infernal spirit she has conjured: "While you bear this in your hand, every door will fly open to you," enjoins the succubus, "[i]t will procure you access tomorrow night to Antonia's chamber."[129] In the same way as the stage props, walls and wings shift or sink through the stage at the strike of Harlequin's magic wand, similarly bolts fly open at the touch of Ambrosio's supernatural myrtle: "No sooner did He touch the door with the silver Myrtle, then it flew open, and presented him with a free passage. He entered, and the door closed after him of his own accord."[130] Very interesting for the present purpose is the fact that magic branches and similar vegetal props were not infrequent on the pantomimic stage. For instance in Andrews' *The Enchanted Castle* the good Genius of the Wood enjoins Harlequin to exchange his enchanted bough with an indestructible sword:

> In me behold the Genius of the Wood,
> Fear not, my friends, my errand is your good;
> That bough which you possess, gives me the pow'r
> To aid, to shield you in this dang'rous hour.
> […]
> Restore the bough, (observe me, and believe,)
> In glad exchange, this powerful sword receive.

(Scene II)[131]

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[128] Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element*, cit., p. 24.

[129] Lewis, *The Monk*, cit., Vol. II, ch. i, p. 278.

[130] Ibid., Vol. III, ch. i, p. 299.

[131] M. P. Andrews, *The songs, recitatives, airs, duets, trios, and choruses, introduced in the pantomime entertainment, of The enchanted castle, as performed at the Theatre-Royal, Covent-Garden.* The words by Miles Peter Andrews, Esq; and the music by Mr. Shields. London, 1786 Based on information from *English Short Title Catalogue*. *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*. Gale Group. URL: http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO p. 9.

In my reading, the inversion of values investing Amborsio's branch reiterates the through-line of parodic reversal which I maintain to be typical of *The Monk*: an object which is endowed with beneficent powers in a pantomime (Harlequin's sword) becomes an instrument of evil in Lewis's novel.

At the end of the pantomime Harlequin and Columbine are saved by the intervention of a beneficent character, "in a final scene of unparalleled splendour"[132] in which the hostile figures are routed and the lovers are reunited: "the benevolent agent transports all of them to a final splendid scene, usually an exotic temple or palace, where the lovers share an apotheosis with their patron."[133] A significant example is the final tableau in Dibdin's *Harlequin and Humpo*:

> *Music: No. 66. Grand March*. Where Aquila leads the Princess to the Arms of her Lover. Beautiful Genii, the Hours, Loves, and Graces appear, accompanied by all possible Brilliancy, and celebrate the union of the Pantomime Pair.[134]

The finale was often accompanied by a musical theme to increase its marvellous effect, for instance an air to Hymen in which the bliss of love and the joys of a virgin heart were extolled. In *The Enchanted Castle* the beneficent Genius of the Wood chants:

> 'Tis your's to possess, if you practice no harm
> In the fullness of joy, life's most exquisite charm!
> What no wealth can procure, what no pow'r can remove,
> That purest of passions, the Virgin's first love.

(Scene XI)[135]

The reversal of this finale could hardly be starker. The ending of *The Monk* is marked by the malevolent intervention of a fiend, that first aids Ambrosio in bringing about the destruction of the two couples of young lovers, including the rape and murder of Ambrosio's own sister. In the end the infernal spirit punishes

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[132] Nicklaus, *Harlequin Phoenix*, cit., p. 158.

[133] Mayer, *Harlequin in His Element*, cit., p. 31.

[134] *Harlequin and Humpo* in Cox and Gamer (eds.), *The Broadview Anthology of Romantic Drama*, cit., p. 220.

[135] Andrews, *The Songs, Recitatives, Airs, Duets, Trios, and Choruses, introduced in the Pantomime Entertainment of the Enchanted Castle.*, cit., p. 22.

the monk with eternal damnation in a sublime and terrifying *tableau* which adapts to the page the rich tradition of medieval and renaissance iconography of "the fall of the damned" (from Dirk Bouts the Elder to Bosh to Rubens, Fig. 13).

13. Dirk Bouts the Elder, the *Fall of the Damned*. *La chute des damnes*. Approx. middle of the XV cent. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lille (France).

Ambrosio's death occurs amid majestic mountains. As the cleric's futile shrieks weaken and disperse across the mountaintops, the horrors of his fate find a terrifying visual counterpart.

> As He said this, darting his talons into the Monk's shaven crown, He sprang with him from the rock. The Caves and mountains rang with Ambrosio's shrieks. The Daemon continued to soar aloft, till reaching a dreadful height, He released the sufferer. Headlong fell the Monk through the airy waste […].[136]

The description of the Sierra Morena, I would finally suggest, strikingly recalls the description of Milton's Pandemonium, an awful vision that was used as the

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[136] Lewis, *The* Monk, cit., vol. III, ch. v, p. 441.

final scene (possibly the *coup*) of the Eudophusikon show.[137] Visual historian Amy Sargeant quotes a contemporary description of the de Loutherbourg's Miltonic hell –"In the foreground a vista stretching an immeasurable length between the mountains ignited from their bases to their lofty summits"[138]- which is surprisingly similar in its sublimity to the one devised for the finale of his novel by Lewis, particularly for the inclusion of terrifying light and sound effects. The tremendous vision of Beezebub and Moloch rising from the lake surrounded by lurid sulphurous fire must have, indeed, been terrifying for many spectators of the Eudophusikon and it is possible to suppose that this imagery may have eventually migrated into the diabolical visions of *The Monk*.

A final influence of the Christmas pantomime and the visual shows on *The Monk* is offered by the spectacular possibilities of their marvellous scenic transformations. In Lewis's novel the wonders of stagecraft and stage machines seem to provide the dark actualization of the epistemological uncertainties of which the Gothic discourse is the cultural expression. In a prophetic dream, Lorenzo sees his beloved Antonia prey of a gigantic monster who "clasp[s] her in [his] arms, and tortures her with his odious caresses."

> His form was gigantic; his complexion was swarthy, his eyes fierce and terrible; **his** mouth breathed volumes of fire; [...]. Lorenzo flew to her soccour, but ere he had time to reach her, a loud burst of thunder was heard. Instantly the cathedral seemed crumbling into pieces; the Monks betook themselves to flight, shrieking fearfully; the lamps were extinguished, the altar sank down, and in its place appeared an abyss vomiting clouds of flame. Uttering a loud and terrible cry the Monster plunged into the Gulph, and in his fall attempted to drag Antonia with him.[139]

These diabolical visions incorporate effects of sound, smoke and smell in a hyper-Gothic building, to recreate on the page the same shocking experience of many spectacular shows among which, I suggested, possibly de Loutherburgh's Pandemonium.

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[137] Altick, *The Shows of Lonson*, cit., p. 122.
[138] A. Sargeant, "From 'The Wonders of Derbyshire'", cit., p. 105.
[139] Lewis. *The Monk*, vol. I, ch. i, p. 28.

In another key episode of the novel, as well as the cultural traffic with the visual shows, the disappearance of Lewis's monster into an abyss under the main altar in Madrid Cathedral recalls the mechanics and stage traps used for the changes of scenery in the pantomimes and the supernatural dramas, as described in a contemporary manual:

> The [central] trap is generally square, and is chiefly used for the sinking of the cauldron in the tragedy of Macbeth. [Behind the side traps], there are a number of longitudinal apertures across the stage, which are covered by planks movable upon hinges, so that by throwing them back, the stage may be opened in a moment. The use of these is to allow the flat scenes to sink through the stage when required.[140]

As a type of spectacular visual (and visionary) actualization of the Gothic heterotopia,[141] the extravagant scenic transformations in *The Monk* actualize what I call the *ur*-theatricality of the Gothic novel. I contend that *The Monk*'s connection with contemporary stagecraft is further substantiated by the use of similar devices in most of Lewis's spectacular extravaganzas. We could recall, for instance, the sinking of Evelina's ghost in *The Castle Spectre*, an apparition which was "greeted with tumultuous applause."[142]

> *The spectre waves her hand, as bidding her farewell. Instantly the organ's swell is heard; a full chorus of female voices chants, "Jubilate!" a blaze of light flashes through the oratory, and the folding doors close with a loud noise.*[143]

Similarly, the stage directions in *Adelmorn the Outlaw* (1801) indicate an exploitation of stage space and stagecraft comparable to the one exemplified by the excerpt from *The Monk* I have previously quoted:

> *Part of the wall opens, and discovers (in vision) a blasted Heath by moonlight. The figure of an Old man, a wound on his bosom, and his garments stained with gore, is seen holding a bloody dagger towards heaven. [...] The Moons turns read; a burst of Thunder is heard, and* Ulric *appears held by two Daemons. [...] The Old Man Plunges the dagger in* Ulric's *bosom, who sinks into the arms of the Daemons, and is*

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[140] A. Rees, *Cyclopedia, or Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and Literature* (1819), Document no. 173 in Roy (ed.), *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre*, cit, p. 227.

[141] F. Botting, "In Gothic Darkly: Heterotopia, History, Culture", in Punter (ed.), *A Companion to the Gothic*, cit., pp. 3-14.

[142] Summers, *The Gothic Quest*, cit., p. 256.

[143] Lewis, *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. 79.

carried off by them. [...] The Heath vanishes; a Glory appears, into which the Old Man is seen ascending upon brilliant clouds. [...] The Wall closes [...] (IV. ii).[144]

Similar effects recur throughout the *corpus* of Lewis dramas as confirmed by a review of the much later *The Wood Daemon* (*General Evening Post,* 2 April 1807): "At the close of the last scene, when the Count and the Altar sink into the Earth, that opens to devour them, there was a general cry of *bravo!* which was redoubled when the piece was announced for a second representation."[145]

What I hope to have shown is that the scenes of rapid transition and the metamorphoses in *The Monk* have lost the innocent wonderment privileged by the pantomimic transformation scenes. On the contrary, they remind the audiences in strikingly audio-visual terms of the unfathomable dangers and the monstrosity buried beneath the pure façades and lurking in the innermost dark corners of the soul. In this sense, I suggest that *The Monk* performs a grotesque reversal of the themes and structure of the pantomime, to which it provides a conceptual contrast. Arguably, *The Monk* could be imagined as a type of *anti*-pantomime since it appears to entertain with pantomime a relation comparable to that the one existing between the anti-masque and the masque.

In questioning empirical assumptions, *The Monk* celebrates the illusionary while it mystifies the relationship between rational and irrational. The novel performs the profound instability and the loss of contact with –or maybe, more correctly, the suspension of- the true ontological status: as flesh-and-blood Agnes becomes spectralized, the phantasmatic Bleeding Nun materialises. At the same time, the novel offers an "anti-uncanny" model of interpretation of the world,[146] according to which the signifiers are irretrievably dislocated from their signifieds, epistemological surety is suspended, and cosmic disorder and irrationalism appear to triumph. On the level I have tried to suggest here, the grand spectacular

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[144] M. G. Lewis, *Adelmorn The Outlaw*. cit., pp. 71-2. The emphasis is mine.
[145] Document no. 170, in Roy (ed.) *Romantic and Revolutionary Theatre*, cit., p. 224.
[146] The term "anti-uncanny" is used by D. L. MacDonald to indicate all those events which appear to be natural and which in fact turn out to be supernatural (*Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography*, cit., p. 114).

costuming of the "ghost of the counterfeit"[147] performed by *The Monk*'s alliance with the Georgian scenic shows and spectacular pantomimes seems to actualize – and thus give physical expression to- the Gothic metaphysical apprehensions and fears.

Gothic responds to and represents anxieties beyond the personal, brewing underneath the polished and decorous surface of neoclassic regularities. The Gothic novel and drama rehearse profound fractures and disjunctions within British society, epochal shifts of values, cultural unease and the seemingly approaching collapse of familial, social and religious structures. As in "a heterotopic mirror,"[148] the Terror quickly transformed an initially positive revolutionary change into the nightmare of history. Similarly, society showed the Janus face of its moral values. Gender and social relations transformed, new ideas about sexuality and new ideals about equality challenged the moral universe of Britain at home and the moral probity of its colonial discourse abroad. As the cornerstones of empiricism appeared to give way, social disorder seemed accompanied by metaphysical disorder: the ontological status of both human beings and inanimate objects was questioned, time- and custom-honoured moral and epistemological certitudes crumbled. On the late Georgian stage the panels slid back as the trapdoors opened, humans changed into animals while the objects became animated, the drops unfurled while the flat scenes sank through the stage, lighting and special effects transfigured the actors. Beyond the veil and behind the curtain –on both the page and the stage– deception, change, flux reflected and performed in unison the same dark spectacle of uncanny transformation.

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[147] Hogle, "The Ghost of the Counterfeit—and the Closet—in *The Monk*", cit.
[148] Botting, "In Gothic Darkly", cit.

Concluding Notes on the Re-mediations of Gothic Dramas: Popular Press, Chapbooks, Trade Gothic. With a Synoptic Table.

Even a limited survey of publishing and book trade in and around the 1790s confirms that the forms of the textual transits were, indeed, numerous and diverse –figurative and literals webs and layers of intermediations. A comparative analysis may be expedient to prove the existence of a continuum in eighteenth-century textual practices as well as to broaden our perception of the stage appropriations of the Gothic.

As I try to show in the synoptic table that follows, redactions may follow multiple paths of interrelation, variation and connection. As we see in the first row of the table, a popular narrative (the supposedly real-life story of Inkle and Yarico as recounted in Richard Logon's *True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados*, 1657) could be disseminated into drama, fiction and poetry through several spin-offs,[149] including a very successful didactic retelling published in a journal (Richard Steele's short version in *The Spectator*, 1711), a much later comical play (George Colman's musical opera *Inkle and Yariko,* Haymarket, 1785) and, finally, an adaptation for the chapbook market by popular writer Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson with the title *Inkle and Yarico; or Love in a Cave* (1805).

If we now turn to the realm of 'facts', a few rows below in the same table we note that a true (or, more appropriately, truth-like) historical episode (the murder of fair Rosamond in the royal palace of Woodstock) could be romanticised (and later gothicised) with equivalent success on both the page and the stage. Eventually, it was transformed into a spectacular hippodrama, *Fair Rosamond: or, Woodstock Bower*, this latter redacted in narrative form by Charlotte Frances Barrett and printed in Dublin with the addition of "the songs and choruses, sung in the popular spectacle of the same name, now performing at the Amphitheatre, Peter-Street." Similarly, a vaguely Celtic folk tale would become an aqua-drama

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[149] B. Sutcliffe, "Introduction" cit., pp. 21-23.

at the hands of the prolific Charles Dibdin. A number of redactions of this popular show came out either simultaneously with or a few years after its Sadler's Wells production.

Abridgments and popularizations of plays could be in both narrative and verse, tailored-made for the tastes of more or less refined audiences. Even anthologies of ballads and popular songs could provide extreme abridgments of stage blockbusters. *A Garland of New Songs* (published in Newcastle upon Tyne, 1800?) includes a patriotic abridgment in ten stanzas of Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *Pizarro* (Drury Lane, May 1799) entitled *Paddy's description of Pizarro*. The rhyming couplets rollick through the exploits of the cruel Pizarro, who comes on stage "growl[ing] like a pig", and Rolla's heroics. The central stanza depicts Rolla's rescue of "the child" (Cora's infant son in Sheridan's version), in the climactic Act V, scene ii of the drama where John Philip Kemble, playing the wounded Rolla, manages to cross a bridge and bring to safety the helpless infant.

> The *Rolla* came running, and with him the child,
> And he look'd all the world just as if he was wild;
> Saying – Take the dear creature, it's my blood that's spilt,
> In defence of your child, blood and owns [sic] now I've kil't![150]

According to contemporary accounts this episode of *Pizarro,* later represented in a very famous portrait of Kemble in costume by Sir Thomas Lawrence (1803), managed to capture for the stage the energy and the "herculean effort" of the actor. James Boaden, for instance, chronicles that the scene "excited a sensation of alarm and agony beyond anything that perhaps the stage had exhibited,"[151] possibly explaining its inclusion in this otherwise condensed poetic abridgment. Interestingly, both the characters of Elvira (played by Mrs Siddons) and Cora (played by Mrs Jordan) are not mentioned at all in the anonymous ballad.

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[150] *A garland of new songs containing 1 Yo heave ho 2. Paddy's description of Pizarro. 3. My Grand-mother's eye-water. 4. The Thorn. 5. The Parson.* (Newcastle: Angus printer, 1800?), p. 5. Available from the Gale *Eighteenth-century Collections Online* at the URL: http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO . Accessed March 2009.

[151] Boaden, *Memoirs of John Philip Kemble,* cit., vol. II, p. 393.

The forms of intersemiotic adaptations also found materials in the *oeuvre* of William Hogarth, the artist whose narrative pictorial series and musical imagery had already challenged disciplinary boundaries bringing painting nearer to its sister arts, music and the novel. The booklet *The Harlot's Progress* appeared as a short story in duodecimo in Dublin in 1739. (The engravings of Hogarth's six original scenes had come out in 1732.) Colman's musical interlude *The Enraged Musician* (later produced with the rather ambitious title *Ut pictura poesis* at Haymarket in 1789) was similarly founded on the work of (as well as dedicated to) Hogarth, the author of the famous etching of the same name. Samuel Arnold's musical score for Colman's opera included notated representations of the London street cries, the source of the rage of Colman's singing teacher, Castruccio. The final tableaux has the following directions: "[...] *the rest of the piece concludes amidst the confusion of drums playing &C, a girl with a rattle, little boy with a penny trumpet, old bagpiper &c., as near as possible to Hogarth's print of* THE ENRAGED MUSICIAN."[152] Interestingly, Arnold and Colman were not alone in trying to capture on the page the multisensorial stimuli of London daily life. An example of this intersemiotic contamination may be found in the illustrated *The Cries of London, as they are daily exhibited in the streets* (London, 1796).[153] Each one of the sixty-two prints in the volume was captioned with the typical cry of the vendor, followed by a short description in verse. As in a proto-modern cinematic recreation of the sights and sounds of London, the readers of *The Cries of London* must have moved between the overlapping dimensions of the aural, the oral, and the visual. As these latter examples suggest, readers were simultaneously turned into spectators *as well as* auditors, somewhat complicating Luisa Calè's reconstruction of reading and viewing practices in the 1790s.[154]

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[152] G. Colman, *Utpictura [sic] poesis! or, the enraged musician*. A musical entertainment. Founded on Hogarth. Performed at the Theatre-Royal in the Hay-Market. Written by George Colman. Composed by Dr. Arnold. (London: printed for T. Cadell, 1789), p. 17.

[153] *The cries of London, as they are daily exhibited in the streets; with an epigram in verse, adapted to each.* Embellished with sixty-two elegant cuts. To which is added, a description of the metropolis in verse. (London : printed for E. Newbery, 1796).

[154] Calè, *Milton's Füseli's Gallery*, cit..

The following synoptic table records some of the most interesting examples of intersemiotic and intra-linguistic translations I have come across with during my enquiry. I limited the scope of my investigation of a potentially sprawling field by focusing on what I have labelled 'stage-to-page' adaptations. What follows is the result of the collation of three different on-line repositories: the Catalogue of the John Larpent Plays, the British Library integrated catalogue, and the Gale *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*.[155] There follows that the table below charts exclusively material of which we have textual evidence, regrettably limiting the comprehensiveness of the available sources and, as a consequence, the thoroughness of the documentation that can be accessed. Any sampling must also face the fact that the catalogues of the circulating libraries –the commercial institutions that offered ample opportunities to read amongst the many types and grades of 'high' and 'low' literature on offer at the time- did not usually list chapbooks.[156]

The synoptic table must be read moving from left to right. The two juxtaposed blocks of 'stage' and 'page' record (when these are known) the year of composition and the author of, respectively, the 'stage' hypotext, and its 'page' hypertext(s). Any additional material –including textual inter-mediations- is recorded near the relevant item.

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[155] Respectively available at http://content.cdlib.org/view?docId=tf1h4n985c&chunk.id=odd-1.8.3&brand=oac, http://catalogue.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file_name=login-bl-list and http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO. Whenever possible, information has been checked against Potter, *A History of Gothic Publishing*, cit., and A. Koch, "Gothic Bluebooks in the Princely Library of Corvey and Beyond", Cardiff Corvey Articles Vol. IX (2002), available at http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/encap/journals/romtext/articles/cc09_n01.html

[156] For an introduction to modern reading practices see R. Altick, *The English Common Reader: a Social History of the Mass Reading Public, 1800-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963) and Jacqueline Pearson, *Women's Reading in Britain, 1750–1835. A Dangerous Recreation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

Stage			Page		
Year	Author	Title and Notes	Year	Author	Title and notes
4 August 1785	George Colman the Younger (libretto)/ Samuel Arnold (musical score)	*Inkle and Yarico.* An Opera.Little Theatre in the Haymarket [782. Catalogue John Larpent Plays] Founded on Richard Ligon, *True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados* (1657); Richard Steele, *The Spectator* no. 11 (March 1711); adaptation by Frances Seymour (1738).	**1805**	Sarah Wilkinson	*Inkle and Yarico; or Love in a Cave.* Chapbook.
9 June 1794	John Philip Kemble	*Czartoriska.* Opera, 3 acts. Prod. as *Lodoiska.* Music by Stephen Storace. Translated from the French musical romance. [1029. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]	**1811**	Anon.	*Lodoiska; or the Tartar Robber.* An Historic Tale. Printed by A. Lemoine
3 June 1795	James Boaden	*The Secret Tribunal.* Covent Garden. [1085. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]. Original romance by Christiane Benedicte Eugenie Naubert, *Hermann von Unna* (1788, transl. 1794).	**1803**		*The Secret Tribunal; or, The Court of Winceslaus.* A Mysterious Tale. 12°. Printed by Tegg and Castleman
12 March 1796	George Colman the Younger	*The Iron Chest.* Drury Lane. [1116. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]	**n.d.**	Stephen Storace	*The Iron Chest: A tale.* Founded on the play of that name. 12°. Printed by T. Tegg.
14 December 1797	Matthew Gregory Lewis	*Castle Spectre.* Drury Lane. [1187. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]	**1820**	Sarah Wilkinson	1) *The Castle Spectre, an Ancient Baronial Romance.* Founded on the original drama of M.G. Lewis, Esq. Printed by J. Bailey
24 May 1799	Richard Brinsley Sheridan	*Pizarro.* Drury Lane. [Not recorded in the catalogue of John Larpent Plays]	**Between ca. 1800 and**	Anon.	*A Garland of new songs*: containing 1. Paddy's wedding 2. Dutch fish-monger 3. Joe and the show Folk 4. Description

			1812?		of the play of *Pizarro.* 12°. Printed by M. Angus and Son, Newcastle
2 July 1800	John Fawcett	*Obi; or, Three-Finger'd Jack.* Little Theatre in the Haymarket. Pantomime. [1297. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]	**Late 1800-1801**	William Burdett	*The Life and exploits of Three-Finger'd Jack, the terror of Jamaica.* With a particular account of the Obi: being the only true one of that celebrated and fascinating mischief, so prevalent in the West Indies. Also known as *Life and exploits of Mansong, commonly called Three-finger'd Jack, the terror of Jamaica. With a particular account of the Obi.* On which is founded the popular pantomimical drama Obi; or Three-Finger'd Jack performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. Printed and published by A. Neil,
1802 to 1803 **1802** **1803**	Paul de Philipstal Mark Lonsdale Meeson	1) Spectre-shows or phantasmagoria. Lyceum Theatre, London. 2) "Spectrographia". Lyceum Theatre, London. 3) Phantasmagoria. Bartholomew Fair in 1803	**1803?**	Anon.	*Phantasmagoria; or, The Development of the Magical Deception.* Printed by Legg and Castleman.
?1803	Anon.	*Fair Rosamond: or, Woodstock Bower.* Dublin, Astley's Amphitheatre.	**1803**	Charlotte Frances Barrett	1) *Fair Rosamond: or, Woodstock Bower.* To which is added, the songs and choruses, sung in the popular spectacle of the same name, not performing at the Amphitheatre, Peter-Street. 12°. Dublin, Printed by Conolly and Ritson.
			n. d. **[not**	Anon.	2) *Fair Rosamond, or the Bower*

			before 1824]		*of Woodstockd*. Printed by O. Hodgson
No date	Anon.	*The Black Castle; or The Spectre of the Forest*. Performed at the Amphi-theatre of Arts with unbounded applause nearly one hundred nights. [Spectacle not recorded in the catalogue of John Larpent Plays]	**1800**	Charlotte Frances Barrett	*The Black Castle; or The Spectre of the Forest: an historical romance.* Founded on the spectacle of that name,...to which are added *Tracey Castle; or the Parricide Punished*. And *The Fate of Edeliza; or Sacrifice to Superstition.* 12°. Printed and sold by S. Fisher
April 1801	René Guilbert de Pixérécourt	*Le Pélerin Blanc; ou les orphelins du hameau.* Drama in trois actes. Théâtre de l'Ambigu-Comique, Paris. Published 1802.	**n.d.**	Sarah Wilkinson	*The White Pilgrim; or, the Castle of Olival. The White Pilgrim; or, Castle of Olival: An interesting and affecting tale.* Chapbook.
1805	Charles Dibdin the Younger	*The Water Spectre.* Melodrama performed at the aquatic theatre, Sadler's Well's.	**1803?** **1805** **1826**	Francis Lathom Anon. Sara Wilkinson	1) *The Water Spectre.* Some bibliographical reference indicate it was Wilkinson's *The Water Spectre.* 2) *The Water Spectre; or, An Bratach.* A romance, founded on the popular melo-drame, as performed, with universal applause, at the Aquatic Theatre, Sadler's Wells. 12°. Printed by Ann Lemoine. 3) *The Water Spectre; or Kitty o'the Clyde.* Printed by A. Lemoine
1806?	John Cross	*The Cloud King, or Magic Rose*. Melo-dramatic spectacle performed with the most unparalleled applause at the New	**Between ca. 1804 and**	William Kemmish	*The Beauty and the Beast, or The Magic Rose.* A new aerial and terrestrial romantic tale of enchantment.

		Royal Circus. Blended with the poetical Episode of the Cloud King, written by M. G. Lewis, Esq. and published in his *Tales of Wonders*. Libretto printed by Barker and Son, 1806	**1810?**		Founded on the new splendid melo-dramatic spectacle, called *The Cloud King*, performing with the most unparalleled applause, at the New Royal Circus. 19 cm. Printed by A. Kemmish. Coloured engraved frontispiece.
22 January 1806	Domenico Corri. Libretto Andrew Cherry	*The Travellers*. Drury Lane. Application 14 January 1806 [1471. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]	**1806?**	Sarah Wilkinson	*The Travellers; or, Prince of China*. An interesting story, founded on the popular operatic drama, performing at the Theatre-Royal, Drury Lane. 18°. Printed by T. Maiden. With vignettes.
1806	Charles. M. Dibdin the Younger.	*The Invisible Ring; or, The Water Monster, and Fire Spectre*. Sadler's Wells	**1806**	Anon.	*The Invisible Ring; or, The Water Monster, and Fire Spectre*. A Romantic tale. Founded on the popular aquatic melodrama, as performed with universal applause at Sadler's Wells. 12°. Printed by T. Maiden.
19 February 1807	John Tobin	*The Curfew; a Play*. Drury Lane. [1509. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]	**1807**	Anon.	*The Curfew; or, the Castle of Baron de Tracy*. Bluebook
1 April 1807	Matthew Gregory Lewis	*The Wood Daemon or 'The Clock has struck'*. A Grand romantic melodrama in Three Acts. Drury Lane. Printed by J. Scales, 1807. [Readapted as *One O' Clock! Or, the Knight and the Wood Daemon*. A Grand Musical Romance in Three Acts. Printed by Lowndes and Hobbs, 1811. Opened 1 August 1811. Lyceum Theatre]	**1807** **1840**	Anon. Anon.	*The Wood Daemon, or 'The Clock has Struck'*. Chapbook. Printed by J. Scales *One O'Clock, or The Knight and The Wood Daemon*. Printed by G. Drake. Chapbook.

9 May 1816	Charles Robert Maturin	*Bertram; or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand.* Drury Lane. Comp. 1814 [1922. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]	**1825**	Anon.	*Bertram; or, The castle of St. Aldobrand. A Romance.* Printed by S. Carvahlo, 1825. Adapted in French by Charles Nodier and Isidore Justin Severin Taylor (*Bertram ou le Chateau de St. Aldobrand*, 1821). This version was the source of the opera *Il pirata*, libretto by Felice Romani, music by Vincenzo Bellini, premiered at La Scala of Milan in 1827.
12 November 1816	Thomas Morton.	*The Slave.* [other title *Freedom and Slavery*]. Opera. Music by H. R. Bishop and libretto by Thomas Morton. Covent Garden. [1942. Catalogue John Larpent Plays]	**Between 1816 and 1820?**	Anon.	*The Story of the Slave.* From the romantic drama now performing at Coven Garden Theatre. Comprising the loves, perils, and adventures of Clifton and Zelinda. 12°. Printed by W.Mason.
1818	Brook Bridges Parlby.	*Revenge, or The Novice of San Martino. A Tragedy.* Printed by Black, Kingsbury, Parbury, and Allen. [Not recorded in the catalogue of John Larpent Plays]	**1818** **Between ca. 1830 and 1850?**	Anon.	1) *The Novice of San Martino.* In *The Pocket Magazine of Classic and Polite Literature*, II. Printed by J. Arliss. 2) *The Novice of San Martino*; or The dreadful effects of monastic seclusion, giving an account of the atrocities of the Count Lernia, in the disguise of a monk, and the untimely deaths of the lovers, Florian and Olivia. A tale founded on Major Parlby's tragedy of *Revenge*. To which is added, *Hell Bridge*, or *The Feuds of the McPhersons and the Grant*. 8°.

					Printed by W. Bethell.
1820	James Robinson Planché.	*The Vampire* [*Or, The Bride of the Isles*]. Romantic melodrama. [prod. as *The Vampyre*] English Opera House in the Strand, 9 August, 1820. [2161. Catalogue of John Larpent Plays]. Adaptation of the melodrama *Le Vampire* by Charles Nodier Theatre de la Porte Saint-Martin in Paris.	**No date** **1820?**	Anon.	1) *The Bride of the Isles. A Tale Founded on the Popular Legend of the Vampire*. Sixpenny volume. Adaptation of the play printed by J. Charles of Mary Street, Dublin. 2) *The Vampire; or, Bride of the Isles*. a tale, founded on the popular superstition of Caledonia. ... From which is taken the much-admired piece of that name now performing with unbounded applause at the English Opera House in the Strand. 12°. London. Printed by J. Bailey.
28 July 1823 **1826**	Richard Brinsley Peake Henry M. Milner	*Presumption; or, The Fate of Frankenstein*. English Opera House. Later retitled as *Frankenstein; or, The Danger of Presumption.* *The Man and the Monster! or, The Fate of Frankenstein*, Subsequently, *Frankenstein; or, The Monster*	**1826**	Anon.	*The Monster Made by man; or the Punishment of Presumption*. In *Endless Entertainment; or, Comic, Terrific, and Legendary Tales*. Printed by G. Herbert

Most of the publications I have recorded in the 'stage' column of the above table could be classified as popular, street or 'trade' literature.[165] They might include cheap duodecimo volumes, popular periodicals, collections of tales, broadside ballads, and chapbooks. These latter were eight to thirty-two page-long booklets often bound in a soft blue cover, from which their other name 'bluebooks'. These cheaply manufactured books formed the staple reading matter of less educated people, especially the rural poor. Their low-cut price assured their popularity and their large circulation.

Popular publications played a significant part in England's social, cultural, and political repertoire for a very long period, up to and including the first part of the nineteenth century. As far as the circulation of stage materials is concerned, 'trade' literature offered a transitional bridge between the world of 'entertainment' and 'performance' and the world of the 'page' -the aural/oral and the written text. The telling crossovers rehearsed by 'trade' literature confirm the permeability of works of art seen as dialogic and interconnected products –texts as *textures* and *weavings* of multiple, often 'lost-in-the-making' hypotexts.

Far from being derogatory or destabilizing, textual and authorial permeability was in fact frequently demanded by the audience and overtly sought by the authors and publishers, who seemed to rely on the transparent proximity and the easily-detectable derivation of texts. As testified by the titles of the redaptions I have charted in the table above, the metatextual genotype of a work might be explicitly recalled through the tag "*as founded on*", a particularly expedient (and lucrative) paratextual device in case of successful productions. This was the situation, for instance, of Charlotte Frances Barrett's *The Black Castle* (1800), a six pence booklet whose title page reads: "The Black Castle; or the Spectre of the Forest, an Historical Romance by C. F. Barrett founded on the spectacle of that name,

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[165] Potter, *The History of Gothic Literature*, cit.,

performed at the Amphi-theatre of Arts, with unbounded Applause, for nearly one hundred nights."[166]

The 'vanishing' of the 'trade' author could be also signalled by the anonymity of a great number of these hacks, *ghost* writers often referred to via their work and through such depersonalising labels as "*the author of*".

As far as reception is concerned, redactions, we may argue, are a collaborative art form –born of the pleasure of remembrance and recognition of the reader. However, as I have mentioned, the readership of redactions was varied and may have included consumers unfamiliar not only with the source texts, but also with the original contexts of reception (for instance, the Theatres Royal). In this sense, redactions -like adaptations- may be also read and enjoyed at face value or *au premier dégrée*. Their titles -the reliquial signs of now redundant or disposable hypotexts- may have simply worked as indications of a shared literary tradition, rather than as palimpsests of precise hypertextual clues. However, as a rule we may contend that the low cost of chapbooks exponentially augmented the power of 'trade' Gothic to popularize the source texts, which were made available to a larger public

On the level of metatextuality, finally, stage-to-page transits perform a type of three-phased appropriation, as the readers knowingly move between a more or less descriptive printed script (or dramatic text), the play-text or performance, and its final redaction. We must bear in mind the modification in the circumstances of reception, which may include the cultural shift existing between hypotexts and hypertexts, often composed in different periods, as well as the social and economic gaps existing between the spectators of the stage shows and dramas (mostly urban, and including the middle classes and the socially aspirant groups) and the readers of 'trade' literature (mostly rural, with less money and, probably, less sophisticated tastes).

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[166] *The Black Castle; or the Spectre of the Forest*, an Historical Romance by C. F. Barrett (London: printed for S. Fisher, 1800), Available from the Gale *Eighteenth-century Collections Online* at the URL: http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/ECCO . Accessed March 2009.

In this section I will briefly look at one the chapbooks of the table, Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson's *The Castle Spectre, An Ancient Baronial Romance*, a six pence abridgment of Lewis's play published in London in 1820. Although a slightly tardy example of Gothic redactions –arguably, a mixture of Radcliffe's novels with graftings from Walter Scott's historical romances- Wilkinson's *The Castle Spectre* remains a fairly accomplished production from the pen of a better-than-average popular writer, the author of at least fifty short Gothic texts, a dozen of which were adaptations and translations.[167] For these reasons *The Castle Spectre, An Ancient Baronial Romance* will be considered as a model for the 'stage-to-page' appropriational practice.

The dramatic structure of the action of Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* is built on one main line, Percy's release of Angela, imprisoned by her uncle Osmond who wants to marry her against the girl's will. A number of sub-plots endowed with a relativising or heightening function are opposed and juxtaposed to the main plot. These are the racial (or colonial) sub-plot involving Osmond's black slaves; the imprisonment of Reginald, Angela's allegedly dead father; the supernatural sub-plot, with the apparitions of Evelina, the ghost of Angela's mother; and, finally, the comical subplots involving the lowly characters. Earl Percy, *The Castle Spectre*'s nominal hero, is not on stage for a good part of the play; the female protagonist, Angela, on the other hand, is given dramatic prominence. She actively resists Osmond's sexual proffers, swears to avenge her parents, and is even ready to marry the incestuous Osmond if this can restore Reginald to health and freedom.

Lewis used the comic exchanges between Motley the Fool and the gluttonous Father Philip, and old Alice's superstitious fears to offer comic relief to the main action, thus alternating bathos and pathos, moments of tension and horror with ludicrous intervals. Lowly characters are employed as instruments to debunk supernaturalism, offering an ironic (almost tongue-in-cheek) version of the

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[167] Potter, *The History of Gothic Publsihing*, cit., pp. 109 *et* foll.

Radcliffean explained supernatural. The 'supernatural' comical subplot is in effect structured in parallel to the main plot, to which it offers repetition, variation and distancing. Before Evelina's ghost makes her actual appearance on stage, the presence of the spectre is repeatedly evoked through a crescendo of dreams, memories, musical airs, invocations and false apparitions. The presence of the ghost is further ostended through some indexical stage objects: the bloodstained poignard used to stab Evelina and a picture of the deceased lady. In point of fact, the materialization of the ghost at the end of the play is the acme of a conjuring progress that starts in Act I, scene i.

The fixed page length of chapbooks implied the enforcement of a rigid economy of abridgement, incorporation and relocation. Wilkinson's redaction *The Castle Spectre, An Ancient Baronial Romance* eliminates or greatly reduces the number and functions of the Lewis multiple subplots, confining itself, as the narrator states in the first paragraph of the tale, to "the horrific story of the spectre of Lady Evelina and the base Earl Osmond."[168]

The economy of the redaction imposes a narrative rhythm that erases the existence of mixed characters. Personages are actants, clearly labelled and with a clear-cut moral positioning, their identity (pre)defined by class and, particularly, gender. Angela is given a secondary position, while the hero of this romantic story is the chivalric Percy who even dares Osmond "to instant combat if he would give him a sword."[169] When the door of the room where she is imprisoned remains open, Wilkinson's fearful Angela "felt no inclination to avail herself of that opportunity: she could do nothing of herself alone, and unprotected."[170]

Mixed characters are bowdlerised and censored, and moral and political ambiguities solved or conveniently displaced. Father Philip, Lewis's religious figure with slightly misogynistic undertones who enjoys eating and drinking, is

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[168] Wilkinson, *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. 2.
[169] Ibid., p. 9.
[170] Ibid., p. 16.

transformed by Wilkinson into "the good hearted confessor of the castle."[171] Motley the Fool, the roguish retainer and former thief who likes a glass and a laugh, becomes the upright old servant of Earl Percy's father. Osmond's black servants, arguably Lewis's most overt and at the time controversial political statement, are completely sidelined. While Lewis creates three highly effective scenes which give Hassam and Said psychological and moral depth, Wilkinson imagines only one brief dialogue for them, which ends with Saib's philosophical statement that "among these white folks there are good and bad."[172]

The generic bending of stage Gothic is turned into bland supernaturalism with didactic undertones. Significantly, the sexually charged confrontation scenes between Osmond and Angela are defused as dialogue is substituted with third person narrative. Lewis makes Osmond's transgression physical and explicit: "My bosom is a gulph of devouring flames! I must quench them in your arms, or perish" (II. i).[173] Wilkinson genteelly summarises as follows: "when he offered her himself in marriage, and to make her the uncontrolled mistress of his vast possessions, she indignantly refused him."[174]

The story quickly winds up with a "happy-ever-after" finale: Percy and Angela's marriage is celebrated "with all the pomp and magnificence of the ancient times"; familial hierarchies are restored as Reginald "lost that premature decay, and appearance of old age"; class and social structure is similarly strengthened, while the grateful peasant adoptive parents of Angela, now Lady Northumberland, refuse to be raised to a superior station in life and "remained by choice in their own cottage". Even the troubled Evelina, vindicated with the blood of the cruel Osmond, promises finally "to rest in peace." [175] In Wilkinson's reassuring domestic revision of Lewis's Gothic drama the epithalamic *dénouement* dispenses

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[171] Ibid., p. 6.
[172] Ibid., p. 11.
[173] Lewis, *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p. 27.
[174] Wilkinson, *The Castle Spectre*, cit., p.8.
[175] All the quotations come from ibid., p. 24.

reassurances and promises of a better future to everybody, be they among the living or the dead.

Finally, we may notice that while the Gothic novels is polysemiological the Gothic redaption is often monosemiological. We have seen that the authors of Gothic novels and plays were aware of the dramaturgical and semiological potentials of music and light. While Lewis communicates to the audience (of both the play and printed script) through the suggestive mode of music, Wilkinson's redaption gives hardly any relevance to the overcodification of the Gothic. Both Lewis's Osmond and Evelina are related to precise signifying sound effects: the bell that tolls announcing the arrival of the villain and the musical air that suggests the presence of the ghost. On the contrary, in *The Castle Spectre, an Ancient Baronial Romance* the melodic refrains used by Lewis are de-potentialised and reduced to incidental musical quotations. Similarly, the striking imagery and unambiguous chromatics of play –suggestive of the dialectics between internal and external blackness, which Lewis charges with strong political undertones- are erased or at best significantly downplayed in the chapbook.

An in-depth analysis of Wilkinson's 1820 *The Castle Spectre* goes beyond the scope of this work, since it belongs to a later cultural context in which new fashionable genres and subgenres were gaining popularity (I have already mentioned Scott's romances) and the Gothic *déjà lu* was perceived no longer as a success formula but rather a hollow replication. Nonetheless, the intersections of stage appropriations and Gothic publishing I have briefly drawn attention to invite fresh questions about issues of transmission, dissemination and reception as well as about the interchangeable nature –the *transference*, we may say- of mainstream novels, 'trade' literature, stage drama, and entertainment –the addenda at the core of the appropriative practice.

I do not wish to claim that the theatrical perspective I maintain should supplant psychoanalytical accounts, thematic or formalist reconstructions and feminist historiographies. My enquiry simply aims to suggest a contextual

supplement that the ongoing investigations of Gothic may overlook. Using stage appropriation as an investigative tool, my work evokes the importance of those signs which are ephemeral and extra-textual, such as the visual and the aural. It suggests an anti-hierarchical and inclusive vision of Gothic which goes beyond the popular/high cultural divide. It finally proposes an approach which is intertextual, and receptive towards the variants, metamorphoses and re-mediations existing within the same literary tradition.

Afterword

In order to take into account the plural, flexible dimension of the Gothic and its textual density, some influential critics have defined this genre a "literary-cultural formation," a "discursive site" and, finally, a "semantic constellation."[1] My thesis has pursued the theoretical approach inaugurated by these scholars by offering what I define as a holistic or inclusive reading of the Gothic studied as an appropriative genre –a cultural mechanism that took over a plethora of literary, para-literary and extra-literary texts/objects and incorporated them into a new diversified language.

In its continuous movement from one cultural zone to another, the Gothic involves the presence of transitive users (writerly readers and/or a proactive audience)[2] and, consequently, a productive mode of using the text. This form of creative consumption –the trade-off between multiple elements– implies the projection of the cultural material (novel/drama) on to the source texts and, thus, their re-actualisation. In terms of the archaeology of the text, stage appropriation may prompt the creative recovering of whatever lies sub-textually *in potentia* from underneath what is textually *in actu*. The study of the stage appropriations thus implies not only the investigation of the textual objects of the enquiry, but, most cogently, claims for the recognition, imaginative reassessment and actualisation of their textual possibilities and, thus, their "semantic potential," in Marco de Marinis' terms.[3]

The backward and forward look of the stage appropriation fuses without eliding, simultaneously moving between past and present texts, seen and unseen, decoding and encoding. As a transtextual dialectical formation, it considers at one and the same time the stage borrowings within the novel (its dramatic and

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[1] See respectively R. Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750-1820*, cit., M. Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, cit., and E. J. Clery and Robert Miles , "Introduction", in E. J. Clery and Robert Miles (eds.), *Gothic Documents*, cit.

[2] For an explanation of readerly (closed) and writerly (open) texts, see. R. Barthes, *S/Z*, cit., p. 4. For the active role of the theatre spectator, see Susan Bennett, *Theatre Audiences*, cit.

[3] De Marinis, "Dramaturgy of the Spectator", cit., p. 102.

theatrical palimpsest) as much as the novel's own stage afterlives, following the (c)overt network of oscillations– resulting from "elusive exchanges, trades and trade-offs"[4]– existing between the stage and the page. A permeable, flexible and anti-hierarchical genre –constitutively hybrid– the Gothic invented and sustained itself through various forms of theatrical appropriation, along the textual fault planes of a multi-layered and dynamic cultural mechanism. This I define as the multileveled negotiations of the partial intertexts that constitute the dramatic and novelistic Gothic. I dub them –in an appropriation of Greenblatt's own model of the English Renaissance theatre– 'Gothic negotiations.'

Far from attempting to offer yet another definitive approach to the Gothic, I hope that the study of stage appropriations I have proposed here will delineate a new field of investigation and offer potential lines for a flexible and non-monolithic interdisciplinary enquiry. As rightly pointed out by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick,[5] it is only through a fresh scrutiny at the trappings, stage props and signifiers of the genre– its 'surface'– that we may hope to have access to its signified and, as I would argue, also to their 'inter-mediate' and 're-mediated' manifestations. On the stage side, de Marinis has declared that "theatrical pleasure arises and is maintained in an unbroken dialectic between the frustration and satisfaction of expectations." He continues:

> The fragile balance is kept between the pleasure of discovery, the unexpected, and the unusual, on the one hand, and the pleasure of recognition, *déjà vu*, and the anticipated on the other.[6]

A theory of stage appropriation argues against the marginalization of Gothic as popular texts, poor spectacle or a lower-class form of cultural trash. Quite the opposite, the study of its poetics and its phenomenology encourages us to reconsider what happens before, and after as well as *within* one or more texts – throughout the multiple phases of the textual transits. As a consequence, stage

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[4] S. Greenblatt, *Shakespearian Negotiations* (Oxford, Clarendon, 1988), p. 7.

[5] E. Kosofsky Sedgwick, *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (London-New York: Methuen, 1986).

[6] De Marinis, "Dramaturgy of the Spectator", cit., p. 112.

appropriation does not simply imply a second look at the Gothic. Rather it issues an invitation in the direction of the contemporary audiences for a holistic and inclusive re-*vision* of the Romantic cultural discourse.

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