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Horatio and Camilla [supplemental material]

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Horatio and Camilla; or, THE NUNS OF ST. MARY. A tale of the Fourteenth Century, by Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson.

Contents

MLA Citation.....	2
MLA Citation from the Gothic Archive.....	2
Full Title.....	2
Summary	2
Constellation of Knowledge/Historical Context	2
Key Words	3
Anti-Catholic.....	3
Boundaries	3
Bifurcated Ideology.....	4
Class Conflict	4
Doubling	4
Entrapment	5
Family	6
Interpolated Narratives.....	7
Melancholy	7
Missing Mother	7
Religious Oppression.....	7
Spectre	7
Uncanny.....	7
Violence	7
Contextual Background Linked to Keywords	9
<i>anti-Catholic, boundaries, bifurcated ideology, doubling, religious oppression, entrapment</i>	9
<i>family, melancholy, missing mother, class conflict</i>	9
<i>boundaries, anti-Catholic, religious oppression, uncanny, violence, class conflict, spectre</i>	9
Bibliography of Related Information.....	9

MLA Citation

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MLA Citation from the Gothic Archive

Wilkinson, Sarah Scudgell. *Horatio and Camilla; or, THE NUNS OF ST. MARY. A tale of the Fourteenth Century*. Published 1805. E-Publications Marquette. The Gothic Archive, Marquette University, Wisconsin. http://epublications.marquette.edu/english_gothic/14/. Accessed 9/16/13. Web.

Full Title

Horatio and Camilla; or, THE NUNS OF ST. MARY. A tale of the Fourteenth Century.

Summary

Horatio, a young nobleman, is engaged to Lavinia, a young noblewoman. For the three years before the marriage, Lavinia lives in the convent of St. Mary; Horatio falls in love with Camilla, one of Lavinia's companions. Soon afterwards Camilla disappears, apparently having run away with a nun from the convent. Camilla is recaptured, and it is said that she dies; Lavinia eventually leaves the convent and marries Camilla's brother Henry. Shortly after the marriage Lavinia is called to the convent of St. Bennet, where she is reunited with Camilla, who had eloped with a disguised Horatio, been recaptured and ill-treated in the convent, and had at last escaped. Henry's joy at his sister's return inspires him to give a ball in celebration; one of the attendees of the ball seems enamored with Camilla and returns the next day to propose. She turns him down, and Henry, Lavinia, and Camilla go to Montpellier for Camilla's health. Living near Henry's Montpellier estate is a recluse, with whom Henry and Lavinia try to match Camilla; she is uninterested. As she wanders the grounds of the estate, she is kidnapped by minions of Baron de Crass, the man who was interested in her at the ball. De Crass tries to forcibly marry Camilla, but she is rescued by Henry and the recluse, who is revealed to be Horatio. Horatio and Henry kill de Crass and rescue a young man who de Crass had imprisoned. Horatio and Camilla are finally able to marry at the end.

Constellation of Knowledge/Historical Context

Fatal "Horatio and Camilla; or, THE NUNS OF ST. MARY. A Tale of the Fourteenth Century", by prolific chapbook author Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson (1779-1831), was published at least three times in chapbook form—twice in 1804 (by T. Hughes and by Ann Lemoine) and once in 1805 by J. D. DeWick. Wilkinson wrote in partnership with Ann Lemoine, who published a serial "magazine" called *The Tell-Tale*, in which several of Wilkinson's other stories appeared. An extremely productive author, Wilkinson wrote textbooks, novels, and children's stories, as well as the chapbooks for which she is most well-known. Wilkinson

wrote for volume, not critical acclaim; she embraced the habit of abridgement and borrowing (as in “Inkle and Yarico” and “The Travelers”), sometimes openly (as in “George Barnwell”, subtitled “Carefully Abridged from Mr. Surr's Celebrated Novel”).

Some of Wilkinson's works seem to have enjoyed considerable commercial success; her “History of Crazy Jane”, a purportedly true explanation of the story behind the ballad set down by Matthew Lewis, received multiple reprints. *Horatio and Camilla*, by contrast, seems to have been less in demand. Its first publication date of 1804—when Wilkinson was 25—places “*Horatio and Camilla*” early in her career as an author of Gothic fiction. Indeed, the chapbook clues that inexperience; she is aware of the Gothic tropes she must replicate to be successful, but she deploys them somewhat inexpertly. For instance, Horatio's disguised invasion of the convent is a fine opportunity for insertion of anti-Catholic rhetoric, but instead the episode is mentioned obliquely and never given room to breathe. In general, “*Horatio and Camilla*” functions as an example of Wilkinson's less-polished work, a valuable insight on her development as a creator of commercially popular Gothic fiction.

Key Words

Anti-Catholic

Description forthcoming.

Boundaries

Anne Williams in her book *The Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* suggests that Gothic literature is “pervasively organized around anxieties about boundaries (and boundary transgressions)” (Williams 16). Gothic literature, however, deals not only with boundaries (and transgressions) of “self and other”; it attempts also to show the problematic nature of boundaries in the first place. Social boundaries, for example, define what is correct, but at the same time repress the individual. Boundaries in Gothic fiction are often blurred, and things are never as clearly defined as they seem.

The establishment of the boundary between the self and other is important in Gothic fiction for everything that the Self is not is projected onto the Other. In Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Frankenstein's monster is clearly the Other for he, at least physically, has come to represent everything that the other normal looking characters are not. The idea of “self and other” extends also to geographical boundaries, where everything within the boundary of civilized world is good and everything beyond it is either seen as exotic or dangerous. In Stoker's *Dracula*, London is seen as civilized and safe (at least prior the arrival of Dracula) and everything in Romania is considered to be dark, ominous and dangerous.

Boundaries create distinction, but they are also repressive in nature. Society lays down certain norms (boundaries) that individuals cannot transgress or risk being termed the ‘Other’. People in attempting to stay within these boundaries naturally have to repress any desires that may transgress these socially placed boundaries. It can be argued that Dr. Jekyll's creation Mr. Hyde is an attempt to remain respectable at all times, as defined by the societal boundaries.

Lastly, boundaries can be blurred as we see in *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, for is it really possible to create a boundary within oneself? The fact the Jekyll goes to bed as himself and wakes up as Hyde suggests that not only are boundaries problematic, it can also be easily blurred. Dracula too, represents a blurring of the boundaries between the living and the dead, He is not dead, but he is not alive as well, hence he is called the "Un-Dead", which is really an oxymoron.

Boundaries are endless in Gothic fiction; they constantly attempt to define what is correct, known and approved, but at the same time create more problems by their very act of categorization.

Source: Ivan Ang. "Gothic Keywords."

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 9/16/2013. Web.

Bifurcated Ideology

Description forthcoming.

Class Conflict

Christianity is both very much present and absent in Gothic literature. In *Dracula*, religion features prominently in the fight against the vampire – Van Helsing, Harker and Mina frequently invoke the name of God for supernatural and divine aid against the power of Dracula. Yet, there is also a disturbing sense that God is strangely absent, or at best, distant, within the novel. God's power seems limited – captured and contained within material shapes and symbols such as the Host, Indulgences, and the Crucifix. The men who hunt down Dracula are dependent on the trappings of religion without true substance.

Christianity thus becomes reduced to transferable property.

God is also sidelined in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. On one hand, while Biblical allusions to God as Creator abound in the novel, it is always in juxtaposition to the transgression of Victor Frankenstein as the mad scientist. Again, God is invoked only when an immediate threat is identified, as Victor laments and appeals to God to grant him the strength to defeat and destroy his monster. Christianity as the dominant religion in nineteenth century England was thoroughly interrogated and questioned, its beliefs in an Almighty God challenged as science and technology assumed prominence. Gothic authors, themselves questioning the relevance of religion, foregrounded these issues by presenting Christianity in a dubious light – present, but altogether powerless, shallow and somewhat deficient.

Source: Fong, Minghui. "Gothic Keywords."

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 9/16/2013. Web.

Doubling

Doubling refers to a multiplication by two, such as when two or more characters parallel each other in action or personality, for example. It can also mean internal doubling, or division within the self to exhibit a duality of character.

Often, seemingly disparate characters are shown through doubling to be fundamentally similar, hence collapsing the self-other dichotomy and imparting a worrying sense of indistinguishableness between the supposed opposites. This implies that boundaries between deliberately demarcated groups of people are actually slippery and unstable. External identity markers such as dressing and mannerisms are hence undependable,

allowing social categories to become permeable and vulnerable to transgression by virtue of their easy imitation.

Doubling hence illustrates deep anxieties that Victorian elites had regarding the weakening of the distinctions drawn along lines of class, gender, race and nationality, posing threats to the interests of the self. It also raises a cautionary point that a thin line separates good and evil, and while it is easy for evil to infiltrate one's protected sanctum, it is equally easy for one to fall into the latter's trappings. As such, everything that seems good must also be held in suspicion of harboring a negative underside.

Doubling also foregrounds the motif of mirroring, in particular the projection of one's fears, desires and anxieties onto the other, which becomes an uncomfortable reflection of ugly traits that the self refuses to acknowledge. The other thus reveals the social ills and moral decay that high Victorian society tries to ignore. It also broaches the notion that there are always two sides to a coin, such as that crime and poverty would necessarily accompany wealth accumulation in a capitalistic society. Progress for some comes at the cost of hardship for many others.

At the individual level, doubling plays out an internal splitting of the self between the public face of high Victorian respectability and professionalism, versus the carefully hidden face of despicability and immorality. It makes an oblique reference to Victorian hypocrisy, duplicity of standards and multiplicity of facades, as well as the fear of being discovered as such. It also dramatizes the inner struggle and vacillation between choices of good and evil in the individual. It is also interesting to note that for particular groups, doubling shows the essential sameness of perception by society of their status. Gothic representations of female characters for example, almost always seem to double each other in their stereotypical portrayal of feminine passivity when confronted with masculine power.

Lastly, at the narrative level, the form and structure of gothic writings sometimes act as a double to the content of the novel, underscoring the importance of themes that are doubled (reiterated through form and content), and the narrative strategy of doubling itself.

Source: Diana Chan Tsui Li. "Gothic Keywords."

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 9/16/2013. Web.

Entrapment

Entrapment, a favourite horror device of the Gothic, means to be confined or to be trapped in such a way that there is no way out. It is this sense of there being no escape that contributes to the claustrophobic psychology of Gothic space. The notion of claustrophobia is closely tied up with that of entrapment. Although it is most often regarded as a consequence of physical entrapment, it can also be more generally attributed to a character's sense of helplessness, or a feeling that one is caught up in some sinister plan or destiny over which one has no control.

There are essentially three types of entrapment: physical, mental, and existential. Physical entrapment would mean being physically trapped in some place. A recurring gothic device of physical entrapment is that of the protagonist trapped in a maze of some kind and trying to escape, but inevitably returning to the same spot again and again. An example of physical entrapment can be found in Stoker's *Dracula*. When Harker is being driven to the castle of Dracula, he experiences a moment of being physically trapped in the nightmare landscape of the Transylvania, as is evident in his remark that "[it] seemed to me that we were simply

going over and over the same ground again; and so I took note of some salient point, and found that this was so" (Stoker). Another example of such entrapment is found in Smith's "A Rendezvous in Averigone." In this short story, the protagonist Gerard is trying in vain to escape from a forest; he returns, inevitably, to the same spot every time. Eventually, "[his] very will was benumbed, was crushed down as by the incumbence of a superior volition" (Smith).

Mental entrapment, on the other hand, is about being confined to a certain state of mind. The gothic trope of madness, for example, is a form of mental entrapment. In a way, the insane are trapped in their own mental universe, into which no one else can penetrate. Renfield, in *Dracula*, is doubly entrapped; physically locked up in an asylum, he is also limited to the confines of his mental universe, doomed to be continually misunderstood by Seward, or simply dismissed as insane.

Lastly, there is also existential entrapment, which takes the form of social entropy and ontological or epistemological entrapment. An example of existential entrapment can be found in Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*; Dr Jekyll feels trapped by societal notions of respectability, by a constant pressure of having to uphold his reputation as a gentleman in the eyes of the Victorian public. As a way of breaking out of this 'prison', Dr Jekyll invents the figure of Hyde. Hyde is therefore Jekyll's liberator, for it is as Hyde that Dr Jekyll can truly express himself, unbound by considerations of maintaining his respectability.

Source: Esther Leong. "Gothic Keywords."

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgobhb/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 9/16/2013. Web.

Family

Industrial development in the Nineteenth century encouraged urbanization and by 1850 more than half of England lived in cities and worked in industries. This changing economic condition inevitably challenged conventional ideology of the family which became redefined to include members "whether actually living together or not" and "connected by (either) blood or affinity" (OED).

By this definition, the patriarchal figure became freed from monogamy. *Dracula*, as symbol of the new money-obsessed class, had three vampire wives. Similarly, with ready money, many figures of authority were in command of the imp-child. Instead of a genealogical right, the new capitalist society allows wealth to gain patriarchal authority over many.

While the new factory communities introduced new figures of authority, with respect to cloth and steel, production becomes increasingly specifically gendered. Through personifying industrial production, Gothic tropes seem to suggest via *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* that while possible, the resultant single-parent offspring are unnatural and terrifying.

At the same time, economically active working class women and the 'masculine' New Woman threatened conventional notions of feminine dependency. Writers like Stevenson reacted by only presenting negative working women (in both sense of the word) while Stoker singles intellectual Mina out for *Dracula's* sanction.

Proliferation of child labor positioned children as 'property generating property' as exemplified in *The Bottle Imp*. Dracula's brute beast children also aid his creation of vampire children. The horror of the four female vampires' feeding off children is an implicit gothic comment on the inhumane nature of this exploitation.

Source: Yao Lingyun. "Gothic Keywords."

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 9/16/2013. Web.

Interpolated Narratives

Description forthcoming.

Melancholy

Description forthcoming.

Missing Mother

The typical gothic mother is absent or dead. If the mother is alive and well, such as Lucy's mother in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, she is associated with the incapacity to carry out her maternal duties. The typical gothic mother has to be killed in order for the domestic instability that underpins the gothic text to flourish. Only the occasional evil or deviant mother (Olalla's mother in Robert Louis Stevenson's "Olalla" for example), is allowed to survive in the gothic text. Even then, the evil and deviant mother figure (such as H.R. Haggard's titular character in *She*) has to be removed eventually for there to be some sort of closure to the gothic text.

The repression of the mother allows the progression of the narrative in the gothic mode.

The missing mother also serves as a social commentary where her absence and silence highlight the repression of women within an overwhelming patriarchal regime.

The missing mother points to the absence of regulation and the absence of stability in the family, hence the desire for the male characters to usurp the maternal role and circumvent the female's role in procreation (Victor Frankenstein and Dr Jekyll do that in their respective fictional worlds). At the same time, the missing mother is a signifier for the stranglehold of men over the legal and physical self-agency of the women in gothic texts.

Source: Choo Li Lin. "Gothic Keywords."

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 9/16/2013. Web.

Religious Oppression

Description forthcoming.

Spectre

Description forthcoming.

Uncanny

Description forthcoming.

Violence

Violence, like over-determined symbols in Gothic literature, functions as much as an act of social interrogation as it is an act of affirmation. In both *Frankenstein* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, strict social mores and policing that prompt the disastrous, transgressive reactions of

repressed selves are manifested in the physical violence wrought by Frankenstein's and Dr Jekyll's doubles, the monster and Mr Hyde. Here, violence also highlights class anxieties where the repressed working class, like Frankenstein's self-educated monster, rebels violently against social masters like Frankenstein. Human superficiality that incites Frankenstein's monster's violence also operates to reflect the monstrosity in society itself. Apart from interrogating social norms, scientific advancement and its monstrous power, building on the Promethean over-reacher theme, are also examined in its production of violent figures and emotional violence, like that experienced by Frankenstein and Dr Lanyon after witnessing what science can achieve. Here, gothic atavism of regression alongside material and scientific progress is manifested in the figures of Jekyll and Hyde, where the latter's regression is demonstrated in his ape-like appearance and, more significantly, in his disregard of human moral codes—his violence. Yet, while violence undermines and questions the adequacies of law, it also serves to affirm social codes. The violence of staking in Dracula, for instance, acts as a social cleansing ritual of removing figures that threaten social instability and miscegenation. Here, the violence of staking Lucy, as is the mutilation of Elizabeth in Frankenstein, also takes on phallic terms to affirm masculinity in an age of increasing sexual anxieties.

Source: Sophia Koh.. "Gothic Keywords."

<http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 9/16/2013. Web.

Contextual Background Linked to Keywords

anti-Catholic, boundaries, bifurcated ideology, doubling, religious oppression, entrapment

The first part of this text participates whole-heartedly with the anti-Catholic discourse of its contemporaries. The setting of much of the action in and around a convent, as well as the conflation of Catholic/ecclesiastical and political structures, positions readers to condemn the Catholic other. The second part, beginning with Lavinia's departure from the convent, involves a much more bifurcated ideology; a good priest is doubled with a rogue priest, and Catholic structure serves both to save Camilla and to (almost) doom her.

family, melancholy, missing mother, class conflict

This is a long text, and thus provides more insight into its characters' psychologies than most chapbook texts can. The governing mood is melancholy; every main character except Henry falls prey to it at one point or another. Family dynamics affect characters' choices and personalities, as well; neither Horatio, Lavinia, nor Henry and Camilla are said to have living mothers, and their fathers function as little more than aristocratic pimps, using their children as chips in land-gambling. The only positive parental relationship in the text is in a lower-class family.

boundaries, anti-Catholic, religious oppression, uncanny, violence, class conflict, spectre

As one of Wilkinson's earlier forays into the Gothic, "Horatio and Camilla" systematically includes multiple well-known tropes: the boundaries of Catholicism are tested, the convent is a site for religious oppression and ghostly interaction with the uncanny, characters return seemingly from the dead to tell interpolated narratives, nobles swing swords at each other. The text addresses class issues in a relatively cursory way; it lacks any of the aggressive questioning native to Radcliffe's *The Italian* and its ilk. It functions more as a response to demand than any attempt at novelty; this fits with Wilkinson's commercial project.

Bibliography of Related Information

Bearden-White, Roy. "Chapbooks of Henry and Ann Lemoine." SIU-C, 2008. Web. 9 November 2013.

- *Bearden-White, presently at SIU-C, has linked a bibliography of Ann Lemoine's chapbooks, with brief descriptions of the contents of each. Valuable for understanding the shape of Wilkinson's partnership with Lemoine.*

Hoeveler, Diane. "More Gothic Gold: The Sadleir-Black Chapbook Collection at the University of Virginia Library." *Papers on Language and Literature* 46.2 (2010): 164-193. Web. 9 November 2013.

Horatio and Camilla

- Hoeveler's article situates Wilkinson's biography relative to her career, as well as analyzing one of Wilkinson's late-career chapbooks.

Potter, Franz. "Writing for the Spectre of Poverty: Exhuming Sarah Wilkinson's Bluebooks and Novels." *Cardiff Corvey: Reading the Romantic Text* 11 (2003): 17-33. Web. 9 November 2013.

- Potter's article details Wilkinson's biography, discussing her partnership with Ann Lemoine as well as the general course of her career.