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White Pilgrim, The [supplemental material]

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The White Pilgrim (1805) by Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson

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The White Pilgrim

MLA Citation

Sarah Scudgell Wilkinson. *The White Pilgrim; or, Castle of Olival: An Interesting and Affecting Tale, Founded on Singular Facts*. London; Dean & Mundy, 1805. Print.

MLA Citation from Gothic Archive

The White Pilgrim. Published 1805. E-Publications Marquette. The Gothic Archive, Marquette University, Wisconsin. http://epublications.marquette.edu/english_gothic/3/. Accessed 10/16/13. Web.

Full Title

The White Pilgrim; or, Castle of Olival: An Interesting And Affecting Tale, Founded on Singular Facts. Translated From That Highly Popular French Novel, Le Pelerin Blanc

Summary

While Count Horatio Castelli is away from home, he receives a letter informing him that his wife, Amabel, has gone missing. Castelli and his friend, Count Vassali, return to Castelli's hamlet, Olival, only to find out from Amabel's servant, Theresa, that Amabel had been in a secret correspondence and that she seems to have left voluntarily. Castelli and his three children go to live on Vassali's villa for two years before returning to Olival. Shortly after returning to Olival, Castelli receives a letter to meet Vassali in London and goes. Vassali brings Castelli to see Theresa, the old servant of Amabel who reveals that Roland, Castelli's bastard brother and Captain of the Guard during the time of Amabel's disappearance, was in love with Amabel and when she did not return that love, Roland, with the help of Otho, used a poison to put her to sleep and kidnap her. Shortly after, Castelli dies in a ship wreck and Roland produces a fake will that names him guardian of the Castelli children but plans to kill them, fight his bastard status and inherit Olival. Vassali finds the Countess being held captive and surrounds the castle with soldiers led by the same White Pilgrim who pretended to be deaf when he asked Roland to take him in but actually heard Roland confess to everything. Horatio returns, having not died in a shipwreck, and retakes Olival. Amabel recovers quickly and her and Horatio have a baby girl.

Inspirations for this work

Rixercourt's novel *Le Pelerin Blanc* (written French in 1802, translated into English by Henry R. Bishop in 1817 as "The Wandering Boys; of The Castle of Olival).

Source: Hoeveler, Diane L. *Gothic Riffs: Secularizing the Uncanny in the European Imaginary, 1780-1820*. Columbus : Ohio State University Press, 2010. 222. Print.

Bibliography

Other Editions

London: Dean and Munday, n.d., 6th edition

Keywords:

Home

Found on: page 1, paragraph 1, page 14, paragraphs 2 and 6, page 28, paragraph 2

The home's nature to "home" emphasizes its vulnerability to becoming un-homed. When Hyde ventures out of the home at night and engages in activities that attract the attention of Jekyll's contemporaries, Jekyll's secret transformation to Hyde within his home runs the risk of being un-homed. Jekyll's anxious desire for his home with all its trappings of comfort, love and respectability emphasizes another conception of home by the fin-de-siecle gothic writer, where secret social transgressions within the home will potentially lead to the destruction or loss of the home.

The nuclear family of the Castelli's in this chapbook is fractured because Horatio is despondent over the loss of his wife and as a result cannot reside in his own home. Horatio and his three children live with Vassali for three years and then the children are cared for by a tutor named Marcella. The Castelli's lose the safety and privacy of their home from the transgressions of a member of their own staff meant to protect the inner sanctum of the house: Roland. The home in this story is also a place of secrets because Amabel is kept not far from the home, Theresa, the handmaid of Amabel, does not reveal who Amabel was in contact with before she went missing, and Roland orchestrated this whole plan in order to seize the house.

While it ultimately seems like the home will be destroyed or lost forever when Roland locks the castle down, this chapbook has a happy ending where the White Pilgrim, Vassali, and Castelli retake the home and Horatio and Amabel reestablish their home as a place of comfort and safety.

Source: Koswanage, Niluksi. "Gothic Keywords." <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 11/1/2013. Web.

The Missing Mother

Found on: page 9, paragraphs 1 and 5

The typical gothic mother is absent or dead. 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. 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.

In this text, Amabel is gone not through her own volition, but because of the acts of the captain of the guard of Olival, Roland. Amabel going missing is the catalyst for the action of the novel and progression of the narrative. Her absence highlights how easily a family can be thrown into instability with her absence. Ultimately, her reappearance

Source: Lin, Choo Li. "Gothic Keywords." <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 11/1/2013. Web.

Secrets

Found on: page 19, paragraphs 3 and 6, page 28, paragraph 3, page 29, paragraphs 4 and 5

Secrets, namely that which is 'unspeakable' is a distinctive gothic trope. In literary novels, secrets are knowledge deliberately concealed from the readers and/or from the characters involved. In gothic literature, secrets aid in creating a sense of suspense, hinging on a scandal or mystery and subsequently lead to a shocking revelation at the end. Often, a foreboding shadow is cast upon those who withhold secrets, be it a dark family history or a Faustian pact as exemplified by Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll* who are both possessors of an 'unspeakable' knowledge which allows them to transcend the limits and abilities of man but eventually at the expense of their sanity, friends and lives.

Secrets as a form of concealment also connote darkness and acts as a means of subversion against the façade of the hypocritical Victorian society which boasts a well-policed

state with brightly-lit streets at night, claiming the honourability of well-clothed individuals and the safety of the private self, all which the gothic trope seeks to challenge.

This chapbook has three major secrets: (1) that Amabel was kidnapped and hidden away by Roland because she rejected her advances; (2) that Roland is the bastard of Horatio's father and Horatio's older half-brother (3) that Horatio did not die in a shipwreck towards the end of the story. The fact that Amabel was kidnapped and hidden away for three years challenges the idea of a well policed state because she was not found. Also, Roland's secret contributes to his plans of revenge and eventually leads to his death. Horatio's faked death ultimately contributes to the final undoing of Roland.

Source: Yuqi, Kong. "Gothic Keywords." <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 11/1/2013. Web.

Genealogy

Found on: page 19, paragraphs 5 and 6

What we know as "blue blood" reminds us at once of the aristocracy and nobility. The Gothic texts in the Victorian era were concerned with the rise of the bourgeois class, a liminal force itself that threatened to destabilize the ruling power of the former elite. Therefore, the Gothic treatment of blood sometimes focuses on the purity and taintedness of blood like in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* to highlight then contemporary societal anxieties.

Roland is obsessed with his genealogy and "fixing" his family status by arguing that his father was secretly married to his mother, legitimizing his birth and making him the true Count of Olival. This motivation is revealed at the end of the chapbook. This genealogical motivation is what creates the initial problem in the novel [Amabel's disappearance] that drives the action and conflicts of the story.

Source: Tan, James. "Gothic Keywords." <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2004. Last Accessed 11/1/2013. Web.

Entrapment

Found on: page 20, paragraph 4, page 29, paragraph 5, page 28, paragraph 3

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 Averioigne*. 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).

Amabel is the entrapped character in this novel. She is kidnapped by Roland after she rebuffs his romantic advances. Roland keeps Amabel trapped in order to execute his plan of getting rid of Horatio and poisoning the children in order to claim control of the castle of Olival. Amabel is found and rescued by her husband Horatio. Her reappearance is the spark to the ending resolution of the novel and allows for the story to resolve.

Source: Leong, Ester. "Gothic Keywords." <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2004. Last Accessed 11/1/2013. Web.

Letters

Found on: page 8, paragraphs 8 and 9, page 9, paragraph 5, page 11, paragraph 2, page 14, paragraph 6, page 16, paragraph 9, page 17, paragraphs 2, 4, and 5, page 19, paragraph 2, page 21, paragraph 2, page 22, paragraph 1,

Letters while seemingly presenting objectivity on one level through the assumed tone of factuality, are also simultaneously open and subject to interpretation. It is linked to a reading of words as well as a misreading. There are letters that are not replied in *Frankenstein*, letters that may not have reached their destination, letters of secrecy in *Jekyll and Hyde*, letters that chronicle events—these letters attempt to present to us an understanding of what happened, reiterated with the supposed advantage of retrospect and an overarching perspective that is

allowed by the passing of time. However, as the paths of these letters are always dubious, it calls to attention its own in-authenticity and hence the potential for a misreading since we are never always sure if what we are reading is accurately represented. In other words, what has happened is always fragmented and there can be no complete reading of events.

Some letters and entries, instead of being handwritten, are now type-written which displaces the personal touch of the writer from the reader and handwriting can no longer be a measure of authenticity. Anything, including words, can be reproduced. This links the idea of letters to modern communication and technology. The use of problematic embedded narratives illustrates an anxiety about the increasing ease of communication and whether more information really means knowing more. Narratives within narratives draw to attention its own artificiality and the question of whether there can be an original sequence of events behind what is narrated. At the same time, letters are also clearly letters of the alphabet which cues the reader in to the notion that all that is being read is a construct of "letters". Perhaps overdetermined, but letters open the doors to the multitude of readings and misreadings in the Gothic world.

The letters and wills in this chapbook are works of either deceit or confusion. Letters carry bad news to Horatio and Vassali about the women in their lives, other letters do not reach their destination, and Roland manufactures Horatio's will in order to further his own plans of capturing Castle Olival. The letters in this chapbook only create problems and are often falsely constructed.

Source: Chan, Felicia. "Gothic Keywords." <http://courses.nus.edu.sg/course/ellgohbh/gothickeywords.html>. Last Updated 2006. Last Accessed 11/1/2013. Web.