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Jacek Mydla

Spectres of Shakespeare

Appropriations of Shakespeare
in the Early English Gothic



Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego
Katowice 2009

Spectres of Shakespeare
Appropriations of Shakespeare
in the Early English Gothic

For Ela
and the Wonder of You

With warm thanks
to David

PRACE
NAUKOWE



UNIwersytetu
Śląskiego
w Katowicach

NR 2680

Jacek Mydla

Spectres of Shakespeare
Appropriations of Shakespeare
in the Early English Gothic

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Katowice 2009

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Abbreviations

Shakespeare

<i>AYLI</i>	— <i>As You Like It</i>
<i>Cym.</i>	— <i>Cymbeline</i>
<i>H</i>	— <i>Hamlet</i>
<i>JC</i>	— <i>Julius Caesar</i>
<i>KJ</i>	— <i>King John</i>
<i>KL</i>	— <i>King Lear</i>
<i>Mcb.</i>	— <i>Macbeth</i>
<i>MND</i>	— <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i>
<i>MfM</i>	— <i>Measure for Measure</i>
<i>Oth.</i>	— <i>Othello</i>
<i>R3</i>	— <i>King Richard III</i>
<i>RJ</i>	— <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>
<i>T</i>	— <i>The Tempest</i>
<i>TN</i>	— <i>Twelfth Night</i>
<i>TA</i>	— <i>Titus Andronicus</i>

Gothic

<i>AM</i>	— <i>Aurelio and Miranda</i>
<i>AO</i>	— <i>Adelmorn the Outlaw</i>
<i>B-B</i>	— <i>Blue-Beard</i>
<i>B-CSA</i>	— <i>Bertram; or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand</i>
<i>CasWol</i>	— <i>The Castle of Wolfenbach</i>
<i>CA&D</i>	— <i>The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne</i>
<i>C-B</i>	— <i>Cambro-Britons</i>
<i>CN</i>	— <i>The Count of Narbonne</i>
<i>CO</i>	— <i>The Castle of Otranto</i>
<i>CW</i>	— <i>Caleb Williams</i>

<i>DM</i>	— <i>De Monfort</i>
<i>FF</i>	— <i>Fontainville Forest</i>
<i>GB</i>	— <i>Gaston de Blondeville</i>
<i>I</i>	— <i>The Italian</i>
<i>IM</i>	— <i>The Italian Monk</i>
<i>IS</i>	— <i>The Impenetrable Secret, Find It Out!</i>
<i>KB</i>	— <i>Kentish Barons</i>
<i>M</i>	— <i>The Monk</i>
<i>MB</i>	— <i>The Midnight Bell</i>
<i>MC</i>	— <i>The Mysteries of the Castle: A Dramatic Tale</i>
<i>MM</i>	— <i>The Mysterious Mother</i>
<i>MU</i>	— <i>The Mysteries of Udolpho</i>
<i>MW</i>	— <i>Melmoth the Wonderer</i>
<i>MystMar</i>	— <i>The Mysterious Marriage</i>
<i>MystWar</i>	— <i>The Mysterious Warning</i>
<i>NA</i>	— <i>Northanger Abbey</i>
<i>OEB</i>	— <i>The Old English Baron</i>
<i>R</i>	— <i>The Recess</i>
<i>RF</i>	— <i>The Romance of the Forest</i>
<i>SR</i>	— <i>A Sicilian Romance</i>
<i>SRAC</i>	— <i>The Sicilian Romance: or, the Apparition of the Cliffs</i>
<i>ST</i>	— <i>The Secret Tribunal</i>
<i>TT</i>	— <i>A Tale of Terror</i>
<i>V</i>	— <i>Vortigern</i>
<i>ZM</i>	— <i>Zofloya, or: the Moor</i>

Notes on referencing. Citations to Gothic fiction are by abbreviated title followed by volume and chapter number in Roman numerals followed by page number of the edition used (described in detail in the Bibliography); e.g. *MU*, II/vi/234 (for *The Mysteries of Udolpho*). Citations to drama, Gothic and otherwise, are by abbreviated title followed by act and scene number in Roman numerals followed by page number (line number in the case of Shakespeare) of the edition used, e.g. *H*, I.iv.39 (for *Hamlet*) and *FF*, III.ii/34 (for *Fontainville Forest*). Original editions rarely affix numbers to scenes.

In cases of many editions of the same text, in the Bibliography at the end asterisk is put next to the edition cited.

Foreword

And, indeed, the spirit of Shakespeare haunts the courtyard, the halls, galleries, battlements and dungeons of the Castle of Otranto.

E.L. Burney, "Shakespeare in Otranto"

"Spectres of Shakespeare" — the title is intentionally ambiguous. *Hamlet* was no doubt the most popular play in eighteenth-century England, to which the ghost scenes certainly contributed. At the same time Shakespeare's spirit "haunted" the century as much as Old Hamlet's shade haunted the stages of London theatres.

This study of the Shakespearisation of the Gothic and the Gothicisation of Shakespeare examines the inspirations which Gothicists found in Shakespeare and their uses of the Shakespearean spectres, the supernatural being the hallmark of the Gothic genre. The word "spectres" refers thus to the poetics of terror which informs the genre while the idea of Shakespeare's spectral presence is here proposed to capture the often elusive manifestations of Shakespeare.

In the eighteenth century "Shakespeare" emerged as a cultural icon, or, to use current jargon, a product of mechanisms of cultural transmission. The appropriations of Shakespeare by early Gothic romancers and playwrights continued, sustained, and transformed the towering cultural presence of the Bard. An already appropriated "Shakespeare" was handed over to Gothicists as a god of the nation's idolatry.

Ample textual evidence, such as the omnipresent Shakespearean quotation and other verbal borrowings, connects Shakespeare with the emergence of the literary Gothic in the second half of the eighteenth century; Gothic appropriations carried on the processes that began in the Age of Johnson and Garrick. Besides perpetuation, however, the Gothic reshaped Shakespeare and handed a newly and differently appropriated Shakespeare to the romantic poets.

This study deals, besides textual evidence, with the generic (thus also structural and thematic) similarities between Shakespeare and works that both now make up the Gothic canon and those, including the underestimated dramatic variety, that have recently been restored to it. In discussing the inevitable transformations to which the Shakespeare *oeuvre* was subjected, the project is concerned with its role in the solidification of the British national identity, a process in which the literary Gothic also had a role to play.

Many critics have observed that Shakespeare haunts Gothic works. There is a need to look beyond this scholarly commonplace summed up in the metaphor of surface-scratching, which will only enable us to assess the degree of interpenetration between Shakespeare and the Gothic, now two classics of English literary history.

Introduction
"Scratching the Surface"



Shakespeare, bastardy, and the “Gothic spawn”

[...] and the whoreson must be acknowledged.

King Lear

The worst creatures fastest propagate / Many more murders must this one ensue / As if death were propagation too.

Witches' song in Davenant's *Macbeth*

From its “effulgence” in the 1790s to the present, critics have repeatedly dressed the Gothic genre and its vigorous propagation in metaphors of illegitimacy. It is estimated that publications of Gothic fiction rose from, roughly, one per year in the 1770s and 1780s to over twenty annually in the 1790s.¹ It was this astounding self-propagating capacity that aroused the anxiety of reviewers and the public in general. In 1797, T.J. Mathias voiced the common concern over the epidemic spread of the genre: “[Walpole’s] Otranto Ghosts have *propagated* their *species* with unequalled *fecundity*. The *spawn* is in every novel shop.”² Famously, the procreation metaphor was to be used in 1831 by Mary Shelley when she referred to her fictional horrors as her “hideous progeny” while at the same time bid-

¹ See Robert Miles, “The 1790s: the Effulgence of Gothic,” in: Jerrold E. Hogle, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to English Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 43. Summers and Varma speak of Gothic’s “efflorescence”; Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest. A History of the Gothic Novel* (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), 28 and Devendra P. Varma, *The Gothic Flame. Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England: Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), 2 and ff.

² Thomas J. Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature. A Satirical Poem in Four Dialogues. With Notes* (1798), quoted in Elizabeth R. Napier, *The Failure of Gothic. Problems of Disjunction in an Eighteenth-century Literary Form* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), viii (emphasis added). It needs to be added in all fairness that Mathias’s remark (in a footnote to the name of Walpole) is not overtly derogatory.

ding her book "go forth and prosper." There is ample evidence that the Gothic has retained this capacity for raising doubts concerning its respectability.

It is presumed that Ann Radcliffe was rudely awakened to the fact that her fictions had "spawned" a great number of imitators. As Rictor Norton, Radcliffe's biographer, has stated, reusing Mary Shelley's metaphor, "Ann Radcliffe's hideous progeny is enormous."³ Clara McIntyre, an earlier biographer (1920),⁴ remarked that "a lady of any literary conscience might well have a sense of guilt at being responsible for such a following."⁵ Applying the procreation metaphor, one reviewer wrote about *The Mysteries of Udolpho* that the book "had given birth to several humble imitations."⁶ But as "several" does not answer to the astounding number of the offspring, so the word "humble" fails to reflect the commonly sensational content or the degree of corruption or degeneration involved: "Thinly disguised redactions of her [Radcliffe's] books were serialized as shilling shockers, with everything stripped away except the sensational, which thereby appeared even more gross in the absence of Ann Radcliffe's restraining sentiment."⁷ By the end of the eighteenth century, the once fledgling genre of the novel had grown to become a respectable literary form and came to be distinguished from the less dignified and more entertaining varieties of fiction, such as the Gothic romance.⁸ The two-way influence between production and reception came to resemble the marketplace relations between supply and demand. Circulating libraries contributed to this categorisation of fiction; at the same time those libraries, acting as publishing houses, had a strong impact on the process of touting the Gothic merchandise to the literary market.⁹

³ Rictor Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho. The Life of Ann Radcliffe* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 1999), 163.

⁴ Apart from this biography, another example of early research into Shakespeare's influence upon the tragedy of the eighteenth century is William Page Harbeson's study, *The Elizabethan Influence on the Tragedy of the Late Eighteenth and the Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Lancaster, Pa.: Wickersham Printing Company, 1921).

⁵ Clara F. McIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe in Relation to Her Time* (Archon Books, 1970 [1920]), 14. Norton quotes this passage in his *Mistress of Udolpho*, 163.

⁶ *Analytical Review* 23 (January 1796), quoted in Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 162.

⁷ Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 162–163.

⁸ See J.M.S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England 1770–1800* (London: Methuen & Co Ltd, 1969; 1st published 1932), *passim*.

⁹ Edward Jacobs, "The Anonymous Signatures: Circulating Libraries, Conventionality, and the Production of Gothic Romances," *English Literary History* 62.3 (1995), 603–629. Having anonymously had three of her novels published by Thomas Hookham, Radcliffe signed a lucrative deal with G.G. and J. Robinson for the fourth one,

The dynamic of the market made mutual influence among Gothic romancers inevitable. Indeed "influence" is too mild a word to reflect the degree of imitation involved, and imitation was usually combined with or motivated by a desire to out-Gothicise the predecessor. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* may have prevented what was to become the most sensational publication of the 1790s from being consumed by flames. In a letter to his mother written in May of 1794, Matthew Gregory Lewis, already eager to emulate Walpole, reveals the source of his revived inspiration: "I have taken up my Romance, and perhaps by this time Ten years I may make shift to finish it fit for throwing into the fire. I was induced to go on with it by reading 'the Mysteries of Udolpho,' which is in my opinion one of the most interesting Books that ever have been published."¹⁰ Among Radcliffe's followers, Lewis is distinguished by his youthful — and perhaps irresponsible in a future MP and legislator — ambition to outdo his model. By making the genre more spectacular and more sensational ("unpardonable grossness" in the words of William Hazlitt¹¹), Lewis certainly contributed to its "degeneration," and, for the same reasons, to its even more vigorous proliferation.¹²

No matter how strongly one might dislike, and even wish to oppose, the idea that the Gothic derived from a patriarchal source, the facts cannot be in dispute. When Montague Summers calls *The Castle of Otranto* "the parent of the Romantic novel,"¹³ the metaphorical clothing is not the scholar's invention. Clara Reeve in her Preface to the second edition of *The Old English Baron* (1777/1778) describes her story as "the literary offspring of the Castle of Otranto," and declares her novel "written upon the same plan." Recognising the parenthood, however, did not prevent

The Mysteries of Udolpho. A Romance, which was published in 1794. Summers was one of the first to discuss the author-publisher-circulating library triangle and its impact on the "effulgence" of the Gothic; see Chapter II of his *Gothic Quest*.

¹⁰ From Lewis's "Selected Letters" published as part of Louis F. Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), 208. See also Peck's note on p. 209.

¹¹ From Hazlitt's lectures of 1819; quoted in Peck, *Life of Lewis*, 37.

¹² Degeneration is a term used by many critics, including, predictably, Napier in *The Failure of Gothic*, 31.

¹³ Montague Summers, "Introduction" to *Constable's Edition of the Castle of Otranto and the Mysterious Mother written by Horace Walpole* (London: The Chiswick Press for Constable and Company Ltd., 1924), xxiv. Out of the twelve novels discussed by Robert Kiely in his study of the romantic novel in England, eight are Gothic classics and the remaining four are *Northanger Abbey* (Jane Austen's parody of the Gothic romance), *Waverley*, *Nightmare Abbey*, and *Wuthering Heights*. Kiely opens the book with an analysis of *Otranto*; see Robert Kiely, *The Romantic Novel in England* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972).

Reeve from taking Walpole to task for trespassing over the limits of credibility. Another interesting revolution of the wheel of influence and emulation came with Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya; or, The Moor: a Romance of the Fifteenth Century* (1806). Inspired by the excesses of *The Monk*, Dacre nonetheless managed to out-Gothicise her model and break even those few taboos which Lewis had left intact. Symptomatically, Dacre's penname, Rosa Matilda, betrays her debt to Lewis in that it combines the names of *The Monk's* demonic protagonist, Rosario and Matilda. In *Zofloya*, Ambrosio is the name of a gardener, and the name of a female character, Loredani, is an allusion to an ill-fated character in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*.¹⁴ By the 1790s, the self-propagating vigour of the Gothic found its unsurprising expression in sexual taboos and their spectacular violation in fictions such as *The Monk* and *Zofloya*. This, following the logic of the illegitimacy metaphor, aligns the genre with the illegitimate Edmund and his invocations to Nature, where illicit yet fertile vigour is set over against stale legitimacy:

Why "bastard"? Wherefore "base"?
 When my dimensions are as well compact,
 My mind as generous, and my shape as true
 As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
 With "base"? with "baseness"? "bastardy"? "base, base"?
 Who in the lusty stealth of nature take
 More composition and fierce quality
 Than doth within a dull, stale, tired bed
 Go to th'creating a whole tribe of fops
 Got 'tween a sleep and wake?

KL, I.ii. 6—15

Cases such as Lewis's and Dacre's make us aware of circles or perhaps "gyres" of mutual influence and emulation among the major Gothicists (as Bertrand Evans calls Gothic authors and playwrights) during the period of the genre's most vigorous growth.¹⁵ Or we might rather speak of Gothic family trees to capture the passing on of the pool of generic features and, alas, the ever present threat of degeneration. If Radcliffe influenced Lewis, they both supplied material for James Boaden, one of the adapters of Gothic fictions for the London stage. Soon Boaden was to enter into

¹⁴ See Appendix to the Oxford edition of *Zofloya*.

¹⁵ For an excellent discussion of the notion of poetic emulation in the eighteenth-century context see Howard D. Weinbrot, *Britannia's Issue. The Rise of British Literature from Dryden to Ossian* (Cambridge, New York, Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 99 ff.

a quarrel with Lewis over who had borrowed whose spectre. Boaden had reasons to feel sore. Lewis’s transfer of the Gothic gene pool from fiction to the theatre was far more successful than Boaden’s and his *Bleeding Nun* drew crowds. The Lewis — Boaden controversy reveals not only the fact that appropriation among Gothicismists was rampant, not only that motifs, themes, and devices but also that the verbal tissue, by means of thinly disguised paraphrase, were transferred from earlier works to their progeny. It also reveals two conflicting interests, that of out-Gothicising one’s predecessor and that of correcting his or her work to make the new one adhere to the existing conventions of, in this case, theatrical representation, which were underpinned by severe ideological strictures.¹⁶ While Boaden seems to have been awake to the voice of the public and the accompanying, though not always in tune, voice of the public’s tribune, the reviewer, Lewis soon out-Gothicised himself, and his *Adelmorn*, which followed the successful *Castle Spectre* (1797), turned out to be a flop on account of its sheer spectacularity: the supernatural vision staged at the end confused one part of the audience while offending the other.

The Gothic’s proliferation was no doubt greatly stimulated by this transference to the medium of the theatre. This process was facilitated by the Gothic being generically amorphous, or as some critics have it — here we go again — “generically promiscuous.”¹⁷ The steep rise in the number of adaptations has been put down to the dynamic development of the theatre: the rise in the number of theatres and types of theatrical entertainment, the enlargement of audience space, and an accompanying rapid increase in theatregoers. “Spectacular settings, elaborate costumes and the colourful effect of massed gatherings added zest to the gothic drama.”¹⁸ All this caused an increasing demand for theatrical entertainment, and the outcome could easily be predicted: “to fill that demand in rushed the hack dramatists with versions of virtually every recent novel.”¹⁹ In consequence, the already mentioned metaphoric was applied to the the-

¹⁶ I address these issues in my forthcoming article, “Recycling the Spectre: James Boaden’s Stage Adaptations of the Gothic Romance and the Spectres of Literary Appropriation,” in: Wojciech Kalaga, Marzena Kubisz, Jacek Mydla, eds., *A Culture of Recycling / Recycling Culture? Repetitiveness, Recurrence, Cyclicity* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2009).

¹⁷ David Worrall, “The Political Culture of Gothic Drama,” in: David Punter, ed., *A Companion to the Gothic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 98.

¹⁸ Paul Ranger, “*Terror and Pity reign in every Breast.*” *Gothic Drama in the London Patent Theatres, 1750—1820* (London: The Society for Theater Research, 1991), 75. (Hereafter *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*).

¹⁹ H. Philip Bolton, *Dickens Dramatized* (1987), quoted in: Philip Cox, *Reading Adaptations. Novels and Verse Narratives on the Stage, 1790—1840* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1.

atre.²⁰ Reviewers and commentators would repeatedly cast the opprobrium of bastardy upon such plays as Lewis's "Germanized" *The Castle Spectre*. Boaden was one of those who voiced concern about the German influence upon the English and European stages in the 1790s in terms which have allowed Michael Gamer to speak of a new species of illegitimacy in the London theatre in the 1790s: "By Boaden's logic, an improperly protected national stage quickly becomes violated and dishonored, forced to produce illegitimate, half-English and half-German — offspring."²¹ Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions*, published anonymously in 1798, were hailed as a noble attempt to revive legitimate drama, i.e. national tragedy in the Elizabethan tradition represented, of course, by Shakespeare as "the quintessential dramatist of theatrical legitimacy."²² Lord Byron, with whom Baillie was a great favourite, in reply to Voltaire's idea that "the composition of a tragedy requires testicles," is reported as saying: "If this be true, Lord knows what Joanna Baillie does — I suppose she borrows them."²³ Given the legitimising role of Shakespeare, the lineage takes us all the way back to the loins of the Bard as the source of legitimate tragedy. By the time of Baillie's dramatic debut, the ties between Shakespeare and the Gothic were strong and affinities obvious: "if we were to judge from available playbills and reviews, productions of Shakespeare during the last decade of the eighteenth century exhibited the same tendency toward supernatural spectacle as gothic drama."²⁴

The problem of legitimacy, however, has a darker side to it. From the Restoration to the middle of the eighteenth century, Shakespeare's plays were adapted, or, as the common practice was referred to, "altered." This tampering with the Shakespeare text brought about what late in the eighteenth century came to be regarded as a bastardly spawn of reworkings, such as Sir William Davenant's operatic version of *Macbeth*.²⁵ However, alterations of the plays also indicate an urgent need to work out ways of handling the Shakespeare legacy. Typical in this respect is Nahum Tate's

²⁰ See Jeffrey N. Cox in his "Introduction" to his edition of *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789—1825* (Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1992), 11 and elsewhere.

²¹ Michael Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic. Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 150.

²² Jane Moody, *Illegitimate Theatre in London, 1770—1840* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 22.

²³ Byron's letter (April 2nd, 1817), quoted in William D. Brewer, "Joanna Baillie and Lord Byron," *Keats—Shelley Journal* 44 (1995), 170. See also Christine A. Colón's "Introduction," in: Joanna Baillie, *Six Gothic Dramas* (Chicago: Valancourt Books, 2007), xv, and Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, 151.

²⁴ Gamer, *Romanticism and the Gothic*, 134.

²⁵ William Davenant was by some regarded as Shakespeare's illegitimate son.

King Lear (1681), where Edmund's speech has been moved to the very opening of the play. Symptomatically, the speech has been altered to trim away the original verbal playfulness with which Shakespeare's Edmund illustrates the vigorousness involved in composing bastards:

Why Bastard, wherefore Base, when I can boast
 A Mind as gen'rous and a Shape as true
 As honest Madam's Issue? why are we
 Held Base, who in the lusty stealth of Nature
 Take fiercer Qualities than what compound
 The scented Births of the stale Marriage-bed?

King Lear, I.i. 5—10

David Garrick's 1773 *Lear* ("as performed at the Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane"), while commending Tate's version ("Tate, in his alteration, has properly curtailed, and, in general, polished it [...]") offers a "judicious blending" of Tate and Shakespeare to make the play "more nervous."²⁶ The figure of Edmund is from the start of special significance: "From the Bastard's situation, transactions, and expression; we are led to expect a bold, martial figure, a genteel, but confident deportment, with a full, middle-toned, spirited voice" — a description which, one would think, suits much better Philip the Bastard from *King John*. Garrick has restored Edmund's "Why bastard?" speech in its original, but not without some reservation: "It is a very favourable speech, for the actor; but rather bordering on the licentious." Eventually, altered versions came to be censured and rejected as adulterations, or as pollution of the poetic effusions of the true Original, with their legitimate source in the Avon ("the fruitful banks of Avon," as Mark Akenside put it). Still, the Shakespearean *King Lear*, with the Fool and the catastrophe, had to wait some more time before actor and manager Edmund Kean restored it to the stage.

As the national spirit acquired vigour, the stature of the Bard grew until he became the most native preserve of Englishness and Britishness. Walpole, himself something of a crypto-neoclassicist, joined the campaign against French detractors, Voltaire in particular, and what were now regarded as gross critical misconceptions. This brought the nascent genre of the Gothic into the fray, and soon, as we have seen, genuinely British Gothic, haunted by the spectres of the native Bard, was being opposed to German importations, such as Lewis's, which were represented as contaminating invaders.

²⁶ All my quotations are from the notes accompanying Garrick's *King Lear* (1773) in *Plays of David Garrick* (vol. 2), 3, 5, and 10.

Sadly, the sanctity of Shakespeare as the patron saint of the British national drama was assaulted not only from abroad. During the heyday of the Gothic, a homebred violation of the national stage occurred. Saturday, April 2nd 1796 saw the first (and only) staging of *Vortigern, an Historical Tragedy in Five Acts*, a brazen forgery by William-Henry Ireland,²⁷ a lad in his early twenties with a knack for sham Elizabethan handwriting.²⁸ What added to the public outrage was the place that witnessed the scandal, the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane ("house of Shakespeare" in David Garrick's phrase and "a proud monument to the fame of Shakspeare" in James Boaden's), one of the two London patent theatres represented as sanctuaries with a mission to preserve the Bard's masterpieces. Moreover, the title part was played by John Philip Kemble (hereafter Kemble), a veritable scholar-actor and acting manager known for his enactments of the greatest Shakespearean heroes. Boaden, who eventually was personally involved in exposing Ireland's forgeries, but only after being duped like many others, reacted with the expected vehemence. Accosting the culprit in the street, Boaden is reported to have addressed him in this way:

You must be aware, sir, of the enormous crime you have committed against the divinity of Shakespeare. Why, the act, sir, was nothing short of sacrilege; it was precisely the same thing as taking the holy Chalice from the altar and ***** therein!!!²⁹

²⁷ In my use of the hyphenated spelling of the first names I follow the recent publications, e.g. Patricia Pierce, *The Great Shakespeare Fraud. The Strange, True Story of William-Henry Ireland* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2005). Ireland is often referred to by his first names so as not to confuse him with his father, Samuel, who, as some would have it, was implicated in the forgeries.

²⁸ This may sound like an attempt to dismiss whatever significance the incident may have, but in Chapter II we shall be returning to Ireland's forgeries because they conveniently illustrate many aspects of the Shakespeare idolatry. The forgeries, including the "newly discovered" plays, certainly operated within what after Hans Robert Jauss we may describe as a horizon of expectations, or a larger cultural context that helped the forger to deceive so many so easily (see Jauss's "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory" (1969/1970) in: *The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism* [hereafter *NATC*], ed. Vincent B. Leitch (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001)). As in the case of other forgeries of the period, the Ossian "translations" for instance, scholarly assessment is something of a challenge; while some ignore the Ireland forgeries completely (Babcock, Dobson) others, leaving aside full monographs, attempt to "make sense" of the incident (Bate). There is also a Polish trace in the matter, investigated by Anna Cetera, Marianna Czapnik, and Małgorzata Grzegorzewska (see Bibliography). I am indebted to Professor Grzegorzewska for bringing this to my attention.

²⁹ Quoted in Steven Cohan, "Introduction," in: *The Plays of James Boaden*. Ed. and with an introduction by Steven Cohan (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1980), xxii—xxiii; after Bernard Grebanier, *The Great Shakespeare Forgery* (1965).

For Boaden, as this outburst makes clear, the forgeries, apart from their criminal nature, were tantamount to sacrilege ("nothing short of sacrilege"!). Boaden insists on the literal sense of Shakespeare's divinity. He compares Ireland's "act" to urinating into the holy Chalice stolen from the altar. I assume that the act that Boaden speaks of here is that of impersonating Shakespeare's divine figure, and especially of pouring an imitation into the divine image of the Bard, and thus trying to substitute a simulacrum for the truly inspired word.

As William-Henry was later to explain in "An Authentic Account of the Shaksperian Manuscripts," he was motivated by a desire to please his father — "my object was to give my father pleasure" — his father, Samuel, being something of an early Shakespeare worshipper: "My father would often lavish his usual praises on *Shakspear*."³⁰ What gives extra piquancy to the Shakespeare papers scandal is the suspicion that "William Henry Ireland appears to have been illegitimate, born to [Samuel] Ireland's housekeeper and mistress [...]."³¹

Recently, interest in *Vortigern* and the Ireland forgeries has somewhat revived, largely as a consequence of the more intense interest in the Gothic and in the eighteenth-century appropriations of Shakespeare. David Worrall even went so far as to suggest some affiliation between *Vortigern* and the Gothic:

Vortigern [...] amidst much notoriety, had pictured a Gothic dark age replete with murderous traitor, bloody corpses, absentee princes, weak barons, persecuted Scots (II.ii) and Saxon invaders at the gates of London (III.iii). *Vortigern's* anachronistic use of late eighteenth-century political and social clichés may have helped smoke Ireland out as a forger, but the national dangers posed by the traitor Vortigern [...] remained resonant at the century's turn. 'Shakespeare's' *Vortigern* [...] was the Gothic abyss, an Elizabethan 'could-be' history of Dark Ages Britain lost in treachery, civil war and foreign invasion. It was enough to make the Enlightenment shudder.³²

To suggest that *Vortigern* is a Gothic drama is to court inaccuracy or overstatement,³³ and Worrall actually avoids committing himself to this opi-

³⁰ William Henry Ireland, *An Authentic Account of the Shaksperian Manuscripts, &c.* (London: J. Debrett, 1796), 7—9.

³¹ Roger Manvell, *Sarah Siddons: Portrait of an Actress* (London: Heinemann, 1970), 194. See also Summers, *Gothic Quest*, 341.

³² Worrall, "Political Culture of Gothic Drama," 94—95.

³³ And yet the play can of course be classified as "Gothic" on account of the identification of the Saxon invaders of England as Goths; see Samuel Klinger, *The Goths in England. A Study in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), 8.

nion while at the same time pointing out, albeit indirectly, several affinities between Gothic drama and Ireland's forgery. Many things considered, among them the popularity of the Gothic on the London stage and Ireland's predilection for ghost-haunted romances, a Pseudo-Shakespeare play composed in the 1790s *ought to have been Gothic*. And yet it is not (see p. 176), though it does contain enough of Gothic matter to betray it as a forgery. Instead it is hyper-Shakespearean in that it is a rather crude composite of the most recognisable Shakespearean elements.³⁴ *Vortigern's* un-Gothicness is the more surprising in view of the fact that William-Henry Ireland did dabble in the Gothic romance, and eagerly joined the Gothic merry-go-round with *The Abbess, a Romance* (1799), *Rimualdo; or, the Castle of Badajos* (1800), and *Gondez the Monk, a Romance of the Thirteenth Century* (1805). Montague Summers praises *Gondez* for an "admirably done" sabbat scene, noting at once its "many obvious borrowings, sometimes almost verbal echoes, from *Macbeth*."³⁵ This, as we shall see, would be one of the myriad instances where Shakespearean terrors have come to the rescue of a Gothic narrative.

Given the common use of the illegitimacy metaphor in criticism, even those scholars who have dealt with the Gothic have often felt disheartened. When discussing the relation of the Gothic to romanticism, Robert Hume brings up the question of the supposedly illegitimate relationship of the Gothic to romanticism proper.³⁶ Similarly, Anne Williams in her *Art of Darkness* uses the family romance as a metafictional category to explain the nativity and proliferation of the Gothic: "the Gothic has been less a skeleton in the closet than the black sheep of the family, an illegitimate cousin who haunts the margins of 'literature,' pandering cheap and distressingly profitable thrills."³⁷ But Williams is strangely entangled in the very discourse she attempts to distance herself from. For, to look with critical detachment on the procreation or generation metaphors, especially as it was employed by early Gothicists themselves, does not necessarily have to entail wholesale rejection or deliberate disregard of the "family trees" in which early Gothic works arranged themselves.

³⁴ A Macbeth-like villain, a Fool, an escape plot reminiscent of *As You Like It*, to name just a few.

³⁵ Summers, *Gothic Quest*, 348.

³⁶ Robert D. Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic: A Reevaluation of the Gothic Novel," *PMLA* 84 (1969). "There is a persistent suspicion that Gothicism is a poor and probably illegitimate relation of romanticism, and a consequent tendency to treat it that way" (ibidem, 282, note 4). More recently, Michael Gamer has interrogated this persistent misrepresentation.

³⁷ Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness. A Poetics of Gothic* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 4.

Susan Wolstenholme, though sharing Williams's broadly feminist approach, employed the legitimacy figure more constructively. In her *Gothic (Re)Visions*, Wolstenholme rephrases the legacy problem in terms of gender relations. In reference to the Shakespearean epigraph, ubiquitous in Radcliffe, the critic argues:

Such detail suggests that Shakespeare acted as one of Radcliffe's literary fathers; [...]. The point of claiming such a relationship, as Radcliffe does, is to establish her own legitimacy — in something very much like a legal as well as a literary sense. [...] For a woman who wrote Gothic fiction, the parental relationship becomes additionally complicated by questions of gender; for the woman writer shared an anomalous status with the Gothic text she produced.³⁸

As should become evident in the course of our analysis, this Hamlet-esque predicament of claiming a spectral father whereby "his [Shakespeare's] 'spirit' is deliberately summoned,"³⁹ was mediated and in fact considerably alleviated in the case of Ann Radcliffe by a tradition of female appropriations of Shakespeare, a tradition for which the career of such actresses as Sarah Kemble Siddons (hereafter Siddons) was especially significant.⁴⁰

These opening considerations have been written with the aim to prepare us to question the supposedly legitimate assumption concerning the illegitimacy both of the Gothic and of Gothic-oriented research, especially if the task involves examining *creative receptions* of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century. As much as critical appraisal of the Gothic has found it difficult to disengage itself from suspicions of the genre's baseness or bastardy, the eighteenth-century intense engagement with Shakespeare was for a long time ignored as inferior to the more sincere, if not more "legitimate," romantic reception.

³⁸ Susan Wolstenholme, *Gothic (Re)Visions. Writing Women as Readers* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 15.

³⁹ Wolstenholme, *Gothic (Re)Visions*, 17.

⁴⁰ Among Siddons's manifold if not always intentional contributions to the development of the Gothic we need to mention the career of her son, Henry, who composed several Gothic dramas, among them *The Sicilian Romance: or, the Apparition of the Cliffs, an Opera* (Covent Garden, 1794), an adaptation of Radcliffe's novel.

The problem, or: the Shakespearean debt

The origins of the Gothic lie, not in Horace Walpole's mind, but in the aesthetic that preceded his novel.

Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing* (1993)

Nowadays it is unfashionable to dwell on particular verbal parallels.

Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (1986)

A number of studies have raised our awareness of the scope and variety of the appropriations of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century.¹ We are now able to reconstruct the setting up of Shakespeare as a national bard, a process which, many agree, culminated in Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769.² Not only did the event turn Stratford-upon-Avon into a veritable holy place to which worshippers would make pilgrimages to honour the Poet, the "god of our idolatry," in Garrick's phrase echoing *Romeo and Juliet*,³ but the date itself conveniently if arbitrarily marks the point at which the reception of Shakespeare, begun in earnest in the Restoration period, entered a new phase. Now the appropriated Shakespeare was used to consolidate the national identity. Furthermore, an au-

¹ For an overview see Catherine M.S. Alexander, "Shakespeare and the Eighteenth Century: Criticism and Research," *Shakespeare Survey* 51 (1989), 1–15. As Robert Hume rightly points out, Michael Dobson deserves the greatest credit for his book *The Making of the National Poet. Shakespeare, Adaptation and Authorship, 1660–1769* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

² The event needs to be distinguished from the play, *The Jubilee*, by David Garrick, which was successfully performed (a staggering ninety times) at Drury Lane in the season of 1769/1770. The Covent Garden theatre was evidently determined to rival Garrick, and George Colman's comedy, *Man and Wife; or, The Shakespeare Jubilee*, was presented in October 1769.

³ Juliet calls Romeo's "gracious self" "the god of [her] idolatry"; *RJ*, II.ii.114.

thenticating apparatus was now created to restore the genuine text: this phase had *its* culmination in Edmund Malone's edition of the Shakespeare *oeuvre* in 1790 (complete with a newly written biography), which summed up the century's effort to give the nation the "authentick" Shakespeare.⁴ It was Malone who "smoked out" William-Henry Ireland as a forger. The process of "forging the nation," in Linda Colley's phrase,⁵ naturally involved denouncing Shakespeare forgeries.

Jonathan Bate sums up Shakespeare's rising presence in the Age of Garrick and Johnson: "The demand for editions, the prevalence of casual quotations from the plays and the assimilations of phrases into everyday speech, and the success of production after production, especially once Garrick took control at Drury Lane in 1747, are testimony of Shakespeare's real place in the eighteenth century."⁶ According to Bate, himself partly responsible for renewed interest in the eighteenth-century Shakespeare, "[t]he rise of Shakespeare's cultural status between the age of Dryden [d. 1700] and the age of Coleridge [d. 1834] was such that no English poet of the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century could be without a sense of Shakespeare's superiority, a feeling that his plays had exhausted the whole of human nature."⁷ When in 1816 Charles Maturin, prefacing his play *Bertram*, now a classic of Gothic romantic drama, spoke of the language of Shakespeare as his natural choice, the common adulatory justification would not have surprised anyone: "because it may be called the Sacred language of the English Drama."⁸ Maturin simply gives voice to the spirit of the age. Yet, as much as one of adulation, Maturin's was also a gesture of appropriation, cultural rather than narrowly literary, and a gesture which, moreover, reveals the clandestine way in which the Shakespeare spirit may have penetrated the Gothic.

If a personal confession be allowed, I have found E.J. Clery's metaphor of scratching to be a great stimulus to the investigations presented in this book. Writes Clery:

⁴ A detailed study has been undertaken by Margreta de Grazia in *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991). Writes de Grazia, "Before Malone, texts professed to be based on copies that were 'genuine,' 'original,' 'perfected,' or 'corrected,' but not 'authentic'" (ibidem, 51).

⁵ Linda Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation 1707—1837* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992). Colley repeatedly speaks of "the forging of British identity" (ibidem, 1, 7).

⁶ Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), 8.

⁷ Bate, *Shakespeare and Romantic Imagination*, 1.

⁸ Charles Maturin, "Preface" to his *Bertram; or, The Castle of St. Aldobrand*, in: Cox, ed., *Seven Gothic Dramas*, 317.

It would be impossible to overestimate the importance of Shakespeare as a touchstone and inspiration for the terror mode, even if we feel the offspring are unworthy of their parent. *Scratch the surface of any Gothic fiction and the debt to Shakespeare will be there.* To begin with there are the key scenes of supernatural terror that are plundered by Walpole and then by many other fiction writers: the banquet scene, the vision of the dagger, and the visit to the cave of the three witches in *Macbeth*; the phantasmagoria of the tent scene in *Richard III*; and above all, the ghost scenes from *Hamlet*.⁹

Not too many critics have been eager to do the scratching. The metaphors and the discourse in which the task has been couched discourage as much as they stimulate. Even if we ignore the common suggestion of illegitimacy (in "we feel the offspring are unworthy of their parent," where "we" imposes Clery's point of view on the reader and would-be researcher), scratching the surface is an undignified business. Furthermore, the metaphor can easily be inverted. Clery states that we should find Shakespeare at a deeper level in Gothic texts, but he at once seems to suggest that the opposite might also be true. His other metaphor, that of theft, implies that Gothic authors stole from Shakespeare motifs and devices without taking the trouble to cover their traces. Neither metaphor, while insinuating that unwarranted appropriation has been perpetrated ("plunder"), clarifies the relation between surface and depth. What lies on the surface? Is it the borrowed Shakespearean motifs, the borrowed sacred language, or perhaps something else?

Another stimulus came from Michael Dobson's book on Restoration and eighteenth-century appropriations of Shakespeare. It was only upon revisiting the book that I began to suspect that the language which Dobson uses to describe Shakespeare's cultural afterlife may have been influenced by or even borrowed from the Gothic and thus reflects twentieth-century criticism's interest in the genre. When presenting the instances in which Shakespeare is resurrected verbally to support various causes Dobson writes, for instance, that "[s]ummoned from the dead with ever more frequency to appear as a prologue, the Bard's spectre returns to the London stage [...]"; and that the dead author "has achieved the status of a monitory ghost."¹⁰ Elsewhere, in reference to the Abbey memorial, we read that "the labours of canonization might appear to offer Shakespeare at best the living death of official ghosthood." Putting the Shakespeare

⁹ E.J. Clery, "The Genesis of 'Gothic' Fiction," in: Hogle, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, 30; my emphasis.

¹⁰ Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 101; "resurrection" occurs on page 161. The excerpts which follow are from pages 159, 160, 165, and 184.

statue on the stage “merely substitute[d] for the dramatic character of Shakespeare’s ghost.” The public grew accustomed to “an intimate connection [...] between Garrick and Shakespeare’s ghost,” especially thanks to Garrick’s successful appearance in the ghost scenes in *Hamlet*. And thus, “[a] spirit lacking a voice and a grave lacking a body, Shakespeare’s image had been provided with both in David Garrick.” This rhetoric of spectralisation, here in reference to Shakespeare, may be more than a stylistic device, especially if we assume after Terry Castle that the form of spectralisation which informs or “haunts” Gothic fictions was a product of a new sensibility and had developed in the last decades of the century. Castle argues that “a crucial feature of the new sensibility of the late eighteenth century was, quite literally, a growing sense of the ghostliness of other people.”¹¹

To return to the previous metaphor, some *scratching* has been done, to be sure. Clery’s two-sentence short shrift represents this type of approach to the matter. More examples are easily found in any other introduction to the genre and its individual specimens. Of *Otranto*, Markman Ellis has observed that “[t]he tone [...] has elements of Shakespearean tragedy [...] specifically in its attempt to graft the heightened passions, elemental situations and stylised poetic techniques of Elizabethan tragedy onto the contemporary and everyday structures of the novel.”¹² A typical, and typically mangled, attempt to capture Walpole’s engagement with Shakespeare in one sentence, with the help of figures such as “grafting” and assorted verbal imprecision, this remark can elicit no more than a raised eyebrow. It does little to explain precisely why *Otranto* is *not* another imitation of Elizabethan tragedy. Less confusingly, but curtly nonetheless, J.M.S. Tompkins observes in her somewhat dated study, *The Popular Novel in England*, that whatever affinities there may be between the Gothic and Elizabethan drama, differences are equally serious. This time it is about Radcliffe and basic generic differences: “Sources of and parallels to her devices can be found in the Elizabethan drama, but the drama has no room for the slow subjection of the mind to terror.”¹³

It is my suspicion that such typically cursory remarks concerning Shakespearean influence upon the Gothic have a common source in an essay by Clara McIntyre, “Were the ‘Gothic’ Novels Gothic?” published in 1921, where the scholar insists that the influence was pervasive and that

¹¹ Terry Castle, “Spectralisation of the Other in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*,” in: Fred Botting and Dale Townshend, eds., *Gothic: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), vol. 2, 85.

¹² Markman Ellis, *The History of Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 31. See also Kiely, *Romantic Novel*, 34.

¹³ Tompkins, *Popular Novel*, 258.

we should not confine it to Shakespeare but speak in terms of the Elizabethan worldview. In her concluding remarks McIntyre, in an attempt to answer the question in the title, even considers changing the term "Gothic novel" to "Elizabethan novel." Her treatment of the problem is encouragingly extensive, but marked with the superficiality and imprecision attendant on breadth. Concentrating on Radcliffe's fiction, she finds affinities in "dramatic structure," "choice of theme," attitude towards death and towards the supernatural, situations, and even in the figure of the "villain-hero."¹⁴ With all this McIntyre does not go past scratching. While she convincingly argues that without Shakespeare the Radcliffean Gothic would not have occurred and clearly identifies the most conspicuous evidence of appropriation, she fails to do more than adjust the lens for a future in-depth examination.

In another early study of the Gothic as "English Romanticism," *The Haunted Castle* (1927) by Eino Railo, Shakespeare and the Elizabethan drama figure prominently. Railo was apparently determined to come up with as many parallels as possible, and thus, for instance, the haunted or otherwise "dismal" castles in Shakespeare (Pomfret, Dunsinane, Elsinore) must be regarded as powerful influence: "The Castle of Elsinore is *already* a haunted building in full accordance with the demands of horror-romanticism [...]"¹⁵ Similarly, what Railo calls Shakespeare's "knowledge of ghostlore" must have been in his view a model for the Gothicists' use of the supernatural machinery. This conviction causes him to suggest that there is an analogy between the sleepwalking Lady Macbeth and the spectre of the Bleeding Nun, another "criminal white woman of the haunted castle who walks the scene of her bloody deeds."¹⁶ As we shall see presently, analogies of this kind, to make them relevant, require some methodological foothold, a foothold that Railo fails to secure.

More recently, Shakespeare's influence in the formative stages of the Gothic has been recognised by E.J. Clery and Robert Miles, prominent Gothic contemporary scholars, who in their anthology of *Gothic Documents*

¹⁴ Clara McIntyre, "Were the 'Gothic' Novels Gothic?" *PMLA* 36 (1921), 665.

¹⁵ Eino Railo, *The Haunted Castle. A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd.; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1927), 17; emphasis added. As Jess Stein jocularly observed, "Railo has taken the idea of the Shakespearean influence upon the Gothic movement, and has pressed it with such emphasis that one almost suspects Shakespeare of having written the Gothic plays and novels." Jess M. Stein, "Horace Walpole and Shakespeare," *Studies in Philology* 31 (1931), 52, note 4.

¹⁶ Railo, *Haunted Castle*, 65. Given the context where it appears in Railo, this analogy is far-fetched. There is, however, a striking *visual* analogy between pictures of the Bleeding Nun and those of Sarah Siddons in the sleepwalking scene (see also below, p. 275).

(published 2000), conceived as a “Sourcebook” to Gothic studies for the period 1700—1820, included Shakespeare in the first section, entitled “Supernaturalism: religion, folklore, Shakespeare.” This recognition has been accompanied by several chapter- or half-chapter-length analyses where the Shakespearean appropriations have been treated more extensively than the common one-sentence ticking-off. Clery himself went a step beyond scratching in a section of his *Women’s Gothic* (2000), “Lady Macbeth in the Eighteenth Century.” Earlier, in *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction* (1995), Clery also wrote copiously on the inspiring theatrical representations of the supernatural. In Michael Gamer’s *Romanticism and the Gothic* (2000), an extension of this research into romanticism, we find a chapter, “National supernaturalism: Joanna Baillie, Germany, and the gothic drama,” containing a seminal analysis of the cultural and political involvements of the theatrical supernatural. Ann Howells’s analysis in her well-received book *Love, Mystery and Misery* (1995) certainly also goes beneath the surface. In the introductory chapter to her book, Howells allots several pages, rather than the usual odd sentence, to the Shakespearean influence.¹⁷

So far, only one scholar has devoted a book-length monograph to the problem — Helga Seifert in *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel. Zur kreativen Rezeption seiner Dramen im englischen Roman des späten 18. Jahrhunderts* (1983). While recognising the value of this pioneering study, we need to assess briefly the scope, the method, and the results achieved. Seifert is selective in her choice of the literary material. She studies closely only three novels, Walpole’s *The Castle of Otranto* and Radcliffe’s *The Romance of the Forest* and *The Italian*. She gives practically no justification why *Measure for Measure* should be given precedence over other plays, especially as this particular play is devoid of the element of the supernatural. And since *Measure for Measure* has been chosen, why does she not analyse its conspicuous appropriation by Lewis in *The Monk*? Moreover, like so many scholars in their studies of the Gothic,¹⁸ Seifert has left out drama and theatre, and thus both the presence of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century theatre (i.e., prior to and contemporary with the birth and effulgence of the Gothic) and the Gothic drama’s “competition” against Shakespeare in the 1790s and early 1800s. These omissions cause Seifert

¹⁷ Coral Ann Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery. Feeling in Gothic Fiction* (London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Athlone, 1995).

¹⁸ For many “the Gothic” seems to be synonymous with “Gothic fiction”; Summers’s groundbreaking *Gothic Quest* is subtitled “A History of the Gothic Novel” and, to cite a contemporary example, Maggie Kilgour’s book treats, as the title proclaims, of “The Rise of the Gothic Novel” where the focus is on the genre’s “Frankensteinian” narratives.

to bypass the tricky problem of generic distinctions, both within the Gothic and in its relation to the appropriated Shakespearean canon as it was carved out by the Gothicists.

As has been increasingly recognised in more recent studies (Howells, Clery, Gamer), stage representations of Shakespeare (Garrick's and Siddons's Hamlets, for example) had a significant impact on the development of Gothic fiction and drama. Shaped under the Shakespearean influence, the Gothic had from the moment of its inception a "dramatic" side to it. The subsequent transpositions of the Gothic material into the theatrical medium can be perceived as predictable consequences of the seminal tendencies within the genre or as due to its generic vagueness. Thus, once the Shakespearean debt is acknowledged, the generic problem raises its ugly head, and this simply makes unavoidable the inclusion of Gothic drama. A study of Shakespearean influence cannot be blind to the fact that two of its founding fathers (or, rather, the founding father, Walpole, and the unruly imitator, Lewis) wrote Gothic dramas. Telling is the fact that James Boaden, the adapter of Radcliffe and Lewis for the London stage, was a devout admirer of Shakespeare's "mighty muse,"¹⁹ as well as something of an early Shakespeare scholar, being author of a pamphlet on the Sonnets. This challenge of discussing both types of the early Gothic, fiction and drama, necessitates a significant broadening of the scope of analysis, and requires that we be awake to very different modes of influence.

As we have already observed, among the existing evidence of appropriation, the epigraphic uses of Shakespeare have attracted some critical attention. Predictably, the rhetoric used to address the Shakespearean epigraph is that of theft or colonization. Clery describes Radcliffe's practice of prefixing individual chapters with literary quotations, many of which have been taken from Shakespeare, as "textual kidnapping" and "literary kleptomania."²⁰ This metaphoric is suggestive of illicit seizure of another's property: "Radcliffe begins to *colonize* new areas of the text for her epigraphs, at the start of each chapter."²¹ Leaving aside overstatements such as this, the Shakespearean epigraph certainly is a very conspicuous manifestation of literary appropriation as well as being a rather peculiar textual formation, positioned somewhere between a paraphrase, a verbal allusion, and a direct quotation bordered off from an "own" text by means of the usual quotation marks. A Shakespeare motto, besides saying "I know

¹⁹ From "Epilogue" to *Fontainville Forest*, 69 of the original pagination. See also Cohan's "Introduction," ix. Boaden adapted Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest* and *The Italian*, as well as Lewis's *The Monk*.

²⁰ E.J. Clery, *Women's Gothic. From Clara Reeve to Mary Shelley* (Northcote House, 2000), 53 and 57.

²¹ Clery, *Women's Gothic*, 56; my emphasis.

and admire Shakespeare, our great national poet," says also the following: "A Gothic romance such as the one you are now reading is a respectable piece of literature since so much here has been inspired by and resembles Shakespeare." Especially in the case of Radcliffe, whom her contemporaries christened "the Shakespeare of Romance writers,"²² there are reasons to assume that literary ambitions invested in the Gothic genre may have gone beyond the purveying of cheap thrills. Radcliffe's poetics of terror (or "aesthetics of terror"²³) rounds off her romantic appropriation of Shakespeare.

In the Introduction to a collection of essays examining *The Appropriation of Shakespeare* (1991), Jean Marsden voiced the need to research more extensively Shakespeare in quotation marks, for "Shakespeare' is to a disturbing degree culturally determined."²⁴ Like the type of research endorsed by Marsden, this study of the appropriation of Shakespeare in the early English Gothic is also concerned, not with Shakespeare's text, but with yet another "attempt to make over Shakespeare in our own image."²⁵ The working assumption then is that early Gothicists attempted to "make over" Shakespeare in *their* own image with the result of "Gothicising" the Bard. Various species of verbal borrowing are here treated as evidence of a transmutation of Shakespeare into "Shakespeare," or Shakespeare in the inverted commas supplied by his Gothic appropriators. All such evidence needs to be taken into account and examined.²⁶

A systematic examination of verbal texture as proof of literary and cultural appropriation has to use special methods to handle the peculiar type of evidence, e.g. the epigraph, the verbal borrowing, and various types of more or less conspicuous allusions. Much of this material is certainly inconspicuous, at the outset at least, in contrast to such blatant instances of accommodation of Shakespeare as the notorious alterations of the plays

²² Nathan Drake's praise of Radcliffe, from his *Literary Hours* (1798, 1800), came in the context of his analysis of *The Italian*. It has become one of the scholars' favourite quotations, apparently due to the ennobling and legitimising ring to it. See McIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe*, 46. Drake was certainly a Radcliffe enthusiast, "and enthusiasts were not afraid to cite *Hamlet*, *Lear* and *Macbeth*" in their praises of the novelist; Tompkins, *Popular Novel in England*, 252.

²³ As in Norton, who uses this phrase as the title of one of the chapters of his biography, *Mistress of Udolpho*.

²⁴ Jean Marsden, "Introduction," in: Jean Marsden, ed., *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth* (New York... Singapore: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 8.

²⁵ Marsden, "Introduction," in: Marsden, ed., *Appropriation of Shakespeare*, 1.

²⁶ Estimates have yielded an approximate number of over a hundred and fifty quotations from Shakespeare in nineteen Gothic novels; see Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, note 39 (to page 49).

by the Restoration adapters. All verbal echoes, no matter how unobtrusive, are, according to Morton Bloomfield, proof of the stealthy *Nachleben* of Shakespeare in the English language. This afterlife, if thematised, requires a special approach; "the student of the *Nachleben* is more interested in the overwriting the original text has experienced during its existence."²⁷ The idea of the *Nachleben* of a great author with the attendant notions and phenomena of canonicity and monumentality answers very well to our working hypothesis here, of Shakespeare's shadow presence in the Gothic fictions and dramas, both in the sense of the immortal Shakespeare's survival in another's literary work but also in the sense more befitting Gothic, that Shakespeare's ghosts, which never released their spectral grip on the eighteenth-century audience, were revived in the works of Walpole and Radcliffe.

As we shall see, functions which Bloomfield assigns to quoting and alluding, namely those of self-aggrandizing, gaining authority, archaizing, and "bringing the past to the present,"²⁸ are fulfilled by such direct appropriations of Shakespeare as the epigraph. However, as Margreta de Grazia has shown in an influential essay on "Shakespeare in quotation marks," the uses of quotation marks changed substantially in the eighteenth century.²⁹ While in his edition of the plays in 1725 Alexander Pope used quotation marks on the margin to signal "shining passages," in collections of "beauties of Shakespeare" published later in the century they increasingly serve the purpose of tying Shakespeare's language to what Shakespeare might have thought and how Shakespeare might have felt. With the romantic poets, quotations have become as common as their variants, the allusion and the echo, and were employed as "a means of assimilation of Shakespeare into [one's] own discourse."³⁰ Charles Lamb's eulogy to Mrs. Siddons, the nonpareil Lady Macbeth, made up almost entirely of verbal borrowings, where no quotation marks are used, is a good illustration of such assimilation:

MRS SIDDONS

As when a child on some long Winter's night
Affrighted clinging to its Grandam's knees

²⁷ Morton Bloomfield, "Quoting and Alluding: Shakespeare in the English Language," in: G.B. Evans, ed., *Shakespeare: Aspects of Influence* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1976), 3.

²⁸ Bloomfield, "Quoting and Alluding," 13.

²⁹ Margreta de Grazia, "Shakespeare in Quotation Marks," in: Marsden, ed., *Appropriation of Shakespeare*, 57 ff.

³⁰ De Grazia, "Shakespeare in Quotation Marks," 65.

With eager wond'ring and perturb'd delight
Listens strange tales of fearful dark decrees

Mutter'd to wretch by necromantic spell;
Or of those hags, who at the witching time
Of murky Midnight ride the air sublime,
And mingle foul embrace with fiends of Hell:

Cold Horror drinks its blood! Anon the tear
More gentle starts, to hear the Beldame tell
Of pretty Babes, that lov'd each other dear,
Murder'd by cruel Uncle's mandate fell:

Even such the shiv'ring joys thy tones impart,
Even so thou, SIDDONS! meltest my sad heart!³¹

This torrential succession of verbal borrowings is symptomatic. “Is it indeed a poem *by Lamb?*” — one might well ask, for the words are ostensibly not his. The verbal and poetic texture is thoroughly Shakespearean, and, what's more, builds up a representation of Siddons, the renowned Tragic Muse, as an entity entirely composed, in the mind of the spectator and admirer, of Shakespeare's language. Let us merely say at this point that this way of treating Shakespeare's language was not born with the romantic poets.

Literary and cultural influence studies have an ambiguous status in academia. The idea of influence, as Kathleen Ashley and Véronique Plesch point out, has been denigrated on account of its conservatism and the harmful way in which it reinforces the canonicity of the great authors.³² And yet the problematics is very much alive, due in part to the widely discussed if controversial views of Harold Bloom. Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* (first published in 1973)³³ has certainly stirred a debate and, with Bloom's peculiar pronouncements about the way Shakespeare created “us,” put Shakespeare at the very centre of the storm. At the same time, Bloom's highly speculative conception offers a strangely biased view of the question of reception and thus complicates matters that by themselves are

³¹ Quoted in Clery, *Women's Gothic*, 8. Clery attributes the poem to Coleridge, but apparently Coleridge took this sonnet from Charles Lamb (see Bate, *Shakespeare and Romantic Imagination*, 45). The edition of Lamb that I have consulted (*Poems, Plays and Miscellaneous Essays*. With Introduction and Notes by Alfred Ainger) confirms this and gives 1794 as the date of composition. For further confirmation see e-book available at Gutenberg Project (*The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb. IV: Poems and Plays*).

³² Kathleen Ashley and Véronique Plesch, “The Cultural Processes of ‘Appropriation,’” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32/1 (2002), 2.

³³ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence. A Theory of Poetry*. 2nd edition (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

not easy to handle. Himself betraying strong Nietzschean and Freudian influences, Bloom assumes that influence is a mental syndrome or condition, a state of unease in the mind of a *Nachkömmling* or a descendant of a great dead poet such as Shakespeare – as the word “anxiety” plainly indicates. This optics allows Bloom to bypass and virtually ignore evidence of influence and, instead, indulge in exceedingly metaphorical hypotheses about what happens in the mind of an aspiring but late poet. Bloom, in other words, downplays the role of the necessary starting point, examination of evidence, and hence he proposes no strategy capable of testing the validity and heuristic vitality of his *a priori* assumptions. To put it yet differently, he provides all the answers but the actual questions, which can only spring from a careful examination of textual evidence, are not even formulated. Clearly, not all evidence of influence is necessarily a symptom of anxiety.³⁴ As Bloom himself obliquely admitted some twenty years after publishing the book, in his study of influence he was himself influenced by a romantic idea of poetic creativity and did not fully recognise the emergence of the influence problem in the eighteenth century. But this is indeed where it all seems to have started: “Concern with influence arose in conjunction with the mid-eighteenth-century interest in originality and genius, and the concept still bears the marks of that origin.”³⁵ Besides, research such as Jonathan Bate’s study of the reception of Shakespeare by the major poets of English romanticism does surprisingly well without the assistance of Bloom’s categories. Bate’s meticulous examination of “a network of quotations, allusions, and echoes, many of them hitherto unrecognized and uncollected,”³⁶ is certainly of value to someone who is not necessarily interested in Bloom’s “theory of poetry.” Bate’s cautious defence of his own methodology (see the epigraph to this section) shows that, himself a descendant of the romantic idolatry (“Shakespeare belongs to the giant age before the flood”³⁷) and certainly a “strong” critic, Bloom exerted a powerful and unfortunately stifling influence on reception studies.

If reception and influence tend to cause methodological difficulties, appropriation appears to be much more tractable, if not necessarily freer from “ideological” ambiguities. For one thing, appropriation can be in-

³⁴ Compare for instance Howard D. Weinbrot, *Britannia’s Issue*, 3. Weinbrot repeatedly insists, without engaging in a debate against Bloom, that influence may be free from the affliction of anxiety.

³⁵ Jay Clayton and Eric Rothstein, *Influence and Intertextuality in Literary History* (1991), quoted in Mary Orr, *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts* (Cambridge and Malden: Polity Press, 2007), 61.

³⁶ Bate, *Shakespeare and Romantic Imagination*, 3.

³⁷ Bloom, *Anxiety of Influence*, 11.

vestigated with the help of literary-historical methods rather than psychological ones. Unlike influence, gestures of literary appropriation manifest themselves, sometimes obtrusively, and those manifestations provide material that research can handle with a degree of objectivity. Such investigations may be derisively dismissed as fit for “source-hunters and biographers,”³⁸ and yet one cannot really reject the necessity of such groundwork job for any study of literary and cultural transmissions.

If connotations carried by the word “influence” are not entirely favourable, then with “appropriation” things look hardly more encouraging. Already the etymology bears denotations of forceful seizure of another’s property. The motivation constitutive of an act of appropriation (and not of influence) is “to gain power over.”³⁹ Besides, in a cultural context, appropriation presupposes inequality between those who wield power and those who yield to it, which is enough for many to denounce any such action or process as cultural imperialism. However, when applied to the case of Shakespeare’s rising, in the eighteenth century, to the position of Britain’s national Bard, such denunciatory strategies lose their meaning. This is, unless we are prepared to assume, which is not unreasonable, that the appropriated Shakespeare is identical with, to rephrase Garrick’s eulogium, the god of universal idolatry. As Robert Hume has cautioned us, to engage the eighteenth-century attitudes to and transformations of “Shakespeare” requires that we “comprehend an outlook disconcertingly remote from our own.”⁴⁰ As Shakespeare’s status rose, so the appropriation of him became more and more vehement. However, if, as Ashley and Plesch argue, we need to treat appropriation as “potentially a two-way process,” and furthermore as one which is aimed at consolidating identity, then the uses of Shakespeare in the process of consolidating the British national identity have to be addressed in their baffling complexity.⁴¹

To return to our major contention, Bloom, in order to study influence, needs to presuppose the strong poet as a solid if dead entity, a source of

³⁸ These phrases occur in the following context: “By ‘poetic influence’ I do not mean the transmission of ideas and images from earlier to later poets. This is indeed just ‘something that happens,’ and whether such transmission causes anxiety in the later poets is merely a matter of temperament and circumstances. These are fair materials for source-hunters and biographers, and have little to do with my concern” (*Anxiety of Influence*, 71). For a critical discussion see Bate, *Shakespeare and Romantic Imagination*, 4.

³⁹ Ashley and Plesch, “Cultural Processes of ‘Appropriation,’” 3.

⁴⁰ Robert D. Hume, “Before the Bard: ‘Shakespeare’ in Early Eighteenth-Century London,” *ELH* 64/1 (1997), 65.

⁴¹ A similar call for a rejection of a narrowly monodirectional perception of influence and appropriation see Orr, *Intertextuality*, 83 ff. Also, Orr suggests that “a so-called authority may also be multiple, dialogic or reciprocal [...]” (*ibidem*).

cultural energies. But studies of the making of Shakespeare into a national Poet expose the fact that any such presupposition is dubious, if not groundless. If cultural appropriation is a two-way transaction, then it is also a two-way transmission of energy. Shakespeare's spectres certainly enkindled the Gothic flame but, inversely, his works were eagerly used to bolster the reputation of the new genre. Ashley and Plesch rightly emphasise that processes of appropriation have "a powerful diachronic dimension,"⁴² but we might add that the relation between "earlier" and "later" is never one-directional. T.S. Eliot, in his celebrated essay "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919) put it memorably: On the one hand, "No poet, no artist of any art, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists." From this statement, whereby "later" poets are judged by and in relation to their predecessors, Eliot goes on to invert the situation and argues that the "supervention of novelty" alters "the whole existing order." Eliot does not find "preposterous" the idea that while the present "is directed by the past," so in equal measure the past can be altered by the present.⁴³ When applied to the appropriation of Shakespeare by Gothic romancers and playwrights, this view justifies the suggestion of a mutual exchange of energies between Shakespeare and the Gothic. This broadened perspective is here adopted in preference to the unhelpfully reductive notions of influence as a one-way transfusion and of appropriation as a high-handed exercise of power. If we are prepared to admit that any reception of Shakespeare can influence the meaning of Shakespeare and his work, then we can ask not only to what extent Gothic is Shakespearean, but also to what extent Shakespeare is Gothic. As with any creative reception, the phenomenon whose name is "Shakespeare" undergoes a transformation and possibly an enrichment. After Gothic, Shakespeare has never been the same.

⁴² Ashley and Plesch, "Cultural Processes of 'Appropriation,'" 9.

⁴³ T.S. Eliot, "Tradition and the Individual Talent," in: *NATC*, 1093.

The method, or: the ways to scratch

The voice of the absent, the dead, located in the no man's land which surrounds the narrative.

E.J. Clery, *Women's Gothic* (2000)

E.J. Clery's metaphor of "scratching the surface," regarded in a positive light, suggests that there is a strong link between the formative phase of the Gothic and Shakespeare, or to be more precise, the Shakespeare of the second half of the eighteenth century. The metaphor insists that the Shakespearean legacy, the "received" Shakespeare of the eighteenth century, had an impact on the nascent genre. The hypothesis is that the links between the early Gothic and Shakespeare can be treated as a peculiar literary-historical invisible hand.

Helga Seifert's study consistently approaches the Gothic in terms of its "creative reception" of Shakespeare. This yields interesting results when applied to Ann Radcliffe. The term "creative reception" points to the "internal" aspect of the appropriation, where by "internal" we mean any evidence that can be detected within a given literary work: any traces of Shakespeare's plays in Gothic fiction and drama, not merely verbal borrowings but situational and generic parallels.¹ Evidence is of paramount significance at the outset; of equal importance, however, is the methodology with which evidence is to be handled. When Seifert speaks of the need to analyse "structural features,"² one has to ask what those features are and, when they have been identified, whether we can speak of structural parallels between such distinct works as a Shakespeare play and a Radcliffe novel.

¹ The internal-external distinction is commonly used. For instance, Paul Lewis, when examining the striking parallels between *Otranto* and Cyril Tourneur's *The Atheist's Tragedy*, has to admit that "There is no external evidence showing that Walpole was acquainted with the play." Paul Lewis, "The Atheist's Tragedy and *The Castle of Otranto*: Expressions of the Gothic Vision," *Notes and Queries* 25 (1978), 54, note 5.

² Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 4.

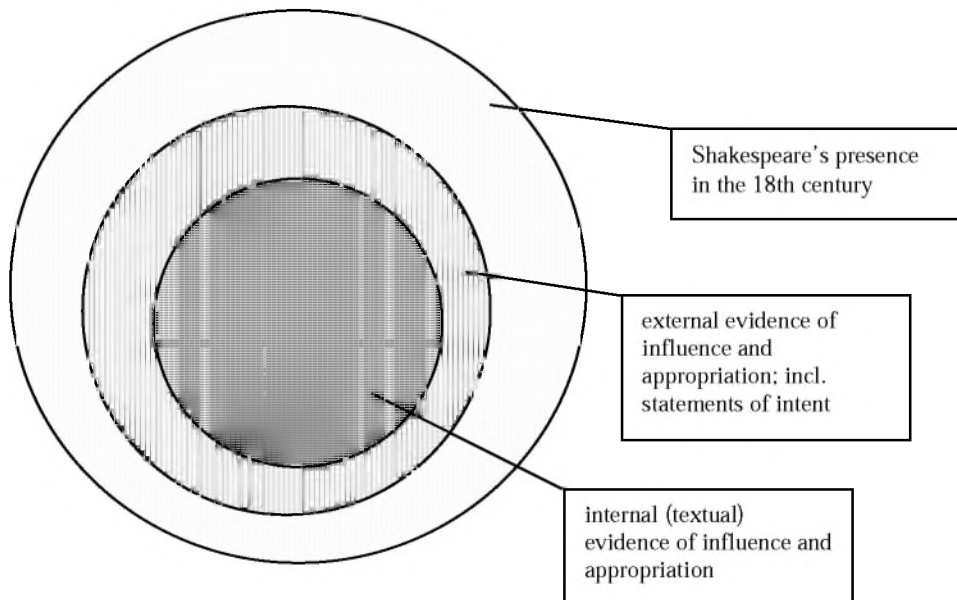
The evidence of the Shakespearean influence can be broken down into at least three types of manifestations. Historically, the most significant is the cultural fact of Shakespeare idolatry in the second half of the eighteenth century, the now well-documented process of setting up Shakespeare as a natural genius and the national Bard; the dates 1766 to 1799 proposed by Robert W. Babcock suggest that this process coincided with the formative phase of the Gothic.³ This would account at least in part for the fascination of the new genre's founding parents with Shakespeare. We can speak of a double manifestation of this "personal" fascination: a) in what can be called Gothic manifestoes (or programme texts which accompany literary works proper); b) in the fabric of the literary works.

Starting with the fundamental problem of Shakespeare's presence in the particular cultural milieu under investigation, we need to take into account editions of the works, critical pronouncements, theatrical productions, exhibitions, cultural events, etc. To address Shakespeare as an influence in the eighteenth century is to attune oneself to the many ways in which the Age or, more appropriately, the successive "ages" (of Addison, of Johnson and Garrick, of the Siddons siblings, etc.) sustained Shakespeare's presence. This effort was manifold and involved such different textual practices as altering (down to the morally reprehensible practices of literary forgery and fabrication of personal documents) and annotating as well as a wide range of visualising practices, chief among them stage representation. The interest was both in the person of the Poet and in the effusions of his genius, and Robert Hume rightly makes us distinguish between *knowledge* and *reputation*. The outpouring of critical editions of Shakespeare's work was accompanied by vigorously mounted critical appraisal. Criticism, however, was commonly compounded with a degree of idolatry, and idolatry with nationalism. Prefaces and introductions to the works pondered the genius of the Poet while portraits of Shakespeare and representations of scenes and characters from his plays supplied the much needed visual accompaniment. More and more faithful performances reflected the rising cult of authenticity and awareness of the actor's role in transmitting the dramatic genius enshrined in the playtext. Especially interesting are those *loci* in the cultural transactions of the century where interest in Shakespeare's plays or characters is motivated by a desire to intuit or even relive their origin, i.e. discover the seat or fount of Shakespeare's poetic inspiration and creativity.

³ Robert Witbeck Babcock, *The Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry 1766—1799. A Study of English Criticism of the Late Eighteenth Century* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1964).

The next type of evidence that must be dealt with is that of an author's statements of intent. Here belongs, for instance, Walpole's express desire to "copy" his Master, Shakespeare, to set him up as a model. This encourages a relapse into psychology, perhaps justified inasmuch as we are dealing here with an expressly stated purpose on the part of the reader-turned-author. Walpole's statements in the Preface to *The Castle of Otranto* must be treated in accordance with their position, i.e. as prefatory. Pride of place belongs to the work thus prefaced. The preface and its theatrical equivalents, the ubiquitous prologue and epilogue, are similar in nature to other modes of the intertext. Like the epigraph, for instance, the preface occupies a space between the author (and reader/viewer, with whom the author communicates "above" the work) and the literary text proper; it mediates between two distinct spheres, the personal and the public. As we have already suggested, evidence-hunting, focused on the personal sphere, merely supplies a necessary basis for engaging the much more tricky problem of literary influence. A relatively sharp distinction presents itself between authorial intention (as part of external evidence) and the actual execution (internal evidence).⁴

The diagram represents the three types of evidence discussed and the relations between them:



⁴ Clara McIntyre uses the term "internal evidence" (in the article "Were the 'Gothic' Novels Gothic?", 650), but does not draw, let alone dwell upon, the necessary distinction.

The division of the present study is, accordingly, tripartite: 1. Shakespeare's presence in the late eighteenth century and, as a result, also in the early-Gothic aesthetic: the appropriative "circulation" of Shakespeare as influence and inspiration (largest circle); 2. programme appropriations of Shakespeare as a model by chosen Gothicists (on the examples of Walpole and Radcliffe — middle circle); 3. the elusive ("spectral") presence of Shakespeare in works that are representative of early Gothic fiction and drama in the form of verbal borrowing, etc. (innermost circle). This tripartite examination of evidence will allow us to proceed to the next stage and inquire about the incorporation of Shakespeare's plays into Gothic structures and themes.

Thus over and above the book's division into so many chapters and sections is the division into the (preparatory) part which examines various species of evidence and the (systematic) part which undertakes a comparative evaluation of the depth of the Shakespearean inheritance. This hopefully justifies my decision to discuss the definition of the literary Gothic *after* examining the evidence material. The attempt in the Section "Genres and Modes..." to define literary Gothic as a genre and a mode relies on the historical considerations which precede it; the definitions proposed here, rather than seeking a theoretical framework for a new definition of the genre, promise both to respect the historically documented usage of "Gothic" and to reflect the foundational status of early Gothic fictions.

The task of handling the gathered evidence is the most difficult part of the exercise. The spectral or phantom presence of Shakespeare is not only about the eighteenth-century fascination with Shakespeare's ghosts (which, as we have already suggested, found a predictable outlet in the early Gothic) but also about the subtle way in which Shakespeare is "made present" in the literary works of the early Gothicists. It is, I would argue, the lack of a methodology with which to handle the spectres of Shakespeare in the early Gothic which has put off scholars, who have rarely ventured through the trapdoor of the obvious and gone below the surface. Very much like Radcliffe's phantoms, Shakespeare is palpably present and yet upon closer inspection dissolves into an airy nothing; is and is not there all at once.

The above considerations, I trust, justify the following structure of the book:

In Chapter II we deal with Shakespeare as a presence in the eighteenth century. Its basic manifestations are discussed: the manifold dissemination of Shakespeare, the rise of bardolatry as well as criticism, the politicisation and nationalisation of both the figure of the Poet and his work. Woven into the chapter is the story of William-Henry Ireland and his multiple forgeries; the greatest cultural fraud of the 1790s *and its*

unmasking are, I believe, highly symptomatic of the dynamic of Shakespeare's presence in the period.

Chapter III traces the Gothicisation of Shakespeare. After a cursory examination of elements of the supernatural in Shakespeare, we look at what can perhaps adequately be described as a fascination with the supernatural. We examine the way in which representations of the Shakespearean supernatural at once gratified and stimulated enthusiasm for the marvellous. Next, we look at the shaping of a new poetic idiom and a new poetics that justified this enthusiasm. The changing cultural paradigm found its culmination in the Gothic manifestoes of Walpole, Radcliffe and Drake. Further, evidence of appropriation is examined, with special emphasis placed on verbal borrowings and the epigraph, or what I have described as internal evidence of appropriation.

Chapter IV undertakes a systematic analysis of the early Gothic in its relation to Shakespeare, or rather to "Shakespeare." This type of comparative analysis requires some fine-tuning to prevent inaccuracies, which would inevitably occur if basic generic categories (comedy, tragedy, romance, and the Gothic itself) were left undefined. Genre, in Lawrence Danson's formulation, may be "a form always in the process of reforming itself,"⁵ yet the shifting nature and elusiveness of generic distinctions does not mean that they do not matter; in fact, they do now as they did in the eighteenth century. Hence the chapter opens with a bipartite preparatory section, one part concerned with generic problems and the other with the definition of the Gothic. These considerations prepare the ground for an analysis of such parallels and differences between Shakespeare's plays and Gothic fiction as are historically justifiable and determined by processes of cultural transmission. The last section of this chapter undertakes a different task, that of discussing parallels between the Shakespearean and the Gothic types of romance. Unlike the other analyses, this section is not founded upon obtainable evidence of appropriation.

Chapter V examines the theatrical side of the Gothic's affiliation with Shakespeare. Being concerned with the stage, it is relatively autonomous, and yet relies heavily on all the parts of the study that come before it. This analysis is broken down into two stages or movements. The first treats of the troubled relations of the Gothic mode to the stage, while the second examines the parallels, verbal and otherwise, between Shakespeare and Gothic drama, concentrating on the constitutive element of the supernatural.

⁵ Lawrence Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5.

The terms of art necessary for this type of examination include, besides "evidence" (internal and external), the notions of "parallels," "analogies," or "similarities," verbal, structural, thematic, and generic. One cannot avoid speaking of "borrowing," "comparison," "absorption," etc.⁶ In McIntyre's article we find a rich array of such vocabulary: this or that in Radcliffe "is built on" Shakespeare, "shows influence of," "is a reminiscence of," "suggests," "has some resemblance to," "reminds us of" this or that in Shakespeare. Any detected resemblance seems to justify the term "parallel." A discerning critic, especially one endowed with retentive memory, will be able endlessly to pile up parallels; certainly some (McIntyre and Railo among them) have attempted to detect and describe as many as possible. As has been suggested, in order to avoid speculative leaps, we need to keep a watchful eye on the context in which a given parallel occurs. Moreover, we need to be prepared to make sense of the non-occurrence of appropriation where it might well be expected. A case in point is the fact that Gothic romancers seem to have found no inspiration in what we now call Shakespeare's romances.

In an introductory section such as this, devoted to the methodological apparatus which is to be employed in the study, a thing or two must be said about the adopted theoretical position. The straightforward answer is (disappointingly perhaps) that none has been chosen, unless it could be described as historical and literary-comparative in the sense that these designations commonly carry. Categories, terms of art and distinctions which are used are, intentionally at least, noncommittal in the sense that my purpose is to reflect and respect the historically occurring usage or not to obfuscate the material to which they are applied. There is, however, a critical side to this approach that it would be pointless to conceal. In choosing a nontheoretical optics I warmly subscribe to the major contention of an essay by Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, who denounce Gothic Criticism's built-in indifference (if not sheer blindness) to "observable features of theme and setting."⁷ As an example the scholars cite the inability of

⁶ This is how, for example, Sandy Conger approaches the problem of the possible influence of C.H. Spiess's *Das Petermännchen* on Lewis's *The Monk*: "There is neither *verbal similarity* between the two works nor *external evidence* to suggest that Lewis actually knew Spiess's novel [...]. Though the works deserve a *test comparison*, because two influential critics [...] remain convinced of Spiess's *influence on Lewis*, even a brief synopsis of Spiess's novel reveals how few *surface details* the two works have *in common*, and surface details are precisely what Lewis *usually absorbed* from his sources." Sandy M. Conger, *Matthew G. Lewis, Charles Robert Maturin and the Germans: An Interpretative Study of the Influence of German Literature on Two Gothic Novels* (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1977), 82–83; emphasis added.

⁷ Chris Baldick and Robert Mighall, "Gothic Criticism," in: Punter, ed., *Companion to Gothic*, 216.

Gothic Criticism to deal with the early Gothic's endemic anti-Catholicism. Perhaps the most denunciatory statement of their essay is "that Gothic Criticism now functions as a 'Gothic' form of discourse in its own right, compelled to reproduce what it fails to understand."⁸ The self-congratulatory indifference of much of contemporary "Gothic Criticism" (understood in the critical meaning constructed by Baldick and Mighall) has at least one serious consequence; namely, it makes it impossible for theorists to define the field of their study, the Gothic. We must postpone a more detailed discussion of these problems to Chapter IV of this book.

Finally, something needs to be said concerning the selection of the literary material. The Gothic, even the early phase of its development, has been variously divided, and different scholars have proposed different, more or less arbitrary, dates to delimit the period of its rise after its inception in 1764/1765 with *The Castle of Otranto*. A degree of arbitrariness cannot be avoided.⁹ The time brackets adopted in this study are roughly 1764 and 1800. This period not only witnesses the rise of Gothic fiction but also its unhampered dissemination or "effulgence" in the 1790s. The period, too, covers the diversification of the Gothic into its basic varieties commonly known as the "historical," the "Radcliffe" variety of terror Gothic, and the "German" variety of horror Gothic.¹⁰ Furthermore, between these brackets fall such events as the birth of the Gothic drama, both in its adaptive and in its original-plot varieties, and the publication of revisionist, generically and politically, Gothic texts, including for example William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*. Apart from the literary productions, the decade of the 1790s sees the shaping of a full-fledged Gothic aesthetic, both in the fictional and the dramatic forms. In 1798 Nathan Drake publishes his *Literary Hours*, which rounds off the formative phase of Gothic fiction, and Joanna Baillie makes her debut as a dramatist, her anonymously published *Plays on the Pas-*

⁸ Baldick and Mighall, "Gothic Criticism," 220.

⁹ On "inevitable selection," always to an extent arbitrary, see Summers, *Gothic Quest*, 14. Curiously, to Summers's study the notion of selection does not seem to apply; David Punter objects that *The Gothic Quest* "degenerates into a catalogue of obscure Gothic texts, many of which Summers himself appears to have possessed the only extant copy [sic]," and adds that Summers ended up "with too much material to handle"; David Punter, *The Literature of Terror. A History of Gothic Fictions from 1765 to the Present Day*. Vol. 1: *The Gothic Tradition* (London: Longman, 1995), 15.

¹⁰ See for instance the categories used by Rictor Norton in his anthology of early Gothic texts, Rictor Norton, ed., *Gothic Readings. The First Wave, 1764–1840* (London and New York: Leicester University Press, 2000). The Contents section distinguishes, besides "Historical Gothic," between "The Radcliffe School of Terror" and "The 'German' School of Horror." These commonly accepted distinctions largely derive from Summers and his *Gothic Quest* (e.g., 29).

sions (1798) at once marking the completion of the early phase of Gothic drama and hailing the entry of the Gothic into a romantic phase of its development.¹¹ Baillie's ambition may have been to revive, within a refurbished conceptual framework and under the auspices of Shakespeare, the declining tradition of serious drama, but her drama is also a manifestation of a successful merger of the Gothic with that tradition as represented by the London patent theatres and its luminaries, Sarah Siddons and John Philip Kemble. Kemble, if we accept Jeffrey Kahan's hypothesis,¹² may have been responsible for the ruining of the opening night of *Vortigern* in a bid to save the reputations both of Shakespeare and of the Royal Theatre he co-managed, and yet he did not refuse to appear in the undignified role which Lewis contrived for his Gothic hero in *The Castle Spectre*. Nor did he reject the part of the romanticised villain in Baillie's *De Monfort*. Sarah Siddons, the celebrated Lady Macbeth opposite Garrick's and her brother's Macbeths, reportedly wanted more roles of the Jane De Monfort type.¹³ Dedicating his *Castle of Montval* (1799) to Mrs. Siddons, the Rev. T.S. Whalley confesses that the leading female role, that of the Countess, was "written solely for you."

It is James Boaden's writings on the theatre of the period that expose its role in a vibrant transmission of ideas and thus in the creation of the peculiar cultural merger, Shakespeare's association with the formation of the Gothic. Awake to the public's demand for the supernatural, whether in fiction or in theatre, ardently convinced of the canonical status of Shakespeare, and determined as we have seen to defend the purity of the British stage against foreign contamination, Boaden found himself uncomfortably poised between the different cultural and ideological forces and still leapt headlong into a cauldron which in the 1790s bubbled with the offspring of the most objectionable as well as the most elevated literary strivings.

¹¹ There is, however, a longstanding tradition of regarding the Gothic as quintessentially romantic (Summers and Railo).

¹² Jeffrey Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare: The Story of a Theatrical Scandal* (Bethlehem: Lehigh University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 1998).

¹³ Siddons is reported as saying, "Make me some more Jane De Monforts." See Peter Duthie's "Introduction" to his edition of Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* (Letchworth: Broadview Literary Texts, 2001), 52. Boaden compliments Mrs. Siddons for having "exerted herself powerfully in the Countess Jane"; James Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble* (hereafter *Life of Kemble*, see Bibliography for details), vol. 2, 257.

Shakespeare's Presence in the Eighteenth Century



Adapting, editing, circulating

Thou wonder'st at my Language, wonder still [...]

Macbeth's line from Davenant's *Macbeth*¹

Those Sybil-leaves, the sport of every wind, (For poets
ever were a careless kind) [...]

William Collins, "An Epistle: Addressed to
Sir Thomas Hanmer, on his Edition of Shakespeare's Works"

The Restoration and the eighteenth century were crucial for the setting up or institutionalising of Shakespeare, a period "when Shakespeare's works became public property and an intrinsic, even defining, part of English national culture."² According to Jean Marsden, the process of appropriation of Shakespeare in this period consists of two distinct and basically opposite movements: *adapting* (especially in its radical forms) gives way in approximately the middle of the century to *restoring*.

The adapting of Shakespeare is an interesting chapter in the history of the reception and appropriation of Shakespeare between 1660 and 1800. As Jeffrey Kahan puts it, "Listing and describing all [...] Shakespeare imitations for the period would be a book in itself."³ Christopher Spencer cites the number of 123 adaptations of 35 plays by Shakespeare between the years 1660 and 1820, but adds that "the total is really larger than 123," as, for instance, the adaptations by John Philip Kemble need to be added to the list.⁴ Spencer stresses the significance of the adaptation

¹ Compare Shakespeare's "Thou marvell'st at my words: but hold thee still;" *Mcb.* III.ii. 54. I find Davenant's line to be an unintended self-reflexive comment on an adapter's oft-inexplicable urge to alter.

² Jean Marsden, *The Re-Imagined Text. Shakespeare, Adaptation & Eighteenth-Century Literary Theory* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 3.

³ Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 33.

⁴ Christopher Spencer, "Introduction," in: Christopher Spencer, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), 1, note 2.

on the Restoration and eighteenth-century stages, admitting at the same time that the question of what constitutes an adaptation enormously complicates matters due to the great variety of the adapters' approaches to the original text. Spencer comes up with his own definition:

The typical adaptation included substantial cuts of scenes, speeches, and speech assignments; much alteration of language; and at least one and usually several important (or scene-length) additions. Accompanying these measurable changes are alterations or at least new emphases in tone, in character, and in theme.⁵

To a different category belong works such as Nicholas Rowe's *Jane Shore* (1714), plays which have plots of their own but are expressly imitative, "Written in Imitation of Shakespear's Style."⁶ Spencer rightly finds Dryden's definition still valuable; writes Dryden,

I take imitation of an author [...] to be an endeavour of a later poet to write like one who has written before him, on the same subject; that is, not to translate his words, or to be confined to his sense, but only to set him as a pattern, and to write, as he supposes that author would have done, had he lived in our age, and in our country.⁷

Both these definitions are applicable because Shakespeare was both adapted (and "altered") and imitated. As we shall see, even the emerging Gothic fiction (and, subsequently, drama) raises the problem of imitation, not only of Shakespeare by a Gothic author, but also of one Gothicism by another. What one finds missing in the above definitions, assuming that only a degree of precision is attainable, is that they do not address the problem of generic distinctions. Turning a Shakespearean tragedy into a melodrama with a happy ending would fall under the category of adaptation; writing a Gothic story with the aim of "copying" Shakespeare (as Walpole did) would need to be classified as imitation. Both the adaptation and the imitation fall within the broader category of appropriation, although the latter does not function as a distinct literary species; there are no plays subtitled "appropriation" of Shakespeare. The term appropriation does

Kemble staged twenty-five self-adapted plays by Shakespeare; see Harold Child, *The Shakespearean Productions of John Philip Kemble* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 4.

⁵ Spencer, "Introduction," in: *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, 7.

⁶ For a discussion of Rowe's debt to Shakespeare see Boaden, *Life of Kemble*, vol. II, 421 ff.

⁷ John Dryden, "Preface to the Translation of Ovid's Epistles" (1680), quoted in Spencer, "Introduction," in: *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, 9.

not impose the limitations which the other two do: a play which merges two Shakespearean comedies into one and a play which uses the Shakespearean style are both instances of appropriation. Before we take a closer look at the history of *Macbeth*, let us mention in passing two extremely interesting cases, *The Tempest* and *King Lear*. The operatic adaptation of *The Tempest* by Davenant and Dryden (dating back to 1670), described as “the worst perversion of Shakespeare in the two-century history of such atrocities,”⁸ was probably one of the most popular plays of the Restoration period, despite or perhaps due to the shift of emphasis to the love interest (according to Spencer’s estimate, in comparison to the 256 lines Shakespeare gave to the lovers, the Davenant—Dryden version devotes 1,227!). “Shift of emphasis” hardly captures the scope of the modification to the original in Nahum Tate’s *King Lear*. Here, too, love interest is given extensive treatment and includes the pairing off of Cordelia and Edgar, but a more substantial alteration is the last-minute rescue of Cordelia; despite subsequent reworkings and restorations (including Garrick’s in 1756), the tragic ending waited 157 years for its revival by Edmund Kean in 1838.⁹

Kahan introduces a category of plays which “operated within Shakespeare’s known imaginative worlds.”¹⁰ Operating within a poet’s imaginative worlds, however, is vague, and perhaps we need simply to distinguish between plays which follow the borrowed plotline and those which, based on a new story, are imitations of the style of the “inimitable” Bard.¹¹ Here we have a wide variety of approaches to the Shakespearean text, from the usual and expected cuts to wholesale rewritings, especially those under the auspices of the principles of neoclassicism, such as John Dryden’s version of *Antony and Cleopatra, All for Love* (1677) or his adaptation of *Troilus and Cressida* (1679). Plays like these retain the plot of the original but introduce into the fabric of the drama various additions (“new songs” in Davenant’s *Macbeth*) and adjustments (blank verse in Dryden’s play).

Robert Hume suggests that we should distinguish between the following: cut versions, production adaptations with addenda, textual alterations,

⁸ George Odell, *Shakespeare from Betterton to Irving* (1920), quoted by Spencer, “Introduction,” in: *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, 17.

⁹ Spencer, “Introduction,” in: *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, 22. Interestingly, the Fool was as consistently cut from the altered versions as was the tragic ending. The Porter in *Macbeth* shared a similar lot, omitted by Kemble from his adaptation of the play; see Dennis Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and the Players* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969), 131.

¹⁰ Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 33.

¹¹ The word “inimitable” was often used in various writings on Shakespeare in the eighteenth century. We shall return to the tricky problem of imitation of the inimitable in the next chapter when we look at how Gothic authors, and Radcliffe in particular, handled the paradox.

rewritings, and imitations.¹² This may be helpful, but perhaps slightly too casual as some of the categories overlap (“textual alteration” is much too broad to be useful), and once more leaves aside the crucial problem of generic transformations which alterations commonly involved. With David Garrick the distinction between an adaptation and an acting copy with the usual cuts and alterations largely collapses. In his capacity as acting manager, Garrick took upon himself the joint role of adapter, editor and finally, of actor, transmitter of the text, which he claimed to have restored to the original version. Garrick’s claims to the realisation of the text’s meaning (identified with the author’s spirit enshrined in words) were subverted by the then common predilection for tampering with the Shakespearean text (and with the text of *Hamlet* in particular). His desire to “improve” *Hamlet* and the protests his corrections met with reflect the advanced processes of authentication and critical vindication.

Having assumed the role of a conductor of meaning between the authorial spirit and the audience, it was natural and logical for Garrick to try and improve upon the existing copies of the Shakespeare text. Usually the alterations are described either as minor or as somehow necessary. In the Advertisement to *Cymbeline* (1762) we read that “[i]t was impossible to retain more of the Play and bring it within the Compass of a Night’s Entertainment.”¹³ The alterations involve the “Division of the Acts,” “the Shortening many parts of the Original,” and “transposing some Scenes,” all in the hope that no “great Impropriety” has been committed. *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* of 1763, however, receives no such disclaimer, and yet the title page reveals deep-running changes: “*A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Written by Shakespeare: With Alterations and Additions, and several New Songs.” Even more serious does the situation look in the case of *The Winter’s Tale*, which Garrick had reworked into *Florizel and Perdita. A Dramatic Pastoral, in Three Acts* (1758). Here the justificatory Prologue, “Written and Spoken by Mr. Garrick,” is appropriately elaborate and relies for its chief metaphor on the likening of the theatre to “a Tavern,” which serves liquor “from Shakespear’s Head,” “this Fountain-head divine” (conveniently rhymed in the subsequent line with “Wine”). A justification comes after a somewhat lengthy elaboration on this principal metaphor: the cutting of the five-act original to a three-act alteration is represented as distilment: “confin’d and bottled for your Taste”; to which Garrick adds this finishing, curiously ambiguous couplet: “Tis my chief wish, my Joy, my only Plan, / To lose no Drop of that immortal Man!”¹⁴ This type of me-

¹² Hume, “Before the Bard,” 56.

¹³ “*Cymbeline. A Tragedy. By Shakespear. With Alterations.*” In: *Plays of David Garrick*, vol. 3, A3.

¹⁴ *Plays of David Garrick*, vol. 2.

taphorics was not uncommon; as George Branam sums it up, “The general assumption is the same in all: Shakespeare is uneven, and the adapter is doing a service by saving the good in Shakespeare — whether it be by separating his gold from his dross, pruning his garden, rebottling his liquor, tuning his lyre, or rebuilding his ships.”¹⁵

In view of the special position of *Hamlet* in the eighteenth century and hence also in our subsequent analyses, we need to look more closely at Garrick’s mishandling of the play. The altered *Hamlet*, which opened on 18 December 1772, was in the words of Michael Dobson, “Garrick’s final and most daring act of authorial *lèse-majesté* [...]”¹⁶ Writes George Winchester Stone, “One incident in the life of David Garrick — Shakespeare’s Priest — has subsequently evoked the harshest kind of criticism even from his professed admirers, namely, his alteration of *Hamlet*.”¹⁷ In a humorous vein, Garrick’s determination to “rescue that noble play [*Hamlet*] from all the rubbish of the fifth Act,”¹⁸ was represented by the *Universal Magazine*, which (in response to the grave-diggers’ complaints) gave voice to Shakespeare himself; he appears in the role of the Ghost of Old Hamlet and allows Garrick to “freely correct my Page; [because] I wrote to please a rude unpolish’d age.”¹⁹ Much bitterer was a satire entitled *Hamlet with Alterations* (by Arthur Murphy) in which Shakespeare’s ghost visits Drury Lane to chide Garrick in a speech which itself is an adaptation of the spectre’s tale:

Yet on my scenes by ages sanctified,
In evil hour thy restless spirit stole
With juice of cursed nonsense in an inkhorn
And o’er my fair applauded page did pour
A manager’s distillment, whose effect
Holds such enmity with wit of man
That each interpolating word of thine
Annihilates the sense [...]”²⁰

¹⁵ George C. Branam, *Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespearean Tragedy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1956), 6.

¹⁶ Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 172.

¹⁷ George Winchester Stone, Jr., “Garrick’s Long Lost Alteration of *Hamlet*,” *PMLA* XLIX (1934), 890.

¹⁸ From Garrick’s letter of 1776, quoted in Babcock, *Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, 88.

¹⁹ Quoted in Babcock, *Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, 87.

²⁰ Quoted in Stone, “Garrick’s Long Lost Alteration,” 891. Naturally, Shakespeare’s ghost also returned from the dead to hound the notorious forger; for a discussion of the caricatures occasioned by the Ireland forgeries see Jonathan Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions. Politics, Theatre, Criticism 1730—1830* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 59—60.

Both Garrick's appropriations and "Shakespeare's" response to them make sense within the larger context of Shakespeare's spectral presence. Garrick in his capacity as leading actor and manager of a licensed theatre usurps the position of Hamlet. In the satire, he says that "His [Shakespeare's] plays are out of joint," and bemoans: "O, cursed spite / That ever I was born to set them right." Accordingly, Garrick foregrounds his personation of Hamlet and feels free to, in the ambiguous words of James Boaden, mutilate "*all parts but his own*."²¹ On the other hand, the satire resurrects Shakespeare as Old Hamlet, who returns to claim respect for his original script. Eventually Garrick is reported as having seen through his "impudence," which explains his decision not to publish the altered *Hamlet*. By comparison, the *Hamlet* of 1763 is surprisingly faithful to the original, and retains even the controversial grave-diggers episode.²² As we shall see, Horace Walpole, for whom the grave-diggers seem to have represented the essence of the drama, joined in the debate to vindicate Shakespeare's wit and like others cast opprobrium on Garrick's unwarranted appropriations.

Garrick's *Macbeth* readily furnishes another example of the way in which by the middle of the eighteenth century the desire to restore militated against the urge to alter. In an attempt to negotiate these conflicting tendencies, Garrick's *Macbeth*, besides lines added by the actor, features extensive and not infrequently critical observations on the text. In the 1740s Garrick made his adaptation of *Macbeth* to replace the then commonly staged Davenant version, an adaptation which saved much of the original. Davenant's *Macbeth* of 1674 (advertised on the title page as a tragedy "with all the alterations, amendments, additions, and new songs") answers neatly to the above-quoted definition of adaptation by Spencer: numerous characters have been removed (Seyward's Son and Macduff's Son among them), speeches reassigned, and new scenes and passages added. According to Spencer, the rationale behind the changes is that they all help to get across the moral lesson (the corrupting consequences of ambition). As a result of these moralising commitments, the play loses much of its emotional depth and the characters much of their arresting individuality.²³

²¹ From Boaden's Preface to his edition of Garrick's letters (1831); quoted in Stone, "Garrick's Long Lost Alteration," 890.

²² Garrick's alteration (as performed at Drury Lane on Dec. 18th 1772) can be found appended to Stone's article ("Garrick's Long Lost Alteration," 906 ff). Garrick apparently also misconstrued the role and character of Polonius; see Babcock, *Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, 140.

²³ Spencer, "Introduction," in: *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, 14–16.

Garrick's adaptation of *Macbeth*, "as performed at the Theatre-Royal, Drury-Lane," published in London in 1774, is prefaced by the following introduction:

Shakespeare was not more remarkable for the dignity of his characters, the strength of his expression, the elevation of his sentiments, and the natural beauty of his imagery, than for the happy choice of his subjects: which, however, disdain[ing] the fetters of rule, he sometimes sported with. In the tragedy immediately before us, he is more regular, than in many others; it records an important point of history, but gives a picture of the human heart rather too horrid; which, no doubt, is the reason that few female spectators like this piece.

The witches, however trespassing on the bounds of probability, are finely written, and the ghost admirably introduced. The play contains many sublime sentiments, and the principal characters afford such uncommon scope for acting-merit, that, on the whole, it must be allowed a fine dramatic structure; though cold criticism might perhaps charge it with some blemishes.

Though it is not strictly within our design to speak of Performers, we should deem ourselves ungrateful to Mr. GARRICK's unparalleled merit, if we did not here remark, that he sustains the importance, marks the strong feelings, and illustrates the author's powerful ideas, with such natural, animated, forcible propriety, that the dullest heart must receive impressions from him, which the clearest head cannot adequately express.²⁴

Already in the Introduction, therefore, reservations are made as to the propriety of the play in the eyes of the critic, especially as concerns the rules. Some justifications are deemed necessary of elements of the supernatural machinery, and are found in the language and adequate handling: the witches are "finely written" and the ghost (of Banquo) admirably introduced. Besides the fact that it gives excellent material for the actor (to Garrick's "personation" of Macbeth we shall return below), the play is justified on the basis of its many sublime sentiments. The edition, evidently designed for careful personal perusal, contains numerous footnotes, which, according to the title page, have been "added by the authors of the dramatic censor."

Garrick felt obliged to give his Macbeth a dying speech, which was printed in italics as distinct from the restored Shakespeare. The goal was to supply the kind of repentance which he thought fit for the ambiguous hero:

²⁴ *Plays of Garrick*, vol. 2, 61.

'Tis done! the scene of life will quickly close.
 Ambition's vain, delusive dreams are fled,
 And now I wake to darkness, guilt and horror.
 I cannot bear it! let me shake it off —
 'Two' not be; my soul is clogg'd with blood —
 I cannot rise! I dare not ask for mercy —
 It is too late, hell drags me down. I sink,
 I sink — Oh! — my soul is lost for ever!
 Oh!

*Dies*²⁵

Similarly to other chosen passages before it, this speech is glossed in a manner which, like the introduction, sheds light upon the concerns with which Shakespeare was approached and adapted for the contemporary audience:

If deaths upon the stage are justifiable, none can be more so than that of Macbeth. Shakespeare's idea of having his head brought on by Macduff, is very censurable; therefore commendably changed to visible punishment — a dying speech and a very good one, has been furnished by Mr. Garrick, to give the actor more *éclat*; from the desperate state of Macbeth's mind, we think his immediate death most natural, though probably not so well calculated for the stage. There are, in the last scene, some lines added, and some judiciously transposed, for perusal as well as representation.²⁶

As we have already suggested, William-Henry Ireland's *Vortigern* is at once an extreme illustration of Shakespeare worship and a reflection of the concerns that Shakespeare's plays provoked in the second half of the eighteenth century. As Kahan argues: "Much like a forger, the imitator imagined a play Shakespeare might have written and then adapted it to contemporary aesthetics."²⁷ Of course, when discussing forgery and imitation we need at all times to be aware of the basic distinction, which is the criminal intention of the forger, the intention to cheat. At the same time Kahan is right in pointing out that regarded in purely literary-critical terms, a forgery such as *Vortigern* may be indistinguishable from an imitation or even from a radical adaptation (in Marsden's sense of the term).

Unsurprisingly, Ireland's pseudo-Shakespearean *Vortigern* reflects the mood of improvement that seems to inspire an adapter. As the adolescent

²⁵ *Plays of Garrick*, vol. 2, 130. These lines were retained by Kemble, and, interestingly, there are distinct echoes of them in *Vortigern* (e.g., V, V.ii/63—65).

²⁶ *Plays of Garrick*, vol. 2, 130. In the original all proper names are in italics.

²⁷ Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 33.

forger put it, when transcribing fragments of *King Lear* he made “alterations where [he] thought the lines were beneath him [Shakespeare].”²⁸ For illustration’s sake, he goes on to quote his “improvement” of a couplet (“so much ridiculed”) spoken by Kent: “I have a journey, Sir, shortly to go, / My master calls, and I must not say no.”²⁹ Instead of the “jingling” couplet Ireland comes up with a seven-line speech.³⁰

Vortigern is indeed a fine (if notorious) imitation of Shakespeare, composed with the mind to come as close as possible to the public’s idea of another genuinely Shakespearean text. It is unusual in being a collection of the most recognisable or standard Shakespearean elements from all the plays, the result being a hotchpotch of the tragic and the comedic, a super-adaptation, unattempted yet in prose or rhyme, of a number of different plays rather than just one. The young forger’s intention was evidently to please universally, typical also of Gothicists, by means of generic merger. Offensively and obtrusively Shakespearean, *Vortigern* certainly does operate within Shakespeare’s imaginative worlds, indeed several of them at once. Ireland had the ill luck to compose his “adaptation” in a period when the editorial apparatus employed in the search for the genuine Shakespeare was already highly advanced. When this apparatus was used to expose his forgeries, it nipped in the bud what seemed to be, initially at least, a promising enterprise.³¹ Edmund Malone’s copious *An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments* appeared shortly before the ill-fated opening of the play and in the more than a 400-page pamphlet this leading Shakespearean scholar methodically exposed the impostor. Ireland’s forgeries were thus an occasion to put to the test the authentication protocols which by this time had been worked out.

The history of the scandal illustrates that the business of editing Shakespeare was largely opposed to that of adapting him. The eighteenth century not only saw an impressive number of critical editions of the *oeuvre* but also, as de Grazia argues, produced the very idea of textual authenticity.³² Critical editions of Shakespeare included *The Works of Mr. William*

²⁸ Ireland, *Authentic Account*, 18.

²⁹ Slightly misquoted; compare *KL*, V.iii.295.

³⁰ For more examples of this kind and for the rule of avoiding “jingle” see Branam, *Eighteenth-Century Adaptations*, 76 ff.

³¹ Kahan convincingly argues that William-Henry expected to collect a considerable sum as receipts for *Vortigern* but goes perhaps a little too far when he represents the forgeries as a kind of family business, with the father fully apprised and implicated.

³² De Grazia credits Malone with firmly establishing the authentication methodology; Malone “is credited with raising eighteenth-century scholarship to a level from which that of the nineteenth century could proceed with its continuing project of approximating ever more closely to what Shakespeare wrote and what Shakespeare meant” (*Shakespeare Verbatim*, 5).

Shakespear edited by Nicholas Rowe (1709),³³ *The Works of Shakespeare* edited by Alexander Pope (1723—1725), *The Works of Shakespeare* edited by Lewis Theobald (1733), *The Works of Shakespeare* edited by Thomas Hanmer (1744), *The Works of Shakespeare* edited by Alexander Pope and William Warburton (1747), *The Plays of William Shakespeare* edited by Samuel Johnson (1765), *The Plays of William Shakespeare* edited by Samuel Johnson and George Steevens (1773), and *The Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare* edited by Edmond Malone (1790).³⁴ De Grazia argues that there is no synonymy between the phrase “published according to the True Originall copies,” which was used on the title page of the First Folio of 1623, and the idea of “authentick” Shakespearean text introduced by Malone in 1790; she traces the story of what she calls a “continuing project of approximating ever more closely to what Shakespeare wrote and what Shakespeare meant.”³⁵

As distinct from the expensive scholarly editions of Shakespeare, printed Shakespeare texts became more and more affordable: Writes Hume, “The situation changed almost overnight in 1734 and 1735 when Tonson and Walker engaged in a ferocious and very public battle over the publication of authentic (which is to say, folio-derived) texts of all of Shakespeare’s plays. The importance of this event has long been apparent to bibliographers, but many cultural historians remain surprisingly cavalier about it.”³⁶ This meant a widening readership: “Eventually the reading public could obtain a Shakespeare play for a penny.”³⁷ Towards the end of the century, numerous editions of annotated Shakespeare were available, usually giving the public a taste of the burgeoning Shakespearean scholarship and an idea of the scope of research done so far. *Annotations Illustrative of the plays of Shakespeare* (2 vols. published in London in 1819) which includes commentary by “Johnson, Steevens, Malone, Theobald, Warburton, Farmer, Heath, Pope, Hawkins, Hanmer, Sir J. Reynolds, Percy, etc., etc.” is a good specimen. But much earlier than this the public received multi-volume collections which represented the current state of Shakespeare scholarship. For instance in 1767 Edward Capell put out a ten volume edition

³³ Robert Hume stresses the breakthrough role played by Rowe’s edition (“Before the Bard,” 66).

³⁴ According to de Grazia’s “List of Major Eighteenth-Century Editions of Shakespeare.” Marsden lists only some of these major editions: see Marsden, *Re-Imagined Text*, 68.

³⁵ De Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 5. For more on the “methodology of authentication” see also Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 38 ff (chapter “Authentication debate”).

³⁶ Hume, “Before the Bard,” 54. See also de Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 66 ff.

³⁷ Jonathan Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions*, 23.

of Mr William Shakespeare's comedies, histories and tragedies, the title page of which contains the following advertisement: "set out by himself in quarto, or by the Players his Fellows in folio, and now faithfully republish'd from those Editions in ten Volumes octavo; with an INTRODUCTION: Whereunto will be added, in some other Volumes, NOTES, critical and explanatory, and a Body of VARIOUS READINGS entire." What more could the reading public desire? — one might ask.

The growing availability of printed Shakespeare was manifested in ways other than just the popular and critical editions. Shakespeare's plays became a source of quotable passages, available in various anthologies (touting the "Beauties of Shakespeare") which began to appear as early as the 1730s.³⁸ This "fragmented" Shakespeare, reflecting "the increased emphasis on particular passages,"³⁹ corresponds, as we shall see, to the Shakespeare of the epigraph, which is the most palpable manifestation of the Shakespeare influence in Gothic fiction. This may sound like unlicensed speculation, but one cannot help thinking that some such publication may have fallen in the hands of Ann Radcliffe néé Ward and touch the soul-strings of the nascent Gothic imagination. *Beauties of Shakespeare*, a third edition "corrected, revised, and enlarged" published by G. Kearsley in 1784 may serve as an example.⁴⁰ Ideas and names are arranged in alphabetical order, and thus unsurprisingly, under the heading "Suicide" we find Hamlet's "To be or not to be" soliloquy, and under "Night," the "Ere the bat hath flown" speech from *Macbeth* (III.ii), which is identical with Radcliffe's epigraph on the title page of *The Romance of the Forest*. A selection of the "most interesting scenes" is also found, including the assassination scene from Act II of *Macbeth*. More interestingly still, the only illustration in this edition is a picture of Prince Hamlet's encounter with the Shade of Denmark with a nocturnal view of Elsinore in the background.

³⁸ Babcock, *Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, 117. Another instance is the use of such epigrammatic Shakespeare in Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary*. I am indebted to Professor Małgorzata Nitka for bringing this to my attention.

³⁹ Babcock, *Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, 118.

⁴⁰ The full title reads: "*Beauties of Shakespeare*; Selected from his Works. To which are added the principal Scenes in the same Author."

Criticism and idolatry

[...] with enthusiastick praises of Shakspear, my father would often say, that if there ever was a man inspired, Shakspear was that man.

William-Henry Ireland, *An Authentic Account*

There were critics armed cap-a-pee from Aristotle to Bos-su; these men dined at twelve, dictated at a coffee-house till four, then called to the boy to brush their shoes, and strode to the theatre, where, till the curtain rose, they sat hushed in grim repose, and expecting their evening prey.

Charles Maturin, *Melmoth the Wonderer*

But then, said I, it might happen to the writer as it has to the imitators of Shakespeare, the unities may be preserved, but the spirit may evaporate; in short it will be safest to let it alone.

Clara Reeve, *The Champion of Virtue*, Address to the Reader

In 1769 Elizabeth Montagu succinctly summed up Shakespeare's progress over a period of a hundred and fifty years in the following way: "He [Shakespeare] was approved by his own age, admired by the next, and is revered, and almost adored by the present."¹

The idea of getting to the authentic meaning of Shakespeare has besides the editorial also a critical side to it. Gradually, as Robert Babcock demonstrates, English criticism vindicated Shakespeare in the face of a considerable number of accusations, among them neglect of the unities, lack of decorum (mixing tragedy and comedy), lack of learning (knowledge of the ancients), use of the supernatural, use of blank verse in drama,

¹ Elizabeth Montagu, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Shakespear, Compared with the Greek and French Dramatic Poets. With some Remarks Upon the Misrepresentations of Mons. de Voltaire* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1970; reprint of first edition of 1769), 10 (original pagination).

and inordinate punning.² One of the many aspects of this process was the development of criticism itself over a period of more than one hundred years, from Dryden to Coleridge (see above, p. 25).³ With more and more vigorous and successful vindication of Shakespeare on the above points came increasingly manifested enthusiasm for his poetic greatness. By the time the first Gothic fictions were printed, Shakespeare and Milton had come to be regarded as England's original geniuses (Edward Young's "Originals," as opposed to mere "Imitators"), equal in prominence to the great poets of the past, notably Homer. Shakespeare "emerged as the paradoxical thing, the model of 'untutored genius,' the pattern of originality."⁴ Heedless of the paradox informing the idea of imitating the inimitable, the earliest Gothic romancers warmly hailed this Shakespeare (see below, p. 117).

The "paradigm shift," to borrow Thomas Kuhn's famous term, in the reception and appreciation of Shakespeare involved a transition from a standards-oriented poetics (perhaps best exemplified by Thomas Rymer's virulent attack on Shakespeare and on *Othello* in particular⁵) to a poetics of originality and inimitable genius. With this change of the aesthetic paradigm, the valuation of Shakespeare shifted accordingly, from the vigilant balancing of faults and graces in the wary appraisals of the poet's *oeuvre* by Pope and Johnson to Young's eulogistic praise of Shakespeare as an "Original" of Homeric stature.⁶ On the other hand, this process was to a large extent focused on Shakespeare as the British Homer, and hence one could argue that the paradigm shift was motivated by the desire to laud Shakespeare as an Original. The two sides to the process are inseparable: vindication of Shakespeare went hand in hand with vindication of the idea of the original genius.

² Babcock, *Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, Chapter IV, 45.

³ See "Preface to the First Edition," D. Nichol Smith, ed., *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1963). See also Chapter VII in: J.W.H. Atkins's *English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1963).

⁴ E.J. Clery, "Introduction," to the Oxford World's Classics edition of *CO*, xiv. For further discussion see, for instance, Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 60 ff.

⁵ *The Tragedies of the Last Age* (1677) and *A Short View of Tragedy; its Original, Excellency and Corruption. With Some Reflections of Shakespear, and Other Practitioners for the Stage* (1693). Writes Jonathan Bate: "If we had to pick out a single premiss at the core of English Romanticism, it would probably be the ascription of a central place to the power of the creative imagination [...];" and adds: "the Romantic approach to Shakespeare has its roots deep in the eighteenth century." Bate, *Shakespeare and Romantic Imagination*, 6.

⁶ Edward Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759), in: *NATC*, 429. For a discussion see, for instance, Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 59 ff. It is also worthwhile to consult Jonathan Bate's *The Genius of Shakespeare* (London: Picador, 1997), especially the relevant chapters of Part Two of the book.

That Shakespeare was full of beauties and capable of pleasing audience and reader was never a matter of contention; what was doubtful was whether the pleasures he offered could be justified. A battle in defence of Shakespeare's greatness was fought not only on the scholarly level, represented by prefaces to critical editions of Shakespeare's works, but also on the more popular one of the periodical magazines. Edward Young and Elizabeth Montagu, with her immensely popular *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakespear*,⁷ to a large extent round off the campaign. As we shall see in the following section of this chapter, such military metaphors are fully justified.

As we suggested earlier, the long process of vindication begins in earnest in the Restoration period, when criticism is represented by John Dennis, Thomas Rymer, and John Dryden. As Robert Hume argues, Restoration criticism in England is characterised by a heavy reliance on the recognised authority of seventeenth-century French critics,⁸ and — which is largely a consequence of the preceding — “the tendency of the English writers to parrot pseudo-Aristotelian platitudes which they misunderstand or misapply.”⁹ Exoneration begins with Dryden. In his polemic with Rymer, Dryden puts beauty of execution over formal accuracy. The great ancients are the ever-present yardstick, but a half-hearted attempt to endorse another notion of tragedy is made: “the Plays of the Ancients are more correctly Plotted, ours are more beautifully written; and if we can raise Passions as high on worse foundations, it shows our Genius in Tragedy is greater.”¹⁰ In this, a “fabulist” notion of tragedy (represented by Rymer, for whom “Fable or Plot” is the “Soul of a Tragedy”) is contrasted with an “affective” conception, i.e., one concerned with the way a play speaks to the soul of the viewer.¹¹ In general terms, both these conceptions are indebted to Aristotle, the difference lying in the different place-

⁷ According to Babcock's Bibliography, Montagu's essay had as many as seven editions between its first publication and 1810. Wrote Boaden: “Of her book upon Shakespeare, without expecting the praises of commentators, it may be fame enough to ask, where there is such another?” (*Life of Kemble*, vol. 2, 273).

⁸ For example: René Rapin's *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie*, which appeared in Thomas Rymer's translation in London in 1674, and François Hédelin's *The Whole Art of the Stage*, which appeared in an anonymous translation in London in 1684.

⁹ Robert D. Hume, *The Development of English Drama in the Late Seventeenth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 150.

¹⁰ John Dryden, “Heads of an Answer to Rymer” (1677), quoted in Hume, *Development of English Drama*, 154. “Heads” are Dryden's notes in his copy of Rymer's tract *The Tragedies of the Last Age of 1677*; see Michael J. Sidnell, ed., *Sources of Dramatic Theory. 1: Plato to Congreve* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 291, note 1.

¹¹ For the distinction see Hume, *Development of English Drama*, 154 ff; and Dan-son, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres*, 3.

ment of emphasis in the broad Aristotelian definition of tragedy, which includes both the fable and the emotions of the recipient or spectator.

The rules-oriented notion of drama as art is perhaps best illustrated by the impeccable logic of Pierre Corneille's theorem, "It is *axiomatic* that there are precepts, since there is an art."¹² The obvious deduction from art to rules is the basis of Corneille's conception of a well-wrought play. Yet this rules-oriented approach to dramatic art did not eliminate the "pleasure principle"; on the contrary, Corneille (and English critics such as Dennis after him) believed that, since "the goal of dramatic poetry should be to please the audience," it is the task of criticism to find "this appropriate pleasure."¹³

The affective conception of drama defends the evocation of pity and terror as the essence of tragedy, and thus more important than decorum and poetic justice. In a contemporary translation, the relevant passage in the *Poetics* states that a tragedy "effects through pity and fear the catharsis of such emotions."¹⁴ In his "Heads" and elsewhere, Dryden (after Rymer, after Rapin, after Aristotle) speaks of "moving" (or "causing") "Pity and Terror" (or, alternatively, "fear and pity") in the audience and of the "purging of those two passions in our minds." Yet another formulation can be found in Joseph Addison (another "affective" critic, against Rymer and Dennis), who in the *Spectator* argues that "the principal Design of Tragedy is to raise Commiseration and Terrour in the Minds of the Audience."¹⁵ According to Dryden at his most conservative, the purpose of the purgation is moral:

We are wrought to fear by their [tragedians'] setting before our eyes some *terrible example of misfortune*, which happened to persons of the highest quality; for such an action demonstrates to us that no condition is privileged from the turns of fortune; this must of necessity cause *terror* in us, and consequently abate our pride. But when we see that

¹² Pierre Corneille, "On the Purpose and the Parts of a Play," in Sidnell, ed., *Sources of Dramatic Theory. 1: Plato to Congreve*, 235; emphasis added.

¹³ Corneille, "On the Purpose and Parts of a Play," 235.

¹⁴ Aristotle, *Poetics*, 1449b 6, trans. M.E. Hubbard, in D.A. Russell and M. Winterbottom, eds., *Classical Literary Criticism* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 57. "Terror" along with "pity" and "purgation" are part and parcel of the extended definition of tragedy in the *Poetics* (1449b 25). The alternative translation of the Greek word *phobos* is "fear." "Pity" and "Fear" are the titles of the two famous "Aristotelian" Odes by William Collins, which we shall examine in the next chapter.

¹⁵ No. 40 of April 16, 1711 (all citations from the *Spectator* are to Donald Bond's five-volume edition; see Bibliography). In her pamphlet, Elizabeth Montagu was to come up with the following rephrasing of Aristotle: "tragedy [is] capable to purge the passions, by means of pity and terror." Montagu, *Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, 28.

the most virtuous, as well as the greatest, are not exempt from such misfortunes, that consideration *moves pity in us*, and insensibly works us to be helpful to, and tender over, the distressed.¹⁶

We shall see in due course that the early Gothic was greatly indebted to the affective notion of tragedy, mainly as a consequence of Walpole's attempt to base his *Otranto* on the tragic pattern. William Warburton thus commented on the novel: "a beautiful imagination, supported by strength of judgement, has enabled the Author [Walpole] to go beyond his subject, and effect the full purpose of the ancient Tragedy, that is, to purge the passions by pity and terror, in colouring as great and harmonious as in any of the best Dramatic Writers."¹⁷

As we have already mentioned, John Dennis (author of "On the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare" of 1712, consisting of three letters) is a representative of the fabulist notion of tragedy. Dennis may extol Shakespeare as "one of the greatest Genius's [sic] that the World e'er saw for the tragic stage," yet at the same time he is eager to point out the "faults" and "gross mistakes" which were owing to Shakespeare's "want of Poetical Art."¹⁸ Dennis's debt to French criticism becomes clear when he grants Corneille's *Cinna* superiority over Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. The way in which Dennis uses the term "poetical art" betrays this French debt as well. Throughout his essay, Dennis is also heavily indebted to Rymer and the latter's notion of poetic (or "poetical") justice, a term which was actually coined by Rymer. This particular "want" (lack of "exact Distribution of Poetical Justice") in Shakespeare makes his plays (Dennis heaps special opprobrium on *Coriolanus*) appear to have no moral instruction in them.

In Dennis, however, appears the idea, soon to become one of the trump cards in the vindication game, of describing Shakespeare as a natural genius and an Original. Unlike Rymer, Dennis is determined to defend Shakespeare, if with reservations, and having found Shakespeare lacking in learning (in knowledge of the Arts, of the Ancients, etc.), he must assert that Shakespeare owed his "great Qualities" to Nature, or to a Nature especially generous to the British:

¹⁶ John Dryden, "The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy" (1679), as part of Preface to *Troilus and Cressida*, in: John Dryden, *Essays of John Dryden*, selected and edited by W.P. Ker (London: At the Clarendon Press, 1900), vol. 1, 210; emphasis added. See also Hume, *Development of English Drama*, 160.

¹⁷ From Warburton's 1770 edition of the works of Pope; quoted in Kiely, *Romantic Novel*, 42.

¹⁸ John Dennis, "On the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare," in: Smith, ed., *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, Letter I, 23–25.

Therefore he who allows that *Shakespear* has Learning and a familiar Acquaintance with the Ancients, ought to be look'd upon as a Detractor from his extraordinary Merit, and from the Glory of *Great Britain*. For whether is it more honourable for this Island to have produc'd a Man who, without having any Acquaintance with the Ancients, or any but a slender and a superficial one, appears to be their Equal or their Superiour by the Force of Genius and Nature, or to have bred one who, knowing the Ancients, falls infinitely short of them in Art, and consequently in Nature it self?¹⁹

By the peculiar logic inherent in this type of argument,²⁰ genius justifies itself. This practically nullifies criticism, or transforms critical evaluation into idolatry. In the midst of critical debate, then, there are predictably to be found in Dennis encomiums to the exquisite genius of Shakespeare, as when he speaks of “that celestial Fire of which *Shakespear* is sometimes Master in so great a Degree.” One way or another, some of Dennis’s statements open up a line of justification for the soon-to-emerge terror mode in fiction, a process examined in the next chapter. So do some pronouncements of Joseph Addison, who in his essays on the imagination (1712) showed the way towards justification of the supernatural early in the eighteenth century. At least a brief passage from Addison’s famous “Shakespearean” essay should be quoted here:

For the *English* are naturally fanciful, and very often disposed by that Gloominess and Melancholy of Temper, which is so frequent in our Nation, to many wild Notions and Visions, to which others are not so liable.

Among the *English*, *Shakespear* has incomparably excelled all others. That noble Extravagance of Fancy which he had in so great Perfection, thoroughly qualified him to touch this weak superstitious Part of his Reader’s Imagination; and made him capable of succeeding, where he had nothing to support him besides the Strength of his own Genius. There is something so wild and yet so solemn in the Speeches of his Ghosts, Fairies, Witches and the like Imaginary Persons, that we cannot forbear thinking them natural, tho’ we have no rule by which to judge of them, and must confess, if there are such Beings in the World,

¹⁹ Dennis, “Genius and Writings of Shakespeare,” in: Smith, ed., *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, Letter III, 39; original emphasis retained.

²⁰ Johnson is said to have put an end to the debate over unities: “Whether Shakespeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide, and useless to enquire”; Samuel Johnson, “Preface to the *Plays of William Shakespeare*” (1765), in: Smith, ed., *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, 121. At the same time Johnson holds on to the precept of pleasing: “Nothing can please many, and please long, but just representations of general nature” (*ibidem*, 106).

it looks highly probable that they should talk and act as he has represented them.²¹

In Addison, besides his emphasis on the national character of Shakespeare's "fancifulness" (symptomatic of the nationalisation of the Bard), we also find the characteristic Age-of-Reason belief that it is possible to contain the seemingly supernatural within the bounds of the natural and probable. Addison wants to reconcile the rules of verisimilitude and probability with the licence of genius: there are no ghosts or fairies (Nature does not know them), but if there were, they would act and speak in the ways Shakespeare devised for them. One may see here the seeds of Radcliffe's methodical containment of the supernatural. Yet even before Addison, Dennis, in *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704), came up with the idea of "enthusiastic terror" which, as he put it, "contributes greatly to the sublime."²²

Discussion of the increasingly idolatrous attitude to Shakespeare needs to be reserved to the next chapter, inasmuch as the Gothic was a natural continuation of the worshipful approach to Shakespeare's genius. Here let us briefly return to the incident which can be regarded as a culmination of the bifocal Shakespeare idolatry, focused on both the figure of Shakespeare and the Shakespeare *oeuvre*: the Ireland forgeries. Renewed research into the incident allows us to see it not only as a consequence of the canonisation of Shakespeare but also as a by-product of the increasingly popular antiquarianism.²³

The list of items miraculously "discovered" by William-Henry Ireland in the 1790s included legal deeds, a profession of religious faith, a love letter to Anne Hathaway ("a childish frolic" intended to "strengthen the authenticity of the papers"²⁴) and correspondence with some contemporaries (Queen Elizabeth among them), annotated books from Shakespeare's library, a manuscript of *King Lear* and a fragment of *Hamlet*.²⁵ The forger

²¹ The *Spectator*, No. 419, July 1, 1712; original emphasis retained. The essay appeared in a series devoted to "The Pleasures of the Imagination." See E.J. Clery and Robert Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents. A Sourcebook 1700—1820* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 106.

²² John Dennis, *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704), in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 101.

²³ In the words of J.M.S. Tompkins, "For some half century there had been in England an ill-informed but highly romantic interest in the relics of the past" ("Foreword" to Sophia Lee, *The Recess*, ii).

²⁴ Ireland, *Authentic Account*, 15.

²⁵ In my presentation of the forgery I chiefly follow two recent publications (already cited): Jeffrey Kahan's *Reforging Shakespeare: The Story of a Theatrical Scandal* (1998) and Patricia Pierce's *The Great Shakespeare Fraud* (2004).

did not stop at this, however, and the astonished public received a theretofore unknown work by the Bard (“discovered” on the 3rd of January 1795), “A Play Called *Vortigern*,” which premièred on April 2nd, 1796. Among those who were duped by Ireland were the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence, the poet laureate, theatre managers and actors, and Shakespeare critics. James Boswell knelt before the “sacred relics” and kissed them in veneration.

If we are bemused, as we should be, by the prospect of a public fooled by the forgeries of a young clerk, there are some facts which may help us comprehend the incident. William-Henry Ireland was raised in an atmosphere of Shakespeare apotheosis, concentrated on the newly established reputation of Stratford-upon-Avon as the shrine of the Bard. Ireland recalled the “daily opportunities of hearing Mr. Samuel Ireland [William-Henry’s father] extol the genius of Shakespeare, as he would very frequently in the evening read one of his [Shakespeare’s — J.K.] plays aloud, dwelling with enthusiasm on such passages as most peculiarly struck his fancy.”²⁶ In his *Authentic Account*, Ireland gives another description of the worshipful attitude of his father, a book-collector, to the Poet: “My father would often lavish his usual praises on *Shakspear*, and frequently add, that he would give all his curious books to become possessed of a single line of his hand writing.”²⁷ A trip to Stratford on which the father took William-Henry was a veritable hunt for relics, complete with a visit to a gift shop, where Samuel fell enthusiastic victim to the already thriving industry of Shakespeare relics (commonly, various objects made from the famous mulberry tree).²⁸ Reported William-Henry: “not one hour was spent but in the favorite pursuit; [...] [of] the immortal and divine Shakspeare.”²⁹

Without going further into the interesting details of this astounding cultural and literary scandal, let us concur with Kahan’s main point, which is that the forgery itself, as well as the duping of so many, reveals the enthusiasm of a public (represented in the story by Ireland’s father, whom the lad wished to “please”) determined to tie together the flamboyant cult

²⁶ William-Henry Ireland, *Confessions* (1805), quoted in Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 44.

²⁷ Ireland, *Authentic Account*, 7. Ireland uses this spelling and italics throughout the *Account*.

²⁸ Comp. the song in Garrick’s *The Jubilee*: “Behold this fair Goblet, ’twas carv’d from the tree, / Which, O my sweet Shakespear, was planted by thee; / As a Relick I kiss it, and bow at the Shrine [...]”; *Plays of Garrick*, vol. 2, 83. On offer are: “toothpick cases, needle cases, punch ladles, Tobacco Stoppers, Ink-stands, nutmeg Graters, and all sorts of boxes, made of the famous Mulberry tree” (ibidem, 81). The scene features two salesmen who quarrel over the trademark calling one another “Mulberry Scoundrels.”

²⁹ Ireland, *Confessions*, quoted in Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 51.

of the Poet with tangible evidence of his existence and the effusions of his creative genius. In a preface to *The Abbess* (Ireland's Gothic romance, already mentioned), the young forger's answer to the charge of having "most grossly deceived the world" is brazenly straightforward: "How can they suffer themselves to be so deceived? [...] No, the world have deceived themselves."³⁰ The Shakespeare autograph (which is what Ireland started with), and the manuscripts that followed, provided the public with much-desired physical confirmation that their apotheosis had some material foundation. Michael Dobson's opinion seems to confirm this as he speaks of "this crucial missing link between William Shakespeare's body and the Shakespearean corpus," which largely necessitated the "retrospective invention of Shakespeare as himself a Lockean economic individualist [...]."³¹

It seems inevitable that Ireland would eventually decide to try his hand at drama and present the public with a lost play which was to enrich the existing canon and which was, reasonably, made up of the familiar Shakespearean themes and motifs. Like the "authentic" manuscripts of the existing plays, this "new" play supplied the desirable (but largely missing) link between the figure of the poet and the manifestations of his genius.

³⁰ *The Abbess. A Romance*. By W.H. Ireland, the Avowed Author of the Shakspear Papers &c. (London: Earle & Hemet, 1799), vol. 1, xi (hereafter *Abbess*).

³¹ Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 61. Oddly, the Ireland forgeries are entirely missing from Dobson's argument.

Politicisation and nationalisation

From no French model breathes the muse to-night; / The scene she draws is horrid, not polite. [...] / Shall foreign critics teach you how to think? / Had Shakespeare's magic dignified the stage, / If timid laws had school'd th'insipid age? / Had Hamlet's spectre trod the midnight round? / Or Banquo's issue been in vision's crowned? / Free as your country, Britons, be your scene!

Prologue to Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother*

While Shakspeare's tomb o'erlooks the plain below, / Where Avon's consecrated waters flow; / So long, so clear, BRITANNIA'S fame shall last, / For strength of nature, and for truth of taste!

Epilogue to *The Regent* (spoken by Mrs. Siddons)

At this day, the French Critics have abated nothing of their aversion to this darling of our Nation: 'the English, with their bouffon de Shakespeare,' is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire.

William Wordsworth in 1815

David Garrick capitalised on the Stratford Jubilee by preparing a theatrical show, *The Jubilee*, which offered an agreeable mixture of the comic and the pathetic. As John Genest described it: "the D.L. [Drury Lane] Jubilee was very pleasing in the representation and was acted through the whole season to crowded houses. The Pageant, which was ingeniously contrived, and judiciously managed, proved one of the most magnificent Spectacles ever exhibited on the stage; and had the singular merit of uniting sense with show, as being a sort of dumb representation of many of Shakespeare's best scenes."¹ At the same time, *The Jubilee* is fraught with polit-

¹ John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage, from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830* (Bath: H.E. Carrington, 1832), vol. 5, 257. The Pageant was a procession of as-

ical anxiety and innuendo. In the opening exchange the disquiet is palpable as allusions are made to the Gunpowder Plot, and to the likelihood of being fooled by "a Plot of the Jews and Papishes."² The simple folk at Stratford believe that "the Pope is at bottom on't all." The now rampant idolatry stirs suspicions of treason even in the very midst of the festivities. The idolisation of Shakespeare comes to smack of Catholic superstition: "they wou'd not let his [Shakespur (sic)] Image alone in the Church, but had the Shew People to paint it in such fine Colours, to look like a Popish Saint."³ The play revolves around a much-bemused Irishman: "what is the same Jubilee, that I am come so far to see, and know nothing of the matter."⁴ Naturally the Irishman cannot believe that all this "Crowding, trumpeting, Drumming, eating, drinking, ringing, Cannon firing" is for a poet; indeed, it must needs be for "a Prince, or a State-man."⁵ And he is not very far wrong, for Shakespeare in the second half of the eighteenth century is certainly not simply another poet.

One of the finest testimonies to the growing political significance of Shakespeare is found in an ode by Mark Akenside, "THE REMONSTRANCE OF SHAKESPEARE: SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN SPOKEN AT THE THEATRE ROYAL, WHILE THE FRENCH COMEDIANS WERE ACTING BY SUBSCRIPTION" (1749). The immortal Bard is resurrected once more thus to address his countrymen:

Such from the first was my dramatic plan;
 It should be yours to crown what I began:
 And now that England spurns her Gothic chain,
 And equal laws and social science reign,
 I thought, now surely shall my zealous eyes
 View nobler bards and juster critics rise [...]
 [...]
 But do you thus my favourite hopes fulfil?
 Is France at last the standard of your skill?
 [...]
 Oh! blest at home with justly-envied laws,
 Oh! long the chiefs of Europe's general cause,
 Whom Heaven hath chosen at each dangerous hour
 To check the inroads of barbaric power,

sorted characters from Shakespeare's plays. On the popular success of *The Jubilee* see also John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 327–328.

² Garrick, *Jubilee*, 72.

³ Garrick, *Jubilee*, 71.

⁴ Garrick, *Jubilee*, 74.

⁵ Garrick, *Jubilee*, 91–92.

The rights of trampled nations to reclaim
 And guard the social world from bonds of shame; [...]⁶

As this versified speech shows, by the 1750s Shakespeare would be used as a political weapon to assert the superiority of the English against any other nation, especially one which did not uphold the ideals of the celebrated British constitution. Shakespeare here serves as spokesman of an enlightened social and political order and a champion of civil liberties. Moreover, given the context in which Akenside places this address, the theatre or the British national stage, to be precise, is harnessed to the political mission of a universal campaign against the inroads of foreign power. Somewhat paradoxically, taking into account Akenside's derogatory use of "Gothic," playwrights now regarded as representative of the Gothic genre, Boaden for instance, repeatedly, in Prologues and Epilogues to their dramas, eulogised the British legal and political order (see below, p. 194).

Akenside's ode reveals one more thing. Politicisation and nationalisation affected not only the *oeuvre* but the person of the poet himself. According to Joseph Addison — it will be recalled — the genius of Shakespeare was and remains corroboration that the English are "naturally fanciful," thus identifying Shakespeare with the powers of the imagination.⁷ Ann Radcliffe largely appropriates Shakespeare as an English person would at the end of the eighteenth century. In her posthumously published essay "On the Supernatural in Poetry," she characteristically speaks in the name of her countrymen as much as her own: "No master ever knew how to touch the accordant springs of sympathy [...] like *our own* Shakespeare."

Politicisation in a narrow sense needs to be distinguished from nationalisation. Indeed, these are largely two distinct types of appropriation and differ also in terms of chronology. If, as Jean Marsden argues, "[t]he actual Shakespeare is an ideal subject for mythologizing,"⁸ the same goes for politicising. There are reasons to confine politicisation to the various ways of making Shakespeare topical in the area of domestic politics. John Loftis paints a picture of the Augustan theatrical scene as a political battlefield. Reflecting the serious position of political writing, "[t]he theatres were, to a degree, political institutions [...]"⁹ Not surprisingly, from the re-opening of the theatres with the Restoration of Monarchy in 1660, Shake-

⁶ *The Poetical Works of Mark Akenside* (London: George Bell & Sons, no date), 205—208.

⁷ Cf. Clery, "Introduction" to *CO*, xiv. On the political meaning of the model of natural genius see Cannon Schmitt, "Techniques of Terror, Technologies of Nationality: Ann Radcliffe's *The Italian*," *ELH* 61.4 (1994), 853—876.

⁸ Marsden, "Introduction," in: Marsden, ed., *Appropriation of Shakespeare*, 2.

⁹ John Loftis, *The Politics of Drama in Augustan England* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1963), 2.

Shakespeare was continuously politicised, and clearly the many political uses of Shakespeare have even today not been exhausted. Shakespeare has always been ideal for various partisan messages: "With a few judicious omissions, [Shakespeare] could be both a Whiggish spokesman for British liberty and a Tory touting the traditional values of a stable society."¹⁰ Michael Dobson's study of *The Making of the National Poet* depicts the many and ongoing political involvements which the Shakespearean drama was given in the course of time the between the Restoration and Garrick's Jubilee (1769), including the more or less explicit topical meanings and uses which were bestowed upon individual plays, especially in their numerous adaptations and imitations. Gradually, however, politicisation gives way to nationalisation, a distinct type of appropriation begun with Dryden and in its early phases preoccupied with curing the English of what Robert Hume calls their "cultural inferiority complex."¹¹

Dobson's purpose is, in the words of the scholar, to outline "a history of how Shakespeare's works were [...] successfully appropriated to fit what became the dominant, nationalist ideology of mid-century England [...]."¹² In other words, with Dobson emphasis falls on the role which the Shakespeare idolatry played in the process of consolidating the English national identity in the second half of the eighteenth century, up to a point where, in the words of a Jane Austen character, the poet is part of the country's constitution. Jonathan Bate alludes to this in the title of his book, *Shakespearean Constitutions. Politics, Theatre, Criticism 1730—1830* (already quoted) devoted largely to political appropriations of Shakespeare in Austen's England. The conversation in the novel is symptomatic of the status of Shakespeare at the turn of the eighteenth century. When one of the men says,

But Shakespeare one gets acquainted with without knowing how. It is a part of an Englishman's constitution. His thoughts and beauties are so spread abroad that one touches them everywhere; one is intimate with him by instinct.

the other joins in, partly to concur and partly to rectify:

No doubt one is familiar with Shakespeare in a degree [...] from one's earliest years. His celebrated passages are quoted by everybody; they are in half the books we open, and we all talk Shakespeare, use his similes, and describe with his descriptions [...]. To know him in bits

¹⁰ Marsden, "Introduction," in: Marsden, ed., *Appropriation of Shakespeare*, 4.

¹¹ Hume, "Before the Bard," 62.

¹² Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 165.

and scraps is common enough; to know him pretty thoroughly is, perhaps, not uncommon; but to read him well aloud is no everyday talent.¹³

The statements which Jane Austen put in the mouths of her characters concisely sum up the popularity and veneration of Shakespeare, but say little about the process whereby Shakespeare entered the bloodstream of the individual Englishman and the nation as a whole. The word “constitution” is symptomatically ambiguous. Along with its political denotations, it also suggests the nursery or even prenatal absorption of Shakespeare, without specifying what the articles of constitution are. More curiously perhaps, Shakespeare’s language has become identified with Britain’s *unwritten* constitution.

The glorification of Shakespeare’s poetic genius easily assumed a tone of political belligerence, as in the national campaign waged against such detractors as Voltaire. While Voltaire in his *Letters* (1733) recognises Shakespeare’s “strong and fertile genius,” he reproaches him for entire lack of good taste and utter ignorance of the rules.¹⁴ To what extent Voltaire realised that in saying such things he was ruffling national pride is difficult to determine. He does praise “the illustrious Addison” for an extremely well-wrought tragedy, *Cato*, but goes on to generalise that as yet English tragedians have not done too well; isolated passages may be fine but on the whole their plays are “almost all barbarous, quite lacking in good taste, order and plausibility [...]”¹⁵ Personally, I do not think that Voltaire was fully aware of the amount of national sentiment already invested in precisely those qualities which he found censurable. How could he predict that what he found barbarous would soon be flaunted under the Shakespearean banner? While Elizabeth Montagu’s *Essay* (quoted on p. 58) testifies to the rise of bardolatry, Walpole’s Preface to the second edition of *Otranto* ties it up with the birth of the Gothic romance. In both texts, Voltaire’s perceived misconceptions are the main target. Voltaire’s response in a letter to Walpole of 15 July 1768 bears witness to the Frenchman’s better understanding of the full import of his former criticism. First he accuses Walpole of having “persuaded your nation that I undervalue Shakespeare.”¹⁶ Now it is no longer about tragedy and a tragedian; now it is

¹³ Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (Ware: Wordsworth Classics, 2000 [1814]), 241.

¹⁴ Voltaire, *Letters on England*, trans. Leonard Tancock (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2005), 92 (from Letter 18 “On Tragedy”).

¹⁵ Voltaire, *Letters on England*, 95.

¹⁶ The letter has been reprinted as Appendix 6 to the recent Penguin edition of *The Castle of Otranto* (ed. Michael Gamer, 2001), 121–124. All citations are to this source.

about the national spirit: "You disregard, you *free Britons*, all the unities of place, time, and action" (original emphasis retained). This much Voltaire does see, and yet fails to see in Walpole's *romance* a realisation of those traits which have now come to be identified with Britishness and worshipped in the figure of Shakespeare.

The Voltaire-Walpole controversy put politics and Shakespeare together in the very cradle of the Gothic. With the dramatically changing situation at home and abroad, the political involvements of both, Shakespeare and the Gothic, become more and more intense. Almost any literary product acquired special significance, as at least potentially a voice in the political debate. By the 1790s, as we shall see in Chapter V, even fictive spectres, let alone those that appeared on the stage, had acquired the capacity to raise political concern. The case of *Vortigern*, once more, offers useful illustration.

The bare fact that *Vortigern* was regarded in political terms is highly symptomatic. In the words of Jeffrey Kahan, "In the mid-1790s, it was essential that Shakespeare's cultural power was not polluted. [...] Editions of Shakespeare served as a buffer against the French Revolution [...]."¹⁷ This may sound like an overstatement, and yet there is some justification for it in the fact that on the exposure of the forgery Edmund Burke lost no time in congratulating Malone. In point of fact, the subject matter, even though Ireland went all the way to Holinshed to retrieve it, was politically charged. Here is a summary of the story by Juliet Feibel:

Led by the brothers Hengist and Horsa, the Saxons ostensibly entered the island as allies to the Britons, but soon determined to conquer them and acquire the riches of their isle. As part of their strategy, Hengist and Horsa instructed their beautiful daughter and niece, Rowena, to seduce Vortigern with wine and kind words at a banquet. Vortigern, infatuated, traded Kent for Rowena. From their new stronghold, Hengist and Horsa made league with the Picts and the Scots and exiled Vortigern and his people to the wilderness of the western mountains — what is now Wales — or over the sea into Brittany. The surviving Britons deposed Vortigern in favor of his son Vortimer. At this point, the legend fragments into different endings, depending on the version: most notable are an incestuous relationship between Vortigern and his daughter from a previous marriage, a meeting at Stonehenge at which Hengist slaughtered three hundred British nobles (an incident known as the Treason of the Long Knives), and a meeting between Vortigern and Merlin. But the best-known moment of the legend was the banquet,

¹⁷ Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 214.

which in history writing and history painting became representative of the fall of Britain.¹⁸

Feibel lists no fewer than five history paintings inspired by the banquet scene made between 1758—1793, all of them circulated in the form of prints. Ireland could hardly think of another subject which would fulfil at once the two basic conditions, that of being derived from the same chronicle which Shakespeare consulted and that of topicality. According to Feibel, who studied the changing pictorial representation of the figure of Rowena, the Welsh legend was transformed into “an English myth of origins, reinterpreted to represent the glorious foundation of England, Wales’ ancient enemy.”¹⁹ Taking this into account, it is easy to see reasons for the ambivalent attitude to the play. On the one hand, it courted the aroused sense of national identity, while on the other offended against Shakespeare idolatry. That Ireland aimed to please, and not only his father but the public at large, is obvious in view of the fact that he chose not to demonise Rowena as he might have done by, for instance, modelling her on a Shakespeare villainess. Assuming as we well might that in Ireland there was a great deal of reverence toward “authentic” Shakespeare, his decision to revive the Fool so long exiled from *King Lear* testifies to a misplaced and miscalculated impulse to restore. How could he have foreseen that some critics would find his amiable fool “strongly *Democratic*”!²⁰

In anticipation of our subsequent analyses we must point out that the common usage of the term “Gothic” in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was, as Akenside’s “Remonstrance” illustrates, charged with political connotations. Even if we make allowances for a degree of overstatement to be expected of a scholar enthusiastic over his field of research, we have to recognise the fact of the circulation of the word “Gothic” as a *Modewort* in the period and perhaps even the existence of what Samuel Klinger calls “the Gothic vogue.”²¹ Parallel to the post-Renaissance associations of the term with barbarism, common were Whiggish ones, with such essentially British values as valour and liberty. A crowning of this semantic alliance is the depiction of the English constitution as Gothic and the linking of “Gothic” with “enlightenment.”²²

¹⁸ Juliet Feibel, “Vortigern, Rowena, and the Ancient Britons: Historical Art and the Anglicization of National Origin,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 24/1 (2000), 1—2.

¹⁹ Feibel, “Vortigern, Rowena,” 2. After a few opening remarks on the play, Feibel goes on to discuss the paintings and does not analyse Ireland’s representation of Rowena.

²⁰ This makes us aware of the extent to which literary-critical categories such as that of decorum were charged with political meaning.

²¹ Klinger, *Goths in England*, 1 and elsewhere.

²² Klinger, *Goths in England*, 20 and the subchapter “Gothic Enlightenment,” 33 ff.

Representation and imitation

And thou hast e'en with him communication kept, / Who
hath so long in Stratford's chancel slept; / Whose lines, where
nature's brightest traces shine, / Alone were worthy deem'd
of powers like thine; [...]

Joanna Baillie, "To Mrs. Siddons."

To speak of Paintings illustrative of Shakespeare, is to
misapply terms. He is a SCHOOL of Painting himself, but
that art cannot illustrate him [...].

from a review of Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery

Shakespeare's presence in the eighteenth century was by no means purely verbal. Increasingly, Shakespeare became associated with visual representations, of himself, of his plays, and of the actors who owed much of their celebrity to their performances of the relatively small number of famous Shakespearean characters such as Hamlet, Richard III and the Macbeth couple. Two representations of the Poet are of special importance. One is the so-called Chandos portrait, which adorned Nicholas Rowe's edition of *The Works* of 1709; due to the rapid dissemination of printed Shakespeare which this likeness accompanied, "no picture in the century was more frequently copied."¹ The other is known as Scheemakers' statue, which after its unveiling in Westminster Abbey in 1741 "soon became, and has remained, one of the best-known and most widely reproduced of all likenesses of Shakespeare."² But even though the royal theatre raised funds to erect the effigy, rivalry was soon afoot between this incarceration of the Poet in the Abbey and what may be perceived as theatrical resurrections of his genius by means of stage performance. According to Michael Dobson, much of David Garrick's effort was devoted

¹ De Grazia, *Shakespeare Verbatim*, 80.

² Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 141.

to establishing “his” theatre, rather than Westminster Abbey, as the home of Shakespeare’s spirit.³ In the strange logic of this cultural contest, Garrick was soon (1758) to erect a temple of Shakespeare, complete with another statue, on his estate at Hampton. To perfect the project, Garrick commissioned a picture representing himself, his family and his dog by his Temple of Shakespeare, with an artist whom he patronised,⁴ we might suspect, for the purposes of a joint immortalisation, of himself and the god of his idolatry.

The growing availability of printed Shakespeare went hand in hand with the increasing popularity of the Shakespeare canon in performance. Shakespeare’s plays furnished the standard theatrical repertoire: “the increasing centrality of the plays to the repertory provides the strongest evidence of their rise in cultural status.”⁵ There are reasons for this “increasing centrality.”

In the late 1730s the London theatrical scene changed dramatically. In response to, among other things, the ways in which theatres were used for purposes of political propaganda,⁶ Parliament passed new legislation designed to curb theatrical activity in the city. As a result, the Stage Licensing Act of 1737 (the Royal Assent given on June 21) confined “serious” or spoken drama in London to two “royal” theatres (i.e., theatres which held royal patents), Covent Garden and Drury Lane, with the Haymarket (“that ever-delightful little theatre” in the words of James Boaden) taking over for the summer season (July and August). As the Licensing Act imposed censorship on content, the inevitable result was a straitjacketing of playwrighting as managers preferred to rely on Shakespeare and other classics rather than risk the staging of new material.⁷ As noted by John Genest, misuse of the prerogatives invested in the Licensor of plays was easy to predict: “Lord Chesterfield, infinitely to his credit, opposed this bill, in a celebrated speech he plainly and distinctly foretold that the power about to be given to the Licensor would in all probability be abused and

³ Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 165. See below, p. 78.

⁴ The picture (*The Shakespeare Temple at Hampton House, with Mr and Mrs Garrick*, 1762), currently on display at Tate Britain, is by Johan Zoffany (1733–1810).

⁵ Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions*, 25.

⁶ According to John Loftis, what directly brought on the passing of the new legislation was the increasing political involvement of some playwrights, e.g. Henry Fielding. In his dramatic satires such as *Pasquin* (the Little Theatre at the Haymarket, March 1736) Fielding attacked the government and Sir Robert Walpole personally; see Loftis, *Politics of Drama*, Chapter VI (“Fielding and the Stage Licensing Act of 1737”).

⁷ The metaphor of straitjacketing naturally comes to mind, as in Brewer, *Pleasures of Imagination*, 356. As Brewer points out, the patent system survived until 1843 while the “official approval of plays” continued into the 1960s (*ibidem*, 357).

indeed this was no more than what any person of common sense and without prejudice, would naturally foresee."⁸

Managers such as David Garrick promoted serious drama in the royal theatres, regarded as "the *house[s] of William Shakespeare*."⁹ According to some estimates, the number of performances of Shakespeare's tragedies (including *Richard III*) in the eighteenth century exceeded 3,500.¹⁰ The popularity of Shakespeare on the London stage grew steadily between the first and the fourth decades of the century, from eleven per cent between 1703 and 1710 to twenty-five per cent of total performances in the years 1740 and 1741, i.e., before the advent of Garrick, "Shakespeare's priest."¹¹ During the so-called Age of Garrick, the Shakespeare repertory amounted to twenty percent of performances at Drury Lane and sixteen per cent at Covent Garden.¹² Among the most popular were *Hamlet* (601 performances), *Macbeth* (558), *Romeo and Juliet* (495), and *Othello* (441). From Shakespeare, as Kahan put it metaphorically, "[t]here was no escape. Shakespeare was the phantom of the playhouse."¹³ Indeed; and moreover, as Robert Hume observes, Shakespeare's plays as a measuring rod with which to assess the quality of new dramas easily turned into a disciplining instrument; "Shakespeare [was] often used as a stick with which to beat contemporary playwrights."¹⁴

In the period which roughly corresponds with the rise and "effulgence" of the Gothic, three successive generations of actors built their reputations on their performances of the Shakespeare protagonists.¹⁵ The most famous among hosts of Shakespearean actors were, besides Garrick (who made

⁸ Genest, *Account of English Stage*, vol. 3, 521. See also Brewer, *Pleasures of Imagination*, 328 ff. For the speech and a more general context see Loftis, *Politics of Drama*, 9–10 and 143 ff.

⁹ Garrick as quoted in Brewer, *Pleasures of Imagination*, 330; original emphasis retained.

¹⁰ Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 25. Kahan arrives at the number of 3,731. The most reliable source for such estimations is Genest's *Account*, which in ten volumes lists performances between 1660 and 1830.

¹¹ These figures (including adaptations) are here given after Spencer's "Introduction," in: Spencer, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, 3. My chief aim is illustration rather than precision, and indeed estimates may and do vary; Robert Hume based his on Charles Becker Hogan, *Shakespeare in the Theatre 1701–1800* (2 vols. 1952–1957); compare Hume's "Before the Bard," 57.

¹² Spencer's "Introduction," in: Spencer, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, 4.

¹³ Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 28.

¹⁴ Hume "Before the Bard," 65.

¹⁵ For a recent study of this phenomenon see Celestine Woo, *Romantic Actors and Bardolatry. Performing Shakespeare from Garrick to Kean* (New York... Oxford: Peter Lang Publishing, 2008). This publication appeared after this chapter was completed.

his debut in 1741), Sarah Siddons and her brother John Philip Kemble (1776/1782 and 1783, respectively), and Edmund Kean (1814). The fame of actors and actresses, often portrayed in Shakespearean roles, spread quickly due to the production of their portraits and the circulation of prints: "Indeed by the time Siddons and Kemble began to dominate the stage in the 1780s and 1790s, it was no longer necessary for the actor or actress to commission a theatrical portrait: the demand was often answered by a third party."¹⁶

The artistic and theatrical representations of Shakespeare and his *oeuvre* were intimately connected. On the one hand, as Shearer West demonstrates, pictorial representations of the actors reveal the conventions of painterly representation that operated in the period rather than being realistic portraiture of the staging conditions; on the other, the actors become living monuments who body forth images and figures conjured up by the Bard's poetic genius. If one takes into consideration the psychologising tendencies in the reception of Shakespeare in the second half of the eighteenth century (stressed by Robert Babcock¹⁷), then the identification between the Shakespearean actor and the poetic genius becomes more intriguing.¹⁸ Behind the figurations of that Genius is the spirit of the Poet, whom the actor/actress endows with body and soul, and whose reappearance he or she makes possible:

To paint fair Nature, by divine Command,
Her magic pencil in his glowing hand,
A Shakespeare rose: then, to expand his fame
Wide o'er this breathing world, a Garrick came.
[...]
And till Eternity with Power sublime
Shall mock the Mortal hour of hoary Time,
Shakespeare and Garrick like twin stars shall shine,
And earth irradiate with beam divine.

(inscription to Garrick's monument in Westminster Abbey)¹⁹

¹⁶ Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor. Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble* (London: Pinter Publishers, 1991), 31

¹⁷ See Babcock, *Genesis of Shakespeare Idolatry*, Chapter 12, "The Psychologizing of Shakespeare."

¹⁸ West's observation also bears on this conflation: "the period between 1747 and 1817 deserves to be considered as an entity, as it was a time when acting took predominance over text, and when the focus of London audiences was almost exclusively upon the two Theatres Royal and the actor-managers who dictated their policies." West, *Image of Actor*, 6.

¹⁹ Quoted in West, *Image of Actor*, 4.

Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee of 1769 celebrated this identification between Shakespeare and the Shakespearean actor and indeed Garrick represents an extreme attitude by appropriating the genius of the poet whose work he enacts. As we have seen, like the Restoration adapter, Garrick felt entitled to alter Shakespeare's text and in the manner of an early editor (such as Pope) to praise beauties and amend defects in the original work. But Garrick went beyond these two prerogatives and seems to have aimed at an ultimate incarnation of the Poet and, by suggesting an identification of himself with Shakespeare, at total appropriation.

There was a degree of rivalry between the different representations of the Bard, and between the figure of the Bard and the expressions of his genius. Naturally, Garrick, called "Shakespeare's priest" by his contemporaries,²⁰ took it as his professional mission to make everyone believe that Shakespeare's spirit was to be found in the theatre, *his* theatre to be precise: "Garrick's career was dedicated not to promoting Scheemakers' statue as an embodiment of Shakespeare, but to replacing it as such, and in the process of establishing Drury Lane Theatre rather than Westminster Abbey as the rightful home of Shakespeare's spirit."²¹ Dobson "accuses" Garrick of appropriating *Hamlet* in order to effect an identification of himself with his performance of the Prince (regarded as Shakespeare's greatest achievement) and of Shakespeare with Old Hamlet's ghost: "It was this role, which Garrick, making his brilliant debut at precisely the right moment, set out to fill, casting himself on stage as the greatest Hamlet since Betterton, and offstage as precisely the Hamlet for whom Shakespeare's royal ghost had been waiting."²² This string of identifications ultimately effects a spectralisation of Shakespeare in the sense of a resuscitation of the Shakespearean spirit by means of theatrical representation. It implies a perpetuation of the spirit; a continuous histrionic resurrection, where the Ghost's words, "Remember me" are recast as an injunction for renewed theatrical enactment. Performance has the meaning of both commemoration and celebration: "As Hamlet to Shakespeare's ghost, simultaneously the father's heir and his living representative, Garrick is not only possessed by his spirit (giving Shakespeare life, speaking his words) but is in possession of it (able to declare what Shakespeare means) [...]"²³ Precisely

²⁰ Cecil Price, *Theatre in the Age of Garrick* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1973), 3.

²¹ Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 165.

²² Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 165. Garrick's first role in *Hamlet* was that of the Ghost, see Price, *Theatre in Age of Garrick*, 2. On the tickets issued for the Stratford Jubilee we find printed above the picture of Shakespeare the line which in *Hamlet* refers to Old Hamlet: "We ne'er shall look upon his like again" (compare *H*, I.ii. 187; spoken by Hamlet, hence "I" instead of "We"). See Brewer, *Pleasures of Imagination*, 328.

²³ Dobson, *Making of National Poet*, 167.

this idea has found an expression in a eulogy to Garrick: “That Eye, whose bright and penetrating ray, / Does *Shakespear’s* meaning to my soul convey. — / Best Commentator on Great SHAKESPEAR’S text! / When GARRICK acts, no passage seems perplex.”²⁴ Also worth quoting is Elizabeth Montagu’s opinion, among other reasons because of her role in the Gothification of Shakespeare later in the eighteenth century: “his [Shakespeare’s] very spirit seems to come forth and to animate his characters, as often as Mr. Garrick, who acts with the same inspiration with which he [Shakespeare] wrote, assumes them on the stage.”²⁵ Shakespeare’s spirit or genius has been preserved in his characters; thanks to a theatrical genius such as Garrick’s (i.e., one capable of sharing in the poet’s inspiration) the poet comes back to life in a stage representation.²⁶

Garrick was soon to find a female counterpart in his appropriation of the Shakespeare spirit, the actress Sarah Siddons, whom Garrick himself had spotted and employed in 1776.²⁷ Siddons’s stage career offers a female counterpart to the role which Garrick assumed in the perpetuation of the Shakespearean idolatry, especially in its relation to the emergence of the Gothic genre. Her performance of Lady Macbeth, reportedly her greatest role, inspired one of the most famous theatrical portraits of the day, *Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse* (1784) by Sir Joshua Reynolds.²⁸ Siddons remembers Reynolds inviting her to sit for him in the following manner: “Ascend your undisputed throne, and graciously bestow on me

²⁴ Quoted in Price, *Theatre in Age of Garrick*, 18; original italics retained. This poem, ascribed to a young gentleman who was deaf, appeared in the *London Chronicle* in January 1772.

²⁵ Montagu, *Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, 15–16.

²⁶ On the multi-layered and crisscrossing identifications, especially those of Shakespeare with Old Hamlet, see Dobson, *Making of the National Poet*, Chapter 4 “Embodying the Author.”

²⁷ In May 1776 Siddons played Lady Anne to Garrick’s Richard the Third. But her debut at Drury Lane soured into a failure and it was only after six years in the provinces that she was reemployed, this time by Sheridan (as of the 1781/1782 season). See Manvell, *Sarah Siddons*, 35 and 63. Her feelings on being allowed to occupy what was formerly Garrick’s dressing room are worth noting here: “It is impossible to imagine my gratification when I saw my own figure in the self same Glass which so often reflected the face and form of that unequalled Genius [...]”; *The Reminiscences of Sarah Kemble Siddons 1773–1785*, ed. with a foreword by William Van Lennep (Cambridge: Printed at Widener Library 1942), 12 (see also Manvell, *Sarah Siddons*, 75).

²⁸ West, *Image of Actor*, 113–116. See also Heather McPherson, “Picturing Tragedy: *Mrs. Siddons as the Tragic Muse* Revisited,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 33 (2000) 3, 405 and 410. Writes Brewer: “By 1789 she had become the female symbol of the entire nation, dressed as Britannia at the service in St Paul’s to celebrate the recovery of George III from his madness.” Brewer, *Pleasures of Imagination*, 346.

some grand Idea of The Tragic Muse."²⁹ Prints were readily available. In Henry Siddons's operatic adaptation of Ann Radcliffe's novel, *The Sicilian Romance: or, the Apparition of the Cliffs* (1794), we find an advertisement for "A Capital likeness of Mrs. Siddons" for the price of 1s.

As an inspiration Siddons is palpably present in Radcliffe's aesthetic of terror. In the process of asserting the female genius as capable of attaining sublime heights of terror, Siddons's enactment of Lady Macbeth (for the first time in 1785) played a special role. In much the same way as Garrick (via his impersonations of Hamlet) *was* Shakespeare, "Siddons *was* Lady Macbeth,"³⁰ and by being Lady Macbeth, the actress bodied forth the creative genius of the Poet. Of equal importance for its influence on the development of the Gothic mode in fiction must have been Siddons's playing Prince Hamlet.³¹ The actress appeared as Hamlet several times outside London, among other places in Bath (as well as in Birmingham, Manchester, and Dublin), where she may have been seen by Ann Radcliffe.³² Writes Rictor Norton: "On Wednesday 27 June 1781 Mrs. Siddons performed Hamlet at the Bath-Bristol Theatre Royal, for one night only, though this was her sixth appearance in that character. Ann Ward, almost seventeen years old, may have been in the audience that evening, for Mrs. Siddons made an indelible impression upon the future novelist."³³ We shall have occasion to return to the immense influence that the per-

²⁹ *Reminiscences of Siddons*, 17.

³⁰ Clery, *Women's Gothic*, 10. Wrote Boaden: "The character of Lady Macbeth became a sort of exclusive possession to Mrs. Siddons. There was a mystery about it which she alone seemed to have penetrated" (Boaden, *Memoirs of Siddons*, 103–104; see Bibliography for details). See also Catherine Burroughs, *Closet Stages: Joanna Bailie and the Theater Theory of British Romantic Women Writers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 52–55.

³¹ See Jane Moody, "Dictating to the empire: performance and theatrical geography in eighteenth-century Britain," in: Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre 1730–1830* (Cambridge, New York...: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 26 ff.

³² That Radcliffe actually saw Siddons perform Hamlet is a matter of conjecture. In "On the Supernatural in Poetry," we find this enigmatic sentence: "I should suppose she would have been the finest Hamlet that ever appeared, excelling even her own brother [Kemble] in that character" (in Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 165). The first person singular is not Radcliffe's but that of one of the two male travellers who are engaged in conversation.

³³ Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 50. When presenting his somewhat biased opinion on Siddons's female Hamlet, Boaden admits that her claim to superiority might be in the province of terror: "Where Horatio and the rest describe the appearance of the spectre, I should think the real feminine alarm at such mysterious seeming would carry up the expression of countenance higher than it has perhaps ever illumined even the powerful features of Kemble" (*Memoirs of Siddons*, 167–168).

performances and personality of Siddons exerted upon the development of the Gothic, partly via Radcliffe's fascination with the actress and the way in which Siddons set "an example of uncompromising and powerful artistry."³⁴

Through this type of cultural appropriation, much of the splendour which had accreted to the poetic genius of Shakespeare rubbed off onto the actors: "By the time Kemble was at the height of his popularity [...] claims for nobleness, erudition and connoisseurship were commonplace," a process which Shearer West calls one of myth-making.³⁵ At the same time, processes of restoration and authentication were underway on the London stages, parallel to the studies by early Shakespearean scholars such as Edmund Malone. Garrick, besides his facetious *Essay on Acting* (1744), may have come up with something like a critical edition of *Macbeth*, but Kemble went a step further and wrote an essay on *Macbeth and Richard III* in which he takes issue with Thomas Whately's *Remarks on Some of the Characters of Shakespeare* (1785). Its significance lies in the fact that the actor-manager finds himself competent and entitled to take part in a scholarly debate and to defend the honour of *Macbeth* against the accusation of cowardice.³⁶ Telling also is the fact that Kemble uses the latest critical edition of Shakespeare, George Steevens's in twenty-one volumes, the same "authentic copies" and "genuine books" (in Boaden's phrases) which, as manager, he would consult when preparing performances.³⁷

From Garrick to Kemble there is a perceptible change of attitude to the playtext, reflecting the growing concern with authenticity. An anecdote may help us see this change more clearly. On being informed by Dr. Johnson that such an acclaimed Shakespeare actress as Mrs. Pritchard (whom Johnson called "a vulgar idiot" who "never read any part of the Play, except her own part") did not know the plays, Siddons could not

³⁴ Clery, *Women's Gothic*, 13.

³⁵ West, *Image of Actor*, 18. As Boaden remarks: "Mr. Kemble's principle was, as I have often stated, to keep Shakspeare as his own great distinction" (*Life of Kemble*, vol. 2, 289).

³⁶ See John Philip Kemble, *Macbeth and King Richard the Third: An Essay, in Answer to "Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakespeare"* (London: John Murray, 1817 [1786]; rpt. in the Eighteenth Century Shakespeare series, London: Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1970), 10—11. Kemble's main contention is that if we degrade the character of *Macbeth* our contempt will prevent the stage representation of the play from fulfilling its moral purpose, i.e., we shall have to "forego our virtuous satisfaction in his [Macbeth's] repugnance to guilt" (*ibidem*). There is a parallel to this in Siddons's interpretation and defence of "her" Lady *Macbeth*. See Burroughs, *Closet Stages*, 55.

³⁷ See Child, *Shakespearian Productions of Kemble*, 5—6. Child questions Boaden's idea that Kemble was a restorer of the authentic Shakespeare, a myth which Kemble himself eagerly propagated.

overcome her astonishment: "Is it possible [...] that [...] the greatest of all Lady Macbeths should never have read the Play?"³⁸ Yet notwithstanding the increasing loyalty of performers towards the text, in both Siddons and her brother the actor does not disown the prerogative independently to interpret the text and to infuse the lines and the character with what she or he believes to be their genuine meaning. This extra role may have been thrust upon the actors by the public as a matter of course, particularly in consequence of Garrick's ambitions, but there are no reasons to suspect that the leading actors of the era felt the smallest degree of discomfort performing it.

In a manner similar to the way in which an actor's career in eighteenth-century England was closely related to the Shakespearean repertory, many artists of the age became more or less intimately connected with the Poet's *oeuvre*. The growing popularisation and commercialisation of Shakespeare found its consummation in the opening of the Shakespeare Gallery by John Boydell, a well-known London print dealer, on May 4th 1789. Boydell's Gallery reflects the way Shakespeare came to be circulated in visual form. As a "middle-ground" between the popular theatrical print and the paintings of the Shakespeare Gallery, Winifred Friedman names Bell's editions of Shakespeare (1st edition in 1773, 2nd in 1785—1787), "designed to appeal to popular taste because of their modest price and plentiful illustrations."³⁹ As in the case of Garrick and his Jubilee twenty years before, Boydell's enterprise, launched on the advance subscription principle, was censured as unashamedly mercantile, sacrificing, as a denunciatory aquatint had it, Shakespeare to Avarice.

The Gallery's influence on literary production and on the rise of the Gothic may be difficult to assess, but certainly must not be ignored. Among the contributors to the Gallery was Henry Fuseli, and among his pictures was one depicting Hamlet's encounter with the Ghost. In the picture, which was soon to inspire James Boaden with an idea for a stage representation of a spectre, as Fuseli's biographer puts it, "[t]he stately majesty of the ghost of Hamlet's father, contrasted with the expressive energy of his son, and the sublimity brought about by the light, shadow, and general tone, strike the mind with awe."⁴⁰ Rictor Norton, citing *tableau*-like passages in Radcliffe, has no doubts concerning the Gallery's influence: "The

³⁸ *Reminiscences of Siddons*, 14 (quoted also by Manvell, *Sarah Siddons*, 95). Mrs. Pritchard played Lady Macbeth to Garrick's Macbeth. This partnership was duly represented in prints.

³⁹ Winifred Friedman, *Boydell's Shakespeare Gallery* (New York: Garland, 1976), 24.

⁴⁰ John Knowles, *The Life and Writings of Henry Fuseli* (London: Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, 1831), vol. 1, 78.

most compelling Shakespearean images for Ann Radcliffe were the same as those painted by Fuseli for the Shakespeare Gallery [...]. [W]e cannot doubt that Mrs. Radcliffe visited this popular exhibition."⁴¹ Perhaps she shared the enthusiasm of a critic who thought that the painter had "caught the Spirit of the Poet, and given to his Ghost all that material sublimity, and awful grandeur, with which this high-wrought character is so wonderfully marked in the pages of Shakespeare."⁴²

Boydell's project was aimed at establishing an English School of Historical Painting, and Shakespeare is evidently used also as a vehicle for a celebration of the past in the sense of a shared national heritage. Among Fuseli's other contributions we find quasi-political pictures: a scene from *Henry V* representing the disclosure of the conspiracy and the scene of the dismissal of Cordelia from *Lear*. Fuseli's and the other contributors' lavish visual celebration of history corresponds to changes taking place in the theatre, especially the growing concern with historical accuracy advocated by Kemble.

The composition of the Pseudo-Shakespearean *Vortigern* also throws some light upon the mutual influence between stage and artistic representations of the Shakespeare *oeuvre* and the increasing concern with "antiquity." The composition of the play, as reconstructed by Kahan, was the reverse of the usual way in which Shakespearean themes, episodes, and characters served as an inspiration for the artists of the age. The plot, we recall, was taken from Holinshed ("For 'tis well chronicled in Holinshed," says the Fool in his bow-out address to the audience; V, V.iv. 72) and among other sources were the many pictorial representations of the story, especially of the Vortigern-meets-Rowena episode (IV.vi in the play) by artists who were known as illustrators of Shakespeare, such as William Hamilton, Richard Westall, and chiefly John Hamilton Mortimer, a favourite with Samuel Ireland and author of a series of etchings entitled "Twelve Characters in Shakespeare."⁴³ In other words, William-Henry Ireland's bet was that the public would immediately recognise the Shakespeareanness of the "newly discovered" play, a story that Shakespeare could not plausibly have neglected to tell.

These remarks on the significance of the theatrical and artistic representations of Shakespeare conclude the part of the project which deals with the most comprehensive context for the emergence of the literary Gothic. Having discussed manifestations of Shakespeare's presence (his met-

⁴¹ Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 73.

⁴² In the *Public Advertiser* (July 1789), qtd. in: Bate, *Shakespearean Constitutions*, 57.

⁴³ Kahan, *Reforging Shakespeare*, 71—81.

onymic embodiments) in the eighteenth century and its dynamism, we shall now confine our analysis to the increasing appreciation of Shakespeare's poetic genius and unrestrained imagination, his handling of the supernatural or marvellous being regarded as the best proof of his creative potential. This type of appreciation is reflected in reception patterns, a reconstruction of which we shall undertake by examining a variety of verbal debts.

The Gothicisation of Shakespeare



Shakespeare and the fascination of the supernatural

Though pit, gallery, and boxes were crowded to suffocation, the chill of the grave seemed about you while you looked on her; — there was the hush and damp of the charnel house at midnight; you had a feeling as if you and the medical attendant, and lady in waiting, were alone with her; your flesh crept and your breathing became uneasy.

Sheridan Knowles on Siddons's interpretation of the sleepwalking scene

Again, the opening of *Hamlet* is full of exhausting interest. There is more mind in *Hamlet* than any other play; more knowledge of human nature. The first Act is incomparable.

William Wordsworth

Before we analyse the Gothicising appropriation of Shakespeare as patron saint of the new school of fiction, we need briefly to examine the way in which Shakespeare satisfied the eighteenth-century thirst for the supernatural. Our considerations center upon two related issues. First, we need to look more closely at the supernatural in Shakespeare, especially those scenes which continued to inspire terror in the reading public and which held in thrall theatrical audiences. This refamiliarisation with the Shakespeare text will prepare us for a discussion of the uses to which the supernatural in Shakespeare was put in Gothic fiction and drama. Secondly, and more importantly, we must examine the fascination of the eighteenth-century public with those scenes, paying special attention to the way in which the Shakespearean supernatural was rendered in theatrical productions and in painting.

The eighteenth-century fascination with the supernatural has received various interpretations, which we need not examine critically at this point. More important at present is the affirmation that the Age of Rea-

son was also a period in which poetic representations of the supernatural still had the power to enthrall human souls,¹ that, in particular, readers and audiences found fascination in Shakespeare's handling of the supernatural despite their reluctance to accept what James Boaden called "the pneumatology of Shakespeare's age."² It might be objected that scholars who study the Gothic will insist on the genre's role in fulfilling long-frustrated needs of the public. On the other hand, those same scholars by way of justification tend to quote Samuel Johnson as saying about the ghost question that it was "a question, which after five thousand years, is yet undecided; a question, whether in theology or philosophy, one of the most important that can come before the human understanding."³ Patricia Spacks quotes the same passage⁴ and adds the following comment: "one discovers that almost all the best critics of this great period of criticism considered quite explicitly the place of the supernatural in poetry: many of them, increasingly many, justified the unearthly as subject."⁵

That same Dr. Johnson seems not to have lost the ability to be affected by literary depictions of the supernatural. The powerful impression which *Macbeth* made on him confirms this; he confesses to having been "alarmed" by the play's vivid depiction of "sorcery, lust, and murder." Comparing Dryden's and Shakespeare's depictions of night (referring specifically to Macbeth's floating-dagger speech; *Mcb.* II.i. 47), Johnson comes to this conclusion:

Night is described by two great poets, but one describes a night of quiet, the other of perturbation. In the night of Dryden, all the disturbers of the world are laid asleep; in that of Shakespeare, nothing but sorcery, lust and murder, is awake. He that reads Dryden, finds himself lul'd with serenity, and disposed to solitude and contemplation. He that pe-

¹ The publication by Thomas Percy of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* in 1765 is a confirmation of the unceasing popularity of the supernatural as well as a recognition of it as a justified poetical subject. (Summers, despite his objections to Percy's methods of "polishing" and "pruning," calls the publication an overwhelming success; *Gothic Quest*, 46). The collection contains some popular ballads of the supernatural, "Sweet William's Ghost," for instance, reprinted by Miles and Clery in their anthology of *Gothic Documents*.

² Boaden, *Life of Kemble*, vol. 1, 106—107.

³ James Boswell, *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791), quoted in E.J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762—1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18. See also Knowles, *Life and Writings of Fuseli*, vol. 1, 373.

⁴ Patricia Meyer Spacks, *The Insistence of Horror: Aspects of the Supernatural in Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), 3.

⁵ Spacks, *Insistence of Horror*, 2.

ruses Shakespeare, looks round alarmed, and starts to find himself alone. One is the night of a lover, the other, of a murderer.⁶

The impressions of Sarah Siddons answer to Johnson's analysis. This is how Siddons recalled her nocturnal perusal of *Macbeth* when preparing herself for the role of Lady Macbeth:

I went on with tolerable composure, in the silence of the night, (a night I never can forget), till I came to the assassination scene, when the horrors of the scene rose to a degree that made it impossible for me to get farther. I snatched up my candle, and hurried out of the room, in a paroxysm of terror. My dress was of silk, and the rustling of it, as I descended the stairs to go to bed, seemed to my panic-struck fancy like the movement of a spectre pursuing me. At last I reached my chamber, where I found my husband fast asleep. I clapt my candlestick down upon the table, without the power of putting the candle out; and I threw myself on my bed, without daring to stay even to take off my clothes.⁷

Whether or not Siddons's account is quite accurate, what is interesting is that the way she depicts the occurrence, the moments she highlights, is parallel to several situations from *Macbeth* which she mentions: lack of sleep, suggestions of supernatural presence, rushing away to bed, putting the candlestick on the table. It may well be that Siddons's reminiscences were coloured by her numerous appearances in the play, which some called her greatest histrionic achievement owing to the way she unreservedly identified with the role she performed. Certainly in the quoted responses of Johnson and Siddons we find manifestations of the process that E.J. Clery calls aestheticisation of the supernatural.⁸

⁶ From Johnson's "Notes on the plays: *Macbeth*," in: *Johnson on Shakespeare*. Essays and notes selected and set forth with an Introduction by Walter Raleigh (London: Henry Frowde, 1908), 172. See also Philip Smallwood, "Shakespeare: Johnson's poet of nature," in: Greg Clingham, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Johnson* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 143, where the passage quoted is described as coming from Johnson's *Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Macbeth* (1745). According to Raleigh, this pamphlet, which contained "remarks on Sir Thomas Hanmer's Edition of Shakespeare," was the beginning of Johnson's editorial project ("Introduction" to *Johnson on Shakespeare*).

⁷ Thomas Campbell, *Life of Mrs. Siddons* (London: Effingham Wilson. Royal Exchange, 1834), 2 vols., 35—36. The passage comes from Chapter I, which contains Mrs. Siddons's "own Remarks on the Character of Lady Macbeth," from her *Memoranda*. The passage was subsequently quoted in several publications, e.g., in Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and Players*, 99—100 and Manvell, *Sarah Siddons*, 22. Manvell names as his source Percy Fitzgerald's *The Kembles*.

⁸ Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, especially Chapter 2. See below, p. 101.

The supernatural in Shakespeare depends both on the *choice* of figures represented mimetically or verbally and on the *use* these figures are put to. The latter is largely a consequence of the former, but it is the overall design (the “kind” of the play and the movement of the plot) that determines the type of supernatural that is deployed. Supernatural figures in Shakespeare can be divided into two basic classes: fairy creatures and ghosts.⁹ Fairies naturally belong to the world of comedy and romance while ghosts to that of tragedy and the tragedy-like worlds of the histories and Roman plays. As we have remarked, the overriding principle is an artistic one; furthermore, the choice of the type of the supernatural is determined by two other factors, death and origin. Thus the ghosts of the tragedy are typically avengers returned from the dead to right wrongs and in terms of origin represent the Senecan literary tradition; the fairies, on the other hand, are usually otherworldly immortals, mostly of folk provenance. A consummate representation of the fairy world is found of course in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here the broad category of “fairy creature” calls for further distinctions. K.M. Briggs elucidates the difference between fairies and witches:

Titania's followers are sharply dissociated from the witches. They drive away the owl, snakes, spiders, newts and bats, all creatures that are associated with witchcraft. Oberon, too, distinguishes himself from ghosts and night-wandering spirits that cannot bear the day. He prefers to leave before sunrise, but he boasts his power of out-staying the sun; cock-crow has no terrors for him.¹⁰

This description is obviously already an interpretation of the fairies *as they have been represented and used by Shakespeare*; Briggs repeatedly asserts that popular belief mingled ghosts, fairies, and devils, and that this confusion was not rectified by “extreme Puritan belief” which treated both fairies and ghosts as devils in disguise.¹¹ According to this belief, the Senecan ghost, who perfectly suited the purposes of the revenge tragedy as the “avenging spectre,” was theologically and hence also morally suspect: “The current Protestant belief was that, since the soul went at death to heaven or hell, it was impossible that it could walk, and that all ghostly apparitions were devils in masquerade.”¹²

⁹ K.M. Briggs, *The Anatomy of Puck. An Examination of Fairy Beliefs among Shakespeare's Contemporaries and Successors* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), Chapter 9 “Fairies and Ghosts.”

¹⁰ Briggs, *Anatomy of Puck*, 46.

¹¹ Briggs, *Anatomy of Puck*, 119.

¹² Briggs, *Anatomy of Puck*, 123; and earlier, 121. According to Briggs, this part of the Senecan tradition found “its supreme expression in *Hamlet*” (*ibidem*, 122).

Both these aspects, i.e. the Senecan provenance of, and the Puritan reservations about, the avenging spectre, suggest the impossibility of attaching to the Shakespearean ghost any definite external meaning, i.e., one which goes too far beyond the purposes which were assigned to it by the playwright's *fiat*. For all we know, Seneca never aimed at giving spectres the elaborate theatrical treatment which Shakespeare did; furthermore, rather than being concerned with the controversial crypto-Catholicism of his apparitions (and the un-Christianness of revenge),¹³ Shakespeare seems to be happy with a ghost which elicits — both in the audience and the protagonist — the mixed but powerful responses of amazement, terror, and doubt.

Interestingly, Shakespeare's spectre plays are those which ranked very high on the popularity charts with eighteenth-century audiences, perhaps with the exception of *Julius Caesar*. Before we examine more closely Shakespeare's two greatest supernatural tragedies, let us briefly look at two minor examples. If we accept 1591 as the approximate date for *King Richard III*, then here we find Shakespeare's first attempt at handling the supernatural in the tragic mode.¹⁴ None the less, the scene, V.iii, is remarkable for its complexity and a "surplus" of the imaginary over the real. Not only is the stage divided in two, the tents of Richard and Richmond pitched at either side of it, but the ghosts (eleven altogether) come in a long procession addressing Richard and Richmond in turn until eventually Richard awakes screaming:

Give me another horse! Bind up my wounds!
 Have mercy, Jesu! — Soft!, I did but dream.
 O coward conscience, how dost thou afflict me!
 The lights burn blue; it is now dead midnight.
 Cold fearful drops stand on my trembling flesh.

R3, V.iii. 178—182

There is repetitiveness in the several ghosts' speeches ("Let me sit heavy on thy soul tomorrow," "Despair and die"), and the collective curse accumulates as the procession goes on. In the process, a moral contrast builds up with the "quiet, untroubled soul" of Richmond. At the same time, this supernatural scene is perhaps the most outspokenly Christian in all of Shakespeare,¹⁵ despair being traditionally the state of a sinner's soul that

¹³ For the debate see Harold Jenkins's "Longer notes" in his edition of *Hamlet*, 453—454.

¹⁴ For a source of the spectres scene see Sir Thomas More, *History of King Richard the Third*, Appendix III in Shakespeare, *King Richard III*, 363. For explanations see "Introduction" to this edition of the play, 79.

¹⁵ Briggs, however, maintains that "[t]he ghosts in *Richard III* are in the pure Senecan tradition [...]" (*Anatomy of Puck*, 126).

makes him impervious to God's grace. Appropriately for a historical play, the plea, collectively, is for personal as well as political redress; Richmond is to "conquer for fair England's sake" guarded by "God and good angels." And yet Shakespeare capitalises on personal response and gives the villain another memorable speech ("What do I fear? Myself?"), one in which Richard eventually fulfils the curse: "I shall despair." That this scene was a great favourite with eighteenth-century audiences is testified to by popular prints portraying Garrick and Kemble in similar postures as Richard: overawed, starting at the sight of the spectres.

In a parallel scene in *Julius Caesar* (1599), Shakespeare reworks certain motifs from *Richard III*, at once anticipating the supernatural encounters of *Hamlet* (1600) and *Macbeth* (1606). Once more, the setting is a military tent on the eve of a final confrontation, and once more the presence of a ghost is heralded by candlelight turning blue: "How ill the taper burns!" (*JC*, IV.iii. 274). And again Shakespeare relies on the testimony of his narrative source, in this case Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*.¹⁶ The substantial difference is that now the ghost encounter is personal and conscious. Hence also the protagonist's reaction, both verbal and physical, is more elaborate:

How ill this taper burns! Ha! who comes here?
 I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
 That shapes this monstrous apparition.
 It comes upon me. Art thou any thing?
 Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
 That makest my blood cold and my hair to stare?
 Speak to me what thou art.

JC, IV.iii. 274—280

Verbal parallels with *Hamlet* are too obvious and striking to ignore,¹⁷ and yet one feels that in closely following the source narrative Shakespeare put himself under some constraint and decided not to enlarge upon an episode of great theatrical effectiveness but also one which is without justification within the texture of the play. For here, unlike in *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, the supernatural does not have a substantial role to play; apart from the ominous announcement the ghost does not have anything to say and the exchange has all the triviality of making an appointment ("then

¹⁶ The relevant passages from *Shakespeare's Plutarch* (1875), i.e., Sir Thomas North's Plutarch in a modernized version by Walter W. Skeat, are found in Appendices in Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, 157. The versions from *Life of Caesar* and *Life of Brutus* differ in this respect very slightly.

¹⁷ The resemblance of Brutus' lines to those with which Hamlet addresses the Ghost is evident; see the editor's gloss in T.S. Dorsch's edition of *Julius Caesar*, 111.

I will see thee at Philippi”), and Brutus spends more time questioning his servants and soldiers than he does the spectre.

As I have suggested, the two examples of Shakespeare’s early handling of the supernatural are, from the perspective of later developments, episodic and even half-hearted. In *Hamlet*, Shakespeare gives himself more licence, and in the eighteenth century this ample and bold handling of the Shade of Denmark not only worked well in the theatre but also had a great impact upon Shakespeare’s enthusiasts, thus stimulating and contributing to the rise of the Gothic. Unlike previous apparitions, the Ghost of Old Hamlet is employed liberally (four appearances) and, one would think, so as to use up all the available employments to which this type of the supernatural could be put in the theatre of Shakespeare’s time without surfeiting the audience.

Already in the opening scene the Ghost appears twice, his entrance prepared by suspense-raising dialogue in which Horatio’s scepticism whets the spectator’s appetite for the marvellous. Shakespeare lays the scene making sure that the appropriate parameters of time and setting are carefully established. The Ghost is recognised for its resemblance to “the King that’s dead,” refuses to speak, and during its second appearance on stage, when it seems to be on the point of making a communication to Horatio and the guards, is chased away by the cock crowing or, alternatively, flees offended by the men “offering it the show of violence.” One way or another, this scene is merely an appetiser before the main course, which is Hamlet’s encounter with the Ghost in scenes four and five of Act I.

Hamlet’s reaction to the appearance of the Ghost, at a moment when he is engaged in conversation with Horatio, was to become one of the most celebrated Shakespearean “moments,” a favourite with eighteenth century audiences, minutely recorded, among others, by Henry Fielding in *Tom Jones*. With “Look, my lord, it comes,” Horatio interrupts Hamlet’s speech, at which point, Hamlet, in a manner reminiscent of Brutus, staggers under the impact of the sight, as is suggested by his exclamation: “Angels and ministers of grace defend us!” (*H*, I.iv. 39). There is ample scope for a skilful actor to introduce various shades of emotion into the speech in which Hamlet overcomes his terror and eventually addresses the Ghost with words of compassion shaded with filial warmth: “I’ll call thee Hamlet, King, father, royal Dane. O answer me.” With a change in emphasis (or punctuation), these lines can indeed indicate Hamlet’s attempt to establish some intimacy with this dreadful presence: “I’ll call thee Hamlet, King, father. [pause] Royal Dane, O answer me!” This emotional clash between Hamlet’s shaken state, mentally, emotionally, and physically even —

What may this mean,
 That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
 Revisits thus the glimpses of the moon,
 Making night hideous and we fools of nature
 So horridly to shake our disposition
 With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?

H, I.iv. 51

— and the Ghost's steely unresponsiveness could indeed be used to powerful theatrical effect. The ensuing exchange between Hamlet and the Ghost does not abate this affective disharmony. Hamlet is eager to hear what fate has decreed for him (l. 81), the Ghost's communication elicits a response in the innermost regions of his soul ("O my prophetic soul!"), and yet his compassion is bruised against the armour of the apparition's harshness. Hamlet's impassioned "Alas, poor ghost" is countered with "Pity me not [...]" (*H*, I.v. 4—5), and we soon realise that the Ghost is back on earth on an official errand (as the armour suggests) and is demanding an act of bloody vengeance which will cleanse the "royal bed of Denmark" rather than expecting sympathy. There is thus ample psychological justification for Hamlet's passionate discharge in the soliloquy that follows ("O all you host of heaven!"; *H*, I.v. 92—112), its affective pitch, it would seem, compensating for Hamlet's failure to find emotional responsiveness or a degree of empathy in the Ghost.

Aside from the Ghost's audible intervention in the encounter scene ("Swear by this sword"), Shakespeare reintroduces him in III.iv, the eventful and violent scene set in Gertrude's closet. After the killing of Polonius and during Hamlet's vehement castigation of his mortified mother, the Ghost enters, this time visible only to Hamlet, and to the now absolute stupefaction of Gertrude. Hamlet's first response is almost synonymous with that from Act I: "Save me and hover o'er me with your wings, / You heavenly guards! What would your gracious figure?" (*H*, III.iv. 104). The Ghost reprimands Hamlet for his "almost blunted purpose," and urges him to show compassion to Gertrude ("step between her and her fighting soul"). The spectator's perception is as it were split in two, between Hamlet's reaction to the Ghost's presence and words and Gertrude's reaction to what she regards as a palpable demonstration of Hamlet's lunacy ("This bodiless creation ecstasy / Is very cunning in." l. 140). This scene indeed turns Hamlet into a ghost-seer and thus anticipates the supernatural feats and fits in *Macbeth*.

Throughout the play the Ghost elicits the most profound reactions, compelling the Hamlet actor to deploy a broad scale of expressiveness, from paralysing dread to macabre humour (as in "A worthy pioneer!" at I.v. 171).

As actors such as Garrick seem to have known perfectly well, the role demanded the working out of a variety of emotional responses, which would answer to the intrusion of the supernatural and its “most foul, strange, and unnatural” communication. At the same time, Old Hamlet’s Ghost is woven into the texture of the play. Rather than being an occasional visitation or an uncanny embellishment, his ambiguous presence hovers over the entire plot and its manifold thematic complications, such as, most obviously, the way in which Hamlet’s sense of identity depends upon his pursuit of the father figure and its multiple representations, embodiments, and substitutions: Old Hamlet, the Ghost of Old Hamlet, Claudius (“think of us as of a father,” I.ii. 107), the Player King, the images of both brothers (at III.iv; the Hyperion vs. the satyr, I.ii. 140), and, finally, Yorick (“He hath bore me on his back a thousand times [...]”; V.i. 180). If we take into account the characters of Fortinbras and Laertes and their relations to *their* fathers, this thematics of paternity becomes complicated even further. It is, however, only in Hamlet’s case that the lost father theme receives the added supernatural dimension, otherworldly and spectral.

With *Macbeth* Shakespeare launches his drama into yet unexplored regions of the supernatural. To be sure, in *Macbeth* we do find an echo of sorts of *Hamlet*, namely with the ghost of Banquo, which represents a species similar to the Ghost of Old Hamlet.¹⁸ Macbeth’s lines about the dead who “rise again” to push their assassins “from [their] stools” (*Mcb.*, III.iv. 79–81) make the spectre come up to the pattern of the avenging ghost. And yet the context in which these words are spoken makes us aware of a substantial difference; with *Macbeth* the supernatural has been given a new dimension because of its internalisation. This is a radical shift, as it renders the spectre itself redundant, and indeed the banquet scene can be successfully staged without the actual presence of the mute spectre of Banquo.¹⁹ In a sense, Shakespeare returns here to his method of handling the supernatural in *Richard III*, but as *Hamlet* can be considered an expan-

¹⁸ Kemble, however, proposed a distinction between ghost and apparition: Old Hamlet’s Ghost plays a role in the play similar to that of other characters, and therefore he is “an apparition,” unlike Banquo’s spectre, or, in Kemble’s terminology, a ghost proper; see Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and Players*, 133.

¹⁹ As it was performed in Kemble’s version at Drury Lane and then at Covent Garden (until the audiences forced him to restore the ghost as a physical presence; see Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and Players*, 133). To this Boaden objected, claiming that the real ghost on the stage was Shakespeare’s own idea faithfully preserved in original versions of the text (*Life of Kemble*, vol. 2, 122–123). Davenant’s *Macbeth*, on the other hand, had more ghost scenes; in Act IV, Sc. iv, Lady Macbeth tells Macbeth that she has been pursued by the Ghost of the murdered king. At the end of their interview, the Ghost appears. See *Macbeth* (1674) in: Spencer, ed., *Five Restoration Adaptations of Shakespeare*, 92–93.

sion of the Senecan ghost motif used earlier in *Julius Caesar*, so *Macbeth* works the internalisation device from *Richard III* into the entire play. Macbeth's preoccupation with "horrible imaginings," which begins after his receiving what he calls a "supernatural soliciting" (*Mcb.*, I.iii. 130—142), holds him spellbound until nearly the end of the play.²⁰ In contrast, supernatural as they may be, the Witches are not exactly a source of terror²¹; the souls of the protagonists are. Accordingly, the most memorable "supernatural" scenes in *Macbeth* are precisely those in which the Macbeths are made to confront spectres of their own making: the air-drawn dagger, the assassination, and finally the scene of Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking. In them, as arguably also in the banquet scene, histrionic effectiveness (conducive to moral dread) depends on what is not shown but is present in the mind of the protagonist: the dagger with "gouts of blood" on it, the ghost of the murdered king ("Didst thou not hear a noise?", II.ii. 14), the bloodstain on Lady Macbeth's "little hand."

In the second half of the eighteenth century, scenes of supernatural terror received ample coverage in painting, prints, and personal accounts by spectators — all reflecting the fascination with ghost-seeing and the power of the supernatural to transfix popular imagination. Even a cursory overview of pictorial representations of Shakespearean actors reveals the extent of this fascination. It also gives us some idea concerning the "moments" in Shakespeare that were most likely to spellbind theatrical audiences. A painting by William Hogarth of 1745 shows David Garrick as Richard III, which, it will be recalled, was one of his greatest roles. The moment chosen by the artist is precisely one of supernatural terror, Richard shaking himself awake from the nightmare, half reclining on a sofa,

²⁰ For a closer analysis see my essay "The Earth's Bubbles and Slaughter's Pencil: *Macbeth* and the Philosophy of Imagination," in: Wojciech Kalaga and Tadeusz Rachwał, eds., *Memory and Forgetfulness* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 1997), 95—116.

²¹ Deriving from the folk tradition as well as answering to some theological conceptions, the Witches are as ambiguous as their appearance suggests; and so have been their stage representations, for example in the Davenant version of *Macbeth*, which Ann Radcliffe, among others, found highly objectionable. To insist that the Witches are a key to the play's meaning is to insist on an unambiguous nature for these "metaphysical" beings. When Edwin Wiley, for instance, argues that "[t]he problems of the whole play of *Macbeth* center in the Weird Sisters, and *Macbeth's* relation to them," I agree only with the second part of the statement; Edwin Wiley, *A Study of the Supernatural in Three Plays of Shakespeare*, rpt. from *The University of California Chronicle*, XV, No. 4 (1913), 40. Wiley notes the ambiguous description of the Witches already in *Holinshed*, where they are depicted at once as "creatures of elder world," "goddesses of destinie," and "some nymphs or feiries" (*ibidem*).

right arm outstretched, eyes gazing wildly at an invisible (to the viewer) object of supernatural dread. Even though contemporaries found this picture vulgar,²² it is an attempt to capture on canvas something that obviously captivated Garrick's audiences. On the other hand, representations of the Weird Sisters such as Fuseli's can be regarded as attempts to bestow upon them some extra supernatural awe to reflect their sublime status as figurations of Shakespeare's genius. A remark by Fuseli confirms this supposition; his object was terror and he believed himself compelled to supply it when he found the poetry deficient: "When Macbeth meets with the witches on the heath, it is terrible, because he did not expect the supernatural visitation; but when he goes to the cave to ascertain his fate, it is *no longer a subject of terror*: hence I have endeavoured to supply what is deficient in the poetry."²³ Fuseli's approach is, as we shall see, in tune with Ann Radcliffe's interpretation of the Shakespearean supernatural.

Pictures of the Hamlet figure reflect the actors' individual interpretations of the role. Sir Thomas Lawrence's "Kemble as Hamlet" (exhibited in 1801) is a tribute to Kemble's appearance in the role and represents a pensive, melancholy muser, skull in hand. A very different Hamlet was Garrick's, as immortalised by Benjamin Wilson. Wilson's picture captures Garrick's Hamlet's reaction to the apparition in the ghost-encounter scene, which Fielding's Partridge sees and comments on in Book XVI (Chapter 5) of *Tom Jones*. This "moment" was also given a minute description by one Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, who saw Garrick's performance while on a visit to England in 1776. Lichtenberg's account closely corresponds to Wilson's picture: the actor's arms outstretched in a protective gesture, "knees giving, legs apart, an expression of terror on his face."²⁴ The passage deserves to be quoted in full:

Hamlet appears in a black dress, the only one in the whole court, alas! still worn for his poor father, who has been dead scarce a couple of months. Horatio and Marcellus, in uniforms, are with him, and they are awaiting the ghost; Hamlet has folded his arms under his cloak and pulled his hat down over his eyes; it is a cold night and just twelve o'clock; the theatre is darkened, and the whole audience of some thousands are as quiet, and their faces as motionless, as though they were painted on the walls of the theatre; even from the farthest end of the

²² West, *Image of Actor*, 2. Reproductions are readily available; see also for instance Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 45. The picture was later reworked by Francesco Bartolozzi in an engraving of 1790. Pictures of Kemble in the role of Richard III are strikingly similar to Hogarth's *Garrick*.

²³ Quoted in Knowles, *Life and Writings of Fuseli*, vol. 1, 189; emphasis added.

²⁴ Price, *Theatre in Age of Garrick*, 19–20. For an analysis of the *Tom Jones* passage see Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 40 ff.

playhouse one could hear a pin drop. Suddenly, as Hamlet moves towards the back stage slightly to the left and turns his back on the audience, Horatio starts, and saying: "Look, my Lord, it comes," points to the right, where the ghost has already appeared and stands motionless, before anyone is aware of him. At these words, Garrick turns sharply and at the same moment staggers back two or three paces with his knees giving under him; his hat falls to the ground and both his arms, especially the left, are stretched out nearly to their full length, with the hands as high as his head, the right arm more bent and the hand lower, and the fingers apart, but no loss of dignity, supported by his friends, who are better acquainted with the apparition and fear lest he should collapse. His whole demeanor is so expressive of terror that it made my flesh creep even before he began to speak. The almost terror-struck silence of the audience, which preceded this appearance and filled one with a sense of insecurity, probably did much to enhance this effect. At last he speaks, not at the beginning but at the end of a breath, with a trembling voice: "Angels and ministers of grace defend us!" words which supply anything this scene may lack and make it one of the greatest and most terrible which will ever be played on any stage. The ghost beckons to him. With eyes fixed on the ghost, though he is speaking to the companions, freeing himself from their restraining hands, as they warn him not to follow and hold him back. But at length, when they have tried his patience too far, he turns his face towards them, tears himself with great violence from their grasp, and draws his sword on them with a swiftness that makes one shudder, saying: "By Heaven! I'll make a ghost of him that lets me!" that is enough for them. Then he stands with his sword upon the guard against the spectre, saying: "Go on, I'll follow thee," and the ghost goes off the stage. Hamlet still remains motionless, his sword held out so as to make him keep his distance, and at length, when the spectator can no longer see the ghost, he begins to follow him, now standing still and then going on, with sword still upon guard, eyes fixed on the ghost, hair disordered, and out of breath, until he too is lost to sight. You can well imagine what applause accompanies this exit. It begins as soon as the ghost goes off the stage and lasts until Hamlet also disappears. What an amazing triumph it is. [...] The ghost was played by M. Bransby. He looked, in truth, very fine, clad from head to foot in armour, for which a suit of steel-blue satin did duty; even his face is hidden, except for his pallid nose, and a little to each side of it.²⁵

²⁵ Georg Christoph Lichtenberg, *Lichtenberg's Visits to England as Described in His Letters and Diaries*, quoted from the 1938 edition in Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 107–109. See also Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 38–39. The passage "With eyes fixed [...] hold him back" seems to be a sentence fragment, but it is identical in both these sources.

This detailed description certainly matches Garrick's meticulous craftsmanship in body management.²⁶ Interestingly, in the account the Hamlet actor rather than the ghost has the spectator's keen attention. In Clery's interpretation, scenes such as this worked towards the internalisation of the supernatural: "The body of the actor playing Hamlet becomes the locus of a system of exchanges, refractions and identifications joining the members of the audience, the ghost, and the ghost-seer on stage himself."²⁷ Of this, Garrick's performance is one example out of many. As I have remarked before, Siddons, both as a counterpart to Garrick with her interpretation of Lady Macbeth and in the role of Hamlet, occupied as it were the female part of the stage.

There are many visual representations of moments of sublime terror in *Macbeth*. One of the earliest is Henry Fuseli's watercolour representing "Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard in *Macbeth*" (1766). In what seems to be a close rendition of the assassination scene, Lady Macbeth puts a finger to her lips, at the same time extending her right arm to take the blood-stained daggers from Macbeth, who, distracted by the consciousness of the deed he has done, assumes a posture that looks almost like a caricature of a fear-paralysed assassin. This scene was later portrayed by Johan Zoffany and Valentine Green. The latter's mezzotint of 1776 shows the Macbeth couple against the dark interior of a Gothic castle (complete with a glimpse of clouds outside the high window and lightning shooting across the sky). There is a wedge of light coming through the open door which apparently leads to the king's chamber, where, daggers in hand, Lady Macbeth is headed while Macbeth (Garrick) fixes a gaze of dread upon the spectator.²⁸ Once more the same scene was "immortalised" by Thomas Beach in 1786, this time representing the Kemble siblings in "Kemble and Mrs Siddons in *Macbeth*," a more tightly framed rendition of the same moment captured in earlier pictures, in which Siddons with an expression of mixed dread and revulsion holds the daggers, now prominent, one in each

²⁶ For a close analysis of Garrick's technique see Leigh Woods, *Garrick Claims the Stage: Acting as Social Emblem in Eighteenth-Century England* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 118 ff. For additional illustration on the Ghost-encounter as Garrick's signature piece see Boaden, *Memoirs of Siddons*, 14–15.

²⁷ Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 42.

²⁸ In 1773, a reviewer for the *St. James Chronicle* complained that Garrick's clothes (which the artist, it seems, faithfully represents) did not match the spectacle, especially as regards the supernatural scenes; Garrick's Macbeth looked like a "modern fine gentleman" and when he met the Witches he looked "like a Beau, who had unfortunately slipped his Foot and tumbled into a Night Cellar, where a Parcel of Old Women were boiling Tripe for their Supper." Quoted in Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 181, note 20.

hand, and Kemble looks in horror at the viewer, his white hands gesturing the crime away.

We have a detailed description by Thomas Davies of the scene which corresponds to the pictures:

This representation of this terrible part of the play, by Garrick and Mrs. Pritchard, can no more be described than I believe it can be equalled. I will not separate the performers, for the merits of both were transcendent. His distraction of mind and agonizing horrors were finely contrasted by her seeming apathy, tranquillity, and confidence. The beginning of the scene after the murder was conducted in terrifying whispers. Their looks and action supplied the place of words. You heard what they spoke, but you learned more from the agitation of mind displayed in their action and deportment. The poet here gives only an outline to the consummate actor. — *I have done the deed!* — *Didst thou not hear a noise?* — *When?* — *Did you not speak?* The dark colouring, given by the actor to these speeches, makes the scene awful and tremendous to the auditors. The wonderful expression of heartfelt horror, which Garrick felt when he shewed his bloody hands, can only be conceived and described by those who saw him.²⁹

In his *Essay on Acting* (already mentioned), Garrick shares his thoughts on the role of Macbeth, whom he believes should be played as of a “moving statue” and a “petrified man.” His Macbeth is “sensible to imaginary noises” and deaf to the words of his wife, a detail which the different painters captured: the gazes of the couple meet in none of the pictures. Further, Macbeth’s voice is “articulately trembling” and “confusedly intelligible”; the entire figure is the fit representation of a horrified murderer.³⁰

The material just presented amply illustrates, and justifies, Addison’s tongue-in-cheek remark on the functions of the supernatural in the theatre: “There is nothing which delights and terrifies our *English* Theatre so much as a Ghost, especially when he appears in a bloody Shirt. A Spectre has very often saved a Play, though he has done nothing but stalked across the Stage or rose through a Cleft of it, and sunk again without speaking one Word.”³¹ Alert to the need for terror on the stage and extolling the Ghost in *Hamlet* as a “Masterpiece of its kind,” Addison concedes that the supernatural may have some justification on condition that the playwright finds for such “Terrorours” “a proper Season.” In other words,

²⁹ Thomas Davis, *Dramatic Miscellanies* (1784), quoted in Price, *Theatre in Age of Garrick*, 20.

³⁰ See Price, *Theatre in Age of Garrick*, 17.

³¹ The *Spectator*, No. 44, April 20, 1711; italics Addison’s.

circumstances matter greatly. As the accounts of performances quoted above make clear, the emphasis was not on the representation of the supernatural as such but on the actor and his reactions to it. On its own, despite Addison's assertion, a ghost would not be enough to evoke the reaction of delightful terror in the audience. What was necessary was the actor's body in the function of, as Clery puts it, "a lightning-rod for the transfer of passion."³² This function of theatrical performance was certainly manifest in scenes in which, as in *Macbeth*, the supernatural is as it were internalised, and invisible as an object to which the actor (and through him the spectator) would affix his emotional response. In the words of Clery, "The significance of a spectre is to be determined by the quality and intensity of the feeling it arouses. In any scene of haunting, fear is the true object of the aesthetic, the apparition a mere catalyst."³³ Shakespeare, with the supernatural material that his plays supplied, played here the role of another lightning-rod and catalyst, the atmosphere of idolatry creating an environment which legitimised the powerful emotional discharge the public hankered after.

Reluctantly (for fear of perpetuating superstition) allowing the theatre to present ghosts, the age evidently revelled in representations of the supernatural and of sublime terror in those spheres of artistic creativity where, thanks to the justifying intercession of Shakespeare, delight in fear was contained and justified. This aestheticising containment and legitimisation of the supernatural was possible in large part thanks to the temporal (and cultural) distance which Shakespeare guaranteed. In other words, Shakespeare's ghosts were tolerated because Shakespeare himself had undergone a process of spectralisation. The foreigner Lichtenberg was to note this when he added the following remark to his detailed description of Garrick's performance of the terror-stricken Hamlet: "one perceives that to act like Garrick and to write like Shakespeare are the effects of very deep-seated causes. They are certainly imitated; not they, but rather their phantom self, created by the imitator according to the measure of his own powers. He often attains to and even surpasses this phantom, and nevertheless falls far too short of the true original."³⁴ Thus in Lichtenberg's view, the spark of genius passes from Shakespeare via the Ghost onto Hamlet, whose role demands the congeniality of a Garrick to electrify the audience.

³² Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 40.

³³ Clery, *Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 46.

³⁴ Lichtenberg, *Lichtenberg's Visits to England*, in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 108.

Shakespeare's "Gothicness" from Dryden to Drake

I should not expect a bard to write by the rules of Aristotle.

from a letter of Horace Walpole (June 1760)

[...] the Romantic approach to Shakespeare has its roots deep in the eighteenth century.

Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (1986)

Our task now is to examine the way Shakespeare became entangled in the rise of the aesthetic of the Gothic. As we pass from John Dryden to Nathan Drake and Ann Radcliffe, the name of Shakespeare constantly crops up in various formulations of this aesthetic, coupled, for exemplification and justification, with such notions as superstition, fancy and imagination, enthusiasm, the supernatural, sublimity, and terror. Thus it comes as little surprise when with Drake and Radcliffe we find a full-blown aesthetic of terror under the auspices of Shakespeare, since the authority of the Bard and his genius was always at hand to introduce and defend new standards of taste and new poetics. By the 1750s Shakespeare had become synonymous with the powers of fancy, as is confirmed by such encomia as the invocation at the beginning of Mark Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination* (1744):

Thou, smiling queen of every tuneful breast,
Indulgent Fancy! from the fruitful banks
Of Avon, whence thy rosy fingers cull
Fresh flowers and dews to sprinkle on the turf
Where Shakespeare lies, be present; [...]¹

¹ In: *The Poetical Works of Mark Akenside*. Book 1, 6.

It has to be made clear at the outset that in what follows we make no attempt systematically either to consider the Gothic as a literary genre or indeed to examine critically the very notion of Gothicness. Postponing such necessary clarifications to the next chapter, we are here primarily interested in the rise of a new aesthetic where the different meanings of "Gothic" met "Shakespeare" for reasons which are hopefully going to become more evident as we proceed.

Before we turn our attention to theoretical discourse let us first examine samples of the poetry which, while also testifying to the growing fascination with the supernatural, due to the way it consciously engages the issue of poetic inspiration, anticipates some of the soon-to-emerge critical assumptions. In the year 1746, William Collins published his *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects*.² The collection opens with two odes which address the Aristotelian categories of Pity and Fear, two programme poems, i.e., ones in which execution mingles with its conceptual justification.³ Of the two, Collins gives a more elaborate treatment to Fear, the Pity ode being much shorter, less sophisticated in structure, and largely confined to propounding the idea that the spirit of tragedy is as native to British soil as it was to ancient Greece and that Pity personified will soon delight to hear a British lyre. In the meantime, the poet begs to be allowed to dwell with Her in her temple and "melt away in dreams of passion," thus betraying his Miltonic inspiration, which is even more pronounced in the Fear ode.

In "Ode to Fear,"⁴ Collins in a similar manner seeks to draw a line of continuity between ancient tragedians (Aeschylus and Sophocles; Euripides in "Pity") and their British inheritors: Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton. The great finale belongs to Shakespeare; in the last stanza the poet addresses the "mad nymph" thus:

O thou whose spirit most possessed
The sacred seat of Shakespeare's breast!
By all that from thy prophet broke,
In thy divine emotions spoke,

² The date on the title page is 1747, but the volume actually came out in December of the previous year; see Roger Lonsdale, ed., *The Poems of Thomas Gray, William Collins, Oliver Goldsmith* (London: Longman, 1969), editor's note to the titlepage. All references to the poems of Collins, unless specified otherwise, are to this edition.

³ While composing these poems Collins was considering a translation of the *Poetics*.

⁴ In Radcliffe's novels there are four epigraphs taken from this relatively short poem; interestingly, she never quotes Collins's most Shakespeare-derivative passage.

Hither again thy fury deal,
 Teach me but once like him to feel:
 His cypress wreath my meed decree,
 And I, O Fear, will dwell with thee!

lines 64—71

The last note is, again, Miltonic, echoing the final lines of “L’Allegro” and “Il Penseroso”; it is Shakespeare, however, on whom the nymph chose to bestow the gift of fury and whom she adorned with the “tragic crown” of the cypress wreath. The inspiration of the tragic poet is unambiguously identified as this divine gift of fury, which takes possession of the poet’s breast. It is the preceding stanza which assigns a cathartic role to the supernatural with Shakespeare as the model:

Dark power, with shuddering meek submitted thought
 Be mine to read the visions old,
 Which thy awakening bards have told:
 And, lest thou meet my blasted view,
 Hold each strange tale devoutly true;
 Ne’er be I found, by thee o’erawed,
 In that thrice-hallowed eve abroad,
 When ghosts, as cottage-maids believe,
 Their pebbled beds permitted leave,
 And goblins haunt, from fire or fen
 Or mine or flood, the walks of men!

lines 53—63

The passage is manifestly Shakespearean, shot through with literal borrowings, especially from *Hamlet*: “devoutly,” “hallowed,” “pebbled,” and “goblin” are all found in *Hamlet*, besides the obvious allusion to ghosts (or “goblins”) who are permitted to haunt the walks of men. The repulsion-attraction attitude of the poet has, too, its equivalent in *Hamlet*, in the shudders of the Prince, who cannot help but listen and hold true each tale although it may well “blast” (i.e., “strike with horror”) his eyes. Here the poet assumes a similar attitude to Fear’s “awakening bards” as that of Hamlet to the Ghost; the latter “could a tale unfold whose lightest word / Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood, / Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres [i.e., “blast” them]” (*H*, I.v. 15). In other words, Shakespeare once more is cast in the role of the Ghost. But the ambivalence is not only emotional; the poet’s reservations are also of a moral nature. The poet readily embraces the “visions old” and wishes “but once like [Shakespeare] to feel,” but at the same time distances himself from the superstitions of the common folk with the dismissive “as cottage

maids believe." The thought itself is enough and there is no need to put these superstitions to a reality check: "ne'er be I found [...] abroad."

There lies, it seems to me, a substantial difference between these two odes and the much more radical programme poem, "An Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland, Considered as the Subject of Poetry," composed around the year 1749 and, symptomatically of the changing poetic canons, published from an imperfect manuscript in 1788, almost thirty years after Collins's death.⁵ The extended title indicates that the poem's theme is poetry, that the poem is self-reflexive or metapoetic in the sense of addressing popular superstitions as a possible subject for poetry. But the title also contains the suggestion that superstition *can be regarded as an appropriate subject of poetry*. Furthermore, poetry is here understood in the elevated sense of heroic poetry (in Dryden's sense⁶), which has been proposed in the other two odes we have just examined, a sense deriving from — and emulative of — tragedy, as the ode form suggests. The title thus brings together two ideas which must have clashed against one another in the mind of the contemporary reader: superstition and heroic poetry. The poem's addressee is concealed under the letter "H," but whom we can easily identify as Collins's friend, the playwright John Home, composer of "tragic songs" (l. 4). Interestingly, Home was soon to earn himself a reputation as the "Scottish Shakespeare" owing to the enormous success of his play *Douglas*, which premiered in Edinburgh in 1756 and was then brought to London (Covent Garden), where "it vied with *Hamlet* as a perennial favourite."⁷

⁵ Collins's poems in defence of folk superstitions gave rise to the anonymous composition, *A Lyric Ode on the Faeries, Aerial Beings, and Witches of Shakespeare* (1776), subsequently set to music and in this form popularised by Thomas Linley. See Weinbrot, *Britannia's Issue*, 373 (with the relevant footnote).

⁶ In his essay "Of Heroic Plays," Dryden gives the following justification to a poet's use of the supernatural machinery: "I am of the opinion, that neither Homer, Virgil, Statius, Ariosto, Tasso, nor our English Spenser, could have formed their poems half so beautiful, without those gods and spirits, and those enthusiastic parts of poetry which compose the most noble parts of all their writings. [...] [A]n heroic poet is not tied to a bare representation of what is true, or exceeding the probable; but [...] he may let himself loose to visionary objects, and to the representation of such things as [...] may give him a freer scope for imagination. 'Tis enough that, in all ages and religions, the greatest part of mankind have believed the power of magic, and that there are spirits or spectres which have appeared." John Dryden, "Of Heroic Plays, an Essay (Prefixed to *The Conquest Of Granada*, 1672)," Dryden, *Essays*, vol. 1, 152–153. Dryden comes up here with the distinction between the probable and possible, which will be repeatedly used to justify the supernatural in poetry. See also Lonsdale, ed., *Poems of Gray, Collins, Goldsmith*, 516, editor's note, and Spacks, *Insistence of Horror*, 71 ff.

⁷ In Edinburgh, Home was praised as a "Scots Shakespeare," in the words of Nicoll (Allardyce Nicoll, *British Drama* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1962), 172). Ber-

As in "Ode to Fear," the suggestion in "Popular Superstitions" is that poetic inspiration is to be sought in beliefs of the country folk. Superstitions, preserved among "untutored swains" (l. 30) and in "native legends" (l. 186) are vindicated as worthy of the heroic muse: named are Spenser, Shakespeare and Tasso (as in Hurd's *Letters* and Drake's *Hours*, to be discussed presently). The poet is encouraged to "dare to depart / From sober truth" (ll. 188—189), because such departure does not necessarily make him untrue to Nature. Once more, a substantial part of the poem is devoted to Shakespeare. In Stanza XI, Collins brings up the example of *Macbeth*:

Nor need'st thou blush that such false themes engage
 Thy gentle mind, of fairer stores possessed;
 For not alone they touch the village breast,
 But filled in elder time the historic page.
 There Shakespeare's self, with every garland crowned,
 In musing hour his Wayward Sisters found,
 And with their terrors dressed the magic scene.
 From them he sung, when mid his bold design,
 Before the Scot afflicted and aghast,
 The shadowy kings of Banquo's fated line,
 Through the dark cave in gleamy pageant passed.
 Proceed, nor quit the tales which, simply told,
 Could once so well my answering bosom pierce;
 Proceed, in forceful sounds and colours bold,
 The native legends of thy land rehearse;
 To such adapt thy lyre and suit thy powerful verse.

lines 172—187

The "gentle mind" of the addressee needs encouragement for he cannot help feeling ashamed at the idea of using superstitious themes in his poetry, themes which the age considers "false." By way of encouragement the poem's speaker names the supernatural in Shakespeare and its historical source, the "Historic page," i.e., Holinshed's *Chronicles*. This precedent ennobles such themes and lifts them above the common folk ("village breast"). In other words, if Shakespeare, the recognised tragic authority ("with every garland crowned"), was not above handling such themes, our friend is neither. The Witches in *Macbeth* ("Wayward Sisters") are not only

trand Evans (*Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1947), 19) regards *Douglas* as a "precursor of the Gothic school" and devotes several pages to its Gothicism in "attitude" (of the playwright to his material) "technique" (plot hanging on a mysterious past event) and "theme" (long-believed-lost relatives); see *ibidem*, 20—21.

supernatural beings but, as befits a tragedy,⁸ awe-inspiring ones; the appropriate reaction of terror is verified by the hero, "the Scot afflicted and aghast," and furthermore, by the speaker in the poem, who confirms that tales of the supernatural have the power to "pierce [his] answering bosom."

Collins not only encourages; he teaches by example. Having blurred the generic difference between heroic poetry (ode) and drama (tragedy), he employs the Spenserian-Shakespearean-Miltonic tints to paint supernatural terrors of his own. In stanza VII of the Ode, he depicts the drowning of a "luckless swain" by an "angry fiend" by means of a "whelming flood" which sends the man to his death. What we have here is a self-conscious construction of the sublime, the effect enhanced by the working of the hand of a malicious demon behind the "roused" element. And Collins does not stop at drowning. Not only does the dying man have a vision of Death "clad in all its terrors," but soon returns from the dead to visit "his anxious wife" and his orphaned "bairns." This exemplary tale, unfolded in two stanzas, ends in the appearance of a "mournful sprite," evidently designed to send chills down the spine of the reader who has grown accustomed to spurning such false tales:

Then he, perhaps, with moist and watery hand,
Shall fondly seem to press her shuddering cheek,
And with his blue swoll'n face before her stand,
And, shivering cold, these piteous accents speak [...]

ll. 129—132

Aside from being a model example of the typically Gothic blending of pity and terror (see Chapter IV), this passage, I believe, considerably weakens Spack's contention that Collins "removes himself one extra degree from his material by treating it not directly, not even as a potential subject for himself, but as a hypothetical poetic material for someone else."⁹ This is very much the case with "Ode to Fear," while in "Popular Superstitions" Collins overcomes the previous hesitations. Spacks, however, has ignored the chronology and discusses the later poem first.

⁸ This has a precedent in Richard Steele's *Spectator* essay (No. 141, 11th August 1711): "The Incantations in *Mackbeth* [sic] have a Solemnity admirably adapted to the Occasion of that Tragedy, and fill the Mind with a suitable Horror [...]" The genius of Shakespeare alone ("passing thro' an Imagination like *Shakespear's*") justifies such "Machinery," whereupon Steele goes on to quote from Dryden's Prologue to *The Tempest*, "But *Shakespear's Magic* cou'd not copy'd be."

⁹ Spacks, *Insistence of Horror*, 70. To this, Spacks adds the following generalisation: "he [Collins] has found the ideal eighteenth-century mode of gaining the advantages of interest in dubious material without the disadvantages" (ibidem, 71).

The publication history of the Ode should give us pause; the eagerness to publish it in the late 1780s certainly resulted from the conviction that a favourable reception, such as Radcliffe's, was to be expected. A revival of heroic and allegorical poetry later in the century found an interesting dramatic appropriation, one attuned to the political connotations of that revival. Thomas Gray's "The Bard" (1755—1757) was soon to be used by James Boaden as a leading motif for a semi-supernatural scene in *Cambro-Britons* (1798), in which King Edward's invasion of Llewellyn's Wales is held back by a group of Bards. Boaden borrows directly the line with which Gray's poem opens: "Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!" (*C-B*, III.iv/76), and, true to his favourite method, paraphrases some other lines from the opening of the poem for which, in turn, Gray was indebted to Shakespeare's *King John*. Where Gray has "Confusion on thy banners wait / Though fanned by Conquest's crimson wing [...]," Boaden has "Havock choak thy furious way! / Desolation's raven wing / Sweep thee from the eye of day!" — both echoing Shakespeare's "and vast confusion waits, / As doth a raven on a sick-fall'n breast" (*KJ*, IV.iii. 151—152).¹⁰

In Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762),¹¹ the name of Shakespeare, alongside those of Spenser and Milton, appears in an argument which is meant to legitimise Gothicism; Montague Summers considers Bishop Hurd of Worcester and his tract as of "paramount importance" in the defence of the notion of "Gothic."¹² *Letters* is very much a transition text, having appeared five years after Burke's *Inquiry* and two or three years before Walpole's *Otranto*.¹³ Hurd begins his essay with a discourse upon the characteristics of chivalry and, predictably, soon finds himself labouring to explain the way in which the representation of chivalric ideals was joined with the marvellous. Greek antiquity with its Cyclops is,

¹⁰ The source of *Cambro-Britons* in Gray's "The Bard" has somehow eluded scholarly attention. It is mentioned neither by Cohan in his Introduction to Boaden's *Plays* nor by Evans. In Gray, the Bard, having finished his speech, plunges "headlong [...] deep in the roaring tide" (ll. 143—144). Boaden's "principle Bard," beckoned by the shades of the murdered, "flings himself into the torrent below him" (*C-B*, III.iv/78). The tradition of regarding the Welsh as descendants of ancient Britons was mentioned earlier, in connection with the revival of the Vortigern and Rowena legend.

¹¹ Published anonymously in 1762, the *Letters* had undergone some changes before they went into a second edition in 1765 as part of a three-volume publication entitled *Moral and Political Dialogues*. See Hoyt Trowbridge, "Introduction," in: Richard Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clear Memorial Library, 1963), ii (with the relevant endnote).

¹² Summers, *Gothic Quest*, 41.

¹³ See Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 73—75 and Bate, *Shakespeare and Romantic Imagination*, 11. See below, p. 113.

he observes, similar to Gothic with its monsters and dragons.¹⁴ Praise of the heroic manners of Greek antiquity and its equivalent in the chivalric ("Gothic") Middle Ages leads Hurd to a defence of the two types of poetry: the heroic poetry of Homer and, again, its medieval equivalent which Hurd finds in Tasso and, on his native soil, in Spenser and Milton. Thus the veneration of "forgotten chivalry" leads Hurd to the subject of poetry which is founded upon it; chivalric manners were superior to ancient pagan ones thanks to their "dignity and magnificence."¹⁵ Hurd praises the medieval "religious machinery" of superstition for its entertainment value and its capacity to "awaken the imagination."¹⁶ Distinguishing two types, or "systems," of the marvellous, the fairy and solemn (e.g., the Witches in *Macbeth*), Hurd claims that the "horrors of the Gothic were above measure striking and terrible" and that "Gothic Enchanters shook and alarmed all nature."¹⁷

When he comes to Shakespeare, Hurd finds an example of the marvellous in *The Tempest*, and quotes Prospero's lines about "rough magic," paying special attention to suggestions of necromancy: "Graves, at my command, / Have open'd, and let forth their sleepers."¹⁸ As Hurd realises, this passage in Shakespeare has a parallel and very probably also a source in the Medea episode in Book VII of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which considerably weakens his distinction between the pagan and medieval types of the marvellous. Hurd nonetheless insists that there is an essential difference between "sleepers" raised by Prospero (whom Hurd calls a "Gothic magician") and the dead of "the pagan necromancers."¹⁹ In other words, Hurd finds himself hard-pressed to demonstrate that regardless of the actual sources of the marvellous in Shakespeare, which as we have seen are many and varied, they are part and parcel of the world of chivalry and, going a step farther, native to English soil.

In his attempt to justify the marvellous, Hurd summons the authority of Addison to his aid and goes on to quote a *Spectator* essay in which the latter supplies much-needed links in his somewhat strained argumentation. The passage runs as follows:

The Antients have not much of this Poetry among them; for, indeed almost the whole Substance of it owes it's [sic] Original to the darkness

¹⁴ Hurd, *Letters*, 30—31.

¹⁵ Hurd, *Letters*, 45 and 48.

¹⁶ Hurd, *Letters*, 48.

¹⁷ Hurd, *Letters*, 49.

¹⁸ Hurd, *Letters*, 51. Hurd slightly misquotes Prospero's speech at V.v. 48: "graves at my command / Have waked their sleepers, ope'd and let 'em forth / By my so potent art."

¹⁹ Hurd, *Letters*, 51.

and superstition of later Ages [here Hurd omits a passage]. Our Forefathers look'd upon Nature with more reverence and horror, before the world was enlightened by learning and philosophy, and loved to astonish themselves with the apprehensions of Witchcraft, Prodigies, Charms and Inchantments. There was not a village in *England*, that had not a Ghost in it, the churchyards were all haunted, every large common had a circle of fairies belonging to it, and there was scarce a Shepherd to be met with who had not seen a spirit.²⁰

What Addison says further, as we have seen above (p. 63), concerns Shakespeare's fancifulness considered as a national trait of the English. Besides this symptomatic emphasis on the national character of the marvellous in Shakespeare we also have here an attempt to contain the visionary being within the limits of the natural and the probable, i.e., make it conform to the enlightened spirit of the age. Addison's essay reveals yet another source of the legitimisation of the supernatural, which is Dryden's idea of the "fairy way of writing," i.e., writing "wherein the Poet quite loses Sight of Nature, and entertains his Reader's Imagination with the Characters and Actions of such Persons as have many of them no Existence, but what he bestows on them. Such are Fairies, Witches, Magicians, Demons, and departed Spirits. This Mr. *Dryden* calls *the Fairy Way of Writing* [...]"²¹

To return to our critic: Hurd, having praised the marvellous, elevates the Gothic in Shakespeare above the classical: "one thing is clear, that even he is greater when he uses Gothic manners and machinery, than when he employs classical: which brings us again to the same point, that the former have, by their nature and genius, the advantage of the latter in producing the *sublime*."²² This mention of the sublime may be indicative of another of Hurd's sources, besides Addison, namely John Dennis, a Shakespeare critic and an eminent precursor of Edmund Burke's conception of sublimity. Thus, before we go on to discuss Elizabeth Montagu's defence of Shakespeare's Gothicness, which is heavily indebted to Hurd, let us briefly examine the way in which Dennis portrays his conception of "enthusiastic terror."

In his essay "On the Genius and Writings of Shakespeare" (1712), Dennis puts forth the assertion that "his [Shakespeare's] Master-Passion was Terror," and that "his Paintings are often so beautiful and so lively, so

²⁰ Quoted after Hurd, *Letters*, 53–54. Hurd quotes faithfully from Addison's famous essay in the *Spectator*, No. 419, July 1st, 1712; italics in the original. See also Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 106. The essay appeared in a series devoted to "The Pleasures of the Imagination."

²¹ Dryden used this phrase in the dedication to his *King Arthur* of 1691. See Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 171, note 7.

²² Hurd, *Letters*, 60; Hurd's emphasis.

graceful and so powerful, especially where he uses them in order to move Terror [...]."²³ In *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704), Dennis comes up with the idea of "enthusiastic terror," which "contributes greatly to the sublime."²⁴ Among many "religious" ideas capable of producing enthusiastic terror, Dennis names, with a liberal pen, "gods, demons, hell, spirits and souls of men, miracles, prodigies, enchantments, witchcrafts, thunder, tempests, raging seas, inundations, torrents, earthquakes, volcanoes, monsters, serpents, lions, tigers, fire, war, pestilence, famine, etc." He adds, however, that the prime source of terror is supernatural, as nothing is more terrible than "the wrath of Infinite Power."²⁵

After the birth of Gothic fiction in 1764, such theorists of the terror mode as William Duff, Elizabeth Montagu, the Aikins, and Nathan Drake rendered what we can retrospectively call the poetics of the Gothic more and more consistent. In *An Essay on Original Genius* (1767), drawing heavily upon Edward Young's *Conjectures upon Original Composition* (1759),²⁶ Duff binds vivid imagination together with the supernatural (or "the preternatural") as a source of poetic invention. The Original Genius is distinguished "by a more vivid and a more comprehensive Imagination," and "by an inventive and plastic Imagination."²⁷ The Original Genius "delights in every species of fiction" and will "display his invention" in "praeternatural characters," by which Duff means, of course, the usual assembly of Witches, Ghosts, Fairies, and "such other unknown visionary beings" and "such like apparitions." The name of Shakespeare appears as a matter of course. Reverence for Shakespeare as an Original has already become a commonplace of the age's criticism,²⁸ and now Duff affixes it unequivocally to the use of the supernatural. It is the Original Genius that has the boldness to venture — Duff borrows here from *Hamlet* — into "that undiscovered country," which is the region from which

²³ Dennis, "Genius and Writings of Shakespeare," 24. Dennis adds, as it were in anticipation of Hurd's essay, that romance and fable have the power to entertain "the generality of Mankind with more Satisfaction than History" (25).

²⁴ John Dennis, *The Grounds of Criticism in Poetry* (1704), in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 102.

²⁵ Dennis, *Grounds of Criticism in Poetry*, 103.

²⁶ Young, *Conjectures on Original Composition*, in: NATC, 429.

²⁷ William Duff, "An Essay on Original Genius and Its Various Modes of Exertion in Philosophy and Fine Arts, Particularly in Poetry (1767)", in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 125.

²⁸ In his Preface to *The Works of Shakespear* (1725), Alexander Pope puts it thus: "If ever any Author deserved the name of an Original, it was *Shakespear*" (Smith, ed., *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, 44; original emphasis retained). It needs to be added that for Pope originality consists in "drawing [poetry] immediately from the fountains of Nature."

the poet takes his “visionary beings”: “Shakespear [...] is the only English writer, who with amazing boldness has ventured to burst the barriers of a separate state, and disclose the land of Apparitions, Shadows, and Dreams; and [Shakespeare] has nobly succeeded in his daring attempt.” Due to the obscurity which envelops them, visionary beings afford “great scope for the flights of fancy.” However, Duff adds a word of warning, cautioning likely imitators that “it will be hazardous for any one to pursue the track which [Shakespeare] has marked out; and that none but a Genius uncommonly original, can hope for success in the pursuit.”²⁹ As we already know, such caution was not to be exercised by Gothic authors. The Penguin editor of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* points to a correspondence between Radcliffe’s frequent use of “enthusiasm” and Duff’s explorations of “the role of imagination in ordinary perception [...] related to the special acts of imagination of which only individuals gifted with original genius are said to be capable.”³⁰ This indicates the way in which “Gothicised Shakespeare” helped create a new genre.

Montagu, who it will be recalled joins Walpole in his debate with Voltaire, openly reveals her debt to Hurd, which leads to her calling Shakespeare “our Gothic bard,” and yet it seems that this epithet is not granted in the spirit of flattery: “Shakespear, in the dark shades of Gothic barbarism, had no resources but in the very phantoms that walked the night of ignorance and superstition.”³¹ Montagu does what Hurd fails to do: she joins together the idea of the bard with the notion of Gothicism: “our Gothic bard employs the potent agency of sacred fable.”³² Yet, as the passage about barbarism makes obvious, all such reasoning is not only sinuous and convoluted but also half-hearted and ambiguous. Shakespeare, with his machinery of the preternatural, cannot be unreservedly recuperated. The use of this kind of machinery in poetry is justified by reverence for “national superstition,” which, although it excuses the employment of the marvellous in Shakespeare, effectively precludes its use in an age of self-proclaimed enlightenment. Now reverence is out of the question; what is left to Montagu’s contemporaries is critical examination or theatrical (aesthetic) experience; the latter allowing us, “as spectators,” to “willingly yield ourselves up to pleasing delusion.”³³ Eventually, perhaps dimly aware of the difficulty that lies in allowing an enlightened audience to delight

²⁹ Duff, *Essay on Original Genius*, 126.

³⁰ The Penguin edition of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 634 (editor’s note).

³¹ Montagu, *Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, 150 (of the 1769 original). Excerpts of this essay’s chapter “On the Praeternatural Beings” appear in Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*.

³² Montagu, *Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, 147.

³³ Montagu, *Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, 163.

in superstitious dread, Montagu hesitatingly opens a line of justification: the incantation of the Witches ("those potent ministers of direful superstition") in *Macbeth* "seizes the heart of the ignorant, and communicates an irresistible horror to the imagination of even the more informed spectator."³⁴ The justification is thus aesthetic, concentrated on the response of the reader/spectator. In other words, Montagu's "informed" contemporaries are prevented from fully recognising ("revering") the superstitions of the past, and yet in order to take the marvellous in Shakespeare seriously, they need to have retained some reverence, if not for the national superstitions any more, then at least for the way these have been preserved in Shakespeare. If the English fail or refuse to respect their superstitions — which will make them no better than the French, who have found Shakespeare's ghosts ridiculous — Montagu's entire argument collapses. One way or another, Shakespeare's supernatural machinery needs to be allowed to do its tricks, i.e., to "communicate an irresistible horror to the imagination." The theatre has become a platform which permits even the informed to delight in and be instructed by the old superstitions, preserved in spectral form.

John and Anna Laetitia Aikin, treading in the footsteps of Edmund Burke's treatise on the sublime (*A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, 1757) and Walpole's *Otranto* (with both Prefaces, 1764/1765) take another significant step in the direction of a "Gothic aesthetic," especially in the way they seek to join the ideas of pleasure and terror. In their essay "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror" (1773), the Aikins argue for a link which connects "wildnesses of the imagination" with "scenes of horror." Making an allusion to *Macbeth*, they point to tragedy as "the most favourite work of fiction" which "has supt full with horrors."³⁵ Writing their essay almost two decades before Radcliffe's romances, they cite exactly those scenes in Shakespeare from which she would draw most inspiration: "The ghost of Hamlet, *Macbeth* descending into the witches' cave, and the tent scene in *Richard*," scenes which "command forcibly the attention of our souls."³⁶ Perusing their

³⁴ Montagu, *Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, 197 (Chapter "The Tragedy of *Macbeth*").

³⁵ The line is *Macbeth*'s, spoken in Act V: "I have supp'd full with horrors [...]" (*Mcb.*, V.v. 13). Characteristically of the "Gothic" manner of handling Shakespeare, the line is wrenched out of its original context, which gives it a very different meaning to the one suggested by the Aikins. *Macbeth* speaks of having "almost forgotten the taste of fears" and of his inability to be started by horror, which might actually be regarded as a warning against the indiscriminate use of supernatural machinery.

³⁶ John Aikin and Anna Laetitia Barbauld, "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror; with Sir Bertrand, A Fragment," in: John Aikin and Anna Laetitia Barbauld,

argumentation one detects a slight reservation, but the logic is impeccable: tragedy is “the most favourite work of fiction,” and terror was assigned to tragedy by “the ancient critics” (probably meaning Aristotle); “extraordinary personages” (equivalent to Duff’s “visionary beings,” etc.) are best suited to inspire terror; it follows that tragedy needs to make use of the supernatural machinery. Collins is summoned for support, as his (“most poetical”) “Ode to Fear” “has finely enforced the idea.” But the waterproof logic leads to further conclusions which sound all but ominous if one takes into account the future evolution of the newly emerged type of romance: “Hence, the more wild, fanciful, and extraordinary are the circumstances of a scene of horror, the more pleasure we receive from it.” This sounds almost like an invitation to an all-out competition. We must not forget that the Aikins wrote this with a copy of *The Castle of Otranto* on the shelf, the derivative nature of which they indicated when they described it as “a very spirited modern attempt upon the same plan of mixed terror, adapted to the model of Gothic romance.”³⁷ That it was yet too early for a more detached reflection upon the aesthetic of pleasing terror is demonstrated by the authors’ own attempt at a piece of fiction prepared according to the recipe (gleaned from *Otranto*), the story “Sir Bertrand, A Fragment.”³⁸

Perhaps the greatest novelty which the Aikins come up with is the notion of suspense. With this notion they go beyond the “static” or painterly idea of “dwelling upon the objects of pure terror.” They call suspense painful and describe it as a compulsion to carry on with the story: “the irresistible desire of satisfying curiosity, [which] when once raised, will account for our eagerness to go quite through an adventure, though we suffer actual pain during the whole course of it.” But once more, what follows sounds hardly like a recommendation of the nascent mode of fiction: “This is the impulse which renders the poorest and most insipid narrative interesting when once we get fairly into it.”³⁹ This is a very interesting early example of critics becoming conscious that the supernatural

Miscellaneous Pieces, in Prose (London: J. Johnson, 1792; 3rd edition), 121. (For a rpt. and notes see Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 127–132.) Interestingly, in the same sentence the Aikins allude to two other plays, Thomas Otway’s *Venice Preserved* (1682) and Nicholas Rowe’s *Jane Shore* (1714), both in the standard repertory of the day and both famous for the memorable interpretations of the female leading roles by Siddons (of Belvidera and Jane respectively).

³⁷ Aikin and Barbauld, “Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror,” 126; emphasis added.

³⁸ Summers ascribes the essay to Miss Aikin (later Barbauld) and the story to Dr. Aikin (*Gothic Quest*, 48).

³⁹ Aikin and Barbauld, “Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror,” 123.

element of the Gothic romance is not merely about objects of terror displayed for the reader's shuddering delectation. The notion of suspense to a large extent militates against the supernatural machinery inasmuch as "dwelling upon objects of pure terror" removes the compulsion to go on reading. A fuller awareness of this was to come with Radcliffe and her distinction between terror and horror.

It was Nathan Drake who eventually came to gather all the basic elements that constitute the aesthetic of terror. His *Literary Hours, or Sketches Critical and Narrative*, first published in 1798 and then "corrected and greatly enlarged" for a second edition in 1800, includes essays: "On the Government of the Imagination; on the Frenzy of Tasso and Collins," "On Gothic Superstition," "On Objects of Terror," and "On the Superstitions of the Highlands of Scotland," poetical pieces: "Ode to Superstition" (accompanying the superstition essay), and fictions in the manner of the Aikins' "Sir Bertrand" entitled "Henry Fitzowen, a Gothic Tale" and "Montmorenci, a Fragment" (the latter accompanying the essay on objects of terror).⁴⁰ Drake recognises openly what he calls "the power of gothic agency," and does not fail to mention "the apparitions of Shakespeare" and to praise Shakespeare's ghosts for their solemnity and striking properties. Although, unlike Radcliffe, he refuses to endorse Shakespeare's authorship of *Titus Andronicus*,⁴¹ Drake praises the Poet for his capability of "raising the most awful, yet the most delightful species of terror."⁴² "Shakspeare possessed in a far superior degree [...] the powers of superhuman creation, and no poet ever enjoyed such an unlimited dominion over the fears and superstitions of mankind."⁴³ Furthermore, Drake strikes a national note as he eulogises the romantic poetic genius: "and I venture to predict, that if at any time these romantic legends [featuring supernatural agency] be totally laid aside, our national poetry will degenerate into mere morality,

⁴⁰ Clery and Miles have reprinted portions of two essays, "On Gothic Superstition" and "On Objects of Terror;" see *Gothic Documents*, 154–163. All my subsequent citations of Drake are from the 1800 edition.

⁴¹ In "On Objects of Terror" (in: *Hours*, vol. 1, 356). Drake calls the play "wretched" and subscribes to the general opinion that *Titus* could not have been Shakespeare's. Interestingly, Radcliffe appends an epigraph from *Titus* to a chapter in *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (Chap. 18 in vol. 4) identifying it as Shakespeare's. Similarly, while Drake finds Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother* (1768) defective (ibidem), Radcliffe gives it a gesture of recognition by using several citations from the play as epigraphs in *The Italian* (and one, earlier, in *The Romance of the Forest*). It is easy to overlook or underestimate the boldness of Radcliffe's open appreciation extended towards plays whose artistic merit and moral propriety were questioned by her contemporaries.

⁴² Drake, "On Gothic Superstition," in: *Hours*, vol. 1, 141.

⁴³ Drake, "Government of Imagination," in: *Hours*, vol. 1, 62.

criticism, and satire; and that the sublime, the terrible, and the fanciful in poetry, will no longer exist."⁴⁴

Drake's is a late coming, post-Collins, post-Walpole, and post-Radcliffe reflection in the sense that it draws upon their joint achievement and his defence of Gothicism, one would think, was greatly aided by the growing popularity and commercial success of the Gothic romance. His appraisal of the "Gothic" genius of Shakespeare may have even been directly inspired by Radcliffe, whom he memorably christens "the Shakspeare of Romance Writers,"⁴⁵ an encomium which, if Radcliffe knew of it, must have been exceptionally rewarding for an author whose goal was to emulate the Great Original. Interestingly, in his depiction of the "frenzy" or madness of Tasso,⁴⁶ Drake is indebted to Shakespeare in a similar way to the Gothic authors he admires: he borrows the language from *Hamlet* and specifically from the closet scene of Act III, thus aligning Tasso with Hamlet the ghost-seer.

⁴⁴ Drake, "On Gothic Superstition," in: *Hours*, vol. 1, 146. Jacqueline Howard sums up the argument of "On Gothic Superstition" as follows: "in concentrating on the fearful aspects of the supernatural, writers of Gothic romance had neglected the 'sportive' branch of medieval superstition, the 'traditionary tales of elves and fairies' which had been employed to good effect by Spencer and Shakespeare"; the Penguin edition of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 634 (editor's note).

⁴⁵ Drake, "On Objects of Terror," in: *Hours*, vol. 1, 359.

⁴⁶ See Drake, "Government of Imagination," in: *Hours*, vol. 1, 60.

The Gothic manifestos: Walpole and Radcliffe

Not to miscarry in an imitation of Shakespeare, would
be to be Shakespeare.

Horace Walpole

On the strength of the evidence presented, the joining of the supernatural and the poetic genius was an acquired taste that developed in the late eighteenth century. As E.J. Clery sums up this thought, “The ability to evoke supernatural dread was [...] the ultimate test for a truly unbounded imagination.”¹ Clery points out that, around the 1790s, “the supernatural was converted into an opportunity for asserting poetic vision beyond the mundane for the writer, and achieving a sublime experience of terror for the audience.”² As we have observed, Shakespeare was an ever-present companion to those who strove to justify a poetics of the extramundane. While for the Augustans imitation and emulation were not a problem, for those who put resourcefulness above all it became, one would think, a major crux. Having demolished the orthodoxy of the rules, the epoch set up another one, that of the Great Original, an embodiment of poetic genius. The problem is that to imitate the inimitable makes just about as much sense as to affect enthusiasm. Clery succinctly captures the dilemma occasioned by the idolatry: Shakespeare “emerged as the paradoxical thing, the model of ‘untutored genius,’ the pattern of originality.”³

Our task at this point is to examine the species of influence which, it will be remembered, is of a personal nature. We can distinguish two types of evidence here: that which reveals an author’s individual exposure to Shakespeare and that of an expressly formulated authorial intention to

¹ Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 66.

² Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 8–9.

³ Clery, “Introduction,” in: Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, xiv.

imitate, copy, or recreate. The analyses of the last two chapters allow us to reconstruct patterns of reception; the “Gothic manifestos” substantially aid this task. We shall first focus on statements of intent by Walpole and Radcliffe. Another important source is found in the peculiar intertextual entity, the epigraph. Subsequently, then, Shakespearean epigraphs will be examined, not in relation to the contents of the novels, but to the extent that they support the task of reconstruction. Verbal allusions and textual importations as well as borrowed or similar proper names — which like the epigraph seem to fall beyond the content proper of the literary work in which they occur — are so many species of verbal evidence, and will have to be examined in due course.

The engagement of Horace Walpole with Shakespeare’s *oeuvre* is extensive, as testified to by his correspondence, which is peppered with allusions to Shakespeare (especially to Walpole’s favourite play, *Hamlet*) and contain occasional theoretical pronouncements.⁴ Besides his letters, in which he would assume the posture of the melancholy Prince,⁵ Walpole mounted a defence of the Bard against French criticism, composed “notes on several characters in Shakespeare,”⁶ founded a new species of romance upon the Shakespearean model, composed a play, “Shakespearean” as well as Gothic,⁷ and advised Robert Jephson on a dramatisation of his *Castle of Otranto* (*The Count of Marbonne*) in three letters. The Shakespearean spell under which Walpole seems to have remained throughout his life can perhaps only be compared to that which captivated Radcliffe. His fascination with *Hamlet*, and especially with the grave-diggers scene, went as far as a desire to “Gothicise” the play. To this testifies his tongue-in-cheek suggestion that for his *Hamlet* Shakespeare drew on “Olaus Ostrogothus” rather than Saxo Grammaticus.⁸ This substitution of a mock Gothic source

⁴ For an overview see Jess Stein’s article “Walpole and Shakespeare,” a study based on Paget Toynbee’s edition of Walpole’s correspondence (1903) with Supplement.

⁵ As in an early letter to Richard West, sent in 1739 from the Continent while on his Grand Tour; quoted in: R.W. Ketton-Cremer, *Horace Walpole. A Biography* (London: Methuen. University Paperbacks, 1964), 53.

⁶ See Wilmarth S. Lewis, “Edmond Malone, Horace Walpole, and Shakespeare,” in: René Wellek and Alvaro Ribeiro, eds., *Evidence in Literary Scholarship. Essays in Memory of James Marschall Osborn* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), 353—362; the article includes Walpole’s notes on Shakespeare, written between 1759 and 1795. The notes, edited by W.S. Lewis, were printed “privately” in 1940 as *Notes by Horace Walpole on Several Characters of Shakespeare* (see Bibliography).

⁷ Designation used by Michael Pincombe in “Horace Walpole’s *Hamlet*,” in: Marta Gibińska and Jerzy Limon, eds., *Hamlet East-West* (Gdańsk: Theatrum Gedanense Foundation, 1998), 134, note 5.

⁸ See Pincombe, “Walpole’s *Hamlet*,” 128.

(Olaus Ostrogothus) for a genuine one (Saxo) is symptomatic of the Goth-icists' proclivity for authorial masquerade, but it also has to do with the conviction that the Danes actually were a Gothic nation.⁹ More enigmatic is the birth of *Otranto* out of a dream in which in his counterfeit Gothic mansion Walpole saw a gigantic suit of armour.

Walpole's Preface to the 1764 edition of *Otranto* makes no mention of Shakespeare; instead, it reveals Walpole's debt to the one-hundred-year-long critical legacy, in which as we have seen Shakespeare was an always present theme. Walpole's gesture of masquerading as an editor and translator allows him to excuse the use of the supernatural machinery ("miracles, visions, necromancy, dreams, and other preternatural events") as native to the early romance. The romances of old have their own rule of verisimilitude by which "every kind of prodigy" is justified by the fact that the figures in the work act as though they believed in the miraculous. Next, Walpole summons the Aristotelian categories of pity and terror ("the rules of the drama") in order to justify the unity of action in his work, in which "[e]very thing tends directly to the catastrophe." In this way we enter the province of drama, and indeed the author boasts that "[t]he rules of the drama are almost observed throughout the conduct of the piece." That his ambitions lie with drama is further confirmed by this statement of the mock translator: "It is pity that he did not apply his talents to what they were evidently proper for, the theatre." This might explain why *Otranto* was soon followed by *The Mysterious Mother* (1768) as well as Walpole's involvement in the composition and staging of a theatrical adaptation of his romance by Robert Jephson. We shall be returning to this (p. 167).

The name of Shakespeare appears in the Preface to the second edition of the novel, now subtitled "A Gothic story," which reveals his name as author. While Walpole blames the modern type of romance for "damping up" the "great resources of fancy," he finds equally blameable the "ancient romance" in which all was "imagination and improbability." In proposing a middle-way blending of these two types, Walpole defends both the "liberty [of fancy] to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention" (strongly reminiscent of Hurd) and the "rules of probability," which should govern the conduct of the protagonists. What Walpole seems to be saying is that even though he puts his "actors" in extraordinary situations and springs all kinds of prodigies upon them, he expects them to "think, speak, and act" according to the rules of probability, which is to say, "as

⁹ See Pincombe, "Walpole's *Hamlet*," 134, note 7. Samuel Kliger mentions a conception according to which the Goths, conceived as the "aboriginal folk," divided as they spread over Europe and Asia into the Visigoths and the Ostrogoths (*Goths in England*, 12).

mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions.” This reminds us of Addison’s praise of Shakespeare’s “noble extravagance of fancy” (quoted above, p. 63), the difference being that Addison never intended to imitate the wild solemnity of Shakespeare’s ghosts, fairies, and witches. In Walpole we already have a manifesto which is far from clear and courts contradiction. For if the figures of “ancient romance” acted in an absurd manner, then who is to say what “natural” behaviour should be like when the circumstances defy the common laws of nature? The problem is aggravated rather than solved by Walpole’s defence of the behaviour of the commoners or domestics in his “little piece.” These lowly characters, as the readers of the first edition of *Otranto* had already had a chance to see for themselves, with their robust display of superstitious dread tend to dispel the solemn awe which the supernatural occurrences inspire in the “princes and heroes.” Moreover, they impede the progress of the action, which according to Walpole’s express desire, should “tend directly to the catastrophe.” Yet Walpole insists that they are as indispensable as the grave-diggers in *Hamlet* for the way they put the sublime and pathetic qualities of the dignified figures in proper relief.

Walpole’s theoretical meanderings make us realise two things: the scope of his dependence on Shakespeare as the “higher authority than my own opinion” and the idiosyncrasy of his creative reception of his “immortal countryman.” Walpole’s predilection for the grave-diggers in *Hamlet* — a mixture of “buffoonery and solemnity” which the French could not tolerate — reflects the fact that they were to him a confirmation of the genius of Shakespeare (“the brightest genius this country has produced”), to whom no man will “give laws.” This absolves Walpole from servitude to the rules but also plunges him into another ambiguity, if not outright contradiction. Walpole is on the point of shaking himself free of all authority (“having created a new species of romance, I was at liberty to lay down what rules I thought fit for the conduct of it”); yet he eventually chooses to bow to Shakespeare as his “model” and “masterly pattern.”

Walpole’s adulation gives us little idea as to the actual scope of the influence he laboured under, traces of which can be detected in his Gothic story.¹⁰ Both Prefaces do, however, give us an idea of the overall reception pattern, which is further confirmed and complemented by Walpole’s later theoretical pronouncements. In 1768 Walpole published a play, *The Mysteries Mother*, to which he affixed a Postscript, and to which in an edition of

¹⁰ For an in-depth though not exhaustive analysis see Kristina Bedford, “‘This Castle Hath a Pleasant Seat’: Shakespearean Allusion in *The Castle of Otranto*,” *English Studies in Canada* 14 (1988) 4, 416–435.

1781 was added a Preface.¹¹ In the Postscript Walpole again calls upon the “essential springs” of true tragedy, i.e. terror and pity, which, he says, “naturally arose from the subject.” Interestingly, Walpole is proud to say that “the rules laid down by the critics are strictly inherent in the piece.” This sounds very much like an admission of defeat in his campaign against French critics, even though he would insist that the rules are “inherent in the piece” rather than being imposed upon the material in the process of composition. This also reveals to what extent Walpole was constrained by precisely those principles that he ostensibly was at pains to reject. Apparently, when composing his piece of fiction he gave himself more liberty than when he decided to satisfy his ambitions as a playwright. His attempt at revivifying the tragic genius (see below, p. 245), which “lay dormant after Shakespeare,” was an odd one, since, once he eventually hit upon a story fit to captivate the audience as well as to escape critical censure, he himself found it too horrifying and disgusting to “appear on the stage.”¹²

Between the composition of *The Mysterious Mother* and the opening of *The Count of Narbonne*, Walpole wrote “Thoughts on Tragedy” (1775), a critical disquisition in three letters addressed to Robert Jephson.¹³ Walpole confesses that he “found some talent” in himself “for tragedy” but also that he “hold[s] a good comedy the *chef-oeuvre* of human genius.” In the second Letter this idea brings him naturally back to the grave-diggers, “an instance of that magic and creative power,” which (aligning him once more with Hurd) makes him rail again at the ignorant French critics who presume to “stifle genius itself.” His unfavourable opinion of the English stage is now expressed in this manner: “we want new channels for tragedy, and still more for poetry.” This want is, oddly, generated by Walpole’s own inability to think apart from Shakespeare. He gives only modest praise to others, the highest to Nicholas Rowe’s *Jane Shore*. Again the actual phrasing he uses is evidence of how much he respected the French and how far his admiration for Shakespeare made him as it were speak against his better judgement. Here is how he vindicates Shakespeare’s supernatural:

The incantations in *Macbeth*, that almost border on the burlesque, are still terrible. What French criticism can wound the ghosts of Hamlet

¹¹ Both texts have been reprinted in *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Peter Sabor (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 131–136; all references are to this edition.

¹² His finding *The Mysterious Mother* improper for stage representation also explains why he took keen interest in Robert Jephson’s dramatisation of *Otranto*, which was staged in 1781 (see Chapter V, p. 246).

¹³ References are to *The Works of Horatio Walpole, Earl of Orford* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson and J. Edwards, 1798), vol. 2, 305–314.

or Banquo? Scorn rules, sir, that cramp genius, and substitute delicacy to imagination in a barren language. Shall not we soar, because the French dare not rise from the ground?

Ann Radcliffe's reception of Shakespeare was perhaps as deeply personal as Walpole's, but it was also more worshipful and more pronounced. Unlike Walpole (and Elizabeth Montagu after him), Radcliffe did not find it necessary to defend Shakespeare's genius against French criticism. Furthermore, while Walpole's reception was strongly influenced by his classicist conception of drama, Radcliffe viewed the Bard as a very model of poetic inspiration.

Due to a scarcity of personal records prior to the publication of her first novels (Radcliffe, unlike Walpole, left to posterity almost no correspondence), it is difficult to reconstruct the process and patterns of Radcliffe's reception of Shakespeare. On the other hand, the novels themselves, thanks to her copious use of the epigraph, give us invaluable insight into to her appropriations. Our attempt at such a reconstruction will be postponed to the next subchapter.

That Radcliffe read Shakespeare and that she admired what she read there is no doubt; that she saw Shakespeare performed is less certain. She may have seen some plays, but if she did, she did not like what she saw. *Macbeth* may have been her favourite play,¹⁴ but she repeats Elizabeth Montagu's disapproving remarks about the representation of the Witches.¹⁵ Her allusion to Sarah Siddons in the role of Hamlet may have been based on personal experience. Radcliffe may have seen *Hamlet* with the actress in the leading role during her residence in Bath; Siddons only played the Prince outside London. While the other Gothicists dabbled in drama (and Matthew "Monk" Lewis was, for a brief period at least, the most popular playwright of his time) Radcliffe remained indifferent and aloof, and was admirably consistent in sticking to fiction and to such poetical flights as her idea of fiction allowed her to indulge in. She customarily "intersperses" her romances with poetry and is known to have written several pieces of poetry including a "metrical tale," *St. Alban's Abbey*. There are interesting references to Shakespeare in her *Journal*, passages of which

¹⁴ On Radcliffe's admiration for Shakespeare, and for *Macbeth* especially, see McIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe*, 10.

¹⁵ Montagu wrote disapprovingly of the witches scenes in *Macbeth* made ludicrous "by a mob of old women, which the players have added to the weird sisters" (Montagu, *Writings and Genius of Shakespear*, 197). Similarly, among Walpole's notes we find the observation that "the Witches in Macbeth, are by the folly of the actors, not by any fault of Shakespeare, represented in a buffoon light" (Lewis, "Malone, Walpole, and Shakespeare," 356). We shall discuss this below at more length (p. 126).

are found in a “Memoir of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Radcliffe,”¹⁶ affixed to a posthumous publication entitled *Gaston de Blondeville. A Romance of St. Alban’s Abbey. A Metrical Tale with some Poetical Pieces* (1826). This publication includes, among others, a poem called “Shakespeare’s Cliff,” which pays tribute to Radcliffe’s beloved Dover. She allows her Shakespeare, portrayed as Prospero, to blend with (or accompany¹⁷) the landscape.

But mark! on *this* cliff Shakespeare stood,
And waved around him Prosper’s wand,
When straight from forth the mighty flood
The Tempest “rose, at his command!”¹⁸

Apart from the “Memoir,” the romance *Gaston de Blondeville* was accompanied by an Introduction and a Conclusion by way of a framing device. The Introduction, which is a conversation between two gentlemen, a Mr. Simpson and a Mr. Willoughton, on their way to Warwick, originally included what came to be known as Radcliffe’s “programme” essay “On the Supernatural in Poetry,” which was published separately in the same year in the *New Monthly Magazine* (No. 16). In the text of the Introduction only a suggestion of the dispute is left: “Here ensued a conversation on illusions of the imagination and on the various powers of exciting them, shown by English poets, especially by Shakespeare and Milton, which it is unnecessary to repeat in this place” (*GB*, I/6).¹⁹

In this truncated form, the Introduction is still an interesting document, testifying not only to Radcliffe’s appreciation of Shakespeare and her persistence in conjuring up supernatural terrors but also to her desire to tap into a new resource for the Gothic mode in fiction, the historical past of the country.²⁰ Her alter ego in the dialogue, Mr. Willoughton, is re-

¹⁶ The “Memoir” is ascribed to the novelist’s husband, William Radcliffe.

¹⁷ For the idea of accordance or “correspondence” see Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 197. We shall return to this notion presently.

¹⁸ Ann Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondeville. A Romance of St. Alban’s Abbey. A Metrical Tale with some Poetical Pieces* (London: Henry Colburn, 1826; reprint), vol. 4, 169; original emphasis retained. See *T*, V.v.48, and pp. 77 and 109 above.

¹⁹ References to *Gaston* are by volume and page number. References to the essay “On the Supernatural in Poetry” are to a reprint in Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 163–172.

²⁰ “New” in Radcliffe, as the so-called “historical Gothic” is represented by such authors as Clara Reeve. Radcliffe’s debut novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) is also a representative, but for its ostensible and indeed persistent antiquarianism, *Gaston* stands unrivalled. Summers does not think *Gaston* to be a representative of the historical Gothic (compare *Gothic Quest*, 31), but gives no justification for this very odd opinion.

presented as an enthusiast of antiquity, a “painful antiquary” (*GB*, I/46). “Antiquity” — he asserts — “is one of the favourite regions of poetry” (*GB*, I/47). Willoughton’s antiquarian passions are, unsurprisingly, combined with his delight in superstitious dread. Both are soon satisfied. When, on their way to Warwick, the gentlemen stop to inspect the noble ruins of Kenilworth Castle, they are accosted by a stranger. This old man soon opens for them a chest full of “curious relicks,” among them the manuscript of *Gaston* as well as *A Boke of Sprites*, a situation reminiscent of William-Henry Ireland’s “discovery” of the Shakespeare relics a decade or so earlier. Although Willoughton despises the “thralldom of superstition” which the “boke of sprites” testifies to, he cannot stop himself from enjoying it: “Yet he sometimes found his attention seized, in spite of himself, by the marvellous narratives before him” (*GB*, I/74).

Ghosts of the past linger. Willoughton is eager to inspire supernatural dread in his sceptical and cynical companion: “And yet [...] if you remain in this ruin, half an hour longer, till you can scarcely distinguish the walls, you will feel less inclined to laugh at Queen Elizabeth’s ghost in a ruff and farthingale” (*GB*, I/31). More importantly, Shakespeare is spectrally present from the start: “Well! now are we in Arden,’ said an English traveller to his companion, as they passed between Coventry and Warwick, over ground, which his [Willoughton’s] dear Shakespeare had made classic” (*GB*, I/3). This, obviously, is an allusion to the Forest of Arden, the setting for the main part of *As You Like It*: “He was not, it appears, one of those critics, who think that the Arden of Shakespeare, lay in France” (*GB*, I/4).²¹ Having made it clear that they are on Shakespeare-hallowed ground, Willoughton revels in the thought that the spirit of Shakespeare still lingers there: Shakespeare may have rested under the shade of that ancient oak, “perhaps Shakespeare’s eyes have dwelt on it” (*GB*, I/8–9), the moonlight “glances to Shakespeare’s stream below” (*GB*, I/70), even “a strain arises” spontaneously, “as if commanded by Shakespeare’s wand, and to which his words might have been applied” (*GB*, I/71). But Shakespeare’s spirit fully appears only when the travellers eventually reach Warwick: “now, if you want towers that would do honour to Hamlet, go to Warwick Castle” (*GB*, I/7), which brings us back to Radcliffe’s essay on the supernatural.

Passages from Radcliffe’s journal included in the already mentioned “Memoir” illustrate the personal relation which the authoress sought to

²¹ For this insistence on the Englishness (indeed, Elizabethanness) of Shakespeare’s Arden, Radcliffe was in my opinion indebted to Sophia Lee’s *The Recess*, the title page of which displays as epigraph the first lines of Duke Senior’s speech (on the envious court, etc.), which opens Act II of *As You Like It*. Moreover, Radcliffe may have been in debt to Lee for the idea of a romance set in the England of “other times.”

establish with the Shakespearean model. Scenes in Shakespeare which evoke supernatural dread have a special significance and it is around them that Radcliffe constructs her sophisticated notion of terror. During her visit to Windsor Castle she, just like her antiquary tourist Willoughton, endeavours to look at the terrace the way Shakespeare may have looked. The aim is to re-experience the Shakespearean moment of inspiration, an instance of the *nachempfinden*, in Helga Siefert's terminology²²: "It was on this terrace, surely, that Shakespeare received the first hint of the time for the appearance of his ghost —." This re-enactment of inspiration will give her access to the selfsame fount of poetry which, in Shakespeare, produced the ghost-encounter scene. She goes on to quote from that most Gothic of scenes.²³ The lines are spoken by Barnardo: "Last night of all, / When yon same star that westward from the Pole / Had made his course to illumine that part of heaven / Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself, / The bell then beating one —" (I.i. 38).²⁴ In *Hamlet*, Barnardo's speech is interrupted by the appearance of the ghost; in Radcliffe — and this is the important difference — the apparition does not need to materialise. She pays more attention to the circumstances that accompany the supernatural occurrence, the time and the place, the "moment" and its capacity to "expand the soul." This has its analogy in the manner in which, in the theatrical practice of the time, as we have seen, the psychological response to the supernatural (the actor's and the audience's) was more important than the spectre itself.

In sharp contrast, the representation of the supernatural agents in *Macbeth* as three Scottish hags was to Radcliffe an abomination because it froze the imaginative faculty by affixing the mind to something solid rather than creating a space for it freely to range through. Here lies the peculiar oddity of Radcliffe's "romantic" appropriation of Shakespeare, whom she reads, not as a playwright and theatrical craftsman, but as a poet soaring skywards on the wings of fancy. It is this Shakespeare that Radcliffe seeks to imitate in her fiction and it is these flights of genius that she wants to re-enact.

²² For a close analysis of the re-enactment of poetic inspiration see Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 98 ff. "Re-experience" and "re-enact" are my equivalents of Seifert's terms, "*nachempfinden*" and "*nachvollziehen*" respectively.

²³ There is, besides this explicit recognition of the Shakespearean spell, internal evidence of Radcliffe's attempts to recreate ("re-enact") this scene in her fictions, most notably in *Udolpho*. Citing the relevant scene on "the lonely terrace" of Udolpho (in III/iii), McIntyre finds the influence of *Hamlet* "plainly discernible" ("Were the 'Gothic novels' Gothic?," 662).

²⁴ "Memoir of the Life and Writings of Mrs. Radcliffe," in: Radcliffe, *Gaston de Blondville*, vol. 1, 98.

Radcliffe felt a strong distaste for the theatre of her time, especially as regards the representation of supernatural scenes. While sharing the universal admiration for Sarah Siddons's interpretation of the role of Lady Macbeth, she barely mentions Siddons's fabled performance. The witches on the stage well-nigh spoil the entire show: "I should probably have left the theatre when they [the witches] appeared, had not the fascination of Mrs. Siddons's influence so spread itself over the whole play, as to overcome my disgust."²⁵ Similarly, she confesses that "[t]here is [...] no little vexation in seeing the ghost of Hamlet *played*."²⁶ Evidently, she could not endure mundane or "vulgar" representations of the supernatural.²⁷ To render a realistic interpretation of the witches in *Macbeth*, i.e. to represent them as "mere old women," attired in "the dress of the country where they happened to live" is nothing short of dishonour to the poetic genius which "turns [things unknown] to shapes, and gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name" (*MND*, V.i).²⁸ To pay due reverence to this ori-

²⁵ Radcliffe, "Supernatural in Poetry," in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 165. Boaden, similarly to Radcliffe, finds the unrepresented witches far more powerful. Here is his comment on how Siddons (known for her public readings from Shakespeare) recited the incantations in *Macbeth*: "On the stage, where the 'Weird Sisters' are necessarily consigned to actual persons and positive habiliments, the charm is dispelled; for the imagination has no picture to paint, no mystery to develop" (Boaden, *Mrs. Siddons*, vol. 2, 320; see Bibliography for details). More interestingly perhaps, Boaden calls "the witches of Mrs. Siddons" "poetical creations."

²⁶ Radcliffe, "Supernatural in Poetry," in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 167–168; original emphasis retained.

²⁷ Radcliffe's scanty comments do not allow us to be certain what element in the representation of the witches exactly she objects to. James Boaden in his book on the career of another actress, Mrs. Jordan, also writes disapprovingly of the representation of the witches, and yet he mainly objects to the operatic style in which scene IV.i of *Macbeth* was staged. Writes Boaden: "indeed the noble firmness and compactness of the action was dreadfully broken and attenuated by the vast crowds of witches and spirits that filled the stage, and thundered in the ear a music of dire potency" (James Boaden, *The Life of Mrs. Jordan* [hereafter *Life of Jordan*, see Bibliography for details], vol. 1, 260). Boaden finds opera, "growing into a passion among us," "fatal to the genuine produce of our drama" (ibidem, 261). Robert Hume mentions a playbill which in January 1707 advertised a staging of *Macbeth* at Drury Lane in the following way: "With all the Original Flyings and Machines. The Musick as compos'd by Mr Leveridge, and perform'd by him and others. With proper Dances by Monsieur du Ruel, Monsieur du Barques and others" ("Before the Bard," 45). On the "English Opera" ("a genre with spoken dialogue") see Michael Burden's essay "Opera in the London Theatres" (in: Moody and O'Quinn, eds., *Cambridge Companion to British Theatre 1730–1830*, 205 ff).

²⁸ Radcliffe herself does not cite Theseus' speech, but I find her "romantic" conception of the poetic genius evidently inspired by this well-known passage. In *Udolpho*, there are three epigraphs from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, including one from the last act/scene. In *The Romance of the Forest*, Adeline composes a poem (called "To the Visions of Fancy") in which she invokes "dear, wild illusions of creative mind" (Chap-

ginal poetic *fiat*, the witches need to be attired in “that strange and supernatural air which had made them so affecting to the imagination.” In a dictum which sums up her poetics of terror, Radcliffe identifies the supernatural with poetic genius itself: “the only real witch [is] the witch of the poet.”²⁹

As Clery puts it, “Radcliffe was a ghost-seer in imagination.”³⁰ Clery is also right to point out that the appropriation of Shakespeare by the early Gothicists is a gendered issue. While Walpole and Lewis identified with Hamlet and Macbeth respectively,³¹ Radcliffe sought a female counterpart (if through the male mouthpiece of the sentimentalist Willoughton) and found one in the Witch-Poet, in Siddons’s acclaimed roles of Hamlet and Lady Macbeth. In Siddons’s performance, Lady Macbeth is as much a ghost-seer as her husband is.³²

Radcliffe’s preference for terror over horror — terror “expands the soul, and awakens the faculties” while horror “contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them”³³ — in relation to the problem of the poetic treatment of the supernatural, can be interpreted as a suggestion that the supernatural need not and ought not be represented. When represented, especially by means of the crude mechanics of stagecraft, horrors will “contract and freeze” the mental faculties, i.e. fancy, while the task of the poet is to put the mind in a state of perturbation. This reveals Radcliffe’s debt to Burke’s aesthetic justification of obscurity.³⁴ According to Burke, “To make any thing very terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary.”³⁵ In

ter iii) and then another one (“Titania to her Love”) directly inspired by her (Adeline’s) reading of the play (Chapter xviii).

²⁹ Radcliffe, “Supernatural in Poetry,” in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 165.

³⁰ Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 68.

³¹ In at least one of his letters to his mother Lewis compares himself with Macbeth; on March 31st 1818, he writes from Jamaica to say that, like Macbeth, he believes that he “bear[s] a charmed life” since he is able to put up with all the hardships. See “Selected Letters,” in: Peck, *Life of Lewis*, 266.

³² In the banquet scene as staged by Kemble, i.e. with the actual ghost left out, Siddons’s Lady Macbeth was also something of a ghost-seer. According to Bartholomusz Siddons’s Lady Macbeth tended to “displace Macbeth as the central figure of the play” (*Macbeth and Players*, 122). See also Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 11. As Clery puts it, “elevated to the level of Shakespeare’s greatest tragic characters, Macbeth and Hamlet, she [Siddons] has the vision to penetrate the invisible world” (ibidem, 11–12).

³³ Radcliffe, “Supernatural in Poetry,” in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 168.

³⁴ Radcliffe, “Supernatural in Poetry,” in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 168.

³⁵ Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 54 (in the sec-

Radcliffe's essay Burke's name appears, not unexpectedly, in a passage which treats of grandeur and obscurity. Shakespeare and Milton are "great masters of the imagination" owing to their observance of the principle of obscurity "as a cause of the sublime." Radcliffe's poetics of terror thus revolves around the idea that the reader's imagination should be affected and this goal is achieved by suggestions rather than portrayal of the supernatural. The poet skilfully enwraps objects of terror in obscurity, which, as she puts it, "excites" the readers' imagination by creating a space through which the thus excited mind roams freely.

Radcliffe's is clearly an aesthetic of cooperation between the author and the receiver, an aesthetic which *leaves* (Radcliffe's favourite word) much for the latter to supply. On the one hand, this allows her to bypass the morally ("ideologically," as we would say) delicate problem of the representation of the supernatural and avoid the censure which Walpole's boldness inevitably met with. On the other hand, her position is not only more sophisticated but also more demanding because she elicits the reader's creative response. Her heroines realise this model of creative response. They have their moments of soul-expanding terror, although these are not necessarily moments of poetic inspiration, and very often Radcliffe's idealist notions of the powers of terror receive a serious qualification, especially in situations when terrors, in Burke's phrase, "press too near" to be regarded with delight. This complication is largely due to the fact that Radcliffe fails clearly to distinguish, and in consequence successfully to combine, the two types of sublimity which we find operative in both her fiction and her few theoretical pronouncements: on the one hand, the sublimity of terror (or the supernatural sublime), and on the other, the sublimity of nature, as we find it treated in her masterful descriptions of scenery.³⁶

tion entitled "Obscurity"). On Radcliffe's notion of sublimity see Samuel H. Monk, *The Sublime. A Study of Critical Theories in XVIII-Century England* (The University of Michigan Press, 1960), 217 ff. Monk believes that Radcliffe's romances "are in general expressions of Burkean sublimity" (ibidem, 219). Malcolm Ware in his monograph, *Sublimity in the Novels of Ann Radcliffe. A Study of the Influence upon her Craft of Edmund Burke's "Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime & the Beautiful"* (London: Carl Bloms Boktryckerei A.-B. 1963), indebted to Monk's study, finds Burke's influence on Radcliffe "undeniable"; his analysis of the sublime in Radcliffe concentrates on the setting, but he rightly observes that obscurity (as one of the ideas productive of the sublime) can refer to all kinds of "indistinctness," including the semantic.

³⁶ Malcolm Ware, similarly to Samuel Monk, fails to draw this obvious distinction. It seems to me that on the whole critics assume wrongly that there needs to be a high degree of coherence in Radcliffe's understanding of the sublime.

Radcliffe's attempt to combine the Burkean sublime with the Shakespearean supernatural, with terror functioning as the copula, could not but be problematic. Being acquainted with the *Philosophical Enquiry*, Radcliffe surely knew that Burke's interest in Shakespeare was next to nought, and for very good reasons. According to the crudest Platonic conception, which Burke cites in the section entitled "POETRY not strictly an imitative art," drama is mimetic; but Burke's interest is in poetry, and "poetry," he insists, "cannot with strict propriety be called an art of imitation."³⁷ Of the few passages where Burke addresses the supernatural the following two are perhaps the most relevant: "many ideas have never been at all presented to the senses of any men but by words, as God, angels, devils, heaven and hell, all of which have however a great influence over the passions."³⁸ In the section "OBSCURITY," he develops the crucial proposition which links terror with obscurity ("To make any thing terrible, obscurity seems in general to be necessary"), and goes on to say that "ghosts and goblins" are a source of dread because, of them "none can form clear ideas." And because "night adds greatly to our dread,"³⁹ apparitions enveloped in nocturnal darkness are perfect sources of terror. This passage must have intrigued and inspired Radcliffe, for although Burke does not cite *Hamlet*, the mention of ghosts and goblins appearing at night sounds like an intentional albeit indirect allusion to the play's opening scenes. As we have seen, Radcliffe kept returning in her mind to this scene as a prime example of sublime terror and recreating it in her fictions in accordance with how she conceived the role of the supernatural. The problem that Radcliffe encountered was that according to Burke, Shakespeare, unlike Milton, did not conjure up sublime terror because drama is not a genre well adapted to producing this kind of response. Radcliffe's solution was in a sense predictable: Shakespeare is a poet rather than a playwright and reading rather than stage representation is better capable of doing justice to his genius. Consequently, she came to scorn the way in which the stage of her time treated the supernatural in Shakespeare and, more importantly, endeavoured to create the proper setting for *her* Shakespeare, to allow the original grandeur of his genius to reemerge. This setting was the Gothic romance.

The state of perturbed fancy which Radcliffe hopes to build up in her readers is of course also that of her heroines. Her primary goal then is to depict the mental perturbation of the heroine, which she means subsequently to impart to the reader. Rictor Norton pertinently describes her *Romance*

³⁷ Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 157.

³⁸ Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 158.

³⁹ Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 54.

of the *Forest* as a *Künstlerroman*. Writes Norton: “The Radcliffean heroine is a poet, and all experience is grist to her mill. *The Romance of the Forest* is a portrait of the artist as a Gothic heroine.”⁴⁰ This invites a close analogy, one drawn by Seifert, between a heroine such as Adeline and the narrator and by implication the authoress, who should be more adequately described as a poetess. This is how Clery handles the matter:

It is a fact often overlooked that every one of her major heroines is said to possess creative genius. The admiring narrator shares with them an ardent appreciation of poetry, music, painting and the sublime and beautiful in nature, often giving rise to performance of their own compositions. *It would be difficult to say where the artistic sensibility of the heroine ends and that of the narrator begins.*⁴¹

From her earliest fiction, Radcliffe places great emphasis on the development of taste and creative potential in her main protagonists. The first whom she endows with poetical propensities is a man, Osbert in *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*. In a model situation, Osbert finds the tumult of his sorrows hushed by “the sweet tranquillity of evening,” and goes on to compose a sonnet “under the enthusiasm of the hour” (*CA&D*, iv/53). Later, Radcliffe locates the romantic sensibility (as conducive to poetry) in the heroines. She customarily sets aside a space in her narrative to depict the acquisition of taste by the adolescent female mind. In *A Sicilian Romance*, the younger of the two sisters, Julia, spends her leisure hours cultivating all sorts of noble entertainments:

Books, music, and painting, divided the hours of her leisure, and many beautiful summer-evenings were spent in the pavilion, where the refined conversation of madame [Madame de Menon, who serves here as a kind of substitute for the girls’ supposedly dead mother], the poetry of Tasso [...]. (*SR*, i/7)

At such moments, the authoress becomes inseparable from the heroine. As Clery points out, *The Romance of the Forest* is advertised as authored by a poet, whose poems have been published under the name of Adeline, that of the novel’s heroine.⁴² Repeatedly, Radcliffe describes moments in which her Adelines and Emilys attain a mental state in which, their mind “tranquillised by the surrounding scenery,” they “woo the gentle muse”

⁴⁰ Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 85.

⁴¹ Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 61; emphasis added.

⁴² Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 69.

(*RF*, I/ii/35). Radcliffe sets such episodes against a background of sublime scenery. At one such moment (mentioned above), in Chapter iii of *The Romance*, Adeline composes a sonnet entitled “To the Visions of Fancy,” which opens, symptomatically, with an apostrophe to “the wild illusions of creative mind.” The thus emphasized creativity makes perfect sense within the context of the novel, which does not give much of a background for the mental growth of the heroine. To attain the desired effect within the portrayed world, Radcliffe culturally decontextualises the poetic process, which allows her to endow her heroine with a genuinely original poetic genius. This goal explains the scanty references to literary influence in the novel. The “heroine-as-original-genius,”⁴³ Adeline has been a discerning reader, and we are informed that in happier times books have “elevated her heart and interested her mind”; yet in moments of adversity, she finds herself unable to take comfort in this “Lethean medicine.” Clearly, oppression tends to spoil moments of enchantment (*RF*, II/xiv/208). In Chapter xvii, however, a larger passage is devoted to Adeline’s reading habits, now maturing under the guardianship of her mentor, La Luc. Here she is shown reading Shakespeare and Milton in an exemplary romantic setting: “She frequently took a volume of Shakespeare or Milton, and, having gained some wild eminence, would seat herself beneath the pines, whose low murmurs soothed her heart, and conspired with the visions of the poet to lull her to forgetfulness of grief” (*RF*, II/xvii/261).⁴⁴ Now capable of reading Shakespeare and Milton in the English original,⁴⁵ Adeline is convinced of “the superiority of the English” over French poetry.⁴⁶ Yet, even though Adeline enthusiastically drinks from the cup of the English muse, Radcliffe manages to justify her original genius by causing the act of reading to blend with that of the surrounding objects, so that eventually the two influences are virtually inseparable. The poetry of Shakespeare and Milton, being the product of natural genius, is one with the sublime objects of Nature; the creative mind, having attained a state of unity with them, becomes capable of poetic expression.

⁴³ Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 68. Compare “she had genius” (*RF*, I/ii/29).

⁴⁴ Conveniently, Radcliffe does not tell us what in Shakespeare and Milton the heroines read.

⁴⁵ The novel being set in 1658, this cannot be *Paradise Lost*, though. See Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 71. Radcliffe’s epigraphs from Milton are indeed confined to his earlier works, such as *Comus* (1634).

⁴⁶ Comments McIntyre: “it is amusing to see the pains [Radcliffe] takes to explain how a French or an Italian girl should have become acquainted with the English poets” (“Were the ‘Gothic’ Novels Gothic?”, 663); but of course we must not ignore the political context and the desire to assert the superiority of the English literary tradition, by now consolidated around such “bards” as Shakespeare and Milton.

It is tempting to see the depiction of Adeline's literary education as a sublimated portrayal of Radcliffe's own; for all we know, Radcliffe's reading consisted chiefly of Shakespeare, Milton, and the English pre-Romantic poets.⁴⁷ Assuming that the heroine is Radcliffe's alter ego, at least with regard to her poetic aspirations, we can attempt to reconstruct the basic reception pattern which the heroine fulfils. Accordingly, in her reception of Shakespeare, Radcliffe did not look for tropes or poetic devices but, like Adeline, sought and seems to have found poetic genius which she strove, as a poetess, to re-experience and then imitatively enact. In the terms proposed by Seifert, Radcliffe's appropriation of Shakespeare has the features of creative reception,⁴⁸ and is characterised by these two basic phases, i.e. those of imitative experience and imitative enactment, Seifert's *nachempfinden* and *nachvollziehen*, respectively.⁴⁹ The *nachempfinden* phase can be a state of passive absorption of (or of emotionally putting oneself into a mental state productive of) poetry. In the *nachvollziehen* or re-enactment phase, this receptive state becomes a source for new poetry. The two phases are intimately connected, and it is this close connection which ensures a much-sought-for balance between receptiveness and imitation on the one hand and creativity on the other.

A discrepancy, however, comes into view between the poetising heroine and the mind of that same heroine worked up into agonising terror. The manuscript-reading episode in *The Romance of the Forest* is a model description of the reception process as Radcliffe envisioned it for the Gothic romance. It invited parody, such as that by Jane Austen in Chapters XXI and XXII of *Northanger Abbey* where Catherine Morland,⁵⁰ under the powerful spell of Radcliffe's terrors, discovers a mysterious manuscript only to find it to be "an inventory of linen." But one does not need to read Austen to conclude, on the basis of Radcliffe's fiction, that the oppressed heroine is hardly an appropriate model of poetic genius. Also, no trace is left in the novels of the kind of impression that Shakespeare must have left on Radcliffe, as he did on Johnson and Siddons.

Perhaps these inconsistencies are not beyond reconciliation; they continue to perplex us nonetheless. On the one hand, Adeline's excited mind eagerly performs the task which Radcliffe ascribes to terror. The manuscript being full of gaps and lacking a conclusion, Adeline's imagination

⁴⁷ Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 49.

⁴⁸ Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 99 ff.

⁴⁹ Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 90—98.

⁵⁰ I do not find it implausible that Austen may have devised her Catherine as a mocking portrait of Ann Ward (later Mrs. Radcliffe). Radcliffe spent a significant period of her life in Bath in circumstances not unlike Catherine's. See Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, Chap. 4 entitled "Miss Nancy."

eagerly fills in “the void in the sentences” (*RF*, II/viii/121).⁵¹ Like Radcliffe’s other heroines at critical moments in their troubled lives, Adeline finds herself overwhelmed with terror: “While she sat musing, her fancy, which now wandered in the region of terror, gradually subdued reason” (*RF*, II/ix/134). We become keenly aware of the paralysis of the heroine’s mental faculties which not only prevents her from indulging in poetical compositions but also suspends the operation of reason. This is precisely the moment when danger “presses too nearly” to allow the person involved to savour the sublimity of the moment. The expression “press too nearly” is of course Burke’s, as is the idea that a safe distance is necessary between us and the object if we are to delight in that object’s terrifying properties.⁵²

When we keep Adeline company during her perusal of the manuscript, we are meant to partake of the suspense which makes her fancy wander in the realms of terror. Yet the larger context, which the poetry affixed epigraphically to the text we are reading brings to the fore,⁵³ emphasises the aesthetic distance which alone is capable of turning Adeline’s nocturnal vigil into a sublime object, at once terrifying and delightful. To make the scene complete, Radcliffe almost petrifies her terror-stricken heroine with a suggestion of the supernatural, in the moment when “a hollow sigh” seems to pass near her.⁵⁴ The narrator will eventually “explain away” the suggestion of supernatural presence but is, of course, in no great hurry to do so.

In her soon-to-become-classic romances, *Udolpho* and *The Italian*, Radcliffe consistently abided by this basic pattern. In a typical passage, Chapter vi of Volume 2 of *Udolpho*, the authoress abandons her heroine, Emily, in the supposedly haunted chambers of the gloomy castle, incarcerated there by the villain. The many apprehensions she feels make her incapable of enjoying “the genius, the taste, the enthusiasm of the sublimest writers” (*MU*, II/vi/235). In vain does she try to “enliven her attention” by reading, for she cannot stop “gloomy and fantastic images” from assailing her mind (*MU*, II/vi/240). Curiosity makes her peep behind a veil, which roughly corresponds to Adeline’s perusal of the mysterious

⁵¹ These words do not relate to the manuscript, yet the formulation finely corresponds with the Radcliffean conception of terror.

⁵² Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 36 (“Of the Sublime”).

⁵³ One of the epigraphs is from Collins’s “Ode to Fear.”

⁵⁴ On petrification by terror see Railo, *Haunted Castle*, 319 ff. In his definition of suspense Railo seems indebted to Radcliffe and yet largely ignores her statements and distinctions. Radcliffe’s terror-horror distinction has become common; see for instance David S. Miall, “Gothic Fiction,” in: Duncan Wu, ed., *A Companion to Romanticism* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1999), 349.

manuscript; on doing so, she swoons. To a reader familiar with Radcliffe's method it comes as no surprise that Shakespeare presides over the assorted terrors of this chapter, the epigraph consisting of three lines spoken by Brutus startled at the apparition of Caesar, which "comes upon [him]."⁵⁵ Packing into the space of a single chapter various motifs borrowed from *Hamlet*, Radcliffe never grants her strung-out heroine (or her reader) the relief of actually confronting the ghost. Being a kind of leash with which to control the sentiments of the reader, Emily had better brace herself for three hundred pages of drawn-out suspense.

Radcliffe's poetics of terror has as it were two aspects which seem to cancel one another. Despite her ambition to poetise terror, it is fiction rather than poetry which is capable of realising this poetics. Radcliffe posits two types of sublimity and there are very different manners in which her female protagonists indulge in flights of fancy. Informing the part of her poetics which is predicated upon terror and operating upon the principle of suspense is sublimity according to Burke. Working very well in the external context, which involves the response of the readers, aestheticised terror may be a mind-expanding experience, especially when Radcliffe bestows upon it the blessings of such patron saints as Shakespeare. On the other hand, within the inner context of the portrayed reality, terror inevitably becomes the petrifying "horror" of Radcliffe's own designation; it inevitably ties up the wings of poesy which only recuperate when given the proper setting.

Radcliffe's writing like that of no other author of the post-Johnson age reflects the changing literary paradigm which eventually hailed the advent of romanticism. There is a two-way communication in Radcliffe between her poetics of terror and her worshipful appropriation of Shakespeare. She consciously submits to Shakespearean influence, and yet the Shakespeare she appropriates is already as it were pre-formatted, not only by what she expects to find there but also by how her reception has been programmed by the epoch, and especially by those critics who have Gothicised Shakespeare after Walpole's fathering of the new type of romance.

⁵⁵ *Julius Caesar*, IV.iii.275.

The Shakespearian epigraph

Would not the owl have shrieked and the cricket cried in my very title page?

Sir Walter Scott, *Waverley*, Chapter 1. *Introductory*

Radcliffe's usurpation was carried out by a variety of means [...], but most obviously through the tried and tested method of quotation, and a form of textual kidnapping quite new to the novel: the epigraph.

E.J. Clery, *Women's Gothic* (2000)

Radcliffe's Gothic appropriations took the form of that odd textual formation or ornament, the epigraph. Positioned at the head of the narrative's main text and being an excerpt from another author's work, drama or a piece of poetry, epigraphs suggest and establish intertextual connections between the unfolding story and texts which by virtue of being quoted are meant to represent a literary heritage, in our case, that of the Gothic. By her use of the epigraph, Radcliffe wished to give her romances a pedigree which linked them with the poets of the eighteenth century (James Thomson, William Collins, Thomas Gray, James Beattie, William Mason) and the tradition which they in their turn drew upon, represented by Shakespeare and Milton. In other words, the epigraph establishes in the mind of the reader of Radcliffe's mature romances a sense of continuity between the heyday of English poetry in the seventeenth century and the poetic torchbearers in the eighteenth. Just as those poets of her age whose patronage she thus solicits turned to the bards of the past in whom they found a fount of inspiration, so she seems to be implying that she draws her version of the Gothic from the unpolluted well of poesie. In this way the methodical use of the epigraph, in Radcliffe's case at least, supplements her scarce theoretical pronouncements.

Alongside the authoress's desire to "bolster her credentials,"¹ the epigraphs and the occasional quotations which she weaves into her narrative build up a multilayered textual structure which poses a special challenge for the reader, demanding what E.J. Clery describes as "different modes of literacy." The epigraph encourages and to some extent demands what we might describe as double or split reception; Radcliffe's own text is offered to the reader as a many-layered literary product. One eye of the reader is to fix on the narrative at hand while the other is directed towards the literary heritage, in which, as we have seen, Shakespeare has pride of place. In the external frame of reference we can speak of a meta-literary or cultural function (in addition to the one, mentioned above, which it performs in relation to the main body of the narrative) of the epigraph and the *Shakespearean* epigraph in particular; the function of, as it were, couching the narrative within (the English) literary tradition (giving it a particular literary pedigree and justifying the fledgling mode of fiction).

According to Helga Seifert, the Shakespearean epigraph enables us to reconstruct patterns of reception and modes of appropriation of Shakespeare. In Radcliffe's three most successful novels, epigraphs are prefixed to every chapter, and many are from Shakespeare's plays, and especially from the tragedies "of the supernatural," chiefly *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*. Among the comedies, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which has often been regarded as a play that pays tribute to the powers of the imagination, supplies the greatest number of Radcliffe's epigraphs.²

In this chapter we shall chiefly concentrate on Radcliffe's epigraphs, on their various functions and possible relations to the main body of the novels. A word of explanation is necessary at the outset. In the analysis that follows we shall omit the relation of the epigraph to the actual content of the unfolding narrative. Our interest will be rather in the ways in which the epigraph influences the reception process, the assumption being that such quotations have essentially fulfilled their function once the act of reading of a given chapter (or of the entire story, in the case of title-page epigraphs) has begun. This is not to say that the relation of the prefixed quotation to the content of the narrative is negligible; on the contrary, these intertextual relations might be (though they not necessarily are) complex and worth exploring. An analysis of them, however, would far exceed the purview of this chapter.

In her decision to use epigraphs Radcliffe seems to have been influenced both by the periodical essayists and by her great "Gothic" predeces-

¹ Clery, *Women's Gothic*, 57.

² See Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 80–81.

sors, Horace Walpole and Sophia Lee, her teacher at Bath.³ According to Susan Wolstenholme, “Shakespearean characters, situations, and epigraphs pointedly claim validity for the text here [in Radcliffe’s novels], just as they had for Walpole, who deliberately employed them to that effect.”⁴ As the epigraph to the second edition of his *Otranto*, Walpole chose and adapted, perhaps in mock imitation of the *Spectator* essayists, a passage from Horace’s *Ars Poetica*. While in Horace we have: “idle fancies shall be shaped like a sick man’s dream so that neither foot nor head can be assigned to a single shape”; Walpole changes the passage to read: “[...] nevertheless head and foot are assigned to a single shape.”⁵ This adaptation allows Walpole to suggest a classical justification for his fanciful story where none in fact exists. Sophia Lee, as we have observed, took a passage from *As You Like It* (II.i. 3–5) for a title-page epigraph to *The Recess* (1785); this establishes a parallel between the court of Duke Frederick and that of Elizabeth I, and thus locates Shakespeare’s Arden in England. Both these examples illustrate one service which the epigraph was supposed to render, that of appropriating an earlier text to suggest a parallel, a gesture which simultaneously creates a space for semantic manipulation and for intertextual teasing.

Let us start with some general observations and supply necessary statistics. While Radcliffe’s debut novel, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne: A Highland Story*, published by Thomas Hookham in 1789, contains no Shakespearean epigraph, *A Sicilian Romance*, first published in 1791, takes its title-page quotation from the Ghost’s speech in *Hamlet* (“I could a tale unfold [...]”; *H*, I.v). From now on, all Radcliffe’s novels published in her lifetime will include Shakespearean epigraphs. The title page of *The Romance of the Forest* has a quotation from *Macbeth* (“Ere the bat hath flown [...]” *Mcb.*, III.ii. 40–44) and there are eight Shakespearean epigraphs to individual chapters (twenty-six in all), including one which uses the same passage from *As You Like It* which we find on the title page of Lee’s *The Recess*. Five of these epigraphs are from *Macbeth*. In *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), the number is greater, in proportion to the greater length of the novel: twenty-one out of fifty-seven chapters. Out of these,

³ Devendra Varma explains: “It is conjectured that Ann Ward, later Mrs. Ann Radcliffe, had been a student of Sophia Lee when she worked as the headmistress of that prestigious girls’ school [a Seminary for Young Ladies at Belvidere House]” (“Introduction” to *The Recess*, viii). Sophia and Harriet Lee (author of *The Mysterious Marriage*, discussed below, p. 276 ff.) were daughters of John Lee, whom Varma calls “a distinguished member of Garrick’s company” (*ibidem*, vii).

⁴ Wolstenholme, *Gothic (Re)Visions*, 15.

⁵ See “Explanatory Notes” to *The Castle of Otranto*, 116.

five, once more, have been taken from *Macbeth*. Of a total of thirty-three chapters in *The Italian* (1796), twelve have Shakespearean epigraphs. Interestingly, in this last of Radcliffe's novels published during her lifetime there are fully eight epigraphs whose sources editors have failed to identify, and which, like the title-page epigraph to *Udolpho*, may have been composed by the authoress herself.⁶

The emerging pattern of reception and appropriation is clear. Out of the seventeen plays used as source for the epigraphs the most often quoted are seven tragedies (among them, surprisingly, *Titus Andronicus*), but if we include tragic history and Roman plays, i.e. *King John*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, and *Julius Caesar*, the number is eleven. The priority which Radcliffe gives to *Macbeth* may indeed reflect her personal preference. Among the five comedies *A Midsummer Night's Dream* is the one most frequently used, but there are also two problem comedies, *Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure* (in *Udolpho*). From among the "romances" only *The Tempest* is represented, which is not surprising if one takes into account Radcliffe's identification of Shakespeare's poetic genius with the magic wand of Prospero. No interest is evinced in Shakespeare's poems; apparently Radcliffe found Shakespeare at his most genuinely poetic in drama. In the main, the selection, some exceptions notwithstanding, reflects the standard theatrical repertoire of the day, which in turn reflects the common taste of the period. Predictably, Radcliffe's choices of citations are of those "moments" which the contemporary audience found most titillating and, as we have seen, those scenes which the contemporary actors found professionally most gratifying. Unsurprisingly almost all the scenes of supernatural terror are represented. Less predictable is the meagre, indeed almost absent interest in Shakespeare's so-called romances even though, along with *The Tempest*, those plays were given due representation in the theatrical repertoire. But here we must not be biased by our contemporary point of view, and we need to take into account the considerable shift in perspective. Evidently, Radcliffe did not regard what we know to be Shakespeare's romances as a source of inspiration for the Gothic mode of romance.⁷

Radcliffe's appropriation of Shakespeare is tuned to the emerging aesthetic of the Gothic. There is hardly a more volatile category than that of atmosphere and yet Bertrand Evans's brief definition of the Gothic as a mode which evokes "mystery, gloom and terror"⁸ is convenient when one

⁶ Radcliffe used no consistent attribution pattern, but the Shakespeare epigraphs always have either the name "Shakespeare" or the title of the play appended to them.

⁷ We shall return to this problem in due course (see p. 171).

⁸ Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 6.

wants to capture the chief principle according to which Radcliffe selects passages for her epigraphs. Before we attempt to present a comprehensive and cohesive definition of the Gothic, let us draft a preliminary typology of *topoi* which the authoress found especially valuable in her Shakespeare; this typology will be followed with illustrative material. The assumption is that the epigraphs' chief function consists in placing extra emphasis upon various elements of the narrative and in thus influencing the process of reading. We may, for the sake of clarity, provisionally assign a single function to an epigraph, but polyfunctional epigraphs are not difficult to find. Elements which receive this extra emphasis include the following:

- 1) suspense, past- or future-oriented;
- 2) a particular feature of a given situation; especially a) reactions of horror at the supernatural and b) elements of the marvellous (which add a new dimension to the represented world);
- 3) characterisation: a) features of a single character (e.g., a parallel with a Shakespearean prototype); b) interactions between two or more human characters;
- 4) particular features of the setting; suggestions of the sublime, but also introducing elements of the pastoral;
- 5) the theme or moral which the portrayed events should convey.

The key to unlocking Radcliffe's appropriation pattern seems to lie with her aesthetic of terror. Thus, on the title page of *The Romance of the Forest* we find Macbeth's lines on the "deed of dreadful note," obviously calculated to work strongly upon the reader's imagination and to shape his expectations; i.e., to build up an effect of suspenseful terror. Often, a quotation's correspondence with the contents of a given chapter is sufficiently obvious to prod the reader's mind as it were into anticipating things desired by the author.

The same function of building up future-oriented suspense is fulfilled by another such epigraph, "Present ills [...]"; according to Garrick's edition of *Macbeth*, "this speech [...] is a masterly prologue to his [Macbeth's] future acts."⁹ Another example is Macbeth's advice to the murderers of Banquo (*MU*, III/i), and the lines in which he decides to kill the king (*I*, II/ix). Lines such as these more effectively inspire terror when they are tinged with an element of the supernatural, as when Macbeth (in scene III.ii) speaks to his wife about "night's black agents" rousing "to their preys." By the same token, many epigraphs from *Hamlet* perform this essentially dramatic function. Radcliffe found the Ghost's words, "I could a tale unfold [...]," especially effective and she used them twice (for the first

⁹ *Plays of Garrick*, vol. 2, 71.

time, it will be recalled, on the title-page of *A Sicilian Romance*, and then again in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, I/ii). The meaning, as Radcliffe must have seen, works in a double way on the mind of the reader: on the one hand, any reader who remembers the original context of the line may well expect a materialisation of the supernatural (the tale which the Ghost “could unfold” but does not is an account of the terrors of purgatory); on the other, the tale which the Ghost does unfold before Hamlet is one of “mundane” crime, i.e., that of fratricide.

There are many other Shakespeare passages which are used for their capacity to create future-oriented suspense, and two more examples may suffice to illustrate the novelist’s knack for identifying and employing suggestions of terror. Thus from *Romeo and Juliet* Radcliffe takes Juliet’s uneasy expectations concerning the sleeping potion, “What if it be poison [...]” (used for *I*, I/v). From the last-act murder scene in *Othello* Radcliffe has lifted lines which express Desdemona’s mortal fear of the near future and which depict the ominous “portents” displayed in Othello’s features and behaviour. Two key chapters in *The Romance of the Forest* (I/vi&vii) have epigraphs from *Macbeth*: “Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence!” and “Present ills / Are less than horrible imaginings,” respectively.¹⁰ In this part of the narrative, Adeline discovers a manuscript that gives her bad dreams; the second epigraph, with its suggestions of assassination, makes the reader both think back in time to the gruesome events depicted in the manuscript, and anticipate similar dangers awaiting the heroine in the yet-to-be-narrated future. In whichever direction the reader’s mind turns, the epigraph has fulfilled its purpose. This illustrates one of Radcliffe’s methods of raising and sustaining suspense, a method in which she found Shakespeare’s evocations of the supernatural especially helpful.

With mystery or past-oriented suspense Radcliffe must have had some trouble. The Ghost’s “I could a tale unfold,” as we have seen, can be interpreted in a “mundane” way; i.e., precisely the way Radcliffe chose to interpret it. In *A Sicilian Romance* Radcliffe employs the line from *Hamlet* as a suggestion of the supernatural with the aim to arouse our interest in a tale which, as it turns out, is one of ordinary criminality. Suggestions of supernatural agency sustain our interest in the mysterious back-story that comes to light along with the evolution of the story proper. From *Julius Caesar* Radcliffe took a report about “most horrid sights” (*MU*, III/iv), but just like the supernatural portents, these may be interpreted as both future- and past-oriented; in their original context they presage the unnatural (though not supernatural) event of the assassination. Mystery is often linked to a specific character; and thus in *King John* (*KJ*, IV.ii. 71–72)

¹⁰ The latter misquoted; in Shakespeare we have “Present fears [...]”.

Radcliffe found lines which sound almost like a picture of Gothic villainy: "The image of a wicked, heinous fault / Lives in his eye" (used for *MU*, II/ix). There is a similar ring to the lines from *Measure for Measure* (*MfM*, V.i. 16) about "evil wrapt up in countenance" which waits to be unfolded (used for *MU*, II/xii). In the context in which Radcliffe uses them, these and similar passages have the above-mentioned double direction; the suggestion is that the hidden guilt, the unrevealed crime, etc., fester in the soul and are thus a threat for the nearest future. But, as will become clearer in our subsequent analyses, Shakespeare was not an excellent source for suggestions of mystery, and so Radcliffe reached for a better one, Walpole's play *The Mysterious Mother*, for this quintessentially Gothic, irreligious passage: "What is this secret sin; this untold tale, / That art cannot extract, or penance cleanse?" (*MM*, I.iii/46), to introduce the opening chapter of *The Italian*.

An important class among Radcliffe's Shakespeare epigraphs concerns the supernatural. The supernatural, explained or not,¹¹ is a constitutive feature of the Gothic, which gives particular significance to those epigraphs which denote a character's response to it. Nearly all the relevant scenes from Shakespeare's plays (discussed above) are represented. The brief ghost scene from *Julius Caesar* is used twice; for a chapter in *Udolpho* (II/vi), Radcliffe chose lines which not only express dread of the supernatural but which contain the suggestion that the "monstrous apparition" could have been caused by a "weakness of the eyes," an idea which the authoress must have thought particularly appealing. Brutus's lines are used once more in *The Italian* (I/iii); this time Radcliffe has chosen Brutus's question concerning the nature of the apparition, "Art thou some God, some Angel, or some Devil [...]" (*JC*, IV.iii. 278), which is found rephrased in *Hamlet*. Hamlet's question addressed to the apparition, "Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd [...]" is used in *Udolpho* (IV/viii). Macbeth's reaction to Banquo's apparition, "Hence, horrible shadow! / Unreal mockery, hence!" (III.iv. 106—107) is used for a chapter in *The Romance of the Forest* (I/vi), and then another passage from the same scene ("Can such things be [...]" ; ll. 109—111) for a chapter in *Udolpho* (I/x). In *The Italian* (I, III/6) we find another citation that belongs to this class, the lines spoken by Richard III on awakening from his nightmare, and once more Radcliffe prefers to have a question and for this reason refer-

¹¹ Sir Walter Scott first gave a succinct definition of what became known as Radcliffe's method of "explained supernatural": "the rule which the author imposed upon herself, that all circumstances of her narrative, however mysterious, and apparently superhuman, [are] to be accounted for on natural principles, at the winding up of the story." In: Victor Sage, ed., *The Gothick Novel. A Casebook* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 60. Explained supernatural corresponds to Tzvetan Todorov's notion of the uncanny.

mulates the original declarative sentence. As these examples show, Radcliffe is highly selective in her choice of quotations; evidently attracted to direct expressions of supernatural dread, she is also intent on retaining some distance, which the question form allows. Not wanting to import Shakespeare's spectres, not wanting to create actual ghosts, Radcliffe hand-picks lines which she can exploit for their psychological suggestiveness and ontological and moral ambiguities.

There are two more types of epigraphs which we need not discuss at much length. Shakespeare does not supply Radcliffe with lines that relate to and emphasise particular elements of the setting. As we have observed, in *The Romance of the Forest* (I/iii), she uses the same passage from *As You Like It* that is found on the title page of Lee's *The Recess* and which stresses the difference between the "court" and the "pastoral" setting of Arden. The problem is that in *The Romance*, unlike in *The Recess*, there is no court as such and Fontanville Abbey, where the story largely takes place, is hardly an adequate counterpart to Shakespeare's forest of Arden.

Another class of epigraphs is represented by a relatively small number of passages which supply a moral and thematic (these in Radcliffe usually go hand in hand) commentary on the portrayed events. We find them, not surprisingly, towards the end of the narratives. And thus at the end of *Udolpho* (IV/xvi and xvii), two passages from *Macbeth*, on "the unnatural deeds [which] breed unnatural troubles" (*Mcb.*, V.i. 71—72) and on "the even-handed justice" (*Mcb.*, I.vii. 10) are a signal to the reader that the time of reckoning has come. Such epigraphs are intended to awaken a string of thematic associations with the appropriated text: guilt-burdened conscience, concealed murder, etc.

An examination of the selection of texts which Radcliffe, in E.J. Clery's phrase, "ransacks" for epigraphs has led him to the conclusion that the authoress systematically constructs what can be called "the emerging canon of sublime poetry," where the predominant literary modes are those of the ode and the tragedy.¹² The number of non-Shakespeare epigraphs alone should remind us that Radcliffe's inspirations were not exclusively in Shakespeare's plays. On the other hand, as we have seen on the example of William Collins, the ode can be yet another attempt to appropriate Shakespeare. Not surprisingly, this poetry found ample representation in Radcliffe's epigraphs, nine of which are from Collins alone.¹³ Out of these,

¹² Clery, *Women's Gothic*, 56.

¹³ Collins's *Odes on Several Descriptive and Allegoric Subjects* (1744) was a major source of inspiration for Radcliffe; in her epigraphs she also quotes from his "The Manners. An Ode" and "The Passions. An Ode for Music." Of course in Collins's poetry Radcliffe found much closer realisations of Burkean principles than anything she could find in Shakespeare.

five are from his “Ode to Fear.”¹⁴ These five epigraphs from “Ode to Fear” (which are moreover unusually long) are found in all the three major novels by Radcliffe, but at the same time she avoids quoting lines which contain clearly Shakespearean references. The most explicitly Shakespearean is the epigraph from Collins’s “Epistle” to Hanmer (for *I*, III/viii), and here, as elsewhere, Radcliffe has chosen lines informed by a sense of terror, ones which refer to, among other things, the supernatural scene in *Richard III*. One cannot help thinking that, at the end of her bulky novel, she may have found herself short on passages to use, as just two chapters before she had turned to that same play and scene for another citation. Also Radcliffe’s choice of quotations from Thomas Gray can be described as Shakespearean. She mostly uses his two “poetics poems,” the sister odes, “The Progress of Poesy” and “The Bard” (the latter for *RF*, III/xxiii).¹⁵

Epigraphs in Radcliffe are usually identified by name or title. The fact that the sources of a number of them have no attribution and have remained unidentified should not go unnoticed. If, as we have reasons to suspect, Radcliffe did write these lines of poetry herself, then they are yet further evidence of her desire to canonise her aesthetic of terror. Along with the pieces of poetry which Radcliffe with a liberal hand scatters round her novels, the self-composed epigraph would perform the extra-textual function of legitimising the new type of romance. Assuming after Clery that Radcliffe herself supplied these “citations,”¹⁶ her use of such own-made epigraphs makes perfect sense against the larger background of her literary ambitions: Radcliffe imitates the manner of the poets she appropriates elsewhere, though not strictly that of Shakespeare.

What immediately captures our attention is the use of personification, especially personification of the features constitutive of the Gothic. Thus we have the “flame eye’d Fury” (for *RF*, I/xiii), Fate who “sits on battlements” (*MU*, title page), the god-like “he” that “wrapt in clouds of mystery and silence / Broods o’er passions” and “bodies them forth in deeds”¹⁷ (*I*, title page), “Conscience trembles to the boding note” (*I*, II/iv), and, above all, “Terror,” who sits “meditating woe” (*I*, II/vii). Radcliffe’s use of personifi-

¹⁴ James Beattie, with another programme poem, *Minstrel; or, the Progress of Genius* (1770–1774), comes second, with eight epigraphs.

¹⁵ Gray’s two Pindaric odes were published by Horace Walpole at his newly erected press at Strawberry Hill in 1757.

¹⁶ See Clery, *Women’s Gothic*, 56. In his edition of *The Italian*, Clery thus comments on the title-page of the novel: “There is no indication of the source in the case of this and seven other epigraphs in *The Italian*; [...] It seems likely that Radcliffe wrote them herself specifically for the novel” (editor’s note on page 417 of the Oxford edition).

¹⁷ To “body forth” is an expression used in the famous Theseus speech in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, V.i.

cation and allegory, characteristic of the ode, is hardly surprising. It answers to her desire to emulate the ideal of poetic creativity, represented by Gray and Collins and embodied in her poetising heroine. Chronology also supports the hypothesis of the self-composed epigraph. In *The Italian* there are eight epigraphs which lack attribution, with an excellent specimen already on the title-page:

He, wrapt in clouds of mystery and silence,
Broods o'er passions, bodies them in deeds,
And sends them forth on wings of Fate to others:
Like the invisible Will, that guides us,
Unheard, unknown, unsearchable!

Almost certainly composed by Radcliffe herself — so closely does it correspond to her archetype of Gothic villainy realised in Schedoni — this piece depends for its effect of sublimity on the leading personification of the godlike male figure wrapped in mystery¹⁸; godlike, because it is compared explicitly to the supreme Will which, impenetrable, runs through and governs all things. As the depiction of Fate makes clear, Radcliffe is aware of the convention of effective and transcendental personification, and yet chooses the personal pronoun “he” to wrap the *spiritus movens* of her narrative in a cloud of mystery. Let us elucidate.

On the one hand, as Spacks observes, personification was “a respectable rhetorical disguise for the supernatural in poetry,” which was “peculiarly characteristic of the eighteenth century from beginning to end.”¹⁹ On the other, according to John Newbery, allegories and images in prose would appear “very ridiculous and pedantic.”²⁰ And indeed, both Samuel Johnson and Lord Kames agreed that the poetic phantoms raised by allegory and personification “dissolve” once, in Johnson’s phrase, they are “put in motion.” But Radcliffe wants to have the best of both worlds; she uses the quintessentially poetic device of allegory in her *poetic* compositions and then, having thus conjured figures and images evocative of the terrific sublime, realises them in a narrative form, i.e., by exploiting their suspenseful potential.

The title-page epigraph to *Udolpho* fits this pattern:

Fate sits on these dark battlements, and frowns,
And, as the portals open to receive me,

¹⁸ To “sit brooding” is of course Miltonic, and in the Invocation to *Paradise Lost* (I, l. 21) the phrase refers to the Holy Ghost.

¹⁹ Spacks, *Insistence of Horror*, 132.

²⁰ John Newbery, *The Art of Poetry on a New Plan* (1762), quoted by Spacks, *Insistence of Horror*, 166.

Her voice, in sullen echoes through the courts,
Tells of a nameless deed.

The brooding figure of Fate is represented as female (if “her voice” is the voice of Fate).²¹ Interestingly, this does not correspond with the conventionally male figure of the villain, for example Montoni or Schedoni. At the same time the evocation of mystery is given a Shakespearean tinge, the “nameless deed” referring to the Witches’ “deed without a name” (*Mcb.*, IV.i. 49), the Witches themselves being, in turn, “ministers of Fate,” to cite a phrase from *The Tempest*.²² Another interesting composition of this type is used to introduce a chapter of *The Italian* (I, II/vii). The latter part of this long piece runs as follows:

[...] Wrapt in the midnight
Of the clouds, sits Terror, meditating
Woe. Her doubtful form appears and fades,
Like the shadow of Death, when he [Death] mingles
With the gloom of the sepulchre, and broods
In lonely silence. Her spirits are abroad!
They do her bidding! Hark, to that shriek!

Terror here is personified as a female figure, typically wrapped in obscurity (“appears and fades”). Once more, this mysterious figure, likened to Death (traditionally masculine), who sits brooding in the darkness of a tomb, rules over human fate with the help of her spirits. These, in turn, behave like the invisible ministers of fate as they ride through the air. “Hark, to that shriek” is another allusion to *Macbeth*, this time to the murder scene (*Mcb.* II.ii. 2–3).

To conclude our discussion of the epigraph, we need to say a few words about other authors. There are reasons to assume, as Clery suggests, that with her persistent use of the epigraph in *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) Radcliffe created a literary vogue. Examples of imitation are found in abundance. Eliza Parsons’s *The Mysterious Warning* (1793) has a line from *Hamlet* on the title page. Francis Lathom’s *The Midnight Bell* (1798) has a quotation from *Othello* on the title page and a number of Shakespeare epigraphs prefixed to individual chapters. The already mentioned romance

²¹ Female figures often appeared in poetic personifications, as, for instance, Revenge or Melancholy; see Spacks, *Insistence of Horror*, 173 and 178.

²² “Battlements” occurs twice in *Macbeth*, and in reference to Dunsinane in the conjurations of Lady Macbeth (I.v. 49), which, in anticipation of the death of Duncan, also link this spatial synecdoche with the idea of fate.

by William-Henry Ireland, *The Abbess* (1799), besides a quotation from "SHAKSPARE" on the title page (which cannot be found in Shakespeare!) has a large number of epigraphs to individual chapters; altogether there are eleven epigraphs from Shakespeare per twenty-four chapters, the selection of plays reflecting the pattern established by Radcliffe. An interesting example of imitation is the title-page of James Boaden's adaptation of *The Romance of the Forest* of 1794, where we have a quotation from *Macbeth* ("Blood will have blood [...]"; *Mcb.*, III.iv. 121), one which Radcliffe herself does not use in her novel.

Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* is no exception. In this novel the number of epigraphs is smaller simply because there are fewer chapters. The three volumes contain three, four and five chapters, respectively, which, including the title page, allow a total of thirteen epigraphs, four of which are from Shakespeare's plays. In imitation of Walpole, we find Horace on the title page, and then, in imitation of Radcliffe, Shakespeare as well as some meditative verse, including James Thomson (whom Radcliffe also liked to quote) and the "graveyard" poet Robert Blair with his "Grave." Radcliffian inspiration may also be detected behind Lewis's decision to "interperse" his book with poetic pieces. Yet, unlike Radcliffe's, his poems are chiefly narrative ones and furthermore ones for which he has drawn on German sources, as in the case of the two most famous ballads, "The Water-King" and "Alonzo the Brave and Fair Imogine."²³ To a large extent these external trappings of epigraphs and poetry confirm Lewis's self-assumed character of plagiarist, a posture which somewhat blatantly defies his predecessors' (chiefly Radcliffe's) pretensions to originality. These interpolations lend Lewis's book a veneer of respectability that Radcliffe purposefully devised for the Gothic romance but which the sensational content effectively punctures. His choices confirm his cavalier or simply irreverent attitude to the newly established tradition of the Gothic. He indeed "rifles" (to use Clery's term) the same sources, i.e., the same poetic tradition that Radcliffe appropriated to create a "Gothic literary heritage," represented by such classics as Tasso and Shakespeare and eighteenth-century worthies such as Pope, Cowper, Prior, Blair, and Thomson. At the same time in Lewis's epigraphs we find no trace of the German influence, unless

²³ "The Water-King," whose story is based on an old Danish ballad, is modeled on Johann G. Herder's "Der Wassermann" (published in *Volklieder*, 1778–1779), and "Alonzo" on Gottfried A. Bürger's "Lenore" (see Conger, *Influence of German Literature*, 43 ff). The curious thing about the latter ballad (immensely popular in England in the 1790s) is that Bürger probably based it on an English ballad, "Sweet William's Ghost" (Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 146–147). Both "The Water-King" and "Lenore," the latter in Sir Walter Scott's translation, were published in Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* (1801).

we insist that the epigraph from *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (to I/iii) should be regarded as a clandestine recognition of Lewis's debt to Schiller's *The Robbers* (1781).²⁴

Lewis does not compose his own epigraphs and the ones he cites are used for the usual purposes. As his readers soon discover, however, Lewis means business when it comes to two subjects which Radcliffe treated with a great deal of reserve and caution, sexuality and the supernatural. He takes Tasso off the pedestal (on which he was put by such critics as Hurd) by prefixing to the second chapter of *The Monk* an amorous passage from the poet's pastoral play. He does not hesitate to come up with a scandalous realisation of the idea that — and his English readers would not have much trouble with the original — *Perduto e tutto il tempo / Che in amar non si sponde*, or: "lost are all the moments which are not spent in loving." Perhaps slightly more subtle is Lewis's use of a passage from *Cymbeline* (II.ii. 11—16), from the scene in which Iachimo stalks in upon the sleeping Imogen. The passage chosen by Lewis is replete with motifs that have parallels in *The Monk*. The most significant is the figure of Tarquin, which recalls not only the actual rape in *Lucrece* (rather than the rape by report in *Cymbeline*), but also the "air-drawn dagger" speech in *Macbeth* — both events from Shakespeare soon to be recalled by events (Elvira's death and Antonia's rape) in the narrative future of Lewis's novel. A further parallel is Elvira's dream, with its anticipation of death, and yet another the analogy between the two female figures, Imogen and Antonia, represented as paragons of lily-like beauty and chastity, with the corresponding male villains (Iachimo and Ambrosio, respectively) lasciviously gloating over their charms.²⁵ But of course the most conspicuous revelation of the Shakespearean debt comes at the beginning of the narrative. The quotation from *Measure for Measure* that opens the first chapter suggests parallels, not only between Angelo and Ambrosio but by implication also between other elements from the respective works which we shall analyse in the next section of this chapter. It is worth noting that William-Henry Ireland, whose *The Abbess* is largely a transposition of *The Monk*, took this epigraph as a hint and picked more lines from *Measure* which (conveniently for a Gothic story) suggest moral decrepitude underneath a sheep-skin of sainthood. To one of the chapters (I/v) he affixes two quotations from the play, one in which Angelo (the Abbess in Ireland's romance being his and

²⁴ For a discussion of parallels with this trend in the *Sturm und Drang* literature see Conger, *Influence of German Literature*, 112.

²⁵ In two passages which depict such voluptuous gloating in *The Monk*, the metaphors found in the *Cymbeline* passage not unexpectedly crop up: "Lily" in reference to the picture of Madonna (*M*, I/ii/40) and "Venus" (Cytherea in Shakespeare) in reference to Antonia (*M*, II/iv/271).

Ambrosio's counterpart), "the outward-sainted deputy," is denounced as "a devil" (*MfM*, III.i. 88), and another from the blackmail scene, in which Angelo openly reveals to Isabella his "sharp appetite" (*MfM*, II.iv. 160).

When he reaches for the ghost scene in *Macbeth* as source for a quotation, Lewis does so, one would think, with the intention to outdo, or out-Gothicise, his model, Radcliffe. In *The Monk*, Macbeth's "Avaunt! and quit my sight!" speech addressed to the ghost of Banquo is a prologue to the encounter between Raymond and the Bleeding Nun, an episode which opens the novel's second volume. Lewis's ghost may be of German extraction,²⁶ and yet the author appropriates Shakespeare, thus performing, one is inclined to think, the usual legitimising gesture.

As well as in *The Monk*, Lewis used epigraphs in the *Tales of Terror and Wonder* (1801), where among passages gleaned from the other familiar authors we find one from *Hamlet*, Claudius's soliloquy ("O, my offence is rank [...]" ; *H*, III.iii. 36—37) attached to "an old English tale" entitled "The Wanderer of the Wold." A highly self-conscious deployment of the staple Gothic devices, the tale is yet another variation on the Shakespearean theme of filial rivalry between two brothers ending in fratricide. The fact that Ireland quoted the same speech at the end of his novel (*Abbess*, IV/ii) should perhaps be regarded as symptomatic of the Gothic genre's exhaustion towards the end of the century.

As our subsequent analyses will show, the comparatively small number of Shakespearean epigraphs in Lewis is misleading and does not reflect the actual scope of his engagement with Shakespeare, which, if not of overriding significance, is, as the *Cymbeline* example demonstrates, considerable.

²⁶ Lewis's source for the Bleeding Nun episode was probably a tale in Johann K.A. Musäus's *Völkermärchen der Deutschen* (1782—1786). Lewis (in a letter to Sir Walter Scott of 1807) denied that this was a model he directly consulted or copied. Conger's discussion of textual evidence to the contrary, though, is very convincing; see Conger, *Influence of German Literature*, 93 ff.

Proper names and verbal borrowings

O Shakespeare, thou first of men, I am happy to possess
that language in which thou didst write, that not one of thy
excellencies are lost on me!

Horace Walpole

Next choosing from Shakespeare's comic school, / The gos-
sip crone, gross friar, and gibing fool —

Prologue to *The Castle Spectre*

To set an uncanny atmosphere for the assassination scene in *Macbeth*, Shakespeare has Lady Macbeth startle at the shriek of an owl: “Hark! Peace! / It was the owl that shriek'd [...].” (*Mcb.*, II.ii. 2). The effectiveness of this simple means was attested to in the theatre, which in part at least accounts for its popularity with Gothic authors and playwrights. It is a safe bet that in a Gothic text one will sooner or later come across a version of the thus expressed alarm, especially in moments suggestive of the supernatural. Needless to say, Walpole sets the example, making Isabella start with “Hark, my Lord! What sound was that?” just before he introduces a ghost. Others followed suit.¹

Despite its sometimes being a strikingly obvious case of appropriation, this type of evidence may be difficult to assess in its significance. Like the epigraph the verbal borrowing can be called intermediary as it also is an element of a work's verbal texture which establishes intertextual links between two authors and two texts. Another species of such intertextual entity is the borrowed proper name. If the epigraph, an extratextual entity, can exert a strong influence upon the reception process, so can these two other types of the intertext: they indicate that the text has another layer of meaning, a sub-text or a super-text, which supplements the surface or the content proper.

¹ Here is a random selection of other occurrences of this device: *CS*, II.i; *M*, III/iii; *MystMar*, III.iii; *AO*, II.ii; *MB*, III/xxiv, *IM*, II.v/47.

Gothic romancers were constantly on the look-out for proper names for their characters, and were indefatigable in inventing them, preferably ones of the Italian-sounding variety. On the other hand, we see proper names travel from work to work. Matilda, especially, made a veritable career; starting with *Otranto* (Manfred's daughter) and, of course, its adaptation, *The Count of Narbonne*, the name is found in *The Recess* (one of the two main heroines) and in *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (Osbert's widowed mother), *The Castle of Wolfenbach* (the heroine), *The Monk* (Ambrosio's demonic seductress), William Wordsworth's semi-Gothic play *The Borderers* (the hero's beloved), and *The Castle of Monstval* (the Lady Matilda). While no Matildas are found in Shakespeare, many other names are, which may suggest parallels with Shakespeare's plays. In *The Castle of Otranto*, some characters bear names which might hint that they have counterparts in *Measure for Measure*, which in turn suggests that this play may have been Walpole's source of inspiration. Isabella is the persecuted or harassed heroine in both the play and the novel. Both Kristina Bedford and Helga Seifert make much of this parallel.² As we shall see, the so-called Isabella plot (a term proposed by David Richter), with a prototype in Shakespeare, is found in numerous Gothic narratives, notably *The Monk*, where proper names do not correspond with ostensible Shakespearean counterparts. In *The Mysterious Mother*, although we find an Edmund, a Benedict (Friar), and a Beatrice (in the off-stage world), as well as a Porter, no deeper parallels to the Shakespeare plays in which their namesakes appear suggest themselves.

In the case of *Otranto*, there are further correspondences. Kristina Bedford observes that two more names may have a Shakespearean provenance, Jaquez and Frederic, corresponding to the characters in *As You Like It*, Jaques and Duke Frederick. But with every nominal parallel comes a difference. Bedford remarks that "the personalities of the two Jaques do not tally," and she goes on to analyse "a more interesting connection [...] between the two Frederics,"³ which she describes in the following way: "In *As You Like It* the name belongs to the usurping Duke, while in the Gothic romance [*Otranto*] Frederic is a nobleman who is seduced from the path of his divine mission by lust and ambition, and at the end forestalled from assuming the regency over the principality of Otranto by the revelation of Theodore's superior claim."⁴ In other words and to generalise, verbal correspondences are always in need of further elucidation because their significance can vary from text to text.

² Seifert, *Shakespeare und die Gothic Novel*, 48 and Bedford, "Shakespearean Allusion," 421.

³ Bedford, "Shakespearean Allusion," 421.

⁴ Bedford, "Shakespearean Allusion," 421.

As each character acts in a context, i.e. interacts with other characters, we need to be prepared for a degree of dynamism or instability. Under the awning of a similar or identical name, a character's identity, in the sense of his or her "personality" and role in the plot, may shift and, more importantly, blend with those of other prototypes in the source text (a Shakespeare play or plays) by way of conflation.⁵ The role of Jaques may in *Otranto* have blended with that of other clowns in Shakespeare, e.g. Dogberry and Verges in *Much Ado*, who are not domestics in the strict sense but also provide comic relief thanks to their verbal ineptitude and garrulousness ("tediousness," see *Much Ado*, III.v) which impede the progress of the plot.⁶ Walpole's decision to borrow Shakespeare's "comic domestics," figures that were to become a staple of Gothic romance, also extends to female characters. In *Otranto* we have Bianca ("a young damsel" in attendance on Matilda), who is clearly not the namesake of the Bianca in *Othello* but who, as Bedford has observed, has a lot in common with Juliet's nurse, another character who is notorious for her way of "giving well-intentioned yet defective advice with slightly bawdy overtones."⁷ Similarly to Walpole's Bianca, the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, aside from her uncouth opportunism, also displays a particular skill in wearing down the patience of the hearer, as in the scene in which she takes her time delivering Romeo's message to the impatient Juliet (*RJ*, II.v). What Bedford fails to note is that Gothic authors assign an important role to such lowly and secondary figures, which has no equivalent in Shakespeare: they invariably act as vehicles for common superstitions. Thus Bianca will start at some noise and exclaim, "This castle is certainly haunted" (*CO*, ii/42), and will need to be reassured by Matilda. Similarly, Diego and Jaquez are "comprehensive that [they] might meet the ghost of my young lord [...] as he has not received christian burial" (*CO*, i/34), which is yet another example of Walpole's desire to imitate Shakespeare's clowns.⁸

Radcliffe bought wholesale this type of figure with the attendant functions and with slight adjustments inserted it in her novels in both the fe-

⁵ Jacek Mydla, "Juliusz Słowacki's *Balladyna* as a case of Shakespearean influence," in: Ewa Borkowska and Andrzej Łyda, eds., *Wor(l)ds in Transition. Studies in Language, Culture and Literature* (Katowice: Wyższa Szkoła Zarządzania Marketingowego i Języków Obcych, 2004), 161.

⁶ See McIntyre, "Were the 'Gothic' Novels Gothic?," 652.

⁷ Bedford, "Shakespearean Allusion," 422.

⁸ Emphasis added; "comprehensive" of course stands for "apprehensive," and it will be noted that Shakespeare also uses malapropism for comic purposes, as in *Much Ado* and *Measure for Measure* (Elbow, e.g., in the interview with Angelo, II.i). Interestingly, in his exchange with Leonato, Dogberry confuses similar words: "our watch, sir, have comprehended two auspicious persons" (*Much Ado*, III.v.43), for "apprehended two suspicious persons."

male and the male variety. In *Udolpho* we have Annette, who “wearies” Emily “by her loquacity” and has a tendency to be “seized” by “superstitious terror” (*MU*, II/vi/234–235). The equivalent in *The Italian* is Vivaldi’s “honest” servant, Paulo, for whom, however, the authoress devised a more respectable function than that commonly assigned to such characters. Naturally, from fiction this type was transferred into drama. It may be noted that we also find two lowly figures by the name of Stephano and Jacques in *The Monk*, in the narrative of Don Raymond (I/iii).

That the proper name is not to be regarded as an independent bearer of meaning is perhaps best illustrated in the friar figure. Bedford has no doubt that Friar Jerome in *Otranto* “finds his origin in the character of Friar Lawrence” in *Romeo and Juliet*.⁹ This “suspicion of Shakespearean origin” is indeed verified by both verbal and situational affinity: the phrase “meddling priest” or “meddling friar,” as used by Walpole to describe Jerome may have been borrowed, as the critic suggests, from *Measure for Measure*, where it is used to describe Lodowick, i.e., Duke Vincentio in disguise (V.i. 130). But to insist that the transformation of Friar Lodowick into Duke Vincentio prompted the revelation that Jerome is the Count of Falconara is to take this analogy a little too far. Not surprisingly, in *The Mysterious Mother* we also have a scheming friar, Benedict, described not only as a “meddling monk” (*MM*, I.ii/45), but also as a “ghostly friend” (*MM*, III.iii/81),¹⁰ which echoes the several occurrences of “ghostly” in reference to Friar Laurence in *Romeo and Juliet* (e.g., II.ii. 192) and to Lodowick in *Measure for Measure* (e.g., IV.iii. 47), all these figures performing the role of confessors. Interestingly, neither epithet (“meddling” nor “ghostly”) occurs in Radcliffe’s *Italian* despite the fact that the novel makes ample use of the monk figure, a staple of the early Gothic. The idea and role of “meddling” perhaps deserves more attention, and we shall return to it in due course. Here let us note that a conflation occurs also when characters fulfil the same designated role, even if the names are not identical. More important than the “friars,” Walpole’s Manfred, with no namesake in Shakespeare, blends with several Shakespearean villains, especially Richard III and Macbeth, as Bedford has convincingly demonstrated.

Among the numerous minor characters which may have Shakespearean provenance, in Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho* we find Barnardine and Orsino. The former is introduced in Chapter XII of the second volume to stand guard over Madame Montoni. This chapter’s epigraph has been taken from *Measure for Measure*, the lines about evil wrapped up in

⁹ Bedford, “Shakespearean Allusion,” 422.

¹⁰ Compare “ghostly father” in *Orra*, II.i. 105.

countenance referring to Angelo, whose exposure is elaborately staged in this scene. Radcliffe's choice of the epigraph suggests that the reader should apply the idea to Barnardine in her novel, whose true intentions Emily tries to discover until she concludes that "the countenance of Barnardine seemed to bear the stamp of a murderer" (*MU*, II/xii/319). This repeats the way in which in Shakespeare this character and his bad reputation are combined (*MfM*, IV.ii. 60).

The Barnardine chapter from *Udolpho* shows that the Shakespearean debt may have a complex, many-layered nature and be composed of verbal allusions of various types combined with parallels in the represented worlds, situational or otherwise. Thus, besides the explicit borrowings from *Measure for Measure*, Radcliffe creates an episode which reminds the reader of *Hamlet* and effects the authoress's favourite association between the heroine and Prince Hamlet. As Emily sits in her casement long into the night expecting to hear once more strains of the mysterious music, what comes to her are very different sounds: "the distant carousals of Montoni and his companions — the loud contest, the dissolute laugh and the choral song, that made the halls re-echo" (*MU*, II/xii/319).¹¹ Like numerous situations in *Udolpho*, also here we have one patterned after *Hamlet*, and in this case the moment before the appearance of the ghost in I.iv where, on the platform, Hamlet discourses upon the custom of drinking, on the occasion of the distant noises of the king "taking his rouse."

Verbal borrowings may be half-concealed suggestions of a deeper-layer thematic engagement with the thus-appropriated play. Like *A Sicilian Romance*, *The Romance of the Forest* reverberates with thematic allusions to *Hamlet*. This affinity is suggested by a verbal echo: "At length [Adeline's] *perturbed* fancy suggested the following dream" (emphasis added). "Rest, rest, perturbed spirit" are the words with which Hamlet pacifies the ghost of his father (I.v. 190). Once the reader performs an act of recollection, associations with the play are awakened and raise uneasy expectations in the receiver.

This is symptomatic of the manner in which, by means of verbal borrowing, the Gothicists covered their stories with a patina of antiquity.¹² The Latinate word "orisons" for prayers had itself a veritable career in the Gothic novel. In Shakespeare, Hamlet addresses the famous line to Ophelia, whom he sees at the end of his "To be, or not to be" soliloquy: "Nymph, in thy orisons / Be all my sins remember'd" (*H*, III.i. 89). In Volume IV of

¹¹ This has a parallel in *Otranto*, Chapter v, where a banquet is prepared and we see Manfred "plying Frederic with repeated goblets of wine" (*CO*, v/105). There are parallels in *Hamlet*.

¹² Morton Bloomfield speaks of the archaizing function of "quoting and alluding"; Bloomfield, "Quoting and Alluding," 12.

Udolpho, Sister Agnes says to the nuns: "Good night, my sisters, remember me in your orisons" (*MU*, IV/ix/541), which would be Hamlet's words verbatim but for the fact that "my sins" are advisedly omitted. Advisedly, because we soon find out that the conscience of Sister Agnes is indeed burdened with a crime, which she confesses on her deathbed (see Chapter IV, p. 214). It seems obvious that the deliberate omission of Hamlet's words is intended to give Radcliffe's reader pause and make him wonder about what has remained hidden. The death-bed confession is wrapped in a sermon against "indulgence of the passions," which once more brings to mind Hamlet's similar discourse on "one defect" and one "particular fault" capable of "breaking down the pales and forts of reason" (*H*, I.iv. 23–36).

The precedents of verbal echoing, as with many other instances of Gothic borrowing, are found in *Otranto*. "I will remember you in my orisons," says Theodore to Matilda, "and will pray for blessings on your gracious self [...]" (*CO*, ii/43).¹³ Interesting too is the frequent occurrence of "to sift" in the sense of "to interrogate," which might be another verbal debt to *Hamlet*. More significant are instances where Walpole has borrowed from Shakespeare's supernatural scenes: "The ghost scenes from *Hamlet* are a direct inspiration for several passages of the novel."¹⁴ Already in Chapter i Manfred turns to the spectre which he sees "quit its panel" in a manner reminiscent of *Hamlet*: "Lead on! cried Manfred; I will follow thee to the gulph of perdition" (*CO*, i/26). As E.J. Clery notes in his edition of the novel, these words are a combination of Hamlet's lines addressed to the Ghost ("Go on, I'll follow thee"; *H*, I.iv. 79 and I.iv. 86) and a paraphrase of Horatio's warning to Hamlet. Chapters iv and v both contain parallels to the Hamlet-Ghost encounter. Cast in the role of the parental spectre, Jerome turns to Theodore with the following words: "Kneel, headstrong boy, and list, while a father unfolds a tale of horror, that will expel every sentiment from thy soul, but sensations of sacred vengeance" (*CO*, v/94). Here "list" and "unfold a tale" are direct borrowings from Shakespeare and "vengeance" an echo of the Ghost's commission to "revenge" the foul murder. Moreover, Jerome speaks in the name of the "unsatisfied shade" of Alfonso, an expression equivalent to Shakespeare's "perturbed spirit." When Frederic is confronted with an actual spectre, displaying to the horrified mortal its "fleshless jaws and empty sockets," Walpole again borrows liberally from his model. Frederic repeats almost verbatim after Hamlet: "Angels of grace, protect me!" (*CO*, v/106), a symptomatic combination of retention, truncation, and synonymy. As Kristina Bedfors observes, this epi-

¹³ This is a verbal echo of Juliet's line to Romeo, see *RJ*, II.ii.113. It is here that Juliet calls Romeo's "self" "the god of [her] idolatry."

¹⁴ *Otranto*, explanatory notes, 120.

sode draws upon both encounters of Hamlet with the Ghost. Walpole's spectre "wrapt in a hermit's cowl" appears to reprimand Frederic: "Do not forget" (*CO*, v/106—107), which echoes "Dost thou remember me?" and "Hast thou forgotten [...]" (*H*, III.iv. 110). These instances certainly confirm Walpole's intention of basing the supernatural (and, perhaps more importantly, the human reaction to the supernatural) on the Shakespearean model; they also confirm Walpole's partiality for *Hamlet*.

Parallels with characters and situations in *Macbeth* are equally obvious, yet direct verbal borrowings from this play are difficult to find. Like Macbeth, Manfred is addressed as a tyrant: "Now, tyrant! behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head" (*CO*, v/109). Slightly more direct are allusions to *Romeo and Juliet*, which confirms Bedford's opinion that for its love interest *Otranto* is largely indebted to that tragedy. In Chapter ii Walpole re-enacts the well-known balcony scene, with Matilda and Theodore acting out the parts of Shakespeare's star-crossed lovers. As Clery has observed in his notes, Matilda's "the morning dawns apace" (*CO*, ii/44) sounds like an echo of Juliet's words to Romeo at III.v., "O now be gone, more light and light it grows." In the balcony scene, however, Juliet says, "'Tis almost morning [...]" (II.ii. 176). We may not have a direct borrowing in either case, and yet Matilda's words have a familiar ring to them, which, besides the situational parallel, may be due to the fact that Juliet does use the word "apace" on a different occasion (III.ii. 1).

In *The Monk*, where no proper names suggest *Measure for Measure* as a possible influence, the appropriation of both this play and of *Romeo and Juliet* is extensive. The epigraph to the first chapter, as we have observed, makes explicit Lewis's debt to Shakespeare's dark comedy. This quotation suggests a parallel between the "precise" Angelo from Shakespeare's play and Lewis's Ambrosio. This naturally turns Antonia and Agnes, perhaps even Matilda to some extent, into fictional counterparts of Shakespeare's Isabella. In the case of Agnes the parallel is underlined by the fact that at the beginning of *Measure* Isabella is about to enter the convent of Saint Clare, which is exactly where so much of the plot of *The Monk* is set. The designation for the nuns found in Shakespeare, "the votaries of Saint Clare" (*MfM*, I.iv. 5), is repeated verbatim by Lewis (*M*, III/iii/350). But analogies are slightly more complicated; there is a verbal parallel — not close enough, though, to be regarded as anything more than an echo — between Duke Vincentio's lines in I.iii of the play and the words of the Lady Prioress in Chapter ii of the novel. In Shakespeare, the Duke explains to Friar Thomas that the citizens of Vienna have lost respect for the laws, and that he has appointed Angelo to exact due observance:

We have strict statutes and most biting laws, [...]
Which for this fourteen years we have let slip;

MfM, I.iii. 19–21

Similarly, in his first interview with Isabella, Angelo says, “The law hath not been dead, though it has slept [...]” (*MfM*, II.ii. 91). In the novel, in reply to Ambrosio’s plea to mitigate the penance due for Agnes’s offence, the Lady Prioress says, “The laws of our order are strict and severe; they have fallen into disuse of late. But the crime of Agnes shows me the necessity of their revival” (*M*, I/ii/49). The characters have thus been reshuffled, but the analogies are still obvious: Agnes’s pleading with Ambrosio resembles the first encounter between Angelo and Isabella, both females being nuns¹⁵ and both pleading for a similar cause, the difference being that Isabella intercedes for her brother, Claudio. There is thus a palpable similarity between the situation of Juliet and Claudio from the play and that of Agnes and Raymond, although in the latter case it is the woman and not the man who is to be punished for an unchaste act. These analogies Lewis chose not to pursue thematically, and thus, for instance, in *The Monk* we have no equivalent of the sexual blackmail that occurs in *Measure for Measure* although Ambrosio’s interception of Raymond’s letter to Agnes created an opportunity for another “plagiarism.” There is a potential parallel between the intercession of Isabella on behalf of her brother, central to the plot of the play, and Agnes’s pleading with Ambrosio. Were Ambrosio, Angelo-like, to blackmail Agnes, the two plots of *The Monk*, the Ambrosio plot and the Agnes plot, would intertwine. Instead, Lewis creates a very different situation in which Ambrosio is emotionally blackmailed to surrender to the charms and wiles of Rosario-Matilda.

Besides an inserted quotation, of minor importance, from *Othello* (III/i/286), there is one more instance of verbal analogy, this time between *The Monk* and *Romeo and Juliet*. The rather obvious situational and verbal parallels between these two texts have been entirely ignored by Sandy Conger, who seems to believe that the only source for Ambrosio’s abduction of Antonia in Volume III of *The Monk* is the so-called Gretchen tragedy from Goethe’s *Faust*.¹⁶ While Lewis’s debt to *Faust* is unquestionable

¹⁵ Strictly speaking, Isabella is a novice with the sisters of Saint Clare. Besides, Agnes has taken the veil “from motives of despair” (*M*, I/ii/47).

¹⁶ Conger, *Influence of German Literature*, 15 ff. Of course, while in Weimar, Lewis could only have become familiar with an early version of Goethe’s drama, *Faust: Ein Fragment*, published in 1790 (ibidem, 15). Writes Conger: “Once Antonia meets Ambrosio, however, [...] Ambrosio becomes his [Lewis’s] Faust, and then parallel scenes follow one another in quick succession” (ibidem). Another omission concerns the palpable influence of Schiller’s *The Ghost-Seer*.

and manifest in a number of episodes, such as that with the magic mirror (*M*, II/iv/271), his debt to Shakespeare is equally clear. The magic potion episode is certainly evidence of Lewis's predilection for multiple literary plagiarisms, and this tendency is not tolerated by the excessive particularisation proposed by Conger.

Of special interest are parallels between two episodes from *Romeo and Juliet*, which concern the sleeping potion (scenes IV.i and IV.iii), and Matilda's scheme to allow Ambrosio to, as she puts it, "riot unrestrained in the charms of [his] mistress." As in the case of Juliet, the purpose is to prevent Antonia from being married to another, and so there is "no time to lose" (*M*, III/ii/329; rather dubious in view of the fact that Antonia is bedridden). Matilda produces "a juice extracted from certain herbs," which has an equivalent in Friar Laurence's expertise as an herbalist (*RJ*, II.iii. 1—18). In the novel, the potion is referred to as "soporific draught," "greenish liquor," and "opiate," kept in a "Phial." Equivalent to these, in the play we have "distilling liquor" and "mixture," and "vial," respectively. Friar Laurence describes its effect thus:

[...] presently through all thy veins shall run
 A cold and drowsy humour, for no pulse
 Shall keep his native progress, but surcease:
 No warmth, no breath shall testify thou livest,
 The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade
 To wanny ashes, thy eyes' windows fall
 Like death when he shuts up the day of life.
 Each part depriv'd of supple government
 Shall stiff and stark and cold appear, like death,
 And in this borrow'd likeness of shrunk death
 Thou shalt continue two and forty hours [...]

RJ, IV.i. 95—105

Matilda's speech is certainly less ornate. She explains to Ambrosio that "the person who drinks it [becomes] the exact image of Death," and goes on to add that after strong convulsions, Antonia's "blood will gradually cease to flow, and heart to beat; A mortal paleness will spread itself over her features, and She will appear a Corse to every eye" (*M*, III/ii/329); this draught will work for "eight and forty hours." The verbal echoes may seem distant, but I believe we can still speak here, if not of straightforward transference of ideas and imagery, then definitely of inspiration or of a reception that is relatively creative.

In both cases there is suspicion of poisoning. After furtively pouring the liquor into Antonia's medicine, Ambrosio all of a sudden thinks that Matilda may have been trying to kill Antonia out of jealousy: "Might not

Jealousy have persuaded her to destroy her Rival, and substitute poison in the room of an opiate?" (*M*, III/ii/333). Juliet also thinks of poisoning before drinking off the mixture: "What if it be poison which the Friar / Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead [...]" (*RJ*, IV.iii. 24–25). Of course, in the latter case the reasons would be different.

The most striking parallel between the two texts, however, concerns the manner in which uncanny fears, premonitions and metaphors materialise and take flesh. Shakespeare gave Juliet what is arguably the most "Gothic" of his soliloquies:

How if, when I am laid into the tomb,
 I wake before the time that Romeo
 Come to redeem me? There's a fearful point!
 Shall I not, then, be stifled in the vault,
 To whose foul mouth no healthsome air breathes in,
 And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
 Or, if I live, is it not very like,
 The horrible conceit of death and night
 Together with the terror of the place,
 As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
 Where for these many hundred years the bones
 Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd,
 Where bloody Tybalt yet but green in earth
 Lies festering in his shroud; where, as they say,
 At some hours in the night spirits resort —
 Alack, alack! Is it not like that I
 So early waking, what with loathsome smells,
 And shrieks like mandrakes torn out of the earth,
 That living mortals, hearing them, run mad —
 O, if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
 Environed with all these hideous fears,
 And madly play with my forefathers' joints,
 And pluck the mangled Tybalt from his shroud,
 And, in this rage, with some great kinsman's bone
 As with a club dash out my desperate brains?
 O look, methinks I see my cousin's ghost
 Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
 Upon a rapier's point! Stay, Tybalt, stay!
 Romeo, Romeo, Romeo, here's drink! I drink to thee!

RJ, IV.iii. 30–58

Links with *The Monk* are evident. First of all, the setting in which Antonia revives ("tomb" in *The Monk* answers to "vault" in *Romeo and Juliet*) is very much like that fearfully anticipated by Juliet: "By the side of three

putrid half-corrupted Bodies lay the sleeping Beauty" (*M*, III/iv/379). Antonia, on coming to, finds herself in a world of nightmare: "But why am I here? [...] Here are nothing but Graves, and Tombs, and Skeletons! This place frightens me! [...] it recalls my frightful dream! Methought I was dead, and laid in my grave!" (*M*, III/iv/381)

But grisly parallels do not end here. Antonia is brutally ravished and then mercilessly put to death, which — as Conger repeatedly observes — testifies to Lewis's habitual association of sexual gratification with death, of Eros with Thanatos. Interestingly, the way in which Antonia finds death at the hands of her ravisher is verbally anticipated in *Romeo and Juliet*. In Shakespeare, numerous passages figuratively depict the seemingly dead Juliet as a maiden possessed by Death (conventionally personified as masculine in English), and the tomb of the Capulets, where her body is laid, as a bed where this horrid consummation takes place. On finding his daughter dead, Capulet addresses Paris in the following manner: "O son, the night before thy wedding day / Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies, / Flower as she was, deflowered by him" (IV.v. 35—37). Romeo in his dying soliloquy picks up the same figure and asks: "Shall I believe / That unsubstantial Death is amorous, / And that the lean abhorred monster keeps / Thee in dark to be his paramour?" (V.iii. 103—105) These and similar passages, too conspicuous to overlook, build up a parallel by which the scene of the violation and assassination of Antonia is a gruesome realisation of the figurative depictions of death in Shakespeare's play. Ambrosio does not fail to represent himself as a "Monster of cruelty" (*M*, III/iv/385). The instrument of Antonia's death is the same as Juliet's, a dagger, which Ambrosio, urged on by Matilda, plunges in the bosom of his victim, thus fulfilling Elvira's Ghost's ambiguous prophecy. The episode of Antonia's death is merely one of the many instances of Lewis's tendency, or even method, to render sensationally literal and vivid what in his sources was a figurative suggestion or a diegetic evasion. This tendency in the so-called horror Gothic, represented by *The Monk*, to lean towards the luridly mimetic will occupy us in our subsequent considerations.

Between Tragedy and Romance: Structures and Themes in Fiction

IV

Genres and modes; towards a definition of the literary Gothic

We are more impressed by Gothic than by Greek mythology, because the bands are not yet rent which tie us to its magic: he has a powerful hold of us, who holds us by our superstition or by a theory of honour.

Henry Fuseli

The Greek art is beautiful. [...] But the Gothic art is sublime.

Samuel T. Coleridge, *Lecture: General character of the Gothic literature and art*

Chance you will ask if this be tragedy, / We kill indeed, yet still 'tis comedy; / For none save bad do fall, which draws no tear, / Nor lets compassion sway your tender ear; [...]

Vortigern, [Epilogue] spoken by the Fool

Having examined the different types of textual evidence testifying to the Gothicisation of Shakespeare and to Shakespearean influence, we can now embark on a systematic assessment of the interpenetration between Shakespearean drama and the Gothic. This requires several preparatory steps, all concerned with the elusive nature of the Gothic as a genre or with what critics have denounced as the Gothic's generic fuzziness or promiscuity. First we shall confront the generic meltdown at the birth of Gothic fiction. Next we shall give a critical examination of two major ways in which the Gothic has been defined. One is tuned to the usage of the term "Gothic" while the other is elements-oriented and inductive. Having exposed the shortcomings of both these approaches, we shall try to overcome them by turning to the often ignored narrative dynamic of the literary Gothic and its defining role in our proposal to regard the Gothic also as a literary mode.

The depth of the Shakespearean debt in the early Gothic will be discussed in the two main sections of this chapter. Relying on the conventional distinction between structure and content, between narrative syntax and thematic interests, we shall discuss parallels between Gothic narratives and the Shakespearean tradition of tragedy and romance. First, however, it is necessary to address the great confusion of genres which made the Gothic possible, and for which, conversely, the rise of the Gothic was in part responsible.

The Gothic has been recognised as troublesome for its marked generic amorphousness. From the first, Gothic texts eluded narrow or precise generic distinctions and the Gothic has come down to us as a literary fad that goes beyond the conventional categories. Elizabeth Napier, for instance, names the following genres that the Gothic combines: fairy tale, romance, Jacobean drama, and novel of manners.¹ Following Robert Platzner, Napier calls such mixing a case of “generic instability.” Philip Cox speaks of “generic profusion” which is “often accompanied by innovative generic combination and modification.”² Paul Ranger claims that “it [the Gothic] can be thought of as an artistic climate [...]”³ Anne Williams, on the other hand, is representative of an approach which on principle questions the possibility of defining Gothic and sides with Eugenia DeLamotte, who dismisses the historical-inductive method (which I adopt here) as the “laundry list” approach.⁴ Theoretical manoeuvres which aim to question Walpole’s role as the new genre’s Great Sire are understandable in critics who, like DeLamotte and Williams, represent a feminist orientation. At the same time, to deny that the Gothic did originate with Walpole can only add to the already baffling ambiguity of the term “Gothic.” It is precisely the historical genealogy of the Gothic that critics like Williams, interested in the family romance, might be expected to take an interest in, and yet their approach seems to prevent them from launching historical research into the genre’s development. In contrast to positions represented by Williams, David Richter constructs his definition of the Gothic on the basis of what he calls subgenres within *The Castle of Otranto*, “Isabella’s Tale” and “Mansfred’s Tale.” While Isabella’s Tale is basically “a melodrama arousing sympathy and suspense through the unwarranted persecution of an innocent,”

¹ Napier, *Failure of Gothic*, 67. Similarly, for instance, Kilgour: “British folklore, ballads, romance, Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedy (especially Shakespeare), Spenser, Milton [...] the graveyard poets, Ossian, the sublime, sentimental novelists [...] and German traditions [...]” (*Rise of Gothic Novel*, 4).

² Cox, *Reading Adaptations*, 6.

³ Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 17.

⁴ Williams, *Art of Darkness*, 14.

Manfred's Tale is "a punitive tragedy."⁵ While Isabella's Tale draws on the pattern set by Samuel Richardson's *Pamela*,⁶ the Manfred subgenre, which Richter describes also as "a tragedy of deterioration," is modelled on Shakespearean tragedies, such as *Richard III* and *Macbeth*. While both subgenres have eminent representatives in, for instance, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* and *The Monk* respectively, generic purity is practically nowhere to be found, *Otranto* itself being a model example of what Richter calls "the problems of focus": "the difficulty of locating the protagonist, as the point of view shifts among Manfred, Matilda, Isabella, and Theodore."⁷

Before we undertake a systematic discussion of the Gothic as a literary mode — for the Gothic can be seen *both* as a specific literary mode *and* as a relatively stable genre — we need to look at the historical complications which make reaching any comprehensive definition so highly problematic. Historically it did graft itself upon the existing genres and displayed a tendency to call into question their boundaries. In his 1765 preface to *Otranto*, Walpole hailed the advent of a new kind of romance; in his "Advertisement" to *The Monk*, Lewis openly admitted to multiple "plagiarisms," both deliberate and unintentional. In the meantime, Radcliffe effected a merger of the new type of romance with poetry while both Walpole and Lewis made forays into the as yet unexplored realm of the drama. *The Monk's* ballads, like Lewis's "tales of wonder," reasserted the mode's origin in the popular or folklore tradition revived by publications such as Percy's *Reliques* of 1765 (mentioned above).⁸

Walpole explicitly stated an intention that *Otranto* is to "blend two kinds of romance," "the ancient" and "the modern" (Preface to 2nd edition, *CO*, 9). The distinguishing criterion is adherence to Nature; the ancient romance, where all is "imagination and improbability" is contrasted with the modern type, where the principle is verisimilitude, or the copying of nature. The blend consists in the author figuring out how his characters would

⁵ David H. Richter, *The Progress of Romance. Literary Historiography and the Gothic Novel* (Michigan: Ohio State University Press, 1996), 93 and ff.

⁶ In his foregrounding of *Pamela* Richter is indebted to Clara Reeve, as the title of his book testifies; on Samuel Richardson compare Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, and Manners* [...] (1785) (rpt. New York: The Facsimile Text Society, 1930), vol. 1, Evening VIII. Reeve praises *Pamela* for "the Originality, the beautiful simplicity of the manners, and language of the charming maid"; these "are interesting past expression; and find a short way to the heart, which it [the novel] engages by its best and noblest feelings" (ibidem, 135).

⁷ Richter, *Progress of Romance*, 93. Before Richter, Robert Kiely observed that in *Otranto* "there is a disturbing lack of focus on any single person or event" (*Romantic Novel*, 34–35).

⁸ Compare Summers, *Gothic Quest*, 46.

conduct themselves according to the rules of probability that govern human behaviour, if he put them in extraordinary situations. In other words, he as it were wishes his characters to retain their humanness, i.e., to remain faithful to their "nature" (what Walpole calls their "human character"), even when he invents for them circumstances which one would not encounter in ordinary life. This allows him to commit an apparent contradiction and state that "[his] rule was nature," where "nature" is used in the same sense as when Johnson famously praises Shakespeare for "holding a mirror up to nature." In both instances "nature" means human nature or human character, and refers to verisimilitude in the representation of human agency. In terms of "ideology," Walpole proposes to heal a dissociation that is the product of the very era which he represents, one between disloyalty and loyalty to Nature, between improbability which gives free rein to fancy, and verisimilitude, which constrains poetic genius. As George Haggerty put it, borrowing a phrase from Nina Auerbach, Walpole aimed to liberate the novel from the tyranny of the mundane.⁹

Walpole does not stop at this blending of probability and improbability; he goes on to blend comedy and tragedy, or buffoonery and solemnity, for which he now expressly summons the authority of Shakespeare's genius. The justification is that comedy (in the sense of indecorous jesting and the naiveté of being given to superstitions, silliness, and other things which accompany low social status) throws high seriousness into desirable relief. In other words, Walpole's use of uncouth and ignorant domestics is intended to produce a tragicomedy in which, however, the comedic element has little to do with the tradition of romantic comedy represented by Shakespeare.¹⁰ To put this yet another way, Walpole's idea of comedy is strictly speaking unromantic because he reserves seriousness (solemnity and the sublime) for tragedy only, an idea for which he is, paradoxically, indebted to that French criticism which he vehemently attacks.

This does not yet exhaust the scope of Walpole's generic tinkering: *Otranto* is actually the realisation of a certain idea of drama in the form of a work of fiction.¹¹ Not only does Walpole confess his admiration for

⁹ George E. Haggerty, *Gothic Fiction/Gothic Form* (University Park and London: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1989), 5. According to Haggerty, Walpole's project aimed at changing the "concept of reality itself" (*ibidem*).

¹⁰ For a discussion of the relation of Shakespeare's romantic comedy to the romance tradition see E.C. Pettet, *Shakespeare and the Romance Tradition* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1970); worth consulting in this context is the apposite citation of Philip Sidney's distinction (in *Apologie*) between laughter and delight (*ibidem*, 33–34).

¹¹ This has been observed by a number of critics, but the most consistent interpretation of *Otranto* as a drama has been offered by Leigh Ehlers in "The Gothic World as Stage: Providence and Character in *The Castle of Otranto*," *Wascana Review* 14/2

Shakespeare; he is also an imitator and an adapter who has fallen under the constraints imposed on drama by neoclassical theorists. With his Gothic story and then his Gothic play Walpole can indeed be said to fashion other, this time late-eighteenth-century, adaptations of Shakespearean tragedy. This may seem far-fetched but there are I believe reasons why we should hold on to this way of looking at Walpole's position.

To begin with, there are several features that lend *Otranto* a dramatic quality and put into effect Walpole's pronouncements from the Preface to the first edition concerning the resemblance between his Gothic story and tragedy (with the prominent position of such ideas as catastrophe, pity, and terror). We may also recall Walpole's thinly veiled confession that he considers his talents to be "evidently proper for the theatre." Then there are such telltale structural features as the division of *Otranto* into five chapters, which corresponds to the five-act structure of the Elizabethan tragedy and of his play, *The Mysterious Mother*. The chapters of *Otranto* naturally fall into scenes; there is a dramatic flow of episodes which smoothly shift before the mind's eye of the reader. In the main, all the episodes consist of dialogue; occasionally the narrator inserts "stage directions" to record or rather to project the conduct of the figures participating in an exchange. Thus, for instance, when Jerome is speaking with Manfred, words in brackets inform us that "[Manfred's colour changed]" (CO, ii/48).¹² This device plainly shows us that the author places uninterrupted dramatic exchange before narration. To be sure, narration does occur (and is chiefly and predictably reserved for incidents of the marvellous variety), and direct speech often imperceptibly turns into reported speech (and then back again), but this in no significant way changes the proportion between the dramatic and narrative components of the story. In short, the dramatic quality of *Otranto* depends on the priority of the mimetic over the diegetic.¹³

Why then is *Otranto* a piece of fiction rather than a play? There are at least two reasons. The first has to do with the supernatural machinery

(1980). Ehlers does stress the features of the novel which make it similar to "a melodramatic play" (the five-act division, the use of stock characters, and "a catharsis of pity and terror") but from these observations goes on to concentrate on the providential pattern upon which the work is predicated (ibidem, 17 and 18).

¹² In the second edition of *Otranto* (printed in London in 1765 for William Bathoe and Thomas Lownds), which I consulted, all proper names are printed in italics and there are no quotation marks. Walpole's "stage directions," especially abundant in Chapter iii, are faithfully rendered in the modern editions.

¹³ This distinction can of course be applied to other authors. Radcliffe's type of the Gothic can be called diegetic and Lewis's mimetic. Lewis offers dramatic vigour and graphic literalness in contrast to Radcliffe's suggestiveness, obscurity, drawn-out suspense, and postponed revelations.

which Walpole wished to put in motion and which it was not really possible to present on the stage. Walpole must have been aware that shades of ancestors which descend from their portraits to glide along the gallery were not suited to theatrical representation — not yet, anyway — and indeed we do not find any such or similar phenomena in Robert Jephson's adaptation of *Otranto* for the stage.¹⁴ Of course this problem is not only about ghosts and other assorted marvels but concerns much of the apparatus of Gothicism in *Otranto*, which was to turn into an archetype. There are numerous and abrupt shifts in setting and some soon-to-become-classic Gothic situations — like the escape-pursuit through a subterranean passage — all more or less unfit for the stage. And besides the technical problems, Walpole's narrative representation of space is a glaring violation of the rule of the unity of place, a rule which Walpole, a neo-classicist at heart, follows carefully in his play. Finally, there is the question of language. *Otranto* is written throughout in prose, while, as we have seen, the prescribed language of drama — even in adaptations of Shakespeare — was blank verse; this indeed is the language of both *The Mysterious Mother* and *The Count of Narbonne*.

The uses of Shakespeare were shaped by the dramatic aspirations of some Gothicists and by the poetic ambitions of others. While Walpole displays a playwright's mindset in the way he keeps the events at a fast pace and abruptly shifts the setting,¹⁵ Radcliffe's Shakespeare is predominantly a poet, or, to be more precise, a poet who asserts the powers of the imagination, and a transgeneric poet at that, one whose mind ascends to the sublime regions of tragic terror and pity. The generic fusions suggest at least the possibility of a felicitous merger between the dominant mode of prose romance and the attendant genres of lyric poetry and tragic drama. At the same time, with Radcliffe, as earlier with Clara Reeve, the shift is one away from Walpole's dramatic verve and towards the "genuinely fictional": slow-paced yet suspense-driven third-person narrative with frequent and profuse descriptive passages. That Radcliffe herself did not dabble in drama is as unsurprising as the fact that her novels supplied stageable material for several Gothic melodramas.

The Monk is another example of what had by the time of its publication become the endemic mixing of genres. In the "Advertisement" Lewis

¹⁴ This makes us aware of the underlying (though often confused) distinction between drama and theatre; while Walpole's *Mysterious Mother* and indeed *Otranto* are fine realizations of some typically dramatic features, they are nonetheless unfit for display in the public sphere of the theatre. Rather than literary, critical or theoretical, this distinction is cultural and reflects the heightened eighteenth-century awareness of the fissure between the private and the public spheres.

¹⁵ See Clery, "Introduction," in: Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*, xx.

openly admits to many “plagiarisms,” some deliberate and some apparently unintentional and unpremeditated, thus revealing the deep-reaching intertextuality of his romance. His plagiarising obviously goes far beyond the mere mixing of texts, since each extensive literary borrowing involves a generic one. Of course, the main rift in Lewis’s narrative is between romance and tragedy; the romance story revolves around Agnes and Don Raymond (who chiefly act out the love interest) while the tragic plot depicts the fall of Ambrosio. For the romance Lewis may be indebted to Radcliffe (*Udolpho*, in particular) and for the tragedy, to the myth of satanic enticement (with its literary realisations in Marlowe, Milton, and Goethe). To be sure, plot resolutions in romances before Lewis were also of the comic type in the sense of effecting a reconciliation which overcomes and makes up for the earlier traumas and losses with the ultimate triumph of poetic justice, but the punishment which Lewis devised for his corrupted monk far exceeds the comparatively mundane exits that Radcliffe devised for her villains.

From another point of view, *The Monk* can be perceived as a predictable realisation of the mimetic tendencies or potentialities latent in the Gothic mode from its inception with *Otranto*. Formulated in a psychological stylisation by Louis Peck, *The Monk* displays “Lewis’ instinct for dramatic presentation.” This biographer discusses a number of examples of Lewis’s skilful handling of the mimetic potential of his story. A comparison with other romancers is probably intended to sound disparaging towards the less spectacular varieties of the Gothic: “caring nothing for [Radcliffe’s, supposedly] long descriptions filled with romantic vagueness intended to evoke an atmosphere of mystery, Lewis arranges his scenes as for a stage spectacle with gaudy colors and striking contrasts of light and darkness.”¹⁶ Peck chooses not to mention that what added to the scandal of Lewis’s Gothic was his allowing the supernatural full manifestation, in both his fiction and his drama. We might say that the so-called horror Gothic fulfilled those expectations that were at once raised and frustrated in romance readers by Radcliffe’s technique of explaining the supernatural away. In a non-psychological and Ingardenian formulation, the horror Gothic filled out the areas that are vital the Gothic literary mode and which the terror versions left in a state of indeterminacy.

This transgeneric tendency towards the spectacular has often been noted by critics, and received perhaps its most emphatic expression in Ann Howells’s analysis, not of *The Monk* but of the most “perfect” or notorious realisation of the horror Gothic variety, Mary-Anne Radcliffe’s *Manfronè; or, The One-Handed Monk* of 1809, which in the opinion of Montague Sum-

¹⁶ Peck, *Life of Lewis*, 42.

mers was “an utterly worthless compilation of ill-digested horrors and ranting absurdities.”¹⁷ Convinced of the “stagey quality” or “theatricality” of the novel, Howells consistently points up what she regards as “dramatic conventions of gesture, behaviour and scenery.”¹⁸ “In *Manfronè*” — argues Howells — “we have an almost perfect example of the contemporary stage melodrama in prose fictional form.” What lends this novel its quality of staginess is the fact that “it is built out of a series of crisis scenes, each one presented with great visual skill and appealing directly to the reader for an immediate emotional response.”¹⁹ Compelling as this “theatrical approach” to fiction may be, we need to remark that it was strictly on account of these qualities of vividness and immediacy in the realisation of Gothicism that the story could *not* be represented on the stage. As *The Monk* scandal shows, the particular oddity of the Gothic mode, its inherent and potential staginess, could only find its ultimate — in terms of morally reprehensible sensationalism (often depicted as luridness) — realisations in fiction rather than on the stage. Besides, the method of “appealing directly to the reader for an immediate emotional response” is of course also the Radcliffean method as much as the description: “built out of a series of crisis scenes” pertains to *Otranto*. To conclude, to cope with the blariness of the Gothic fictions requires some fine-tuning, finer than many scholars have achieved or indeed attempted. The genre’s mongrel nature demands sophisticated blood-testing instruments.

Judging by the epigraph and the verbal allusion, Gothic appropriations range over the widest generic spectrum of the Shakespeare *oeuvre*, from the histories, Roman plays and romantic comedies through the problem comedies and the great tragedies to the romances; in every one of these classes the Gothic authors had their favourites: *Richard III*, *Julius Caesar*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Measure for Measure*, *Macbeth* and *Hamlet*, and *The Tempest*. This means that, apart from a marked preference for the tragic, no clear-cut generic profile comes into view for the Gothic appropriation. Moreover, any attempt to reconstruct a reception pattern would be based on an assumption of generic purity in Shakespeare’s drama, which is a disputable one both in the historical and the systematic sense. The popular operatic version of *Macbeth*, the equally popular altered *King Lear*, and the problematic “buffoonery” in *Hamlet* that Garrick thought advisable to delete — these examples alone should suffice

¹⁷ Quoted in Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, 101.

¹⁸ Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, 106.

¹⁹ Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, 105. Much of what Howells affirms about *Manfronè* squares with Robert Kiely’s analysis of *The Monk* (*Romantic Novel*, 101 ff). Kiely uses such terms as theatricality and artificiality, and calls Lewis’s Gothic “picturesque” as it “appeals first to the eye.”

to remind us that in historical terms it makes little sense to speak of generically pure Shakespeare. The example of Shakespearean romance, a genre — one would think — particularly relevant in our case, will help us clarify the issue. The obvious reason for the meagre interest of Gothic authors in the Shakespearean romances (in Radcliffe there are many more epigraphs from *King John* than any of those “late plays”) is that the category itself came into being only towards the end of the nineteenth century, when it was created by Edward Dowden.²⁰ Judging by Johnson’s opinion of *Cymbeline*, the views of the eighteenth-century critics towards Shakespeare’s late plays were unfavourable; Johnson expresses his disapproval in strong terms: “folly,” “absurdity,” “confusion,” “impossibility,” “evident and gross faults.”²¹ There was much then that needed to be taken care of if the plays were to be rendered palatable for the eighteenth-century audiences, and adapters such as Garrick set about this job. George Branam’s Appendix in his *Eighteenth-Century Adaptations of Shakespearean Tragedy* lists as many as six adaptations of *Cymbeline* and seven of *The Tempest*, including Thomas Shadwell’s “comedy” and David Garrick’s “opera.”²² Shakespeare’s romances were apparently perfect material on which to impose an adapter’s correctives. It is a peculiar historical curiosity that the prevailing opinion of the epoch prevented even its defiant new romancers from taking a more lively interest in a material where they would find Shakespeare “at his most Gothic,” as for instance in some bizarre episodes in *Cymbeline*. Moreover, it is difficult to establish the extent to which the eighteenth-century notion of romance was shaped under the auspices of the “romantic” in Shakespeare. For the present, we cannot choose but assume that in this province Shakespeare’s influence is to be regarded as negligible.

The eighteenth century owed much of its awakened interest in the romance tradition to scholars such as James Beattie, Thomas Warton, and Richard Hurd. We have already discussed Hurd’s “revisionist” defence of the Gothic which links the romance tradition with the chivalric code. Studies such as Beattie’s essay on “On Fable and Romance” (from his *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, 1783) and Warton’s *Observations on the Fairy*

²⁰ In his *Shakespeare: A Critical Study of his Mind and Art* of 1875; see David Fuller, “Shakespeare’s Romances,” in: Corinne Saunders, ed., *A Companion to Romance* (Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 160.

²¹ In Fuller, “Shakespeare’s Romances,” 160. The relevant passage on *Cymbeline* runs as follows: “To remark the folly of the fiction, the absurdity of the conduct, the confusion of the names and manners of different times, and the impossibility of the events in any system of life, were to waste criticism upon unresisting imbecility [sic], upon faults too evident for detection, and too gross for aggravation” (*Johnson on Shakespeare*, 189).

²² See also Ann Thompson, “*Cymbeline*’s Other Endings,” in: Marsden, ed., *Appropriation of Shakespeare*, 203–220.

Queen of Spenser (1754 and 1762, 2nd edition),²³ an investigation into Spenser's multiple sources, among them Chaucer and Ariosto, supplied, if unintentionally, a bridge for the re-emergence of the new romance. The ultimate goal was, in the words of Hurd, to defend the art of "fine fabling," which has been lost. "Ignorance and superstition," argued Warton, "are the parents of imagination."²⁴ He bemoans the stifling of genius by erudition: "Fancy was weakened by reflection and philosophy." However, as it soon began to transpire, a revival was not really possible. "Romances," Reeve wants to convince her readers, "are neither so contemptible, nor so dangerous a kind of reading, as they are generally represented [...]."²⁵ She is at pains to vindicate them against the recent "fashion to decry and ridicule them."²⁶ At the same time, Reeve finds herself unable to tolerate such attempts at revival as Walpole's *Otranto* and before the effulgence of the Gothic bemoans "the Chaos of a circulating Library."²⁷

Perhaps the best illustration of this curious critical predicament would be to juxtapose the position of Johnson with that of Walpole. In his famous essay from *The Rambler*,²⁸ Johnson draws a distinction that can be regarded as an anticipation of Walpole's. The province of "the comedy of romance," says Johnson, is "to bring about natural events by easy means, and to keep up curiosity without the help of wonder." This is where what can be called the modern romance differs from "the heroic romance." In narratives composed according to Johnson's Rule, we find the operation of poetic justice, exemplary characters, and verisimilitude.²⁹ Johnson stresses as "the greatest excellency of art" the goal to imitate nature. Walpole is indebted not only to Johnson but indeed to the age's criticism when he calls Shakespeare the great master of nature. This reminds us of Johnson's famous mirror metaphor, borrowed of course from *Hamlet*. Unlike Johnson and Reeve afterwards, however, Walpole leaps over the tradition of realist fiction and goes back straight to Shakespeare, a gesture that opens a space for Shakespeare in the historiography of the romance. Walpole suggests that the choice is not really between fiction written according to Johnson's Rule

²³ In the Preface to her *Progress of Romance* Reeve (vol. 1, vii) admits her debt to Dr. Beattie's *Dissertations* and Warton's *History of English Poetry*.

²⁴ Thomas Warton, *The History of English Poetry* (1778), in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 78.

²⁵ Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, "Evening I," vol. 1, 5.

²⁶ Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, "Evening VI," vol. 1, 105.

²⁷ Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, "Evening XII," vol. 2, 77.

²⁸ No. 4 of March 31, 1750; in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 175 ff. All my citations are from this reprint.

²⁹ Compare Richter, *Progress of Romance*, 91. Richter borrows the term from Ralph Rader.

and something else, but between two kinds of romance, conceived differently than in Johnson. This signals a divorce from Johnson's didacticism (verisimilitude is subordinated to poetic justice) and towards the liberation of imaginative powers, for which Hurd and Warton prepared the way.

To the above disclaimers we need to add a further complication noted by David Fuller: "Though the romances [of Shakespeare] can be seen as a group, there are [...] important differences between them."³⁰ The reason for this, as with the so-called romantic comedies, lies in the fact that for his romantic element Shakespeare relied on numerous and varied sources: classical prose romances, chivalric medieval romances, miracle and morality plays (Fuller), Italian romantic epics, Spanish and Italian novellas, Petrarchan poetry, and the work of the contemporary appropriators of this legacy in the persons of Spenser and Sidney (Pettet).³¹ We shall return to the parallels between the Shakespearean and the Gothic romance in the last section of this chapter.

The definition of the literary Gothic tends to cause critical debate, despite the commonly shared assumption concerning the genre's formulaic nature. In order to embark upon a comparative analysis of Shakespearean drama and Gothic fiction we need to propose at least a working definition of the Gothic.

"If wearing a wool tie makes me a sheep, then *The Recess* is a Gothic novel."³² Robert Hume's jesting remark about a novel commonly regarded as a Gothic classic is indicative of the definition anxiety that any Gothic study has to cope with. But the problem with Sophia Lee's novel does not stop Hume from regarding *Wuthering Heights* and *Moby Dick* as Gothic novels. With many critics, the genre is an attractive field of research and yet at the same time it turns out to be curiously treacherous, like the marshy area surrounding Baskerville Hall. Incidentally, Hume does not regard *The Hound of the Baskervilles* as Gothic, while, contrary to this opinion, Conan Doyle's story is a successful revival of the early Gothic formula more than a hundred years after the genre's emergence.³³

Before we attempt to define the Gothic let us take two preparatory steps: distinguishing and listing the major pre-literary meanings that the word "Gothic" carried in the eighteenth century will help us provisionally

³⁰ Fuller, "Shakespeare's Romances," 164.

³¹ See Pettet, *Shakespeare and Romance Tradition*, 12.

³² Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic," 283.

³³ See Jacek Mydla, "Archeologia zbrodni. Gotyk detektywistyczny na przykładzie *Psa Baskerville'ów* Arthura Conan Doyle'a" [Archeology of Crime. Detective Gothic on the Example of Arthur Conan Doyle's *Hound of the Baskervilles*], in: *Zeszyty Naukowo-Dydaktyczne Nauczycielskiego Kolegium Języków Obcych w Zabrze* (Zabrze: 2006—2007).

to define “the Gothic” in the senses which the term acquired subsequently to its appearance as a new literary form with the publication of *The Castle of Otranto*. From the thus-reconstructed typology of the usage of “Gothic” we shall proceed to fashion a working definition of the Gothic both as a genre and as a literary mode. Although there is no justification for treating the Gothic exclusively as a form of fiction (even though criticism has stubbornly abided by this reductive notion), the genealogy and early development of Gothic drama confirm its derivative status. This in turn justifies our idea of giving here preliminary preference to fiction, taking the precaution that further analyses may force us to qualify this view.

Usage prior to the emergence of the literary Gothic allows us to distinguish the following meanings of “Gothic”:

1) racial or ethnic; referring to the “barbaric” conquerors of Rome, the Goths (Edward Gibbon: “that great people, who [...] broke the Roman power”³⁴);

2) historical; referring to the “Dark Ages,” from the sack of Rome in 410 A.D. until the Italian Renaissance;

3) architectural (i.e. the Gothic style in architecture), which to some extent merges with the historical, but which — as the example of Walpole’s Strawberry Hill shows — could be recreated or rather imitated³⁵; this is by far the most frequent occurrence in the “Gothic stories” themselves, referring to edifices of the Udolpho type (e.g., “the gothic magnificence of Udolpho”; *MU*, II/vi/232) and to various details and particular features thereof such as windows, etc.³⁶;

4) cultural; signifying primitivism, barbarity,³⁷ and lack of urbanity, etc. in the (pejorative) sense of “non-Roman” (acquires different and spe-

³⁴ From *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776—1788). For the illustrative material as well as some basic information, I rely here, unless specified otherwise, upon Robin Sowerby’s conveniently brief overview, “The Goths in History and the Pre-Gothic Gothic,” in: Punter, ed., *Companion to Gothic*, 15—26.

³⁵ The mistaken association of the architecture of “the post-Roman and pre-Renaissance period” with the Goths, Sowerby attributes to Giorgio Vasari (“*questa maniera fu trovata da i Gothi*”; “Goths in History,” 23). Vasari’s designation “German style” is synonymous with the monstrous and barbarous, with confusion and disorder. Summers quotes Sir Christopher Wren’s words about “the *Gothick* Rudeness of the old Design” of St. Paul’s Cathedral (1750; *Gothic Quest*, 38; original emphasis retained).

³⁶ E.g., “an extensive gothic hall” (*MU*, II/v/217). This feature rendered the setting of many plays recognisably Gothic. Typical stage directions read: “A Gothic Room in the Castle, with the Stage darkened [...]” (*Orra*, III.ii).

³⁷ Summers illustrates this common usage with Earl of Shaftesbury’s words in his *Characteristics of Men* (1711): “We are not so Barbarous or Gothic [...]” (*Gothic Quest*, 40). Elsewhere in Shaftesbury we find the following passage: “To insist that beautiful forms beautify; polite, polish. On the contrary, gothic gothicize, barbarous barbarize” (in *Plastics*).

cific negative meanings that denote all that is the opposite, or “abject,”³⁸ to the ideals of Augustanism), which also easily blends with 1. and 2.; a special extension of this meaning is the negative connotation of superstition (referring for instance to folklore)³⁹;

5) ethical or moral; referring specifically to the chivalric code as reconstructed by Richard Hurd and recreated in some fictions (notably *The Old English Baron*)⁴⁰;

6) political and, more generally, social; referring specifically to liberty (and democracy) and its opposites such as bondage and tyranny; the political denotations of “Gothic” depended on and expressed the political position of the user, eulogistic connotations associated with Whiggism;⁴¹ Jonathan Swift wrote in 1715 of the parliament as a “form of Gothic government” and in James Thomson’s poetic vision of the progress of Liberty from the Romans to the present, the Gothic period was an important formative phase on the way to ultimate completion in the form of “Britain’s matchless constitution”;

7) aesthetic (including literary); referring to “Gothic taste” as expression of energy, unbounded imagination, wildness, and irregularity; this applies to the romance tradition, to *medieval* Gothic romance, and more specifically to the Spenserian or quasi-Chaucerian romance and similar works (Tasso’s *Jerusalem*, the poems of Ossian); as we have observed, in pre-Walpolean texts, the primary referent is a liberal use of the marvellous.⁴²

The crucial thing is to note that the above is a list of meanings that in actual usage often mingled to create confusing amalgamations. Examples are too numerous to quote, but generally the racial meaning easily blend-

³⁸ Jerrold Hogle is chiefly responsible for the popularisation of Julia Kristeva’s notion of abjection in reference to the Gothic.

³⁹ The common derivation of the Goths from Scandinavia led to a further association of the Gothic with various elements of Scandinavian mythology; compare for instance James Thomson’s footnote on “the Gothic” beliefs concerning the afterlife, appended to his poem *Liberty* (1734–1736); reprinted in Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 56.

⁴⁰ As Samuel T. Coleridge put it in his 1818 lectures (Lecture II): “Firm in his faith, domestic in his habits, the life of the Goth was simple and dignified, yet tender and affectionate.” *Coleridge’s Miscellaneous Criticism*, ed. Thomas M. Raysor (London: Constable & Co. Ltd., 1936), 12.

⁴¹ Klinger, *Goths in England*, 4 ff.

⁴² Unfavourable connotations can be illustrated by the following passage from John Dryden, “The Gothic manner, and the barbarous ornaments, which are to be avoided in a picture, are just the same with those in an ill-ordered play. For example, our English tragi-comedy must be confessed to be wholly Gothic [...]” (Dryden, “A Parallel of Poetry and Painting,” in: Dryden, *Essays*, vol. 2, 146; quoted also in Summers, *Gothic Quest*, 40).

ed with the historical, these with the architectural and cultural, and so on. On the other hand, political bias encouraged blendings of the historical with the moral and even the aesthetic.

With the inception of the Gothic as a literary mode, the term began to be used in sense

8) literary; from Walpole onwards the above-listed meanings have served to define different types of the Gothic; in other words, we can construct varieties of the genre to answer to the listed meanings, and then, by combining the individual meanings, arrive at more complex types. Of course the actual works which we classify as Gothic can be regarded as representing those hypothetical types.⁴³

Let us illustrate briefly how this works. *The Castle of Otranto* can be regarded as Gothic because of the period in which the action takes place, the features of the setting (especially the castle), the recreation of medieval customs (including the "Catholic" superstitions), the barbarous and tyrannical villain *and* the champion of virtue who opposes him, and finally the author's imitation of the medieval romance in the sense of undamming the resources of fancy. Only the racial meaning does not seem to apply. The play *Vortigern*, on the other hand, though lacking most of the other features, is Gothic in the racial sense as the Jutes, who conspire to overthrow Vortigern, were regarded as a Gothic race. For a similar reason we can (and Sowerby does) call *Titus Andronicus* a Gothic play, even regardless of the bloodshed.⁴⁴ To the tricky example of *The Recess* we shall return in due course, but even at this point it might seem doubtful whether all the great classics of the literary Gothic have much to do with the senses which "Gothic" had accumulated before *The Castle of Otranto* was published. For instance, do any of the meanings listed above pertain to *The Monk*? Mark Madoff insists that, like *The Old English Baron*, *The Monk* is also related to what he calls "the myth of Gothic ancestry." "Lewis," argues Madoff, "drew chiefly upon the other myth of the Goths, which declared their ancestral brutality, ignorance, and destructiveness."⁴⁵ So who is the Goth in *The Monk*? Ambrosio? The Abbess? The Bleeding Nun? The

⁴³ Two further meanings might be added here: psychological and aesthetic, the first referring specifically to literary creation and reception, i.e., both the "free scope" which the author gives to fancy and the ways in which he or she wishes to affect the reader; and the other (aesthetic) to artistic realisations of sublimity, not only in the paintings of, say, Henry Fuseli but also in landscape painting and in landscape itself. Both these meanings, however, are largely offshoots of the literary Gothic.

⁴⁴ The Roman-Gothic opposition was also expressed by Walpole as he wrote (in a letter to William Mason in 1781) about the "strange contrast between Roman and Gothic manners."

⁴⁵ Mark Madoff, "The Useful Myth of Gothic Ancestry," in: Botting and Townshend, eds., *Gothic: Critical Concepts*, vol. 1, 33.

critic predictably avoids being specific, and little wonder since the text of the novel contains one and one only occurrence of the word, and in a meaning that is not ethnic but commonly architectural, referring to “the gothic obscurity of the Church” (*M*, I/i/26; with the typical connotations of superstition). And yet Madoff is basically right in insisting that, underpinning Gothic narratives, there is a “myth of ancestry,” a pervasive sense of pastness blending with cultural (and geopolitical) remoteness, which we might describe as a combination of some of the above-listed meanings of “Gothic.” More important, however, is the narrativisation that the myth or myths underwent in stories which we now find unmistakably Gothic. It is this narrative dynamic that will be our chief concern in the remaining part of this section.

The types mentioned at point 8. above, rather than being a recent theoretical invention, reflect the usage in which the emerging genre was embedded and which found its expression in critical responses. Despite the dominant cultural and political concerns that the Gothic raised, early debate tended to be elements-oriented. Still common nowadays, this “inductive” method of defining the Gothic by listing elements or devices, has given rise to a debate.⁴⁶ As soon as the growing popularity and dissemination of the Gothic came under scrutiny, recipes were drawn up reflecting the rising awareness of the genre’s conventionality.⁴⁷ Recipes then were eagerly used to compose specimens of the genre (such as Anna Letitia Aikin’s story “Sir Bertrand: A Fragment”; 1773) and to mock the new type of narrative. An early example of the satirical mode is an anonymous letter entitled “Terrorist Novel Writing” (dated 1797), where we can read of “the insipid repetition of the same bugbears.” The ingredients are

An old castle, half of it ruinous.
 A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.
 Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.
 As many skeletons, in chests and presses.
 An old woman, hanging by the neck; with her throat cut.
 Assassins and desperadoes “*quant. suff.*”
 Noise, whispers, and groans, threescore at least.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ Review essays conveniently sum up the recent phase of this debate, e.g., Suzanne Rintoul, “Gothic Anxieties: Struggling with a Definition,” *Eighteenth-Century Fiction* 17/4 (2005).

⁴⁷ Many scholars open their studies of the Gothic by stating this emphatically. Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, in *The Coherence of Gothic Conventions* (New York and London: Methuen, 1986), 9 ff., argues that “no other modern literary form [...] has [...] been as pervasively conventional.”

⁴⁸ See Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 184. Compare Samuel Coleridge’s letter to William Wordsworth (October 1810): “it is time to write a Recipe for poems

What we have here is an odd mixture of different building blocks, with unevenly distributed emphasis and some notable omissions. Prominence is given to the setting, with a foregrounding of the castle and its interior. To follow, the most sensational ingredients of this “system of terror” are named: homicidal violence, past and present, terror and suspense (purveyed with the help of “assassins and desperadoes”), and intimations of the supernatural (the classic special effects of the auditory type). Interestingly, with the exception of the bravos, the stock characters are omitted. The palpable ridicule is aimed at the overabundance of the stock ingredients and their horrific indecorousness; the doubly murdered woman makes it obvious that we are talking here of the horror variety of the Gothic or the so-called German school. What is to elicit “terror” in the reader is the ease with which the formulaic nature of this genre allows the avid “female readers” to turn author themselves by composing “two or three very pretty volumes” (the common double- or triple-decker) according to the recipe. In this way, the Gothic romance has to bear the brunt as accountable for the popularisation of fiction, and especially of the short-circuiting between literary reception and literary production, a condition to which the only remedy seems to be, according to the self-appointed cultural physician, reading *ad nauseam*. The exposure of the formulaic nature of the Gothic is an intentional smack in the face of those early Gothicists who, like Radcliffe, aspired to poetic originality.⁴⁹

Elizabeth R. Napier in a book tellingly entitled *The Failure of Gothic* has given a theoretical framework to concerns that critics have voiced since the rise of the genre. If a degree of the formulaic is to be found in every genre or mode, and indeed is part of the definition of genre — claims Napier — the Gothic is a totally conventionalised literary form. Napier has based her critique on this idea and has proposed to treat Gothicism as a system. After Robert Hume, she speaks of “a collection of ghost-story devices”⁵⁰ and repeatedly calls Gothic narratives formulaic: Gothic texts arise “from the repetition of a certain series of extremely conventional scenes, events and landscapes”; and “the superficial and the formulaic [...] form the very heart of the Gothic.” At the same time, Napier puts to the forefront one feature of the Gothic mode, the “atmosphere,” and hence one aspect, the pragmatic or affective:

of this sort — I amused myself a day or two on reading a Romance in Mrs Radcliffe’s style with making out a scheme, which was to serve for all romances a priori [...].”

⁴⁹ Anecdote has it that satirical attacks of this kind made Radcliffe stop writing Gothic romances. As a matter of fact, with her last novel Radcliffe switched from the earlier type of romance to what is known as historical Gothic. What’s more, her posthumously published *Gaston* is also a story in which a real ghost is obtrusively present.

⁵⁰ Napier, *Failure of Gothic*, 29; borrowed from Hume’s essay “Gothic vs. Romantic.”

[Gothicism] is a standardized, absolutely formulaic system of creating a certain kind of atmosphere in which a reader's sensibility toward fear and horror is exercised in predictable ways.

As a matter of fact, the pragmatic or "affective" concern ("exercising the reader's sensibility") is merely one section of an extended definition of the Gothic.⁵¹

In his pioneering study of Gothic drama, Bertrand Evans proposes the already mentioned triad of "mystery, gloom, and terror": "A novel is Gothic," he claims, "if elements of this kind are in quantity and used to *excite feelings* of mystery, gloom, and terror" (emphasis added). This stress on "feelings," i.e. on the reading process, allows us to regard Evans's as yet another pragmatic or affective definition (bizarre as it might seem to treat gloom as a species of feeling). Evans goes on to explain that the desired effect of emotional excitement is related to some literary content, whereby he switches to an elements-oriented type of definition. By "elements of this kind" Evans means features which, some variations notwithstanding, need to occur in order to produce the intended effect. On the first page of his book, Evans provides a list that includes such elements as the spiral staircase, the secret panel, the subterranean passage, the clank of chains, the gloomy tyrant, the insipid hero, etc.

An extreme version of historical inductiveness is represented by those who, with different degrees of literalness, hold up *The Castle of Otranto* as the matrix of all subsequent Gothic narratives in the sense of its harbouring all the necessary ingredients which a Gothicism's "workshop of filthy creation" (to quote *Frankenstein*) should contain.⁵² A systematic approach reveals that the constitutive elements fall into several distinct categories. In a helpfully succinct treatment of the issue, Kelly Hurley names the following: plot (including "stock characters" and "stock events"), setting, theme, style, narrative strategies, and "affective relations to its readership."⁵³ For each element, Hurley supplies a relevant example, such as the "imperiled young heroine" (category character), "the gloomy castle"

⁵¹ Some regard the affective approach as definitive. "Gothic form, then," writes George Haggerty, "is affective form. It almost goes without saying that these works are primarily structured so as to elicit particular responses in the reader" (*Gothic Fiction/Gothic Form*, 8). There is a degree of contradiction in the term "affective form" which the foregrounding of structure (in "primarily structured") fails to remove.

⁵² Sometimes the matrix is extended to include more "basic" authors, e.g., the trio of Walpole-Reeve-Radcliffe (compare Railo, *Haunted Castle*, 11).

⁵³ Kelly Hurley, "British Gothic Fiction, 1885—1930," in: Hogle, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, 191. Hurley's "definition" has been chosen for its succinctness. For a parallel but more extensive treatment see Punter, *Literature of Terror*, vol. 1, "Introductory: dimensions of Gothic."

(category setting), incest (category theme), “hyperbolic language” (category style), confusing narrative frames (category narrative strategies), and rendering the reader fearful (category reading process). Clearly, this approach is still ridden with inductiveness: without the propping-up of relevant examples to fill out the slots, even such a system will remain confusingly vague; different forms of fictional narrative can be said to have a type of character or a certain theme, and thus the blank categories (of character, theme, setting, etc.) on their own do not suffice to make up a definition of any literary form.

On the other hand, one might argue that even though no single element may suffice to produce a Gothic story, an assembly of the different elements certainly will. True; the question remains, however, which particular elements? Will, for instance, a persecuted heroine abandoned in a gloomy castle be enough to create the desired effect or atmosphere? What about the unmistakably Gothic episode of Jonathan Harker’s detention in Count Dracula’s castle? And what about stories in which there are no castles (as in the so-called urban Gothic, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* for instance) or those in which the classic gender configurations have been inverted, as already to some extent is the case in *The Monk* and then in *Zofloya*? These complications make us glance back with appreciation at the already cited attempts to define the Gothic almost exclusively by the effect it produces in the reader, “to frighten,” in the words of Mary Shelley.⁵⁴ Affective definitions are, however, deficient in that they attach the desired effect of terror to an inductively random assembly of narrative devices. A possible remedy may be to treat those devices as relative to a given cultural environment. If we assume, which is not preposterous, that a particular assembly and arrangement of elements gravitates towards a cultural milieu, then a method presents itself of reconciling the affective and the content-oriented approaches to the Gothic; both are justified within their limited scope. Moreover, the elements-oriented approach is especially helpful in a study of the genre’s formative phase, because it is precisely the different features of the represented world and the language that seem responsible for achieving the desired affective relation to the reader. The fact that formulas or conventions are constantly shifting as their effectiveness tends to wear off with time does not puncture the vaunted conventionality of this supremely protean literary mode or genre. As we have insisted in the Introduction, there is no ignoring the historical perspective. To think of the Gothic apart from Walpole and Radcliffe makes as much

⁵⁴ In her 1831 Introduction to *Frankenstein*. Compare Punter’s tentative assumption: “There is [...] one element which, albeit in a vast variety of forms, crops up in all the relevant fiction, and that is fear.” Punter, *Literature of Terror*, 18.

sense as thinking of the epic apart from Homer. If the main fault of the historical-inductive approach is to ignore the narrative (and cultural) dynamic of the Gothic; the fault of the affective has been to ignore the role of pity. To overemphasise, as Punter and other scholars do, the role of terror is to eliminate pity, which is a constitutive element or feature of the early Gothic.

Apart from the cultural and historical dynamic, the Gothic has an internal dynamic in the sense of the viscous manner in which the identifiable literary devices coexist and cooperate in the unity of a given work. Furthermore, this dynamic is essentially related to those concerns with ancestry which found their baffling expression in the ambiguities, chiefly cultural and political, with which the term "Gothic" is ridden.

Many problems that the Gothic seems to raise can be removed by drawing a distinction between the Gothic as genre and the Gothic as mode. When we speak of the Gothic as a genre, we mean a collection of features that encompass a given work in its entirety; such is the case of the great classics, *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Romance of the Forest*. We propose here, in other words, to understand the Gothic as made up of reusable or "recyclable" elements, elements that are relatively independent, which allows for their reproduction. A combination of all or most of the enumerated (classes of) elements makes up canonical or proper Gothicness, which is not to say that there is only one type of fiction justifiably called the Gothic. But in many novels traditionally regarded as Gothic, recognisable Gothicness encompasses only a portion of the narrative. This is perhaps what George Haggerty means when he argues that "Gothic *tales* succeed where Gothic *novels* fail."⁵⁵ This may be rephrased to mean that the Gothic can function independently of the novel form in which it first occurred, as a Gothic tale or a Gothic play or as what I propose to call a mode rather than a genre.

Every genre permits a degree of variety. Even though there should be one type of the Gothic which we can call classic, modifications are of course possible. On the other hand, no successor to the classic, genre-founding works can avoid being regarded as derivative in the sense of hearkening back to the prototype.⁵⁶ If the streets of Victorian London are

⁵⁵ Haggerty, *Gothic Fiction/Gothic Form*, 11; original emphasis retained.

⁵⁶ There are differences between the historically prevalent types of Gothic: "terror Gothic," "horror Gothic," "Radcliffe school Gothic," and "Lewis (or German) school Gothic," etc. This diversity among the earliest Gothic romances undermines to some extent any attempt at systematisation. The historical genealogy of the Gothic puts Walpole's and Radcliffe's varieties before Lewis's, a fact which ought not to be ignored. There certainly were some basic tensions within the genre such as that between the private consumption (fiction) and public representation (drama) and the different approaches to the supernatural, which certainly contributed to its rapid diversification.

to work as a Gothic device and help make up Gothicism then they need to fulfil a role analogous to that played by the castles of Otranto or Udolpho. The same is true of any other variety of the Gothic which one can devise, be it marine Gothic or spacecraft futuristic Gothic. This opens us to the notion of the Gothic as a mode rather than genre. In view of the goal of our analyses, the thus understood Gothicism defies chronology and can be used retrospectively, as we shall see in due course, and applied to Shakespeare, to Jacobean dramatists, to Milton, etc.

To regard the Gothic as a mode rather than a genre is to give preference to function and dynamic, to how elements of the narrative syntax are used. Having decided on elements of the basic configuration, an author is at liberty to turn the mode on, as it were, at any given point in the narrative. This is what makes possible Gothic tales within narratives that are not generically Gothic; one thinks of the episode in *Jane Eyre* from Jane's arrival at Thornfield to the discovery of the female "demon" in the attic. One thinks also of Watson's diary in the Dartmoor section of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, before the discovery of Holmes and the final solution of the case. Such episodes are not examples of *generic* Gothicism, and indeed the purpose may be far from composing another Gothic story that "imitates the canonical work." A literary mode creates the possibility for parody. This turning the Gothic on and off at will is what Jane Austen does in *Northanger Abbey*; a close analysis would show that she deftly runs almost the whole gamut of classic elements and devices.

In what follows, we shall analyse the osmosis that binds and animates some standard structural components or elements, or turns them into *devices*, in the process-like unity and the organic whole of the literary work. This dynamic, we shall soon observe, is closely related to some of the meanings of "Gothic" that we have listed, especially the political one.

First of all let us observe that a narrative dynamic informs the setting, the seemingly most static element but at the same time the largest and some would say most significant class of constitutive elements. The Gothic topography can be characterised on two scales, large and small. The large-scale setting is made up of the basic localisations, such as (commonly) the castle ("that horror-romanticist stage-setting, the haunted castle"⁵⁷), the convent, and the woods. The opening of Eliza Parsons's *The Castle of Wolfenbach* features the (apparently) haunted castle but with a change of setting (from Germany to England) later in the story, the Gothic mode vanishes. In Charlotte Dacre's *Zofloya* we observe a counter-movement: the Gothic mode sets in halfway through the book and the scene shifts to this typical locale as befitting the criminal events that are to take

⁵⁷ Railo, *Haunted Castle*, 14.

place. In the last chapters of her novel, Dacre moves the scene once more, and stages the final catastrophe in some banditti's cavern in the Alps.⁵⁸ These examples show that function is all-important.

Usually there are also many small-scale features: the chamber furnished with a sliding panel, the trap door, the dungeon, the iron chest, the subterranean passage, etc.⁵⁹ These props are accompanied by the standard occurrences or special effects — the tolling of the clock, the clanking of chains, music, the light of the moon, etc. — which make the places as it were come alive. This may confer a supernatural extension upon the represented world: in the sense of a divine and benevolent presence (Radcliffe) or its demonic counterpart (Dacre). While in *Udolpho* music imparts a tinge of the marvellous to the castle and the sublime scenery conveys an assertion of divine providence, in *Zofloya* unearthly sounds are intimations of the interference of the demon and the wild woods allow the exercise of illicit passions. Obscurity, when it pervades small-scale topography, lays the scene for the tasks of exploration as well as for the equally suspenseful escape-and-pursuit. In a word, topography is tightly linked with the deployment of mystery and suspense.

While some features of the setting are instruments and symbols of oppression, others fulfil the liberating function; the dungeon is a prison but the trapdoor into the subterranean passage offers a means of escape. Oppression ranges from the political and domestic types through the social variety (low birth) and some cultural forms. Especially popular was the monastic or conventual variety, perhaps best symbolised in the statue of St. Clare in *The Monk* as a source of superstitious terror (*M*, III/iii), but in fact concealing an entrance to the dungeon. Another type of oppression, a favourite with Radcliffe, may be called psychological; Radcliffe's heroines are victims of their excitable imaginations as much as they are of male tyranny.

The setting then is clearly more than just a neutral backcloth for the plot; the chief narrative engine is agency, human or otherwise. In accordance with the romance tradition (see p. 224), human figures tend to be static and their actions predictable, but this "psychological inertness" does not mean that characters do not engage in action; on the contrary: "adventures" abound. Yet this toing-and-froing does not necessarily entail internal transformation. Nor is conventionality necessarily at odds with mobility. Fixed personalities act out prescribed roles; arranged in stock con-

⁵⁸ A similar movement and the accompanying change of setting is found in Percy B. Shelley's *The Cenci*. Act IV of the play opens in the Castle of Petrella and soon the patricide is to occur. Shelley may have been here inspired by *Zofloya*, as he was for his Gothic novel *Zastrozzi*.

⁵⁹ Railo speaks about such details as moonlight, wind, bell, clock, etc. (*Haunted Castle*, 10 ff).

figurations, they engage in staple interactions and get involved in easily foreseen situations. The tyrannous villain will do deeds that confirm his tyrannous villainy and the chaste maiden will defend her virtue. This fixedness of the characters' ethos (their personal identity) has little to do with their social or public identity; the latter may and often does change dramatically. In the principal characters, the fixed ethos (how a character acts and what principles move him to action) is thus combined with a highly unstable social standing, the plot consisting of a series of adventures rather than of identity-shaping experiences. Any destabilisation of identity ends in a disintegration of personality: madness or, not infrequently, death.⁶⁰ With this treatment of character, it is not difficult to meet the demands of poetic justice; oppression, embodied in the usual tyrant or the scheming monk, produces its victims and those must in turn be delivered from the various restraints to which they are subjected.

The social dynamic concerns both villains and their opponents; they are bound together.⁶¹ At the end of *Otranto* the position of Manfred is as much changed as that of Theodore. Both types of figures have been involved and arranged in a classic win-or-lose tug of war: Manfred descending on the social see-saw at the same time as his opponent goes up. Moreover, both are encumbered by the past. This troubled relation to the past is a typical feature of Gothic characterisation, which finds reflection in plot arrangements. This is conspicuous not only in the constructions of villainy, arguably the most unique creation of the genre; some heroes and heroines also suffer from what may be called mental oppression, if only caused by overactive imagination. Transgressive desires and passions threaten the wellbeing of others,⁶² but villains are also equipped with a conscience gnawed by a sense of guilt, which often seems like a literary afterlife of the Macbeth syndrome.⁶³ The Countess of Narbonne, the epo-

⁶⁰ Of course we are talking here of deaths due to a moral wound, the frequent suicides included.

⁶¹ The sharp distinction between good and evil concerns also minor characters. The servants and bravos, playing staple roles, are usually well suited to the realisation of the traditional features of romance. Their roles differ; the lowly figures of the domestics are used as a detachment device from the superstitious fears evoked by the narrative (though simultaneously they encourage the very fears which their naïveté is meant to dispel). The banditti, on the other hand, are much wanted purveyors of suspense, always ready to turn up whenever the pace of the narrative is in danger of slackening. In the main, minor characters in Gothic narratives are employed for different purposes than their counterparts in Shakespeare's drama.

⁶² On transgression as a feature of the Gothic genre see Fred Botting, *Gothic* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 6 ff.

⁶³ For a typology see Varma, *Gothic Flame*, 215 ff. We shall return to this problem presently.

nymous heroine of Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother*, can be regarded as a model for this pattern due to her uneasy conscience over the incest committed with her son. At the same time, she is not strictly speaking villainous; paralysed by guilt, she is quite incapable of committing further crimes. This kind of troubled relation to the past is central to many Gothic narratives.

There is then a perceptible dynamic also to character portrayal. Besides, typically "Gothic" situations answer to the Burkean notion of the sublime. It will be recalled that according to Burke, the sublime is evoked by such ideas as death, pain, etc. This relates the horrific sublime to situations of personal danger, which in the interpersonal realm is found in cases of coercion and oppression of all types, and the related instances of verbal and non-verbal threat or personal confrontation (or avoidance thereof), of escape and pursuit. Adeline menaced by the machinations of the Marquis de Montalt and her escape from the abbey in *The Romance of the Forest*; Agnes's attempt to run away from the convent thwarted by Ambrosio and the tyrannical Prioress in *The Monk*; Victoria's successful flight from the clutches of Signora di Modena in *Zofloya* — the list could be extended *ad infinitum* (especially if we take into account the dramatic variations). In *Caleb Williams*, a borderline case of the Gothic,⁶⁴ it might be argued that the Gothic mode sets in when Caleb decides to run away despite the death-dealing threats of Falkland. In all situations where personal safety or life itself is at stake, we have the Gothic equivalent of the romance adventures. The sheer abundance of them should give us pause:

The various components are arranged in a teleological sequence,⁶⁵ and the way they evolve produces genre-specific effects, especially those of mystery and suspense. This dynamic is present also in the slow-paced novels of Radcliffe.⁶⁶ Teleology is related to significant narrative strategies, ones that are fundamentally Gothic and in a strict sense "sensationalist."⁶⁷

⁶⁴ This is to say that *Caleb* is a novel that interrogates the Gothic conventions at the same time as it exploits them. Another narrative of this kind is Friedrich Schiller's *The Ghost-Seer*.

⁶⁵ Devendra Varma laid strong emphasis on the suspense-creating function of various elements of Gothic narratives.

⁶⁶ On pace see for instance Summers, *Gothic Quest*, 55. Clara McIntyre early emphasised the role of suspense in Radcliffe's narratives. She describes *The Italian* as having "the most dramatic plot of all [Radcliffe's novels]" (*Ann Radcliffe*, 85) and gives a number of examples showing Radcliffe's use of suspense.

⁶⁷ According to Hurley, the common narrative strategies concern chiefly "confusion of the story by means of narrative frames and narrative disjunction; the use of densely packed and sensationalist, rather than realistic, plotting" ("British Gothic Fiction, 1885—1930," 191). Yet narrative framing is hardly a characteristic of early Gothic, while what the critic describes as sensationalist plotting can be put down, once more, to the legacy of the romance tradition; see below, p. 224.

These concern the deployment of mystery and suspense (terror), *both* being the chief narrative engines, which naturally also concerns drama as a generically different realisation of the Gothic mode.⁶⁸ Evans's "atmosphere of mystery" points to a distinct trait that basically is not a feature of the represented world but rather belongs to the affective (response-oriented) element of the genre's definition. This insistence on "mystery" helps us realise how much the narratives depend on specific quasi-temporal arrangement (to borrow a term from Roman Ingarden) of its constitutive elements.

Situations and events naturally cause characters to interact with one another, but besides interpersonal ones, there is in the Gothic a shady class of occurrences that, for lack of a more precise designation, belong to the sphere of the marvellous and the fantastic.⁶⁹ Characteristic are confrontations with the marvellous or the supernatural, wherewith we usually transcend the realistic dimensions of the represented world. Depending on an author's treatment of the supernatural, such encounters may belong to the category of the marvellous in Tzvetan Todorov's sense — as when Don Raymond "meets" the Bleeding Nun in *The Monk* — or to that of the fantastic.⁷⁰ Often the supernatural dimension of the represented world is confined to the personal rather than interpersonal realm. Such is the case of *The Old English Baron*, where the supernatural is allowed a phantasmal realisation in Edmund's dreams, a situation found later in *The Romance of the Forest*. Zofloya offers a combination of both methods: Victoria has many dreams and visions which give a personal enhancement to the ontology of the represented world; Zofloya himself, however, receives a full-blooded realisation in the daytime world as "a Being," wonderful and superior (*ZM*, III/iii/233).⁷¹

⁶⁸ This is basically also McIntyre's assumption, see McIntyre, *Ann Radcliffe*, 79 ff.

⁶⁹ The term "fantastic" is used here in the sense proposed by Tzvetan Todorov in *The Fantastic. A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre*, trans. Richard Howard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press), 41 ff. Todorov's definition is affective; the fantastic is a state of hesitation in readers and characters "who must decide whether or not what they perceive derives from 'reality' as it exists in the common opinion" (*ibidem*). Todorov recognises the role of the fantastic in what he calls the maintaining of suspense (*ibidem*, 92).

⁷⁰ The latter is the case of Radcliffe's explained supernatural; the ghost of the mother in *A Sicilian Romance* may be eventually explained away as a human presence, and yet Radcliffe sustains our belief in the reality of the supernatural for almost the entire narrative.

⁷¹ On the other hand, the genuine, demonic nature of Zofloya is revealed to Victoria in a dream by an angel, and thus we never receive a satisfactory, "objective," confirmation of the Moor's supernatural status.

Responses to the supernatural (perceived or actual) are not confined to terror, even though this is common. Dacre, taking her cue from Lewis, has her heroine develop a fascination for her demonic accomplice and terror is reserved for a dream vision in which Victoria is haunted by the spectre of her murdered husband. Caleb, on the other hand, reacts with terror to the increasing oppressions inflicted upon him by Falkland, otherwise a perfectly natural human being.⁷²

The supernatural, explained or not, is involved in a narrative purposefulness typical of the Gothic mode. The abundant presence of terrors of oppression and coercion is predicated upon a specific liberationist teleology in which even the ghosts have an appointed function to perform. Initially at least those model situations were highly gendered, as represented by the mad pursuit of the damsel in distress by the infuriated villain with the chivalrous “peasant” coming to her rescue. Once more the legacy of the romance tradition shows through, the dragons of yore transformed into machinating monks and power-obsessed tyrants.⁷³ We cannot perhaps treat the supernatural as a necessary source of terror, and yet, even though the Radcliffean variety of the Gothic does not allow the supernatural to materialise,⁷⁴ the method consists largely in skilfully planting suggestions of it, and in exploiting her readers’ superstitions. It is difficult to disagree with Montagu Summers’s opinion concerning the special role of supernatural terror: “A supernatural terror is on a higher psychological plane than terror aroused by natural objects of repulsion.”⁷⁵ Terrors in “terror Gothic” relate to human agency and, specifically, to the villain’s wickedness; they thrive, not on certitude and inevitability but on varying de-

⁷² One might argue, however, that as Victoria’s fascination (latently erotic) renders the devil less demonic (as in Lewis’s representation of Matilda), so Caleb’s terror confers a tinge of the demonic upon Falkland.

⁷³ Indeed, the gendering of this configuration underwent little modification with time, although later Gothicists were at pains to destabilise the romance legacy. In *The Monk* (as later in *The Abbess*) the conventionally masculine tyranny is embodied in the Prioress, and Ambrosio is undone by a female, but it is still a classically masculine knight who rescues Agnes and the wiles of Matilda that are the undoing of Ambrosio are female. By the same token, Dacre’s Victoria may depict the very opposite of Radcliffe’s obsession with the ideal of female chastity, and yet it is a supremely masculine demon who escorts her safely through the frequent moments of crisis.

⁷⁴ Radcliffe’s *Gaston* is proof of her inability to handle real ghosts with the aim to build suspense. Her repeated use of the ghost strips it of the spellbinding suggestiveness of the semi-supernatural scenes in her earlier novels. See p. 204.

⁷⁵ *Gothic Quest*, 49. Radcliffe’s distinction between terror and horror (see p. 127) is basically affective; a species of terror, which she calls “horror,” may have a “freezing” effect on the mind of the reader and extinguish suspense. Many situations from *The Monk* illustrate this.

grees of uncertainty concerning the future, while the indispensable supernatural variety of terror is chiefly related to the yet-to-be revealed past. Be they what they may, all terrors are planted for one overriding purpose: to be overcome.

The common distinction relates mystery to the past and suspense to the future. Both mystery and suspense are produced by a particular arrangement of events, and as such belong to the narrative syntax, the “how” and not the “what” of the story. We have a sense of mystery if what we know to be a momentous event from the past is unknown to us; this lack of knowledge posits this event ever so strongly in the as-yet-concealed back-story of the narrative. Similarly, suspense arises whenever we feel that something of moment is to happen and this feeling is more or less acute in proportion to the supposed significance and perilous nature of the anticipated event. This relates suspense to terror. There are, one might object, episodes where terror is not directly linked with suspense; the Gothic castle, such as Udolpho, seems to create an atmosphere of terror without allowing the fears to get a grip on something to substantiate them. But then the gloomy edifices of the Gothic largely blend with their wicked owners, and so there is some nefarious human agency intuited “behind” them which is the actual source of terror.⁷⁶

In terms proposed by Manfred Pfister,⁷⁷ mystery and suspense operate both within and outside what he calls the internal communication system: we can ask whether the characters have a sense of mystery and suspense (the internal communication system), but also how the represented events affect the reader, whether he or she has a *sense* or *feeling* of mystery and suspense (the external communication system); and, to use a more objective formulation, what in the content and structure of the work has caused this particular type of tension, to emerge. We can think of situations in the fictive world where there is danger or risk of which the portrayed characters are not aware but which nonetheless keeps the mind of the reader enthralled. Alternatively, the opposite may be the case: a character experiences an acute sensation of suspense that, however, unless the reader finds it plausible or justifiable, fails work in the external communication system.

What mystery and suspense have in common is information deficit. Mystery arises out of deficient knowledge about the past while suspense

⁷⁶ For an exemplary analysis of this fusion of setting and character (castle and villain) see Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, 33 ff.

⁷⁷ See Manfred Pfister, *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*, trans. John Halliday (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 27 ff. In my discussion of suspense I chiefly rely on Pfister’s concise but very helpful treatment of the subject (*ibidem*, 98–102).

concerns the future. In both cases, it is necessary that the deficient knowledge be imbued with intentionality by being oriented towards a momentous event, in either the back-story or the yet-to-be-represented part of the evolving narrative. Thus, mystery is constituted by information deficit about an as-yet-unrepresented event from the past which, if known, would elucidate the narrative present. *Mutatis mutandis* the same is true of suspense: the narrative present is opened as it were onto a future event, which, once it has occurred, *may* dramatically reshape the current situation. Both these “objectivist” definitions can be reformulated into their “subjectivist” or affective equivalents, with the help of such ideas as anxiety, anticipation, curiosity, etc. Furthermore, both can be related to the Burkean notions of both obscurity (information deficit) and the sublime, the latter category in its horrific variety being contained in the notion of the momentous event upon which both mystery and suspense depend for their effective deployment.⁷⁸

The distinction between (past-oriented) mystery and future-oriented suspense, or suspense proper, needs perhaps some further elaboration. This will, next, allow us to elucidate the specifically Gothic joint-operation of mystery and suspense, or the device that I propose to call past-oriented suspense.

First let us examine two instances of suspense in an unadulterated, future-oriented form, even though one would think it sufficient to cite again Manfred's pursuit of Isabella. In Chapter vi of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, Alleyn is making preparations to liberate Osbert from his imprisonment at Dunbayne Castle. There are various difficulties that need to be overcome: “The hopes of Alleyn were somewhat chilled by the report of the soldier; from the vigilance which beset the doors of the prison, escape from thence appeared impracticable” (*CA&D*, vi/76). Difficulties and the resulting risk involved in the enterprise raise the level of suspense, both in the protagonist and in the readers, especially if they sympathise (or even identify) with him (as Radcliffe expects them to): Alleyn “was condemned [...] to linger in suspense till the third night from the present [...]” Next we find out that the young hero is unaware that his schemes have been pre-empted: “But Alleyn was unsuspecting of a circumstance which would utterly have defeated his hopes and whose consequence threatened destruction to all their schemes” (*CA&D*, vi/76). This disparity between

⁷⁸ Burke defines suspense without calling it this: “it is in our nature, that, when we do not know what may happen to us, to fear the worst that can happen us [sic].” Burke, *Philosophical Enquiry*, 76 (II/xix). Burke, too, knows that suspense (“apprehension”) vanishes when “we know the full extent of any danger” (*ibidem*, 54; II/iii), which corresponds to Pfister's assumption concerning information deficit as a condition of suspense.

what Alleyn knows (internal communication system) and what we know (external communication system) makes the situation even more suspenseful, that is if we still find it plausible and have reasons to believe that after all Alleyn may succeed.

Another example comes from *The Monk*: Ambrosio's imprisonment depicted in the last chapter of the novel. What creates and sustains suspense in this scene is *not* the fact that Ambrosio awaits torture and execution by the officers of the Inquisition: He knows too well what to expect (Burke's "full extent of danger"), and we share in his knowledge. This certitude diminishes or positively eliminates suspense, leaving room for pure horror in the face of ineluctable doom. Actually, the anguish that Ambrosio feels is not directly related to the apprehension, if any, that the reader may experience once he/she surveys all the circumstances (including the metaphysical or theological consequences) of the situation. But in fact we do have here also a keen sense of suspense. Why is that? Even before the summoning of the devil, the possibility of eluding his doom presents itself when Matilda visits him to offer counsel and leave a book of magic spells. The hesitations of Ambrosio sustain the high level of suspense, which answers to the high stakes involved: escape from torment present and anticipated in exchange for eternal damnation. The appearance of the devil (especially the first instance) opens up the seemingly sealed fate of Ambrosio and thus creates the possibility for suspense to arise: the "what" (What will Ambrosio decide?) and the "how" (How is he going to escape?).⁷⁹ The reader is invited to "savour" moments of undiluted suspense because with the approach of the hour appointed for the *Auto da Fé* the situation grows more and more serious. The questions which define the circumstances are formulated for us: "Will you accept my conditions?" asks the devil. At the same time, the supernatural element causes danger to assume metaphysical proportions; what is at stake is Ambrosio's eternal bliss rather than his physical wellbeing. Furthermore, the intervention of non-human agency, once the Faustian pact has been signed, diminishes suspense; the devil can achieve the impossible, at which point we can no longer come up with a hypothetical resolution of the situation.

In the hell-assisted escape we have an example of a suspenseful situation which is not related to a narrative past. Yet also in this final episode in *The Monk* the reader may await some revelation, namely the clearing-

⁷⁹ This questions-oriented approach to suspense has many proponents (Noël, Pfister, Pütz). Pfister stresses the role of anticipative hypotheses in the building up of suspense. As a critic put it in a comment on Radcliffe, readers are repeatedly encouraged to "create their own morbid fantasies for themselves" (Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, 43).

up of the mystery of Ambrosio's identity.⁸⁰ Thus, we might say, the suspense that arises here is not wholly unadulterated and has an admixture of mystery in it. But Lewis does not make us focus on the past the way Gothicists normally do; even though Ambrosio's transgressions follow one another fully exposed to our view, which may be regarded as exceptional, the shocking discovery of the identity of his victims is reserved for the last course at this supper of horrors.

Typical for Gothic fictions is the use of a past-oriented species of suspense: significant occurrences (e.g., the murder committed by Manfred's ancestor) belong to the narrative's back-story and a special type of tension arises as the past strives, so to speak, to reach the light of day. The classic situation is when "we" (including some of the protagonists) know that past crimes await revelation and call for retribution. Here, once more, *Otranto* sets the basic pattern; as Walpole puts it in the Preface to the first edition when he states (after the Bible) the moral of his story: "the sins of fathers are visited on their children to the third and fourth generation." The first-page prophecy, according to which the castle and lordship of Otranto "should pass from the present family, whenever the real owner should be grown too large to inhabit it," although seemingly directed exclusively towards the future (noteworthy is the repetition of "should") and thus being a classic suspense-building device,⁸¹ contains hints about the past which are plain enough to put Manfred on edge. This "ancient" prophecy suggests that the present prince has no rightful claim to the title and that the line of lawful owners was at some point in the past unlawfully ousted. *Otranto* is also "classic" in that it introduces the assistance of supernatural agency in the process of restitution. This of course strongly reminds us of the opening scenes in *Hamlet*.

The deployment of past-oriented suspense was perfected by Ann Radcliffe, who turned it into a hallmark of her art, the veil at Udolpho becoming its symbol. The characteristically Radcliffean device is the use of a situation in which the heroine peeps under a veil which apparently conceals past mysteries and starts in terror at what she has only managed darkly to glimpse at rather than bring fully to light. At the beginning of *The Mys-*

⁸⁰ The true nature of Ambrosio's crimes, including matricide, is revealed to him *post factum* and in a situation that precludes suffering from (past-)troubled conscience, alone productive of tragic pathos.

⁸¹ Compare the monster's threat in *Frankenstein*. Here the relevant anticipatory hypothesis is solely future-oriented. Interestingly, in this piece of "romantic Gothic" fiction, the device of past-oriented suspense is not employed; the reader is fully apprised of Victor's terrifying secret. The building of the creature is a "mystery" only within the internal communication system.

teries of *Udolpho*, Emily's father commands the girl to burn "a packet of written papers" and expressly forbids her to examine them (*MU*, I/vii/76).⁸² We are first given to believe that the grave secret, contained in those papers has been destroyed beyond recovery but we soon find that it has survived in the memory of an old servant, Dorothée, a circumstance that allows the mystery to survive while postponing revelation. Eventually the truth is revealed in the tale that Sister Agnes unfolds on her death-bed, almost at the end of the bulky, four-volume novel (*MU*, IV/xvii). Even then the mystery does not expire altogether as the penultimate chapter (IV/xviii) brings corrections to the death-bed confession.

Radcliffe habitually resorts to devices of postponement before reluctantly allowing the truth to see daylight. Significantly, the suppressed facts concern the identity of the protagonists. Also here the pattern was set by Walpole; used in *Otranto* and then reused in *The Mysterious Mother*. As he explains on the occasion of the publication of the drama, the trick consists simply "in interrupting the spectator's fathoming the *whole* story till the last."⁸³ Radcliffe must have been as fully aware that the actual revelation is far less significant than the titillation of partial ignorance.⁸⁴ Hence, she does not spare her readers this kind of excitement; naturally, however, many objected to being thus led on a leash of fabricated obscurity.⁸⁵

Our working definition of the Gothic includes categories that belong to the romance tradition. We shall discuss revelation and recognition at more length in the subchapter devoted to romance, together with such devices as disguise and mistaken identity. Here let us remark here that both revelation and recognition as well as a characteristic use of language are essentially related to mystery and suspense and it is chiefly in this rela-

⁸² This corresponds to the opening of *Melmoth* and the injunction in the will of old Melmoth to burn a mysterious manuscript: "He may read it if he will; I think he had better not. At all events, I adjure him, if there be any power in the adjuration of a dying man, to burn it" (*MW*, I/ii/22).

⁸³ Walpole, "Thoughts on Tragedy," in: *Works of Horatio Walpole*, vol. 2, 312; emphasis Walpole's. "Fathoming the story" would be tantamount to eliminating the desired information deficit, which would remove both mystery and suspense.

⁸⁴ The conversation between Catherine and Isabella in Chapter vi of *Northanger Abbey* (*NA*, I/vi/25) captures the essence of Radcliffe's method: being "wild to know" what is hidden behind the black veil, the reader would like to spend her whole life in reading the book; to be more precise, in creating morbid fantasies and making terrifying conjectures, e.g., "I know it must be a skeleton, I am sure it is Laurentina's skeleton" (*ibidem*).

⁸⁵ For an example of early criticism see Sir Walter Scott's "Introduction" to Radcliffe (already quoted); rpt. in Sage, ed., *The Gothick Novel*, 56–63. At the same time, Scott commends Radcliffe's skill in "working upon the sensations of natural and superstitious fear" and her "use of obscurity and suspense" (*ibidem*, 60).

tion that they can be regarded as generic features. The language of Gothic romances, besides features that reflect the extent to which these works depend upon the romance tradition (with its special decorum and the resulting strict observance of social distinction) assists in the deployment of mystery or/and suspense by means of verbal obscurity. Verbal obscurity, which, as we recall, Burke elevated to the rank of aesthetic principle, is responsible for partial ignorance or information deficit. A skilful Gothickist would certainly lose no opportunity to enhance with the help of semantic ambiguity the obscurities that envelop protagonists and situations. When, for instance, Radcliffe introduces music from an unknown source the purpose seems to be to achieve a totality of mystification. Her use of obscurity is thus purposefully affective; the untold and the ambiguous leave room for the imagination of the reader to bustle in. In the eyes of contemporaries the trick consisted in an actual identification of the reader with the heroine: "her readers are the virtual heroes and heroines of her story as they read."⁸⁶ In the non-Radcliffean species of the Gothic we observe a significantly limited use of mystery and past-oriented suspense, and thus also of the indistinctness which verbally sustains both these devices. A comparison between Lewis's handling of Ambrosio and Radcliffe's handling of Schedoni, two arch-villains, is telling. While there is little about Ambrosio that Lewis does not reveal, Schedoni is a strings-pulling Machiavel whose identity and motivation remain unknown.

Our necessarily cursory analysis allows for the following conclusions and distinctions. The formula for the Gothic as a literary genre is based on the narrative's fulfilment or filling-out of all the constitutive elements originally found in the model novels. To the extent that novels such as *Otranto* and *Udolpho* use those elements *throughout* their narratives, we can call them Gothic classics. On the other hand, as we have argued, the constitutive elements are devices that create the typical narrative dynamic of mystery and suspense. Without this dynamic no narrative can be regarded as Gothic. This dynamic, in turn, is essentially related to what we described as liberationist teleology, by the logic of which oppressions are overcome and liberation attained. However, forces of liberation, opposed to the terrors of oppression, do not essentially depend upon elements that belong to the canon. This is what ultimately justifies the distinction between the Gothic as genre and the Gothic as a literary mode. To put it otherwise, the *mode* may but does not have to rely on the elements which constitute generic Gothickness but needs to employ the essential narrative devices, and particularly that of past-related suspense.

⁸⁶ From a posthumous piece of criticism published in the *New Monthly Magazine* in 1826; quoted in Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, 39.

These distinctions have several merits. First of all, they conveniently help us define as Gothic the borderline cases among early Gothic novels, *The Recess* and *Caleb Williams*, to mention two examples. Although devoid of some of the defining features of the genre, such as the setting, both these texts are emplotments of a struggle between forces of oppression (located in the past) and liberation.⁸⁷ In both, moreover, the Gothic mode dominates in some part of the narrative, as when Caleb's curiosity makes him inspect the contents of Falkland's trunk, an episode of an especially high level of past-oriented suspense, if we take into account the extent to which the discovery of Falkland's crime affects Caleb personally.⁸⁸ Another merit consists in the fact that our definition of the Gothic is attuned to the contemporary usage of the term, and particularly its political or ideological connotations. All Gothic narratives, in fiction and drama alike, can be regarded as narrativisations of a historical process, away from oppression (located in various culturally-determined or ideologically-charged sources), and towards liberation. This solves the surprisingly perplexing case of *The Monk*; Ambrosio is as much an oppressor (though, significantly, he pales in comparison with the Abbess, both Lewis's and Ireland's) as he is a victim of that favourite variety of oppression, monastic or, more broadly, of religious despotism. Not surprisingly, the plot parallel to the story of Ambrosio features another champion of virtue, Lorenzo, who liberates nuns from the enthrallment of superstition at the same time as he opens up the dungeons of St. Clare to reveal its gruesome secrets ("Here is some mystery concealed [...]"; *M*, III/iii/359). Stories such as this allowed the reader imaginatively to relive as it were the historical process that James Tompson depicted in his poetic vision as a progress of Liberty towards its final enthronement in the British constitution.

This meaning of "Gothic," rather than narrowly partisan, is related to the way the English felt about their laws and their constitution, which explains the frequently political tone of the prologues and epilogues attached to most Gothic dramas. "Freedom fixed by laws," to cite the prologue to *The Mysteries of the Castle*, is perhaps the most succinct formulation of the popular belief. It is thus not odd that Jane Austen should be in unison with the novelist she satirises about these basic political sentiments. In *The Castle of Wolfenbach*, one of the "Northanger" novels (see *NA*, I/vi/25), we are not surprised to find the following patriotic passage (a close parallel of Henry's we-are-English lecture in *Northanger Abbey*;

⁸⁷ Anne Williams opens a chapter of her book, "The Nightmare of History" (*Art of Darkness*, 27 ff), with what seems to be another Gothic tale and what turns out to be a stylised narrativisation of the reign of Henry VIII, reminiscent of *The Recess*.

⁸⁸ This is what makes the novel a model detective thriller.

compare *NA*, II/ix/145): “I consider the English as the happiest people under the sun: they are naturally brave, friendly, and benevolent; they enjoy the blessings of a mild and free government; their personal safety is secured by the laws; no man can be punished for an imaginary crime, they have fair trials, confront their accusers, can even object to a partial jury [...]” (*CasWol*, I/71). In this “land of liberty” the wickedness of villains can be fully exposed (*CasWol*, I/111) and the safety of their innocent victims protected. Indeed, for Matilda and for many other victims of parental, conventual, and marital kinds of oppression, England is “the country for people to marry in” (*MC*, III.ii/62).

Yet another merit of the notion of the Gothic as mode is the way it can be applied to non-classic works, retrospectively and prospectively. Dubious as it may seem to regard *Moby Dick* as Gothic (as Robert Hume does), we may still look in it for episodes in which the Gothic mode occurs in a narrative that does not fulfil the criteria of generic Gothicism.

Our next task is to see whether in Shakespeare we can find realisations of the Gothic mode, i.e., whether, since we can speak of Gothicised Shakespeare, we can also speak of Shakespearean Gothic, assuming naturally that no play meets the definition of generic Gothicism. In other words, are there elements (features, devices, etc.) which are at once recognisably Gothic as well as recognisably Shakespearean? We shall discuss this in two stages, first looking at elements of structure and then at themes. This somewhat crude distinction, between structure and theme, I hope, lets us handle the matter with a degree of lucidity. In the analyses to follow we give prominence to the most eminently “Gothic” features, i.e. the engines of terror and the sources of pity with regard to Shakespearean tragedy. Next we shall turn to some characteristic “romantic” elements and devices in Shakespeare, chiefly on the example of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Cymbeline*.

Terror and pity

When e'er I *Hamlet* or *Othello* read, / My Hair starts up,
and my Nerves shrink with Dread! / *Pity* and *Terror* raise my
Wonder High'r / 'Till betwixt both I'm ready to expire!

Robert Gould, "The Play-House. A Satyr"

If in our scenes your eyes delighted find / Marks that denote the mighty master's mind, / If at his words, the tears of pity flow, / Your breasts with horror thrill, with rapture glow, / If on your harrow'd souls impress'd you feel / The stamp of nature's uncontested seal, / Demand no other proof —

Prologue [I] to *Vortigern*

It would be naive to look in Shakespeare for a configuration of elements matching the Gothic classics. Individual traits and features take on extra colouring and significance from the larger narrative or dramatic context (chiefly of generic nature) in which a later author makes them operate. Predictably, even the most conspicuous affinities or ostensible parallels, e.g. the handling of the supernatural, may turn out to be superficial, and thus a comparative analysis such as ours has to assess the depth rather than extent of appropriation, i.e., see how far a Shakespeare borrowing or parallel has penetrated into the structure and theme of the work into which it has been transplanted. In Shakespeare's plays, for instance, we do find typically "Gothic" settings; it is doubtful, however, whether they have been meant to set the mood or atmosphere for an entire work or even a large part of it. Shakespeare does have his ghost upon the ramparts of the castle and allows it to inspire awe — does this make *Hamlet* a typical Gothic play? Furthermore, young Hamlet feels imprisoned in Denmark and in Elsinore in particular, which aligns him with many a Gothic heroine (e.g., *MU*, II/vi/238: Emily's "melancholy spirits represented [Udolpho] to be her prison") — does that add to the Gothicness of *Hamlet*? Given the ostensible gestures of appropriation, Shakespeare may be said to have been

Gothicised, but extent does not equal depth. Going beyond surface-scratching will only enable us to assess the degree of interpenetration between Shakespeare and the Gothic; we need to be prepared to inquire about the inevitable departures from the Shakespearean model, about the divorces, infidelities, and generic incompatibilities, without presupposing in advance a superiority of one above the other.

Since a degree of focalisation is necessary, in our analysis in this section we shall concentrate on the two defining features of the Gothic and tragedy, terror and pity and the attendant devices of mystery and suspense.

Already in Walpole the supernatural was granted a special position, but it will be recalled that Walpole also established a focus on the human interest in the literary treatment of the supernatural, claiming Shakespeare for his model. This psychologisation of the supernatural, as we may call it, soon rendered the actual ghost superfluous, as both Clara Reeve and Ann Radcliffe seem to have thought. The former, in the Preface to the second edition of *The Old English Baron*, after enumerating the assorted marvels of *Otranto*, condemns Walpole's story for not keeping the marvellous "within certain limits of credibility" (*OEB*, 3).¹ In other words, even if a degree of suspension of disbelief is necessary, Walpole has gone too far. When the credibility of the reader — which corresponds to the probability of events portrayed — is treated without the necessary discretion, the effect is laughter or scepticism instead of the desired level of attention. As a result, "the work of the imagination" is dissipated. Reeve's critique reveals her indebtedness to the Johnson Rule; besides, it addresses a basic problem: attempting to imitate Walpole, Reeve does not seem to know for sure just how much suspension of disbelief to elicit in *her* readers.

Soon Radcliffe's method of the explained supernatural, in which she was indebted to Reeve, met with similar criticism of frustration to that which Reeve levelled against Walpole. Reeve's version of the supernatural is indeed kept within limits acceptable to an enlightened author and reader; and yet, though confined to the mind of the protagonist, it also runs the risk of being regarded as ludicrous, if for reasons different from those which made her condemn Walpole's spectres. The new method is to give and take away at the same time. Reeve shuts up her Edmund in an apartment that has a reputation for being haunted. Then she makes the wind blow out the lamp, and then she makes the lad hear "a hollow rustling noise like that of a person coming through a narrow passage" (*OEB*, 36).

¹ In *Otranto* "the [supernatural] machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite." "Address to the Reader" from *The Champion of Virtue* (1777) (Appendix 1 in the Oxford edition of *OEB*, 136).

After saying his prayers, Edmund rallies his spirits and decides that he “will speak” to what he expects to be an apparition (*OEB*, 37).² As James Watt rightly points out, in making her hero speak the lines of Hamlet, Reeve follows “Walpole’s example by resorting to the ghost scenes from *Hamlet* as a model for the representation of the supernatural.”³ But no supernatural is represented here. The reader is in for another anticlimax because the expected apparition turns out to be of flesh and blood and his purpose mundane indeed: Joseph, bringing “some wood to make a fire.”

With Radcliffe, this device becomes common and methodical; repeatedly she prepares a ghostly setting and sets the proper atmosphere only to frustrate our expectations; successful locally, it fails to unify the entire work. As early as Chapter ii of *Udolpho*, she paints a horrific scene in which she allows her heroine to catch a glimpse of her father, St Aubert, who with an expression of horror looks at some papers and then gazes “earnestly and tenderly” upon a miniature picture, which, to the young lady’s astonishment, is “not of her mother” (*MU*, I/ii/28). Old Hamlet’s ghost’s words, used as the epigraph, about unfolding a tale are apparently meant to send a thrill of pleasing terror down the reader’s back and encourage him to come up with a tale of his own making which would connect the inexplicable behaviour of St Aubert with some mysterious occurrences concealed in the past; actually buried, both metaphorically, in St Aubert’s bosom, and literally. This allows Radcliffe to achieve her goal, which is to raise, with the assistance of the Shakespearean quotation, the spectres of the past, to affix to actuality a shade of mystery, the gravity of which is underscored by the protagonists’ comportment.

The episode in which Emily burns the family secrets is accompanied by another quotation from the treasury of the supernatural in Shakespeare. Chapter x has prefixed to it Macbeth’s lines about the ghost spoken during the banquet (“Can such things be [...]”; *Mcb.*, III.iv.109–111) as an epigraph; moreover, it contains an inserted quotation from the same play, lines about the “thick-coming fancies” (spoken in Act V by the Doctor in reference to Lady Macbeth’s “melancholy”). In a passage of typical ambiguity, in which the authoress simultaneously deplores her enervated heroine’s superstitious reveries (St Aubert has just died) and counts on raising some in the readers, Emily thinks she sees “the countenance of her dead father” in a suitably “obscure part of the closet” (*MU*, I/x/99). Emily, it will be recalled, is here to execute her father’s orders concerning the mysterious bundle of papers, which she has been forbidden to peruse. Not only

² Compare the elaboration of the “speaking to a spirit” motif in the conversation between Emily and Annette in *MU*, II/v/226–227.

³ “Explanatory Notes” by James Watt in the Oxford edition of *OEB*, 143.

does she struggle with “the infirm state of her nerves,” but she finds it almost impossible to stifle her curiosity:

With a trembling hand she removed them [the papers], replaced the board, paused a moment, and was rising from the floor, when, on looking up, there *appeared to her alarmed fancy the same countenance in the chair*. The illusion, another instance of the unhappy effect which solitude and grief had gradually produced upon her mind, subdued her spirits; she rushed forward into the chamber, and sunk [sic] almost senseless into a chair. Returning reason soon overcame the dreadful, but pitiable *attack of imagination*, and she turned to the papers, though still with so little recollection, that her eyes involuntarily settled on the writing of some loose sheets, which lay open; and she was unconscious, that she was transgressing her father’s strict injunction, till *a sentence of dreadful import* awakened her attention and her memory together. She hastily put the papers from her; but the words, which had roused equally her *curiosity and terror*, she could not dismiss from her thoughts. (*MU*, I/x/99; emphasis added)

The heroine is, indeed, a veritable battlefield: she sees an apparition but at the same time knows it to be a product of her heated imagination; she sets about gratifying her curiosity and yet seems to have no consciousness of transgressing the express wish of her departed father until she catches a glimpse of something of import, which makes her stop at just the right moment to find herself in the powerful grip of both curiosity and terror. Amidst these give-and-take ambiguities, the handling of Shakespeare does not surprise us as being more remarkable than that of the other devices. The ambiguous status of Banquo’s ghost, seen (subjectively) and yet not seen (objectively), suits the authoress’s purpose; as do the associations with *Hamlet*, still retained in the memory of the attentive reader. The ghost of the father hovers and oversees, and yet it is not like the relatively loquacious ghost of Old Hamlet, but rather the taciturn spirit of the poetess, who takes her time to unfold *her* story.⁴

There is then a substantial difference between how the past is treated by Shakespeare and by his “Gothic progeny.” Shakespeare’s method is to set out *in medias res* (the best examples being *King Lear* and *Macbeth*) and, with the notable exception of the opening scenes in *Hamlet*, he does not seem to be interested in deploying and sustaining “an atmosphere” of

⁴ Similarly, Emily’s conviction that she “witnessed a supernatural appearance,” when she saw “something like a human form” on the ramparts of the castle (*MU*, III/ii/337), is exploded a hundred pages later when we find out that the figure “who occasioned [Emily] much foolish terror” was a Monsieur Du Pont, another person whom Montoni kept prisoner at Udolpho (*MU*, III/ix/431).

mystery. It was not the Elizabethan method to keep the audience in suspense by postponing the revelation of some horrid mysteries. On the contrary, the method was to reveal as much as possible; a method, as it were, of advance-revelation. Claudius may be at pains to keep the other protagonists from discovering his crime, yet the intention of the playwright is not to abandon his audience to uneasy conjectures. Even before the Mousetrap scene and the attempt at prayer that follows it, Shakespeare gives Claudius an aside which reveals his guilt to the audience (*H*, III.i. 50). In the other great tragedies, the past is not the source of the conflict, either. In a classic Gothic story (and consequently also in Gothic drama), on the other hand, a substantial part of the overall meaning of the plot depends on revelations concerning some past deeds, often committed and concealed by previous generations. It needs to be added, however, that in Shakespeare the meaning of the past changes as we turn from tragedies to romances, and we shall analyse this change in the next section of this chapter.

Radcliffe uses the same method of raising past-oriented suspense in perhaps the most famous episode of *Udolpho*, the veil scene in Chapter vi of Volume Two. Here, “with a timid hand” but unable to resist her curiosity, Emily lifts the veil and immediately lets it fall. The readers, *their* curiosity presumably raised to the highest pitch, encounter a masterpiece of semantic reticence as the narrator tells them that what the veil conceals is “no picture” (*MU*, II/vi/236). This “no picture” is enough, however, to make the heroine “drop senseless on the floor.” Little wonder that this episode has served critics as a perfect example and a metaphorical summation of the Radcliffian narrative method and led them to consider her either a masterful conjurer of terror or mere suspense monger.⁵ But the veil and the mystery it veils do not exhaust the terrors of this chapter. Having taken her epigraph from the ghost scene in *Julius Caesar* (about the “weakness of the eyes” capable of shaping “monstrous apparitions”), the authoress gives us an excellent specimen of her method of the explained supernatural, with all the attendant ambiguities. Her readers may be counted on to recall the appearance of the ghost of Caesar in Brutus’s tent, but Radcliffe chooses to take the passage in its literal meaning rather than in its original context. As the passage epitomises Radcliffe’s method it deserves to be quoted in full:

A return of the noise again disturbed her; it seemed to come from that part of the room, which communicated with the private stair-case, and

⁵ See, for instance, Railo, *Haunted Castle*, 62 and Sedgwick, *Coherence of Gothic Conventions*, 140 ff (chapter 4, “The Character in the Veil: Imagery of the Surface in the Gothic Novel,” a reprint of the critic’s essay first published in 1981).

she instantly remembered the *odd circumstance* of the door having been fastened, during the preceding night, by some *unknown hand*. Her late *alarming suspicion*, concerning its communication, also occurred to her. Her heart became *faint with terror*. Half raising herself from the bed, and gently drawing aside the curtain, she looked towards the door of the stair-case, but the lamp, that burnt on the hearth, spread *so feeble a light* through the apartment, that the remote parts of it were *lost in shadow*. The noise, however, which, she was convinced, came from the door, continued. It seemed like that made by the undrawing of rusty bolts, and often ceased, and was then renewed more gently, as if the hand, that occasioned it, was restrained by *a fear of discovery*. While Emily kept her eyes fixed on the spot, she saw the door move, and then slowly open, and perceived *something* enter the room, but the *extreme duskiness* prevented her distinguishing what it was. Almost *fainting with terror*, she had yet sufficient command over herself, to check the shriek, that was escaping from her lips, and, letting the curtain drop from her hand, continued to observe in silence the motions of the *mysterious form* she saw. It seemed to *glide along* the remote *obscurity* of the apartment, then paused, and, as it approached the hearth, she perceived, in the stronger light, what *appeared to be a human figure*. Certain remembrances now struck upon her heart, and *almost subdued* the feeble remains of her spirits; she continued, however, to watch the *figure*, which remained for some time motionless, but then, advancing slowly towards the bed, stood silently at the feet, where the curtains, being a little open, allowed her still to see it; *terror*, however, had now *deprived her of the power of discrimination*, as well as of that of utterance.

Having continued there a moment, *the form* retreated towards the hearth, when it took the lamp, held it up, surveyed the chamber, for a few moments, and then again advanced towards the bed. The light at that instant awakening the dog, that had slept at Emily's feet, he barked loudly, and, jumping to the floor, flew at *the stranger*, who struck the animal smartly with a sheathed sword, and, springing towards the bed, Emily discovered — Count Morano! (*MU*, II/vi/247; emphasis added)

The passage supplies all the ingredients for the type of terror which Radcliffe offered her readers. To begin with, the heroine, imprisoned as she may be in the castle, is not immune to danger (real or imagined — the ambiguity is never resolved), which lurks in apertures of the space she occupies. Confined, she is always in danger of being accosted. There is always some rusty lock that may be forced, some entrance hidden behind a curtain, in an alcove or recess, etc. She feels beset by lurking dangers, ever ready to leap on her from some obscure corner of the murky space which envelops her. Obscurity, including the very literal variety, sur-

rounds her at all times. She is always prepared, as it were, to experience some new terror, this permanent capacity being perhaps the greatest mystery of all. Capable of experiencing terror, she seems incapable of confronting and actively withstanding danger, if only because she is ever at risk of being overcome by fear, of losing her “powers of discrimination.”

The novelist’s trade as conceived by Gothic romancers involved in part at least the business of enhancing (chiefly by means of semantic ambiguities) terrors of the actual circumstances in which they put their protagonists. Radcliffe intersperses the description with suggestions of the supernatural; the stalker is an actual human being, and yet he is a “something,” a “figure,” a “mysterious form,” which “glides along” — a vocabulary (especially the verb “to glide”) which is immediately associated with spectres. Up to the point of the final discovery, the reader assumes — or can be expected to assume — that he/she “observes” an apparition, the carefully planted suggestions strengthened by the Shakespearean epigraph to the chapter and the verbal echoes that the passage contains. To this extent, Radcliffe may be said to imitate Shakespeare’s method of building up suspense: In the opening scene of *Hamlet* we also go from “this thing” to “this dread sight”, and finally to “this apparition.” But for Radcliffe, decreasing ambiguity leading up to an eventual materialisation of the ghost was not a choice.

Radcliffe skilfully manipulates the reader’s point of view: we cannot choose but assume the heroine’s position. Here we come upon a basic distinction: the narrative may be third-person but the point of view, far from omniscient, is very limited; it is that of the beset heroine. If accustomed to Radcliffe’s method, the reader may be prepared for an anticlimax: it is a flesh-and-blood stalker that frightens Emily and not a spectre that supposedly haunts Udolpho. In all likelihood, Radcliffe, having dispelled the heroine’s (and the reader’s) superstitious fears, wanted the focus to shift from the supernatural to the human, real, and more pressing sources of terror. After all Count Morano, like Montoni, is another version of the Gothic villain, whose common prototype is the seducer, the Marquis de Montalt in *The Romance of the Forest*.

This brief examination of specimens of Radcliffe’s method of deploying supernatural terrors has not exhausted Radcliffe’s debt to Shakespeare. Many situations, though not introduced by a carefully chosen epigraph, also betray a Shakespearean inspiration. In the chapter following Emily’s night fears, Radcliffe describes a banquet scene in which one recognises elements from, again, both *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. Montoni sits up late “carousing” with his guests, which as well as being an example of archaizing suggests a parallel with the habits of Claudius, who, “doth wake

to-night and takes his rouse, / Keeps wassail [...]" (*H*, I.iv. 8)⁶ when Hamlet and his companions are awaiting the appearance of the Ghost. During the banquet in *Udolpho* and the "passing of the goblet," while Montoni tells his version of the story of how the castle fell into his ownership, "a voice" interrupts twice, not allowing him to finish his tale of the disappearance of Signora St Aubert, the lady of the castle, who vanished in mysterious circumstances. As in *Macbeth*,⁷ where the spectre of Banquo is raised when Macbeth offers a toast to him, the voice, though not identified as female, is heard after one of the guests offers to "drink to the lady of the castle" (*MU*, II/vii/273).

When we compare the banquet in *Macbeth* with that in *Udolpho*, we immediately become aware of a significant difference. In the play, regardless of how the ghost is represented or whether it is represented at all, this scene (like Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking in Act V) presents a discharge of self-accusatory emotions in the protagonist. In his wrangling with the spectre, Macbeth is defeated not so much by the spectre itself as by the powers of his fancy, his "second sight," as it were, which seem to have acquired a life and an energy independent of the human being in whom they dwell. We have a sense of this being, if not a turning point in the progress of the villain, then certainly a terrifying epiphany, a flash of self-awareness, which fully justifies Menteth's diagnosis of Macbeth: "all that is within him does condemn / Itself, for being there" (*Mcb.*, V.ii. 24–25). In the novel, we have no such exposure. The voice, which makes one think of the Ghost in *Hamlet* "crying" from under the stage (*H*, I.v), is heard by all the guests present at the banquet; in a pale equivalent of Macbeth's perturbation, Montoni, despite his efforts to remain calm, is "visibly and greatly disordered" (*MU*, II/vii/275). Yet, since Radcliffe is determined to postpone revelations, the reader cannot choose but share the perplexity of the characters. In the terms that Pfister uses to describe the circulation of information in a work of literature, while in *Macbeth* the audience know more than those present at the banquet, in *Udolpho* the information surplus is on the side of the characters, leaving the reader perplexed and possibly frustrated.

Taking into account the evidence we examined earlier, Radcliffe's postponed revelations may be held to owe a great deal to her admiration for the opening scenes in *Hamlet*. She was clearly inspired by the suspense

⁶ Jenkins gives "carouses" as an equivalent to "takes his rouse"; "carouse" occurs in *Hamlet* in the Queen's lines (as she takes up the poisoned cup) during the fencing match at V.ii. 292; in *Macbeth*, in the lines spoken by the Porter at II.iii. 24 ("We were carousing till the second cock"). For a more distant echo in *Otranto* see *CO*, v/108.

⁷ Clara McIntyre detected also this analogy; see "Were the 'Gothic' Novels Gothic?" 662.

of the first scene, with the mysterious and gloomy Ghost gliding across the stage, a figure symbolic (as Gothic authors must have seen it) of crime buried in the past and, in consequence, of many a guilt-burdened breast. In *Hamlet* we have both, represented in the ghost of Old Hamlet and in Claudius respectively, the two conflicted father figures that jointly determine the fate of Prince Hamlet. Radcliffe worked out into a basic *narrative device* or method what in *Hamlet* is an episode, a one-time sequence of events confined to the first act of the play, not reused and — for all we know — *not to be reused*. Symptomatic here is Radcliffe's repeated introduction of the ghost in *Gaston de Blondeville*. The ghost seems to be wholly Shakespearean and Clara McIntyre even insists that "[t]he whole of *Gaston de Blondeville*, of course, is built on the *Hamlet* theme [...]"⁸ The ghost may indeed be a means to sustain this thematic parallel, but the technique is non-Shakespearean.

Also telling is the fact that the Ghost's "I could a tale unfold" has served Radcliffe as a motto for an entire novel, *The Sicilian Romance*. In their original context, these words refer to the horrors of Purgatory, too ghastly for mortal ears. Shakespeare's Ghost, once the opportunity presents itself, however, is not reluctant to unfold his own tale, i.e., the tale of his assassination. Radcliffe, on the other hand, takes her time in unfolding *her* tale, and chooses to titillate her hearers by means of past-oriented suspense. True, Claudius's self-accusatory soliloquy comes only in the third act of the play (III.iii), but we cannot say that this is because Shakespeare wished to build up suspense. On the other hand, halfway through is still too early for a Gothic narrative. In Shakespeare, the focus is on Hamlet and the "cursed spite" of his lot, and thus it is Hamlet, not the villain, who encounters the ghost. The revelatory ghost-encounter staged in *Macbeth* is not a satisfying solution for a Gothicism, either, and not only because it also occurs "too early" but because the audience have been witness to the crimes. In other words, the Gothic ideal would be some combination of the terrors of both plays, which is evidently what some of the Gothicismists attempted to achieve. After all, in the banquet scene Macbeth himself, writhing in a paroxysm of terror, is not concerned (in contrast to his wife) with how much he reveals; and the revelations of Claudius are not assisted, let alone prompted, by a spectre and thus do not evoke a supernatural dread.

⁸ McIntyre, "Were the 'Gothic' Novels Gothic?" 662–663. Compare the following description of the apparition the moment it returns to haunt the king: "the same armour, worn in the same way, with visor up, and the eyes showing that same solemn and resigned look, save that they were now fixed, somewhat sternly on the King" (*GB*, II, The Sixth Day, 273).

Creative reception of what can be regarded as “Shakespearean material” has influenced characterisation, and hence our next concern is the Gothic villain in comparison with the Shakespearean variety. In both the fictional and dramatic works, the villain is a source of terror, not only for the other characters but also for himself.

Obviously Shakespeare created a wide spectrum of villainy, perhaps even the widest range of *human* villainy, for we need to distinguish here the Satanic variety, which exerted some influence on the development of the Gothic but which is of Miltonic provenance. Villainy of the Shakespearean type consists of malignity, motiveless or not. In practical terms, a villain’s dedication to harm, injury, and mischief is externalised in the form of intrigue. No matter what motivation we can attribute to the villain (the classic motives are a sense of injured merit or envy), he or she comes up with a plot or a scheme and is not slow to reveal it to the audience or/and the other characters. Richard III, Iago, and Edmund are models of this ever-busy wickedness, the former two engendering their plots from the moment they appear on stage and at once revealing them to the audience. There may be an element of suspense here, as when for instance Gloucester tells us of the plots he has laid without saying what they are, but commonly Shakespeare’s villains have no stake in being tight-lipped. Cunning as they are when dealing with the other protagonists, the Elizabethan villains unlock their wicked bosoms to the audience according to the convention of the all-revealing soliloquy. Thus as soon as the opportunity presents itself, Gloucester informs us how he is going to remove his brother, and Iago — what roles in his schemes to undo Othello are to be played by his dupes, first Roderigo and then Cassio.

Gothic villains, on the other hand, are customarily rather reticent in this respect, enveloping themselves in a cloak of mystery. As we shall see, villainy is treated differently in the fictional and in the dramatic varieties of the Gothic, but Radcliffe’s Schedoni is largely the model type due to the mystery that enwraps him from the moment when he is introduced. Also here the principle of obscurity reigns supreme. Here are some excerpts from the classic passage which introduces Schedoni:

There lived in the Dominican convent of the Spirito Santo, at Naples, a man called father Schedoni; an Italian, as his name imported, but whose *family was unknown*, and from some circumstances, it appeared, that he wished to throw *an impenetrable veil* over his origin. For whatever reason, he was never heard to mention a relative, or the place of his nativity, and he had *artfully eluded every enquiry* that approached the subject [...]. Some few persons in the convent, who had been interested by his appearance, *believed* that the peculiarities of his man-

ners, his severe reserve and *unconquerable silence*, his *solitary habits* and frequent penances, were the effect of misfortunes preying upon a haughty and disordered spirit; while others *conjectured* them the consequence of *some hideous crime* gnawing upon an awakened conscience.

He would sometimes *abstract himself from the society* for whole days together, or when with such a disposition he was compelled to mingle with it, he seemed unconscious where he was, and continued *shrouded in meditation and silence* till he was again alone. There were times when *it was unknown whither he had retired*, notwithstanding that his steps had been watched, and his customary haunts examined. *No one ever heard him complain.* (I, I/ii/34; emphasis added)

The mysteries which enshroud Schedoni are manifold: his birth, his ways, even his appearance (his cowl, his “half-shut eyes”). Not only is he extremely secretive and taciturn, but he seems to hate unconcealment even in its mental and verbal manifestations. Radcliffe suggests that he is indeed an enemy of truth itself:

In fact he *cared not for truth*, nor sought it by bold and broad argument, but loved to exert the *wily cunning of his nature* in hunting it through artificial *perplexities*. At length, from a *habit of intricacy and suspicion*, his vitiated mind *could receive nothing for truth*, which was simple and easily comprehended. (ibidem; emphasis added)

At the same time, we observe a peculiar analogy between the mysterious Schedoni and Radcliffe’s sustained reticence in portraying him. We realise that she is the Schedoni of her novel, for without a figure of this type she would not be able to deal in the obscurities which sustain her narrative. The less *she* reveals and the more perplexing and intricate *her* revelations, the better.

The verbal ambiguities and evasions notwithstanding, the Gothic villains show differences in motivation. As we have observed in passing, the Shakespearean villain is driven by a sense of injured merit, by envy, resentment, and a desire for aggrandizement. Examples abound in the *oeuvre*, from early ones such as Aaron (in *Titus*) and Gloucester through Iago, Claudius, etc., in the great tragedies. Not surprisingly, we find versions of the same type also in some of the comedies (Don John in *Much Ado*) and romances (Antonio in *The Tempest*). Some Gothic villains resemble the Shakespearean ones, or more generally, remind us of the Elizabethan Machiavellian wrongdoer. Others, however, and perhaps more commonly, belong to the new libertine type, of which Lewis’s Ambrosio is an accomplished specimen. As Jeffrey Cox points out, this Gothic villain owes a great

deal of his wickedness to the Restoration and Augustan “rake,” such as Richardson’s *Lovelace*.⁹ Clara McIntyre’s insistence that there is a close resemblance between Radcliffe’s villain-hero and Shakespeare’s villains is vague if not wrong: Are there really any villain-heroes in Shakespeare? Or in Radcliffe, for that matter?¹⁰ We can certainly find some Shakespearean analogies or even ostensible models. As we have seen, Lewis mentioned Angelo from *Measure for Measure* as a pattern for his Ambrosio, a character which, according to another suggestion, also has much in common with Iachimo from *Cymbeline*.

In respect of motivation, Gothic villainy comes in at least three varieties: political, economic, and sexual.¹¹ The distinctions, though far from clear-cut, depend on the prevailing type of interest: “political” refers to matters of state and includes the prominent antagonism between Protestantism and Catholicism; “economic” to divisions of property and related legal issues. In some narratives, as for instance *The Recess*, the ties between political and domestic matters are unusually strong, which however does not annul our distinction. The political type finds its chief manifestation in the scheming ecclesiastics, agents for the Catholic church, epitomised by such plotters as the Armenian in Schiller’s *The Ghost-Seer* and the Director in *Melmoth*, both, and particularly the latter, being at once examples of how this type can shade into the economic variety. This makes us recognise the prominent influence of *King John*, confirmed by Radcliffe’s numerous epigraphs from this play, popularised in the middle of the eighteenth century in Colley Cibber’s adaptation entitled, tellingly, *Papal Tyranny in the Reign of King John*. As we have already had occasion to observe, the economic and sexual varieties of villainy found their realisations in such characters as the Marquis de Montalt and Montoni, but a good female specimen of the latter is Victoria, the heroine of *Zofloya*, a counterpart of Ambrosio. Perhaps the most cynical expression of the mercenary motivation of many a villain is found in J.C. Cross’s “musical dramatic romance,” where Glanville confesses his love thus: “I love the maid to desperation, love her — that is (mark me) her wealth — I’m next of heir [...]” (*Apparition*, Liii/17).

There is one characteristic that Gothic villains seem to have in common: they are, to borrow a phrase from Lily Campbell’s book on Shake-

⁹ Cox, “Introduction,” in: Cox, ed., *Seven Gothic Dramas*, 27.

¹⁰ Compare McIntyre, “Were the ‘Gothic’ Novels Gothic?” 665.

¹¹ Devendra Varma distinguishes the following three types: the Manfred type (“composed of ambitions tyranny and unbridled passion”), the “Rousseauistic sentimentalist” (a loner, and “a humanitarian who combats life’s injustices”), and “the terrible ‘superman’” (one “whose strength originates far beyond mortal thought”); *Gothic Flame*, 215—216.

spere's heroes, slaves of passions.¹² Whether the same is true of Shakespeare's villains is debatable, although some of his fallen heroes are victims of their passions, as Lear is undone by wrath. But it was the eighteenth century which worked out a moral philosophy in which passions were accorded a significant position.¹³ In Pope's *Essay on Man* (1731),¹⁴ passions are the main driving force of human actions, counterbalanced by reason.¹⁵ There is then a crude logic at work in Gothic fictions: since villains ("the most forceful characters" in Bertrand Evans's phrase) are the driving force which pushes the action forward, consequently it is they who are as it were the seats of the passions. Walpole, again, creates the model with his Manfred, whose fiery and severe temperament causes him to tyrannise over most of the other characters in the story.¹⁶ It is the passions that turn the villainous protagonists into tyrants and despots and hence into sources of terror. Schedoni, to return once more to Radcliffe's super-villain, is a figure whose passions, even when concealed, pose an ever-present menace: "A dark malignity overspread the features of the monk [...] a man, whose passions might impel him to the perpetration of almost any crime, how hideous soever" (*I*, I/iv/51).

Examples are on hand in all the early classics,¹⁷ so let us briefly discuss less familiar instances. In *The Recess* it is Queen Elizabeth whom the

¹² Compare with Boaden's Schedoni's confession, "I have been all my life / The slave of passion in its fierce excess" (*IM*, III.vi/73).

¹³ The section of Alexander Gerard's *Essay on Genius* (1774) which treats "Of the Influence of the Passions on Association" relies for illustrative material on a number of Shakespeare's plays, from *Measure for Measure* (love) to *The Tempest* (e.g., fear) and *Richard II* (grief). See *Eighteenth-Century Critical Essays*, ed. Scott Elledge (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1961), 895—913.

¹⁴ Two passages from Epistle Two need to be quoted here: "Two principles in human nature reign; / Self-love to urge, and Reason, to restrain" (ii, 53—54), and "Modes of self-love the Passions we may call: / 'Tis real good, or seeming, moves them all: / But since not every good we can divide, / And reason bids us for our own provide, / Passions, though selfish, if their means be fair, / List [enlist] under reason, and deserve her care" (iii, 93—98).

¹⁵ Radcliffe sums up the main idea of Pope's conception when she makes Agnes in *Udolpho* say that "the passions are the seeds of vices as well as virtues, from which either may spring, accordingly as they are nurtured" (*MU*, IV/xvi/608).

¹⁶ "Manfred was not one of those savage tyrants who wanton in cruelty unprovoked. The circumstances of his fortune had given an asperity to his temper, which was naturally humane; and his virtues were always ready to operate, when his passions did not obscure his reason" (*CO*, i/33). In Chapter v of *Otranto*, Frederic is described as being "in a frame of mind capable of the most fatal excesses" (*CO*, v/108).

¹⁷ In *The Old English Baron*, Lord Lovel confesses: "my mind was disturbed by the baleful passion of envy; it was from that root all my bad actions sprung" (*OEB*, 91). Similarly, the evil Baron, Malcolm, in Radcliffe's debut novel is a man "torn by con-

author cast in the role of the chief tyrant. Thus, when Elizabeth discovers the secrets of the two sisters, her fury blazes forth without restraint: "Pale, horror-struck, and speechless, I [Ellinor] was dragged like a criminal into the closet of the Queen; whose burning cheeks, and enraged eyes, told me in one killing look all I had to dread" (*R*, II/iv/201). During one of the face-to-face confrontations between Caleb and Falkland, the latter is shown as a person incapable of mastering his murderous intentions: "His [Falkland's] manner was that of a man labouring with some dreadful thought, and endeavouring to give an air of carelessness and insensibility to his behaviour. Perhaps no carriage of any other sort could have produced a sensation of such inexplicable horror, or have excited in the person who was its object such anxious uncertainty about the event" (*CW*, II/viii/153). On an earlier occasion, Falkland's countenance is described as "frightful" and "almost diabolical"; it indicates "severity" and changes to "harsh" and "tempestuous" (*CW*, II/iii/120). On the whole, *Caleb Williams* depicts the fall of a noble figure, which can be regarded as a descent into a hell of unmitigated hatred and in this respect Falkland comes to resemble his mortal enemy and initial moral opposite, Tyrrel.

This progression from hero to villain, as Evans plausibly argues, is characteristic of the larger historical process whereby powerful passions, located in the villain figure, became "romanticised."¹⁸ Joanna Baillie's project of a series of plays "on the passions" (begun in 1798) confirms the growing predominance of this orientation of the Gothic.¹⁹ And yet, already in Hannah More's pre-Gothic tragedy *Percy* we have an example of the preoccupation with passions. Very much like Baillie's *De Monfort*, More's Douglas is a man consumed by jealousy and "deadly hate" (*Percy*, II.i/22). Othello-like, Douglas disbelieves Elwina's chastity and desires "dire means, / Wild as my hate and desperate as my wrongs!" (IV.i/66).

There are different levels of villainy, so to speak, depending on the overall generic characteristics of a given work. Plots in romantic narratives may depend on strategies of containment of evil, but it is one of the

flicting passions," which makes him "the victim of their power" (*CA&D*, I/iv/52). Among the "direful passions" she names "hate, revenge, and exulting pride" (*CA&D*, I/iii/26).

¹⁸ Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 86 and elsewhere.

¹⁹ Further discussion in this and the next chapter. Compare Peter Duthie's note in his "Introduction" to Baillie's *Plays on the Passions* (22, n. 1). Besides the source in *An Essay on Man*, Baillie's biographer, Margaret Carhart, names a 1781 theatrical presentation at the Haymarket Theatre, *The School of Shakespeare, or Humours and Passions*. The passions represented in this "entertainment" were vanity, parental tenderness, cruelty, filial piety, and ambition. Margaret S. Carhart, *The Life and Work of Joanna Baillie* (New Heaven: Yale University Press; London: Humphrey Milford Oxford University Press, 1923), 190–191. See also Clery, *Women's Gothic*, 16.

curious things about Gothic fictions that, though they all depend upon some type of villainy for their narrative energy, the individual romances vary greatly with regard to how much evil is permitted actually to happen. With the horror variety of the Gothic goes the immense actuality of evil, but this variety, curiously, can claim little Shakespearean influence. I say “curiously,” because if one thing is basic to Shakespearean tragedy it is the *actual* destruction (dissipation or “waste of good” in A.C. Bradley’s term) wreaked by human wickedness, an aspect of the tragedies which, due to its infringing the principle of poetic justice, Augustan audiences and critics found intolerable, as the changed ending of *King Lear* demonstrates.²⁰ Shakespeare’s villains are almost unstoppable, not only in how much crime they themselves commit but also in how much evil they are able to inspire in others, as in the influence of Iago upon Othello. Guilty of fratricide,²¹ Claudius is not only ready to kill again but also implicates Laertes in his intrigue. Similarly, Macbeth plunges headlong into homicide and finds himself past the point of return and repentance. David Richter gave what sounds to me like a definitive expression of the generic problems upsetting Gothic narratives. He speaks of the overriding desire in the authors to keep “the Gothic romance free of any permanent consequences for the hero and heroine.” Especially the heroine, commonly the chief sufferer, due to her being “exemplary,” “can have done nothing to warrant persecution.” The underlying belief in “distributive justice” incapacitates the wrongdoer and “the threat cannot ultimately be carried out.”²²

The Gothic is evidently attuned to the (post-Shakespearean) idea of poetic justice which exerted such powerful influence upon the Restoration and Augustan adapters of Shakespeare. To be sure, in some Gothic novels we do find examples of full-blooded villainy, and yet the most obvious of these, *The Monk* and *Zofloya*, betray substantial departures as well. In both stories we have, instead of human, some superhuman agency employed in the realisation of evil schemes, indeed in the scheming itself, which significantly changes the “message,” i.e., adds a new dimension to the story, for which we cannot find a parallel in Shakespeare.²³ Upon closer

²⁰ In Nahum Tate’s *Lear* (1681), the King’s concluding lines are about “gentle pass[ing] our short reserves of Time / In calm Reflections on our fortunes past, / Cheer’d with relation of the prosperous Reign / Of that celestial Pair; [...]” (*King Lear*, V.vi. 149); the couple referred to are Queen Cordelia, married in the last scene to Edgar.

²¹ “O, my offence is rank [...] / It hath the primal eldest curse upon’t — / A brother’s murder” (*H*, III.iii. 36–38).

²² Richter, *Progress of Romance*, 92.

²³ The Witches may have enkindled in Macbeth a prospect of noble having, and yet it is Lady Macbeth who does the scheming and takes the business of assassinating into her dispatch.

examination and if a degree of speculation be allowed, Ambrosio would be quite powerless to act on his sexual yearnings if abandoned to his own devices, i.e., if Matilda did not do the plotting for him; as would be Victoria without her Moor, who always appears when she is writhing in agonies of unfulfilled desire.²⁴ In both cases Satanic interventions offer critical assistance in the passage from fantasising to actual crime. Furthermore, the end that both these protagonists meet with is not the death of the tragically-illuminated Shakespearean hero, but rather the demise of the unrepentant Shakespearean villain.

In the main, characterisation shows an overall tendency of Gothic authors to invest in effect, especially that of terror, rather than efficacy. While Shakespeare's villains not only plot to inflict harm but are quick to act, their Gothic counterparts, though permanently engaged in plotting, are comparatively ineffective. As some sort of compensation, an *atmosphere* of terror accumulates, which in turn necessitates the use of artifice for its eventual dissipation, which brings us back to the examples from *Udolpho*. This shift of emphasis can, as we have suggested, be put down to generic differences. Those Gothic authors who subscribed to the romance tradition felt compelled to contain wickedness, and Radcliffe was especially concerned to make sure that her heroines, beset on all sides by malice and peril, remain unscathed, again in sharp contrast to the cruel treatment of the two innocent females in horror Gothic, Antonia in *The Monk* and Lilla in *Zofloya*. Some threats to female innocence may have been prompted by Shakespeare (e.g., the Iachimo-Imogen sequence in *Cymbeline*), but they waited for "horror Gothic" for their realisation. *Titus Andronicus* (a play condemned for its atrocities even by those who, like Nathan Drake, extolled Radcliffe's romances) may have been admired and Radcliffe may have shown a degree of boldness in quoting it in one of her epigraphs, but then this gesture was perhaps intended as an excuse not to overstep the rules of decorum and poetic justice and thus as another means to avoid dipping one's pen in actual blood. As McIntyre observed, the Elizabethan death-dealing instruments such as poison and dagger are ubiquitous, which, however, does not necessarily translate into action.²⁵

The reticence in the deployment of villainy in comparison with Elizabethan or Jacobean playwrights is thus compensated for by an ample use of terror and suspense, sustained by repeated suggestions of impending harm. Authors such as Radcliffe evidently concluded that suggested harm

²⁴ The surprising passivity of villains such as Ambrosio was observed by David Richter (*Progress of Romance*, 94).

²⁵ McIntyre, "Were the 'Gothic' Novels Gothic?" 654.

not only works powerfully on the imagination but, moreover (as David Richter explains), suggested but unrealised injury leaves the possibility open for a more proper apportioning of justice. Walpole lays down the principle when he speaks of the need to “keep the audience in suspense” as his chief recommendation.²⁶ Readers or spectators are repeatedly invited to share the anxiety of the hero or heroine, to experience, in Radcliffe’s words, “a thousand vague and fearful conjectures.”

Radcliffe’s devices are those of the fiction writer, which explains her use of sustained suspense and postponed revelation. It would not be fair, as Sir Walter Scott observed, to demand of her the use of methods inappropriate for her genre. We have also looked at instances where Gothic authors resort to the essentially dramatic method of building short-term “arcs of suspense.”²⁷ In *The Monk*, for instance, we see Lewis construct an episode (a sequence of events) which apparently follows closely a Shakespearean model, and we have already discussed the parallel between the resolution of *Romeo and Juliet* and the Antonia episode, which ends with her violent death. In *Romeo and Juliet*, suspense arises independently of human agency; we expect a tragic resolution in the tomb of the Capulets because of an unpropitious arrangement of circumstances operating beyond human agency and contrary to the intentions of the characters involved. Because the message sent by Laurence to Romeo is undelivered, the latter, when he sees the inert Juliet, is fatally mistaken. Shakespeare has given Juliet a “Gothic” speech (quoted above, p. 158), which she delivers when about to drink the sleeping potion (IV.iii) and surely her anxiety does raise suspense in the audience. In Lewis, on the other hand, the potion sequence involves both human and supernatural agency. Matilda and Ambrosio will see to it that as much harm will be done as is intended. Where in Shakespeare we suspect that mistiming may cause Romeo to kill himself before the message arrives, and when the tragedy does occur our terror soon turns to pity,²⁸ in *The Monk*, surprisingly perhaps, there is little that can arouse suspense. The joint operation of Ambrosio and Matilda is enough to ensure that Antonia’s fate is sealed, and Elvira’s prophecy makes this assurance double sure. Because we are fully apprised of Ambrosio’s intentions and because we have little reason to suspect an outcome different than the planned rape, we are left to expect a grisly realisation of the worst.

²⁶ Walpole, “Thoughts on Tragedy,” 312.

²⁷ See Pfister, *Theory and Analysis of Drama*, 101 ff.

²⁸ Garrick’s ending, with Juliet waking up before the death of Romeo, was evidently meant to enhance this effect.

If this conclusion sounds surprising, then another difference is perhaps even more so. The horror of the rape scene in *The Monk* is not in the least alleviated by pity, as there is no character here who would do the office Marcus does to the abused Lavinia in a parallel scene in *Titus* (II.iii). In *Romeo and Juliet* the scene is laid in a “womb of death,” but we are invited to dwell on the horrors of the setting with only the aim to arouse pity, while similar circumstances in Lewis are emphasised as “appropriate” and described, apparently, in order further to diminish the human aspect of the situation, i.e., to prevent pity in the reader. All this makes the rape scene in *The Monk* a model illustration of the way in which horror in Radcliffe’s understanding of it freezes the soul of the reader.

To sum up, while some parallels exist, the two types of tragedy, Shakespearean and Gothic, turn out to be different. Shakespeare strives to elicit the tragic catharsis and for this purpose refuses to keep “mystery, gloom and terror” alive in the mind of the spectator. This is evident also in the (original) endings of *Othello* and *Lear*, more violent and shocking than the ending of *Romeo and Juliet*. In Gothic fictions, terror, supernatural or otherwise, is doled out systematically and in quantity, while pity figures less, as analysis of the *Romeo and Juliet* parallel indicates. The typical Shakespearean apportioning, according to which both terror and pity are affixed to the tragic hero and elicited by catastrophe, is rarely found in Gothic narratives. There are several reasons for this. First, villainy in the Gothic is given a pronounced position as a source of terror. On account of the usual clear-cut distribution of virtue and wickedness and the consistent application of poetic justice, villains are prevented from eliciting pity. Moreover, the type of villainy is based on the *Macbeth* model of absolute and unrepentant villainy, easily combined with the Miltonic model of Satanic hubris. The pronounced position of villainy is not counterbalanced, as it is in Shakespeare, by the pity-eliciting plight of the hero. In the deadly alliance between Othello and Iago it is Othello who brings forth pity and does so at a moment, such as the soliloquy which opens the last scene of the play, when he is about to commit the worst atrocity.²⁹ Gothic hero-villains, however, are little more than ciphers, free from the potentially catastrophic *hamartia* in its various meanings.³⁰ Manfred’s killing of Matilda is perpetrated in a kind of “trance” (*CO*, v/109) and, rather than being premeditated murder, is a realisation of the fate which governs Manfred’s life and which he strives to avert. As Theodore puts it: “Now, tyr-

²⁹ See also the reference to pity in *Oth.* IV.i. 191.

³⁰ Lawrence Danson distinguishes the Aristotelian meaning of *hamartia* as miscalculation from the “Christian” associations with sin and moral culpability (*Shakespeare’s Dramatic Genres*, 27).

rant! behold the completion of woe fulfilled on thy impious and devoted head! The blood of Alfonso cried to heaven for vengeance" (*CO*, v/109). Manfred thus pays for the sins of the fathers, and this diminishing of personal guilt prevents the realisation of a Shakespearean type of tragic catastrophe: the dénouement is thus suspended somewhere between those of *Romeo and Juliet* and *Macbeth*. The young couple, Matilda and Theodore, become the focus of pity and Manfred little more than an automaton whose hand is directed by the avenging forces from above. Theodore prevents him from committing suicide and, disgraced, Manfred gives up the principality. Unlike his theatrical counterpart, Narbonne (in Jephson's adaptation, discussed in the next chapter), he is denied the dignified exit of the tragic hero, such as Shakespeare granted even to Macbeth.

We find less ambiguity in Radcliffe's dénouements. To be sure, full-blown tragedy is not admitted and past-revealing narrative is used as a distancing device. In *Udolpho*, the dying moments of Agnes elicit terror *and* pity, with the parallel, suggested by the epigraph (to IV/xvi), between Agnes and Lady Macbeth, both tormented by the guilt over a "most abhorred deed" (*MU*, IV/xvi/605). Hardly a villain, Agnes is granted a complete tragic exit: her painful confession elicits pity and her sermon on the corrupting power of unbridled passions meets the condition of illumination or recognition:

"Look at me well, and see what guilt has made me. I then was innocent; the evil passions of my nature slept. Sister!" added she solemnly, and stretching forth her cold, damp hand to Emily, who shuddered at its touch — "Sister! beware of the first indulgence of the passions; beware of the first! Their course, if not checked then, is rapid — their force is uncontrollable — they lead us we know not whither — they lead us perhaps to the commission of crimes, for which whole years of prayer and penitence cannot atone! — Such may be the force of even a single passion, that it overcomes every other, and sears up every other approach to the heart. Possessing us like a fiend, it leads us on to the acts of a fiend, making us insensible to pity and to conscience. And, when its purpose is accomplished, like a fiend, it leaves us to the torture of those feelings, which its power had suspended — not annihilated — the tortures of compassion, remorse, and conscience. Then, we awaken as from a dream, and perceive a new world around us — we gaze in astonishment, and horror — but the deed is committed; not all the powers of heaven and earth united can undo it — and the spectres of conscience will not fly!" (*MU*, IV/xvi/607)

Here indeed we find an extended exposition of the Shakespearean type of tragedy, apparently patterned after the career of Lady Macbeth, with

such elements as fatal necessity, which urges the execution of evil born of unbridled passion, pangs of guilty conscience, the anguish of awakening and recognition combined with a keen sense of the ineffectuality of atonement (strange as this may sound when expressed by a nun) — all rounded off by suggestions of the supernatural (in the reiteration of “fiend,” and in the “spectres of conscience”). The problem is that Radcliffe does not “realise” this idea except by means of embedded narration, and hence in a situation in which the inset narrative is an obstruction in the eliciting of terror and pity, the obvious goals, judging by Emily’s response, of this scene.³¹ When Agnes is reminded of Udolpho, the scene of her crime, she falls into a hallucinating fit, which is modelled on the sleepwalking episode in *Macbeth*, with verbal borrowings from the banquet scene.³² She “shrieks”:

“What! there again!” said she, endeavouring to raise herself, while her starting eyes seemed to follow some object round the room — “Come from the grave! What! Blood — blood too! — There was no blood — thou canst not say it! — Nay, do not smile, — do not smile so piteously!” (*MU*, IV/xvi/609)

This tragic story, as we have remarked, is partitioned off in an inserted narrative; the chapter which follows (which also bears an epigraph from *Macbeth*: Macbeth’s “even-handed justice” soliloquy) ensures that the insertion, melancholy as it is, illustrates the working of Providence, or fulfils the principle of distributive justice. The “diabolical deed” prompted by “the delirium of Italian love” (i.e., the excess of amorous passion) brings about as punishment the horrors of guilt-burdened conscience.

Two novels by other authors should be mentioned as variations on the Radcliffe method. For its main plot Eliza Parsons’s “German tale,” *The Mysterious Warning* (1796), depends on the figure of Rhodophil, Ferdinand’s half brother. Typically, Rhodophil is kept in the background as a secret plotter and the full scope of his machinations comes to light in his death-bed confession at the end of the book. Amidst his raving he comes up with the following paraphrase of Hamlet’s lines about foul deeds:

³¹ Taking into account the philosophy of the passions to which the two authoresses subscribed, it is little wonder that the anonymous publication of Baillie’s *Plays on the Passions* in 1798 aroused suspicion in the public that Radcliffe may have been the author. Baillie’s authorship was revealed in 1800; see Norton, *Mistress of Udolpho*, 184. Among other “candidates” for authorship, rumour named Sir Walter Scott and, curiously, the actor John Philip Kemble; see Duthie’s “Introduction” to *Plays on the Passions*, 17, note 1.

³² Clara McIntyre observed this parallel (“Were the ‘Gothic’ Novels Gothic?” 654).

“O, this is horror indeed! [...] ‘Let the guilty look on me and tremble, foul deeds will come to light; [...]’” (*Myst War*, IV/vii/348).³³ Ferdinand views the guilty brother “with averted looks of mingled horror and compassion.” Francis Lathom in another German tale, *The Midnight Bell*, is as reluctant as Parsons in bringing foul truth to light. The crucial events take place one night after the “ghostly hour of midnight” has struck: the mother of Alphonsus rushes into her son’s apartment, “her countenance betray[ing] the most visible signs of an agonized heart,” her hand “stained with blood,” and bids him “fly” from her and the castle (*MB*, I/i/24–25). Lost in a maze of conjectures, Alphonsus obeys. The “tale of horror” is told in the penultimate chapter of the novel: it turns out that the unfortunate lady killed her own husband in self-defense taking him for a count Frederic in a situation which made her think that he “attempted force upon her” (*MB*, III/xxv/284). In both these cases we are offered “a retrospection” (compare the title of the last chapter of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*) which supplies the much wanted elucidation but which precludes effective catharsis.

The examples just discussed show that besides their role in the narrative structures, terror and pity perform other vital functions. In the Radcliffean variety of the Gothic, with its avowed didacticism, the mechanisms responsible for eliciting terror and pity are largely subordinated to thematic, and consequently also to moral, messages. Our present concern is to examine and assess the depth of the Shakespearean provenance of some of the Gothic’s obsessively recurrent themes. As we shall see, also in relation to the supernatural, terror and pity serve to underscore thematic concerns, perhaps more distinct than their clandestine operation in the narrative syntax.

There seems to be, in Gothic fictions, a surplus of terror over pity. But when we examine the role and meaning of supernatural terror, we observe a parallel with the ghost episode in *Hamlet* in the transition from terror to pity (in Hamlet’s and the audience’s response), and then from pity to justice. Terror ceases with the Ghost’s exit, Hamlet following; with its reappearance, pity has taken the place of terror, but the Ghost expressly refuses to be pitied and demands revenge. The righting of wrongs is to be motivated by some sort of “moral horror” at the crime committed (the Ghost elicits *this* response), accompanied by a recovery, even a reenactment of the past, as in Hamlet’s choice of, and personal poetic contribution to, *The*

³³ Compare *H*, I.ii. 257. Why Parsons did not use these words as title-page epigraph to her novel (instead of “Thus conscience / Can make cowards of us all”) is indeed a mystery.

Murder of Gonzago. This abundance of the supernatural material which the Gothicists found in *Hamlet* is not accompanied in equal measure by the pity-eliciting element (the ravings of Ophelia are a poor substitute as they are attached to Polonius and not to Hamlet's father), which compelled the authors to seek elsewhere, chiefly in *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet*.³⁴ As we have remarked, a felicitous blending of the various motifs was regarded as more Shakespearean than the actual Shakespeare. In *Otranto*, unrequited sins return in a supernatural guise to plague their inheritor in the present. Eventually justice is done at a price; and so supernatural terror, pity, the execution of justice — all the required elements are in place.

Another fine example of such blending is Radcliffe's second novel, *A Sicilian Romance*. The title page, it will be recalled, announces the unfolding of a spectre's tale, a tale of another world. Alison Milbank, the Oxford editor of the novel, explains the relevance of the Ghost's lines to the plot of this romance:

The short epigraph, "I could a tale unfold," thus signals two things about the following tale. First, it indicates its intention of arousing suspense and terror in its readers, of disarraying them physically in the manner of the sublime effect. Secondly, the message of the ghost is for his son, revealing that he has been murdered, and his place as king and husband usurped by his murderer, Claudius. That is a hint to the truth of the mystery of the haunted tower in *A Sicilian Romance*, to which the reference to "prison house" provides a further clue. Radcliffe's plot is a non-supernatural version of *Hamlet*, and even contains a muted reference to incest.³⁵

Faithful to her hallmark method of the explained supernatural, Radcliffe begins her narrative by skilfully awakening the reader's superstitions, i.e., by sustaining expectations of a supernatural presence haunting the desolate part of the castle of Mazzini. As can be expected, the mystery "conjured up" in the mind of Julia "a terror which reason could not subdue" (*SR*, I/ii/27). Part of the story of the two young ladies' mother, Louisa de Barnini, is told by their mentor, Madame de Menon, but the madame was absent when the mother died. Radcliffe carefully plants various suggestions of supernatural presence, by means of the usual "hollow" or "strange and alarming" sounds, "sullen groans," etc. Then a fabricated tale is told,

³⁴ In the latter play, as we shall see, they also found a usable love interest. An interesting Gothic reworking of *Romeo and Juliet* is found in Harriet Lee's play *The Mysterious Marriage* (1798). For a close analysis see Chapter V.

³⁵ "Explanatory Notes" in the Oxford edition of *SR*, 200.

according to which “innocent blood had been shed in the castle” and its walls “were still the haunt of an unquiet spirit” (*SR*, I/iii/54). Soon the young couple, Hippolitus and Julia, witness what seems to confirm the terrifying suspicions: “they saw a small door belonging to the south tower open, and a figure bearing a light issue forth, which gliding along the castle walls, was quickly lost to their view” (*SR*, I/iii//75). The truth is disclosed — amid an outbreak of violence and bloodshed to which there is no equal in Radcliffe’s later fictions — as late as Chapter xiv (of Volume 2). Here Julia, having wandered unaware into the obscure part of the castle, finds her mother, who for fifteen years has been committed to this prison by the criminal passion of the marquis, her tyrannical husband. The mother’s tale finally lifts the veil of mystery: “the cloud of mystery which had so long involved the southern buildings broke at once away: and each particular circumstance that had excited terror, arose to her [Julia’s] view entire unveiled by the words of the marchioness.” Terror yields to pity: “When [Julia] considered the long and dreadful sufferings of her mother [...] she was lost in astonishment and pity” (*SR*, II/xiv/177). This supplies a fictional realisation of the thematic delineations of *Hamlet* in their relation to the Ghost.

Radcliffe clearly was after an alternative version of the *Hamlet* story, one prompted not only by her fascination with the play’s supernatural scenes but particularly with Sarah Siddons’s female impersonation of Prince Hamlet. The novel which came after *A Sicilian Romance*, *The Romance of the Forest*, brought another variation upon the lost-father motif,³⁶ with a different configuration of the main characters. The heroine, eighteen-year-old Adeline, embarks upon her journey towards the light in the final chapters of the first volume of the novel. These passages, despite their susceptibility to parody,³⁷ are a fine specimen of Radcliffe’s handling of terror and pity. Typically, the explanation of the mystery is postponed until almost the end of the last volume. In Chapter xxiii we find out about the

³⁶ In his Lacanian interpretation of this romance, Robert Miles insists that it is all about an absent mother; see *Ann Radcliffe. The Great Enchantress* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1995), 100 ff. This is, I think, because Miles disregards the Shakespearean debt, which largely accounts for the fact that in so many Gothic fictions the common theme, to borrow a phrase from *Hamlet*, is the death of fathers. Examples abound; in *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, *The Mysterious Warning*, and *The Midnight Bell* the lost-father motif figures prominently.

³⁷ We have mentioned Austen’s satirisation of the manuscript episode in *Northanger Abbey*, Chapters xx and xxi (or v and vi of the first volume). To be sure, it is *The Mysteries of Udolpho* to which the most references are made, yet Catherine’s suspicions concerning General Tilney are a spoof on the main mystery in *A Sicilian Romance* and a “Northanger novel,” *The Castle of Wolfenbach*. The “washing-bill” episode ridicules the manuscript-reading chapters in *The Romance*.

fratricide and the circumstances surrounding it: “the unfortunate Henry was assassinated in his chamber in the third week of his confinement in the Abbey” (*RF*, III/xxiii/341). When, during the trial, depositions are made containing these revelations, Adeline’s reaction is one of horror. Once more we feel the steady hand of the authoress leading us up to the expected sentiment attending the discovery, projected onto the heroine: “On hearing this Adeline grew faint; she remembered the MS. she had found, together with the extraordinary circumstances that had attended the discovery; every nerve thrilled with horror [...]” (*RF*, III/xxiii/341). Translating this into terms that describe the reading process, the authoress hopes that the MS.-reading passages have left an indelible impression.³⁸ Now she needs to awaken in the readers a remembrance of those moments so that they empathise with Adeline. The tone of this daylight and official elucidation has little in common with the gloom and terror of Adeline’s solitary perusal of the MS., where all her bearings were lost, her sense of identity destabilised, and her grip on reality weakened.

The “noctuary” of terror and pity³⁹ commences when Adeline asks La Motte about the rumours concerning the Abbey. Report has it that the place is haunted, most probably by the ghost of a person who, having been confined in the Abbey by order of the Marquis, is said “to have died unfairly” (*RF*, I/vii/99).⁴⁰ Even though La Motte dismisses the story as “coinage of idleness” and a “romantic tale to excite wonder” in vulgar minds, Adeline’s “perturbed fancy” will now keep stealing her moments of tranquillity. A correspondence is established between Adeline’s inner perturbation and the revelations that follow. This has a parallel in *Hamlet*, namely in the way in which Hamlet’s “prophetic soul” has conjured up suspicions which find a confirmation in the tale unfolded by the Ghost. In her noctuary, Radcliffe seems to be following the Shakespearean pattern, not only in that the MS. narrative elicits in Adeline a profound emotional response but also because of the introduction of an element of the supernatural. The parallel thus is not so much between the two stories, that of the Ghost and that of the imprisoned Henry, as between the emotional correspondence of the hearer and the type of response which the story elicits, i.e.,

³⁸ On Radcliffe’s text in the function of enacting interpretive gaps see Miles, *Ann Radcliffe*, 134. Miles recognises his debt to David Richter’s reader-response approach to the Gothic, but I do not think that either scholar fully appreciates the unique way in which the MS.-reading passage in *The Romance* functions as a metafictional guidebook. See also below, p. 270 ff.

³⁹ Compare Maturin’s “for minutes are hours in the *noctuary* of terror, — terror has no diary” (*MW*, II/viii/192; emphasis retained).

⁴⁰ Compare with: “he [Alfonso] came *not fairly* to his end” (*CO*, v/113; emphasis added).

a combination of terror and pity. The “wretched writer,” i.e., author of the MS., “appeal[s] directly to her [Adeline’s] heart.” Her heart is soon suffused with pity: “*Here*, where you suffered, I weep for your sufferings!” (*RF*, II/ix/132; original emphasis retained). In Radcliffe it is the heroine’s distempered fancy which raises the spectre: “she thought she heard ‘*Here*’ distinctly repeated by a whisper immediately behind her. The terror of the thought, however, was but momentary [...]” (*RF*, I/ix/132—133), and this switching back and forth between pity and terror continues throughout the perusal of the manuscript. At the same time, the passage supplies a most interesting example of verbal parallel, “here” being related by way of homophony to “hear” in Hamlet’s exchange with the Ghost:

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.
Hamlet. Speak, I am bound to hear.
Ghost. So art thou to revenge when thou shalt hear.

H, I.v. 5—7

This verbal echo sustains the semantic (the Ghost’s “List, list, O list!”; *H*, I.v. 22) and thematic parallels, which, however, must not obfuscate the equally significant differences: pity, as we have remarked earlier, is not the response that the Ghost (and Shakespeare) expects and the initial terror of the supernatural soon yields to moral horror: “O horrible! O horrible! most horrible!” (*H*, I.v. 80),⁴¹ from which retributive action is to spring.

The theme of spectrally recovered parenthood is a staple of Gothic fiction. As we have seen, the *Otranto* version is somewhat closer to the Shakespearean model, not only thanks to accoutrements such as the armour⁴² and the supernatural machinery. While Radcliffe concentrates upon the emotional responses of her heroines, with Walpole the emphasis is on the political and the economic: legitimisation and restitution. We might say that the divine intervention in the form of Alfonso, “dilated to an immense magnitude” (*CO*, v/112), compensates imaginatively for the shaky legal claims. Manfred makes this explicit when he declares it unnecessary for Jerome to produce “an authentic writing” which would legitimise Theodore’s claim to the principality: “It needs not, said Manfred; the horrors of

⁴¹ The line can be attributed to either the Ghost or Hamlet; in the light of our analysis the latter attribution (following Samuel Johnson’s gloss) seems the more tenable.

⁴² Walpole’s armour makes in itself an interesting sidenote to this chapter of English literary history. A dream vision featuring an immense suit of armour gave birth to *Otranto*, but we can only speculate to what extent Walpole’s dream may have been inspired by his fascination with *Hamlet*. In any case, the armour has a prominent place in the history of Gothic drama, including stage history. We shall return to this in the next chapter.

these days, the vision we have but now seen, all *corroborate* thy *evidence* beyond a thousand parchments” (*CO*, v/114; emphasis added). In thus substituting the supernatural for the legal Walpole was certainly well-advised. Clara Reeve, on the other hand, having rejected Walpole’s “violent machinery,” treats her readers to a meticulously set down investigation conducted by Sir Philip. Edmund, Reeve’s equivalent of Walpole’s Theodore, is — in the words of his legal executor — “the instrument to discover the death of his parents” (*OEB*, 89). In a manner anticipating Radcliffe, the supernatural that Reeve reluctantly does deploy is topographically related to the past crimes that await revelation. In the manner of Walpole, the armoured spectre precludes empathy: “presently all the doors flew open, a pale glimmering light appeared at the door from the staircase, and a man in compleat armour entered the room: He stood with one hand extended, pointing to the outward door” (*OEB*, 68). This reduction of the spectre to the function of a pointer in the topography of the Gothic edifice has no parallel in Shakespeare; nor does the elaborate process of discovery which largely hangs upon the examination of “a certain apartment in the castle of Lovel, that has been shut up these one and twenty years” (*OEB*, 91). What does, is the villain figure, Lord Lovel, whom envy and resentment push to the execution of criminal designs against his kinsman. This is a distant echo of the Claudius plot. Reeve’s villain confesses to having exulted “in the prospect of possessing his title, fortune, and his Lady” (*OEB*, 92), which recalls Claudius’s anguished soliloquy: “I am still possessed / Of those effects for which I did the murder — / My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen” (*H*, III.iii. 53—55).

The protracted process of revelation, examination, and restitution in *The Old English Baron* is brought to a consummation when “the fatal closet” is examined and “a large trunk” opened to reveal a skeleton in which Edmund recognises “the bones of him to whom I owe my birth!” (*OEB*, 116). By this time suspense, which in any case only sporadically built up in the course of the narrative, has petered out, the skeleton being merely the final piece to complete the judicial jigsaw puzzle. What remains is to punish vice and reward virtue as well as to help the readers draw the intended moral lesson, that “of the over-ruling hand of Providence, and the certainty of RETRIBUTION” (*OEB*, 136). Readers had to wait more than fifteen years before William Godwin, in *Caleb Williams*, crammed an equal amount of mystery, and far more suspense, into another “fatal trunk.”

When the Gothicists plunge their readers into revelatory narratives where they rely upon the examination of “the primal eldest curses” of mankind, the familial crimes of fratricide and incest, the result is a peculiar confusion of the domestic and the public. The processes of investigation

and revelation destabilise the characters' identity (and the characters' *sense* of personal identity). This in turn manifests itself in terror and suspense (especially in its past-oriented variety), which naturally accompany such ambiguity and destabilisation. At the same time, plots, some notable exceptions notwithstanding, consistently pursue romance or a form of felicitous dovetailing of romance and tragedy, rather than tragic climaxes. The tragic "effects" of terror and pity were certainly germane to the Gothic; but so were the romance (and romantic) effects produced with the help of the indispensable devices of revelation and reconciliation. Consequently, we must now turn to those other constitutive features of the Gothic.

Romance: Gothic and Shakespearean

But reason, in the end [...] drove them off the scene, and would endure these *lying wonders*, neither in their own proper shape, nor as masked in figures. Henceforth, the taste of wit and poetry took a new turn: And *fancy*, that had wanted it so long in the world of fiction, was now constrained, against her will, to ally herself with strict truth, if she would gain admittance into reasonable company. What we have gotten by this revolution, you will say, is a great deal of good sense. What we have lost, is a world of fine fabling; the illusion of which is so grateful to the charmed Spirit; [...]

Richard Hurd, conclusion to his *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762)

The benefits of Mrs. Siddons usually presented some interesting novelty to the public; her first night, the 29th January, 1787, she acted Imogen in the really *romantic* drama of Cymbeline.

James Boaden, *Life of Kemble*

It should be said at the outset that this section of the book is different in character to the previous ones. While in examining the parallels between the Shakespearean tragedy and the Gothic we have followed up textual evidence, with the romance the situation is less straightforward. As we have seen, “romance” was not used as a discriminative category in eighteenth-century Shakespeare scholarship. Shakespeare’s romances were not identified as such, which explains why Gothic authors did not see in Shakespeare a model romancer. Consequently, a comparative analysis of the two “types” of romance (assuming that we may regard Shakespeare’s four or five plays as conforming to a type or a genre) can only be speculative in the sense of there being no evidence of a desire on the part of the presumed imitators to emulate or copy. This disclaimer does not automatically compromise the usefulness of such analysis, which, incidentally, has been many critics’ favourite for decades. An examination of the

Gothicness of Shakespeare's romances is justifiable within limits, if only to point out interesting common *topoi* (as a contribution to the history of romance) and to reveal in them motifs which the Gothic authors *could have found* inspiring.

In his in-depth study of Shakespeare's debt to the romance tradition, and of the Shakespearean "romances" in particular, E.C. Pettet, being as systematic as the subject matter allows, lists the following features of Shakespeare's romances,¹ a group of five plays if we include *The Two Noble Kinsmen*:

1) source: romance literature as source; inclusion of some typical romance conventions: disguises, mistaken identities, dreams and elements of the supernatural, especially of the fairy or mythological type (marvels, divinities, oracles, wizardry);

2) plot: abundance of incident; "abrupt changes of scene" and less scenic "concatenation" (or cohesion); diminished plot coherence; rapid "movement" from one scene to another; operation of poetic justice; covering (*The Tempest* excepted) a longer period of time than in the comedies; emphasis on suspense and surprise (scenic organisation surprising, sensational, suspenseful); lack of emotional unity of plot (according to T.S. Eliot);

3) mode of representation: lack of verisimilitude; use of "fairy-tale stuff" (concerning, among other things, characterisation; see 4); interest in plot placed before interest in "psychology" of character; theatricality (in contrast to the realism of tragedy);

4) characterisation: "pasteboard" or one-trait characters; unbelievable (due to lack of convincing motivation, "weak" motivation or no motivation at all); diminished individuality and black-and-white disposition of moral qualities; frequent idealisation; emotion theatrical and occasionally spurious;

5) setting: loose treatment of space (topographical laxity); courtly and aristocratic social environment, elements of pastoralism in terms of the general "backcloth," dress, speech, and manners (obsolete or detached, "at one remove from reality");

6) theme: concern with evil but wickedness confined and diluted (in opposition to the immensity of evil portrayed by tragedy); dissipation of the potentially distressing; strong emphasis on reconciliation, penitence, and forgiveness; shift in love interest (in comparison with the tragedies), away from love-making and passion, towards mature and marital love; concern with mortality and transience; decrease of the comic element;

¹ Pettet, *Shakespeare and Romance Tradition*, Chapter Seven, 161—199. Direct borrowings from this study are marked by the usual quotation marks.

7) language: tendency towards verbal diversion and lyricism; meditative and contemplative passages not necessarily motivated by the dramatic situation.

Reservations notwithstanding, our structural and thematic, rather than strictly literary-historical, approach in this chapter will allow us to dwell at some length on several interesting parallels between the Shakespearean and the Gothic types of romance. Taking into account the tottering and largely provisional definition of the Shakespearean romance, we shall include in our analysis the romantic as well as the romance, and begin, somewhat paradoxically, with *Romeo and Juliet* as containing a pattern of the romantic element.

The first half of the plot of *Romeo and Juliet* follows the pattern of romantic comedy, and some scenes have come down as the epitome of the romantic “love-making,”² i.e., courtship and the discourse of courtship. In its romantic element, *Romeo and Juliet* was a model for several passages of Gothic fiction. Already in *Otranto*, according to Kristina Bedford, we have a conspicuously Shakespearean “romantic subplot of the doomed love affair.”³ Matilda evokes associations with Juliet and when Walpole stages an encounter between Theodore and Matilda in Chapter ii, he models it on the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, both parallels suggested and sustained, as we have seen earlier, by verbal echoes. How far these resemblances lead us is less clear. When Bedford calls Theodore and Matilda “the offspring of enemy households,” she stretches the analogy by implying that we have in *Otranto* two feuding clans as we do in *Romeo and Juliet*. Similarly unconvincing is her suggestion that Matilda’s death may have been modelled on the deaths of Juliet and Cordelia. This determination to detect similarity exemplifies comparative speculation as in undisciplined piling up of parallels. This can easily obfuscate the significant fact that courtship occurs sparingly in Gothic fiction and, furthermore, that Gothic imitators of Shakespeare found its (potentially) tragic mode in *Romeo and Juliet* better suited to their purposes than the more “authentically” Shakespearean comedic mode found in its pure form in his comic masterpieces.

In its classic appearance in *Much Ado About Nothing* (Beatrice and Benedick) or *As You Like It* (Rosalind and Orlando), the comedic mode of lovers’ discourse — as Pettet shows — is a device of detachment from the

² In the sense in which “love-making” is used by Pettet, i.e., “continuous and marked preoccupation with love” (Pettet, *Shakespeare and Romance Tradition*, 77). Pettet calls *Romeo and Juliet* a romantic tragedy; it is a love-tale of adventure in which chance plays a prominent part (ibidem, 81).

³ Bedford, “Shakespearean Allusion,” 421.

typical romance. Unlike the early comedies, such as *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,⁴ which are predicated upon the doctrine of romantic love, the great romantic comedies display features which make them differ from the typical romance: "The protagonists are mature, sophisticated, three-dimensional [...]; there is little love-making, but instead scintillating clashes of wit."⁵ Although it may be argued that the verbal skirmishes between Beatrice and Benedick are a type of lovers' discourse, yet they are also, oddly, a device of detachment, and as such were thought to be out of place in the Gothic romance. If Gothic authors were attracted to the romance element in Shakespeare's romantic comedies, they avoided imitating scenes that display Shakespeare at his comic-romantic best. In other words, they were naturally drawn to the romance in the Shakespearean comedy rather than to the comic and comedic. As the epigraphs demonstrate, the romance setting of the forest of Arden rather than the plot or dialogue was what Lee and Radcliffe found attractive about *As You Like It*.

Gothicists apparently could not afford to abandon the serious romantic mode, a mode which, curiously, links *The Two Gentlemen* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with *Romeo and Juliet*, in their insistence on the (potentially at least) disruptive and destructive element in the amorous passion.⁶ In her treatment of the love interest, Radcliffe displays symptoms of the type of hesitancy with which she treats the supernatural; as she does not allow the supernatural to attain full manifestation, so, likewise, she prevents, in her main protagonists at least, an unrestrained manifestation let alone gratification of the amorous passion. In her narrative economy, revelation and the ascertaining of personal identity which is its consequence come before the erotic. In *The Italian*, the inception of the love between Ellena and Vivaldi is unmistakably based on the Romeo-meets-Juliet model ("pride of birth" substituting for family feud), as scholars have not failed to note.⁷ "The forbidden love between Ellena di Rosalba and Vincentio di Vivaldi," writes Susan Wolstenholme, "resembles the love of Romeo and Juliet; like Juliet's sighs, Ellena's draw her lover to her balcony; later Vivaldi enlists a monk to perform a secret marriage ceremony like that of those

⁴ According to Pettet, "[n]one of the Shakespeare's comedies is more deeply infused with romantic elements than *The Two Gentleman of Verona*" (Pettet, *Shakespeare and Romance Tradition*, 101).

⁵ Pettet, *Shakespeare and Romance Tradition*, 123.

⁶ See Pettet, *Shakespeare and Romance Tradition*, 117. Pettet goes a step further and argues that the fundamental imaginative theme of *Romeo and Juliet* is "the unending conflict between Eros [...] and the forces of death" (ibidem). This explains the fascination of Matthew G. Lewis (conspicuous in the textual evidence examined earlier) with the play. See p. 159.

⁷ See, for instance, McIntyre, "Were the 'Gothic' Novels Gothic?" 663.

other, less fortunate star-crossed lovers.”⁸ After the first encounter in the church and the exchange of passion-enkindling glances, Vivaldi, attracted by the voice of Ellena, who at midnight was “performing the midnight hymn to the Virgin” (*I*, I/i/11), approaches the maid’s window and overhears her pronounce his name. Between this and their next encounter in similar circumstances, Radcliffe dwells upon the impediments to the marriage of the ill-fated lovers. The lowly condition of Ellena and the disposition of Vivaldi’s parents make him despair of ever obtaining their consent. As a further confirmation of the insurmountable obstacles, Vivaldi is repeatedly warned by a cowled monk not to visit the villa of Ellena, “lest you meet the fate you ought to dread” (*I*, I/i/15). Although the warnings whet Vivaldi’s resolve, the interpenetration of the sacred and the erotic with some sort of social determinism (“pride of birth,” according to which one’s birth determines one’s future⁹) creates an aura of fatalism that positively stifles the discourse of courtship before it has properly begun. What is more, the narrator herself fails to side with the lovers: “Unhappy young man, he [Vivaldi] knew not the fatal error, into which passion was precipitating him!” (*I*, I/i/13). Instead, she sides with the philosophy that advises caution about any strong passion. Consequently, when the lovers meet again a chapter later, Ellena’s version of the wherefore-art-thou-Romeo speech sounds dismissive and obstructive rather than hopeful and welcoming:

“Why this unreasonable pride of birth!” said she; “A visionary prejudice destroys our peace. Never would I submit to enter a family averse to receive me; they shall learn, at least, that I inherit nobility of soul. O! Vivaldi! but for this unhappy prejudice!” (*I*, I/ii/26)

They take turns performing “an air,” and when Ellena comes to after a momentary swoon (a weakness endemic among Gothic heroines), she replies to Vivaldi’s invitation to a conversation with a flat “It is impossible.” Of course narratives in which the situation is reversed and which, like *The Monk* and *Zofloya*, give free rein to passions (capable of breaking all barriers, including the incest taboo and racial differences), not only fail to contradict but in fact assert the underlying philosophy of passion-fatalism and the death-oriented energies of Eros.¹⁰

⁸ Wolstenholme, *Gothic (Re)Visions*, 15.

⁹ There is a close parallel in *The Castle of Wolfenbach* and the story of Matilda (the phrase “cursed pride of birth” occurs in *CasWol*, II/156).

¹⁰ Compare, for instance, Dacre’s depiction of Victoria’s passions as “stormy passions of the soul, goading on to ruin and despair [...] the foaming cataract, rushing headlong from the rocky steep, and raging in the abyss below! [...] The wildest passions predominated in her bosom; [...] Unhappy girl! whom Nature organized when offend-

The extra emphasis and significance which Gothic narratives, especially those of the “Radcliffe school,” bestow upon identity seem to confirm the hypothesis that in these romances we ought to find many features in common with Shakespearean romances. In Gothic fictions we do find all the basic ingredients (listed above) that Shakespeare’s romance shares with the romance tradition. As we have indicated before, despite this affinity, we cannot speak of Shakespearean influence upon the Gothic romance as such. The many parallels allow us to speak of the common source of the Shakespearean and the Gothic “types” of romance in the romance tradition. In the discussion to follow we shall be concerned with only some of the characteristic features, and particularly with role of the mistaken identity device, plot organisation, and the thematics of reconciliation, penitence, and forgiveness. Out of the four or five Shakespearean romances, only two have been approached by critics with the aim of discovering parallels. While Clara McIntyre found “some resemblance” between *The Winter’s Tale* and some “situations” and “stories” in Radcliffe, Eino Railo spotted similarities with *Cymbeline*. Here we shall confine our comparative analysis to *Cymbeline* for reasons that are soon to be made clear.

Perhaps the most obvious parallel between the typical Gothic narrative and *Cymbeline* is the story of the king’s two sons, Belarius and Guiderius, who, like Theodore and Edmund, are unaware of their royal descent, but whose noble nature cannot brook concealment and obscurity: “How hard it is to hide the sparks of Nature! / These boys know little they are sons to th’ king, / Nor Cymbeline dreams that they are alive” (*Cym.*, III.iii. 79–81). Similarly, nobility shines through the features of Theodore: “His person was noble, handsome and commanding [...]” (*CO*, ii/54); Edmund surpasses the offspring of the nobles “though he is the son of a poor labourer” (*OEB*, 12), and in Alleyn “the insignificance of the peasant was lost in the nobility of the character” (*CA&D*, iii/43). The recognition, however, is handled differently in Shakespeare and in the Gothic narratives. While in the former the verification of identity is in action, Gothicists put emphasis on similarities of appearance. It is in combat that Arvirgus and Belarius verify their nobility. Gothic heroes and heroines are hardly ever given such opportunities; thus, Theodore “resembl[es] the picture of the good Alfonso in the gallery” (*CO*, ii/40), and Edmund bears a strong resemblance “to a certain dear friend I once had” (*OEB*, 15).

The visual and the pictorial feature prominently in Gothic narratives as factors which reveal and/or verify identity, and thus as factors which

ed with mankind, and whom education, that *might* have corrected, tended only to confirm in depravity” (*ZM*, I/x/78; original emphasis retained). For a parallel in *Othello* see Othello’s speech at III.iii. 460 ff.

guarantee social continuity. In *Otranto*, the marble statue of Alfonso the Good in the Church of St. Nicholas perpetuates the memory of the former prince of Otranto, but a much more effective continuity is found in the young hero, Theodore, who resembles “the picture of the good Alfonso in the gallery” (*CO*, ii/40). Matilda’s “uncommon adoration” of the picture is thus naturally bestowed upon the living copy. Clad in armour, Theodore “is the very image of that picture” (*CO*, iv/88), which causes Manfred to take him for a spectre. In *A Sicilian Romance*, a miniature picture substitutes for the actual presence of the seemingly deceased mother. This has parallels in both *Udolpho* and *The Italian*. In *The Mysterious Warning* the two half-brothers are images of their very different mothers; Ferdinand “was the perfect resemblance of his unfortunate mother,” while Randolphil “was the counterpart of his mother, both in person and disposition” (*MystWar*, I/v/33–34), which is an important early clue to the final solution of the mystery.

A remote analogy in Shakespeare is with the lockets in *Hamlet*, which represent the two brothers, Old Hamlet and Claudius, the Hyperion and the satyr. The two pictures (“the counterfeit presentment of two brothers”; *H*, III.iv. 54) are compared in Hamlet’s exchange with Gertrude, a scene that has little to do with the way in which miniatures and various other pictorial representations serve Gothicists to bring on narrative climaxes. The Gothic uses of resemblance in effecting narrative closure come in two varieties, political and domestic. The political variety is found in *Otranto* and *The Old English Baron* and, as we have seen, is evidently modelled on the *Hamlet* motif of the armour-clad ghost who comes to right past wrongs. The exchange between Hamlet and Horatio in which Hamlet tries visually to verify the Ghost’s identity (*H*, I.ii. 226 ff) may have left an impression on Walpole’s mind, and yet the differences are equally conspicuous: Hamlet, unlike Theodore, does not establish his political credentials on his outward resemblance to the Ghost. Nor is Hamlet given the task of establishing his true identity.

The domestic variety of the identity-revealing dénouement was worked out by Radcliffe, whose heroines’ sense of identity is destabilised by counterfeit presentments the meaning of which they cannot ascertain. In *Udolpho*, this kind of uneasiness is attached to a picture which Emily’s father, St Aubert, treats with puzzling devotion but which Emily cannot identify:

When he rose, a ghastly paleness was on his countenance. Emily was hastily retiring; but she saw him turn again to the papers, and she stopped. He took from among them a small case, and from thence a miniature picture. The rays of light fell strongly upon it, and *she perceived it to be that of a lady, but not of her mother.*

St Aubert gazed earnestly and tenderly upon his portrait, put it to his lips, and then to his heart, and sighed with a convulsive force. Emily could scarcely believe what she saw to be real. She never knew till now that he had a *picture of any other lady than her mother*, much less that he had one which he evidently *valued so highly*; but having looked repeatedly, to be certain that it was not the resemblance of Madame St Aubert, she became entirely convinced that it was designed for that of some other person. (*MU*, I/ii/28; emphasis added)

The quasi-supernatural terrors which trouble the heroine's mind vanish once her identity has been ascertained. Emily's terrifying conjectures concerning the black veil are dissipated when her domestic anxieties are resolved: after all, as it turns out, the lady whose picture St Aubert "valued so highly" was his sister: "she was now relieved" from the "painful conjecture" concerning the loyalty of her father and the legitimacy of her birth (*MU*, IV/xvii/623).

The mutual recognition between Olivia and Ellena that Radcliffe stages towards the end of *The Italian* gives us a sense of the extent to which the Gothic mode depended upon the device of the mistaken identity and the amount of risk involved in carrying the task off. "What new discovery is this?" exclaims Ellena "fearfully" when she learns that the nun Olivia is in fact her mother (*I*, III/ix/358). Having "but lately" found her father, she now discovers that her real father is "in the grave." At this point, "surprise and doubt" suspend in her "every tender emotion" and she is almost distracted. When she has recovered a degree of composure, she is only capable of saying, "It is my mother, then, whom I see! When will these discoveries end!" We register a sense of personal insecurity that informs such scenes, especially in view of the fact that the discoveries concern a heroine who is keenly aware of her social inadequacy when among those who display what she calls "unreasonable pride of birth." But "When will these discoveries end!" can also be interpreted as conveying the authoress's own uneasy suspicion that perhaps she has carried too far the game of mystification. Indeed, Ellena's exclamation might awaken (unintentionally, one assumes, on the part of the authoress) similar objections in the mind of the reader. Radcliffe's type of narration, which makes us share the point of view of the heroine, depends for its success on making the spectacle of concealment and revelation enjoyable for the reader. But what if the reader should become as weary, numb or confused as the heroine herself?

In Shakespeare the romance conventions of mistaken identity and the resulting revelations and discoveries are handled differently. To begin with, the devices of cross-dressing and concealed identity are entirely transparent to the audience. Themselves secure in their better knowledge (ex-

ternal communication system), the spectators take pleasure (in the comedic mode) in the gullibility, perplexity, and amazement of the figures on stage, or (in the tragic variety) tremble at the destructive potential of dissimulation. Contrary to this, in *The Impenetrable Secret* Francis Lathom consistently employed cross-dressing, loosely modelled on Shakespeare's comedies, as a device that conceals (from the reader) the true identity of the main characters. In an early scene, Sylvio is on the point of confessing, we presume, his love for Averilla. In mid-sentence he utters "a piercing shriek," springs up from his knees, and flies hastily away from the astonished maiden (*IS*, I/iii/12). It is of course much later that the solution to the impenetrable secret is finally given: The he is a she; the Sylvio from the opening of the story, whom necessity compelled to "disguise the softness of her sex" (*IS*, II/v/140), is the twin sister of another Sylvio. Lathom's plot resembles that of *Twelfth Night*, but the substantial difference is that in Shakespeare we are perfectly aware of Viola's double identity. Even though we do not share in Viola's perplexity and look from a distance at Olivia's misplaced infatuation, both the "knot" and its untangling (compare *TN*, II.ii. 36—37) are of great psychological interest. This interest is compromised in Lathom because of his almost exclusive concentration on the mechanics of the plot which prevents him from letting us in on the secret upon which it revolves.

In *The Italian* Radcliffe gave the mistaken identity device a sinister twist. Halfway through the novel, in a scene brimming with suspense and terror, Schedoni is on the point of assassinating the sleeping Ellena. As he raises the dagger he is paralysed with horror at the sight of a miniature in which he discovers his own likeness. After a brief exchange with the now awakened Ellena, Schedoni loses his wonted sternness and nearly collapses under the weight of the unexpected recognition: "Unhappy child! — behold your more unhappy father!" As he concluded, his voice was overcome by groans, and he drew the cowl entirely over his face" (*I*, II/ix/236). Ellena's unintentional equivocation on the word "father" demonstrates the extent to which Radcliffe has managed to trick us by concealing the identity of her villain. But she is not going to stop at this and passes on to more revelations. The uneasy familial bond, tying her heroine with the wicked monk, needs to be severed and is only allowed to last as long as the terrors attached to it are requisite. After all, Schedoni is Vivaldi's mortal enemy. To disengage Ellena from this ignoble tie, new figures and new attachments are needed, and thus we learn of the real daughter of Schedoni, who is removed in the same passage that introduces her to us: she is said to have died at the age of two years. One passage will perhaps suffice to illustrate the level of complexity this type of narrative attains:

It was this his child, for whom the Confessor [Schedoni], who had too well *concealed himself* to permit Bianchi [the aunt who raised Ellena] to acquaint him with her death, had *mistaken* Ellena, and to which mistake his own *portrait*, affirmed by Ellena to be that of *her father*, had contributed. This *miniature* she had found in the cabinet of Bianchi after her aunt's decease, and, observing it *inscribed with the title* of Count di Bruno [title and name applying to Schedoni and the brother he killed], she had worn it with a filial fondness ever since that period. (I, III/ix/382; emphasis added)

By contrast, the horror mode of the Gothic, in which the rule is transparency and directness rather than anxious conjecture, is much closer to the *modus operandi* of the playwright, Elizabethan or otherwise. In *The Monk* we have little of Radcliffe's methodical concealment and mystification. Robert Miles points out the sanctioning function of the Shakespearean (Elizabethan, broadly) device of cross-dressing in *The Monk*: "Here Matilda's cross-dressing is protected by Shakespearean allusion. In referring to his/her secret passion, Rosario mimics Viola's 'worm in the bud' speech from *Twelfth Night*. Cross-dressing would ordinarily be transgressive, but here it is 'normalised' by theatrical convention sanctified by the national poet."¹¹ Yet equally important is the fact that Lewis uses this borrowed device (for we cannot really speak of the same "convention") in a non-Shakespearean fashion, because, as Miles observes, "Throughout the novel we are left wondering as to Matilda's true identity, including his/her sex." An amount of situational obscurity certainly plays a role also in *Monk*-like stories, but the fast pace of such narratives is directly related to the rapidity with which revelation annuls uncertainty and obscurity, the upshot being a surplus of suspense proper (i.e., future-oriented) over its past-oriented variety. Matilda is no Ellena; we take no interest (because Lewis does not expect us to) in her identity after she sheds the Rosario disguise, let alone her past or her birth. By the rules of narrative economy, elaborate mysteries demand elaborate and protracted revelations. To the extent that (returning to our list above) accumulation of incident and suspense are characteristic of romance, the horror Gothic is closer to traditional romance than the Radcliffean variety.

As has been suggested, deception (as distinct from mistaken identity) in what Manfred Pfister calls the internal communication system is a particularly Shakespearean device, of which cross-dressing is a comic (or comedic) variety. Dissimulation, which is the great theme that runs through the entire plots of *Caleb Williams* and *The Monk*, is both a staple

¹¹ Robert Miles, "Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis," in: Punter, ed., *Companion to Gothic*, 52.

device (dramatic convention) with Shakespeare as well as being his favourite theme. All of his great villains are masters of dissimulation and in the comedies the motif of conscious deceit always confers a sense of unease, gloom, and peril upon the action. Treacherous characters are ubiquitous and cross-generic in Shakespeare: Gloucester, Macbeth and Iago are the obvious examples, but there is also Proteus (in *The Two Gentlemen*), Shylock, Angelo, and Iachimo (in *Cymbeline*). The use of such characters makes necessary the business of unmasking, which in turn gives the poet an opportunity to discourse (through his protagonists) upon the perils of dissimulation and the inevitability of disclosure.

In *Cymbeline*, to return to our model Shakespearean romance, the ultimate disclosure scene is especially elaborate, justifying Lawrence Danson's adversion to "the fifth act's notorious cascade of recognitions."¹² The scene combines the unmasking of deceit with the settling of identities, and both these with the necessary dealing out of reward and punishment and the eventual domestic reconciliation and restoration of social and political order. Guiderus and Arviragus turn out to be "the issue of [Cymbeline's] loins"; Imogen, miraculously resurrected in the eyes of Posthumus, drops her disguise and transforms from Fidele back into her true self; Posthumus makes a clean breast of his guilt, and Iachimo confesses to his former falsehood ("false spirits"). The scene opens with news of the Queen's death and, more importantly, of her death-bed confession, which unmasks her false nature and prepares us for further revelations. As a "most delicate fiend," whose "seeming" successfully eluded disclosure ("It had [would have] been vicious / To have mistrusted her"), she meets the impenitent death of many villains, "repent[ing] / The evils she hatch'd were not effected," a distant echo of the exit lines of another master of dissimulation, Aaron in *Titus Andronicus* (*TA*, Vi. 125).

The multiple, assorted, and intertwining revelations of this scene anticipate the elaborate dénouements of many a Gothic narrative, but significant here is the emphasis on reconciliation and restoration, characteristic of Shakespeare's late drama. "Pardon's the word to all" (*Cym.*, V.v. 424) is the theme of this type of finale, the necessary preconditions being confession and repentance. Gothic fictions are generally in agreement with the Shakespearean romance in evincing a wish to redress imbalances in the handling of poetic justice by both tragedy and comedy. For while in tragedy the good wasted is too great in the process of the containment of evil, in comedy the reverse is true: the evil energies are artificially contained. In romance, in theory at least, the happy mean can be found between these two infelicitous resolutions: on the one hand, iniquity takes its

¹² Danson, *Shakespeare's Dramatic Genres*, 160.

grim toll but, on the other, the innocent and the righteous are allowed to emerge unbowed and unscathed, or at the very least a universal bloodbath of the sort that we have in *Titus* is averted.

The righting-the-wrongs pattern, well known from the Elizabethan-Jacobean tradition of revenge tragedy and epitomised, in the supernatural version, in *Hamlet*, was repeatedly used by Gothicists. At the same time, in the Radcliffe variety, the most dramatic and tragic events (e.g. Schedoni's crimes) were pushed to the back-story. This not only necessitated the characteristically elaborate work of revelation and an ample dose of past-oriented suspense but also, in a manner typical of the Shakespearean romance, obviated (gratuitous) violence and crime in the "now" of the narrative current. The semi-resurrection of the mother in *A Sicilian Romance* parallels that of Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* while the story of Imogen in *Cymbeline* resembles that of many Gothic heroines who emerge unscathed from ordeals, real and imaginary. The scene in which the apparently dead Imogen awakes to find herself buried next to the headless corpse of Cloten (in which she recognises her husband) is as "Gothic" as anything in Shakespeare. Besides the accumulation of horrors, the scene portrays a characteristically Gothic (chiefly Radcliffean) confusion of the actual and the imaginary in the mind of the heroine: "I tremble still with fear [...] / The dream's here still: even when I wake it is / Without me, as within me: not imagin'd, felt" (*Cym.*, IV.ii. 303—307).

"In all Gothic writing," argues E.J. Clery, "the purpose of instruction is a fig-leaf; the fundamental pleasure is amoral."¹³ Without now disputing this sweeping generalisation, let us merely remark that the size of the fig-leaf varies from one specimen to another. Returning to *The Italian* as an example, we see Radcliffe attempting to impose a moral balance towards the end of the novel, and not so much by means of legal verdict as by the sacred law according to which, to quote the formulation in *Macbeth* (one of many in Shakespeare), "even-handed Justice [...] / Commends th'ingredience of our poison'd chalice / To our own lips" (*Mcb.*, I.vii. 10—12). If we regard *The Italian* as a literary response to *The Monk* then we may say that Radcliffe's goal is to heal the rift between tragedy and romance that in Lewis separates the two major plots of his novel. Radcliffe is eager to show that Schedoni's crimes "by a singular retribution [...] recoiled upon himself" (*I*, II/x/243). Unlike Manfred, Schedoni stays in character, i.e., he acts his part as the villain and remains unrepentant. Unsurprisingly, his end fulfils the law of self-administered retribution almost to the letter: instead of performing an act of contrition, he poisons both himself and the man who has been responsible for his undoing. Evil thus exor-

¹³ Clery, *Women's Gothic*, 98.

cised, the story can proceed to a pastorally joyful consummation, the sense of societal recuperation underscored by the expected union of Ellena and Vivaldi against a larger egalitarian backdrop of “grounds, which were extensive enough to accommodate every rank” (*I*, III/xiii/413).

Our discussion of the generic concerns and ambiguities with which Gothic fiction is ridden will have a natural continuation in the next chapter, in which we analyse the curious literary, cultural, and political phenomenon, that of Gothic drama, which in the 1790s made a conquest of the London theatres.

Stage Spectres



Gothic drama and Gothic theatre — the historical context

Our Bard, long known to you, this night makes up, / Of
various beverage — a kind of cup; / Of Music, Pantomime,
and graver scenes, / Perhaps a dash of terror intervenes; /
Should not all these sufficient change supply / If you condemn
— there will be — *Tragedy*.

Miles Peter Andrews, Prologue to *The Mysteries of the Castle*

Or, if no such chord be thine, / Restore the ancient tragic
line, / And emulate the notes that rung / From the wild harp,
which silent hung / By silver Avon's holy shore, / Till twice an
hundred years rolled o'er, / When she, the bold Enchantress,
came, / With fearless hand and heart on Flame! / From the
pale willow snatched the treasure, / And swept it with a kind-
red measure, / Till Avon's swans, while rung the grove / With
Monfort's hate and Basil's love, / Awakening at the inspired
strain, / Deemed their own Shakespeare lived again.

Sir Walter Scott, *Marmion*¹

In the 1790s, the Gothic became a highly popular dramatic genre. According to Jeffrey Cox, editor of a recent anthology of Gothic plays, “[t]he Gothic remained the dominant form of serious popular drama until the rise of the domestic melodrama of the 1820.”² Cox illustrates the populari-

¹ This passage from Scott, originally quoted with the anecdote accompanying it in the Introduction to *The Dramatic and Poetical Works of Joanna Baillie* (1851), has recently been used by Peter Duthie as epigraph to his Introduction to Joanna Baillie's *Plays on the Passions*. Unfortunately, Duthie, like many others since James Boaden (including Margaret Carhart in the same passage from Scott), has misspelled the name of Monfort. De *Montfort* is the name of Adeline, the heroine in “Henry Fitzowen,” Nathan Drake's attempt at a Gothic tale (numbers IX through XI in his *Literary Hours*, vol. 1).

² Jeffrey N. Cox, “English Gothic Theatre,” in: Hogle, ed., *Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, 127.

ty of the Gothic on the stage with the example of Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*, which after its opening in December 1797 at Drury Lane "was performed forty-seven more times before the theater closed for the summer in June, an extraordinary run at a repertory theater of the day."³ Louis Peck regards the play as a landmark in Gothic drama but finds it difficult to account for the play's popularity "upon reading."⁴ Cox's oxymoronic "serious popular drama" points to a similar problem: some plays were popular because they were not entirely serious. There obviously was a distance between Gothic fiction, tested in reading, and popular drama, whose merit was largely established "by popular vote" in the theatre. Serious drama, on the other hand, was understood as a class comprising original compositions whose merit was chiefly literary, quite exceptional and represented in our analysis by, for instance, Horace Walpole's *The Mysterious Mother* (not staged) and Joanna Baillie's tragedies, of which only a small number were staged. If Gothic drama derived from Gothic fiction, its derivative position was a short-lasting early stage of its development; soon it began evolving into an independent phenomenon, literary and, more broadly, cultural: most plays were published after their presentation in the theatre, usually in a much more lengthy version, and of course both reviewers and the public at large offered ready criticism. Especially significant was the creative two-way influence or interaction between playwriting and the developing stage techniques and staging conditions as well as rapidly changing theatrical conventions; in the words of Paul Ranger: "As gothic drama developed, so the conditions in which the plays were performed altered."⁵

In this chapter, before we discuss the supernatural as one of Gothic drama's distinguishing traits, we shall briefly examine the context in which the genre appeared and functioned. In particular, we shall look at the diversity and generic elasticity of the Gothic on the stage as reflecting its unstable position, in relation to the dynamic cultural context in which it came into existence. In his study of Gothic drama, Bertrand Evans lists almost a hundred and thirty specimens of the genre, but the Gothicness of many of them is questionable. Upon close analysis, even the obvious representatives, such as stage adaptations of Gothic romances, seem problematic, and concerning such plays as, for instance, William Wordsworth's *The Borderers*, Evans himself raises serious doubts on account of some "fundamental differences."⁶

³ Cox, "Introduction," in: Cox, ed., *Seven Gothic Dramas*, 317.

⁴ Peck, *Life of Lewis*, 72.

⁵ Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 88.

⁶ Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 218. There are many such borderline cases; Samuel T. Coleridge's *Remorse* is another. Jonathan Bate suggests that Wordsworth's villain is

Let us begin with at least a cursory overview of the overlap of the Gothic drama with Shakespeare. Gothic plays were staged in various theatres, the variety reflecting the diversity of theatrical entertainment in London and largely contributing to the genre's further diversification. Significantly, Gothic drama appeared early in the so-called patent theatres: *The Count of Narbonne*, an adaptation of *Otranto* by Robert Jephson, "inscribed with the greatest respect and gratitude to the honourable Horace Walpole," was acted at Covent Garden in November 1781. Also James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* and *The Secret Tribunal* were performed (1794 and 1795 respectively) at Covent Garden, while his *The Italian Monk* opened in August 1797 at the Haymarket. It was only with his *Aurelio and Miranda* that Boaden had the luck and honour to see the two theatrical celebrities of the day and his great favourites, Kemble and Siddons, in the title roles of his play at Drury Lane in 1798.⁷ It will be recalled that Sarah Siddons returned to Drury Lane at the end of the 1781—1782 season; her first roles after "regaining Drury Lane" (Manvell's phrase) were in plays that are regarded as among proto-Gothic ones, such as Arthur Murphy's *The Grecian Daughter* (Drury Lane, 1771). In April 1800, the famous siblings were to appear in Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort*. The meagre success of the tragedy in performance certainly did not answer the ambitions invested in Baillie's project. In his biography of Sarah Siddons, Boaden laments the demise of the spirit for high tragedy as he writes of *De Monfort* thus: "On the stage, I believe, no spectator wished it [*De Monfort*] a longer life, and it is to the last degree mortifying to have to exhibit so many proofs that the talent of dramatic writing in its noblest branch was, in fact, dead among us [...]"⁸ Allardyce Nicoll states that "No one now reading these long-forgotten dramas can fail to be impressed by Baillie's genuine talent." At the same time he builds a significant comparison with Shakespeare: "The authoress has gone the wrong way to work. Shakespeare, we may believe, did not say to himself, 'I shall write a play on Jealousy' and turn out *Othello*, or 'I shall write a play on Pride' and turn out *Lear*. The cardinal passion of Shakespeare's dramas is dependent upon the characters

of the Gothic variety (Bate, *Shakespeare and Romantic Imagination*, 91), and — besides — gives a detailed analysis of Wordsworth's play's debt to Shakespeare: "the play itself is an imitation of Shakespeare"; however, "it is the influence of Shakespeare's language [...] that is most prominent and, ultimately, a major factor contributing to the play's lack of vitality" (ibidem, 90—91).

⁷ "This was the only occasion on which I was ever honoured with the professional aid of Mrs. Siddons." Boaden, *Memoirs of Siddons*, 425. See also his *Life of Kemble*, vol. 2, 230.

⁸ Boaden, *Mrs. Siddons*, vol. 2, 269.

and the theme; Joanna Baillie's plays have character and theme dependent on a preconceived passion."⁹

Cases such as J.C. Cross's *Julia of Louvain; or, Monkish Cruelty* show that Gothic drama prospered also outside the two royal theatres; the play was performed at the Royal Circus in May 1797. On the other hand, the presentation of a ballet pantomime adaptation of *The Monk*, under the title *Don Raymond; or the Castle of Lindensburgh*, at Covent Garden in March of that year, shows that the "houses of Shakespeare" welcomed productions with pronounced entertainment value rather than nourishing the noble traditions of spoken drama.¹⁰ Another interesting example of experimentation is Lewis's monodrama, *The Captive* (CG, March 1803), the claustrophobic atmosphere of which reportedly "threw [the audience] into fits."¹¹

It is not to be forgotten that amid the Gothic's storming of the theatres royal, April 1796 saw the inauspicious opening of the Pseudo-Shakespearean *Vortigern*, also at Drury Lane with Kemble in the leading role (to Mrs. Jordan's Flavia) and Siddons excused on account of indisposition but possibly foreseeing a scandal. Vortigern's soliloquy, an unintentional mock-imitation of Macbeth's last-act speeches, raised peals of laughter in the audience when Kemble got to the ill-fated line: "And when this solemn mockery is ended [...]" (V, V.ii/64). Evidently both playwrights and managers had to act with a great deal of caution when serving their audiences Shakespeare's half-baked meats. The success of *The Castle Spectre* at Drury Lane in 1797, with Kemble in the role of the hero Percy, may have surprised Lewis himself, but then Lewis decided to play for high stakes a second time when, in his "romantic drama" *Adelmorn, the Outlaw* (Drury Lane, 1801), he decided to tamper with the perilous machinery of the supernatural.

Regardless of the theatre in which they were performed, many popular Gothic plays were composed according to a simple enough recipe, which combined a crudely liberationist plot with the entertainment element supplied by songs or "airs" and an amount of suspense (supernatural or otherwise) thrown in. Henry Siddons's *The Sicilian Romance; or, the Apparition of the Cliffs* (Covent Garden, 1794) is a good example. Its villain, Ferrand, Marquis of Otranto (!), plays the role of the oppressor, his breast conventionally gnawed by guilt over his wife, whom he keeps imprisoned in what the stage directions describe as "an internal rock" (II.i). When

⁹ Nicoll, *British Drama*, 211.

¹⁰ See Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 241.

¹¹ Jeffrey Cox, *In the Shadows of Romance: Romantic Tragic Drama in Germany, England, and France* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1987), 43. Cox included this short monodrama in his anthology of Gothic drama.

Julia, the counterpart of her namesake in *A Sicilian Romance*, expects to confront the shade of the supposedly dead parent, her language is predictably Shakespearean: “Now if this ghost should be my mother, I’m sure she’d speak to me — I should know her directly by the picture which she gave me [...]” (*SRAC*, III.i/36). The villain eventually comes to be duped into terror by a lad called Martin, who, “pale, and in white,” rises from behind an altar and makes groans:

Ferr. Speak, horrid spectre, if from darkest hell,
Rous’d by my crimes, you come to snatch me hence —
Or if an angel —

SRAC, III.ii/38

The expected liberation comes when the imprisoned lady of the castle, now “hardened to manhood,” draws a dagger to defend her threatened child and chases away the oppressor, aided by the fact that the castle is now surrounded by warriors under the leadership of Don Lope. The quartetto of the finale naturally brims with optimism: “Now let rosy joy / Our hours employ [...]”

The formula firmly established, playwrights searched far and wide for novel and exotic locales. The scene for J.P. Kemble’s opera *Lodoiska* (Drury Lane, 1794) is laid “upon the borders of Poland, and represents a moated castle in the Forest of Ostropol.” Here Baron Lovinski is the oppressor, described by the Tartars as a “cruel Polander,” and “the scourge of his own Territory.” Count Floreski arrives to rescue the title heroine imprisoned (along with her father) in the castle’s tower. The liberation is assisted by the Tartars, the chief of whom storms the castle to “revenge [his] father’s spirit” (*Lodoiska*, III/52). The “mighty chorus” in the finale is sung to praise the triumph of valour. George Colman the Younger’s *Blue-Beard; or, Female Curiosity!* (Drury Lane, 1798) is basically an oriental variation on a similar theme. Though it surpasses Kemble’s opera in spectacular sets and a daring employment of the supernatural machinery,¹² the play’s liberationist *telos* is pronounced and given extra emphasis by con-

¹² Colman’s *Blue-Beard* justifies the expression “supernatural machinery” (“horrible boggling of the ponderous machinery” in Boaden’s phrase) more than any other composition of this period. The ample stage directions (too elaborate to quote in full) give us a clear sense of the sumptuous theatre of horrors (mock-supernatural, actually) displayed inside the Blue Chamber; e.g., “*The interior apartment [...] exhibits various Tombs, in a sepulchral building; — in the midst of which ghastly and supernatural forms are seen; — some in motion, some fix’d — In the centre is a large Skeleton seated on a tomb, (with a Dart in his hand) and over his head, in characters of Blood, is written ‘THE PUNISHMENT OF CURIOSITY’*” (I.iii/84–85). Of course the very sophistication of the machinery, as well as the setting, work as convenient distancing devices.

ventional associations with oriental bondage. In the words of Selim, the deliverer of Fatima (and a host of slaves) from the tyrant's clutches, "Let us away from this rude Scene of horror: — and bless the Providence which nerves the arm of Virtue to humble Vice, and Oppression" (*B-B*, II.viii/96).

Cox describes the genesis of Gothic drama in the following way: "As Gothic drama, it appeared as an imitation of Gothic novels. As Gothic drama, it struck many as an attempt to revive the conventions and motifs of great Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, or alternatively as a dangerous effort to import the suspect German drama of the *Sturm und Drang*."¹³ The assumption that the "conventions and motifs" of the Elizabethan and Jacobean drama had to await the emergence of the Gothic to be revived is questionable or at best ambiguous; this tradition was never entirely dead in the first place, unless some specific conventions and motifs are meant. Secondly, as Coral A. Howells puts it, the techniques of Gothic fiction are theatrical, or "essentially visual in their emphasis on dramatic gesture and action and in their pictorial effects, giving the reader an experience comparable to that of the spectator at a theatre."¹⁴ But then Howells, it will be recalled, is one of the few critics who have regarded the question of Shakespearean influence upon the Gothic with the seriousness it deserves. There are, then, reasons to examine more closely, and hopefully redefine, the purported double derivativeness of Gothic drama.

Historically speaking, Horace Walpole's *Mysterious Mother* (1768) inaugurates, somewhat hesitantly, a new type of drama, a situation parallel to the seminal position of *Otranto* in relation to Gothic fiction: Evans puts it at the head of his list of Gothic plays. Moreover, Walpole, having invented the Gothic story and having sired what is regarded as the first Gothic play, assisted at the birth of an adaptation of *The Castle of Otranto*, Jephson's tragedy, *The Count of Narbonne*. As we have seen, Walpole's ambitions and interests were from the first those of the playwright. There is a paradox in the fact that, although strongly compelled to execute his project, Walpole was from the moment he put pen to paper convinced that his drama would be unfit for the stage for the "truly horrid," as he calls it, Oedipal theme: "From the time that I first undertook the foregoing scenes, I never flattered myself that they would be proper to appear on the stage."¹⁵ Another motive, however, is given in Walpole's letter to

¹³ Cox, "English Gothic Theatre," 125; original emphasis retained.

¹⁴ Howells, *Love, Mystery, and Misery*, 16. This generalisation does not necessarily apply to all the basic varieties of Gothic fiction. See above, p. 169–170.

¹⁵ Postscript to *The Mysterious Mother*, in: Sabor, ed., *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, 131.

George Montagu, in which, having finished his play, he grieves over the retirement of the only actress he would like to impersonate the title heroine: “I wish to see it acted:” he writes, “but as Mrs. Pritchard leaves the stage next month, I know nobody could play the Countess; nor am I disposed to expose myself to the impertinences of that jackanapes Garrick, who lets nothing appear but his own wretched stuff, or that of creatures still duller [...]”¹⁶ These remarks are interesting for a few reasons: For one thing, they indirectly confirm the opinion of those scholars (chiefly Howells and Clery) who emphasise the great impact that the leading actors and actresses had on the development of the Gothic as an attractive form of drama. One of the most popular female roles was that of Belvidera in Thomas Otway’s *Venice Preserved*, revived at Drury Lane a hundred years after its composition in 1682. Otway, now regarded as one of the many sources of inspiration for Gothic playwrights,¹⁷ was often placed side by side with Shakespeare: Walpole mentions him as one of the few in whom “theatric genius” was revived after Shakespeare.

This brings us back to the idea, stressed by Cox, that a type of Gothic drama was another attempt to restore the greatness of British theatre. Walpole’s harsh words about Garrick certainly correspond to this view: “Theatric genius,” he writes in the Postscript, “lay dormant after Shakespeare.”¹⁸ This can be read as an ill-concealed assertion of his literary ambitions; he does not burrow his satisfaction with *The Mysterious Mother* and the way in which it revives the tradition of the serious drama of terror and pity. Byron, who in the Preface to his *Marino Faliero* calls *The Mysterious Mother* “a tragedy of the highest order,” calls Walpole “the father of the first romance, and of the last tragedy in our language, and surely worthy of a higher place than any living writer, be he who he may.”¹⁹

Given Walpole’s interest in the revival of the tragic muse it is hardly surprising that he became personally involved in the staging of Jephson’s *The Count of Narbonne*.²⁰ His involvement was both theoretical and prac-

¹⁶ April 1768, in: Sabor, ed., *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, 130.

¹⁷ See Cox, “English Gothic Theatre,” 125.

¹⁸ Postscript to *The Mysterious Mother*, in: Sabor, ed., *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, 135.

¹⁹ In: Sabor, ed., *Horace Walpole: The Critical Heritage*, 147–148. Apparently what Walter Scott and others (including Walpole himself) found “more unnaturally horrid than even the *Oedipus* of Sophocles” elicited appreciation from Byron.

²⁰ In Arthur Murphy’s Prologue to Robert Jephson’s tragedy, *Braganza* (1775), Jephson is hailed as a tragedian making a vigorous entrance and “warm from Shakespeare’s school. / Inspired by him [...]” The context of this praise is explicitly political: Jephson’s play is “no French play; — tame, polished, dull by rule!” Jephson is recommended to the audience as yet another disciple of the Bard capable of reviving the tragic muse.

tical: in 1775 he addressed “Thoughts on Tragedy in Three Letters to the author of *The Count of Narbonne*” (already mentioned, p. 121) and then lent a costume from his private collection at Strawberry Hill to Henderson, the actor playing Austin, a priest and a main character in the play.²¹ Eventually Walpole and Jephson quarrelled over the position of the statue of Alphonso. In a key scene of the play (V.vi), the stage design features “aisles and Gothic arches, part of an altar appearing on one side; the statue of Alphonso in armour in the centre” (stage directions; CN, V.vi/50). “The scene,” explains James Maynard, “was constructed with the statue of Alphonso recumbent on his tomb. Jephson wanted it erect. Walpole maintained that it was more authentic as it was and that in any case there was no time to correct the matter.”²² This is an incident worth noting not only because statues, as we shall see, played a singular role in Gothic drama, but also because it is symptomatic of the changes that theatre was undergoing towards the end of the eighteenth century.

In the most general terms, the tendencies amidst which Gothic drama developed were towards the visual and away from the verbal.²³ “Spectacular settings, elaborate costumes and the colourful effect of massed gatherings added zest to the gothic drama.”²⁴ The patent playhouses of Covent Garden and Drury Lane, especially after extensive rebuilding which considerably enlarged both the auditorium and the stage, became, in the words of Richard Cumberland, “theatres for spectators rather than playhouses for hearers.”²⁵ In his “Critique of *Bertram*” (a Gothic play by Charles Maturin), Coleridge presented an ironic vision of the Gothic theatre as one in which actors strut and fret upon the stage a lot but are heard no more.²⁶ In his summary of the final part of *Bertram*, he writes:

²¹ See Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 71.

²² Temple James Maynard, “Introduction,” in: *The Plays of Robert Jephson* (New York, 1980), xiv.

²³ It ought to be noted that the first wave of such tendencies came almost a century earlier, chiefly with the introduction and growing popularity of Italian opera at the beginning of the eighteenth century. See Brewer, *Pleasures of Imagination*, 363 ff.

²⁴ Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 75. Compare Boaden’s opinion: “The modern stage affects reality infinitely beyond the proper objects of dramatic representation” (*Mrs. Siddons*, vol. 2, 291).

²⁵ *Supplement to the Memoirs of Richard Cumberland* (1807), quoted in Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 88. Harold Child speaks vehemently of the “vast deserts of patent houses,” which compelled acting “to become cruder and broader” (Child, *Shakespearean Productions of Kemble*, 19–20).

²⁶ This is in sharp contrast indeed to Siddons’s interpretation of Lady Macbeth. It was reported by spectators that during the Duncan assassination scene Lady Macbeth’s whispered “He is about it” (*Mcb.*, II.ii. 4) was “distinctly audible in every part of the house” and the effect was that of horror; Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and Players*, 112. See motto on p. 87.

For the rest, Imogine [Maturin's heroine], who now and then *talks* deliriously, but who is always light-headed as far as her *gown* and *hair* can make her so, wanders about in dark woods with cavern-rocks and precipices in the back scene; and a number of mute dramatis personae move in and out continually, for whose 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 small chance of *hearing* a word.²⁷ (emphasis Coleridge's)

This passage, Coleridge's distaste aside, is descriptive not only of the growing imbalance between spoken word and stage spectacle (including emphasis on mime, costume, scene design, and painting), but also, given the Imogen-Imogine parallel, of the way in which the originally mainly verbal settings in Shakespeare could be — and under such managers as Kemble were — reworked into elaborate *mises en scène*. This scene as Coleridge depicts it could be taken for an early-nineteenth-century staging of *Cymbeline*. Paul Ranger writes, "Shakespeare, in *Twelfth Night* and *The Tempest*, had established the convention of opening the play with a storm, at which point Charles Maturin placed the scene in his drama *Bertram*. The tempest was viewed through a large gothic window in the Convent of St Anselm."²⁸ In other words, symptomatically of the appropriation of Shakespeare by the Gothicists, the audience views a Shakespeare episode through a Gothic frame.

The stage directions in *Bertram* illustrate the development in stage design and mechanics between the classically humble sets in *The Mysterious Mother* and the sophistication characteristic of Gothic theatre's mature years.

Act I, Sc. 1: Night, a Gallery in a Convent, a large Gothic window in the extremity, through which lightning is flashing.

Act I, Sc. 2: The Rocks — The Sea — A Storm — The Convent illuminated in the back ground — The Bell tolls at intervals — A groupe of Monks on the rocks with torches — A vessel in distress in the offing.

²⁷ "Appendix B" in Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 278. The critique appeared anonymously in *The Courier* in 1816 (August 29 through September 11).

²⁸ Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 32. *A propos* Kemble's production of *Cymbeline*, Boaden expressed what must have been common view, that Shakespeare's art (especially the dramaturgy of his romances) was too rich for the theatre of his day: "His [Shakespeare's] fancy for ever prompted him with scenery, that *his* Globe could never even affect to exhibit" (*Life of Kemble*, vol. 2, 293; Boaden's emphasis).

[dialogue] The vessel sinks — The Prior falls into the arms of the Monks. The scene shuts. (*B-CSA*, I.i-ii/319—322)

This contrasts sharply with Walpole's laconic: "Act I, Sc. 1: *A Platform before the Castle*." — which presumably obtains for the entire first act as at the beginning of Act II we read "*The SCENE continues*." (*MM*, I—II/39—57). Much of Walpole's evident desire to observe the unities rubbed off onto *The Count of Narbonne*, where topography is limited in comparison with the classic Gothic combination of three major settings: a castle, a convent (or a church), and the woods, with examples in *Otranto* and *Bertram*. But as Jephson's play was written for stage representation, the opening already displays a degree of sophistication in the stage design:

Act I, Sc. 1: A Hall with Gothic Ornaments; a full-length Picture of Alphonso in Armour, in the centre of the Back Scene; [...] (*CN*, I.i/1)

These examples show that there was already a process of mutual accommodation afoot, between the verbal action (in the Shakespearean tradition) and the stage business not directly related to the spoken word. Sometimes, as in the case of the revival of Joanna Baillie's *De Monfort* by Edmund Kean at Drury Lane in 1821,²⁹ the accommodation involved introducing changes into the text of plays that had already been successfully produced. As Jeffrey Cox concluded on comparison of the existing variants of Baillie's play, some scenes were "altered several times"³⁰ even before the opening in 1800, but serious alterations to perhaps the most "Gothic" scene of the play were made for the revival. Act V Sc. ii, set in a dimly lit chapel of a convent, opens in the following manner:

De Monfort is discovered sitting in a thoughtful posture. He remains so for some time. His face afterwards begins to appear agitated, like one whose mind is harrowed with the severest thoughts; then, starting from his seat, he clasps his hands together, and holds them up to heaven.

DE MON. O that I had ne'er known the light of day! [...] (*DM*, V.ii/301)

After some thirty lines De Monfort's soliloquy is interrupted by his servant; then his sister Jane "bursts into the chamber" to learn that her brother

²⁹ The initiative was, in part at least, Byron's, who must have appreciated Baillie's manner of combining of heroism and villainy in the passion-tormented title protagonist. Byron "hailed Baillie" as "our only dramatist since Otway"; Janice Patten, "Joanna Baillie, *A Series of Plays*," in: Wu, ed., *Companion to Romanticism*, 170.

³⁰ Cox [introductory note to *De Monfort*], ed., *Seven Gothic Dramas*, 232.

has “done the deed” (*DM*, V.ii/302), i.e. killed his mortal enemy, Rezenvelt, in an unadulterated passion of hatred. When a noise “of chains clanking” is heard without, Jane urges De Monfort to escape the expected officers of justice through a side door. De Monfort starts in horror: “Not there — not there — the corps — the bloody corps” (*DM*, V.ii/304). For the 1821 version this scene was substantially altered:

Under Kean’s guidance Baillie restructured the final act of the play which, she felt, made it “better fitted for exhibition.” The principal change involved leaving De Monfort alone with the corpse at the end of the play so that, having made his final speech, Kean threw himself to the ground as the curtain fell. Sitting in the dress circle of Drury Lane at the revival, the playwright enthusiastically expressed her satisfaction with Kean’s interpretation.³¹

This specimen of staging history illustrates Paul Ranger’s more general view concerning the inspiration, cooperation, and mutual accommodation between the theatre, the audience, and the playwright in the dynamic environment which forged the Gothic as a mode of “romantic” theatre. The playwright Baillie is approached by theatre management with a proposal to revive her once-successful play; the manager and actor Kean advises changes with a mind to making the new staging more effective; the playwright complies; eventually, the final result is put to the test by the playwright Baillie turned spectator.

However, Baillie’s relationship with the theatre of her day, like that of many a romantic poet, was not unperturbed.³² Indeed, she voiced similar concerns about the diminishing value of the spoken word to those of Coleridge and others. The changes between the original and the revived versions of *De Monfort* are symptomatic in this respect. The effectiveness of the early version to a large extent depends on Baillie’s handling of a dramatic situation patterned after the assassination scene in *Macbeth*, with Macbeth, who has “done the deed” (*Mcb.*, II.ii. 14) but dares not look again on the corpse (*Mcb.*, II.ii. 51), seconded by Lady Macbeth flying to his emotional rescue. In her Preface to the second volume of her *Dramas* of 1836, Baillie writes that it “would be useless to dwell” on the fact that “the largeness of our two regular, long established Theatres, so unfavourable for

³¹ Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 103. The phrase “better fitted for exhibition” is from Baillie’s letter.

³² Feminist critics (Burroughs, Donkin) have recently written copiously on this subject. It seems to me that Lord Byron’s (or Wordsworth’s, for that matter) attitude of total discouragement rather than Baillie’s involvement would be much more convincing instance to support the argument of female playwrights’ disadvantaged position.

seeing and hearing clearly and accurately, have [sic] changed in a great measure the character of the pieces generally exhibited within their walls." But elsewhere, she does dwell on the matter:

The Public have now to choose between what we shall suppose are well-written and well-acted plays, the words of which are not heard, or heard but imperfectly by two thirds of the audience, while the finer and more pleasing traits of the acting are by a still greater proportion lost altogether; and splendid pantomime, or pieces of whose chief object is to produce striking scenic effect, which can be seen and comprehended by the whole.³³

When commenting specifically on the indifferent success (eight performances) of *De Monfort* in 1800, with Siddons playing Jane to Kemble's title hero, Baillie, while acknowledging the merit of fine acting and excellent decoration, laments the fact that the size of the theatre prevented the beauties of the drama, found "in the writing," from manifesting themselves: "in a theatre, so large and so ill calculated to convey sound [...] it was impossible this could be felt or comprehended by even a third part of the audience."³⁴ William Wordsworth in a similar tone bemoans the corrupting influence which the "modern" mode of theatrical representation has exerted upon the taste of the public: "A Dramatic Author," he argues in "Essay Supplementary to Preface" (1815), "if he [sic] write for the Stage, must adapt himself to the taste of the audience, or they will not endure him; accordingly the mighty genius of Shakespeare was listened to. The people were delighted [...]"³⁵

The instancing of Shakespeare is double-edged here: Adaptation to the vulgar taste of the audience should entail compromising the artistic value of the poetic work. As so many times before in similar speculative predicaments, the notion of the supreme Genius of Shakespeare is summoned to sort out the difficulty. Shakespeare successfully avoided this kind of demeaning compromise thanks to his capable genius: "that Shakespeare stooped to accommodate himself to the People, is sufficiently apparent; and one of the most striking proofs of his almost omnipotent genius is, that he could turn to such glorious purpose those materials which the prepos-

³³ Quoted in Duthie, "Introduction," in: Baillie, *Plays on the Passions*, 42–43.

³⁴ Quoted in Duthie, "Introduction," in: Baillie, *Plays on the Passions*, 38.

³⁵ William Wordsworth, "Essay Supplementary to Preface," in: *Wordsworth's Literary Criticism*, ed. with an Introduction by Nowell C. Smith (Henry Frowde: Oxford and London 1905), 176. See also Cox, *Reading Adaptations*, 11. Wordsworth's rancour in this and similar remarks (e.g., the "deprav'd State of the Stage at present") may have been caused by the rejection of his play *The Borderers* by Covent Garden in 1797 (compare *ibidem*, 13).

sessions of the age compelled him to make use of.”³⁶ Phillip Cox argues that Baillie’s project of serious drama, seen in this context, may be thought of as one of “theatrical reform,” a veritable nationwide campaign to improve the corrupt taste of the public. In her address “To the Reader” prefixed to *Miscellaneous Plays* (1804), Baillie expresses her respect for Shakespeare as the head of a national dramatic tradition which, if somewhat self-effacingly, she wishes to become a part of:

So strong is my attachment to the drama of my native country, at the head of which stands one to whom every British heart thinks of with pride, that a distant and uncertain hope of having even but a very few of the pieces I offer to the public represented to it with approbation [...] is sufficient to animate me to every exertion that I am capable of making.³⁷

That this in Baillie was more than lip service is confirmed by the “Introductory Discourse” to her *Plays on the Passions*, first series, published in 1798. It would be neither fair nor accurate to say that Baillie’s project is solely or even in large measure founded upon an attempt to imitate or recreate the Shakespeare model.³⁸ On the contrary, the praise that she does bestow on Shakespeare is not unqualified, as when she writes of Shakespeare’s infinite variety of characterisation which, admirable as it is, would be an obstacle to *her* project dedicated to a faithful delineation of the passions.³⁹ In her “Introductory Discourse,” Baillie constructs the conventional self-deprecating gesture on the Ghost’s lines to Hamlet. She is bringing before the public “a work, with, doubtless, many faults and imperfections on its head,”⁴⁰ which is a paraphrase of the lines in *Hamlet* (*H*, I.v. 74–79) referring to the fact that Old Hamlet was killed “in the

³⁶ Wordsworth, “Essay Supplementary,” 177.

³⁷ Quoted in Cox, *Reading Adaptations*, 17. Cox quotes from the second edition of 1805. The address appeared already in the first in 1804.

³⁸ Margaret Carhart writes at some length on Shakespeare’s influence on Baillie. Not only did Baillie study Shakespeare “with greatest enthusiasm,” but, in Carhart’s opinion, “The influence of Shakespeare is very evident even in her [Baillie’s] first volume [of plays], and many lines have been criticized as modelled too closely upon those in his plays” (*Life and Work of Baillie*, 73). The critic gives many examples of such “reminders,” or echoes. Indeed, the experience of reading Baillie makes applicable Jonathan Bate’s comment on Shakespeare in Wordsworth; her language “strikes me as profoundly Shakespearean, but in a way that it is difficult to pin down [...]” (Bate, *Shakespeare and Romantic Imagination*, 92).

³⁹ To this, Baillie devotes one of her elaborate notes; see Joanna Baillie, “Introductory Discourse,” in: Baillie, *Plays on the Passions*, 113.

⁴⁰ Baillie, “Introductory Discourse,” 93. For her notion of sympathy and its epistemological function Baillie is chiefly indebted to Adam Smith and his *Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). See Appendix A in Duthie’s edition of *Plays on the Passions*.

blossom of [his] sin," i.e., without receiving the last rites. But Baillie's shallow-sounding parallel between her work and the fate of Old Hamlet upon closer inspection reveals a source of inspiration which is far from trivial. The deep-running affinity is between her programme of a theatre of the passions and Shakespeare's pronouncements on the nature of the theatre strewn throughout *Hamlet* and exemplified in the play-within-a-play episode, upon which Baillie, incidentally, modelled a "Hamletesque" (in Duthie's phrase) scene in her comedy on the passion of love, *The Tryal*.

Baillie's theory of drama and theatre, with the prominent position of tragedy (the "first-born" of Drama), rests upon the idea of the "sympathetic curiosity," "this universal desire in the human mind," as she defines it, "to behold man in every situation."⁴¹ Sympathetic curiosity finds special gratification at "the discovery of concealed passion" and at "the tracing the varieties and progress of a perturbed soul."⁴² The parallel with *Hamlet* is striking due not only to Baillie's wholehearted dedication to a theatre which holds the mirror up to nature⁴³ (compare *H*, III.ii. 22 with Baillie's "faithfully delineated nature") but also to Hamlet as a character who fulfils Baillie's ideal of a person who tends to "reflect and reason upon what human nature holds out to their observation."⁴⁴ Hamlet's bent for moral philosophy is seen in his early observation to Horatio about the "vicious mole of nature" and the "o'ergrowth of some complexion" capable of "breaking down the pales and forts of reason" (*H*, I.iv. 23—28), which sums up Baillie's philosophy of the passions (Boaden called Baillie "a rather metaphysical dramatist"), any single one of which is capable of developing to such an extent that it "will from small beginnings brood within the breast, till all the better dispositions, all the fair gifts of nature are borne down before [it]."⁴⁵ This describes the undoing of De Monfort by hatred, as do Hamlet's lines on one defect or a single fault being capable of corrupting the most virtuous of men (*H*, I.iv. 31—38). Baillie's philosophy not only explains the keen interest we take in a character's reactions to unearthly visitations upon the stage rather than in the marvellous as such (in Hamlet rather than the Ghost),⁴⁶ but explains, too, Hamlet's idea of using the theatre as an instrument of revelation, an epistemological tool of sorts:

⁴¹ Baillie, "Introductory Discourse," 70.

⁴² Baillie, "Introductory Discourse," 73.

⁴³ The phrase "hold up" occurs several times in Baillie's "Discourse," e.g., when she speaks of examples which tragedy holds up "for our immediate application" ("Introductory Discourse," 93).

⁴⁴ Baillie, "Introductory Discourse," 75.

⁴⁵ Baillie, "Introductory Discourse," 86.

⁴⁶ "No man wishes to see the Ghost himself [...] but every man wishes to see one who believes that he sees it, in all the agitation and wildness of that species of ter-

Let us understand, from observation or report, that any person harbours in his breast, concealed from the world's eye, some powerful rankling passion of what kind soever it may be, we will observe every word, every motion, every look, even the distant gait of such a man, with a constancy and attention bestowed upon no other. [...] If invisible, would we not follow him into his lonely haunts, into his closet, into the midnight silence of his chamber?⁴⁷

During the Mousetrap scene, Claudius sits in the audience, but he is in fact both watched and watching. Hamlet, hoping to “unkennel [Claudius’s] occult guilt,” bids Horatio (and, by implication, the actual spectators) observe his uncle “with the very comment of thy soul” (*H*, II.ii. 80–81).⁴⁸ And after the involuntary revelation of the “perturbed” state of Claudius’s soul we do follow him “into the midnight silence of his chamber” to hear his anguished soliloquy.

Unsurprisingly, the convention of the revelatory soliloquy, essential for Shakespearean tragedy, plays a significant role in Baillie’s philosophy of drama.

Soliloquy, or those overflowings of the perturbed soul, in which it unburthens itself of those thoughts, which it cannot communicate to others, and which in certain situations is the only mode that a Dramatist can employ to open to us the mind he would display, must necessarily be often, and to considerable length, introduced.⁴⁹

However, this emphasis, which in Baillie fits perfectly her idea of the tragedy as allowing for “a complete exhibition of passion,” is at variance with the Gothic’s aesthetic of obscurity and its methodically deployed dialectic of concealment and revelation. Thus we see Baillie resort to imagery borrowed from *Othello* when she attempts to approximate to her readers the nature of the most fundamental and the most vehement passions: “it is from within that they are chiefly supplied with what they feed on.”⁵⁰ *Othello* rather than *Hamlet* comes closest to Baillie’s dramaturgy, but classically Gothic plays such as *The Mysterious Mother* are entirely alien to the thus conceived theatre of the passions for while in them passions are allowed violent manifestation, their progression from inception to maturi-

rour” (Baillie, “Introductory Discourse,” 71). This agrees with our analysis of the significant role of the actor as conductor of supernatural terror (p. 101).

⁴⁷ Baillie, “Introductory Discourse,” 73.

⁴⁸ It is in the same speech that Hamlet expresses his admiration for Horatio as one of the few who are not slaves to passion.

⁴⁹ Baillie, “Introductory Discourse,” 105.

⁵⁰ Baillie, “Introductory Discourse,” 92. Comp. *Oth.*, III.iii. 170.

ty is usually hidden from view. Walpole's Countess is shown gnawed by some obscure fiends concealed in her bosom, and it will be remembered that it was Walpole's express intention to postpone revelation as much as possible (p. 192). Baillie's own version of the explained supernatural has little to do with Radcliffe's model. In one of her most Gothic dramas, *Orra*, a play on the passion of fear, the supernatural is, as it were, pre-explained; Baillie favours the idea that more gripping than spectres is the spectacle of "agitation and wildness of terrour" put on by one who believes that she sees spectres. The title heroine loses her mind when she is about to be rescued from oppression by her lover, whom she takes for an actual ghost. Another example of such cruel irony is found in *The Dream*, where the hero, "a noble general" named Osterloo, dies of fear of dying just before the warrant for his acquittal arrives. The idea that the most wicked fiends reside within the human bosom⁵¹ and that it is the task of the theatre to allow them full manifestation is I think much closer to our views on the Shakespearean theatre than the ideas (on Shakespeare *and* theatre) of many Gothicists who dabbled in the supernatural, explained or not.

Before we examine the problems of the representation of the supernatural we need to return to the larger context of the theatre in the 1790s and examine specimens that were more typical of the Gothic mode than Baillie's plays. As in the case of fiction, even the most obvious evidence of Shakespearean appropriation found in Gothic drama is made complex by generic shifts, especially in view of what Jeffrey Cox describes as the revolutionary tendencies of Gothic playwrights, who, he argues, "tended to undermine traditional generic distinctions."

While Baillie's poetic programme of reviving serious tragedy aligns her with Walpole, the mainstream Gothic drama, represented chiefly by Matthew Lewis and James Boaden, exemplified, in David Worrall's phrase, the Gothic's "generic promiscuity."⁵² Concurring, and commenting on the practice of combining tragedy and comedy, Cox puts it vividly thus: "The Gothic drama, trailing its debts to the novel, to other literary forms, and to 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."⁵³ Symptomatically, Francis North's *The Ken-*

⁵¹ Janice Patten, who in her brief presentation concentrates on Baillie's "psychological preoccupations," puts this idea thus: "in a moment of keen dramatic awareness, they [Baillie's main protagonists] realize that they have become progressively deceived by their own mental fixations." Patten, "Joanna Baillie, *A Series of Plays*," 172.

⁵² Worrall, "Political Culture of Gothic Drama," 98.

⁵³ Cox, "English Gothic Theatre," 128; emphasis added.

tish Barons (1791) was advertised by a reviewer as “a drama of the most elevated species of opera.”⁵⁴ Cox’s remark, however, places excessive emphasis on precisely those elements of Gothic fiction which posed the greatest difficulty in the adaptation process, or in the transfer of fictional Gothicism to the stage.⁵⁵ Bertrand Evans notes the most significant shift of emphasis: “Gothic drama — even plays like those by Lewis, which contain an elaborate diablerie — is *thoroughly moral*; indeed, we shall see that the Gothic was virtually ‘converted into a school of virtue’ [...]”⁵⁶

And “school” is what Baillie calls theatre.⁵⁷ This is an extension of the way in which the Shakespearean drama also was perceived, judged, and, if necessary, corrected. As George Branam put it, “The major function of drama might be entertainment, but the theatre was also an ideal medium for vivid presentation of generally accepted concepts of right human behavior.”⁵⁸ Some excellent examples of such adjustments have to do with the cause of an infamous literary scandal, *The Monk* and its author. While Matthew Lewis was busy inventing plots fit for theatrical representation, James Boaden chose merely to adapt the most popular novels of the day.⁵⁹ Boaden’s adaptations openly reveal their credits: *Fontainville Forest* (Covent Garden, March 1794, published in the same year⁶⁰) is “founded on the Romance of the Forest” (in the Prologue, Boaden informs his audience that his play has been “caught from the Gothic treasures of Romance”) while the title of *The Italian Monk* (Theatre Royal, Haymarket,

⁵⁴ Quoted from the *Chronicle* in: Cox, ed., *Seven Gothic Dramas*, 86 (this anthology includes North’s play). “Most elevated” reads “British”; the native equivalent of the Italian variety offered mixture of song and spoken dialogue as well as a wide social spectrum. In *The Kentish Barons* some of the “operatic” pieces are sung by Gam, a notorious drunkard; this in no way compromises the play’s Gothicism; indeed, critics regard it as one of the most typical specimens of the Gothic mode in drama. No doubt it can be put alongside Henry Siddons’s operatic adaptation of *The Sicilian Romance* and Miles Peter Andrews’s “dramatic tale,” *The Mysteries of the Castle*. The former play features another drunkard, Gerbin, who, clad in armour, sets out after midnight to brave ghosts, clearly an indecorous takeoff on the ghost scene in *Hamlet*.

⁵⁵ On the growing popularity of theatrical adaptation comp. Allardyce Nicoll’s statement: “the whole field of fiction was eagerly and systematically sacked” by “hack” playwrights. Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of English Drama 1660—1900* (1955), quoted by Cox, *Reading Adaptations*, 1.

⁵⁶ Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 45; emphasis added.

⁵⁷ Baillie, “Introductory Discourse,” 104.

⁵⁸ Branam, *Eighteenth-Century Adaptations*, 67.

⁵⁹ A classic example of an original composition is Lewis’s debut, *The Castle Spectre*, which, it will be recalled, opened at Drury Lane in December 1797. For a discussion of its stage representation see Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 116 ff.

⁶⁰ After Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 240. The title page of the printed version does not name the date of first performance.

August 1797) craftily combines the titles of two famous romances while being actually “founded” upon Radcliffe’s *The Italian*. The title of *Aurelio and Miranda* (Drury Lane, December 1798), on the other hand, conceals its source narrative, *The Monk*; the list of characters makes it clear that Boaden decided to change the names of Lewis’s Ambrosio and Matilda, whom he has made the protagonists of his melodramatic version of *The Monk*, on which, as the Advertisement informs us, “the Play is avowedly founded.”⁶¹

What all these plays have in common is that they were composed for the purpose of successful stage representation. Furthermore, all of them, as distinct from Baillie’s dramas, are examples of “generic promiscuity.” *The Castle Spectre* may be indebted to *Hamlet* for a number of devices, yet Lewis does not aim at a consistent tragedy. The oscillation between tragedy and comedy, between high seriousness and farce (verging on self-parody) is further complicated by his desire to provide melodrama.⁶² Not only does he feel free to insert songs and lowly indecorous characters, but he eventually pardons Osmond, one of the vilest villains to appear on the London stages in the 1790s (see p. 264).

Villainy and the necessity of its containment, baffling for Gothic romancers, continued to trouble Gothic dramatists as well. Offering a litmus test for generic shifts, the varying treatment of villainy in Gothic drama manifests itself in a different approach to language. Aware of this, Baillie, it will be recalled, stresses the role of soliloquy. While in Gothic plays, and North’s *Mortimer* is here a case in point, the villain reveals his motivation in soliloquies and dialogue, his narrative counterpart is usually tight-lipped. Typically of Elizabethan villains, *Mortimer* informs us that for fifteen years revenge has lain “smothered in [his] bosom,” but that now “it wakes and blazes” forth (*KB*, I.iii/96). In Act III, Sc. i, he speaks of his genial spirits as “feed[ing] the heart” and turning into “gall,” which evokes associations with Lady Macbeth’s invocations to the ministers of evil. Boaden seems to have been similarly aware of the indispensable role of the soliloquy. In *The Italian Monk* his introduction of Schedoni is signific-

⁶¹ In another place Boaden is less polite and describes his play as being “drawn from the impure source of the novel entitled *The Monk*, by Mr. Lewis.” Boaden, *Memoirs of Siddons*, 425.

⁶² “Oscillation” perhaps best sums up Lewis’s career as dramatist; his *Alfonso, King of Castille* (Covent Garden, 1802) was a successful attempt at tragedy while his last play, *Timour the Tartar* (subtitled “A Grand Romantic Melo-Drama in Two Acts,” Covent Garden, 1811), provided impressive spectacle (featuring an equestrian procession and a pitched battle) to rival George Colman the Younger’s *The Quadrupeds of Quedlinburgh* (Haymarket, 1811); both are included in the Broadview anthology of romantic drama (see the editors’ introductions; especially p. 98).

antly different from the Radcliffean model of sustained obscurity. Already in the first scene of the play, Boaden gives him a revelatory soliloquy, which informs the audience both of his motivation — “a fierce flame of masterless ambition” — and of his scheme: the “exile or death” of Ellena (*IM*, I.i/6). In this way the playwright so to speak Shakespearises a narrative material that in its way is already implicitly Shakespearean.

Bertrand Evans advises a degree of caution, arguing that whatever the literary predecessor of the Gothic villain, Elizabethan, Miltonic or something else, “none of them were vital in the genesis of this special kind of villain.”⁶³ This reservation does not seem necessary, and, besides, Evans downplays the way in which Gothic dramatists drew on various sources. North’s Mortimer, as we have seen, is motivated by a desire for revenge and displays the expected urge to wade further and further into wickedness. In the words of the heroine, “Nature cou’d never form so harsh a fiend, / So barbarous and inhuman, whose delight, / Whose only pleasure centers in the pain / He can inflict on others” (*KB*, II.iii/117). These lines reveal a characteristic concentration on suspense, which in practical terms means that threats and suggestions of impending peril, regardless of the emphasis, count more than their execution. When Osmond in *The Castle Spectre* is trying to blackmail the heroine into marriage, he Lear-like fails to make his threats specific: “I offer you my hand: If you accept it [...] your days shall glide away in happiness and honour; but if you refuse and scorn my offer, force shall this instant —” (*CS*, II.i/171). And this vague coercion is repeated, futile as it is.

James Boaden’s adaptations exemplify the processes involved in the transference of the literary material of Gothic fiction onto the stage of the late eighteenth-century London theatre. *Fontainville Forest*, arguably the boldest of Boaden’s three adaptations of the great Gothic romances, puts an actual ghost on the stage, thereby “de-explaining” Radcliffe’s explained supernatural. We shall return to Boaden’s ghost in the next chapter, where we discuss the controversy over the supernatural on the stage. For its movement, the plot largely hangs upon the need to contain the villainy concentrated in the figure of the Marquis. Louis, the play’s hero and candidate for Adeline’s hand, pledges to devote his life to the disclosure of

⁶³ Writes Evans: “Of the Gothic villain it has been said that he descended from the machinating villain of Elizabethan drama; that he was derived from the wicked uncle of the folk tale; that he was a reincarnation of Milton’s Satan. Such statements suggest ancient and glorious ancestors for the figure who was ultimately to become the Byronic hero and to serve Scott and the Brontës, among others, and that there may be truth in them it is unnecessary to deny. Iago, the wicked uncle, and Satan doubtless lent qualities when it served the Gothicists’ interests to borrow; but none of them were vital in the genesis of this special kind of villain” (*Gothic Drama*, 9).

the villain's crimes. Only this will "appease a murder'd brother's shade" (*FF*, V.ii/64). For the motif of fratricide Boaden is of course indebted to his source narrative, and thus indirectly to *Hamlet*,⁶⁴ as this distant echo testifies: Nemours, representative of the law, comes to make reckoning with the Marquis for the latter's "most unnatural murder" (*FF*, V.ii/65; comp. *H*, I.v. 25). In this way, the ultimate scene brings the long-expected disclosure of the villain's wickedness by confronting him with a living witness, Laval. Having been thus unmasked, the Marquis makes the only kind of exit that "does not degrade ambition" (*FF*, V.ii/66): "desperate to the last," he "*stabs himself and falls.*" All that remains is to restore to the heroine her "lineal rights," which allows her finally to give her hand to Louis in, as she puts it, "gratitude at once for life and love" (*FF*, V.ii/67). Before the fall of the curtain Adeline (Boaden) makes sure that the moral lesson is well understood:

Adeline. The great Avenger of perverted nature
 Before us has display'd a solemn lesson,
 How he dispels the cloud of mystery,
 With which the sinful man surrounds his crimes;
 It calls us to adore in awful wonder,
 And recommend ourselves by humble virtue.

FF, V.ii. 68

So much for Gothic excess and transgression. Whatever demons of "perverted nature" Boaden may have unleashed, the purpose is thoroughly wholesome once the stage has been turned into a lay pulpit. Through Adeline, Boaden also alludes to "the cloud of mystery," thus revealing the chief engine of the plot. All this is typical, as is the idea of the self-punished villain. Shakespeare's Claudius, not to mention Macbeth, "bears it out" to the final thrust of the avenger's sword. His Gothic counterpart, however, finds a way to bow out without causing much trouble to those who are to stay on.

Let us mention at this point, before we move on to Boaden's final attempts at adaptation, that this idea of self-administered retribution found one of its finest realisations in Jephson's *The Count of Narbonne*, where the resolution of *Otranto* is rendered "more tragic" by making the Count take his own life in remittance for the life of his daughter. His killing of Adelaide may seem strangely lacking in convincing motivation, and yet

⁶⁴ For an example of Boaden's mediated debt to Shakespeare compare the scene of Adeline's discovery of the rusty dagger as evidence that "murder has been busy." The association with *Hamlet* is suggested by Adeline's exclamation "Prophetic soul!" (*FF*, II.v/25).

the logic of the plot requires some form of human sacrifice to appease the ghosts of the forefathers. To render the offstage murder properly horrifying, Shakespeare is spectrally present throughout, as are the relics of the untimely departed grandsire. At the moment of the murder the officers on stage startle at shrieks and rolling thunder. “The deed is done,” says Narbonne as he enters, a bloody dagger in hand, not knowing yet the meaning of his act. Eventually, he makes the self-inflicted exit that becomes a tragic villain: “But hateful to myself [...] / By heaven abandon’d, and the plague of earth, / This, this remains, and all are satisfied. [*Snatches up the dagger, and stabs himself. Dies.*” (CN, V.xv/57). This type of closure, however, was not the rule. A reformed villain was thought to please more than a dead one.

In *The Italian Monk* Boaden handles the fictional material more cautiously, and yet has decided to represent those few traces of the marvellous that the novel offered and which are concentrated in the “monkish” element of superstition and oppression; i.e., he uses Radcliffe’s mysterious monk as a source of suspenseful supernaturalism. His entrances and exits correspond closely to those in the novel, the effect enhanced by the well-established convention of the superstitious servant (Paullo for Radcliffe’s Paulo). Verbal echoes abound.⁶⁵ Radcliffe’s supervillain, Schedoni, needed to be retained, and yet for the sake of a “sentimental” reconciliation, Boaden has him mend his evil ways halfway through the play. Not only does Schedoni abjure his wickedness but he eventually decides to help Ellena (Schedoni’s *daughter* in Boaden) to win her paramour, Vivaldi (*IM*, II.vi/55).

On the way to the startling *anagnorisis* and father-daughter reconciliation at the end of the second act, Boaden builds up an atmosphere of terror along the lines of the pre-assassination scenes in *Macbeth*. The elaborate build-up features not only Schedoni’s soliloquy but a chorus sung by carousing assassins and is rounded off by the superstitious fears that prevent one of them, Spalatro, from doing the deed. “Hark,” says the Chorus, “the night crow shrieks for food! / Wolves are howling in the wood” (*IM*, II.v/47). All the basic verbal ingredients of the couplets, “hark,” “crow,” “shriek,” “wolf,” and “howl,” are found in *Macbeth*,⁶⁶ as is the idea of the

⁶⁵ Compare, for instance, the scene laid in the dungeons of the Inquisition where Vivaldi is visited by a mysterious monk. Boaden paraphrases Radcliffe’s “To-morrow night you will meet me in the chambers of death!” (*I*, III.v/323) as “Yet we shall meet, and in the hall of death” (*IM*, III.ii/61). For a close analysis of Boaden’s borrowings see my forthcoming article: “Recycling the Spectre: James Boaden’s Stage Adaptations of the Gothic Romance and the Spectres of Literary Appropriation.”

⁶⁶ “Sea” and “fretful wind” are not; though the word “sea” does appear in this scene in *Macbeth*, in Boaden it is part of the verbally sketched setting.

villain being “heralded” by murder on his way to the chamber of the victim. The difference is that Macbeth is “marshalled” (instead of “heralded”) to the king’s chamber by the imaginary dagger, which is another illustration of Boaden’s methodical use of paraphrase. While Macbeth invokes the earth for fear that the “very stones [will] prate of [his] whereabouts” (*Mcb.*, II.i. 58), Boaden’s Schedoni braves it out, and yet starts at the thought of discovery:

There are, who, wandering at this lonely hour,
 With murder for the herald of their way,
 Would dream that every gust of fretful wind
 Rebuk’d their purpose, and the soaring sea
 In solemn sentences condemned the deed.
 Ev’n I, whose reason mocks such childish thoughts,
 Feel unaccustom’d dread palsy my progress.
 In this rude solitude I turn and start,
 As though my path were planted with observers.
 Spalatro!

IM, II.v/47

The passage (quoted here in its entirety) is a succinct summary of Macbeth’s speech, replete with verbal parallels, and one of its functions is apparently to awaken in the audience associations with the poetically much more elaborate Shakespearean model. Given the fact that Spalatro is supposed to have already done the deed, Schedoni’s exclamation (a parallel to Lady Macbeth’s “My husband!”; *Mcb.* II.ii. 13) aligns him, surprisingly, with Lady Macbeth, which is not entirely illogical as Schedoni acts here as accessory to Vivaldi’s evil mother. It turns out that Spalatro has not been able to “perform the deed” (*IM*, II.v/49), restrained — in a mock version of the post-assassination exchange between Lady Macbeth and her husband — by superstitious fears. More echoes follow: Spalatro wishes to “sleep o’ nights” and, handing Schedoni the unstained dagger, is happy that “[his] hand is white again.”⁶⁷ The Lady Macbeth-Schedoni parallel is further sustained by the cause of the recognition and simultaneously the reason for Schedoni’s “*drawing back in an Agony of Horror*” (*IM*, II.vi/51) when on the point of plunging the dagger into Ellena’s bosom. While Lady Macbeth was prevented from murdering Duncan by the latter’s resemblance to “[her] father as he slept” (*Mcb.*, II.ii. 12), Schedoni’s hand falters at the sight of his own likeness in the picture worn by Ellena.

⁶⁷ The parallels are obvious: the post-assassination exchange relies for its horrors on the blood-stained hands, as does the sleepwalking scene in Act V. Moreover, Lady Macbeth, on returning from the bloody chamber, pours scorn on Macbeth for his “white heart” in contrast to her “incarnadined” hands (*Mcb.*, II.ii. 64).

On the way to perfect reconciliation, Schedoni needs to be exonerated of his past crime of passion, the killing of his wife Olivia in a jealous rage, some fourteen years before the portrayed present. For this part of the plot, Boaden draws on the closest parallel in Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*. The unveiling of Olivia in the last scene of *The Italian Monk* may be only a pale reflection of the elaborate semi-resurrection of Hermione in V.iii of Shakespeare's romance, but the parallels between the characters (Leontes-Schedoni, Hermione-Olivia, Perdita-Ellena) are striking. The overall romantic tone of the closure is equally obvious. The transformation of Schedoni from a Macbeth into a repentant Leontes reaches completion in his espousal of ambitionless but contented futurity: "Our remains of life / Shall yet be sooth'd by harmony and peace. / Let all who hear me fling away ambition [...]" (*IM*, III.vi/77).

Boaden himself was slow to cast away his ambitions. *Aurelio and Miranda*, his five-act adaptation of *The Monk*, is another example of moral and generic accommodation. As before, we see Boaden hand-picking episodes of some dramatic potential, such as that of the intercepted letter: Raymond planting a letter which was intended for Agnes and which contains the elopement plan, Aurelio intercepting it, and delivering Agnes into the clutches of the Prioress. Once more we find in the early scenes ample evidence of the second-hand, parasitical status of the play in the number of verbal echoes and even direct borrowings. Subsequently, though, faithfulness to the source narrative decreases rapidly with the unfolding of the plot until, finally, Boaden stages a dénouement which all but annuls the theme of the novel. The ambiguity of the project is suggested by his choice of title characters. Aurelio and Miranda are distant counterparts of Ambrosio and Matilda, respectively, while Lewis's other characters, if at all, appear in nearly unchanged roles, especially Antonia and Agnes, the latter being the sole victim of monastic cruelty. The play successfully intertwines episodes of the two major plots of *The Monk*, which Boaden must have regarded as one of his drama's merits. He confessed to "the utter failure of the fourth and fifth acts" while claiming "the three first being rather powerful in the interest."⁶⁸ In a succession of scenes, which alternate with those that belong to the Agnes plot, Boaden stages first the exposure of Eugenio (Boaden's counterpart of Rosario) as Miranda and then Aurelio's gradual succumbing to fleshly desires. Despite the verbal parallels, the playwright treads more and more cautiously and, while in Lewis the process ends in an inordinate gratification of carnal passion, performs an about-face by transforming his Miranda into a paragon of maidenly

⁶⁸ Boaden, *Memoirs of Siddons*, 425.

virtue, an anticlimax which met with predictable dissatisfaction from audiences, including Lewis.

And little wonder. After all, in this adaptation the defining elements of the “horror Gothic” mode have largely been dispensed with and, where retained as verbal suggestions, turned into assertions of enlightened Protestantism. The play diffidently gestures towards the original “horrors,” which remain unrealised or at best transferred to the diegetic (as opposed to what is actually represented) domain of the portrayed world. In Act IV, for instance, Raymond describes a dream (a frequently used distancing device) in which he descends a subterranean passage into a sepulchre to find Agnes dead. Suddenly this nightmare turns into a blissful vision of a resurrection, as Agnes and her son rise from the tomb. In other words, the horror or suggestions thereof are contained by means of a narrated “dream vision,” and eventually transformed into hope-inspiring images and elevating sentiments.

Boaden’s Aurelio is saddled with an ambiguity which does not trouble his prototypes in either Lewis or Shakespeare. Aurelio is clearly a victim of monastic oppression, which turns his liberation into an assertion of Protestantism. Sensual love gives him new life: “I am new created. — / The fetters of monastic apathy / Are burst and shiver’d by resistless nature; [...]” (*AM*, IV.ii/34). Soon, upon discovering his birth, he finds himself “absolved from [his] vows” (*AM*, IV.iv/57). Boaden makes him once more his mouthpiece when, haunted by uneasy conscience, Aurelio rescues Agnes, to whom the Prioress has just brought poison: “Merciless! horrible! Religion thus / Loses its sacred character and office; [...]” (*AM*, V.iii/63). In this way, a would-be scene of tragic catastrophe is turned into a celebration of amiable sentiments, domestic and otherwise.

There are many would-be’s compounded here: Aurelio, the would-be seducer, has his vows of love received by Miranda, his would-be debauchee. Miranda casts away “reserve, and maidenly resentment” in recognition of his reform but also as an act of recompense for the preservation of the would-be victim of monastic oppression, Agnes. Recognised as his long-lost sister, Agnes kneels before Aurelio, upon which Aurelio declares that his happiness “is more than [he] can bear.” The audience must have felt similarly. Boaden has rewritten the plot of the novel so as to convey “his own” values, very different from those of Lewis: a vindication of propriety and a praise of “just indulgence” of “our passions.”⁶⁹ The main theme of

⁶⁹ Speaking of Boaden’s “own values” does not do full justice to the type of ideology which seems to underpin this visible shift away from tragedy and towards melodrama. For an interesting analysis which ties the rise of melodrama to the process of self-legitimisation of the bourgeoisie in the second half of the eighteenth century see Lo-

The Monk, i.e. the moral corruption of Ambrosio, his fall from sainthood into demoniacal sinfulness, is here merely hinted at as a remote possibility but never realised, let alone represented. Miranda is simultaneously an object of Aurelio's "passion" and an instrument of his moral correction, his "monitress" (*AM*, V.iii/66),⁷⁰ as he puts it in the final speech of the drama. In reply to his source narrative Boaden's mouthpiece, the reformed voluptuary Aurelio, instructs the audience on the proper management of desire: "Our passions are the fairest gifts of Heav'n! / Their just indulgence is our proper joy: / 'Tis their perversion only makes us wretched" (*AM*, V.iii/66).

Aurelio and Miranda appeared a whole year after *The Castle Spectre* and the idea for an elaborate recognition and reconciliation Boaden may have borrowed from Lewis's successful play. The substantial difference is that Lewis's reconciliation scene features an avenging spectre, which of course makes it "more Gothic." However, in *The Castle Spectre* it is only in the last act that we find out the most significant facts, according to a pattern that Walpole pioneered in *The Castle of Otranto* and *The Mysterious Mother*. As we have seen when analysing the generic features and devices of Gothic fiction, Walpole's inauguration of the novel mode in drama meant introducing a new, non-Elizabethan, past-oriented plot movement:

The movement of *The Mysterious Mother* is not, like that of Elizabethan tragedy, a forward movement. It is a movement backward in time, since the whole problem is to find the truth of a past event. Though later Gothic playwrights conducted forward action, we are repeatedly reminded [...] that the real center of interest lies behind, not ahead.⁷¹

In *The Castle Spectre*, Osmond's supposed fratricide is revealed to his victim's daughter; yet after the staple scenes of coercion, imprisonment, escape, and pursuit, the persecuted female discovers her father still alive in the dungeon of the castle where he has been confined for sixteen years.

The generic difference between the Elizabethan tragedy and Gothic drama does not, however, come down exclusively to a different handling of the past. Obviously, the reliance of Gothic playwrights on the device of

thar 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 Cultural Emergence of a Genre* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 85 ff.

⁷⁰ Coleridge uses this word for a personalised Conscience ("our inward monitress") at the end of his *Remorse*; see *Remorse*, V.i/402. There is a similar reference to conscience in Ireland's *The Abbess*, where it is described as "unerring monitor" (II/iii/60). See also *CasWol*, I/89.

⁷¹ Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 39.

past-oriented suspense manifests their debt to the Radcliffian mode of romance. The dénouement in *The Castle Spectre* can thus trace its pedigree through the resolution of the Agnes story in *The Monk* and back to its source in *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. At the same time, *The Castle Spectre* betrays Gothic drama's generic ambivalence. Upon the spectre's intervention, Angela does raise the sword which Osmond has dropped in terror and stabs the villain. But even then Osmond's fate is not sealed. He is conveyed away to die, but his brother, Reginald, hastens after him "to soften with forgiveness the pangs of death" (CS, V.iii/219). The ambiguity stated crudely at the end of *Vortigern* — "We kill indeed, yet still 'tis comedy" — comes to mind, as do the parallels with Jephson's *Narbonne* and Boaden's *Fontainville Forest*, after which, as we have seen, Boaden decided to opt for more consistently romance-comedic resolutions⁷² and Baillie for equally consistent execution of undiluted tragedy in the Elizabethan mode.

In his attempts to adapt the popular romances for the stage, Boaden found himself negotiating very different and to a large extent incompatible options. In adapting Radcliffe, he faced an artistic problem; in adapting Lewis, a moral one. Radcliffe's Gothic, impeccable in the principles it preaches, may be ideally tailored for solitary perusal and aesthetically resistant if not inimical to theatrical adaptation because its "beauties" are dissipated in the compressed treatment that drama requires. Lewis's Gothic, on the other hand, is spectacular but both morally and politically objectionable and therefore unfit for public representation in the theatre. Boaden therefore seeks to out-Gothicise Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest* as well as to domesticate and nationalise the German influences in *The Monk* by way of cutting out the supernatural.

Despite the difficulties Boaden still thought it worthwhile to renew attempts to please the public. From his point of view, apparently, the stage is a platform, not for the final demise of the Gothic, but for a reconciliation, for adoption and adaptation in a socio-political sense, that of the containment of an unruly mode of fiction, of making it acceptable and — to some extent at least — respectable. Still, his methods of literary recycling are open to severe criticism. Not only does he parasitically exploit the verbal texture of his source narratives and capitalise on their popularity, but he also caters to the public taste in a manner which, one might say, shows him capable of hunting artistic bargains in order to attain both popular success and critical acclaim while remaining inoffensive.

⁷² Compare Steven Cohan's remark: "Plot in Gothic drama [...] was more attuned to a comic assimilation of the romantic leads by society, along with the social expulsion of the villain if he could not be reformed or reintegrated" ("Introduction," in: *Plays of Boaden*, lvi.). Shakespearean resolutions in comedies and romances also oscillate between expulsion, reintegration, and self-reformation.

Staging the supernatural

Madam I die, if I give up the ghost.

Epilogue to *Fontainville Forest*

If in Gothic drama we find manifestations of the cultural struggle over legitimacy then the treatment of the defining element of the supernatural provides an excellent example. Miles Peter Andrews, whom Bartrand Evans calls “unquestionably one of the worst playwrights of any period,” stated in the preface to his play, *The Castle of Wonders* (1786, also known as *The Enchanted Castle*), that the appearance of the Ghost in *Hamlet* and that of the witches in *Macbeth*, “though out of nature, was simple and not combined. The clank of chains, the whistling of hollow winds, the clapping of door, gigantic forms, and visionary gleams of light attended not their effects upon the stage.”¹ In his comment upon this observation, Evans says that “the Gothic play was a unique dramatic kind, distinct even from those Elizabethan tragedies in which the supernatural plays a conspicuous role.”² He suggests that even though Elizabethan playwrights put ghosts on the stage for “an effect,” their goals differed substantially from those pursued by their Gothic imitators. This is certainly true of *The Castle Spectre* with Lewis’s elaborate quasi-religious celebration of the supernatural, and yet we ought to avoid oversimplifications. Spectres in Gothic drama came in different varieties and, furthermore, due to the frequently voiced objections to the representation of the supernatural, Gothic playwrights found a way of staging ghost substitutes as well as using distancing devices, both similar to the explained supernatural in fiction. In this, the Shakespearean legacy played a substantial though ambiguous part.

¹ “Preface” quoted in Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 67.

² Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 68.

By the end of the 1790s, writes Michael Gamer, supernatural representations had become “both synecdoche and last straw: synecdoche in that ghosts onstage became for reviewers symbolic of everything wrong with British drama; last straw in their status as brazen affront to the stage’s perceived intellectual, artistic, and moral foundations.”³ Typical in this respect is the review of Harriet Lee’s *The Mysterious Marriage* published in the *Analytical Review* in 1798. The reviewer assumes the role of spokesman for the public good (“we are sorry,” “our theatres”) and defender of tradition, with the predictable instancing of Shakespeare:

We are really sorry, that any merit should be claimed for perverting the simplicity of the drama by the introduction of visionary and phantastic beings: supernatural agency is the taste of a barbarous age, and ought to be banished from our theatres at once. Miss Lee will hardly plead a precedent in Shakspeare or Ben Jonson; her own good sense, surely, will suggest the impropriety of an attempt to revive the exploded superstitions of a former age, and the impossibility that the same effect should be produced by a representation of them now, which attended them at the time when Shakspeare and Ben Jonson lived. No, no; let ghosts and hobgoblins people the pages of a romance, but never let their forms be seen to glide across the stage.⁴

But Shakespeare himself is evidently something of an embarrassment, his ghosts a troublesome relic of “a former age,” superstitious and barbarous. Kemble’s decision to leave out of his *Macbeth* the mute ghost of Banquo was made in compliance with “his own good sense.”⁵

But good sense was not necessarily what audiences wanted. Kemble soon found himself compelled to restore the ghost to the stage. Lewis, nothing loath to admit that his sense may be quite corrupt, was determined not to give up on the spectre despite admonitions and warnings: “I confess I cannot see any reason why Apparitions may not be as well permitted to stalk in a tragedy, as Fairies be suffered to fly in a pantomime.”⁶

³ Gamer, *Romanticism and Gothic*, 132. Similarly Paul Ranger: “Georgian audiences were doubtful about the propriety of the appearance of specters” (*Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 75).

⁴ Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 197. For a similar censure of Boaden’s *Fontainville Forest* see Robert P. Reno, “James Boaden’s *Fontainville Forest* and Matthew Lewis’s *The Castle Spectre*: Challenges of the Supernatural Ghost on the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage,” *Eighteenth-Century Life* 9/1 (1984), 100.

⁵ Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and Players*, 133.

⁶ Matthew Gregory Lewis, “Postscript to *The Castle Spectre*,” in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 198. Lewis’s continued experimentation with the supernatural involved a representation of the Ghost of the Bleeding Nun; see Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 76. In “Postscript” to *Adelmorn* (1801), Lewis speaks in a similar

We actually find playwrights quarrelling over precedence. In his Preface to *Cambro-Britons* (1798), which sports a female ghost not unlike that in Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (staged 1797, published 1798), Boaden claims precedence over Lewis:

By the introduction of a supernatural agent, I may be by some deemed the plagiarist of the CASTLE SPECTRE; and by others censured for complying with the public in the *rank garb*. As to the first, it is an affair of *chronology*; if there be any imitation (which I neither suppose nor charge), they who remember my play of Fontainville Forest [CG, 1794], will imagine Mr. LEWIS conceived his phantom from mine. (Boaden's emphasis)⁷

Harriet Lee, in her Advertisement prefixed to *The Mysterious Marriage* (published 1798), takes up the gauntlet:

[...] as the theatre will soon probably become "a land of apparitions," she [the author] hastens to put in her claim to originality of idea, though the charm of novelty may be lost. The female spectre *she* has conjured up, was undoubtedly the offspring of her own imagination; yet by the ill-fortune of keeping the play considerably less than "nine years," she is now obliged to produce it to a disadvantage, or expose herself to the charge of being a servile imitator.⁸

Here, as with Boaden, the target is Lewis and his play, and the motive may be a professional grudge. Lee's remark makes it clear that the supernatural of one's own devising supports one's claim to originality; Boaden's, that a deviser of spectres runs the risk of being accused of an attempt to comply with the corrupt taste of the public. Anticipating such charges Boaden explains, while admitting to his "repetition of the offence," that he

tone of stage representations of the supernatural: "it is still in my power to deluge this town with such an inundation of Ghosts and Magicians, as would satisfy the thirst of the most insatiable swallower of wonders. Whether I shall exercise this power in future, I am not decided; but nothing tempts me to it more than the splenetic and ludicrous indignation, so ill suited to a subject so trifling, which my productions have excited in many persons" (*AO*, ix—x).

⁷ The phrase "rank garb" has been borrowed from *Othello* (II.ii. 301). According to M.R. Ridley's explanation in the Arden edition of the play, "rank" means "coarsely over-luxuriant" and "garb" is a "fashion of speech."

⁸ In: *Sisters of Gore*, 71—72 (Lee's emphasis). The collection's editor, John Franceschina, credits Harriet Lee with the composition of "the first play by a woman to employ the device of the ghost heroine in a melodrama" (*ibidem*, 68). In both *The Mysterious Marriage* and *The Castle Spectre* there is a character named Osmond; in the latter play Osmond is a main figure, *the* villain.

has “taken care to produce a sufficient *cause* for an event, which no effort of reason has yet shown to be impossible” (Boaden’s emphasis). The language employed here reveals the pitfalls and challenges that Gothic playwrights had to negotiate: originality pitted against plagiarism and public taste against critical censure. But as Gamer urges, the wholesomeness of the English stage was also at stake, which explains Boaden’s decision to keep Lewis’s imported supernaturalism out of his adaptation of *The Monk* and yet to repeat and *refine* the offence from *Fontainville Forest* by introducing, in his *Cambro-Britons*, a spectre of British extraction. This, surprisingly, aligns Boaden with Baillie. For Baillie, argues Gamer, “part of the challenge [...] is one of redefining popular Gothic conventions like the supernatural onstage *as* legitimate because Shakespearean.”⁹

We certainly see Baillie doing just that when, in two footnotes to her *Ethwald* she justifies her sparing use of the supernatural: “It is natural to suppose that the diviners or fortune-tellers of this period should, in their superstitions and pretensions, very much resemble the ancient Druidesses who were so much revered amongst the Britons as oracles and prophetesses, and that they should, amongst the vulgar, still retain the name of their great predecessors” (*Ethwald*, Part 1, IV.i/153). This is said in preparation for a scene in which her title villain-hero descends into an equivalent of the Witches’ den in *Macbeth*. The purpose is the same as *Macbeth*’s, which, *Ethwald* being a play on the passion of ambition, further strengthens the similarity between Baillie’s title protagonist and his model, *Macbeth*. Baillie, however, consistently ennobles the Shakespearean pattern; instead of witches (so offensive in many productions of *Macbeth*) we have “three Mystic Sisters,” the chief of whom is “the female high Arch Druid.” And yet a Shakespearean legitimisation is apparently also required for the fortune-telling. In another footnote Baillie admits to the Shakespearean inspiration: “I will not take upon me to say that, if I had never read Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, I should have thought of bringing *Ethwald* into a cavern under ground to inquire his destiny, though I believe this desire to look into futurity (particularly in a superstitious age) is a very constant attendant on ambition; but I hope the reader will not find in the above scene any offensive use made of the works of that great master” (*Ethwald*, Part 1, IV.iii/154–155).

Why this wrangling and fuss despite belligerent and growing disapproval? For one thing, a ghost supplies, as we shall see in detail presently, a sublime gratification of the expectation of “terror and pity” on which the Gothic genre is predicated. We might here repeat Joseph Addison’s witty remark (already quoted, p. 100) that a spectre has often saved a play.

⁹ Gamer, *Romanticism and Gothic*, 135; original emphasis retained.

In his reminiscences, Boaden makes it quite clear that Lewis owed his success to the skilful handling of the ghost element, even before the raising of the curtain: "The secret of this spectre was extremely well kept; the bill of the day gave not a glimpse of light beyond the mere title; and the actors in the piece answered to all kind enquirers as to who the spectre was, or by whom represented 'You'll see.'"¹⁰ (Possibly motivated by professional envy, Boaden calls *The Castle Spectre* "a piece really of one scene, but that so astonishingly beautiful.") At the same time dramatists understood or came to understand that representations of the supernatural were not easily tolerated in an age in which, as Lewis himself states, "the belief in Ghosts no longer exists!"¹¹ Caught in this conflict between artistic effect and moral propriety, Lewis makes an attempt to vindicate the former: "there is now no fear of increasing the influence of superstition, or strengthening the prejudices of the weak-minded." Boaden, on the other hand, became more and more cautious, which caused him to do "without supernatural agency" in *Aurelio and Miranda*, his last adaptation of a Gothic romance. This hesitation over the perceived impropriety of spectres gliding across the stage ought not to blind us to the fact that in theatre as in fiction the supernatural, actual, perceived or pretended, is an indispensable element of the Gothic formula, which leaves the playwright with these two basic alternatives: either openly to stage the supernatural and offer a conceptual justification of some sort (such as Lewis's) or to allow the ghost to sneak in through the back door.

Shakespeare as a legitimising authority is summoned by Boaden as early as *Fontainville Forest*. Boaden's Epilogue to the play, intended to be declaimed by Mrs. Pope (the actress playing the heroine, Adeline), was written as a conversation between the "vent'rous bard" (Boaden) and the heroine/actress.¹² The ghost evidently needs justification. This is how the problem facing the playwright is formulated:

Think you, our friends, one modern ghost will see,
Unless, indeed, of Hamlet's pedigree:
Know you not, Shakespeare's petrifying pow'r
Commands alone the horror-giving hour?

This is first answered by the playwright's eulogy to Shakespeare, "the brightest spirit above." When the actress presses further, quoting *Hamlet*,

¹⁰ Boaden, *Life of Jordan*, vol. 1, 347.

¹¹ Lewis, "Postscript to *The Castle Spectre*," in: Clery and Miles, eds., *Gothic Documents*, 198.

¹² For another case of intended confusion of the leading actress with her part, see Epilogue (spoken by Mrs. Jordan) to *The Castle Spectre*.

You mean to sanction then your own pale sprite,
By his "that did usurp this time of night: [...]"

Boaden answers with another quibble:

"Why should your terror lay my proudest boast,"
"Madam I die, if I give up the ghost."

Shakespeare is indeed, to repeat after Jeffrey Kahan, the phantom of the playhouse; his ghosts chase all other spectres off the stage. Also Boaden's sprite is "pale" in more than one sense, the intended *double entendre* suggesting that imitations pale in comparison with Shakespeare's authentic ghosts.

Horatio's words to the Ghost about usurping "this time of night" (compare *H*, I.i. 49) have in this epilogue, too, acquired another meaning. What in Shakespeare bears a potentially offensive political insinuation, in Boaden has turned into a suggestion that Shakespeare's spectres have been usurping the English stages. This imposed on any playwright who might attempt to put a ghost on the stage the task of legitimisation.

In transferring the diegetic material of the source narrative into theatrical mimesis, Boaden faced the extra challenge of handling a double narrative since, it will be recalled, Radcliffe's narrative proper has embedded within it the manuscript that Adeline peruses and to the content of which she responds. *The Romance of the Forest* narrates the reading of a story of mystery and terror, while Boaden in his adaptation stages that reading. On the one hand, Boaden was not going to give up on the novel's most titillating episode; on the other, he faced a double risk, because staging the MS.-reading episode meant stripping the act of perusal of its atmosphere of intimacy, essential to the closet consumption of Gothic fiction.¹³ The overall claustrophobic aura of the episode, involving Adeline's prophetic dreams, would also be compromised.¹⁴ Furthermore, what in Radcliffe

¹³ Boaden stresses this distinction when, in a note prefixed to the published version of *Fontainville Forest*, he explains: "It was not from a vain tenaciousness that I determined to retain passages expunged in the performance," and adds that "[t]he Stage and the Closet are very different mediums for our observance of effect" (*FF*, page not numbered). This might also explain his decision to imitate Radcliffe and embellish the title page with a two-line epigraph from *Macbeth* ("It will have blood: they say, blood will have blood. / Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak."). Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* as represented on the stage was also "considerably shorter" than the published version due to the editing out of soliloquies and dialogue (Peck, *Life of Lewis*, 75). Evidently songs were more easily tolerated than the spoken word.

¹⁴ While Radcliffe's Adeline's prophetic dreams (discussed on pp. 133 and 219) precede her perusal of the manuscript, in *Fontainville Forest* this is reversed. At the end

is merely a suggestion (a “hint”) of a supernatural occurrence was by the nature of the theatrical medium compelled to assume actual existence.

The MS.-episode in *Fontainville Forest* comes in the final scene of Act III. Boaden is untiring in his method of paraphrase,¹⁵ which need not concern us here. Before she stumbles upon the dagger, Adeline speaks the following lines:

[...] but asleep, or waking, still
 Conviction haunts me, that some mystery
 Is wrapped within these chambers, which my fate
 Will have me penetrate.

FF, II.iv/24

which corresponds closely to Adeline’s solitary musings in the novel as she decides to peep into the uninviting interior of the chamber. Unsurprisingly, Boaden compresses the contents of the MS. His Adeline does read out the text; but in the play the manuscript is not only shorter but moreover reveals more about the identity of its author: “The wretched Philip, Marquis of Montault, / Bequeaths his sorrows to avenging time” (*FF*, III.iv/38).¹⁶ We at once find out about the fratricide: “Yet, O my brother, I had never wrong’d you” (*FF*, III.iv/39). In contrast to this, Radcliffe, faithful to her method of postponed revelation, reveals these basic facts only towards the close of her narrative.

No less than three times in this relatively brief scene the ghost interrupts Adeline’s perusal of the manuscript. The rationale may be simply that since Boaden has already run the risk of censure, why should he not use the spectre to as much advantage as possible? Be that as it may, the supernatural is given much histrionic celebration. The ghost’s presence becomes gradually manifest. At first (according to stage directions in the printed version of the play) a voice is “*heard within the chamber,*” then the ghost becomes “*faintly visible,*” and eventually comes into full view: “*The phantom here glides across the dark part of the Chamber, Adeline shrieks, and falls back. The Scene closes upon her*” (end of Act III.iv/39–40).

The process of reading as depicted in the novel is a personal affair and the emphasis falls on the effect that the content of the MS. has on Adeline’s imagination. Besides, Radcliffe’s aim was to create a situation fraught with ambiguity: neither Adeline nor the reader can be sure whether the

of Act II (II.ii), Boaden’s Adeline finds the rusty dagger and the “scroll,” and then in III.i reveals the content of her dreams to Madame Lamotte (Radcliffe’s La Motte).

¹⁵ At the same time, Boaden is determined to avoid direct borrowings from Radcliffe’s narrative. See Mydla, “Recycling the Spectre.”

¹⁶ Perhaps unintentionally, Boaden has confused the names of the two brothers (Philip and Henry); in Radcliffe, Phillip de Montalt is the villain and fratricide.

ghost is not a figment of her heated imagination. When she hears a “hollow sigh” and then *thinks* she sees “a figure, whose exact form she [cannot] distinguish,” “pass along an obscure part of the chamber” (*RF*, II/ix/134), the narrator informs us that her imagination has “refused any longer the controul of reason.” This kind of uncertainty was unattainable on the stage,¹⁷ but neither was Boaden interested in sustaining ambiguity. In staging *his* ghost, he aimed at two closely related goals: ensuring the visual (stagey) “attractiveness” of the supernatural occurrence and simultaneously having an eye on the couching of it in the Shakespearean tradition. Inspiration came from Henry Fuseli’s *Hamlet and the Ghost*. The actor John Follet, known for clownish roles (which made it necessary to conceal his name)¹⁸ but chosen here for his tall and sweeping figure, was clad, not “in close-fitting armor,” as Gamer represents it, but in “a dark blue grey stuff, made in the shape of armour,” and made “faintly visible behind the gauze or crape spread before the scene.”¹⁹ The hollow voice of another actor came from the wings. Success was to be expected. Writes Gamer, “Follet’s gigantic steps, and skill in pantomime, had made the scene popular with audiences.”²⁰ Boaden expressed satisfaction, not only with the repeated plaudits but with his considerable author’s receipts as well. His remarks suggest that his goal was “sacred horror,” and he regarded *his* Adeline’s reaction as a legitimate parallel to Radcliffe’s depiction of the reading of Gothic fiction in the MS. episode.

This particular ghost may be quasi-Shakespearean and quite legitimate, and yet its function is, at the end of the day, distinctly non-Shakespearean. Old Hamlet’s ghost comes to bind his son to a task of vengeance, something that a Gothic heroine such as Adeline was not up to. For Adeline no such injunction is intended; nor is she able to receive one: she “*shrieks, and falls back.*” So what is the ghost there for after all? The answer comes, if at all, in the opening of the next act. Amidst “*violent Thun-*

¹⁷ The problem raised by Banquo’s ghost returns. This is how Boaden approached it in his *Life of Jordan*: “If the answer be, that preternatural power alarms the imagination here, it may as well amaze the faculty of eyes and ears; but the spectators have no means but sight, of judging what is fancied by the starting murderer” (260). In other words, if there is a ghost on the stage, it claims “absolute visible appearance” (*ibidem*).

¹⁸ See Reno, “Boaden’s *Fontainville Forest* and Lewis’s *The Castle Spectre*,” 98 ff. Reno chooses not to examine the actual texts of the plays he writes about.

¹⁹ Boaden, *Life of Kemble*, vol. 2, 119. The purpose behind the screen of “blueish-grey gauze” was to “remove the too corporeal effect of a ‘live actor,’” and to “convert the moving substance into a gliding essence” (*ibidem*, 117). The gauze was an alternative to the trapdoor. See also p. 98.

²⁰ Gamer, *Romanticism and Gothic*, 131. For a reconstruction of this representation of the ghost see Ranger, *Gothic Drama in Patent Theatres*, 76.

der and Lightning,” we see the villain, the Marquis, “*wild and dishevelled*” rush onto the stage screaming: “Away! Pursue me not! Thou Phantom, hence!” (FF, IV.i/41). These two scenes, following one upon the other, form a typical combination of the Shakespearean supernatural in the *Hamlet* and *Macbeth* versions, to be found also in fiction. While Adeline represents the pitying Hamlet,

Adeline. Poor, wretched sufferer! Accept the tears
Of one, like thee, pursued by fortune’s frown,
Yet less unhappy!

FF, III.iv/39,

the throes of the Marquis are aligned with the *Macbeth* version:

Marquis. [...] If images like these are fanciful,
The grinding rack gives not such real pain.
My eyes have almost crack’d their strings in wonder,
And my swoln heart so heaves within my breast,
As it would bare its secret to the day.
’Twas sleep that unawares surpris’d me yonder,
And mem’ry lent imagination arms,
To probe my ulcerous spirit to the quick.

FF, IV.i/41—42

No longer represented, merely suggested as an offstage and/or imaginary incident, the supernatural is here retained for its conscience-stinging function.

In his *Life of Kemble*, Boaden says concerning the representation of the Ghost in armour:

The reason for Shakspeare’s dressing the ghost in armour has never been assigned, or nothing beyond the picturesque effect derived from it. Yet it has a very marked and striking propriety, when fully considered. The usual regal dress would have had nothing in it to alarm. The habit of interment would have been horrible, or loathsome, or ridiculous. Now his object seems to have been to excite the strongest attention, and yet not betray the real and ultimate cause of his appearance.²¹

For Boaden it is the stage effect which is of prime importance. The most desired visual effect is the sublime and awe-inspiring (“picturesque”) as opposed to the “horrible, or loathsome, or ridiculous.” So the supernatural

²¹ Boaden, *Life of Kemble*, vol. 1, 105.

on the stage needs to be prepared with the kind of care and caution that Boaden himself showed during the rehearsals of *Fontainville Forest* when he found that neither the actual armour nor the actor's physique answered the solemnity of the ghost. Stage spectres had to conform to an aesthetic *sui generis*.

In Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* the title ghost of the heroine's mother, Evelina, however, does appear in a "habit of interment." The spectre's first appearance as a mute "saint" blends perfectly with the semi-religious setting complete with "soft and plaintive" music. At the end of Act IV the heroine, Angela (Mrs. Jordan),²² finds herself alone in the Oratory and awakens from a sorrow-induced stupor to the castle-bell tolling one: "Hark! the bell tolls!" The lengthy stage directions convey the sense of the visual feast to which the audience was treated:

The folding-doors unclose, and the Oratory is seen illuminated. In its centre stands a tall female figure, her white and flowing garments spotted with blood; her veil is thrown back, and discovers a pale and melancholy countenance; her eyes are lifted upwards, her arms extended towards heaven, and a large wound appears upon her bosom. Angela sinks upon her knees, with her eyes riveted upon the figure, which for some moments remains motionless. At length the Spectre advances slowly, to a soft and plaintive strain; she stops opposite to Reginald's [i.e., her husband's] picture, and gazes upon it in silence. She then turns, approaches Angela, seems to invoke a blessing upon her, points to the picture and retires to the Oratory. The music ceases.

CS, IV.ii/206

The shift towards pity and away from horror is obvious, even in comparison with *Fontainville Forest*, and yet the expected Shakespearean echoes are all here. When the door opens, Angela cannot help but exclaim: "Guard me, good Angels!" When the spectre turns away, Angela "*extend[s] her arms towards it*" pleading: "Oh! stay yet one moment!" Finally, when the "Vision" gestures farewell and vanishes behind the folding doors to the accompaniment of organ music and "a full chorus of female voices," Angela collapses with "Oh! God of Heaven protect me!" The palpable Shakespearean overtones may suggest that what we are witnessing here is a female version of the father-son encounter in *Hamlet*, with the revenge motif considerably diminished on account of a different gender con-

²² Concerning the two heroes Reno has this to say: "Representing the sometimes brutal passage into adulthood, both plays feature heroines forced suddenly from sheltered background [...] into the world at large. [...] In each play the much disputed ghost is a specific representation of the heroine's identity" ("James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* and Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*," 96).

figuration and the generic shift towards the melodramatic. Commenting on the role of the supernatural in melodrama, Michael Booth writes: “the frequency with which ghosts appear in Gothic melodrama also distinguishes it from the rest of its class. These ghosts are invariably on the side of goodness and often turn up at the worst possible moment for the villain [...]”²³

The imprisoned and as it were half-dead father, Reginald, is made present by means of the portrait and is indeed central to the meaning of the scene. The Spectre’s gesture as she “*points to the picture*” seems to be a visual allusion to Old Hamlet’s injunction to “Remember me.” The spectral presence of the father in fact haunts Angela by way of Osmond’s blackmail. The fratricide is as yet uncommitted. Her refusal to marry Osmond will “bid [him] plunge that dagger in her father’s heart!” (CS, IV.ii/204). Reginald’s picture, in a role like that of Old Hamlet’s miniature in Shakespeare, is used by Osmond to harass Angela: “Look at this picture! Mark, what a noble form! How sweet, how commanding the expression of his full dark eye!” Suddenly the tone changes and Osmond unfolds a tale not unlike Old Hamlet’s Ghost’s mention of the horrors of purgatory, and his suggestion of “being cut off in the blossoms of sin”: “Then fancy that he lies in some damp solitary dungeon, writhing in death’s agonies, his limbs distorted, his eye-strings breaking, his soul burthened with crimes from which no priest has absolved him, his last words curses on his unnatural child, who could have saved him, but who would not!” Angela responds with “Horrible! horrible!” (CS, IV.ii/204).

The spectre of Evelina, despite the verbal borrowings from Shakespeare and the thematic parallel of the wronged parent, is hardly Shakespearean, made to resemble the Bleeding Nun from *The Monk*.²⁴ The spectre’s gesture at least in part accounts for Angela’s swoon. The tormented heroine may place some hope in the hero, Percy (Kemble), but he turns out to be as ineffective in action as many another hero in Gothic drama. As we have seen (p. 264), it is the spectre who interferes at the most critical moment towards the end of the play and it is Angela herself who plunges

²³ Michael R. Booth, *English Melodrama* (1965), qtd. in: *Sisters of Gore*, 70, note 10.

²⁴ Reno, “James Boaden’s *Fontainville Forest* and Matthew Lewis’s *The Castle Spectre*,” 101. There is, however, also a striking resemblance of the Evelina figure to the representation of Sarah Siddons as Lady Macbeth in the sleepwalking scene. Boaden’s own description of Siddons’s appearance and performance is telling: “The quantity of white drapery in which the actress was enveloped had a singular and striking effect; her person [...] might be said to be ‘lovelily dreadful,’ but extremely majestic both in form and motion, it was, however, the majesty of the tomb; or, as Shakespeare in a previous scene expresses it, ‘As from your graves rise up, and walk like sprites, To countenance this horror’” (*Mrs. Siddons*, vol. 2, 100).

the avenging dagger into the villain's bosom. It is to this fratricide-preventing supernatural interference that Boaden, despite his much protesting, seems to owe a debt for the parallel scene in *Cambro-Britons*. Act II, Scene ii has a confrontation between Llewellyn and his traitor brother, David, staged in another holy place, "before the Shrine of Lady GRIFFITH." When the swords have been drawn, a voice comes from the tomb crying, "Forbear!" This does not stop David, although his arm seems to fail him. In reply to Llewellyn's taunt — "Why droops the fratricide?" (*C-B*, II.v/57) — David collects his strength and it is only the actual "bursting" of the mother's "dust [...] from its sepulture" that prevents bloodshed: "*The upper part of the tomb, with a mighty noise, falls to the ground, and from the centre their mother rises in the funeral dress.*" Apparently, if the spectre was female, the "habit of interment" was not considered unbecoming. Like Angela before the ghost of her mother, Llewellyn "*falls upon his knees, with his arms extended towards her,*"²⁵ while the sword drops from the villain's hand.

These female spectres in Lewis and Boaden with their fratricide-preventing interventions are interesting not only on account of their similarities to Radcliffe's feminisation (in three of her novels) of the *Hamlet* plot, but also because they use the supernatural dimension to realise the theme of reconciliation already present in the Gothic romance. Of the instances mentioned at the outset, Harriet Lee's *The Mysterious Marriage* turns out to be "the most Shakespearean," in its plot organisation as well as its deployment of supernatural machinery, which likewise feminises the Shakespearean supernatural.

To begin with, Lee's play is unusual for not relying heavily for its main plot on the element of mystery. This may be because it does not derive directly or indirectly from a Gothic narrative, but may also have to do with a Shakespearean inspiration. Having caused the death of his secretly-wedded spouse, the tendentiously named Constantia, the villain Albert is confronted with the innocent's shade. As a realistic backdrop to her domestic tragedy Lee uses the conventional motif of economic and social ambition, a motivation which makes Albert break his vows: "To be plain," he says to Constantia in a moment of truth earlier in the plot, "Thou know'st my means ill suited to my birth" (*MystMar*, II.ii/91). He is determined to acquire "by art" the prize possession named in the play's subtitle, "the Heir-

²⁵ Compare Boaden's commendation of Kemble's interpretation of Hamlet: "The kneeling at the descent of the Ghost was censured as a *trick*. I suppose merely because it had not been done before: but it suitably mark'd the filial reverence of Hamlet, and the solemnity of the engagement he had contracted. Henderson saw it, and adopted it immediately, I remember he was applauded for doing so." Boaden, *Life of Kemble*, vol. 1, 98; Boaden's emphasis.

ship of Roselva.” In practical terms this means that, having disposed of Constantia, he can marry the Countess. A cruel twist to the fate of Constantia comes with the Count of Roselva’s revelation in the first scene of the play. Gnawed by “some cruel secret,” the Count decides to share his mystery, which makes him tremble and look pale: “I will a tale unfold — / Which [...] I do command thee never to reveal!” (*MystMar*, I.i/80). In this way, the Count binds his daughter to secrecy over a rather conventional story of brotherly rivalry in which the Count, on the violent death of his elder brother, deprives the surviving lawful heiress, Constantia, of “princely fortunes.”

As the setting for the scene of the supernatural Lee envisaged an “arched gallery [...] lighted by a lamp from the roof” (*MystMar*, III.iii/107), the eerie effect enhanced by “vivid flashes of lightning seen through the casements.” Albert’s soliloquy is a combination of motifs known from *Macbeth*, and resonates strongly with allusions to the floating dagger speech. It will be recalled that this speech conjures up a parallel between Macbeth’s murderous intentions and Tarquin’s ravishing strides.²⁶ Albert, as he is approaching the chamber of the Countess, make us think of both these Shakespearean villains. Unlike Macbeth Albert does not yield to horrid suggestions and hair-unfixing imaginings; his “[t]hought’s fantastic brood” awakens to “horrible rememb’rings,” as he struggles to stifle recollections of his crime (*MystMar*, III.iii/108).²⁷ But like Macbeth, he is looking towards the future which “gilds the vast horizon of ambition,” to which the only bar would be a disinclination in his newly-wedded Countess to consummate the marriage. A verbal parallel with *Titus Andronicus* entirely disambiguates Albert’s intentions: “Yet is she woman — therefore to be lured; / A young one — therefore to be bribed by gauds [...]” (ibidem; Lee’s emphasis). Similar lines in Shakespeare are spoken by Demetrius (*TA*, I.i.582), one of the two rapists of Lavinia, who in her turn is a parallel to Lucrece.²⁸ The allusion in Albert’s lines prepares the ending of his speech in which the intended marital rape is stated explicitly: “at the

²⁶ Besides his presence in the role of villain in the epic poem *The Rape of Lucrece*, Tarquin is verbally present in *Titus, Macbeth*, and *Cymbeline*.

²⁷ This emphasis on the past was as characteristic of Gothic drama as it was of Gothic fiction. In numerous plays, *The Mysterious Marriage* and *The Castle Spectre* among them, the villain’s security depends on his being able to conceal past crimes while other characters become as vigorously intent on finding out the truth and “making the past matter,” as it were. The difference between the two plays is that in Lee’s play the guilt of Albert is not a riddle that the audience needs to solve.

²⁸ On rape in adaptations of Shakespeare see Jean Marsden, *Re-Imagined Text*, 38, and again by the same scholar: “Rewritten Women: Shakespearean Heroines in the Restoration,” in: Marsden, ed., *Appropriation of Shakespeare*.

worst, / A lover's passion, and a husband's right, / Shall justify th' intrusion!" — at which point he is stopped in his way by "*the Ghost of Constantia, shrouded in the lightest white drapery.*"

For the overall conception of this scene Lee may have been indebted to the episode in *Otranto* in which a spectre prevents Manfred pursuing Isabella. As to Shakespeare, the conspicuous verbal borrowings are reminiscent of *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth*. While the mute spectre "*glides into the chamber of the Countess*" where it vanishes as a symbol of maidenly solidarity, Albert is left on stage to writhe in protracted anguish of guilt. His first reaction to the ghost resembles Brutus's starting at the Ghost of Caesar: "Ha! have my senses conjured up a phantom?" and then, "Speak, vision, if thou canst" (*MystMar*, III.iii/108; comp. *JC*, IV.iii.275). Next, the ghost having vanished, he struggles with his fear in a manner resembling Macbeth's "what man dare, I dare" outburst in the banquet scene: "I've faced the deadly cannon [...] Have danced unshrinking on the curling billows [...] and start I now? / Ev'n at the shrouded and the bloodless semblance / That fancy had embodied!" (*MystMar*, III.iii/109). The terrors of his awakened servant — "and — hark! [...] yet methought it was like a groan" — do not help one bit to reassure Albert and, throughout, the noise and flashing confirm that the villain is quite "unmanned" by "tyrannic guilt." As Albert finds it difficult to shake off imaginary fears — "hark — a noise — Startled again by shadows!" — we realise that Lee has been trying to squeeze as much supernatural dread from the episode as it could afford. Yet, as in the case of Macbeth, fear is not able to pierce the armour of hardened wickedness. In the last scene of the drama, the Countess takes up the task of scourging Albert's soul but as he threatens forcefully to exact wifely obedience, a faithful guard interposes and stabs him. After the death of Albert, the duty of justice-dealing and reconciliation falls to the play's other villain, the Count, who dies with the expected assertion of even-handed providence on his lips, joining the hands of the Countess with the miraculously restored Theodore-like male heir to the principedom: "Mysterious providence! [...] Thy justice wakes to fearful retribution!" (*MystMar*, III.iv/120; original emphasis retained).

Besides instances such as those discussed so far, in which the supernatural is represented in an undisguised fashion, there are also numerous situations in Gothic plays where, in order to avoid censure and at the same time to retain the desired element of supernatural terror, playwrights thought of a spectre substitute, or a dramatic version of the explained supernatural. We shall now look at chosen examples in which the Shakespearean debt seems conspicuous.

Are faint and shadowy traces, to this image.
Fabian. Hear me, my lord, so shall the wonder cease.
 The very arms he wears, were once Alphonso's.

CN, V.i/46

This is a dramatisation of the following passage in *Otranto* (CO, iv/82—83):

[...] Jerome, and part of the troop, who had met an imperfect rumour of what had happened, entered the chamber. Manfred advanced hastily towards Frederic's bed to condole with him on his misfortune, and to learn the circumstances of the combat, when starting in an agony of terror and amazement, he cried, Ha! what art thou? thou dreadful spectre! is my hour come? — My dearest, gracious Lord, cried Hippolita, clasping him in her arms, what is it you see? Why do you fix your eye-balls thus? — What! cried Manfred breathless — dost thou see nothing; Hippolita? Is this ghastly phantom sent to me alone — to me, who did not — For mercy's sweetest self, my Lord, said Hippolita, resume your soul, command your reason. There is none here, but us, your friends. — What, is not that Alfonso? cried Manfred: dost thou not see him? Can it be my brain's delirium? — This! my Lord, said Hippolita: this is Theodore, the youth who has been so unfortunate — Theodore! said Manfred mournfully, and striking his forehead — Theodore, or a phantom, he has unhinged the soul of Manfred. — But how comes he here? and how comes he in armour?

Both Walpole and Jephson are heavily indebted to Shakespeare for the way they represent the dread of the supernatural in their villains, Manfred and Narbonne respectively. But while Walpole chose to model his scene on the ghost of Banquo episode in *Macbeth*, Jephson's dramatisation relies chiefly on *Hamlet*.³⁰ Walpole casts Manfred in the part of Macbeth starting at Banquo's shade and Hippolita in that of Lady Macbeth berating her husband for his weakness. The lines clearly follow Shakespeare. Thus, for instance, "Why do you fix your eye-balls thus?" parallels Shakespeare's "Why do you make such faces?"³¹ and "What [...] dost thou see nothing, Hippolita?" resembles Macbeth's "Pr'ythee, see there! / Behold! look! lo!" Jephson oscillates between both Shakespearean sources as he has Narbonne first paraphrase Hamlet with "Ha! angels shelter me!" and then switch to *Macbeth* as perhaps the more appropriate model. And yet the

³⁰ Among the most obvious echoes, besides "Ha! angels shelter me!" are, for instance: "the awful majesty of death," "his very frown," "speak, declare thy pleasure," "this sameness, not resemblance."

³¹ See E.J. Clery's note in CO, 124.

armour seems to have elicited responses reminiscent of Horatio and Hamlet, as in “Art thou not risen from the mould’ring grave? / And in the awful majesty of death, / ’Gainst nature, and the course of mortal thought, / Assum’st the likeness of a living form, / To blast my soul with horreur?”³² “Answer me!” makes this perhaps most obvious as this kind of address to the spectre is not found in *Macbeth*.

Bertrand Evans’s remark on Narbonne’s line, “Ha! angels, shelter me!” stresses the derivative nature of Jephson’s language: “The very obvious echo of Hamlet illustrates how playwrights ‘borrowed’ striking utterances in moments of crisis,”³³ which he explains saying that by “moments of crisis” he means some sort of ineptness in a later playwright:

Though the debt is obvious, here, as elsewhere in Gothic plays, it goes no deeper than the language. Gothicists imitated or stole from Shakespeare in most of their moments of crisis. But the purpose of Hamlet’s meeting with the ghost is quite different from that of Raymond’s [the Count of Narbonne’s] meeting with what seems a ghost. Hamlet’s shock and seeming horror is incidental; Raymond’s terror is the end itself.³⁴

Putting aside his deprecating attitude towards the literary material, typical of many scholars who after all have *elected* Gothic as their field of research, Evans somewhat strongly states his point: with Gothicists terror is an end in itself, and hence if a playwright such as Jephson borrows from Shakespeare — and borrow he must, for he has no poetic genius of his own — he does so for an effect. However, as we have seen, the debt does seem to go deeper than the language. For one thing, the scenes in both Walpole’s story and Jephson’s play employ the romance convention of resemblance and resemblance-founded recognition which eventually fulfils the *purpose* of retribution. It is the resemblance of the armour-clad Theodore to his wronged ancestor that causes the villains to stare and tremble. This resemblance allows Jephson (and Walpole in the corresponding episode in *Otranto*) to bypass the supernatural and yet achieve the desired effect of terror raised in the mind of the villain at the sight of the rightful ruler risen from the dead. Curiously it falls to the Count to make sure that spectators see what otherwise would remain hidden from their (as well as his) view: “This *sameness*, not resemblance, is *past faith*. / All statues, pictures, or the likeness kept / By memory, of good Alphonso living, / Are faint and shadowy traces, to this image.” The armoured Theo-

³² Compare Horatio’s address to the “*majesty of buried Denmark*” and “I’ll cross it, though it *blast me*” (in *H*, I.i).

³³ Evans, *Gothic Drama*, 56.

³⁴ Evans, *Gothic Drama*, note 12 on page 250.

dore is thus at once more than a likeness and yet he still remains little more than an image as much as his function in the plot exhausts itself in iconic signification.

All this granted, the problem remains, of the displacement that the “original” Shakespearean material has suffered in the transposition. In Jerrold Hogle’s view, the ghosts of Walpole are counterfeit spectres: “These blatant [...] imitations of the Ghost of the prince’s father in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* seem to differ quite sharply from that armoured figure walking on the battlements at Elsinore [...]” And further, “Walpole’s *neo*-‘Gothic’ spectres [...] are signifiers of signifiers [...]”³⁵ Hogle’s approach, with a change of emphasis and especially when applied — on a less abstract level — to the Theodore episode *as transposed* by Jephson, can serve to reveal a significant discrepancy indeed. Neither Manfred nor Narbonne are the actual wrongdoers; when compared with the Shakespearean models, Claudius and Macbeth, they are counterfeit villains, scared out of their wits by counterfeit spectres. The armour-clad Theodores are in that sense signifiers whose appearance points backwards to the back-story as the source of signification for the plots that the two Gothicists do unfold.

While Hogle does not differentiate between Walpole’s “real” spectres and their surrogates, he takes note of the proliferation of artefact signifiers, such as suits of armour, pictures, and statues, in which Gothicists placed special significance.³⁶ By an odd twist of logic, it was in ghost-simulating dramas such as *The Count of Narbonne* that this tendency was to acquire singular prominence. In the famous scene at the end of the play (see p. 246), laid inside a convent and with “*the statue of Alphonso in armour in the centre*,” Austin invokes the “angry spirit of Alphonso” as he seeks to convince Theodore and the spectators that “were a glass before thee, / So would it give thee back thy outward self” as does — by the logic of resemblance — Alphonso’s statue (*CN*, V.vii/51). In other words, the statue of the ancestor is like a mirror in which Theodore can see his faithful reflection. By implication, the tragedy of the Count of Narbonne is but a mirror image of a past tragedy, an unresolved one, which has called for and found a *dénouement* in the play’s present. It is the acting out of the *quid pro quo* which ultimately lays to rest the ashes of the grandsire.

³⁵ Jerrold E. Hogle, “The Gothic Ghost of the Counterfeit and the Progress of Abjection,” in: Punter, ed., *Companion to the Gothic*, 294. In Hogle, perhaps more curiously than in Evans (given the critics’ different theoretical positions), the disparaging attitude to Gothic terrors as compared to Shakespeare’s is still palpable.

³⁶ This device makes one think of Kenneth Branagh’s use of the statue in his film adaptation of *Hamlet*. Compare Boaden’s *ST*, III.iii.

In a scene in *The Castle Spectre*, Lewis, in what seems to me an intentional charade based on *Hamlet*, blends both objects, the statue *and* the armour. The opening of Act II is laid in an armoury, and we see “*Suits of Armour [...] arranged on both Sides upon Pedestals, with the Names of their Possessors written under each.*” What is important, this scene comes after we have found out enough about the past to make us suspect Earl Osmond, the current owner of the Castle, of the foul play so common in Gothic plots, i.e., a criminal appropriation of estate and title. We have already remarked that Lewis, like hosts of romancers before him, borrowed from Shakespeare the motif of filial rivalry between Osmond and his brother, Reginald. This back-story includes Lady Evelina, who “liked [Osmond’s] brother better” (CS, I.ii/166) and whose memory is perpetuated in another living image, her daughter Angela,³⁷ now imprisoned by the tyrannical Earl. With the help of the clownish Motley,³⁸ Percy, the hero, puts on a suit of armour which will help him gain access to Angela’s apartments because of popular superstitions: as Motley explains, “since the late Earl’s [i.e., Reginald’s] death the Castle is thought to be haunted [...]. He [the ghost] is supposed to be dressed in compleat armour; [...] As soon as it grows dark I will convey you to Angela’s apartments [...] and even should you be observed, you will pass for Earl Reginald’s spectre” (CS, II.i/168). As Osmond is heard approaching, Percy ascends the pedestal and assumes the position of the as yet inanimate armour. When Osmond, his “offer” having been firmly rejected by Angela, threatens to resort to violence, the armour comes to life. First, Percy cries “Hold! *In a hollow voice.*” But Osmond persists:

Osm. (*Starts, but still grasps Angela’s arm.*) — Ha! What was that?
 Ang. (*Struggling to escape.*) Hark! Hark! — Heard you not a voice?
 Osm. (*Gazing upon Percy.*) — It came from hence! — From Reginald!
 — Was it not a delusion — Did indeed his spirit — (*Relapsing into his former passion.*) Well, be it so! Though the ghost should rush between us, thus would I clasp her — Horror! What sight is this! —
At the moment that he again seizes Angela, Percy extends his truncheon with a menacing gesture, and descends from the pedestal. Osmond releases Angela, who immediately rushes from the chamber, while Percy advances a few steps, and remains gazing on the Earl steadfastly.

³⁷ The erotic ingredient in Osmond’s attraction to Angela is made explicit, as we might expect from Lewis. Says Osmond: “Evelina revives in her daughter, and soon shall the fires which consume me be quenched in Angela’s arms” (CS, II.i/169).

³⁸ As the name suggests, we have here an element of “buffoonery,” or another symptom of Lewis’s notorious intentional “generic profligacy.”

— I know that shield! — that helmet! Speak to me, dreadful vision! —
Tax me with my crimes! — Tell me, that you come — Stay! Speak! —
CS, II.i/171

As the “spectre” prevents Osmond from following Angela, in a moment reminiscent of *Otranto* and *The Mysterious Marriage*, the villain adopts Hamletesque diction: “Hell, and fiends! I’ll follow him though lightnings blast me!” (CS, II.i/172).

The ramparts of Elsinore once more, of course — and yet not quite. The terrors that Lewis mounts on Shakespearean prosthetics are of a different kind, as are the horrors which the “supernatural” intervention has prevented. This mock-supernatural has been meticulously prearranged, which makes Osmond’s reaction seem underpinned by superstition, with the consequence of diminishing his stature in the eyes of the spectators: Lewis does not even attempt, as he might, to trick the audience into earnestly sharing in Osmond’s superstitious dread. After all, he has another spectre, a “genuine” one for a change, in the green room. For the time being, the audience can sit back and enjoy the spectacle at the expense of the would-be rapist. It is the villain’s “unmastered importunity” (to borrow Laertes’ words) which is a more authentic source of terror. This motivation makes Osmond’s “I’ll follow him [...]” sound almost like a blasphemous parody of Hamlet’s line, for the high seriousness of the Shakespearean nemesis has been downgraded into something like a lustful side-plot variation on it. While Hamlet in answering the Ghost’s beckoning responds to the fate that cries out to him, Osmond is not actually following the ghost but Angela, who represents to him the long-postponed gratification of his shameful and criminal lust (comp. *H*, I.v. 45). In other words, Lewis combines in Osmond two motives, the economic and the erotic. The “passion” in Osmond is even capable of overcoming his dread of the supernatural and the “spectre” has to intervene “in person.”

There is obviously much that can be said to belittle the unquestionable success of *The Castle Spectre*, and critique by Wordsworth, Coleridge and others of the theatre at the end of the eighteenth century would supply the arguments. Lewis’s treatment of the Shakespearean supernatural material tells a new story altogether, especially when viewed in the theatrical context. Artistic achievement or not, *The Castle Spectre* certainly capitalises craftily on the fact that the *quid pro quo* featured two of the most prominent Shakespearean actors: Kemble, the dignified Hamlet, personating Percy impersonating the spectre, opposite Mrs. Jordan’s persecuted maiden. In the scene analysed, Lewis plays off his supernatural farce against the solemnity of the high tragic roles the audience was accustomed to associating with the actors that appeared in his production, and

Kemble especially. Indeed, the mangled relics of Shakespeare's lines are as fit a representation of the use to which Shakespeare was put by Gothic playwrights as the counterfeit sham of a ghost.

When in the Preface to *Otranto* Walpole praised Shakespeare for the buffoonery of the grave-diggers, little did he foresee the excesses to which the commendation might lead when taken up by playwrights such as Lewis. The ghosts in *Otranto* retain the solemnity of their Shakespearean original, but theatrical history shows that even ghosts turn stale and Shakespeare's spectres are no exception. Unsurprisingly, the audience, ever on the lookout for novelty, was soon offered entertaining if irreverent re-workings.

Conclusion

The Shakespearean legacy in the eighteenth century was a web of cultural textures which were involved in making and keeping Shakespeare alive, if in spectral form, parallel to the ambiguous presence of the ghost in a Gothic narrative. Shakespeare, the man and the work, was appropriated in different ways and circulated in an environment vibrant with political (“ideological”) tension. Attached to the figure of Shakespeare were his metonymic representations, which were multiplied and disseminated with unprecedented vigour, all of them manifestations of cultural appropriation.

The eighteenth century worked out a wide range and various forms of appropriation: literary (creative reception, imitation, adaptation), critical (editing, authenticating, interpreting), theatrical (stage adaptations, making Shakespeare’s genius come alive on stage), visual (sculpture, painting, and prints), economic (the Shakespeare industry, selling Shakespeare texts, prints representing Shakespeare and Shakespearean scenes, and even relics made from the mulberry tree in Stratford), and political (Shakespeare used as mouthpiece for partisan interests and as spokesman for the nation). The various forms of appropriation — buying an edition of Shakespeare’s works, buying a theatre ticket to view a Shakespeare play, visiting the Shakespeare gallery, etc. — are intertwined and interdependent. Even the relatively simple act of watching a production of *Hamlet* may be seen as fraught with hidden connotations: an enthusiast, Ann Radcliffe for instance, may have come to the theatre to see Sarah Siddons playing Hamlet after seeing a print representing that actress in the role of Lady Macbeth in a copy of that play. The spectacular Shakespeare events, especially Garrick’s 1769 Jubilee at Stratford and the Ireland forgeries, including the production of a pseudo-Shakespeare play in 1794, are more complex cases of such culturally polyvalent gestures of appropriation. Boydell’s Shakespeare Gallery is another example of a cul-

tural event in which various modes of appropriation converge (including the celebration of the shared cultural heritage), besides its being an economic enterprise stimulated by the widespread cult of Shakespeare.

The introductory chapter proposed methods of approaching the Shakespearean literary heritage. Assumptions concerning the subject matter and the methodology were subsequently applied to the Shakespearean debt in the Gothic. Significant seems to be the role of the actor, not only as a transmitter and “animator” of textual content but even as a live representation of the Bard “himself,” whose prerogative is to body forth the effusions of the poetic genius. Especially actors who performed the most popular roles, such as Hamlet, Macbeth, and Lady Macbeth, were seen almost as embodiments of the playwright. The Shakespearean actor/actress, in the persons of the great celebrities of the eighteenth-century London stage, David Garrick and Sarah Siddons (in the wake of her success as the Tragic Muse, she was repeatedly invited to do readings from Shakespeare for the royal family), assumed and willingly performed the cultural roles of the privileged inheritor, custodian, and transmitter of Shakespeare’s genius. In particular, late eighteenth-century audience perceived the ghost through the eyes of such ghost-seers as Hamlet and Macbeth and seemed to identify both with the poet who gave them a being and a local habitation in the theatre. Ann Radcliffe and other so-called Gothiccists regarded the supernatural scenes as sublime manifestations of Shakespeare’s poetic genius; Radcliffe especially seems to have believed that through his work the poetic genius came alive and as such could be intuited as an inspiration.

Evidence examined in this study shows that Shakespeare was involved in and assisted the changing of the standards of taste and the advent of an aesthetic that justified renewed literary uses of the supernatural. From this point of view the Shakespearean debt in the early Gothic could be regarded as a literary-historical necessity, which does not entail a belief in some sort of cultural determinism. For the pre-romantic aesthetic there was no ignoring Shakespeare and as a result we find Shakespeare as the phantom of the early Gothic, haunting the narratives of Gothic romances and dictating speeches to Gothic playwrights: Shakespeare, the worshipped Original and eagerly emulated Bard, and his metonyms, castles, ghosts, and supernatural terrors.

The concentric circles formula which was adopted systematically to arrange the argument in Chapters II and III has made it possible not only to demonstrate the necessary and largely predetermined appropriation of Shakespeare but also to distinguish this mode of appropriation from the individual and even personal modes and patterns. These, in turn, needed

to be distinguished from the ways in which the authors' personal engagements with the Shakespeare *oeuvre* were transformed into (impersonal) elements of the new literary work: structural features, themes, conventions, and generic variants. In view of these distinctions, the personal sphere of creative reception is an area in which the culturally determined product, "Shakespeare" (this or that play in this or that adaptation or edition, this or that introduction or critical essay, this or that representation of the poet, of a scene from his play or of one of his characters), becomes transformed (according to conceptions which themselves can be culturally determined) into a new product, such as, for instance, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, itself endowed with great cultural fecundity.

The study of Shakespeare's presence in the eighteenth-century carried out in Chapter II, prepared ground for text-oriented analysis of verbal evidence to be followed by comparative analysis. It opened and defined what after Robert Jauss can be called a "horizon of expectations," i.e. helped us to define the parameters within which we can approach and make sense of appropriations by individual authors. It is within a cultural horizon that we can "make sense of" such incidents as forgeries. Chapter III shows that "surface-scratching" and "evidence-hunting" have their role in preparing ground for systematic comparative (as different from historical and evidence-oriented) analysis of literary parallels. At the same time, examination of textual evidence is only a preliminary if necessary stage on the way to a comparative study, i.e. one in which generic features and structural devices are accorded special significance.

The analyses carried out in Chapters IV and V allow us to conclude that the "received Shakespeare," though eagerly appropriated, did not wholly determine his uses in the early Gothic. Between the appreciation of the Shakespeare ghosts and of ghost-seeing and the new aesthetic of the Gothic, also in Radcliffe's explained-supernatural variety, there is a smooth transition which is predicated upon a similar type of response. Pervasive and extensive as the Shakespearean debt may be, we cannot insist that it *determined* the basic generic features of what we now recognise as the classic Gothic. For such specifically Gothic elements and devices as the explained supernatural and the past-oriented suspense we certainly find in Shakespeare an inspiration but we cannot speak of direct transmission. (But then the analyses in Chapters I and II largely undermine the very idea of a literary product which is clean of culturally determined accrual, even though such early scholars as Edmund Malone may have been inspired by the idea and methodological *telos* of authenticity.) The adaptive appropriations of the Restoration and the eighteenth-century reappraisal of Shakespeare prepared the ground for further appropriations. That car-

ried on by the Gothicists was the first extensive accommodation of Shakespeare to a new, pre-romantic, aesthetic. In the light of the common assumption of the intrinsically romantic character of the eighteenth-century Gothic, we may claim that without the Gothic appropriation of Shakespeare, romanticism would not have happened the way it did.

The considerations in Chapter IV set out to confront the notorious elusiveness of the Gothic as a literary genre. Two methods of constructing a definition of the Gothic were discussed. According to a historically-oriented approach, literary Gothicism reflects the usage of the term "Gothic" in the eighteenth century; this approach, however, will not yield a coherent notion of the Gothic because it will inherit the ambiguities and ambivalence of the different meanings in which the term occurred. At the same time, literary Gothicism should not be wrenched from the historical basis from which it originated. The proposed modernised version of the features- or elements-oriented definition of classic (generic) Gothicism both respects the historical context of the genre's emergence and, by emphasising narrative dynamic, reflects the process of narrativisation of the cultural concerns and political anxieties which stimulated the growing interest, in eighteenth-century England, in the past, its representations in history, and its/their political or ideological interpretations (the "myth of Gothic ancestry"). The notion of the Gothic as a literary *mode* allows us, "anachronistically," to inquire about the Gothicism in literary works and other cultural phenomena that do not belong to or reflect the original historical context. In particular, we can inquire about the Gothic mode in Shakespeare.

Furthermore, Chapter IV confirms that *both* the Aristotelian categories of terror and pity, which neoclassicism and post-Restoration criticism in England restored and refurbished, apply to the Gothic and that they perform thematic functions as significant as in the Shakespeare *oeuvre*, especially in its eighteenth-century adaptations. The analyses also stress the fact that even though, thanks to Walpole, these neoclassical assumptions were carried over into the poetics of the Gothic, they were redefined, among other reasons, thanks to the dominant presence of Shakespeare in the theatrical repertory of the day and the popularity of stage representations of the supernatural in Shakespeare. Comparative analysis shows that contemporary criticism of the Gothic in its commonly one-sided concentration upon the element and "atmosphere" of terror has notoriously rendered and propagated a truncated and inadequate perception of the genre, misrepresenting its mergers, especially but by no means exclusively, with the popular genres of the day, the melodramatic and the operatic trends in the theatre being equivalents of the late eighteenth-century ro-

mance. Neither the Gothic romance nor the equally popular Gothic melodrama can be adequately understood without our being tuned to the defining presence of both terror and pity, to the overriding thematics of reconciliation, and the dynamic of liberation. Especially pity is an indispensable element of the early Gothic's representations of the supernatural, particularly in its feminised and melodramatic equivalents, that of the female ghost, real or counterfeit.

One of the peculiarities of the Gothic appropriations of Shakespeare concerns the lack of historical contiguity between what we know to be Shakespearean romances and the Gothic romance. Most probably, creative reception here was prevented by the criticism which Shakespearean romances — without being recognised as such — received. This also explains why Shakespeare did not play any significant role in the revival of the romance tradition in the eighteenth century. Shakespeare may have been praised, with a degree of caution, for extravagant and sublime flights of his fancy and certain romance elements may have found appreciation, but his comedies were far more popular than his romances. Gothicists found *their* Shakespeare in his problem or dark rather than romantic comedies and responded with particular ardour to that peculiar mixture of the comic, pitiful, and tragic found in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Gothic drama, despite its derivative status with respect to Gothic fiction, developed new ways of appropriating Shakespeare. Different individual plays are in different ways Shakespearean depending on the manner and scope of their handling of the borrowed material. Apart from the verbal and nonverbal texture of the plays themselves, we must not ignore the larger cultural context, the way, for instance, in which the two royal theatres and Shakespearean actors were “appropriated,” i.e., entangled in the emergence of Gothic drama. On the one hand, Shakespearean ghosts were employed to legitimise the use of the supernatural on stage; on the other hand, the tradition of British tragedy to which they belonged had a difficult time struggling for revival and survival in a cultural environment which favoured generic blending. In the competition between “legitimate” tragedy, and the Shakespearean type of spoken drama in particular, against the increasingly popular theatrical spectacle of the melodramatic and operatic types, playwrights and managers alike worked out ways to negotiate the usually very distinct expectations of audiences and critics. It seems that, as far as the Gothic tradition is concerned, the golden mean was found in a combination of some spectacular features of the Gothic and the comedic mode of drama which catered to the most universal political opinions of the audience, especially those which supported the popular conviction of the supremacy of the British constitution, summed up

in the phrase “freedom fixed by laws.” Those who, like Joanna Baillie, opted for generic purity and spoken drama were fighting a losing battle.

The historical fusion of the Gothic with Shakespeare was a passing phase. The so-called romantic Gothic departs from the genre’s Shakespearean origins even though this departure was not abrupt and in part concealed. In Charles Maturin, for instance, Shakespeare becomes little more than an ornament. In *Melmoth the Wanderer* Shakespeare is as conspicuously present, by means of the common quotation and epigraph, as he is in a typical Gothic novel of the 1790s. As in the case of *The Monk*, a Shakespeare epigraph is prefixed to the first chapter of the novel and Maturin quotes from or alludes to Shakespeare more than a dozen times throughout the narrative. And yet we feel that he could do very well without such embellishment while we cannot say the same about Ann Radcliffe and, for instance, Francis Lathom. Thus, while Maturin may be said to be indebted to the convention inaugurated by Radcliffe, his appropriation of Shakespeare is superficial and he depends for his machinery of terror on sources other than the plays he quotes.

Was the early Gothic Shakespearean? Is Shakespeare to be regarded as a Gothic poet and playwright? Both these questions can be approached and answered with the help of the adopted methodology, the proposed definitions of the Gothic as a literary genre and mode (Chapter IV), and on the basis of the analyses presented in this study, particularly in Chapters IV and V. In view of the existing evidence of the appropriation of Shakespeare by early Gothicists we may argue that the early Gothic certainly is Shakespearean. At the same time, comparative analysis shows that there are reasons to avoid facile generalisations: different Gothic stories and plays are Shakespearean in different ways. As to the second question, there are elements and features in Shakespeare that we recognise as Gothic; particular scenes and chosen plays can be regarded as Gothic depending on how we understand the genre and what elements make it up. There are in Shakespeare elements (moments, situations, scenes, themes, characters, etc.) that we cannot help but identify as Gothic because they are defining according to a static features-oriented definition of the genre. Retrospectively, we regard them as Gothic simply because they occurred in a certain configuration in works that we now, stimulated by the renewed interest in the Gothic, classify as Gothic.

However, if we treat the Gothic as a literary mode, we can call Shakespeare and a host of other poets and authors Gothic in view of a specific narrative dynamic. To put it otherwise, the Gothic mode occasionally sets in in Shakespeare the way it occurs in narratives and dramas by other authors. Moreover, we may regard as Gothic also those among Shake-

speare's plays and scenes that did not inspire the early Gothicists. Appropriations of Shakespeare that laid the foundations for the Gothic have certainly influenced our perception of a considerable part of the Shakespeare *oeuvre*. The 1996 BBC production of *Hamlet* with the Ghost modelled, as in the case of James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest*, after Henry Fuseli's paintings, plainly demonstrates the cultural and theatrical vivacity of the time-honoured spectres, now spectres of Gothic appropriations.

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Jacek Mydla

Duchy Szekspira Szekspirowskie inspiracje i zawłaszczenia we wczesnym gotyku angielskim

Streszczenie

Rozprawa poświęcona jest zjawisku twórczej recepcji sztuk Williama Szekspira we wczesnym gotyku angielskim, lata 1764—1800. Wpływy Szekspirowskie oraz gesty literackiego zawłaszczenia widoczne zarówno w powieści, jak i dramacie gotyckim analizowane są na szerokim tle obecności poety w osiemnastowiecznej kulturze angielskiej.

Książka podzielona jest na pięć rozdziałów. W rozdziale wprowadzającym omawiane są kolejno konteksty historyczny i teoretyczny związane z gotykiem literackim. Sformułowany zostaje problem łączący się z tzw. szekspirowskim długiem, jaki przedstawiciele wczesnego gotyku literackiego zaciągnęli u tego poety. Omówiono metodologię zastosowaną do materiału historycznoliterackiego, będącego przedmiotem badań.

Treść rozdziału drugiego stanowi zjawisko obecności Szekspira w osiemnastym wieku. Kolejno omawiane aspekty to: adaptacje i przetworzenia sztuk Szekspirowskich, sukcesywne wydania dzieł Szekspira i ponawiane wysiłki edytorskie z nimi związane, coraz intensywniejszy obieg twórczości poety w formie książkowej, zmieniające się krytyczne oceny dramaturgii Szekspirowskiej (jej stopniowe uniezależnienie od neoklasycystycznych wpływów francuskich), narodziny w drugiej połowie stulecia zjawiska idolatrii (które znalazło swoją kulminację w Jubileuszu Szekspirowskim, zorganizowanym w 1769 roku w Stratfordzie przez Davida Garricka), ideologiczne (partyjne i nacjonalistyczne) uwikłania Szekspira, wreszcie sposoby szeroko pojętej reprezentacji — zarówno twórcy, jak i dzieła, w formie scenicznej (z wyeksponowaną rolą i statusem aktora szekspirowskiego, w szczególności Davida Garricka, Philipa Kemble'a i Sary Siddons) oraz artystycznej (np. malarstwo inspirowane sztukami). W rozdziale drugim przewija się, jako swoista ilustracja zmieniającego się statusu Szekspira, wątek fałszerstwa dokonanego przez Williama Henry'ego Irelanda. Zdarzenie to i skandal w życiu kulturalnym Londynu końca osiemnastego wieku ukazane są w swoich wielorakich uwikłaniach.

W rozdziale trzecim omawiana jest gotycyzacja poety, czyli to, jak Szekspir przed pojawieniem się i po pojawieniu się pierwszych dzieł zaliczanych do gotyku literackiego został przyswojony przez zmieniające się kanony literackie, które utarowały drogę do gwałtownego rozwoju gotyku w ostatniej dekadzie osiemnastego stulecia. W pierwszej części rozdziału mowa jest o fascynacji elementami nadprzyrodzonymi w sztukach Szekspira i funkcjach, jakie w tym aspekcie pełniły teatralne przedstawienia motywów nadprzyrodzonych w *Hamlecie* i innych sztukach. Gotyckość poety ukazana zostaje w odnie-

sieniu do myśli krytycznej podkreślającej jego znaczenie i wypracowującej kluczowe dla nowej poetyki sposoby pojmowania takich pojęć, jak wzniosłość i geniusz poetycki. Kolejne pokolenia krytyków, poczynając już od Johna Drydena, a skończywszy na Nathanie Drake'u, wypracowują podłoże sprzyjające kształtowaniu się owej poetyki, gdzie siłą inspirującą oraz egzemplifikacją jest geniusz poetycki Szekspira. Towarzyszącą tym procesom praktykę poetycką omówiono na przykładzie poezji Williama Collinsa i Thomasa Graya z jej otwarciem się na wyobraźnię i świat nadprzyrodzony. W dalszych częściach rozdziału mowa jest o „manifestach”, czyli tekstach programowych autorów, którzy zapoczątkowali gotyk literacki, mianowicie Horacego Walpole'a i Ann Radcliffe. W dalszych partiach rozdziału omawia się różnego rodzaju językowe zapożyczenia z Szekspira jako „materiał dowodowy”, wskazujący na zjawisko oraz zakres literackiego przywłaszczenia; należą do nich: motto Szekspirowskie, cytaty i słowna aluzja oraz zapożyczone imiona postaci.

Rozdział czwarty przedstawia w sposób systematyczny paralele z wybranymi sztukami Szekspira, przede wszystkim tymi, które poddane były intensywnemu procesowi zawłaszczania. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono tragediom Szekspirowskim, które stanowiły niewątpliwą inspirację dla przedstawicieli gotyku. Na wstępie autor dokonuje próby zdefiniowania gotyckości literackiej. Czyni to w odniesieniu do niedookreślonego statusu gatunkowego gotyku literackiego oraz do sposobów użycia słów „gotyk” i „gotycki” oraz w kontekście współczesnych sporów krytycznych wokół definicji gotyku. Przyjmując, jako najbardziej uzasadnioną, definicję zorientowaną na indukcyjnie określone elementy fundujące gotyk literacki, proponuje się zwrócenie uwagi z jednej strony na denotację pojęcia gotyckości, jakie pojawiły się w osiemnastym stuleciu, z drugiej zaś na konieczność dynamicznego podejścia do gotyku literackiego w uzupełnieniu strukturalnie zorientowanej definicji. Omawiając związki gotyku z tragedią Szekspirowską, ukazano, na wybranych przykładach, podobieństwa i różnice w potraktowaniu konstytutywnych wątków grozy oraz współczucia. Obydwa elementy rozpatrzono zarówno w ich aspekcie strukturalnym (konstruowanie grozy), jak i tematycznym. Groza i współczucie są bowiem uwikłane również w przesłanie dzieła i służą eksponowaniu jego aspektów dydaktycznych. Wreszcie, na przykładzie dwóch sztuk: *Romea i Julii* oraz *Cymbelina*, omówiono związki między komedią i romansem Szekspirowskim i romansem gotyckim.

Rozdział piąty przedstawia uwikłanie Szekspira oraz jego twórczości w fenomen przynależący do ostatniej dekady osiemnastego wieku, czyli dramat gotycki. Zjawisko to omawia się najpierw w odniesieniu do szerszego kontekstu, w tym do dyskusji wokół kondycji dramatu angielskiego z przełomu stuleci, jak i przemian wewnątrz teatru. Szczególną uwagę poświęcono ideom programowym wysuniętym przez Joannę Baillie. Twórczość i teoretyczne stanowisko Baillie analizowane są w kontekście uwikłania zarówno dramatu gotyckiego, jak i Szekspira w reformę czy często podnoszoną potrzebę odnowienia narodowej tradycji dramatu oraz trudności, jakie taki projekt napotykał. W dalszej części autor porusza kwestię wykorzystania w teatrze elementów nadprzyrodzonych oraz przetworzeń, jakim Szekspirowskie wątki i zapożyczenia zostały poddane w wybranych sztukach zaliczanych do gotyku, w szczególności w sztuce Lewisa *The Castle Spectre* (*Duch zamczyska*).

We wnioskach podkreślono, iż, z jednej strony wczesny gotyk literacki jest, jak na to wskazuje zgromadzony i omówiony materiał historycznoliteracki, naznaczony obecnością Szekspira, będącą poniekąd konsekwencją obecności poety w osiemnastym wieku. Z drugiej strony wskazuje się na zasadnicze różnice pomiędzy tym, jak rozumiana jest szekspirowskość, w szczególności w odniesieniu do tragedii z elementami nadprzyrodzonymi, jak *Hamlet* czy *Makbet*. Wskazane zostają sposoby rozumienia szekspirowskiego

charakteru wczesnego gotyku angielskiego. Zarysowano możliwość odniesienia gotyckości do Szekspira (jak też do innych twórców i dzieł nie należących do klasyki gotyku literackiego) i to, że uprawniony jest anachronizm, który przy pewnym potraktowaniu czy przeformułowaniu pojęcia gotyckości pozwala mówić o tym, iż poeta pod wpływem jego recepcji przez twórców gotyku uległ gotycyzacji.

Słowa-klucze: William Szekspir (Shakespeare), kult Szekspira, recepcja (przywłaszczenie, przyswojenie), wpływ, gotyk literacki, powieść osiemnastowieczna, dramat osiemnastowieczny, teatr, aktor szekspirowski, groza, współczucie, zjawiska nadprzyrodzone.

Jacek Mydla

Les esprits de Shakespeare
Inspirations et emprunts shakespeariens
dans le gothique anglais précoce

Résumé

La dissertation est consacrée au phénomène de la réception créative des pièces de William Shakespeare dans le gothique anglais précoce, c'est-à-dire dans les années 1764—1800. Les influences shakespeariennes ainsi que les gestes d'emprunts littéraires, présents de même dans le roman que dans le drame gothique, sont analysés sur un large fond de la présence du poète dans la culture anglaise du XVIII^e siècle.

Le livre contient cinq chapitres. Dans le premier l'auteur analyse successivement les contextes historique et théorique du gothique précoce. L'auteur formule le problème de la dette shakespearienne que les représentants du gothique précoce ont faite auprès du poète; il présente aussi la méthodologie employée à l'analyse du matériel historique littéraire qui est l'objet de recherches.

Le deuxième chapitre traite du phénomène de la présence de Shakespeare au cours du XVIII^e siècle. L'auteur y expose successivement des aspects comme: les adaptations et les transpositions des pièces shakespeariennes, des éditions successives des oeuvres de Shakespeare et des efforts éditoriaux liés à elles, la circulation de l'oeuvre shakespearienne de plus en plus intense en forme de livre, des jugements critiques changeants de la dramaturgie shakespearienne (son indépendance progressive des influences néoclassiques françaises), la naissance dans la seconde moitié du siècle du phénomène de l'idolâtrie (qui a trouvé son point culminant dans le Jubilé Shakespearien, organisé en 1769 à Stratford par David Garrick), des implications (nationalistes et politiques) de Shakespeare, des moyens de représentation, de même scénique (avec le rôle et le statut de l'acteur shakespearien exposés, surtout David Garrick, Philipe Kemble et Sara Siddons), enfin des émergences artistiques du poète en personne et de sa production (p.ex. la peinture inspirée des pièces). Dans le deuxième chapitre réapparaît, en tant qu'une illustration du statut changeant de Shakespeare, le motif de la falsification par William Henry Ireland. L'événement et le scandale provoqué dans la vie culturelle de Londres de la fin du XIX^e siècle sont présentés dans ses implications multiples.

Dans le troisième chapitre l'auteur présente la gothisation du poète, c'est-à-dire comment Shakespeare, avant et après l'apparition des premières oeuvres gothiques littéraires, avait-t-il été assimilé par des canons littéraires changeants, qui ont fait place à un développement intense du gothique dans la dernière décade du XVIII^e siècle. Dans la première partie du chapitre l'auteur parle de la fascination des éléments surnaturels dans

les pièces de Shakespeare et des fonctions qu'ont jouées dans cet aspect des représentations scéniques des motifs surnaturels dans *Hamlet* et autres pièces. Le caractère gothique du poète est présenté en référence à la pensée critique qui souligne son importance et propose la signification des notions, cruciales pour la nouvelle poétique, comme la sublimité et le génie poétique. Les générations successives de critiques, en commençant déjà par John Dryen jusqu'à Nathan Drake, appréhendent un milieu favorisant la formation de cette nouvelle poétique où le génie de Shakespeare constitue la force inspiratrice et l'exemplification. La pratique poétique, accompagnant ces processus, l'auteur décrit à l'exemple de la poésie de William Collins et Thomas Gray, avec son ouverture à l'imagination et au monde surnaturel. Dans les parties suivantes du chapitre l'auteur parle des « maifestes » c'est-à-dire des textes lançant un programme des auters qui ont entamé le gothique littéraire, à savoir Horace Walpole et Anne Radcliffe. Dans les parties suivantes du chapitre de différents emprunts linguistiques sont analysés comme une « preuve matérielle », qui affirme le phénomène et l'étendue de l'appropriation littéraire ; on compte parmi eux la devise shakespeareienne, la citation, l'allusion et des noms empruntés.

Dans le quatrième chapitre l'auteur présente de manière systématique des parallèles entre des pièces choisies de Shakespeare, surtout celles qui ont été soumises au processus intense d'appropriation. Il accorde une attention particulière aux tragédies shakespeareiennes qui étaient une source d'inspiration indubitable pour des représentants du gothique. L'auteur commence par une tentative de définir le gothique littéraire en rapport avec, d'un côté, le statut générique du gothique littéraire, et de l'autre à l'emploi du mot « gothique », ainsi qu'aux débats critiques contemporains sur la définition du gothique. En admettant comme la plus justifiée la définition orientée aux éléments fondateurs déterminés par l'induction, l'auteur propose d'accorder l'attention d'un côté aux dénnotations du gothique, apparues aux XVIII^e siècle, et de l'autre à la nécessité d'une approche dynamique au gothique littéraire dans la perspective de la définition du gothique orientée structurellement. En démontrant des rapports du gothique avec la tragédie shakespeareienne, l'auteur prouve, à l'aide des exemples choisis, des similitudes et des différences dans les trames constitutives d'effroi et de compassion. Les deux éléments sont analysés de même dans leur aspect structurel (construction de l'effroi) que thématique. L'effroi et la compassion s'impliquent aussi dans le message de l'oeuvre et servent à exposer ses aspects didactiques. Enfin, à l'exemple de deux pièces *Roméo et Juliette* et *Cymbeline*, l'auteur précise des liens entre la romance shakespeareienne et gothique.

Le cinquième chapitre présente des rapports et des implications de Shakespeare et de son oeuvre dans le phénomène propre à la dernière décade du XVIII^e siècle, c'est-à-dire le drame gothique. Le phénomène est dessiné d'abord par rapport à un contexte plus large, y compris la discussion autour la condition du drame anglais du tournant des siècles, et ensuite il concerne des changements à l'intérieur du théâtre. L'auteur attire l'attention sur des idées proposées par Joanna Baillie. L'oeuvre et l'attitude théorique de Baillie sont analysées dans le contexte de l'implication aussi bien du drame gothique que celui de Shakespeare dans une réforme ou bien une nécessité, postulée souvent, du renouvellement de la tradition nationale du drame et des difficultés que ce projet rencontrait. Dans la partie suivante l'auteur aborde la question d'employer dans le théâtre des éléments surnaturels et des transpositions qu'ont subis des motifs shakespeareiens dans les pièces dites gothiques, surtout dans *The Castle Spectre (Le Spectre du château)* de Lewis.

L'auteur souligne dans la conclusion que d'un côté le gothique littéraire précoce est, comme le prouve le matériel étudié, imprégné de la présence de Shakespeare qui est une conséquence directe de la présence du poète au XVIII^e siècle ; de l'autre côté l'auteur démontre des différences principales dans la compréhension du caractère shakespeareien,

en particulier concernant la tragédie avec des éléments surnaturels, comme *Hamlet* ou *Macbeth*. L'auteur montre des modalités de compréhension du caractère shakespearien du gothique anglais précoce. Aussi, montre-t-il la possibilité de rapporter le gothique à Shakespeare (ainsi qu'aux autres écrivains et autres oeuvres qui n'appartiennent pas au classique du gothique anglais), et prouve que l'anachronisme, consistant à traiter ou reformuler la notion de gothique permettant de dire que le poète, sous l'influence de sa réception par les créateurs du gothique est «gothicisé», est justifié.

Mots-clés: William Shakespeare, culte de Shakespeare, réception, influence, gothique littéraire, roman du XVIII^e siècle, drame du XVIII^e siècle, théâtre, acteur shakespearien, roman d'horreur, compassion, phénomènes surnaturels.

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