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# French and German Influences on the Horror Novels of Lewis, Maturin, Le Fanu, and Stoker

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FRENCH AND GERMAN INFLUENCES ON THE HORROR NOVELS  
OF LEWIS, MATURIN, LE FANU, AND STOKER

BY

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A THESIS  
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## PREFACE

The Gothic horror novel is a fascinating subject for study. Its development and the influences upon this development provide much opportunity for investigation and research. This thesis will examine the French and German influences on the horror novels of Matthew Lewis, Charles Maturin, Joseph Le Fanu, and Bram Stoker.

I would like to thank Dr. Garland O. Gunter for his help in editing this thesis and his invaluable suggestions for the improvement of my style and content. My special thanks must go to Dr. Irby B. Brown, who directed my work and gave me many hints for improvement and suggested the sources from which my research was begun.

The English Gothic novel has long been of interest to scholars and has found wide acceptance among the reading public as well.<sup>1</sup> The Gothic novel is generally divided by critics into two types, the novel of suspense and the novel of horror. The category into which a novel falls is usually determined by the amount of description given to the details of the torture of prisoners, the deaths of certain characters, and the sexual adventures of the victims and the villains. These criteria are used by such scholars as Edith Birkhead, Davendra Varma, Montague Summers, Lionel Stevenson, and George Saintsbury.<sup>2</sup> At its simplest, the novel of suspense is separated from the novel of horror by the attention given to scenes of gore and lust. The more excruciating the details of torture and lusting, the further a novel is placed into the category of horror.

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<sup>1</sup>See: Edith Birkhead, The Tale of Terror (New York, 1963); Montague Summers, The Gothic Quest (London, 1938); Davendra P. Varma, The Gothic Flame (London, 1957); Lionel Stevenson, The English Novel (Boston, 1960); Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (New York, 1927).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

Critics generally agree that the Gothic novel has most or all of the following characteristics: an exotic setting, whether it be an old castle, an unknown forest, or the Orient; a villain of unusual powers, almost always supernatural; an innocent heroine or heroines, victimized by the arch-villain; a hero, who, after suffering many setbacks, succeeds in the overthrow of the villain; and in most cases a happy ending, which reunites the heroine and the hero as young lovers.<sup>3</sup>

With this understanding of the strictures of the Gothic novel, let us move on to its beginnings in England. Almost every critic cites Horace Walpole's Castle of Otranto as the prototype of those that followed.<sup>4</sup>

The Castle of Otranto does not have much literary merit, but it is important, because of its effect on later writers, who borrowed constantly and faithfully from "Otranto's" precedents.<sup>5</sup> These precedents are the foundations of the Gothic tradition and are found in abundance in The Castle of Otranto. The old, foreboding

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<sup>3</sup>See: Birkhead; Varma; Summers; Stevenson; Railo; Paul B. Anderson, "English Drama Transferred to Prevost's Fiction". MLN, XLIX; B. M. Woodbridge, "Romantic Tendencies in the Novels of Abbe Prevost", PMLA, XXVI; Mario Praz, The Romantic Agony, trans. from the Italian by Angus Davidson, (London, 1933).

<sup>4</sup>See: Birkhead, 23; Railo, 68; Stevenson, 182; Summers, 75; Varma, 64; George Saintsbury, The English Novel (London, 1919) p.159.

<sup>5</sup>See: Birkhead, 16; Railo, 118; Summers, 24; Varma, 10.

castle itself provides a setting, which is the archeotype of the Gothic fortress, honeycombed with secret passages and frequented by supernatural beings. There is a villain, Manfred, who is the usurping ruler of the castle, and who attempts to force his murdered son's betrothed, Isabella, to marry him in order that his line might endure. There is the wronged heir to the castle, Theodore, who is the hero and has lived as a peasant, because his true identity was unknown. There is the ghost of the good Alfonso, who seeks to have injustices righted and to have Theodore restored to his rightful place. Alfonso stalks the castle, at times stepping directly from his own portrait in the castle gallery. Naturally there are the lovers, Theodore and Isabella, who are happily reunited and restored to their rightful places at the close.

Walpole himself said of his new novel:

If this air of the miraculous is excused, the reader will find nothing else unworthy of his perusal. There is no bombast, no similes, flowers, digressions, or unnecessary descriptions. Everything tends directly to the catastrophe.

Although Walpole found little to criticize in his own work, if one judges from his statement, The Castle of Otranto created no great stir among the critics or among the reading public, and it is recognized today for its

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<sup>6</sup>Horace Walpole, "Preface to the First Edition of The Castle of Otranto", Seven Masterpieces of Gothic Horror (New York, 1963), p. 15.



influences upon the later novels, not for its own intrinsic merits.<sup>7</sup> Walpole's characters, his settings, his plots, and even specific incidents or devices appear time and time again in the novels of such authors as Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, Sophia Lee, Harriet Lee, Anne Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, Charles Maturin, Joseph Le Fanu, and Bram Stoker.<sup>8</sup>

With Walpole having set the style for the Gothic novel, imitators soon followed who borrowed freely from his innovations and sometimes added to them. A noted successor to Walpole was Miss Clara Reeve, who acknowledged her debt to the author from "Strawberry Hill" in the preface to her novel The Old English Baron, which was originally published under the title of The Champion of Virtue in 1777.<sup>9</sup> Miss Reeve's story embodies the Gothic castle, the unacknowledged heir to the castle, a ghost, secret passages, and evil villain, and an innocent young maiden, who falls under the power of the villain.

Following Miss Reeve in style and in similar novels were the Misses Sophia and Harriet Lee, and Charlotte Smith, all of whom wrote stories, which showed the

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<sup>7</sup>See: Birkhead, 17; Railo, 118; Summers, 13; Varma, 12; and Stevenson, 127.

<sup>8</sup>See: Birkhead, 24; Varma, 35; and Stevenson, 139.

<sup>9</sup>Summers, 40.

definite influence of Walpole and Miss Reeve.<sup>10</sup> However the most famous practitioner of the Gothic novel between 1764 and 1795 was Mrs. Anne Radcliffe.<sup>11</sup> Beginning in 1789, Mrs. Radcliffe began a string of Gothic romances, which achieved unparalleled success in her time, and, which had great influence upon other writers, such as Matthew Lewis and Charles Maturin.<sup>12</sup> Inspired by the publication of Sophia Lee's The Recess in 1785, Mrs. Radcliffe published her first novel, The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne, in 1789.<sup>13</sup> Then followed the Romance of the Forest in 1792.<sup>14</sup> Next, in 1794, she brought out The Mysteries of Udolpho, the classic Gothic suspense novel.<sup>15</sup> This novel has the mysterious, somber setting, Udolpho Castle; the cruel tyrant, Montoni; the persecuted maiden, Emily; unburied corpses; and ghosts. Mrs. Radcliffe was the epitome of the Gothic suspense school and it was her success which helped to

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<sup>10</sup>See: Birkhead, 13; Summers, 40; Stevenson, 151; Varma, 33; and James R. Foster, "The Abbe Prevost and the English Novel", PMLA, XLII, 443.

<sup>11</sup>See: Summers, 30; Varma, 33; and Stevenson, 164.

<sup>12</sup>See: Birkhead, 60; Varma, 128; Summers, 90; and Stevenson, 177.

<sup>13</sup>Birkhead, 39.

<sup>14</sup>See: Birkhead, 53; Summers, 86; and Varma, 94.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

foster the Gothic horror school.<sup>16</sup> Young Matthew Lewis, himself, stated that the success of The Mysteries of Udolpho caused him to try his ability with a Gothic romance.<sup>17</sup> The result was The Monk, the prototype of the Gothic horror novel. The uproar over Lewis's clinical and full descriptions of decaying corpses and the sex act, brought the book great publicity; critical condemnation; and caused wide spread sales.<sup>18</sup>

With The Monk the Gothic horror novel became pre-eminent as the novel form in England.<sup>19</sup> The horror writers, spurred by Lewis's success, brought out an amazing quantity of novels, with each succeeding one trying to outdo the last in its ghastly descriptions and details.<sup>20</sup>

What caused the shift from suspense to horror and what were its sources? Certainly, Matthew Lewis's The Monk had much to do with this change, since its success with the reading public could not be denied by his contemporaries and they were quick to imitate

<sup>16</sup>See: Varma, 103; Birkhead, 70; Summers, 228; and Stevenson, 207.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>See: Varma, 140; Railo, 176; Summers, 217; and Birkhead, 65.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>See: Varma, 131; Railo, 342; and Summers, 295.

Lewis.<sup>21</sup> Where did Lewis find his examples of gore and lust? There were no prominent examples in English of the horror romanticism of Lewis and those that followed such as Maturin, Le Fanu, Stoker and Charlotte Dacre.<sup>22</sup> Scholars generally turn to the French and German writers like L'Abbe Prevost, Marquis de Sade, Anthony Hamilton, Johann Goethe, Christiane Naubert, Karl Cramer, and Musaeus.<sup>23</sup> These writers and others like them established patterns, drew story lines, and liberally used the ghost stories and violent stories of the continent. English writers studying on the continent discovered these stories and used them. Also many of these prominent writers found their works translated into English and achieved influence in this manner.<sup>24</sup>

To relate the influence of these French and German writers individually and as a whole upon the great English horror writers will be the purpose of this thesis. Critics such as Montague Summers, Edith Birkhead, Eino Railo, Mario Praz, and Davendra Varma have probed the history of the Gothic novel in general and have mentioned these influences in passing, but none have given close scrutiny to their

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<sup>21</sup>See: Varma, 135; Railo, 286; Summers, 232; and Birkhead, 75.

<sup>22</sup>See: Birkhead, 80; Praz, 118; Varma, 131; Summers, 218; Woodbridge, 324; and Foster, 448.

<sup>23</sup>See: Praz, 121; Varma, 36; Birkhead, 68; and Railo, 73.

<sup>24</sup>See: Varma, 35; Praz, 116; Summers, 112.

effect on the horror romantic or the schauerromantik. There fore the influence of these writers upon the novels of Matthew Gregory "Monk" Lewis, Charles Robert Maturin, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu, and Bram Stoker will be shown through examples drawn from them and critical appraisal of of the foreign influence. The four authors represent the best of their craft and their major works have survived the test of time in the minds of Gothic enthusiasts.<sup>25</sup> It is proposed to firstst discuss the French influence beginning with L'Abbe Prevost and the Marquis de Sade. Then the German influences weill be discussed starting with Goethe and Schiller. After the French and German writers and their influences have been pointed out, their direct and indirect influences will be shown in the works of Matthew Lewis, Charles Robert Maturin, Joseph Le Fanu and Bram Stoker. The conclusion will include a discussion of Rosemary's Baby by Ira Levin, a Gothic horror story published in 1967, which will point out that the Gothic horror is still a popular and viable form of the novel.

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<sup>25</sup>See: Varma, 205; Birkhead, 225; and Peter Penzoldt, The Supernatural in Fiction (New York, 1965) p. 72.

The major critics, Summers, Varma, Birkhead, Foster, and Woodbridge agree that Gothic horror writers in England were greatly influenced in their development of techniques, story lines, and settings by their French and German predecessors and contemporaries.<sup>26</sup> Their influence needs further, more detailed examination.

Among the French, the author most often mentioned by critics as having major influence upon the suspense and horror novelists is L'Abbe Prevost.<sup>27</sup> Antoine Francois Prevost, born in 1697, wrote several novels and many critical articles which, although they appeared in the age of reason, gave many examples of the techniques and ideals to be found in the later schauerromantik.<sup>28</sup> Prevost's major novels, Cleveland, Manon Lescaut, and Le Doyen de Killerine, all exhibit romantic tendencies and many devices of the

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<sup>26</sup>See: Varma, 31-35; Summers, 108-109; Foster, 443; and Woodbridge, 325.

<sup>27</sup>See: Woodbridge, 324; Foster, 443; Stevenson, 122; Varma, 36; and James H. Foster, "Charlotte Smith, Pre-Romantic Novelist", PMLA, XLIII, 445.

<sup>28</sup>Poster, "The Abbe Prevost", 447.

Gothic horror novel.<sup>29</sup> Such romantic characteristics common to him and the horror school as sentimentality, self pity, subjectivity, the suffering hero, melancholy, persecution, pessimism, and suicidal tendencies.<sup>30</sup> However, these characteristics are placed in the background by later, English horror romantics who prefer to make greater use of Prevost's macabre settings, ghosts, overbearing villains, and his scenes of sexual intimacy. For example, the heroine of Manon Lescaut is a prostitute and her confrontations with the Chevalier des Grieux give ample inspiration for the sex scenes of a Lewis or Maturin.<sup>31</sup> The theme of incest is found in Cleveland through the love of her father for Cecile. This is also found in Lewis's, Maturin's, Le Fanu's and Stoker's work.<sup>32</sup> The lugubrious and melancholy settings, like the burial in Le Doyen de Killerine and the sinister Rumney-Hole of Corogne in Cleveland, were among the first described in French literature.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Woodbridge, 327.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.

<sup>31</sup>George O. Gribble, "Introduction", Manon Lescaut (New York)p. 21.

<sup>32</sup>Walter F. Wright, Sensibility in English Prose Fiction 1760-1814. (Urbana, 1937), p. 53.

<sup>33</sup>Poster, "The Abbe Prevost", p. 446-447.

These examples point out the schauerromantik devices used by Prevost, from which the English horror novelists could have drawn for precedents. There is the need now to establish a connection between Prevost and the horror authors. In order to prove an influence, this connection must be established beyond doubt.

Prevost's direct influence on English novelists such as Clara Reeve, Charlotte Smith, Sophia Lee, and Mrs. Anne Radcliffe has been thoroughly documented by Professor James R. Foster in his articles, previously cited, and in his book The Minor English Novelists.<sup>34</sup> He, Summers, and Varma state that Prevost's plots, settings, and characterizations were well copied or slightly changed by any number of English writers.<sup>35</sup> In fact, Professor Foster also shows that Sophia Lee's novel, The Recess, is a rewritten version of Cleveland.<sup>36</sup> This thesis is also supported by Varma in Chapter IV of his book. The setting of The Recess is a Gothic abbey with secret passages; ghosts appear twice in the book; there are the young lovers; there is a persecuting villain; and there are hints at the brutality found in the later horror novels.

This work of Miss Lee's had a profound impact on

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<sup>34</sup>Published at Harvard University in 1930.

<sup>35</sup>See: Varma, 36; and Summers, 112.

<sup>36</sup>Foster, "The Abbe Prevost", p. 453.



Mrs. Anne Radcliffe, as previously noted, and as confirmed by Mrs. Radcliffe in her introduction to The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne.<sup>37</sup> Also, Mrs. Radcliffe was strongly influenced by Clara Reeve's The Old English Baron, which shows the marked influence of Prevost.<sup>38</sup> However influential Sophia Lee and Clara Reeve were upon Mrs. Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith held the greatest influence with her. Professor Foster details Mrs. Smith's literary relationship to Mrs. Radcliffe in his article in PMLA for 1928. He points out that there are striking similarities between Montague Theobald of Mrs. Smith's Celestina and Louis La Motte in Mrs. Radcliffe's The Romance of the Forest as unrequited lovers. He also compares the marriage of Roker in The Old Manor House to Montoni's marriage in The Mysteries of Udolpho and, in the same two books, he compares Mrs. Smith's smugglers to Mrs. Radcliffe's ghosts of Bangy Castle.

Mrs. Smith's influence on Mrs. Radcliffe serves to intensify Prevost's influence, since critics generally agree that Mrs. Smith was the most faithful disciple of Prevost in England. This opinion is held by Summers, Varma, Miss Birkhead, and Foster.

The question now is what does Prevost's influence upon

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<sup>37</sup>Birkhead, 39.

<sup>38</sup>Varma, 79.

Mrs. Radcliffe have to do with influencing the horror novel? This can be answered primarily by remembering Matthew Lewis's confession that Mrs. Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho caused him to test his skill by writing a novel like it. The result was The Monk which became the prototype of the Gothic horror novel.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, through Mrs. Radcliffe, the innovations and devices of Prevost came to the attention of Lewis and from him they were passed on to Maturin, Le Fanu, and Stoker.

It is also reasonable to surmise that Lewis knew Prevost's works directly because of his own command of French and because of Prevost's wide popularity in England through numerous translations and imitations.<sup>40</sup> This fact is pointed out in detail by Professor Foster in his article "L'Abbe Prevost and the English Novel" in PMLA for 1927.<sup>41</sup> However he concludes that Prevost's influence through Mrs. Radcliffe was far stronger upon Lewis than any influence he received first hand. This thesis is also held by Varma,

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<sup>39</sup>Birkhead, 64.

<sup>40</sup>Professor Foster lists the following novels as copies or close imitations of Prevost's works in "The Abbe Prevost and the English Novel": History of Two Persons of Quality; History of a Woman of Quality; Memoirs of a Young Lady of Quality; Emily or the History of a Young Lady of Quality; The Anabaptist; The History of Sally Sable; The Memoirs of a Young Lady of Family; The History of Sir Charles Beaufort; Indianan Danby; The Brothers; Maria; and the Reclaimed Prostitute.

<sup>41</sup>Foster, "The Abbe Prevost", 443-465.

Summers, and Miss Birkhead.<sup>42</sup>

The conclusion one must reach is that Prevost's influence upon the horror novelists, although secondary rather than direct, was extensive and weighed heavily upon the devices used by the horror writers. It should be remembered that Prevost was one of the first to use the tenebrious settings as an integral part of his novels; to make use of ghosts and supernatural beings; to use explicit descriptions of sexual activity; and to create the menacing, evil villains. These devices bombarded the English writers and reading public in a torrent of translations and imitations; the critical comment on Prevost's work outlived him by many years and such comment was available to the Gothic horror novelists from their contemporaries.<sup>43</sup> Prevost's influence must be considered as major upon the Gothic writers, but his influence alone cannot explain the change in the Gothic novel from suspense to horror.

The emphasis on sex and gore in the English horror novels required a special influence which provided an overabundance of perverted sex and torture. Mario Praz, in The Romantic Agony, and Davendra Varma both agree that such an influence was the work of Donatien Alphonse Francois de Sade, better known as the Marquis de Sade. Signor Praz

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<sup>42</sup>See: Varma, 146; Summers, 114; and Birkhead, 64.

<sup>43</sup>Wright, 58.

devotes a whole chapter to "The Shadow of the Divine Marquis". Both Varma and Praz agree that de Sade was a direct influence upon Matthew Lewis; they confirm Maurice Heine's assertion that Lewis had read de Sade's Juliette.<sup>44</sup>

What sort of influence was de Sade? Almost everyone in our times has heard the name de Sade, and yet relatively few have read his works.<sup>45</sup> However, this was not the case in his own time: de Sade's books were covertly published and reached a wide audience, both on the continent and in England.<sup>46</sup> Critics, as well as readers, have condemned de Sade for his catalogues of carnality and for the carnage which permeates his works. These perversions run from pederasty to eating fecal matter.<sup>47</sup> In fact, normal relations of any kind are difficult to find anywhere in de Sade's works. Algolagnia, a sado-masochistic combination of sexual enjoyment through pain, is the prevalent theme found in his novels and plays.<sup>48</sup>

However, not all of de Sade's writing centered on algolagnia. Amidst the carnage and lust are found spots of enlightened philosophy which could have made him a

<sup>44</sup>See: Varma, 35-36; and Praz, 112.

<sup>45</sup>Praz, 111.

<sup>46</sup>John S. Yankowski, "Introduction", The Complete Marquis de Sade (Los Angeles, 1966) p. 29.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., 30.

most respected philodopher. For example, he discussed nature in evolutionary terms twenty-five years before Darwin's birth; he postulated the existence of an unconscious mind a hundred years before Freud; he propounded a political philosophy later used by Stalin and Hitler; he anticipated laissez-faire before Adam Smith; and he advocated plans for a republique universelle a hundred and twenty-five years before the League of Nations.<sup>49</sup> But these advanced theories have been lost in the outrage over the sexual and physical perversions found in his works.

His most telling influence upon the schauerromantik comes with his interpretation of the theme among Gothic writers; but, coupled with de Sade's own peculiar philosophy that virtue is the greatest insult to nature, the theme became a tool for the horror writers who included illicit and charnel house sexual activity in the adventures of their persecuted maidens. For example this quote from Justine serves to show de Sade's perverse inclinations:

It was the policy of the monastery that, whenever a monk wished, he could summon one of the girls to spend the night with him. Several days after Omphale's graduation, Justine received just such a summons from the gorilla-faced cleric, Father Clement . . . So saying, he nodded to Armande, who proceeded to undress Justine in stages, beginning with the lower portions of the body. As the girl's lovely, cream-colored thighs

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid., 29.

were exposed, Clement fell to his knees and began licking them. Then, with the unveiling of the buttocks, he placed his vile mouth at the threshold of the Temple of Sodom and thrust his loathsome tongue inside the tabernacle. Now Armande positioned herself beneath him and proceeded to arouse him with her hands. Meanwhile, the obscene cleric ordered Justine to give vent to whatever gasses may have accumulated in her intestines, and to direct them into his mouth; revolted the girl nonetheless complied with his instructions, and the jaded Father Clement was beside himself with pleasure.<sup>50</sup>

After Justine's encounter with Father Clement one might desire to see de Sade's technique in Juliette which was known to Matthew Lewis first hand:

I rose every day at ten. From then until eleven I engaged in intercourse with my valets. From then until one I was at my toilette, assisted by my entire retinue. Promptly at one, I gave a private audience to individuals who had come to solicit my favors . . . at two I hastened to my Barriere-Blanche whorehouse where everyday I would find awaiting me four new women and four new men with whom to indulge in the most wanton caprices.

At four I would return to the city and dine with friends. Then after these truly royal repasts (whose splendors I shall, out of mercy, leave to the readers imagination), I would either go to the theater or entertain the minister. Following this, I would return to my townhouse for supper. Then, after an orgy with selected members of my<sup>51</sup> staff, I would retire for the evening.

This quote and the one from Justine point out the voluminous and perverse carnality with which de Sade bombarded his readers and they show a source for the

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<sup>50</sup>Donatien A. F. de Sade, *The Complete Marquis de Sade*, trans. from the French by Paul J. Gillette, I (Los Angeles, 1966) pp. 151-152/

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., I, p. 121.

lustful and morbid sexuality found in the works of the horror writers, especially Lewis. De Sade's descriptions of torture also provide fertile ground for examples which fired the imaginations of the horror writers in England.

For example:

Now as the terrified Justine surrendered . . . her wrists were bound in the leather straps. Next, a small bench was placed in front of her, and she was told to kneel upon it. Then Gernande . . . tightened the straps until her arms were stretched taut . . . This accomplished, the savage nobleman touched a lancet to a vein in each of her arms.

A mad cry burst from the insane Count's throat as he first sighted blood.<sup>52</sup>

De Sade's influences provided the impetus for the shift from suspense to horror. The perverted sex and torture gave sufficient examples from which writers like Lewis and Maturin could choose and these works were known first hand by Lewis. Praz has gone to great lengths to show that de Sade's influence covered the whole of literature,<sup>53</sup> but it will suffice here to say that his works were well known by the English horror writers and his influence multiplied with the publication of The Monk. De Sade's scenes of unusual sex and fiendish torture are found throughout the horror novels and they appeared more often as time wore on.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., I, p. 166.

<sup>53</sup> Praz, chapter 2.

<sup>54</sup> See: Praz, 105; and Varma, 151.

L'Abbe Prevost and the Marquis de Sade were not the only influences on the English horror school to be found among the French. Another notable Frenchman was Anthony Hamilton. His romantic novels contained the trappings of the Gothic horror tale. In Memoirs du Comte Grammont there is the Gothic castle, the evil villain, the innocent maiden, young lovers, and the final triumph of good.<sup>55</sup> Hamilton also wrote oriental tales, which somewhat set the vogue for that type of Gothic novel in England.<sup>56</sup> William Beckford's Vathek is the classic example of Hamilton's oriental influence.

Hamilton's most popular novel in England was Le Quatre Facardins, which contained the Gothic ingredients, as did Memoirs du Comte Grammont, and, which Matthew Lewis translated into English in 1808.<sup>57</sup>

Hamilton's influence did not add anything new to the influence of de Sade and Prevost, but it served as another example for the English to follow. Horace Walpole is said to have claimed to know Hamilton's works by rote. Montague Summers quotes Walpole's statement and in The Gothic Quest gives Hamilton credit for great influence.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup>Summers, 108.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid., 50.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., 124.



Another French writer who contributed to the Gothic techniques was Baculard D'Arnaud. He whetted his reader's appetites with a collage of dungeons, lighted by expiring torches; horrible, haunted castles; remote abbeys inhabited by dark, foreboding inquisitors; vaults containing prisoners long thought to be dead; and numerous other devices of horror. His most notable work was Varbock, which Miss Sophia Lee translated into English.<sup>59</sup> D'Arnaud not only influenced English writers through his novels, but also through his plays which contained the same type of ghastly horror as the novels. His works were popular in England and he influenced Mrs. Radcliffe's The Italian with his Euphemie.<sup>60</sup>

Here again D'Arnaud contributed directly to the Gothic climate in England, but he added no new ideals on which the English could draw. His influence was in setting the mold for the Gothic story and providing yet more examples for the English to follow.

It has been pointed out that Frenchmen like Prevost established a pattern for the formation of Gothic settings, characters, plots, and occurrences which were assimilated and used by English novelists such as Clara Reeve, Sophia Lee, Anne Radcliffe, Matthew Lewis, and Charles Maturin. These patterns were further established and defined by such writers as Anthony Hamilton and Baculard D'Arnaud.

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., 116.

<sup>60</sup>Varma, 36.

However, the Marquis de Sade injected into the pattern the perverse sex and torture which were to become the trademark of the horror novel. These influences have been traced and shown to lead directly and indirectly to Matthew Lewis, the first successful horror novelist and it will be shown that he employed these patterns and passed them directly to Charles Maturin, who in turn left them for Le Fanu and Stoker.

However it would be foolish to state that the French held a monopoly on literary influence and that influence upon the Gothic horror school was limited to them. There were many German authors like Johann Goethe, Christiane Naubert, Karl Cramer, Friedrich Schiller, Peter Teuthold, and Karl Grosse.<sup>61</sup>

Goethe is the most eminent among the Germans as a writer and as a poet.<sup>62</sup> Matthew Lewis met Goethe and knew his works first hand.<sup>63</sup> However, his Gotz von Berlichingen proved to be his major influence upon the English horror writers.<sup>64</sup> This novel contains the ideas of chivalric romance, so much used by horror writers where the young lovers are concerned; the Gothic

<sup>61</sup>Ibid., 34.

<sup>62</sup>Birkhead, 38.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>64</sup>See: Varma, 32; and Birkhead, 148.

characteristics of foreboding castles, ghosts, and secret passages; tyrannical villains; and ghastly descriptions of brutality.<sup>65</sup> It would also be worth noting that Goethe wrote a story, entitled "Braut von Korinth" which describes in detail the vampire legends of Eastern Europe.<sup>66</sup>

Armed with the fact that Goethe and Lewis had met and that Goethe had written horror novels and stories, which involved the brutality and violence of the horror school, one can see that he influenced the horror writers to add the ghastly violence to their works. Goethe's influence brought with it the violence and brutality of German literature and German heritage.<sup>67</sup>

Another German was Mrs. Christiane Naubert, a prolific authoress and translator. The classic example of her work is Herman von Unna. This novel contains a heroine of unknown noble birth; separated lovers; a wicked rival, who, rejected, has the young hero imprisoned through perfidy; the imprisonment of the heroine in a convent; her persecution by a wicked monk and a tyrant abbess; dark castles; adventures in forests at midnight; and the happy reconciliation of the lovers at the close.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>65</sup>See: Varma, 32; and Summers, 121-122.

<sup>66</sup>E. F. Bleiler, "Introduction", Three Gothic Novels (New York, 1966), p. 39.

<sup>67</sup>Summers, 397.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid., 129.

Mrs. Naubert presented a good example of the Gothic novel from which the English drew. However she did not include the extreme brutality of Goethe's Gotz von Berlichingen and her influence was more in the vein of Hamilton and D'Arnaud.<sup>69</sup>

Like Mrs. Naubert, Friedrich Schiller was an influence on the Gothic novel. Yet, his place is beside Goethe as an originator of the schauerromantik.<sup>70</sup> His novel, Die Rauber, contained violent sensationalism; evil bandits, monks, inquisitors, and barons; haunted castles, ghosts, and charnel-like dungeons.<sup>71</sup> Die Rauber proved a valuable source for Mrs. Radcliffe in her novels, The Italian and The Mysteries of Udolpho. This point is made by Varma, Summers and Miss Birkhead,<sup>72</sup> and leads to the conclusion that Schiller helped influence the Gothic writers in their villainous characters.

Another of Schiller's stories, Der Geisterseher, was translated into English and widely read.<sup>73</sup> This story re-introduces the theme of the Wandering Jew to the English and was undoubtedly an influence on Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer.<sup>74</sup> Der Geisterseher involves an

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

<sup>70</sup>Varma, 32.

<sup>71</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>72</sup>Varma, 34; Summers, 122; Birkhead, 51.

<sup>73</sup>Birkhead, 95.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid., 96.

Armenian who possesses superhuman attributes and performs unheard of miracles. He appears and disappears in inexplicable ways. The tale contains a haunted castle, conspiracies against a prince, and mysterious murders.<sup>75</sup>

Schiller helped establish the themes of violent bandits, secret conspiracies, ghostly behavior, and the Wandering Jew. He was a favorite of Mrs. Radcliffe and was known to Lewis and Maturin. He added to the climate of violence and the use of the supernatural found in the Gothic horror novel. He was most influential upon Mrs. Radcliffe and upon Maturin.<sup>76</sup> Schiller's ghosts and his robbers found their way from Germany into the English horror novel where they wrought havoc through many a page of thrills.

Another German of note was Karl Gottlob Cramer whose novels were noted for exaggerated violence and sensationalism.<sup>77</sup> Der Deutsche Alcibiades was his major work and it includes many of the Gothic traits which it helped to foster in England. There is the Gothic castle, honey-combed with secret passages; violent bandits and villains; and a persecuted maiden.

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<sup>75</sup>Varma, 34.

<sup>76</sup>Summers, 130.

<sup>77</sup>Ibid., 124.

Cramer contributed to the theme of violence and brutality in the Gothic novel. His works were available in translation and Montague Summers asserts that Lewis knew about them, if he did not know them first hand.

Karl Grosse, who named himself Marquis of Grosse, lent his talent to the schauerromantik in a book entitled Horrid Mysteries. This work contained the story of a secret group of devil worshippers and their midnight murders, black masses, and anarchistic activities.<sup>78</sup> This novel was an important influence upon the violence and brutality that was found later in the horror novels.<sup>79</sup>

Grosse like Cramer contributed to the violence and brutality in the horror novel and was influential among the English writers. Varma lists Horrid Mysteries as one of the prominent German novels which weighed heavily upon the thought of the English writers.

The Germans as a whole contributed most to the introduction of intense violence into the horror novel and also added much in the realm of ghostly beings. Perhaps the most unique contributions of the Germans were the introduction of the vampire story by Goethe and Schiller's interpretation of the Wandering Jew theme in Der Geisterseher. Their influence was most effective upon Matthew Lewis, who studied

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<sup>78</sup>Ibid., 132.

<sup>79</sup>Varma, 34.

in Germany, met Goethe, and undoubtedly knew many of the works first hand. The Germans added much and helped stabilize the traditional patterns of the Gothic suspense and Gothic horror story. It has been shown that the German influence was felt most heavily in the area of violence and brutality in the horror novel, while the French influence was concerned with explicit and unusual sex and with fiendish tortures. Naturally, it should be remembered that both French and German authors helped to establish and stabilize the Gothic traditions and devices.

The results of these influences will now be pointed out in the works of Matthew Lewis and Charles Maturin. Then they will be shown in the works of Joseph Le Fanu and Bram Stoker.

It has been pointed out that the French and German writers gave to the horror writers of England the Gothic setting, complete with dark and secret passages; the innocent, but persecuted maiden; the extraordinarily evil villain; young lovers, who after being torn apart, are rejoined at the close; explicit sexual activity, both normal and perverse; and extreme violence. They also helped to make the ghost, or supernatural being, an integral part of the horror novel.

It has been noted that Matthew Gregory Lewis set the style for the horror writers who followed him and that his novel, The Monk, through its success and notoriety became the prototype of the Gothic horror novel in England. "Monk" Lewis, as he was known after 1796, was a youthful author, who had been deeply influenced by the suspense novels of Mrs. Radcliffe and the German stories of Goethe.<sup>80</sup> To be a successful writer was his one burning desire. He tried

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<sup>80</sup> Baillo, 41.



in vain for several years to have his works published, but he did not succeed until 1796 when The Monk was published.<sup>81</sup> With its publication, The Monk became the standard for later horror novelists to imitate and was perhaps the most outstanding example of the schauerromantik.<sup>82</sup>

The Monk has all the aualities which constitute the horror novel: the foreboding buildings of the Capuchin monastery and the adjoining convent of St. Clare, which contain secret passages and vaults leading through and into the burial gardens between the holy shrines; an evil monk and an evil prioress; two persecuted maidens; a young hero; the devil incarnate; a female instrument of the devil; a bleeding nun; and the Wandering Jew. Also included for the reader's pleasure are the Spanish Inquisition, a rape and incest.

The Monk itself is a collage of stories which Lewis found sprinkled throughout German and French literature. The story of the bleeding nun, the proposed abduction of Agnes and Raymond's episode are drawn from "Die Entfuhring" by Musaeus. Ambrosio's death scene is derived verbatim from Veit Weber's story "Teurelbuchworung". The night forest scene with Raymond is adapted from Smollett's

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 89-91.

<sup>82</sup> Varma, 129.

Ferdinand Count Fathom, while Matilda's task is much the same as Bianca's in Cazotte's Le Diable Amoureux.<sup>83</sup> The episode with the Wandering Jew is an echo of Schiller's Der Geisterscher.<sup>84</sup>

The explicitness in dealing with the sexual relations of Ambrosio and Matilda make The Monk an excellent example of French influence, while the brutality of its murders and torture scenes shows its relation to the Germans. It is through the character of Ambrosio that these literary debts are most effectively shown.

In the character of Ambrosio, Lewis created a complex mixture of good and evil. The reader first learns about Ambrosio as a pillar of virtue, a famous and much admired abbot of the Capuchin monastery, who enthralled the people, especially the women, with his sermons and his piety.<sup>85</sup> The people of Madrid knew little about this renowned monk, who had been placed on the doorstep of the monastery as a baby, and, who had grown up within its sheltered confines, becoming first a star pupil and then the spiritual leader of the monks at the age of thirty. His only faults were rigidity and austerity. These engendered a spiritual pride,

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<sup>83</sup>Lewis F. Peck, "The Monk and Le Diable Amoureux", MLN, LXVIII, 406-408.

<sup>84</sup>Riallo, 345.

<sup>85</sup>Matthew Gregory Lewis, The Monk (New York, 1952) pp. 35-37.

which the devil later used as a lever to corrupt this pious monk. Ambrosio had never tasted the pleasures of the secular world, with its temptations of the flesh and the spirit. To prick Ambrosio's balloon of pride and inexperience the master of the underworld sent a beautiful young woman, Matilda de Villanegas, to tempt him with the desires of the flesh.<sup>86</sup> Although this is not a new method of seduction from the way of holiness, the explicit descriptions of the seduction do provide a new and more lustful version of the oldest way to fall. Ambrosio reacted to this temptation in his dreams;

He awoke heated and unrefreshed. During his sleep, his inflamed imagination had presented him with none but the most voluptuous objects. Matilda stood before him in his dreams, and his eyes again dwelt upon her naked breast; she repeated her protestations of eternal love, threw her arms round his neck, and loaded him with kisses; he returned them; he clasped her passionately to his bosom, and --- the vision was dissolved . . . Such were the scenes on which his thoughts were employed while sleeping; his unsatisfied desires placed before him the most lustful and provoking images, and he rioted in joys till then unknown to him.<sup>87</sup>

Similarly, Ambrosio revels in his real sexual bouts with Matilda:

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 64-65.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 89.

The hour was nigh. All was silence around. The faint beams of a solitary lamp darted upon Matilda's figure, and shed through the chamber a dim, mysterious light. No prying eye or curious ear was near the lovers; nothing was heard but Matilda's melodious accents. Ambrosio was in the full vigour of manhood; he saw before him a young and beautiful woman, the preserver of his life, the adorer of his person; and whom affection for him had reduced to the brink of the grave. He sat upon her bed; his hand rested upon her bosom; her head reclined voluptuously upon his breast. Who then can wonder if he yielded to the temptation? Drunk with desire, he pressed his lips to those which sought them; his kisses vied with Matilda's in warmth and passion; he clasped her rapturously in his arms; he forgot his vows, his sanctity, and his fame; he remembered nothing but the pleasure and opportunity.<sup>88</sup>

Ambrosio reveled in his and Matilda's sexual escapades within the walls of the monastery and his doom was sealed in the embrace of Matilda. His being was overcome by the lustful desires burning within him and he engaged in daily sex bouts with his more than willing seductress. However, the now sexually aroused Ambrosio soon tired of the lack of variety in his sex life and he sought new companions for the fires of his passion.<sup>89</sup>

In these actions there are shown the influences of L'Abbe Prevost in the explicit descriptions of Ambrosio's sexual dreaming and his actual sexual activity. Also the anti-religious aspects of the monk, having sworn to practice

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid., 109.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 236.

celibacy, engaging in blatant and extremely lustful sexual activity reminds one of the corrupt Roman clerics in de Sade's works, as well as Cazotte's Le Diable Amoureux.

These particular passages point directly to the French influence, while brutality later in the novel echos the German writers. Although Lewis's sex scenes do not rival de Sade's for their perversity, the same lustfulness and sexual vigor is present and presents itself at fairly frequent intervals.

As the story continues, Ambrosio has lighted upon Antonia, who in reality is his sister, as his next conquest. To achieve her, he engages in direct dealings with the devil under the tutelage of Matilda and, in the process of an unsuccessful attempt, he is forced to murder Donna Elviar, Antonia's mother and his own. Then, after feigning Antonia's death and abducting her, he has to rape her to release his sexual desires. The rape is carried out in the vaults of the convent amidst a charnel house atmosphere and is accompanied by the gruesome details so often present in The Monk:

With every moment the friar's passion became more ardent, and Antonia's terror more intense. She struggled to disengage herself from his arms. Her exertions were unsuccessful; and, finding that Ambrosio's conduct became still freer, she shrieked for assistance with all her strength. The aspect of the vault, the pale glimmering of the lamp, the surrounding obscurity, the sight of the tomb, and the objects of mortality which met her eyes on either side, were ill calculated to inspire her with those emotions by which the friar

was agitated. Even his caresses terrified her from their fury, and created no other sentiment than fear. On the contrary, her alarm, her evident disgust, and incessant opposition, seemed only to inflame the monk's desires, and supply his brutality with additional strength. Antonia's shrieks were unheard; yet she continued them nor abandoned her endeavours to escape, till exhausted and out of breath she sank from his arms upon her knees, and once more had recourse to prayers and supplications. This attempt had no better success than the former. On the contrary, taking advantage of her situation, the ravisher threw himself by her side. He clasped her to his bosom almost lifeless with terror, and faint with struggling. He stifled her cries with kisses, treated her with the rudeness of an unprincipled barbarian, proceeded from freedom to freedom, and, in the violence of his lustful delirium, wounded and bruised her tender limbs. Heedless of her tears, her cries, and entreaties, he gradually made himself master of her person, and he desisted not from his prey, till he had accomplished his crime and the dishonour of Antonia.<sup>90</sup>

In this passage Lewis comes as close to the style and content of de Sade's Justine or Juliette as his algolagnic scenes ever did. There is a picture of Ambrosio's perverted lust as it increases in direct proportions to Antonia's struggles and supplications that he desist. The violent fervor of Ambrosio's obviously loathsome advances are definitely sadistic. The delight Ambrosio takes in his deflowering of Antonia and his pummeling of her during the rape shows his algolagnic tendencies. When he murders

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 367-368.

her after administering the physical beating, the influence of de Sade is at its zenith. This passage shows de Sade's favorite combination of perverse sexual activity and murder. It has a definite dependency upon de Sade for its inspiration.<sup>91</sup> Not only are the actions in the scene reflective of de Sade, but also the burial vault setting reminds one of de Sade's subterranean settings, his favorite places for perverted sexual activity.<sup>92</sup> This scene shows a strong link with de Sade and points out Ambrosio's singular status as a Gothic villain.

Ambrosio was a departure from the conventional Gothic villain. Surely, he commits murders, contrives with the devil, and violates his holy vows, but he commits these crimes out of lust and carnal desire. He was not moved by the desire for unlawful power, nor was he usurping a position he did not deserve. He was motivated simply by lust. He had long resisted the impulses of the flesh, but once he yielded to Matilda's seduction, he gave unbridled reign to his passions and his algolagnic desires. Having tired of confining his lusts to one partner, he actively moved the plot in his search for a more varied sex life. His whole being was directed toward achieving his goal and he did not waiver at committing murder or making a pact with

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<sup>91</sup>Yankowski, 36.

<sup>92</sup>Praz, 112.

the devil to fulfill his lusts.

However, Lewis did not limit the scenes of algolagnia to Ambrosio and his machinations. Lewis included the impregnation of a novice of St. Clare within the convent walls, which resulted in her imprisonment in the vaults of the convent. These scenes of imprisonment show Lewis at his gruesome best:

I was oppressed by a noisome suffocating smell; and perceiving that the grated door was unfastened, I thought that I might possibly effect my escape. As I raised myself with this design, my hand rested upon something sort: I grasped it, and advanced it towards the light. Almighty God! what was my disgust! my consternation! In spite of its putridity, and the worms which preyed upon it, I perceived a corrupted human head and recognised the features of a nun who had died some months before. I threw it from me, and sank almost lifeless upon my bier.<sup>93</sup>

And:

Thus did I drag on a miserable existence. Far from growing familiar with my prison, I beheld it every moment with new horror. The cold seemed more piercing and bitter, the air more thick and pestilential. My frame became weak, feverish, and emaciated. I was unable to rise from the bed of straw, and exercise my limbs in the narrow limits to which the length of my chain permitted me to move. Though exhausted, faint, and weary, I trembled to profit by the approach of sleep. My slumbers were constantly interrupted by some obnoxious insect crawling over me. Sometimes I felt the bloated toad, hideous and pampered with poisonous vapors

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<sup>93</sup>Lewis, 385.



of the dungeon, dragging his loathsome length along my bosom. Sometimes the quick cold lizard roused me, leaving his slimy track upon my face, and entangling itself in the tresses of my wild and matted hair. Often have I at waking found my fingers ringed with long worms which bred in the corrupted flesh of my infant. At such times I shrieked with terror and disgust; and, while I shook of the reptile trembled with all a woman's weakness.<sup>94</sup>

These descriptions of the loathsome conditions in the vaults of St. Clare give examples of the detail with which Lewis describes his horror scenes. The revolting detail causes the reader to feel disgust and horror as the lizards crawl across Agnes and the worms engendered in the putrid flesh of her stillborn child attack her hands.

Lewis did not confine his macabre talents to The Monk. He sprinkled horror and terror with disgustingly detailed descriptiveness throughout his works and even in his translations he picked German stories which much influenced his own writing and depended heavily on Gothic situations.<sup>95</sup>

For example:

"Save him! Save him!" shrieked Magdalena as she rushed into the chamber pale as death; "Hasten to his rescue, Huediger! For God's sake hasten! Look! Look!"--- and she threw open the window which commanded the courtyard, and from whence the light of the full moon and the blaze of numerous torches permitted her to observe distinctly what was passing below. "He's surrounded . . . Ottokar . . . the people, the whole crowd of them, with swords, with

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 395-396.

<sup>95</sup> Robert D. Spector, "Introduction", Seven Masterpieces of Gothic Horror (New York, 1963) p. 238.

clubs . . . fly, fly, Ruediger, and rescue him! . . . Merciful heaven! They drag him from his horse . . . they throw him on the earth . . . they will kill him! They will murder him!--- Nay, look yourself! Come to the window; speak to the wild rabble, or their fury . . . Ha! he forces himself out of their clutches! He draws his sword! He fights! He drives them back . . . now, now, my lord! Now they can hear you! Seize this interval of fear, and command them . . . Alas! alas! Now they all rush upon him at once, like madmen! He defends himself still, but their numbers . . . Ruediger! Ruediger! For mercy's sake, for God's sake! call to them from the window . . . speak but one word, and . . . Ah! his head . . . a blow he staggers . . . and now another . . . and another . . . it's done! it's done! He falls! He is dead! ---Oh! Blessed Mary, receive his soul to mercy!"<sup>96</sup>

Here Lewis is describing a mob murder through the eyes of a deeply concerned observer. The horror of Magdalena is evident in her expression, and her exclamated account of Ottokar's brutal murder shows the influence of German violence and brutality. Lewis obviously absorbed much from French and German writers and evidently used it fully.

It has been noted that Lewis knew many of the German and French writings first hand and those that he did not read himself came to him through the direct influence of his contemporary, Mrs. Radcliffe. He derived his sombre settings, his sex and his young lovers and heroes from the French. The brutality of his villain, his ghosts, and his

gory murders show the direct influence of the Germans. These influences combined in Lewis and he responded with the prototype of the Gothic horror novel, The Monk.

Following closely behind Lewis in both style and time, was Charles Robert Maturin, a Dublin clergyman. Maturin is generally considered to be the best of the English horror writers, since he combined the poetic exuberance and restraint of Mrs. Radcliffe with the lurid horrors of Lewis.<sup>97</sup> Although he did not receive the acclaim or notoriety of Lewis, Maturin is considered by modern critics to be the outstanding writer of the first generation of horror novelists. He and Lewis established the guide lines for the Gothic horror novel by which later authors measured their work and against which their success was compared. Unfortunately for devotees of the horror novel, with Maturin's death in 1824, there was left no outstanding writer in the field. It was not until the Gothic revival of the latter half of the Nineteenth Century that writers of equal artistic ability turned to the genre.<sup>98</sup>

Although Maturin was greatly influenced by his

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<sup>97</sup>See: Birkhead, 93; and Varma, 160.

<sup>98</sup>Birkhead, 94.

knowledge of Walpole, Lewis and Mrs. Radcliffe, it is also a certainty that he was well acquainted with the products of French and German authors as well.<sup>99</sup> For example, this quote from Melmoth the Wanderer is remarkably similar in thought to a note to volume four of Justine by de Sade.<sup>100</sup>

It is actually possible to become amateurs in suffering. I have heard of men who have travelled into countries where horrible executions were to be daily witnessed, for the sake of that excitement which the sight of suffering never fails to give, from the spectacle of a tragedy, or an auto-da-fe, down to the writhings of the meanest reptile on whom you can inflict torture, and feel that torture is the result of your own power. It is a species of feeling of which we can never divest ourselves, --- a triumph over those whose sufferings have placed them below, us and no wonder, --- we glory in our impenetrability . . . You will call this cruelty, I call it curiosity that brings thousands to witness a tragedy and makes the most delicate female feast on groans and agonies.<sup>101</sup>

Here Maturin expressed a philosophy which de Sade extended to much greater lengths. Basically, Maturin is presenting the latent sadistic tendencies found in almost everyone. The passage is an analysis of the feelings of de Sade's characters who reveled with delight as they raped, tortured and horribly murdered their unfortunate victims. As Maturin indicates, the greatest

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<sup>99</sup>Praz, 117.

<sup>100</sup>Ibid.

<sup>101</sup>Charles Robert Maturin, Melmoth the Wanderer (Lincoln, 1961) p. 6.

pleasure is derived from the victim who can in no way offer resistance and must submit to the lubricity of his captor. This philosophizing is so Sadean in thought that one cannot doubt Maturin's dependence upon the earlier writer.<sup>102</sup>

Perhaps the closest thing to Lewis that Maturin wrote was The Fatal Revenge or the Family of Montorio. He borrows its corpses and spectres, its crueld materials, and its clumsy plot directly from Lewis.<sup>103</sup> The story is set in the gloomy Castle of Muralto, complete with secret and subterranean passages. The Count of Montorio, who returns as the Monk Schemoli to seek revenge, deals in black magic and other occult powers, causes the Count's sons to murder their father, and succeeds in bringing down the house of Montorio. Interwoven into the story are the loves of the two brothers. These characteristics make The Fatal Revenge a classic horror story whose shaking but subtle terror is shown by this quote:

There came indeed a blast across us, not like the blasts of that night, loud and feverish; but cold and noisome, like a charnel stream. We shuddered as it passed; I felt some effort necessary, to resist the palsied feeling that was stealing over me: "Michelo, let us not be baffled a second time. This form, whatever it be, is probably approaching; before it oppress us with some strange influence, I will rush forth

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<sup>102</sup>Praz, 118.

<sup>103</sup>Varna, 162.

and meet it: and be they favourable and malignant, I will know its powers and purposes." I sought the aisle again. The moon poured a light as broad as day through the windows. I saw the tomb of Count Orazio. I beheld a figure seated on it; I advanced in hope and fear. It was Nichelo---he sat like a mariner, who leans on a bare and single crag, after the tempest and the wreck; he was haggard, spent, and gasping. ---I rushed to him, but he appeared not to hear my moving; his head was raised, and his look fixed on the arched passage; the moonlight poured a ghastly and yellow paleness on his still features. I looked in his eyes; they were hollow and glazed; I touched his hand; it was cold and dropped from mine, I shuddered, and scarcely thought him an earthly man. A moment reproached my fears, and I tried to address some words of comfort and inquiry to him, but I was repelled by an awe in which I scarce thought Nichelo an agent . . . 104

The eerie atmosphere represented here is evoked not by crude whiffs from the churchyard, like Lewis; rather he insinuates horror by the adroit Radcliffian device of reticence and suggestion. He relies upon the use of sensations to transport his horror to the reader. This quote is evidence that Maturin is already a master at the early stages of his career.

Maturin's power does not lie in shock, but rather in his startling realism and suggestion. Especially in Melmoth the Wanderer, when the reader is compelled to linger in the haunting atmosphere of desolation. The

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<sup>104</sup> Charles Robert Maturin, The Fatal Revenge quoted in The Gothic Flame, 156.

opening chapters with their pictures of the lonely decaying form, the cold and gloomy weather, the leafless trees, and the luxuriant crop of weeds and nettles create an inexplicable feeling of paralyzing dread and some impending disaster. The whole background as young John Melmoth returns to the death bed of his uncle, is preparing the reader for the paralyzing effect of the Wanderer's return to his ancestral home and the revelation of his extended life.

However subtle Maturin was, the lurid horrors of Lewis and the Germans found their way into "Melmoth" also. They sometimes rival de Sade in their unthinkable brutality:

It was on the fourth night that I heard the shriek of the wretched female,--- her lover, in the agony of hunger, had fastened his teeth in her shoulder;--- that bosom on which he had so often luxuriated, became a meal to him now.

Or perhaps:

They dashed him to the earth--- tore him up again--- flung him into the air--- tossed him from hand to hand, as the bull gores a howling mastiff with irons right and left. Bloody, defaced, blackened with earth, and battered with stones . . . with his tongue hanging from his lacerated mouth, like that of a baited bull; with one eye torn from the socket, and dangling on his bloody cheek; with a fracture in every limb, and a wound for every pore, he still howled for "life--- life--- life--- mercy!" till a stone . . . struck him down. He fell, trodden in one moment into sanguine and discoloured mud by a thousand feet . . . The crowd, saturated with cruelty and blood, gave way to grim silence. But they had not left a joint of his little finger--- a hair of his head--- a slip of his skin.

Or perhaps:

The next moment I was chained to my chair again, the fires were lit, the bells rang out, the litanies were sung;--- my feet were scorched to a cinder,--- my muscles cracked, my blood and marrow hissed, my flesh consumed like shrinking leather,--- the bones of my legs hung two black withering and moveless sticks in the ascending blaze;--- it ascended, caught my hair,--- I was crowned with fire,--- I closed it, the fire was within, . . . and we burned and burned! I was a cinder body and soul in my dream.

Descriptions of excessive horror like these abound in "Melmoth", but, strangely enough, Maturin does not include the explicit sex scenes of Lewis or of the French writers.<sup>105</sup> Perhaps this is a reversion to the suspense novel, but this is not enough to take it out of the horror classification. However there is the love affair of Melmoth and the lovely Imolee that ends her destruction and the story of the entombed lovers. In these scenes the sexuality of the horror novel is carried on, but not to the extremes of Lewis.

Melmoth the Wanderer is another working of the Faust legend taken both from Goethe and from Marlowe. The central figure in the narrative is the Wanderer, who has sold his soul to the devil for one hundred fifty years of youth and life, and, who may be redeemed, if someone else

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<sup>105</sup>William F. Axton, "Introduction", Melmoth the Wanderer (Lincoln, 1961) p. 16.



else may be persuaded to accept his fate. He is perhaps a mixture of devil, vampire, Byronic hero and the Wandering Jew. His tale is unfolded to his young descendant John Melmoth through an ancient manuscript in their ancestral home and by the Duke of Moncada, who had the misfortune of meeting the Wanderer.<sup>106</sup>

The story abounds in frightful descriptions both physical and moral. There is the long relation of Moncada's story of imprisonment by the Spanish Inquisition, which was taken at times it seems verbatim from Diderot's Religieuse.<sup>107</sup> The fate of the Wanderer fives on the definite impression that he is seeing Faust's demise in Marlowe's celebrated play.<sup>108</sup> Although he borrows his basic plots from other sources, Maturin contributed his own Gothic genius to these tales and, more often than not, he produced a brilliance in expression and description seldom equalled in the realm of the Gothic horror novel. Melmoth the Wanderer is recognized as the masterpiece of Gothic fiction by many scholars, such as Varma, Miss Birkhead, Rallo, and Summers.<sup>109</sup> It's

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<sup>106</sup>Praz, 117-118.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., 120.

<sup>108</sup>Varma, 165.

<sup>109</sup>See: Varma, 171; Birkhead, 63; Rallo, 321; and Summers, 116.

publication in 1820 was the dying gasp of brilliance in the original period of Gothic popularity.<sup>110</sup> Examples of horror and sex had begun to subject the public, who now turned to the more subtle and complex novels of Walter Scott and Jane Austen.

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<sup>110</sup>Varma, 172.

The Gothic horror novel did not die in 1820, but it suffered from a lack of true genius until the second half of the nineteenth century. About 1870, there began a Gothic revival and two writers, Joseph Le Fanu and Bram Stoker, stepped to the forefront as masters.<sup>111</sup> Both of these men showed the influence of their predecessors and wrote in a truly Gothic fashion, giving careful attention to traditional Gothic devices and plot outlines.

Joseph Le Fanu wrote many horror stories in the late nineteenth century and was extremely popular among the reading public as attested by this quote from Henry James' novel, The Liar.

There was the customary novel of Mr. Le Fanu for the bedside; the ideal reading in a country house for the hours after midnight.<sup>112</sup>

Le Fanu's reputation could rest alone on his novels,

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<sup>111</sup>Penzoldt, 72.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

"Carmilla", a classic vampire story, which follows the pattern established by Dr. John Polidori in his short novel The Vampyre, published in 1819.<sup>113</sup> The vampire story in European literature is quite old and deals with the un-dead, who rise from their graves at night to seek their revitalization in the blood of the living. Montague Summers, who has written two books solely on the subject of the vampire, acknowledges Polidori as the originator of the type in England and laments that the great masters, Lewis and Maturin, allowed such a potent subject matter escape their grasp.<sup>114</sup>

Although "Carmilla" does not include the blatant sexuality and perversion for torture that appear in The Monk and Melmoth the Wanderer, the Gothic traditions are carried on in the descriptions of Carmilla at her ghastly work and in the description of her demise. However, the theme of sex is not missing from the story of Carmilla, for she exhibits a strange and unnatural attachment for her intended victim, Laura. The strain of fictional lust, found in Prevost and de Sade, has found a new vent in the

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<sup>113</sup>Bleiler, 39.

<sup>114</sup>Summers, 209.

subtle hints of lesbianism, found in Le Fanu's treatment of the relationship between Carmilla and Laura. They engage in long embraces, other than those initiated by Carmilla's vampire love.<sup>115</sup> The subtle sexuality of "Carmilla" is best illustrated in the scenes, where Laura and Carmilla stroll through the countryside surrounding the schloss or castle in which Laura lives with her father and her tutors:

She used to place her pretty arms about my neck, draw me to her, and laying her cheek to mine, with her lips near my ear, "Dearest, your little heart is wounded; think me not cruel because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and weakness; if your dear heart is wounded, my wild heart bleeds with yours. In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life, and you shall die--- &&e, sweetly die--- into mine. I cannot help it; as I draw near to you, you, in your turn, will draw near to others, and learn the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love; so, for a while, seek to know no more of me and mine, but trust me with all your loving spirit."

And when she had spoken such a rhapsody, she would press me more closely in her trembling embrace, and her lips in soft kisses gently glow upon my cheek.

Her agitations and her language were unintelligible to me.

From these foolish embraces, which were not of very frequent occurrence, I must allow, I used to with to extricate myself; but my energies seemed to fail me. Her murmured words sounded like a lullaby to my ear, and soothed my resistance into a

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<sup>115</sup>Penzoldt, 75.

trance, from which I only seemed to  
recover myself when she withdrew her arms. <sup>116</sup>

This scene is perhaps the best description of  
lesbianism found in Victorian fiction, because it  
shows the emotions and psyche of the two participants  
in a manner which would be difficult to find in a  
textbook on the subject. Le Fanu's brilliance lies in  
his ability to describe reality and interpret life with-  
out being clinical. His perceptivity is uncanny and his  
method is subtle. <sup>117</sup>

The scenes of terror in "Carmilla" show the definite  
influence of the earlier practitioners of the Gothic horror  
novel and through them that of the French and German  
writers, especially Goethe's "Braut von Korinth". <sup>118</sup>

"Carmilla" contains all the established criteria for the  
Gothic horror story: Laura resides in a castle, which  
contains the usual secret passages of Gothic literature;  
Laura is a persecuted maiden, on whom the vampire evase is  
working; there is a lovely villainess, Carmilla, who ranks  
with Ambrosio in her machinations; there are two lovers,  
albeit they are both women; and there is a ruined castle,  
which serves as Carmilla's real home. There is the

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<sup>116</sup> Joseph S. Le Fanu, "Carmilla", Seven Masterpieces  
of Gothic Horror (New York, 1963) p. 415.

<sup>117</sup> Penzoldt, 76.

<sup>118</sup> Bleiler, 39.

unnaturally swift carriage, which bears Carmilla to her ghastly appointments. It is reminiscent of Raymond's carriage in The Monk and a forerunner of Dracula's carriage later. There are the inexplicable comings and goings of Carmilla. The descriptions of Laura's fright, Carmilla at her ghastly work, and of her death provide the best examples of the terror so essential to the Gothic horror novel:

I cannot call it a nightmare, for I was quite conscious of being asleep. But I was equally conscious of being in my room, and lying in bed, precisely as I actually was. I saw, or fancied I saw, the room and its furniture just as I had seen it last, except that it was very dark, and I saw something moving round the foot of the bed, which at first I could not accurately distinguish. But I soon saw that it was a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat. It appeared to me about four or five feet long, for it measured fully the length of the hearth-rug as it passed over it; and it continued ~~bb~~-ing and fro-ing with the lithe sinister restlessness of a beast in a cage. I could not cry out, although, as you may suppose, I was terrified. Its pace was growing faster, and the room rapidly darker and darker . . . I felt it spring lightly on the bed . . . I felt a stinging pain as if two large needles darted an inch or two apart, deep into my breast, I waked with a scream. <sup>119</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> Le Fanu, 428.

And the death blow to Carmilla:

The body therefore, in accordance with the ancient practice, was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek at the moment, an all respects such as might escape a living person in the last agony. Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severed neck. The body and head were next placed on a pile of wood, and reduced to ashes . . . <sup>120</sup>

In these quotes Le Fanu is at his suggestive best. The terror evoked by Laura's all too real dream attacks the reader's sensibility slowly, but ever so surely. The realization that Carmilla is preying upon Laura and Le Fanu's subtle description of the attack combine to give a formidable example of the terror inspired by the Gothic horror story. Carmilla's death shows once again the grisly details presented by the horror writers. It is a direct descendent of Lewis' and Maturin's torture scenes. The description of the beautiful vampire lying in her casket and the subsequent details of her death provide the horror to cause the reader to cringe in fright.

Although Le Fanu was extremely successful as a Gothic writer, the greatest success of the Gothic revival belongs to Bram Stoker.<sup>121</sup> Stoker, the holder of

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<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 462.

<sup>121</sup>Bleiler, 39.



a M. A. in pure science from the University of Dublin,<sup>122</sup>  
 became the best known Gothic writer of modern times.<sup>123</sup>

He still is considered to be one of the premier horror writers of recent times and there are a few people in the English speaking world who have not heard of the infamous Count Dracula. The success of Stoker's Dracula has been unparalled by any horror story.<sup>124</sup> Stoker also wrote two other horror novels: The Judge's House and The Squaw, but there is no doubt that his reputation rests squarely upon Dracula.

The Gothic traditions abound in Dracula. There is Castle Dracula, equal to the Capuchin Abbey and convent of St. Clare in its sinister appearance and secret passages; the most evil Gothic villain of all time, the vampire, Count Dracula; perhaps the most fetching of all Gothic heroines, Mina Harker; the young lovers, Jonathan and Mina Harker; the good heroes who finally destroy the Count; Professor Von Helsing, Lord Goddalming, and Quincey Morris. Dracula has the Gothic traditions of Mrs. Radcliffe, Monk Lewis, and Charles Maturin, and

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Varma, 205.

<sup>124</sup> Penzoldt, 72.

has them in great abundance. Dracula is a Gothic horror novel in the strictest sense of the term. It also is the fullest treatment of the vampire story in English fiction.<sup>125</sup>

The German and French influences are also found in Dracula. Although it was influenced directly by Polidori's The Vampyre and Le Fanu's "Carmilla", Dracula undoubtedly depended upon Goethe's Braut von Korinth for many of the vampire traditions.<sup>126</sup> There is also the underlying theme of algolagnia, which de Sade introduced into the horror novel, and here again it is exemplified in the vampire visits to his victims. Dracula wins and violates two young women and triumphs in causing the death of one of them, Lucy Westenra. He exhibits an overpowering love which demands total obedience even to the surrender of her life from his loved ones. He courts his victims just as if he were a suitor for their affections. Stoker's scenes of horror are most effective, when Dracula is "courting" his victims. Also subtle horror is engendered, when the human characters search the vampire lairs for their supernatural opponents.

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<sup>125</sup> Bleiler, 39.

<sup>126</sup> Basil Kirtley, "Dracula, the Monastice Chronology and Slavic Folklore", Midwest Folklore, VI, 135.

Perhaps the most Lewis-like passage in Dracula is Jonathan Harker's meeting with the dreaded sisters at the Castle Dracula. Harker had gone there to make legal arrangements for Dracula's visit to England. He did not know the true existence of Dracula, nor could he explain Dracula's unwillingness to let him roam the castle at night. It was in one of Harker's curiosity inspired searches of the castle that he met its other inhabitants along with the mountains of accumulated dust:

In the moonlight opposite me were three young women, ladies by their dress and manner. I thought at the time that I must be dreaming when I saw them, for, though the moonlight was behind them, they threw no shadow on the floor. They came close to me, and looked at me for some time . . . All three had brilliant white teeth that shone like pearls against the ruby of their voluptuous lips. There was something about them that made me uneasy, some longing and at the same time some deadly fear. I felt in my heart a wicked, burning desire that they would kiss me with those red lips. They whispered together, and then they all three laughed--- such a silvery, musical laugh, but as hard as though the sound could not have come through the softness of human lips. It was like the intolerable tingling sweetness of water-glasses when played on by a cunning hand. The fair girl shook her head coquettishly, and the other two urged her on. One said:

"Go on! You are first, and we shall follow; yours is the right to begin." The other added:

"He is young and strong; there are kisses for us all."

The girl went on her knees, and bent over me, simply gloating. There was a deliberate voluptuousness which was both

thrilling and repulsive, and as she arched her neck she actually licked her lips like an animal, till I could see in the moonlight the moisture shining on the scarlet lips and on the red tongue as it lapped the white sharp teeth. Lower and lower went her head as the lips went below the range of my mouth and chin and seemed to fasten on my throat.<sup>127</sup>

The vampire's abhorrent sexuality is also evident in the vampire baptism of Mrs. Harker:

We all recognised the Count . . . With his left hand he held both Mrs. Harker's hands, keeping them away with her arms at full tension; his right hand gripped her by the back of the neck, forcing her face down on his bosom. Her white nightdress was smeared with blood, and a thin stream trickled down the man's bare chest which was shown by his torn-open dress. The attitude of the two had a terrible resemblance to a child forcing a kitten's nose into a saucer of milk to compel it to drink.<sup>128</sup>

Stoker here exhibits the influence of French sexuality and shows that he has deep insight into the techniques used to arouse feelings of terror and loathsome disgust in his readers. The scenes of the animal-like actions of the vampire terrify the reader and causes his disgust by exhibiting unnatural relations between the participants. The details and legends of Stoker's story are definitely German. The vampire story was popular in Germany long before Stoker wrote

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<sup>127</sup>Bram Stoker, Dracula (New York, 1897) pp. 41-42.

<sup>128</sup>Ibid., 310.

and was introduced into English by Dr. John Polidori; after traveling on the continent with Lord Byron.<sup>129</sup>

With Stoker and Le Fanu carrying on the Gothic craft in the latter half of the nineteenth century, lovers of the true horror novel once again had first rate material to read and enjoy. Between Maturin and Le Fanu, the Gothic novel did not die, but it was victimized by a distinct lack of writing talent. The Gothic horror story became the tool of sensation mongers and the reading fare of the sensation seekers. No great horror writer appeared, until Le Fanu in the 1870's. The revival in quality of the horror novel was carried on by Bram Stoker, whose Dracula was published in 1897. After Stoker, the horror novel again suffered a decline, and it never really has achieved the high status it held in Mrs. Radcliffe's time.<sup>130</sup>

However, this does not mean the Gothic novel has declined to such a state that a good Gothic novel could not find acceptability in modern times. Indeed, in 1967 there was published a novel with the unlikely title of Rosemary's Baby which is a nearly perfect example of the Gothic horror novel. The settings and characters have been modernized

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<sup>129</sup> Bleiler, 39.

<sup>130</sup> Varma, 237.

somewhat, but the traditional Gothic devices remain intact. Instead of a dark castle, there is an old apartment building which has secret passages and a basement that would rival any dungeon for sheer ability to frighten. The building has a reputation for horror: unsolved murders, children-eating sisters, and a former tenant who led a devil worshipping cult. There are two young lovers, Rosemary and Guy Woodhouse, who are beset upon by a coven of witches, carrying on their devil worship. The devil himself makes an appearance to impregnate the unwilling Rosemary in one of the most algolagnic scenes ever found in horror literature. The villains are the old couple next door, who head the witches coven and, while they appear normal, they present a sinister performance of devilry. The book shows its dependence upon past practitioners of the Gothic craft. The rape of Rosemary by the devil could easily have been an idea from the works of de Sade and is at least a scene of which he would have been proud.

Rosemary slept a while, and then Guy came in and began making love to her. He stroked her with both hands--- a long, relishing stroke that began at her bound wrists, slid down over her arms, breasts, loins, and became a voluptuous tickling between her legs. He repeated the exciting stroke again and again, his hands hot and sharp-nailed, and then, when she was ready, he slipped a hand in under her buttocks, . . . Bigger he was than always; painfully, wonderfully big. He lay forward upon her . . . (He was wearing, because it was to be a costume party, a suit of coarse leathery

armor.) . . . She opened her eyes and looked into yellow furnace-eyes, smelled sulphur and tannis-root, felt wet breath on her mouth, heard lust-grunts and the breathing of onlookers.<sup>131</sup>

This shows the dependence of even modern writers upon the beginnings of the Gothic horror novel found in the works of Prevost, de Sade, Goethe, and Schiller. Their influence, although much diluted, can be seen in Ira Levin's devices, his sex scenes, and in his traditional characters. Interestingly enough, Rosemary's Baby has found wide acceptance and wide condemnation just as did the works of Lewis and Maturin. The popularity of Rosemary's Baby has proven that the Gothic horror novel is a lasting form of English literature and that, if it is properly written by a talented author, it can be adapted to modern times without changing the basic ingredients. Scholars now have a new link in the chain of great horror novels and they will have a field day comparing it to the old masterpieces.

The Gothic horror novel was a product of the romantic period. Its methods have changed little, if at all, in the two hundred years of its existence. Yet it still finds an audience ready to devour the horrors within and it probably will do so for a long time to come.

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<sup>131</sup>Ira Levin, Rosemary's Baby (New York, 1967) p. 81.

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