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Diane Hoeveler

Marquette University, diane.hoeveler@marquette.edu

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GOTHIC ADAPTATION, 1765-1830

Diane Long Hoeveler

Although the gothic has largely figured as a fictional genre, its cultural and literary manifestations extended into the poetic, dramatic, and operatic fields. There were more than one thousand gothic novels and chapbooks written in England between 1764-1830, a large number of which attempted to defend the increasingly serious threats posed against the monarchy and aristocracy more generally in England. The gothic originally began as an ideologically conservative genre committed to shoring up the claims of primogeniture and inheritance by entail. Novels such as Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1765) and Clara Reeve's *Old English Baron* (1778) were concerned with unjust tyrants, imprisonments, escapes, disinheritances, wrongful claims on an estate, threatened assaults on virginal females, and the eventual triumph of the "true" aristocrat as rightful heir. Increasingly, however, the gothic developed a middle class and "whiggish" ideology that was rabidly Protestant and nationalistic. This chapter will survey the various forms that gothic novels have taken as they have been adapted for different audiences and for different ideological purposes.

Gothic bluebooks and chapbooks have been something of the step-child of gothic scholarship, most frequently ignored because of their derivative nature, as well as the charge that they lack artistic sophistication, depth, or significance (Varma; Frank; Watt). Montague Summers claims that they were the reading material of "schoolboys, prentices, servant-girls, by the whole of that vast population which longed to be in the fashion, to steep themselves in the Gothic Romance." They are, in fact, commonly referred to as "the remainder trade" or "the trade Gothic" (84-5). More recently, William St. Clair has claimed that, in fact, the chapbooks were read by "adults in the country areas, and young people in both the town and the country. It would be a mistake, therefore, to regard the ancient popular print as confined to those whose education fitted them for nothing longer or textually more difficult. Many readers, whether adults or children, lived at the

boundary between the reading and the non-reading nations. They were the marginal reading constituency whose numbers fell when prices rose and rose when prices fell” (343-44).

Lewis’s *The Monk* and the novels of Ann Radcliffe produced by far the majority of the imaginative content of gothic chapbooks. Lewis’s novel was so sprawling that there were at least three separate tales within it, each of which could be focused on as the content for an entire chapbook. The first and perhaps the most popular excerpt from the novel concerned the tale of the “Bleeding Nun,” derived from Germanic sources and adapted by Lewis to supplement the story of Raymond and Agnes, the pregnant nun held captive below the Convent of St. Clare. This source tale frequently appeared in a variety of dramatic adaptations, in operettas, and even in paper dolls that were sold to amuse children (Hoeveler 2010b). But, while the emphasis in the Bleeding Nun tale appears to be horror and the fear of the dead walking, the story also relies on the familiar tropes of the profligate nun, the unchaste and undead Sister who continues to seek out male victims for her insatiable lust, much like a proto-vampire. The Preface to *The Castle of Lindenberg; or the history of Raymond & Agnes, a Romance* (London: S. Fisher, 1799), one of the many chapbook adaptations of *The Monk*, states its anti-Catholic agenda quite clearly:

The subject of the following pages is founded on those remoter days of our ancestors when, blinded by superstitions, they sacrificed their dearest interest to the will of monastic fanatics who, under the pretence of religion, committed the most cruel actions; and with a zeal, deaf to all those tender feelings which distinguished a true Christian, let fall their revenge on all those who were so unfortunate as to deviate from the path they had drawn out for them to pursue.

One of the most typical of chapbook adaptations of *The Monk* is *Father Innocent, Abbot of the Capuchins; Or, The Crimes of Cloisters*, an anonymously production published by Thomas Tegg in 1803 (see Figure One). Although the names are changed, the chapbook is a virtual plagiarism

of the novel, now focused on the activities of Father Innocent (the ironic revision of Ambrosio's name) and Philario (the Rosario/Matilda character).

[INSERT]

Figure One: Frontispiece to *Father Innocent* (London: Thomas Tegg, 1803). Reproduced courtesy of the Sadleir-Black Collection, University of Virginia Library.

Another chapbook based on a few of *The Monk*'s many subplots is *Amalgro & Claude; or Monastic Murder; exemplified in the dreadful doom of an unfortunate nun* (1803). This text is a mixture of robbers, the bleeding nun legend, while the Faust figure appears as the Great Bashaw, an orientaling trope, and the evil prioress tries to force the beautiful heroine Claude (Agnes in the original source text) to drink poison rather than shame the convent.

Scholars most frequently claim that the short gothic tale or chapbook grew out of the earlier tradition of cheap broadside (because printed on one side of the paper) ballads or street literature, and certainly one can see in the shorter eight-page chapbooks the residue of this direct oral to written tradition (James). Gary Kelly has recently observed that this early street literature is characterized by its “emphasis on destiny, chance, fortune and levelling forces such as death, express[ing] the centuries-old experience of common people....with little or no control over the conditions of their lives....For these people, life was a lottery” (2002; II. x). According to Kelly, the fact that the lower-classes were the target audience of these early productions is also obvious from their very heavy use of narrative repetition, their emphasis on incident and adventure, and their episodic and anecdotal structures. The other major difference between

lower and middle-class reading materials is the absence in the lower-class works of any extended depictions of subjectivity or emotions in the protagonists (II. x; xv). The earlier “lottery mentality” that was operative in the lower-class chapbooks was eventually replaced during the late eighteenth century by what Kelly calls a dominant “investment mentality” that we can see evidenced in the emerging middle-class chapbooks. This “investment mentality” was characterized by the Protestant ideologies of self-improvement, self-advancement, modernization, and self-discipline, or “the middle-class discourse of merit” (II; x; xxiii). Increasingly hostile to lower-class street literature which it saw as politically subversive and at the same time spiritually reactionary, the middle class effectively displaced street literature by co-opting it.

Clearly delimited as a genre that flourished between 1770-1820, the gothic chapbook has been discussed in largely accusatory tones by earlier critics who blame it for the eventual decline of the canonical gothic novel’s status and popularity. As there are at least one thousand gothic chapbooks currently extant in Britain alone (Potter; Koch, Mayo), it is virtually impossible to provide anything other than a snapshot or freeze-frame portrait of the genre. Along with Isaac Crookenden (fl. 1777-1820), Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson (1779-1831) was one of the most prolific writers of gothic chapbooks, the author of some twenty-nine volumes of fiction and more than 100 short works, at least half of which are gothic.

Wilkinson’s chief rival in the chapbook business, Isaac Crookenden took up the pen to compose his own denunciation of poor young women forced into convents or sometimes underground cells in his *The Distressed Nun* (1802). In this confused tale connecting at least four separate subplots, the lovely Herselia di Brindoli is tricked by her evil and greedy brother into a convent where she comes under the control of the abbess, “an unfeeling monster, [who]

tendered the worldly-separating veil to our distressed heroine, who resolutely refused it.” In revenge, the abbess imprisoned Herselia “in one of the most horrid dungeons under the foundation of the monastery; where many a victim of conventual austerity had lingered out a wretched existence. Here was the lovely sufferer doomed to sustain the double malice of her brother’s remorseless cruelty, and the abbess’s vindictive spirit.” But as this is a gothic chapbook, the morality will be swift and sure: the evil brother is poisoned by his mistress and Herselia is eventually released and placed in full possession of her family’s estates.

A chapbook that was published anonymously in London in 1803 plays on the name of the major character in *Venus in the Cloister*, that is, *The Nun; or, Memoirs of Angelique; An Interesting Tale*. Although one would hope to see similarities between the novel and the chapbook, there are none. And, although the frontispiece prominently features a nun exposing her breast to a monk, almost in imitation of the garden scene in Lewis’s *The Monk*, there is only the hint of such a corresponding scene in the chapbook. Clearly, the chapbook has been constructed to appeal to a reading public that would have been familiar with the Lewis text, even in chapbook form, and perhaps they would have known the heroine’s name was associated with *Venus* and therefore expect a quasi-pornographic work. One can only assume they were disappointed by the tameness and predictably of the actual work that they either borrowed or purchased (See Figure Two):

[INSERT]

Figure Two: Frontispiece to *The Nun: Or Memoirs of Angelique: An Interesting Tale*. 1794.

Rpt. London: Tegg and Castleman, 1803. Reproduced by courtesy of the Pforzheimer Collection, New York Public Library.

This eighteen-page chapbook presents the usual account of a young woman forced into a convent against her wishes by her father, who has offered her up in prayerful sacrifice if one of his shipping ventures returns a profit. Although Angelique is already in love with Ferdinand, her father is unrelenting and so she takes her vows and lives for one year as a nun. It is at this point that the mother superior informs her that a young novice is to share her room and, as one expects, the young novice turns out to be Ferdinand (the name of the love interest in Radcliffe's *Sicilian Romance*) in disguise. The lovers repair quickly to a chapel where they catch a monk and nun *en flagrante*, and so the monk agrees to marry them and help them escape in exchange for their silence about his nocturnal activities in the confessional. Much is made of underground tunnels connecting the convent and the monastery, and much is made as well about the folly of maintaining allegiance to her vows as a nun when she was forced into them against her will. Typical Protestant appeals are made by Ferdinand to Angelique's "conscience":

‘Why would you intreat your maker to eradicate those very feelings he has himself implanted? Why pray for their annihilation only for the purpose of adopting such a line of conduct as he never meant you to pursue? since, if he had, some impulse would have arisen in your own to aid you in the prosecution of it. Conscience, my sweet Angelique, conscience would have whispered to your soul your father’s cruel adoption, if it had been essential to your salvation, or if the Almighty had looked with pleasure on the sacrifice. But believe me, when I tell you in the words of St. Evremont, though much more seriously than he, when dissuading the Duchess of Mazarine that your perseverance is not virtue, but, in

fact, a temptation of the Demon, who envious of the glory of God, will not suffer our admiration to be given to his most beautiful work.’ (10)

The reference to the “Duchess of Mazarine,” one of King Charles II’s French Catholic mistresses, is also a particularly telling one, as it was her biography in a highly fictional adaptation that was the basis for Aphra Behn’s *The History of a Nun*. As we know, Angelique allows herself to be married to Ferdinand and, shortly after the ceremony, they attend a masquerade ball in which several of the participants arrive dressed in clerical costume, suggesting a performative quality to this critique of Catholicism. While dancing with a Cardinal and then an Abbé, Angelique is separated from her husband and suddenly finds herself in the arms of a Monk who turns out to be her father in disguise (the scene in the frontispiece illustration). Confronting her for her duplicity and renunciation of her vows, he condemns and threatens her and finally concludes this, the most dramatic scene in the work, by plunging a knife into Ferdinand’s breast. He ends his days as an actual monk in the monastery of Chartreuse, doing penance for this murder, and he learns just before he dies that his daughter gave birth to a stillborn child and then promptly died herself. The work ends with a denunciation of parental tyranny and an unmistakable slap at the Catholic Church for fostering such a system:

May [this tale], perhaps, sooner or later induce some father to decline the adoption of violent measures, when mild ones have been tried without effect; for when a parent attempts to curb the natural right of choice in his child, authority swells into tyranny, and the inherent spirit of free-will bursting its bonds, flies into extremes that but for such oppression it would have shuddered to think of. Filial affection is absorbed by this grand injustice, and the parent loses his child, and the daughter her father, by his unbounded exertion of that power, a moderate use of which might have insured long life and happiness to both. To tear my Angelique from connections the most delicate and natural, in order to the accomplishment of an absurd vow, is an action I now wonder how I could be guilty of, since my reason has learnt to appreciate with more accuracy the goodness of the Deity and the rights of human nature. (18)

Gothic Ballads, with their dead babies, seduced nuns, abandoned mermaids, undead knights, and malicious monks, enjoyed a heyday in Germany and England from the late eighteenth through the early nineteenth centuries. Steeped in folk and oral traditions, these neo-primitivist ballads were a transitional genre—part oral, part written—and as such they mediated in their very existence a culture in rapid flux. The ballad is perhaps one of the most unstable of genres in its implications, highly traditional and providential, while its later manifestations appear to advocate the need to renounce superstitions in favor of the emerging rationalistic code of conduct that bourgeois Europe was tentatively embracing. Bishop Thomas Percy’s “Appendix II: On the Ancient Metrical Romances” attached to his *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765) is particularly telling in regard to the presence of ballads within the larger gothic imaginary. Percy’s need to construct a dark Northern origin for Britain, shrouded in mists of obscurity, suggests for Siskin “a mysteriously romantic time that gave way to an enlightened present; it also includes our ongoing fascination with what Gothicism—with its strange mix of chivalry haunted by trips to Catholic countries and hints of the forbidden East—was and, to a large extent, still is....a site for the symbolic violence of selective forgetting and remembering” (1988; 11). Perhaps the best known adaptations of the gothic aesthetic can be seen in the ballads by William Wordsworth (1770-1850), for instance, “The Thorn,” and Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s (1772-1834) “The Rhymer of the Ancient Mariner,” both of them published in the *Lyrical Ballads* (1798).

The late eighteenth-century European ballad craze originated in the publication of Percy’s *Reliques* which was enthusiastically received in Germany and then made its way back to England, exerting a powerful influence on Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Lewis, and Scott.

Frank Sayers's *Dramatic Sketches of the Ancient Northern Mythology* (1790) was also popular in both England and Germany and seemed to promise the rise of a new type of literature steeped in Anglo-German romantic sensibilities. But even more gothically potent, the supernatural poetic tales of Gottfried August Bürger (1748-94) were translated from German into English by the early 1790s, circulated widely in manuscript form, and were finally published in the *Monthly Magazine* in 1796. Widely hailed as inaugurating a new and vigorous literary style, Bürger himself admitted that he had been initially influenced by the traditional English ballad "Sweet William's Ghost." Walter Scott began his literary career by translating Bürger's "Lenora" as "William and Helen" in 1796, remembering years later how the "fanciful wildness" of "Lenora" as read by Anna Barbauld to an Edinburgh literary society "electrified" the reading public and inaugurating a new era in poetic sensibilities. In concert with the young Scott and his less than enthusiastic collaborator Robert Southey, Lewis attempted to exploit the Bürger craze by publishing sixty ballads in his *Tales of Wonder* (1801), a two-volume assortment of both original compositions (mainly in volume one) and adaptations or translations taken from the German as well as earlier British ballads by Jonson, Dryden, Gray, Burns, Percy and others (volume two). In a 1799 letter to Scott, Lewis wrote that his collection would feature "a Ghost or a Witch [as the] sine-qua-non ingredient in all the dishes, of which I mean to compose my hobgoblin repast" (qtd. Mortensen 2004; 81). By translating *volk* ballads such as Herder's "The Erl-King's Daughter," and "Elver's Hoh," Bürger's "Der Wilde Jäger" and Goethe's "The Erl-King," and positioning them alongside earlier British works such as Jonson's "The Witches' Song" or Gray's "The Fatal Sisters," Lewis attempted to forge nothing less than an alternative supernatural literary genealogy for British poetry, one that seamlessly incorporated the Germanic as part of its heritage, rather than as a "foreign importation" (see Mortensen 82).

Gothic opera can best be understood as what came to be known as “rescue operas.” Very similar in plot to the earliest gothic novels and, in fact, frequently borrowing the gothic’s settings, characters, and themes, these operas are “sung gothic,” or an oral and performative transmission of the gothic mode. They most frequently focused on two themes: the domestic ritual sacrifice of a woman or the unlawful political imprisonment of innocent victims of tyranny (see Charlton). In both cases, the rescue operas staged elaborate releases of these victims only after their heroic efforts allowed them to prove their worth, hence the operas collaborated in promoting a secularizing bourgeois agenda of earning one’s salvation through one’s own efforts. Extremely popular throughout Europe from roughly 1780-1840, gothic operas deserve to be recognized as important performative ideological markers of the gothic imaginary.

Critical consensus argues that the gothic/rescue opera had its first incarnation in Friedrich von Schiller’s robber-rescue drama, *Die Räuber* (1781). Translated into French as *Les Voleurs* by Friedel and de Bonneville in 1785, the drama was then translated into English by Alexander Tytler in 1792 and seems to have influenced the first English opera with gothic features, Samuel Arnold’s *The Banditti, or Love’s Labyrinth* (1781; with John O’Keefe). From the beginning, *Die Räuber* was viewed as an amalgam of French revolutionary spirit and Germanic hyperbole, a drama that “seemed to epitomize everything that was menacing in recent Continental literature and politics” (Mortensen 155). By the 1790s these gothic/rescue operas were extremely popular, both in Britain and France, and adaptations of popular gothic novels about victimization and persecution reached all classes in a variety of theatrical and operatic venues. The staged form of these plots stressed the dramatic effects, and, as the Terror’s impact spread, gothic villains began to appear in increasingly horrific manifestations in both England as well as in Germany and

France. In B. J. Marsollier des Vivetières's very popular and long-running opera *Camille, ou le Souterrain* we have here a miniature reenactment of the most gothic of interpolated episodes in Madame de Genlis's novelistic "letters on education," *Adèle et Théodore* (1782; trans 1783), *The affecting history of the Duchess of C***, in which an Italian noblewoman is imprisoned by her husband for nine years before she is released, a motif that would appear fairly quickly in Radcliffe's *A Sicilian Romance* (1790) and its imitations (Eliza Parsons's *The Castle of Wolfenbach*, 1793). The use of the imprisonment and rescue motif seems to have originated in the private domestic sphere and then moved to the public, political realm in works that feature male aristocrats under siege by hostile, usually "revolutionary" forces.

Gothic Drama can most fruitfully be examined by recognizing that it was not a 'pure' genre, but rather a hybridized form that made use of a number of formulaic 'gothic devices,' such as the foreboding or premonitory dream, the uncanny double, the confusion between the real and the fantastic, the devilish villain with quasi-supernatural powers, and the use of cathedrals or exotic locales as settings. Gothic Drama can be divided into early, middle, and late periods. The early period, 1780-1800, is characterized by the gothic dramas like Horace Walpole's *Mysterious Mother*, Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (1797), or James Boaden's and Henry Siddons's dramatic adaptations of Radcliffe's novels (Summers provides a listing of the various plays based on Radcliffe's novels [1941: 141-42]), as well as those based on Lewis [1941: 97-98; 419-26]). The middle period saw the development of the gothic melodrama and is best represented by the first of this kind: Thomas Holcroft's *A Tale of Mystery* (1801). The later period saw the revival of the earliest works, but more importantly there were new plays that were melodramatic adaptations of popular gothic poems, stories, or novels, most notably James Planché's *The*

Vampire: or, The Bride of the Isles (1820), and Richard B. Peake's *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein* (1823). These last two plays were consistently revived and held their popularity through the middle of the nineteenth century, indeed Dion Boucicault would write another version of *The Vampire* in 1852, featuring Alan Ruby, a Restoration vampire who is finally dispatched by Dr. Rees, a student of the supernatural, with a charmed bullet (Murray, 2004: 189). And Fitzball in 1855 would write the English libretto for a four act opera by Edward Loder, *Raymond and Agnes*, itself an earlier melodramatic adaptation of one of the inset tales within Lewis's novel *The Monk* (1796). The multiple adaptations of *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* (1897) would spawn in mutated form the later film franchises that became so prominent within the horror film genre.

Although a ghost was briefly used in Harriet Lee's *The Mysterious Marriage* (1793), the ghost made its most spectacular return to the British stage in Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre* (Drury Lane, 1797), generally considered the most popular gothic drama performed in England in the late 1790s. Lewis himself in his footnotes to the drama acknowledged that the "Dream of Francis in Schiller's *Robbers*" was an important influence on his play (Evans 167). It was performed eighty-three times between December of 1797 and 1800, an incredible number for any stage play at the time, and it continued to be popular and produced until 1825. The appearances of Lewis's female ghost were roundly criticized, and the drama was in fact viewed as the epitome of Germanic (read: Jacobin) tastes and therefore was considered revolutionary and dangerous to the British public. Although the ghosts in Shakespeare's plays had been popular since 1700, the subject of supernatural revenants on stage assumed a new urgency in an era where religious debates were almost as contentious as political ones (see Hoeveler 2010a).

James Boaden (1762-1839) was actually the first gothic dramatist to use a male ghost dressed in armor and seen from behind a veil of gauze in his production of *The Fontainville Forest* (1794), based on Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest*. Henry Siddons's production of the *Sicilian Romance; or the Apparition of the Cliff* (Covent Garden, 1794), uses the device of a daughter saved by what appears to be her mother's ghost. This drama undercuts the supernatural element by revealing that the mother had been imprisoned by her evil husband so that he could bigamously marry a young and wealthy heiress. The mystery of her ghostly appearances at night, seen by many around the cliff where she is imprisoned, are resolved when the daughter Julia unbars a door and her mother magically emerges, as if from the dead.

In addition, bleeding nuns, a scythe-wielding Death, and a variety of "ambulant phantoms" were also stock figures in the gothic repertoire. *Raymond and Agnes, or The Castle of Lindenbergh* (Covent Garden, 1797) with "Music by Mr. Reeve," was an early adaptation that advertised itself on the playbill as "founded chiefly on the Principal Episode in *The Monk*." Lewis himself adapted his own material in his gothic drama *Raymond and Agnes* (1809), and like the earlier versions, he focused his dramatic version on the legend of the bleeding nun, although it is necessary to point out that this legend was actually a transmogrification of the earlier Germanic demon lover ballad. In Lewis's play Agnes is being held captive in Lindenburg Castle and, with the assistance of Raymond, makes her escape disguised as the Ghost of the Bleeding Nun, a legend that the family continued to evoke years after the original nun's death. The plot becomes complicated when the ghost herself actually does make appearances and the material realm uneasily coexists with the spiritual in an uncanny dance of the (un)dead with the living. In their presentations of actual ghosts onstage, both Lewis's play and Boaden's earlier *Fontainville Forest* relied on the same visual technique: a sheet of gauze producing a blue-grey haze and

hanging between the audience and the ghost. The ghostly effect was achieved by using the green halves of the shades of the Argand lamps that were placed in the wings of the stage (Warner 148).

John William Polidori's novella *The Vampyre* (1819) was written in 1816 while he was living in Switzerland with Lord Byron, functioning as his traveling companion and personal physician. Polidori appears to have been influenced by the short and unfinished ghost story written by Byron, *A Fragment* (1819), as well as Goethe's 'Die Braut von Korinth' (1797), Robert Southey's *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801), and John Herman Merivale's *The Dead Men of Pest* (1802), all of them featuring fictional vampires who are noticeably different from the aristocratic and human Lord Ruthven of Polidori's tale. Originally pirated and published under the name of Byron, the novella went through five editions in its first year (Macdonald, 1991: 190) and was praised by Goethe as Byron's masterpiece (Butler, 1956: 55). Polidori had to threaten legal action to have his authorship acknowledged, and even then he was paid only 30 pounds by Henry Colburn, the publisher (Stiles, 2010: 798). The story of a seductive vampire who preys on the blood of beautiful virgins made its way quickly to the stage and during the nineteenth century there were approximately 35 different versions on British, French, and American stages, most of them indebted to Polidori's novella as their source (Stuart, 1994: 3). James Robinson Planché, author of 72 original plays and 104 adaptations/translations, adapted Polidori's novella for an August 1820 London adaptation, *The Vampire; or, The Bride of the Isles*. This is the best-known and longest-running version on the British stage, although it is also indebted to the French melodramatic adaptation of the novella, *Le Vampyre: mélodrama en trois actes* (June 1820) by Charles Nodier, Pierre Carmouche, and Achille de Jouffroy (Stuart, 1994: 41). Sleep-walking, hypnotic trances, foreboding dreams and visions, and optical illusions figure

prominently in Planché's version and suggest that the supernatural has begun to be figured within the gothic as a biological force that science will eventually be able to explain and control. On a lighter note, the play was moved to Scotland for its setting because the theatre troupe happened to have a set of kilts left over from an earlier production of *Macbeth*.

Mary Shelley's novel *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818) is, along with Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, one of the seminal gothic texts of the British tradition. It too was quickly adapted for the stage, first by Richard B. Peake as *Presumption, or the Fate of Frankenstein* (1823), a play that was thought by many to be impious, so much so that it was picketed and leaflets were distributed against its performance (Cox, 1992: 386). Despite all of the negative publicity, the play was a success, with the *Theatrical Observer* (1 August 1823) claiming that: "The moral here is striking. It points out that man cannot pursue objects beyond his obviously prescribed powers without incurring the penalty of shame and regret at his audacious folly" (Cox, 1992: 387). In this version, the creature is nameless, but listed in the Larpent version as 'the demon' (Cox, 1992: 387), while Forry has noted that in this adaptation the Creature is 'Calibinized' (Forry, 1990: 22), perhaps revealing the extent to which Shakespeare's works were still part of cultural parlance. In this version, Victor has been driven to impious experiments because he has been separated from his true love, Agatha De Lacey. Elizabeth is now the sister of Victor and Clerval is engaged to marry her; Fritz, a servant to Frankenstein, is introduced, along with his wife Madame Ninon, and 'gypsies' and 'villagers' also appear in order to explore class issues. Clerval and Elizabeth sing of their love for each other, while Frankenstein darkly acknowledges his belief in the devil, who he is sure is motivating him to pursue his strange and dangerous scientific experiments: 'It's the Devil - for I'm sure *he's* at the bottom of it, and that makes me so nervous' (qtd. Cox, 1992: 392). Through

a series of complications, Agatha finds herself suddenly confronted by the Demon, who at first causes her to fall into a river, and then rescues her just as Victor appears and shoots the Demon in order to free Agatha from his arms (Act 2).

This first dramatic adaptation of the *Frankenstein* narrative continued to evolve with the development of filmic technologies into one of the most potent and enduring of cultural representations. Along with adaptations of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the mythic figures of the lower-class monster and the predatory aristocrat have worked to keep the gothic alive in bourgeois popular consciousness throughout the twentieth century. Adaptations of the central gothic narrative—sexual anxiety, social and religious upheaval, and revolutionary political transformation—continue to proliferate today in a variety of forms (see Nelson 2012). Their longevity suggests that the appeal of this genre/aesthetic meets persistent and powerful cultural needs.

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