Romanticism and the Gothic

Genre, Reception, and Canon Formation

Michael Gamer

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MICHAEL GAMER

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This book is for Elise, Langdon, Marlon, and Nancy

Women we have often eagerly placed *near* the throne of literature: if they seize it, forgetful of our fondness, we can hurl them from it.

Critical Review, 2nd series, 5 (1792), 132

Cultural categories of high and low, social and aesthetic . . . are never entirely separable.

Peter Stallybrass and Allon White,
The Politics and Poetics of Transgression (1986), 2

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Abbreviations

The following standard editions are cited parenthetically in the text and notes using the following abbreviations.

BMP	Joanna Baillie, *Miscellaneous Plays* (London: Longman, 1804).
BP	Joanna Baillie, *A Series of Plays: in which It Is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind. Each Passion Being the Subject of a Tragedy and a Comedy*, 3 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1798–1812).
BPW	Lord Byron, *The Complete Poetical Works*, 6 vols., ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford University Press, 1980–91).
CBL	Samuel Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (1817), vol. VII of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton University Press, 1983).
CL	Samuel Coleridge, *Collected Letters*, 6 vols., ed. Earl Leslie Griggs (Oxford University Press, 1956).
CPW	Samuel Coleridge, *Poetical Works*, 2 vols., ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (Oxford University Press, 1912).
LB	William Wordsworth and Samuel Coleridge, *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems 1797–1800*, ed. James Butler and Karen Green (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1992).
SL	Walter Scott, *The Letters of Sir Walter Scott*, 12 vols., ed. H. J. C. Grierson, assisted by Davidson Cook *et al.* (London: Constable and Co., 1932).
SMP	Walter Scott, *Miscellaneous Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott, Bart.*, 28 vols. (Edinburgh: Robert Cadell, 1834–6).
SPW	Walter Scott, *Complete Poetical Works* (Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1900).
WL	William and Dorothy Wordsworth, *The Letters of William and Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Ernest de Selincourt, 2nd. edn. – vol. I: *The Early Years, 1797–1805*, rev. Chester L. Shaver (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); vol. II: *The Middle Years, Part I, 1806–*

1811, rev. Mary Moorman (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); vol. III: *The Middle Years, Part II, 1812–1820*, rev. Mary Moorman and Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970); vol. IV: *The Later Years, Part I, 1821–1828*, rev. Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); vol. V: *The Later Years, Part II, 1829–1834*, rev. Alan G. Hill (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979).

WP William Wordsworth, *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols., ed. W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974).

WP2 William Wordsworth, *Poems, in Two Volumes, and Other Poems, 1800–1807*, ed. Jared Curtis (Cornell University Press, 1983).

WRC William Wordsworth, *The Ruined Cottage and The Pedlar*, ed. James Butler (Cornell University Press, 1979).

A note on the text

Attributions for poetry, whether in the notes or parenthetically in the text, refer to line number (preceded, if necessary, by canto or volume number) unless they include the abbreviation "p." or "pp." References to drama, prose, and correspondence will be cited by volume and page number.

INTRODUCTION

Romanticism's "pageantry of fear"

> There is an economy of cultural goods, but it has a specific logic . . . To the socially recognized hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. This predisposes tastes to function as markers of "class."
>
> (Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction*)[1]

> I submit for your consideration the following hypothesis: a text cannot belong to no genre, it cannot be without or less a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging.
>
> (Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre")[2]

Since the 1980s, critics like Stuart Curran, Jacques Derrida, and Tzvetan Todorov have stated in various ways and without qualification that genre "is the driving force of . . . all literary history" – that "there is no genreless text."[3] This book does not seek to oppose such assertions so much as to explore their less-acknowledged corollary: that generic classification also depends upon the readers, publishers, and critics who ultimately determine a text's identity and value. The interplay between writers and readers drives not only Bourdieu's sense of canon formation and Derrida's final caution concerning "participation" and "belonging," but also Fredric Jameson's definition of genre as a "social contract" occurring between any "writer and a specific reading public."[4] If these formulations give significant importance to readers, they still present genre as an instance of friendly socialization or businesslike negotiation, where various parties combine to determine textual meaning, and where a significant majority of participants must agree on the nature of a text's "participation" before any act of "belonging," however temporary, can occur.

Taking up Jameson's metaphor, I am concerned in this study less

with generic contracts than with those moments of literary history when the negotiations that precede them break off or end in deadlock. Where writers and readers agree fundamentally on a text's cultural status – implicit in Jameson's idea of "contract" – negotiations may run smoothly and even invisibly. Where writers and readers disagree – or where readers disagree among themselves – we enter into a different situation, one in which writers find themselves placed in generic spaces that they never intended, and where texts do not get to choose their own genres.

In beginning with these assumptions, this book explores the association of writing we now call "gothic" and "romantic" with one another in Britain at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries – years in which neither "gothic" nor "romantic" had yet taken their modern meanings, and in which the texts we now associate with each had not yet been categorized in the ways we would now find familiar. I spend considerable time, therefore, following how the late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century writers we now associate with "romanticism" exploited the vogues for gothic fiction and drama in vexed and complex ways. More importantly, the book argues that the reception of gothic writing – its institutional and commercial recognition as a kind of literature – played a fundamental role in shaping many of the ideological assumptions about high culture that we have come to associate with "romanticism." In the last two and a half centuries, "gothic" and "romantic" have held diverse meanings and cultural functions; yet in our own modern criticism both frequently have operated as catch-all terms of convenience whose very belatedness as literary-historical rubrics has helped elide their complex processes of formation. I aim instead to show how the processes through which both terms emerged in large part were determined by their perceived relation to one another. This book, therefore, is very specific about the ways that it employs the terms "gothic" and "romantic."

"Gothic"'s complexity as a historical and ethnic term in the eighteenth century recently has received sustained attention in a number of studies, two of which have proven foundational for this book: Robert Miles's *Gothic Writing 1750–1820: A Genealogy* (1993) and E. J. Clery's *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction 1762–1800* (1995). Miles's opening chapters trace gothic's aesthetic and discursive origins, presenting it as a "series of contemporaneously understood forms, devices, codes, figurations, for the expression of the 'fragmented subject'"[5]; and while Clery chooses to make "supernatural" and not "gothic" the focal point of her book, she nonetheless provides an account of the term "gothic" as well as a

foundational study of the origins, practices, and cultural value of gothic fiction. In focusing upon the reception of "gothic" writing as well as its constitutive discourses, I consider myself to be extending and responding to their theoretical and historiographical projects, as well as to the related work that Ian Duncan and Ina Ferris have done on romance and authorship, and that Peter Manning and David Richter have done on reception. Even more recently, James Watt has attempted to map the genre's heterogeneous nature by surveying the often antagonistic relations that existed among the practitioners of gothic fiction.[6] While appearing too late to inform the writing and central tenets of this book, his focus upon the politics of gothic's reception anticipates and supports the detailed arguments about gothic's formation and cultural status I make here. An approach to genre based in reception seems useful to me *not* because it reiterates Foucauldian assumptions about genre as an agentless discourse whose relations to power are defined directly by institutions and indirectly by the decentralized network of accidental voices, but rather because it seeks to isolate those moments where writers and readers self-consciously attempt to determine a text's affiliation and value. If gothic writing possesses ideologically complex and richly discursive origins, gothic's reception tells us much about how readers at the turn of the nineteenth century organized and attempted to make sense of gothic as a "new" kind of writing.

It is worth reiterating, I think, that, unlike most twentieth-century commentators, gothic's readers in the 1790s considered it neither exclusively a kind of fiction nor even necessarily a narrative mode. As I show in subsequent chapters, part of what caused readers and reviewers to separate gothic from other kinds of writing were its sudden incursions after 1794 into poetic and dramatic realms. Without much difficulty, then, readers by the 1800s grouped together texts as disparate as James Boaden's dramas, Matthew Lewis's ballads, and Charlotte Dacre's fiction under a single categorical umbrella. Several names may have existed for this rubric – "terrorist school of novel writing," "*modern* romance," "the trash of the Minerva Press," "the German school" – yet what is clear from these multiple groupings is the recurrence of specific writers, readers, and publishers under a single heading. While the majority of recent critical commentary has limited itself to gothic fiction, Miles has argued that "such an understanding of Gothic writing [as narrative] is misconceived. We should not understand Gothic as a set of prose conventions, however flexible, but as a discursive site crossing the genres."[7] By nature heterogeneous, gothic texts regularly contain

multiple modes of writing, shifting from novelistic prose into poetry, inset oral narratives, didactic fables, or pantomimic and dramatic spectacles. With Miles, then, I define gothic neither as a mode nor as a kind of fiction (the "gothic novel") but as an aesthetic. I wish, however, to clarify this formulation slightly by characterizing gothic not as a site – which carries with it suggestions of anchored stability – but rather as something more organic and protean. At the very least, if gothic is a site crossing the genres, it is a site that *moves,* and that must be defined in part by its ability to transplant itself *across* forms and media: from narrative into dramatic and poetic modes, and from textual into visual and aural media. I find the conception of gothic as a shifting "aesthetic" helpful because it corresponds to how late-eighteenth-century critical audiences imagined and represented gothic's emergence into British literary culture, except that their own labels for gothic – as foreign invader, as cancer, as enthusiasm, as emasculating disease, or as infantilizing nurse – are more pejorative. The number and intensity of these labels, moreover, demonstrate the range of impressions gothic produced even among its detractors, and give some indication of the extent of the gulf existing between critical and popular audiences. For the purposes of this study's allegiance to the project of historicism, then, my ultimate aim is to problematize gothic as a category by tracking it from its emergence in Britain as a narrative mode to those conflicts that arose when it was appropriated in the later 1790s into other forms, among them ballad, tragedy, and metrical romance. As chapter 2 will demonstrate, in fact, it is gothic's ease of dispersal and ability *not* to stay within the confines of prose romance – its habit of collapsing disciplinary and social categories, however gendered or polarized – that constituted one of the primary threats to the reviewers who condemned it. In defining gothic writing in the terms first accorded to it and through the trajectories of its own contemporary reception, I aim to show how it became a recognized literary category, and why its various generic delimiters so quickly became (or were coined as) terms of abuse. At root an ethnic and historical delimiter that became a generic term only retrospectively, "gothic" operates in this book as a generic term as a matter of terminological necessity; at all times, however, I aim to keep my readers conscious of gothic writing's historically emerging and dynamic identity in these years.

"These years," of course, also refer to decades (1790–1820) traditionally associated with the emergence of "romanticism" in Britain. My aim in positing the development of romanticism as a response to gothic's

reception is to place the term "romantic" under the same critical pressure as I do "gothic." At root a genre term, "romantic" quickly became something else entirely, and for most of the twentieth century has been a locus of debate and contestation, taking on a variety of often conflicting meanings and degrees of importance. My book, therefore, does not use "romantic" to denote a literary period or period-defining movement. With James Chandler and Marlon Ross, I find its use as such misleading because it posits as representative writers who literally did not represent the range of writing of these decades[8]:

> This kind of period-defined history views the horizon of time as a domino-effect whereby every writer within a span of time is naturally affiliated with every other *because* they occupy a similar temporal horizon. The accidental and anarchic nature of time is suppressed for another form of representative history.[9]

Philip Cox sees this conflict between the two dominant uses of "romantic" – as period descriptor and as prevailing aesthetic – as a fundamental tension within romantic studies since the early 1960s. Citing the work of Jerome McGann and Marilyn Butler, he puts the matter succinctly: "perhaps even more relevant to our immediate concerns is McGann's earlier observation that a large amount of the work produced during the Romantic Period is not 'romantic.' This, as much as anything, calls into question the relevance of the historical category."[10]

Much of historicist work on "romanticism" during the 1980s and 1990s has sought to show the ways in which specific "romantic" writers and texts, once defined as such, have become in twentieth-century critical accounts powerful, emblematic constructs. These constructs, in turn, have served as the foundations of inherited notions of "romanticism" as literary period, revolution, or movement. It is in response to such prevailing assumptions, for example, that the ironically entitled *Romantic Revolutions* (1990) opens with a section entitled "The Spell of Wordsworth" followed immediately by another entitled "Romanticism without Wordsworth" – their aim being not only to question Wordsworth's representativeness in these years but also, more generally, "to offer hard thought . . . about our search for the great and the representative" as itself a self-perpetuating legacy of romanticism.[11] Marlon Ross operates with similar aims in mind, painstakingly demonstrating canonical romanticism to be based upon masculine tropes of competitiveness, dominance, quest, and conquest, which "romanticist critics" in turn have taken up in more modern accounts:

Like the romantics, who make women (and the world) an extension of themselves, romanticist critics have made women writers of the period an extension of male romanticism. Such reasoning also makes it easier to ignore the pervasive, fertile, and powerful influence of women poets during the "romantic" period, allowing us to keep intact the idea that romanticism can serve to describe the whole period by equating the male romantic poets with all the literature of the time.[12]

This practice of representative reading "prevents us from considering the ideological limits of romanticism in history" or from engaging in alternative representative practices that produce, in turn, markedly different accounts of literary history.[13]

Put another way, while we commonly see "romantic" invoked in modern criticism to describe a literary period, we rarely, if ever, see "gothic" used in this way – this in spite of the fact that gothic as a popular aesthetic dominated the years 1790–1820 as did no other kind of writing. Why is this? One might simply answer that, in terms of high culture, romanticism won out over gothic in these years rather quickly – by the first years of the nineteenth century if we are to give credence to the modern accounts of Rosemary Ashton or Karen Swann, or the contemporary accounts of the Reviews and private individuals like Baillie, Hazlitt, Jeffrey, Scott, and Wordsworth.[14] As a result, we still often use "romantic" to describe these years, even though the most cursory examination of publishers' booklists yields many times more "gothic" texts than "romantic" ones. As this book demonstrates, however, the contextual picture is more complex than a question of numbers or simple competition – particularly if we wish to understand the circumstances under which romantic assumptions about genre and literary value were produced.

I reserve "romantic," then, to refer to the matrix of assumptions that historicist criticism of the 1980s and 1990s has dubbed "romantic ideology."[15] Coined by Jerome McGann in his foundational study of the same name, "romantic ideology" usually has been represented as a set of writerly decisions about literary value, usually politically derived and articulated either formally or generically. The work of McGann and Marjorie Levinson has focused primarily upon the political evasions of romanticism, pointing to its tendency to elide its own historicity for what are often very historically specific reasons, and to respond to the specific exigencies of time and place by asserting its ability to "transcend the conflicts and transiences of this time and that place."[16] Marilyn Butler, James Chandler, and Clifford Siskin, meanwhile, have concentrated on

romantic ideology's power as a self-perpetuating model, established in the powerful self-assertions of romantic writers that have shaped our notions of periodicity, cultural politics, authorship, and intellectual commonality. Siskin, especially, is interested in the ways in which romanticism – which he calls an ideological matrix – has determined the very terms through which critics have debated romanticism's position within modern culture:

> So pervasive has that power been for over 150 years that mine is among the initial inquiries into Romanticism that treats as artifacts not only its disciplinary boundaries (literary versus nonliterary), hierarchical differences (creative versus critical), aesthetic values (spontaneity and intensity), and natural truths (development and the unconscious), but also the distinction between the organic and the ironic deconstructive that informs contemporary critical debate. It is not that earlier scholars have deliberately perpetuated the past; that they did so simply dramatizes how completely and invisibly the psychologized "reality" of Romanticism has determined our understanding of ourselves and of our writing.[17]

While Siskin's interest lies in the effects of romanticism's longstanding preferences for certain modes of "high" discourse, one might wish to extend this kind of critical inquiry into its assumptions about genre as well. Privileging one kind of writing, however "invisibly," means demoting others linked closely enough to it to be perceived as viable substitutes. In this study, therefore, I focus upon those traditionally "romantic" forms (lyrical ballad, verse tragedy, metrical romance, and historical novel) most closely related to the poetic, dramatic, and narrative modes that meet in gothic writing. Most broadly, I am interested in how negotiations between readers, writers, and reviews over the nature and status of the gothic produced a context to which the ideology of romanticism was a response.[18] While gothic's contentious reception constituted it as a conspicuously "low" form against which romantic writers could oppose themselves, its immense popularity, economic promise, and sensational subject matter made this opposition a complex and ultimately conflicted and duplicitous endeavor. It is no accident that a considerable amount of early-nineteenth-century writing explicitly denies (or otherwise deflects) its association with the gothic at its moments of closest kinship. If my primary interest is with these moments of adjacency and overlapping, it is because within them the gothic perpetually haunts, as an aesthetic to be rejected, romanticism's construction of high literary culture.

I GOTHIC DEFINITIONS AND THE LEGACIES OF RECEPTION

> There is frequently a striking resemblance between works of high and low estimation, which prejudice only, hinders us from discerning, and which when seen, we do not care to acknowledge; for the defects of a favourite Author, are like those of a favourite friend; or perhaps still more like our own.
>
> (Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance*)[19]

This book sets forth two general arguments about genre and reception: that one cannot conceive of particular genres as dynamic and heterogeneous without historicizing them, and that one cannot comprehend the developments and transformations of genres without also tracing the history of their reception. Such an approach is particularly important to understanding genre in late-eighteenth-century Britain, a culture in which most writers were not only readers but also reviewers for a periodical industry expanding at rates that rival gothic even at the height of its popularity.[20] Characterized by unprecedented popular approval and critical aspersion, gothic's reception in the last decade of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth centuries has shaped its subsequent status and valuation for nearly two centuries. In spite of its centrality to British culture from 1790 to 1820 and its two centuries of success in popular print, film, and now computer media, it was widely considered until 1970 as at best a novel sideshow of romanticism, and at worst an embarrassing and pervasive disease destructive to national culture and social fabric.[21]

Even a quarter of a century after it began to be the object of serious and widespread critical inquiry,[22] the legacy of gothic's reception is still present in three recent and astute critical studies by Jacqueline Howard, Anne Williams, and Maggie Kilgour, all of which begin with ruminations on the difficulties and pitfalls of defining gothic. Arguing for the efficacy of "approaching interpretation of the Gothic with Bakhtin," Howard characterizes "the gothic as an indeterminate genre," and argues that tracing its various "impurities" allows for a "greater precision" in situating gothic in opposition to "the more or less fixed nature of many received views . . . [about the] dominant literary canon."[23] Sharing Howard's concern with processes of canon-formation, Williams's hesitancy comes from her own knowledge of gothic's critical history – that, historically, critics have labelled texts as "gothic" in order to ascribe to them traits of sentimentality, femininity, and pulp popularity, thereby rendering them trivial and ephemeral.[24] Kilgour,

meanwhile, finds gothic's interest and importance precisely where previous critics have attributed its "failure" as a genre, in what she calls its "piecemeal . . . corporate identity":

> At times the gothic seems hardly a unified narrative at all, but a series of framed conventions, static moments of extreme emotions . . . which do not form a coherent and continuous whole . . . Like the carnivalesque, the gothic appears to be a transgressive rebellion against norms which yet ends up reinstating them, an eruption of unlicensed desire that is fully controlled by governing systems of limitation.[25]

For Kilgour, gothic's status as an internally conflicted montage of conventions – almost a heteroglossia of British culture in itself – means that previous critical assessments of it as a separate and coherent category of writing have been not only reductive but misguided. Gothic, she argues, cannot be dismissed as a premature manifestation of romanticism or as a missing link between the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel because "it cannot be seen in abstraction from the other literary forms from whose grave it arises."[26] In this she echoes Miles, whose expansive definition of gothic seems, at least in part, an effort to render critical derogation and pigeon-holing impossible:

> "What is 'Gothic'?" My short answer is that the Gothic is a discursive site, a "carnivalesque" mode for representations of the fragmented subject. Both the generic multiplicity of the Gothic, and what one might call its discursive primacy, effectively detach the Gothic from the tidy simplicity of thinking of it as so many predictable, fictional conventions. This may end up making "Gothic" a more ambiguous, shifting term, but then the textual phenomena to which it points are shifting and ambiguous.[27]

Miles's determination to bypass traditional lists of gothic conventions stems in part from his awareness that such lists hearken back to late-1790s dismissals of gothic writing, which represented it as entirely formulaic, a kind of mass-produced fiction-by-numbers.[28] His association of "gothic" with "representations of the fragmented subject" recalls the open characterization of gothic of Jeffrey Cox and Marshall Brown; for both, gothic is concerned primarily with "limits" and "excess" and therefore defined by assumptions that vary across a culture and that change with history.[29]

This prevailing – and warranted – nervousness over defining gothic in anything but the most open-ended terms, I believe, points to even more pressing reasons for historicizing gothic's development and reception: that, as gothic no longer is what it once was, we must stop trying to

define it as having a static identity, and instead try to understand the historical changes and generic transformations that led it to embody its various forms. We must begin not by defining gothic's essence but by tracking its cultural status. This seems particularly important given that gothic's status after 1795 shaped both the conditions under which it could be transmitted into other cultural forms, and its subsequent treatment by critical establishments up to our own time. Over two hundred years after *The Monk* (1796) raised so great a public outcry as to force Matthew Lewis to censor himself and disavow any political relevance to his work for the rest of his career, gothic's stigma is still among the first issues to which recent critical studies of gothic must attend. As the rest of this study will argue, writers at the turn of the nineteenth century were forced to respond to the earliest and most virulent strains of this same cultural stigma.

Rather, then, than echoing Anne Williams's argument that "'Gothic' and 'Romantic' are not two but one"[30] because of their shared poetics, I wish to focus upon the economic and ideological processes that have insured their lasting separation. Following such critics as Eve Sedgwick and Bradford Mudge, Williams observes generally that "[t]wentieth-century criticism records an increasingly effective repression of the Romantic poets' kinship to the Gothic," and particularly that "[b]y mid-century, Romanticists were busy defending their favored poets against the Modernist assaults . . . o[n] this literature as a culturally 'feminine' phenomenon."[31] Such an account, while useful for calling our attention to gender's central role in shaping ideologies of literary value, does not explain fully the relationship between "gothic" and "romantic" because it does not explain why twentieth-century romanticists have assumed that associating romantic poetry with gothic writing would lower its cultural status by feminizing it. Such assumptions, I argue, predate "Modernist assaults" by well over a century, and are a legacy of romanticism's response to the reception of gothic writing in the decades following the French Revolution.

Literary critics and historians since the mid-twentieth century may have sought collectively to recuperate romantic writing by undervaluing its fondness for gothic iconography, machinery, and themes, but they have done so largely at the bidding of the very writers whom they have extolled. If Williams is correct in calling attention to late-eighteenth-century poetry's attraction to gothic settings and tropes, then the critical texts of these same writers – including Samuel Coleridge's reviews of gothic fiction (1794–8), Joanna Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" to *A*

Series of Plays . . . on the Passions (1798), William Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* (1800), and Lord Byron's *English Bard and Scotch Reviewers* (1809), to name but a few – signal their predilection for attacking gothic fiction and drama with varying degrees of dismissiveness and hostility. Their attacks, furthermore, usually follow lines of argument similar to those ubiquitous in the periodical literature of these same decades, which condemn gothic texts as debased productions pernicious to the taste and morality of the British nation. That a number of poets we now classify as "romantic" should align themselves with the reviewers, clergy, essayists, and government officials who condemned gothic fiction and drama is not necessarily surprising. These same years, however, witness from these same writers the production of their most gothic-influenced works: Coleridge's "Christabel" (1797–1800) and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" (1797–8), Baillie's *De Monfort* (1798) and *Rayner* (composed 1796–8, published 1804), Wordsworth's "Fragment of a Gothic Tale" (1797), supernatural ballads (1798–1800), and *Borderers* (1796–7), and Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage Cantos I and II* (1812) and *Giaour* (1813). Such a juxtaposition, I find, points to a wider ambivalence toward gothic in romantic writing, an ambivalence that extends beyond these isolated instances and inscribes itself into romanticism's experiments with poetic form and genre, its assumptions about gender, and its confrontations with received notions of literary class and of the Poet's identity.

One need not, however, look to the critical prose and verse satire of romantic poets to find romantic writing's attraction and repulsion for its gothic relations. One finds these same ambivalences plentifully within the poems and dramas themselves. Sometimes they are manifest structurally, as with the rift in "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" between Coleridge's pious glosses and his grisly subject matter, or as with Scott's tendency in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805) to debunk, through his appended historical and scholarly notes, the very supernaturalism he creates in the text of the poem. At other times these same writers circumvent gothic's stigma as the genre of adolescents and women by adapting it to explore "adolescent" and "feminine" ways of seeing the world. The early spots of time in Wordsworth's *Prelude* and the later cantos of Byron's *Don Juan*, for example, choose gothic motifs to represent not only situations of youthful wonder and female mischief, but also their respective poets' bemused conceptions of their own younger selves. Such sections – from the adolescent Wordsworth stalked by a ghostly Nature while stealing boats and birds' nests to a ghost-seeing Don Juan

growing first "a little dissipated" and later a little prone to superstition[32] – attribute the very gothicism they celebrate to the young and inexperienced states of mind of their poems' heroes. In doing so, they perform an implicit act of evasion. By attaching "gothic" to the "adolescence" of the younger self being represented, the gothic sections of both poems deflect attention from what might otherwise be an embarrassing fact of their composition: that they are inventions not of juveniles full of youthful errancies and enthusiasm, but of mature poets writing either within or against the grandest and most elevated poetic form of all, epic.

My working hypothesis in tracking late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century invasions of gothic into other high-cultural forms, then, has remained that the greater the cultural divide existing between gothic and the genre or form that it enters, the greater the chance that the appropriation will be read as a generic impurity, disruption, and transgression. To gothicize a sonnet in 1797, for example, is to risk committing a less serious transgression than one commits by gothicizing an epic, since the sonnet's status in 1797 as a "feminine" and popular poetic form suitable for conveying sentiment means that it holds gender and class positions similar to those held by gothic. To gothicize a "high" and "masculine" form like epic, on the other hand, means that one must transgress also against the very assumptions that seek to keep gender and class boundaries clear and distinct.

Such considerations become especially important at the turn of the nineteenth century, when gothic's popularity with readers and unpopularity with reviewers make both the costs and benefits of marking one's text as "gothic" extremely high. When one considers the logics of class and gender that govern the hierarchy of British poetic forms, for example, one finds it no accident that the most gothic poems in *Lyrical Ballads, with a few other poems* (1798) are the ballads, or that the volume's Advertisement spends much of its time attempting to police how its readers will respond to these particular poems. The five short paragraphs of the Advertisement single out the volume's most gothic-influenced poems – "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," "The Thorn," and "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" – to caution prospective readers not to reject these poems solely on the basis of their being "too low . . . and not of sufficient dignity" (*WP*, I:116). It is equally unsurprising, given the hostility of reviewers to the more lowly and supernatural poems in the volume, that Wordsworth responds by opening both volumes of the 1800 edition with manifestos, declaring the collection to be free of the linguistic corruptions supposedly so current among other popular

writers.[33] The rejection of gothic fiction and drama implied in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*' (1800) tirade against "frantic novels [and] sickly and stupid German tragedies" is so well known as not to require quotation (*WP*, 1:129). The first lines of Part Two of "Hart-Leap Well" (1800), however, become particularly significant when read against the general vilification of gothic in the late 1790s, since it attests to Wordsworth's many efforts in this second edition to inoculate his poetry against the particular criticisms to which the "supernatural" poems of the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) were subject:

> The moving accident is not my trade;
> To freeze the blood I have no ready arts:
> 'Tis my delight, alone in summer shade,
> To pipe a simple song for thinking hearts. (*LB*, 97–100)

These lines not only reject "freez[ing] the blood" as "trade," but also insist that the poetry of *Lyrical Ballads* is a philosophical vehicle for reconnecting thought to feeling, embodied in the declarative, oxymoronic "thinking hearts." In a similar way, the poem's structure performs an exorcising of its own supernatural content. Part One opens by providing the originary narrative of Sir Walter killing the Hart and commemorating its leap with three pillars and a well; Part Two, after opening with the lines just quoted, follows with the shepherd's superstitious interpretation of the decayed well as haunted only to have Wordsworth revise and naturalize its supernatural content:

> "Grey-headed Shepherd, thou hast spoken well;
> Small difference lies between thy creed and mine:
> This Beast not unobserved by Nature fell;
> His death was mourned by sympathy divine.
>
> "The Being, that is in the clouds and air,
> That is in the green leaves among the groves,
> Maintains a deep and reverential care
> For the unoffending creatures whom he loves. (*LB*, 157–64)

Like many of Wordsworth's ballads, the poem models appropriate poetic interpretation even as it performs it: it provides a history of the monument's construction, and then performs first "low" and next "high" interpretations of these "facts." Wordsworth may place these two interpretations side by side, but it is clear from his elevated tone – and his position as the sayer of the final word – that we should prefer the lesson of his high interpretation to the shepherd's stories of "murder,"

"blood," and "dolorous groan[s]" (*LB*, 132–4). Wordsworth's primary goal in the poem, then, is to do more than teach his reader to distinguish between popular supernaturalism and poetic naturalism. The obsessive retelling of Sir Walter's story, with its accompanying progression from apparently straightforward narrative to metaphysical interpretation, suggests that such histories are valuable primarily as raw material to be transformed into meaning. In many ways, the poem is almost duplicitous in the way that it allows both Wordsworth and his readers first to indulge in the supernatural speculation of low and rustic characters and then to ally themselves with a more philosophical and chastened interpretation of the same events. The poem's structure, then, works to distance author and reader from the gothic materials of the poem and from the ballad form's supernatural predilections even as it taps it as a source of material. As in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, this distancing serves the additional purpose of distinguishing Wordsworth from other poetic contemporaries – like Southey, Lewis, Robinson, and Scott, to name but a few – who "blunt the discriminating powers of the mind" by indulging uncritically in ballad supernaturalism (*WP*, I:128).

This kind of elaborate authorial positioning epitomizes the complexity with which writers like Wordsworth handle decisions about literary form and framing when they are driven by anxieties over how to handle "gothic" materials. "Hart-Leap Well"'s manifesto statement and treatment of the shepherd's speculations about ghosts and curses, furthermore, do not merely signify trepidation at a time when both the costs and benefits of appropriating gothic conventions are high. They also allow Wordsworth to separate himself from his contemporaries who traffic in similar, suspect materials. His treatment is governed by a kind of double perspective – one that seeks to retain gothic materials at the same time that it historicizes, critiques, rejects, neutralizes, or otherwise disguises their gothicism.

With this double perspective in mind, I have chosen this introduction's title from Wordsworth's "Elegiac Stanzas, Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm, painted by Sir George Beaumont" because this text so aptly illustrates how far a poet like Wordsworth will go to transform potentially illegitimate generic materials into something more legitimate. Since chapters 3, 4, and 5 of this book examine "romantic" engagements with specifically "gothic" materials, I read "Peele Castle" here not as an emblematic "romantic/gothic" poem but rather as a case-study for how romantic ideology articulates itself in terms of genre. The poem and its associated materials do more than exemplify the

centrality of genre to Wordsworth's notions of literary value. They also illustrate the extent to which his preference for "high" literary forms and aesthetics – here elegy, Horatian ode, lyric, and the sublime – depend upon rejecting other, "lower" aesthetic forms. Central in romantic poetic canons and to epistemologically focused accounts of romanticism, the poem provides an excellent arena in which to demonstrate how genres like gothic are erased and replaced by more prestigious entities. I find it of emblematic interest because it begins with a generically unstable and heterogeneous point of origin – George Beaumont's painting of *Piel Castle in a Storm* – and attempts to transform that origin into something generically pure and fixed. With its juxtaposition of ship, storm, and ruined castle, Beaumont's *Piel Castle* mixes elements historically associated not only with gothic but also with picturesque and sublime aesthetics. By the end of "Peele Castle," however, Wordsworth not only has redefined the genre of Beaumont's painting by locating it exclusively in the sublime, but also has revised his own poem's origin by replacing Beaumont's painting with the tragedy of his brother's death. The poem's handling of genre, then, exemplifies an assertion I wish to make more generally about romanticism: that its privileging of specific literary forms and aesthetics depends upon an ostentatious rejection of others, and that in these rejections – and the hierarchies of genre that are their byproducts – we can trace the processes by which romantic ideology is constituted.

In reading the ways in which "Peele Castle" constructs its reality through how it chooses to deploy genre, I am in many ways taking up the same question asked by two of the poem's strongest readers, Geoffrey Hartman and Marjorie Levinson, both of whom begin their respective essays on "Peele Castle" by responding to lines 35–6 of the poem: "A power is gone, which nothing can restore / A deep distress hath humanised my soul" (*WP2*, 35–6). Hartman, in asking "What has been lost?", first observes that Wordsworth cannot lose the naïve vision of a benign Nature described in stanzas 1–3 of the poem because he has never possessed it – that Wordsworth's portrait of how he would have painted Piel Castle as a younger man deliberately misrepresents his early poetic practices and influences. Consequently, he reads this forced originary perspective as Wordsworth dramatizing the loss of his ability to believe in his own creations. Choosing rather to focus on the inconsistencies of the poem's argumentation than on its intentionality, Levinson revises Hartman's reading by arguing that what has been lost "is the Power of the Real . . . the loss of a concept of external and independent

otherness" that can exist outside of Wordsworth's subjectivity.[34] Like Hartman, she isolates in the first three stanzas of Wordsworth's poem a false origin that in turn dictates the ways in which the poem structures memory. For her, the poem's "logical binds" lie in the "mechanical and excessive – one might even say, obsessive – oppositions" that it sets up in relation to these first three stanzas. These oppositions, she argues, constitute "Wordsworth's bid to escape from the prison house of his own, dialectically constituted subjectivity, his field of vision."[35]

In asking what loss the poem performs for its readers, I would like to read Wordsworth's escape from his "field of vision" instead as an escape from genre – as I hope to show, an escape from the gothic and picturesque elements of Beaumont's painting and into the sublime. In doing so, I suggest that the poem's "obsessive oppositions" construct a reverse dialectic – that, rather than setting up a thesis and an antithesis in order to produce a transformative synthesis, Wordsworth reverses this process. He comes upon a synthetic, composite genre piece (Beaumont's painting) and, by dividing it into a constitutive thesis and antithesis (the sublime and the beautiful), utterly erases its synthetic, composite effects. In asking what has been lost in "Peele Castle," then, I contend that it is the heterogeneity of genre – the ability of a text to contain multiple genres and multiple associations – in Beaumont's painting of *Piel Castle in a Storm*.

Levinson's own reading has called attention to the artifice of Wordsworth's initial stanzas by noticing how the poem shifts from Beaumont's painting to the actual castle, and from Wordsworth's memories of living next to Piel Castle to his acknowledgment in stanzas 4–5 that the scene of the poem's first three stanzas is actually not memory but an idealized version of it:

> Ah! THEN, if mine had been the Painter's hand,
> To express what then I saw; and add the gleam,
> The light that never was, on sea or land,
> The consecration, and the Poet's dream;
>
> I would have planted thee, thou hoary Pile
> Amid a world how different from this!
> Beside a sea that could not cease to smile;
> On tranquil land, beneath a sky of bliss. (*WP2*, 13–20)

For Levinson, these stanzas amount to a "sleight of hand" or tautology, since the way in which Wordsworth says that he *would* have represented Piel Castle is in fact how, in stanzas 1–5, he has just represented it (*WP2*, 109, 107).

The poem's initial description, however, makes one further finesse – from particular memory into something more generically conventional – that is hardly noticeable until opposed by the equally conventional landscape that succeeds it. Wordsworth may have been, as he claims in the poem's opening lines, the actual "neighbour" of the "rugged Pile" of Piel Castle, but his "sea that could not cease to smile," his "tranquil land," and his "sky of bliss" are as stylized as the details of Beaumont's painting. Determined in its focus upon feminine softness, ease, and pleasure, the description amounts almost to a textbook rendering of the Burkean concept of the beautiful. The finesse of these opening stanzas, then, comes from the way in which Wordsworth provides an aesthetically conventional description of a landscape while claiming that landscape to be authentic because derived from lived experience. As a stylized rendering of a remembered landscape, it participates in an aesthetic category at least one degree removed from memory and at least two degrees removed from the desolate subject matter of Beaumont's own painting.

This opening description's alignment with the beautiful is doubly fixed into place by the other oppositions that succeed it – by the poem's matrix of "then" versus "now," feminine versus masculine, and pleasure versus pain – all of which are fixed into place by what follows in the unsubtle fulcrum of the poem:

> So once it would have been, – 'tis so no more;
> I have submitted to a new control:
> A power is gone, which nothing can restore;
> A deep distress hath humanised my Soul.
>
> Not for a moment could I now behold
> A smiling sea, and be what I have been:
> The feeling of my loss will ne'er be old;
> This, which I know, I speak with mind serene. (*WP2*, 33–40)

Looking again to Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry* (1757) and Longinus' *The Peri Hyposis*, the passage plays on the sublime's associations with overwhelming power, blank desertion, and the elevation that follows being obliterated by such a power, as if Burkean abjection had produced Longinian elevation and empowerment. Subsequent lines, moreover, systematically touch on Burke's assertions about the sublime as associated with fear ("this pageantry of fear!"), with death ("the sea in anger" and "the deadly swell"), with immensity ("That Hulk" and "this huge Castle"), and with eternity ("Cased in the unfeeling armour of old time") (*WP2,* 44–51). The declarations in these lines, like those of the first

three stanzas, are authenticated by a "real" (and unquestionably sublime) event – the death of Wordsworth's brother Jonathan from a storm at sea – that functions ultimately to confirm the sublime standing of Beaumont's painting by positing it as an accurate signifier of an undeniably sublime signified:

> Then Beaumont, friend! who would have been the friend
> If he had lived, of him whom I deplore,
> This work of thine I blame not, but commend,
> This sea in anger, and that dismal shore.
>
> Oh 'tis a passionate work! – yet wise and well;
> Well chosen is the spirit that is here;
> That hulk which labours in the deadly swell,
> This rueful sky, this pageantry of fear! (*WP2*, 41–8)

Stepping in as the "real" origin of the poem, Jonathan Wordsworth's death acts as the sublime counterpart to that other, more pleasurable time when Jonathan Wordsworth was alive and Piel Castle smiled under a "sky of bliss." Fixed by such chronological and generic opposites, the poem's dualisms produce a structure that feels as solid and permanent as the idealized castle that dominates the final three stanzas of the poem. Risking an architectural metaphor, the poem's opposition of the beautiful and the sublime works as a kind of scaffolding that holds "Peele Castle" together, forcing into opposition what otherwise would crumble into the heterogeneous assembly of genres that is Beaumont's *Piel Castle in a Storm*.

In many ways, Wordsworth's tribute in "Peele Castle" has proven to be a high point in *Piel Castle*'s reputation and reception. When spoken of at all, critical commentaries of Beaumont's painting in the last century have compared it unfavorably to similar paintings by Constable and Turner, or have placed it squarely in the tradition of picturesque landscape painting popularized by Beaumont's tutor at Eton, Alexander Cozens, and by Beaumont's early mentor, William Gilpin.[36] Even the most recuperative readings of the painting have noted its mixing of traditional genres and popular gothic subject matter embodied in its dim moon and desolate ruin – what Martha Hale Shackford has called the painting's "typically Romantic scene, with a lonely ruined castle, an expanse of stormy sea, and the hazard of human lives suggested by two struggling ships."[37] Karl Kroeber, addressing this problem of the ruin's multiple associations, goes to almost heroic lengths to make it as sublime as possible, attributing to it what he calls "a depth not actually in the

canvas . . . The ruined castle is representative of the function and destiny of artifice. The castle endures but is not immortal; what we see in Beaumont's picture is the castle's guttedness. But in its ruin the castle testifies to a creative energy which originally shaped it."[38] A recently reprinted reading by J. D. O'Hara, however, illustrates even more strikingly the discomfort created in modern commentaries by the painting's gothic and picturesque associations:

> The picture strains to pile horror on horror's head; its only subtlety, if it has one, is its relegation of the shipwreck to the middle distance. But it is not merely a marine gothic novel. Beaumont was firmly of the old school in his painting. His taste was neoclassic, and the conservative Wordsworth had no difficulty sympathizing with it . . . Wordsworth had written of medieval buildings before "Elegiac Stanzas," and sometimes in connection with water. Falling to ruins, they typically suggest the slow mutability of man's works in contrast either to the changelessness of nature or the swift passing of individual life.[39]

O'Hara's reading may state what Kroeber avoids acknowledging – *Piel Castle*'s association with popular gothicism – yet nevertheless renders such associations insignificant in light of Beaumont's classical training, political conservatism, and reputation for "taste." Beaumont's status as a man of neoclassic taste and his membership in "the old school" of painting, it seems, preclude the possibility of him being interested in any kind of ephemeral taste or extravagance, let alone really meaning "to pile horror on horror's head." Such men, he suggests, are not interested in representations of horror *because* they have "taste"; for them ruins can only function to confirm human mortality and finitude.

I do not want to refute these readings so much as call to attention the ways in which both critics are extremely selective about what they choose to see and value. O'Hara, for example, may capture nicely the connotations of specific passages about ruins in the *Prelude* – such gestures occur as early as the lines about the Chartreuse monastery in *Descriptive Sketches* (1793) – but to do so he must ignore the quite different functions of ruins in other passages of the *Prelude*, as well as in Wordsworth's *Salisbury Plain* poems (1794–7), *Borderers*, and "Hart-Leap Well."[40] In dwelling on the ways in which modern readings of Beaumont's *Piel Castle* and of Wordsworth's ruin poetry have tended to privilege ahistorical ideas commonly associated with ruins, then, I first wish to reiterate ideas established by McGann and others about the relationship between romantic poetry and its historical milieu by mapping out some of the ways in which reading textual ruins ahistorically

purifies them ideologically.[41] In the case of the recuperative readings of *Piel Castle* that I have highlighted, such purification occurs when a critic calls attention to the supposedly grand and universal qualities of Beaumont's painting in order to explain more comfortably why a "great" poet like Wordsworth would find meaning in an otherwise non-canonical, uncelebrated text. In an ideological world where Great Art recognizes its kin through its shared fondness for, and its unremitting focus on, Great Ideas and Grand Themes, to strip from a text its concerns with the political and aesthetic movements of its time is to glorify its ability to transcend the pettiness of its own historicity, not to mention erasing any embarrassing fondness it might have for the passing artistic fads and fancies of the day. In the case of readings like Levinson's, this situation changes to one of addressing the poem's ideological concerns but not its manipulations and breakdowns of genre.

Consequently, my second aim in dwelling on the ideological practices of modern readings of *Piel Castle* is to place them next to Wordsworth's own reading of Beaumont's painting in "Peele Castle." Such readings make explicit the ideological work that Wordsworth's own "Peele Castle" does in transforming the generic composition of Beaumont's painting, and thereby make manifest the ways that romantic ideology operates at the level of genre. In addition, they point to the ways that Wordsworth's closing representation of *Piel Castle* as *sublime* – with all its associations of masculinity, grandeur, power, infinitude, and transcendence – constitutes an act of purification that is ideological in ways strikingly similar to the recuperative readings of *Piel Castle* to which I have called attention. It makes the same universalizing interpretive gestures of later romantic readings of Beaumont's painting. Wordsworth's transformation of *Piel Castle* into "this huge Castle . . . [c]ased in the unfeeling armour of old time" in "Peele Castle" (*WP2,* 49, 51), then, embodies more than the attempt of one artist to elevate the work of another; it is a bid to fix the painting's social status by fixing it generically.

O'Hara's phrase that *Piel Castle* "is not *merely* a marine gothic novel" [my italics], moreover, makes clear the hierarchies of "taste" and genre at work here. From such an ideological viewpoint, to call a painting or a poem purely sublime is to represent it as entirely masculine, absolutely elevated, completely transcendent, and – because this text depends on neither historical nor cultural locus for its power – utterly universal. In such an aesthetic economy, to introduce other genres or aesthetics into such an elevated text is to *dilute* it at best and *pollute* it at worst. Taking the

implications of these assumptions one step further, when one notices in that text the influences of gothic and picturesque – those two extensively and embarrassingly popular and parodied aesthetic movements of the romantic period – one risks lowering and feminizing that text by dragging it through the dregs of the culture out of which it arose.

Wordsworth's letters after 1800 repeatedly confirm this viewpoint about the gothic and the picturesque as kinds of "false taste"; his lengthy correspondence to Beaumont in these same years, furthermore, invokes the term "taste" – rarely used elsewhere in the correspondence of these years – no fewer than a dozen times.[42] What these letters and Wordsworth's other correspondence make plain in addition to this preoccupation with "taste," however, are the ways in which "gothic" and "picturesque" frequently overlap or become indistinguishable from one another. Wordsworth's 17 October 1805 letter to Beaumont, for example, first launches into a detailed critique of the "misconception of the meaning and principles of poets and painters which gave countenance to the modern system of gardening" before cautioning Beaumont against self-indulgence in building a neo-gothic mansion on his estate at Coleorton (*WL*, I:625):

> The names of Howard and Percy will always stand high in the regards of Englishmen, but it is degrading not only to such families as these but to every really interesting one, to suppose that their importance will be most felt where most displayed, particularly in the way I am now alluding to: . . . a man would be sadly astray who should go for example to modernize Alnwick and its dependencies, with his head full of antient Percies. (*WL*, I:625)

In a subsequent letter that refers Beaumont back to this "long Letter I wrote about laying out grounds," Wordsworth ends with an even more resolute conclusion about building with a "head full of antient Percies":

> This system I think is founded in false taste, false feeling, and its effects disgusting in the highest degree. The Reason you mention as having induced you to build was worthy of you, and gave me the highest pleasure. But I hope God will grant you and Lady Beaumont life to enjoy yourselves and the fruit of your exertions for many years. (*WL*, II:7)

Wordsworth's April 1815 letter to R. P. Gillies discussing Scott's *Guy Mannering* (1815), furthermore, makes clear the extent to which this particular brand of "false taste" in building and landscaping overlaps with its literary counterparts. Gothic fiction – here denoted as "the Radcliffe school" – overlaps with picturesque painting in ways similar to the earlier letters to Beaumont:

You mentioned *Guy Mannering* in your last. I have read it. I cannot say that I was disappointed, for there is very considerable talent . . . but with that want of taste, which is universal among modern novels of the Radcliffe school, which, as far as they are concerned, this is. I allude to the laborious manner in which everything is placed before your eyes for the production of picturesque effect. The reader, in good narration, feels that pictures rise up before his sight, and pass away from it unostentatiously, succeeding each other. But when they are fixed upon an easel for the express purpose of being admired, the judicious are apt to take offence, and even to turn sulky at the exhibitor's officiousness. (*WL*, III:232)

Such a passage is of immediate interest for the ways in which it exposes the proximity – if not periodic conflation – of at least one dominant tradition of "gothic" texts with picturesque painting at the turn of the nineteenth century. With its choice of the easel as metaphor and its stress on the picturesque's demand to be *admired,* furthermore, the letter illuminates just how complex is Wordsworth's dance with Beaumont in "Peele Castle." "Peele Castle," after all, does exactly what Wordsworth condemns in the passage above: it places Beaumont's picture on an easel and performs Wordsworth's admiration of it. At the very least, the above letter suggests that one of "Peele Castle"'s functions is to perform a positive appraisal of Beaumont's "taste." What it also exposes, however, is the extent to which "good taste" in the first decades of the nineteenth century could not reside within the "Radcliffe school" or within "picturesque effect." In such a climate, it is hardly surprising that Beaumont wished to bequeath one of his two canvasses of *Piel Castle in a Storm* to the Wordsworths, or that Wordsworth would voice unhappiness in the Fenwick Note to "Peele Castle" when the painting ended up elsewhere:

Beaumont painted two pictures of this subject one of which he gave to Mrs Wordsworth saying she ought to have it: but Lady B—interfered & after Sir George's death she gave it to Sir Uvedale Price in whose house at Foxley I have seen it—rather grudgingly I own. (*WP2*, 427)

Wordsworth's irritation at such "interfere[nce]" from Lady Beaumont may stem from his fondness for Beaumont and from his own hopes of ownership, but that he should feel compelled a full sixteen years after Beaumont's death to complain in such detail (or complain at all) points to something more than disappointment. The irony here is too palpable not to be a contributing factor. In giving the painting to Uvedale Price, author of *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and Beautiful* (1794) and other books on landscape gardening and painting,[43] Lady

Beaumont does more than reverse a promise. She also renames the genre of *Piel Castle in a Storm* by giving it to a lifetime apostle of picturesque and neo-gothic landscaping, thereby bringing it back into contact with the very popular genres from which "Peele Castle" had labored so intensely to extricate it. In doing so, she not only allies *Piel Castle* with "picturesque effect" and all "that want of taste . . . universal among . . . the Radcliffe school," but also effectively undoes Wordsworth's own careful generic packaging of the painting in "Peele Castle."

II WHY GOTHIC?

As a case-study for introducing the ideologies of genre that inform romanticism, "Peele Castle" and the correspondence surrounding it make clear that genre is central to the way that Wordsworth organizes and understands culture. These texts also show his awareness of the relation of generic perception to critical reception – that how a text is perceived generically plays a considerable role in how it is received critically.[44] In doing so, they suggest that, in spite of its penchant for producing generic hybrids – whether they be historical tragedies, metrical romances, *Elegiac Sonnets, Descriptive Sketches*, or *Lyrical Tales* – romantic writing was nevertheless received and criticized by a literary culture that, even in 1806, strongly valued cultural hierarchy, aesthetic unity, and generic purity and definitiveness.

As my subsequent chapters argue, this gulf between generic production and generic reception is best understood as a conflict between the demands of popular and critical audiences in Britain at the end of the eighteenth century – a conflict in which gothic plays a conspicuous and central role. If writers at the turn of the nineteenth century must write for multiple audiences holding conflicting desires, then this predicament becomes particularly difficult when writers choose to work with materials that have a tendency to polarize these audiences. I have chosen gothic's widespread but uneasy presence in romantic writing as my focal point, then, because no other genre plays so great a role in embodying and calling attention to the conflict between critical and popular reading audiences at the turn of the nineteenth century. Gothic's unprecedented popularity and almost unanimous critical vilification after 1795 produce a cultural predicament central to this book's understanding of the production of romantic ideologies of genre because gothic's cultural status in these years plays such a central role in the economic behavior of writers and in their processes of self-definition. If gothic's widespread presence in romantic writing is frequently accompanied by ambivalence

and apology, it is because these same writers are appropriating economically valuable materials (to draw readers) and attempting to transform them into culturally *valued* materials (to satisfy an increasingly vocal critical audience). Gothic, then, is at once extremely attractive to writers wanting readers and because it is so conspicuous – not only to readers but also to the reviewers and essayists who bemoaned its reliance on "*trap-doors*, *false pannels*, [and] *subterranean passages*," to the owners of circulating libraries who commonly organized their books by genre, and to the patrons of libraries and bookshops who chose their reading material either by title or by its blue-and-white Minerva Press binding.[45]

The stigma produced by gothic's reception, then, shapes more than merely the circumstances under which gothic conventions and motifs appear in writing traditionally associated with "romanticism." It also contributes to romantic ideology's privileging of alternative aesthetics like the sublime and the "elegiac," of established poetic forms like ode, lyric, and epic, and of traditional (and therefore legitimate) popular forms like ballad and metrical romance. In addition, gothic's stigma plays a significant role in determining the kinds of supplementary matter – what I often will call "packaging" – that surround gothic materials. It is no accident, for example, that Joanna Baillie footnotes *Macbeth* at length during the most stereotypically gothic scenes of *Orra* and *Ethwald*, or that the most scholarly and substantial footnotes in Scott's romances are those that explain their supernatural machinery. The subsequent chapters of this book, therefore, spend considerable time working with textual practices, as they often act almost as barometers of the comfort with which a writer works within gothic traditions and with gothic materials.

We usually theorize that writers, when they make genre choices, respond both to past writers who have written in the same or adjacent genres, and to contemporaries employed in similar tasks writing within the same culture. Such assumptions govern thinking about genre from Aristotle to Bakhtin, in that they privilege the idea of direct communication between writers rather than focusing upon the cultural forces that dictate the conditions under which one writer reads another. In tracking romanticism's various appropriations of and evasions from gothic, I seek to supplement these assumptions by demonstrating the ways in which genres are defined also through their reception – by those book-buyers, book-borrowers, book-critics, and book-censors who are the texts' readers.[46] I find such an approach to genre particularly useful for thinking about writing at the turn of the nineteenth century because

British critical audiences hold significant power and are vocally partisan in their responses to new publications. This book, consequently, seeks to demonstrate not only how gothic's popular *and* critical receptions shape the production of romantic ideology, but also how this popular/critical dualism can operate in a culture where individuals often occupy both halves of it simultaneously by reading, reviewing, and writing gothic texts. My first chapter ("Gothic, reception, and production"), therefore, begins by exploring theories of literary reception and literary production, and by bringing such models to bear on gothic at the time of its greatest popularity. Chapter 2 ("Gothic and its contexts"), then, seeks to define gothic by tracking what various cultural institutions, from booksellers to reviewers to the Anglican Church, perceived it to be. My interest here is to produce a dynamic and heterogeneous definition of gothic that will supplement the recent critical work chronicling its various genealogies and constitutive discourses.[47] The chapter, then, charts through the marketing and reviewing practices of booksellers and periodicals how gothic became a recognized *genre*. It provides an account of how a set of metaphors and conventions occurring across multiple literary traditions – from romance to Ossianic and Graveyard poetry – became irrevocably associated with the new and popular kind of writing we now call "gothic." I argue, therefore, that both marketers and reviewers had a stake in identifying and promoting the distinctiveness of gothic in these years as an easily saleable commodity to be either desired or avoided, sold or regulated.

Having defined the theoretical and contextual parameters of the book, my remaining chapters are devoted, successively, to the poet (Wordsworth), dramatist (Baillie), and novelist (Scott) most strongly associated with "high" culture and with romantic ideology. My aim in covering dominant writers across a span of genres is to explore the extent to which a reception theory of genre illuminates writerly borrowing *across* genres and forms – particularly when such borrowing occurs between entities perceived to be as far removed from one another as, say, canonical romantic poetry and gothic fiction. I begin these main chapters with Wordsworth not only because of his central position in traditional romantic canons, but also because he has been, arguably, the poet *least* associated with the gothic in modern critical accounts of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century poetry.[48] Chapter 3 ("Gross and violent stimulants"), therefore, reads the first (1798) and second (1800) editions of *Lyrical Ballads* as responses to the sudden popularity after 1796 not only of gothic fiction but also of the supernatu-

ral ballads of the German poet Gottfried August Bürger and his translators. Chapter 4 ("National supernaturalism") then takes these issues of supernatural representation to the stage by focusing upon the plays of Joanna Baillie and their uneasy relationship with the increasingly spectacular and supernatural dramas of the 1790s and 1800s. In focusing on Baillie's relation to "the German," I explore how gothic drama, a dramatic form originally created by eighteenth-century antiquarians like Horace Walpole and John Home (author of the play *Douglas*) to revitalize a self-consciously *British* literature, came by the end of the century to be considered an illegitimate "Germanized brat" of an invading foreign culture.[49] Chapter 5 ("To foist thy stale romance") interrogates the assumptions about gender and history inscribed in gothic's popular stigma by examining Walter Scott's attempts, first in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3) and later in his metrical romances, to transform himself from disciple of Lewis to antiquarian scholar and national bard. In doing so, the chapter charts Scott's anxious relationship to his own early translations and imitations of German poetry and drama, and his related lifelong concern about what being a popular writer of romances signifies. Forming the concluding chapter to this book, my reading of Scott suggests that the creation of romanticism as an entity separate from gothic must be understood as a continuing process of authorial collection and revision, whether that work of ideological purification is done by the poets themselves or through their compilers and critics.

CHAPTER I

Gothic, reception, and production

> In looking at the Gothic Fiction of the 1790s, it is important to keep in mind that this was not a strange outcropping of one particular literary genre, but a form into which a huge variety of cultural influences, from Shakespeare to 'Ossian', from medievalism to Celtic nationalism, flowed. And one concomitant of this is that most of the major writers of the period 1770 to 1820 – which is to say, most of the major *poets* of that period – were strongly affected by Gothic in one form or another. And this was not merely a passive reception of influence: Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Keats all played a part in shaping the Gothic, in articulating a set of images of terror which were to exercise a potent influence over later literary history. (David Punter, *The Literature of Terror*)[1]

At the rare times when literary historians have confronted the question of romantic poetry's relation to gothic fiction and drama, they usually have described it in the language of influence. Though few in number, scholars since John Beer and Eino Railo have noted late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century poets' fondness for gothic authors and conventions.[2] Recent monographs on the gothic – including studies by Steven Bruhm, Jeffrey Cox, Judith Halberstam, Kilgour, Miles, José B. Monleón, David Richter, and Williams – have remarked at least in passing upon the close thematic and chronological proximities of gothic fiction and the poetry of the same decades.[3] While our understanding of gothic's multiple origins and cultural functions has increased as gothic as a field of study has burgeoned, our understanding of gothic's historical and literary position within romanticism has not moved significantly beyond David Punter's manifesto of 1980 (quoted above), or even very far beyond Robert Hume's assessment of "Gothic versus Romantic" in 1969:

> That Gothicism is closely related to Romanticism is perfectly clear, but it is easier to state the fact than to prove it tidily and convincingly.[4]

If critics since Punter have begun arguing for a more intimate and active relation between romantic and gothic writers, they have done so, as Miles puts it, with "more theoretically guarded, and aware, approaches."[5] In most cases, these approaches have built upon the work of Michel Foucault, Tzvetan Todorov, and Slavoj Zizek in order to argue for gothic as container of multiple meanings or as mediator between high art and mass culture. In doing so, they effectively have banished the traditional Walpole-to-Maturin, 1764–1820 account of gothic, with its well-demarcated origins and endings. We no longer, for example, describe gothic exclusively as a genre; recent studies have represented it variously as an aesthetic (Miles), as a great repressed of romanticism (Bruhm and William Patrick Day), as a poetics (Williams), as a narrative technique (Halberstam and Punter), or as an expression of changing or "extreme" psychological or socio-political consciousness (Bruhm, Cox, Halberstam, Monleón, Paulson, Richter, Williams). While these accounts have differed with one another often and on key issues, they nevertheless have put forward accounts of gothic that pay homage to the complexity of its materials and to its responsiveness to economic, historical, and technological change.

When we turn to critical accounts of gothic's relationship to the poetry, verse tragedies, and metrical romances that we associate with "romanticism," however, much of this complexity disappears – in part because the question has not been treated in depth, and in part because the problem requires reconceptualization. We know, with Punter, that a relation between these two bodies of writing exists – one not simply of passive influence but punctuated by simultaneous appropriation and critique. Romantic writers' acts of appropriation, moreover, not only coincide chronologically with their most stringent public criticisms of gothic, but also show them often borrowing the very metaphors and techniques they are most critical about elsewhere. What we have, then, are borrowings that cannot be explained exclusively in terms of influence, whether passive or active, individual or cultural. To borrow Judith Halberstam's definition of gothic as "overdetermined – which is to say, open to numerous interpretations," the relation of gothic to romantic ideology is itself a gothic one, since gothic's presence in romantic writing is characterized by "multiple interpretations . . . [of] multiple modes of consumption and production, [of] dangerous consumptions and excessive productivity, and [of] economies of meaning."[6] If gothic is, as Miles puts it, a "literary complex" for "diverse discourses" then the site of romantic writing's appropriation of gothic is even more so, since as a

literary transaction it is buffeted and pulled apart by historical, economic, and ideological forces in conflict with one another.[7]

This chapter, therefore, approaches this scene of appropriation from the twin vantage points of reception and production, and does so to produce an account of literary exchange sensitive both to the politics of a Britain at war and to the economics of a burgeoning market publishing industry. In putting forward a framework for understanding the dynamics of gothic's reception in the 1790s and 1800s, I begin with the writings of Hans Robert Jauss, which recently have proven central and fruitful to David Richter's work on gothic's historiography. Because of the simplicity of Jauss's model of reception, however, I bring to bear on it specific notions from M. M. Bakhtin's later work on speech genres and from Jon Klancher's work on reading audiences. The chapter's final section, on genre and production, takes as its twin starting points Jauss's and Fredric Jameson's observations on the economics and ideology of contract theories of genres, and Klancher's and Miles's observations on the heterogeneity that characterizes both reading audiences and generic practice at the turn of the nineteenth century. I extend these analyses into the economic realm by asking to what extent gothic functions as a marketing tool for writers anxious to gain access to popular reading audiences.

I TOWARDS A THEORY OF GOTHIC'S RECEPTION

The only recent critic of gothic fiction and drama to make reception the focus of in-depth study is David Richter, who first addressed the subject in a 1988 essay entitled, appropriately enough, "The Reception of the Gothic Novel in the 1790s." One of the first attempts to define gothic fiction from a readerly perspective, Richter's article bases its findings on the hundreds of reviews, the dozens of letters, and the few sparse reading diaries that have survived from the era 1795–1805. Anticipating cultural studies of gothic published in the 1990s, Richter posits that gothic, and genre in general, must be reconceived "as an area of literary space, a niche in the ecology of literature":

> But just as living organisms evolve, so do genres. When the cultural environment which produced the niche changes, the genre must change with it . . . It is my hypothesis that this shifting of literary niches, including the birth of new genres out of old, cannot be explained in purely formal terms, as the opening and exhausting of structural possibilities. Such changes must have been at least partly the result of a complex interaction between producers and

consumers, between authors on the one hand and audiences and publishers on the other.[8]

Assuming an economic and political basis for generic change, Richter first calls upon the theoretical work of Hans Robert Jauss, focusing especially on Jauss's organization of readers into three *strata*: (1) reader/writers who engage in the textual production; (2) reader/critics who influence public taste but who do not directly produce "creative" works for consumption; and (3) reader/consumers who comprise the general market for consumption.[9] For Richter, Jauss provides a convenient starting point because he locates in readers the power to dictate literary change: "what makes Jauss worth taking up is not any greater precision of terminology to influence studies, but rather his implicit notion that literature changes from the bottom up."[10] Gothic fiction's popular ascent becomes in this account the product of larger and more gradual changes in the desires of British readers, and gothic's interest to literary historians lies in its role as both a symptom and a mediator of that change: "[Gothic] sits astride a major shift in the response of readers to literature, a shift (in Jauss's terms) from *katharsis* to *aisthesis*, or, in basic English, a shift from reading for information, and for the sake of entry into a verisimilar world otherwise inaccessible to the reader, toward reading as an escape."[11] Richter's insistence that we read gothic and its popular reception as part of "a tendency rather than a revolution" leads him to question more political readings of gothic – particularly those of critics like Ronald Paulson and Paula Backscheider, who have argued that gothic's obsession with tyranny and "authority . . . gone mad" explore the larger-than-life anxieties created in the last years of the eighteenth century by the recurring madness of George III and by the French Revolution.[12] Such political readings, Richter concludes, are "attractive but empty" because the reviews themselves contradict them: "Any simplistic notion of the gothic as a metaphor for the French Revolution runs aground on the ways in which critics during the most exciting phases of the revolution fail to make such conscious connections."[13]

Part of my project in the next two chapters is to provide a framework that will describe the reception of gothic fiction, in Richter's terms, as "a complex interaction between producers and consumers." As I will insist, however, part of this interaction's complexity is its politics. While Richter himself only finds one review that links gothic fiction to the French Revolution, he does not examine the several other publications

– among them George Canning's *The Anti-Jacobin; or Weekly Examiner* (1797–8), Thomas Mathias's *The Pursuits of Literature* (1794–7), and Hannah More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799) – that vocally condemn the "morality" of gothic fiction and drama as politically dangerous and link it explicitly with radical and revolutionary politics. These texts help us to understand not only that gothic fiction and drama were perceived as threats to political and social order, but also how and why periodical reviewers chose to review gothic texts in less overtly political terms than more vocally partisan critical cousins like *The Anti-Jacobin*. Put another way, it is not enough merely to track gothic's reception without contextualizing the receivers themselves, including the politics of reviewing and the cultural position of the periodical – and especially the Review – at the end of the eighteenth century.

In testing his own hypothesis that the rise of gothic fiction in the 1790s signals a larger shift in British reading practices, Richter finds confirmation of this shift from *catharsis* to *aisthesis* in several writers and readers – the first and third categories of Jauss's model. In critical essays and reviews of gothic fiction, however, he finds no such change:

> As it happens, the sensibility that I hypothesize grew in the 1790s finds virtually no expression in these publications . . . all of them alike tend to discuss the novel in neoclassical or Johnsonian terms, with an emphasis on the probability, generality and ethical probity of the narrative. This is a blow to my hypothesis.[14]

This marked opposition between critical and popular tastes is crucial to understanding the processes of gothic's stigmatization in the 1790s. Gothic's reception becomes especially marked and voluble after 1795,[15] and coincides in trajectory and intensity with widespread alarm in England during these years over unrest at home and possible invasion from across the Channel. In this context, however, I do not see the opposition of popular and critical tastes to be a blow to Richter's argument. If his hypotheses about changes in British reading habits are at all credible, I do not see how there could *not* exist discernible opposition and resistance to the most apparent marker of this change – the sudden and at times overwhelming popularity of gothic fiction and drama – particularly in such a time of general anxiety and alarm.[16] For those segments of the population threatened by it, cultural change is more than merely upsetting and unsettling. Cultural trends, then, not only spread unevenly across a culture as Richter ultimately concludes, but also frequently provoke significant resistances at specific sites. Such

a narrative seems to me particularly plausible in the case of the reception of the gothic, whose reviewers and critics occupy markedly different positions of cultural authority and gender than do its producers and consumers.

Even Jauss's model of readership, which bears little resemblance to what evidence does exist concerning actual British readership, comes to bear in fruitful ways on the question of gothic's reception and its position in romantic poetry. As Jon Klancher has argued persuasively, reviewers and readers hardly constituted homogeneous, let alone mutually exclusive, groups.[17] Yet the relevance of Jauss's *strata* does not lie in the accuracy with which they represent actual British readers or reading habits, but rather in the uncanny resemblance those conceptual categories bear to the similarly imprecise ideas that late-eighteenth-century British writers and reviewers held about the makeup of their own readership.[18]

This imprecise knowledge of fellow readers has been confirmed in recent scholarly research on literacy and reading habits at the end of the eighteenth century – research that has characterized British culture as experiencing exploding literacy rates accompanied by an increasingly bewildering and diverse collection of reading audiences.[19] Few conservative prose writers in the 1790s, for example, display an informed awareness of this new diversity of readership beyond making increasingly anxious calls to police the reading of women and adolescents and to contain the circulation of radical texts like *The Rights of Man* (1792). For Ina Ferris, this paternalistic response, with its voice of aristocratic authority, "testifies to the pressure exerted on the literary sphere by the extension of literacy."[20] Klancher, in fact, makes this irony – of a print culture whose diverse producers and consumers must struggle to comprehend changes that in many ways they themselves have produced – a defining characteristic of these years: "The English Romantics were the first to become radically uncertain of their readers . . . No single, unified 'reading public' could be addressed in such times."[21] This more general radical uncertainty, not surprisingly, becomes anxious incomprehension when confronted by the runaway popularity of gothic fiction and drama after the French Revolution. One of the factors that makes the sudden popularity of gothic so upsetting is that it makes manifest the vast quantity of popular romance readers "out there" in British culture – readers who become threatening to reviewers, literati, clergy, and government officials only when their numbers are perceived, and their ability to affect British taste and morals imagined and computed.

The process by which the array of readers who produce, review, and read gothic texts become mistakenly separated into these *strata* is captured most vividly in those figures who inhabit, either at various points in their careers or simultaneously, all three Jaussian positions of gothic writer, gothic reviewer, and gothic reader. The ability of these writers to occupy categories of readership that are, in many ways, at odds with one another changes as little between 1790 and 1820 as do the categories themselves. Mary Wollstonecraft's contempt for "the herd of novelists" in her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), for example, is as well documented as her predilection for gothicism and sensibility in her own fiction.[22] Like Wollstonecraft, Samuel Taylor Coleridge writes negative reviews of gothic fiction by Radcliffe, Robinson, and Lewis at the same time (1797) that he is composing his *Osorio*, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "Christabel," and "Kubla Khan."[23] Coleridge occupies these conflicting categories of readership, furthermore, with an energy and ease that in no way abates over the next two decades. His *Friend* (1809–10) and *Biographia Literaria* (1817) attack Lewis and Maturin, respectively, in the same vitriolic terms as his earlier reviews of gothic fiction, and make a point of attacking not only these individual authors but also their "imitators" as pernicious; yet these same years see the Drury Lane production of *Remorse* (1813) and the publication of *Christabel, Kubla Khan, and the Pains of Sleep* (1816).

In many ways the barometer of popular taste in the period, Walter Scott writes in an array of genres whose diversity is only less striking than the precision with which he assumes the voice of ballad-singer, dramatist, antiquarian editor, minstrel, historian, reviewer, folklorist, lyric poet, romancer, and historical novelist. Translator of *Stürm und Drang* works and of Bürger's supernatural ballads, writer of his own "Germanised"[24] gothic dramas, and contributor to Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* (1801), he nevertheless moves from producing texts that celebrate black magic and the supernatural to debunking these same subjects in his critical writing – doing so with cool rationality in *Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft* (1830) and with conventional hyperbole in his 1810 *Quarterly* review of Charles Maturin's *The Fatal Revenge: Or, The Family of Montorio, A Romance* (1807).[25] The language of this latter review, furthermore, becomes particularly interesting when we consider that Scott had recently published two "tales" with similarly dark and supernaturally haunted heroes: *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion* (1808).

Scott's lengthy review opens by stating that he has heard various female "whispers" gossiping about the *Quarterly* "that we were *dull* . . .

– that is, we had none of those light and airy articles which a young lady might read while her hair was papering" (*SMP*, XVIII:158). With this gambit, Scott creates a scenario in which he, a mature and sensible man of letters, must order and attempt to read "the newest and most fashionable novels" in order to gratify the demands of young female readers (*SMP*, XVIII:159). When Scott receives his "packet, or rather hamper" of books, the epic project of his review essay comes into full focus: not to review a single novel, but rather to make sense of the "present degradation of this class of compositions" by defining them generically and placing them into an evaluative and gendered hierarchy (*SMP*, XVIII:159):

When we had removed from the surface of our hamper a few thin volumes of simple and insipid sentiment . . . we lighted upon . . . the lowest denizens of Grub-street narrating, under the flimsy veil of false names, and through the medium of a fictitious tale, all that malevolence can invent and stupidity propagate concerning private misfortune and personal characters . . . "Plunging from depth to depth a vast profound," we at length imagined ourselves arrived at the *Limbus Patrum* in good earnest. The imitators of Mrs. Radcliffe and Mr. Lewis were before us; personages, who to all the faults and extravagancies of their originals, added that of dulness.[26] (*SMP*, XVIII:160–2)

Scott's Dantesque descent to that lowest circle of literary hell – gothic fiction – shows him participating unproblematically within the conventions of periodical reviewing, whose task he sees as one of confirming existing literary hierarchies and enforcing unchanging standards of taste. That Scott had been stung two years earlier by Francis Jeffrey in a review of *Marmion* for appealing to female readers by employing "the machinery of a bad German novel . . . images borrowed from the novels of Mrs. Ratcliffe [*sic*] and her imitators"[27] in no way stops him from assuming the same voice in his own review, associating Maturin's novel with the same readership, and calling for him to adopt the same standards of good sense, simplicity, and restraint associated with masculine writing.

Thus, in spite of a burgeoning readership and a literary marketplace in which numerous men and women often read, write, and review gothic simultaneously, the discourses that make up the reception of gothic fiction and drama configure gothic readers, writers, and reviewers as wholly separate entities, suggesting that in the 1790s perceptions of British readership change more slowly than the constitution of the readership itself. This factor begins to explain not only why Reviews maintain "Johnsonian" assumptions, but also why the categories of

writer, reviewer, and reader continue in literary discourse to endure as mutually exclusive categories both in reviews and in authors' prefaces of gothic texts.

The "Apostrophe to the Critics" that opens Charlotte Dacre's *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer* (1805), for example, is typical for its depiction of critics as unknowable, overzealous, and uncomprehending: "I confess I stand in awe of the critics, for I am diffident of myself – I fear they will lash the effervescence of its sentiments, and the enthusiasm of its fancy; but let them remember, I write not to *palliate* either, but to exemplify their fatal tendency."[28] Dacre's argument, however self-effacing, nevertheless carries with it a double edge repeated constantly by other writers of gothic fiction in the period – that critics, however awe-inspiring and sublime to the gothic writer in their incomprehensibility and obscurity, are also incapable of comprehending the immediate pleasures and functions of the gothic. Claiming an essential difference between herself and "the critics," Dacre argues that this difference bars her from condemnation, since reviewers should not condemn what they are too old, too masculine, and too learned to understand: "the effervescence of its sentiments, and the enthusiasm of its fancy." The only extant review of Dacre's first work of fiction, in turn, addresses her romance with a curt paternalism reminiscent of Scott's tone toward his female readers of "light and airy" gothic fiction, commending its "moral" because it cautions young women against "mischief" and toward "social duties."[29] Its tone not only acknowledges the essential difference between gothic writer and gothic reviewer by standing in stark contrast to Dacre's own tone, but also exemplifies typical assumptions about gender and age inscribed in the categories of "gothic reviewer," "gothic reader," and "gothic writer."

Of these three categories, the first two of these (gothic reviewer and gothic reader) are especially fixed in opposition to one another at the turn of the nineteenth century. The gothic writer, while perceived overwhelmingly as a female figure writing for young women, nevertheless carries some class and gender instability because its ranks include, much to the chagrin of its contemporary critics, antiquarians and men of taste like Horace Walpole and William Beckford, who have "wasted" their genius by writing in the genre. As chapter 2 will show, this gender ambiguity – femininity blurred by what eighteenth-century reviewers termed a flamboyant, "wanton" masculinity – is itself a legacy of romance's cultural status in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Gothic reviewers, on the other hand, speak from far more predict-

able positions – as emblematic and experienced Men of Letters whose time is wasted by women who write, and especially women who read, fiction:

That the majority of novels merit our contempt, is but too true; and, for the above given, it is a truth of a serious and painful nature. The very end of a novel is to produce interest in the reader, for the characters of whom he reads: – but, in order to produce this interest, it is necessary that the novel writer should be well acquainted with the human heart, should minutely understand its motives, and should possess the art, without being either tedious or trifling, of minutely bringing them into view. This art is so little understood by the young ladies who at present write novels, which none but young ladies and we, luckless reviewers, read, that it is not wonderful that they should have incurred a considerable share of neglect from us.[30]

For the above *Monthly* reviewer, a piece of fiction can only claim success, and therefore a legitimate reason for existing, if it can demonstrate extensive and *productive* knowledge of human nature. As the reviewer's pronouncements upon the novel and upon young female writers and readers suggest, such knowledge resides typically in a mature, experienced, and, in most cases, masculine mind much like the reviewer's.

Jauss's reader–reviewer–writer model, then, adopts itself surprisingly well to the reception of gothic fiction and drama in the 1790s and 1800s – not because it accurately represents British readership in these years, but because it coincides with how British readers perceived and represented themselves. Just as one notices, when reading early reviews of *The Monk* and other novels like it, how cursorily reviewers read (and misread) actual gothic texts even as they dismiss the genre as a whole, so one also realizes with increasing certainty that the categories of gothic writer, gothic reviewer, and gothic reader matter as much as the actual demographics of gothic's readership. One need only look, for example, at a case like Elizabeth Moody's anonymous review of James Thomson's *The Denial; or, The Happy Retreat* (1790) to gain a sense of how the gender and class inflections associated with these three gothic *strata* invade and often take over the act of reviewing:

Of the various species of composition that in course come before us, there are none in which our writers of the male sex have less excelled, since the days of Richardson and Fielding, than in the arrangement of a novel. Ladies seem to appropriate to themselves an exclusive privilege in this kind of writing; witness the numerous productions of romantic tales to which female authors have given birth. The portraiture of the tender passions, the delicacy of sentiment, and the easy flow of style, may, perhaps, be most adapted to the genius of the softer sex:

but however that may be, politeness, certainly, will not suffer us to dispute this palm with our fair competitors. We, though of the harder sex, as men, and of the still harder *race as critics*, are no enemies to an affecting well-told story: but as we are *known* not to be very *easily pleased*, it may be imagined that those performances only will obtain the sanction of our applause, which can stand the test of certain criteria for excellence.[31]

The review is particularly breathtaking for the directness with which it defines and insists upon the specific gender and class inflections attached to the occupations of reviewing and novel-writing. What begins as a potentially negative review written by a woman of a romance written by a man quickly becomes something fundamentally different and more traditional: a self-identified "male" reviewer denying the value of popular fiction written by "Ladies" by asserting "certain [and in this case overtly masculine] criteria for excellence." The only thing more striking than Moody's representation of herself as a member first of "the harder sex" and then of "the still harder *race as critics*" is the way that Thomson's sex carries less significance than *The Denial*'s gender. What matters here, then, are not Moody's and Thomson's sexes, but rather the respective gender and class positions of the cultural categories in which they participate. Almost automatically, Moody aligns herself with the ultra-masculinity of eighteenth-century literary reviewing, "hard[ening]" herself as she aligns Thompson with "the softer sex," thereby claiming the very mantle of masculine "excellence" and taste that she denies him.

In performing this double act of realignment, moreover, she provides a prototypical example of both the pervasiveness and the power of these Jaussian readerly *strata* at the end of the eighteenth century. If taking on the masculine garb of the reviewer is to authorize and authenticate oneself, then part of that process of authorization involves defining oneself not only within the category of reviewer but also in opposition to other categories. It is not enough that we understand why Moody must change her own sex to that of "the still harder" critic; we also must understand that part of her process of self-definition involves that of completing the reviewer–writer dichotomy by feminizing *The Denial*'s author. In other words, it is not enough for a male reviewer to oppose a male writer of popular fiction; the gender of the writer being reviewed must be transformed through association with the "female writers" who supposedly dominate both the reading and the writing of popular fiction. If gothic readers, gothic writers, and gothic reviewers are specific categories that do not reflect the demographic makeup of late-eighteenth-century British readership yet dominate gothic's reception, then

we must begin to ask what function these categories serve, why they take on an increasingly oppositional relation to one another as the 1790s progress, and how they shaped the practices of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century writers attracted to the gothic.

II GOTHIC DIALOGUES

My purpose in providing the above examples is to stress the extent to which we are confronting, in the reception of gothic, positions already hardened during the course of the eighteenth century. Gothic's reception is part of a strong and longstanding grid of preconception and reification – one that finds its origins in the history of the reception of prose romance, and that structures the assumptions and terminology of readerly responses to gothic. Consequently, I have described gothic's reception both as a series of exchanges between individuals or actual groups of readers, and as a highly conventional set of exchanges between readerly categories. It is this fixedness of the categories of gothic writer, reader, and reviewer, I contend, that primarily shapes gothic writer–reviewer discourses, and produces such succinct dismissals as Clara Reeve's of "doughty critics" or the *Monthly Review*'s of Ann Radcliffe's *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789): "To those who are delighted with the *marvellous*, whom wonders, and wonders only, can charm, the present production will afford a considerable degree of amusement. This kind of entertainment, however, can be little relished but by a young and unformed mind."[32] The frequency with which such caricatures recur, furthermore, confirms that we must consider gothic's reception as occurring among sectors of the British readership that, however much they might actually overlap with one another, define themselves oppositionally as separate and distinct from other sectors. In Jon Klancher's words, gothic writers, reviewers, and readers "are not simply distinct sectors of the cultural sphere. They are mutually produced as an otherness within [each's] discourse."[33]

Our sense of the dynamics of this standoff is somewhat limited by the scant direct knowledge we have about actual readers of gothic fiction and drama – what Richter calls "the real-life counterparts of [*Northanger Abbey*'s] Catherine Morland."[34] This paucity of evidence – of published or unpublished records or diaries of gothic readers – has allowed critical writers and satirists to assume that gothic readers were, like Catherine Morland, young, female, naive, and easily manipulated. One could go so far as to argue that no single literary stereotype has enjoyed such

widespread acceptance on so little first-hand information. The little evidence that does exist, moreover, pointedly contradicts the portrait of gothic readers drawn by critics and historians for over two centuries. Analyzing the borrowing records of proprietary libraries and the catalogs of circulating libraries, Paul Kaufman has found British libraries to be dominated neither by women nor by gothic and sentimental fiction.[35] Jan Fergus, in her seminal work on circulating libraries, not only has corroborated most of Kaufman's findings, but also suggested that borrowing fiction was neither a female nor a middle-class enterprise:

> The information in Samuel Clay's buying and borrowing records, then, makes it necessary to modify five out of six clichés about the eighteenth-century provincial reading public . . . first, that the circulating library of this time does not seem to have greatly expanded provincial readership. Nor did women constitute the overwhelming majority of patrons in this provincial library; in fact, men and women displayed about equal interest in borrowing books. Novels did form the most popular genre in this library – the one received idea about readership that Clay's records support. But the notion that women in particular borrowed novels exclusively and voraciously is inaccurate. Neither sex borrowed novels exclusively, and only one reader, [a butcher named] Latimer, borrowed them voraciously . . . Finally, and most important, neither Clay's bookselling activities nor even his library indicates that the middle class had come to dominate the reading public.[36]

Looking again to *Northanger Abbey*'s Catherine Morland, then, we see Austen exploring this same gap between predominant stereotypes of gothic readers and actual readers of gothic fiction, for no one is more convinced of the truth of the category "gothic reader" than Catherine:

> "I never look at [Beechen Cliff]," said Catherine, "without thinking of the south of France."
>
> "You have been abroad then?" said Henry, a little surprised.
>
> "Oh! no, I only mean what I have read about. It always puts me in mind of the country that Emily and her father travelled through, in the 'Mysteries of Udolpho.' But you never read novels, I dare say?"
>
> "Why not?"
>
> "Because they are not clever enough for you – gentlemen read better books."
>
> "The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid. I have read all Mrs. Radcliffe's works, and most of them with great pleasure. The Mysteries of Udolpho, when I had once begun it, I could not lay down again; – I remember finishing it in two days – my hair standing on end the whole time." . . .
>
> "But I really thought before, young men despised novels amazingly."

"It is *amazingly*; it may well suggest *amazement* if they do – for they read nearly as many as women."[37]

Both Fergus's and Kaufman's findings concerning the readership of fiction suggest statistically about gothic readers what Austen's Henry Tilney here embodies: that men "read nearly as many as women," and that gothic fiction attracted educated and elite readers capable not only of understanding irony but also of treating their own reading experience with it. For Austen, as for Kaufman and Fergus, the actual gothic reader has little in common with the "young ladies and . . . luckless reviewers" assumed by the *Monthly* and other Reviews to be the only readers of gothic fiction. That Austen raises and explodes this assumption about the gender and level of education of gothic readers *twice* in the same passage provides us with some sense of the prevalence of the stereotype and degree of irritation it caused her. Looking to *Northanger*'s famous passage defending novels, furthermore, the perpetuators of such a stereotype are equally clear: "Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure, and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans."[38]

These "threadbare strains" of "abuse," and the effects that they had on other writers in the period, require further investigation and theoretical work. In writing prose fiction, Austen has little choice but to defend the novel against reviewers and to supplement their portrait of the naive female gothic reader (Catherine) with an older and more sophisticated counterpart (Henry). For a poet, dramatist, or learned editor, however, such a direct defense of – and association with – popular fiction is both unnecessary and, in the face of the repetitive vitriol and clichés of eighteenth-century reviewing, undesirable. By the end of the eighteenth century, in fact, gothic reviewer–writer discourses have become so hyperbolic and so mechanistically *conventional* as to force us to re-examine their cultural function. Gothic writers and reviewers may ostentatiously speak to one another, but the utter sameness of their mutual addresses spurs us to ask for whom these authorial prefaces and critical reviews are intended, and where, if anywhere, communication exists in these discourses. Put another way, in discourses so predictable in their rhetoric and modes of address, why do gothic writers and reviewers write with so much energy?

How long, *O Novelist!* wilt *thou* abuse our patience? How long wilt thou continue to persecute us by the publication of "Nothings," and those too in "so strange a style" – So nonsensically, so stupidly written, that even Laughter is unable to

exercise his functions on them. – How long, we say, wilt thou continue this? – Why wilt thou put us under the disagreeable necessity of seizing the whip? – of lashing thee –

> – "Naked thro' the world:
> Even from the East to the West."[39]

For these reasons, gothic reviewer–writer discourses at the end of the eighteenth century hardly can be called "dialogic" in the manner in which scholars usually invoke the term.[40] They instead present us, in the language of Bakhtin's later work on speech genres, with speakers who claim to speak to one another yet speak past one another: a series of addresses by addressers without addressees made up of apparently meaningless utterances.[41] Partisan in their fixed tones and stances, these discourses either must verge on becoming functionless babble or must achieve their primary communication elsewhere – i.e., with other sectors of the British readership.

Understanding this dynamic – of speaking to one group while actually communicating with another – allows us to move beyond imagining gothic's reception in the 1790s as simply an impasse between stubborn and unthinking participants. It allows us, in fact, to view stubbornness as a writerly strategy and impasses as serving economic and political functions. Gothic writers may remonstrate with reviewers directly, but such remonstrations function even more potently as appeals to book-buyers and book-borrowers, particularly when writers are able to position themselves in opposition to a supposedly older and masculine critical audience and (either directly or indirectly) in alignment with the female and younger readers who stereotypically comprise the bulk of gothic's readership. Within this model of writer–reviewer discourse, Jane Austen's defense of novel-reading in *Northanger Abbey* is only atypical in the openness of its use of economic language, and in the degree of irony and sophistication with which it wields the notion of "patron[age]":

> Alas! if the heroine of one novel be not patronized by the heroine of another, from whom can she expect protection and regard? I cannot approve of it. Let us leave it to the Reviewers to abuse . . . every new novel . . . Let us not desert one another; we are an injured body.[42]

Gothic reviewers, in speaking past the gothic writers whom they address, engage in similar practices. As the example of Moody typifies, part of this strategy "to abuse . . . every new novel" involves self-authorization and self-definition. As guardians of taste in a culture that

privileges male over female writers, poetry over prose, and learned and didactic over popular literature, reviewers dismiss gothic writing almost by definition, since to countenance it is to undermine the very positions of privilege from which they derive their authority.

I wish to argue, however, that the ritualistic abuse of gothic writers by gothic reviewers involves more explicit acts of intimidation as well. Gothic reviewers most often attack individual gothic works, and gothic as a genre, not to remonstrate with gothic writers to write in other genres, but rather to make clear to other readers – and especially to other writers – the cultural costs of reading and writing gothic texts. However indirectly stated, this communication constitutes a palpable threat, and if gothic reviewers perform a specific kind of cultural work, it is to define and reiterate the risks of reading and writing gothic to those members of the British readership contemplating it. Looking back to the above-quoted review of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*, for example, gothic readers risk associating themselves with the "unformed mind[s]" of adolescents, with the "stupidity" of female "nonsense," and with the vitiated tastes of readers for whom "wonders, and wonders only, can charm." More seriously, gothic writers risk losing their cultural legitimacy, social respectability, and standing as serious authors. I read gothic's critical reception, therefore, as a regulatory discourse – carried out under the fiction of paternalistic advice to a given gothic writer, but functioning as an implicit threat to other readers and writers potentially attracted to the gothic.

III MARKING AND MARKETING GOTHIC

> Once you begin to examine the historical development and empowerment of any particular system, what you discover is a collection of accidental contingencies that have been turned into opportunities. (Marlon Ross, "Contingent Predilections")[43]

If reception confers genre and hence cultural status upon texts, this does not mean that genre is any less central to textual production – as writerly practice, publishing strategy, or political opportunity. Genre may depend in part upon reception, but the claims that writers make for their texts, and the decisions that publishers make concerning how to package and promote those texts, fundamentally matter to how genres develop and to how texts interact within cultures. They matter to modern critics and historians, moreover, for what they suggest about a text's intended audience, expected stature, and anticipated sites of political resistance.

Because writers and publishers attempt to frame reception, strategies of textual packaging can tell us much about the anxieties and hopes that have shaped that text's composition, production, and distribution.

In beginning here, I am hardly espousing original ideas; even the most traditional notions of genre have assumed it to be a mediating tool between writers and their various publics, whether that tool be E. D. Hirsch's "heuristic device" (1967) or Cyril Birch's "comfortable saddle" (1974).[44] Similar formulations have occurred in studies as widely varied as Philippe Lejeune's *On Autobiography* (1989), which takes as its fundamental assumption the idea of genre as a pact between writer and reader,[45] and Fredric Jameson's foundational *The Political Unconscious* (1981), which makes as one of its central projects that of historicizing genre's contractual "pact" until its ideological moorings are exposed:

> The strategic value of generic concepts for Marxism clearly lies in the mediatory function of the notion of a genre, which allows the coordination of immanent formal analysis of the individual text with the twin diachronic perspective of the history of forms and the evolution of social life . . . Genres are essentially literary *institutions*, or social contracts between a writer and a specific public, whose function is to specify the proper use of a particular cultural artifact.[46]

For Jameson, genre is inextricably tied to notions of institutionally sanctioned propriety, and is therefore "a form of social praxis, . . . a symbolic resolution to a concrete historical situation."[47] Such a formulation sees popular genre not only as tapping into widespread readerly desire, but also as possessing the power to placate cultural anxieties and displace them into the realm of fantasy.[48] Taken to its logical conclusion, it produces arguments similar to those of Jauss and McGann – that the conventionality of texts and the popularity of genres are measures of the degree to which a text eludes its own historicity. Jauss, in fact, nearly collapses the conventional into the ahistorical: "The more stereotypically a text repeats the generic, the more inferior is its artistic character and its degree of historicity . . . [Genres] transform themselves to the extent that they have history, and they have history to the extent that they transform themselves."[49]

In associating ideology with the infiltration and institutionalization of market economics, Jauss and Jameson largely duplicate Raymond Williams's identification of ideology with processes that produce politically interested meanings for culturally dominant groups.[50] They therefore construct, either self-consciously or on the level of assumption, models

in which texts "fall" to the extent that they are institutionally coopted by established genres. In their respective hierarchies, texts descend yet further into cliché and cultural irrelevance if participation includes the economic cooptation by the popular press:

> It is . . . the generic contract and institution itself, which, along with so many other institutions and traditional practices, falls casualty to the gradual penetration of a market system and a money economy. With the elimination of an institutionalized social status for the cultural producer and the opening of the work of art itself to commodification, the older generic specifications are transformed into a brand-name system against which any authentic artistic expression must necessarily struggle. The older generic categories do not, for all that, die out, but persist in the half-life of the subliterary genres of mass culture, transformed into the drugstore and airport paperback lines of gothics, mysteries, romances, bestsellers, and popular biographies.[51]

In the above formulation, genres rarely "die out" because, as they become more institutionalized, they simply change their position within the cultural systems they occupy, or feed and disperse themselves into other forms. With cultural institutionalization comes increasing economic institutionalization and distribution, where the genre is recognized as a commodity and therefore produced for consumption. Appropriately Blakean in his vision of genres that fall into a "half-life" and are kept alive to work in the hellish mills of mass culture and airport- and drugstore-level commodification, Jameson re-enacts a distinctly romantic trope describing the fragmentary process of commodification as political and cultural tragedy. Politically resistant discourse, like the prototypical romantic artist, must "struggle" against conventionality because conventions always carry with them the impurities of the institutions that established them. While by no means nostalgic for the past, Jameson sees commodification as both tragic and inevitable because of its intellectual bankruptcy and its power to reproduce itself with mindless efficiency. As genres fall "casualty to the gradual penetration of a market system," their "ideologemes" increasingly, but never completely, reflect or refer to that market economy.

I would like to apply these two assertions – of genres as essentially ideological, and of generic institutionalization as inevitably economic – to explain the stubborn distance between gothic readers and reviewers at the end of the eighteenth century, and to formulate a model that will describe gothic's behavior in the 1790s and 1800s as an economic entity within British market publishing. I do so primarily because the way that gothic conventions find their way into "high" literary discourse at the

turn of the nineteenth century is not adequately represented by Jameson's narrative, even though its presiding logic – of commodification necessitating a fall from "high" to "low" culture – governs the terms by which the borders between high and low are patrolled.

First, however, I want to explain why I hesitate to reduce, as Jameson does, genres to "essences," and ultimately to ideologemes. To reduce a genre to an ideological function fails to explain why genres are so often appropriated for purposes other than hegemonic ones, and why genres so frequently fragment and feed other forms. At the very least, it denies the role that generic inversion, parody, burlesque, and montage – to name just a few highly conventional strategies – play in instituting historical change and in binding literary and political discourses to one another. More importantly, it fails to acknowledge, as Katie Trumpener has asserted recently, that genres develop over time dialectically through their interactions with other kinds of writing, as "names, characters, set pieces, and plots are constantly borrowed back and forth between genres, even among writers of sharply divergent political views who claim to disapprove of each other's work."[52]

By asserting this, I by no means wish to deny gothic's ideological importance to British readers or its participation in the production of dominant beliefs in the decades that followed the French Revolution. In associating the Napoleonic Wars with the rise and fall of gothic's popularity, scholars have long maintained that gothic fiction and drama performed important cultural work in these years by allowing British readers to satisfy private desires and anxieties while participating in collective narrative fantasy. The majority of these conventions James Watt suggestively groups under the rubric "loyalist gothic romance"; it is remarkable, however, how many of these same devices appear in what Watt calls "subversive" gothic texts as well.[53] Gothic's nostalgia for simpler and more hierarchical class and gender structures, its fabling about the birth of the British nation, its xenophobia and anti-Catholicism, and its fondness for continental travel (not possible during the war years) all smack of the ideology of popular wartime fantasy. This critical narrative, however, hardly exhausts or fully explains the multitude of divergent and often conflicting political roles gothic plays in these years. It addresses, for example, neither how gothic can accommodate radically different political viewpoints even as it is denounced as politically dangerous, nor how it can function as a vehicle for British nationalism even as it is rejected as an invading foreign literature. I find gothic's ideological flexibility – striking given the general monotony of

critical responses to it – to be eloquent testimony that market economies rarely operate with perfect ideological efficiency to the point of completely excluding outside discourses, even when supported by state censorship. At the very least, gothic's vexed reception in the censorious 1790s, ranging as it does between commercial success and critical condemnation, should alert us to its ability to produce multiple significations, and to fulfill multiple functions within the late-eighteenth-century literary marketplace.

Part of gothic's instability, of course, is endemic to any text, be it a material book or the collection of social conventions that comprise a genre. Derrida's famous passage from "The Law of Genre," quoted as an epigraph for this book's Introduction, puts this with famous succinctness: "Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text; there is always a genre and genres, yet such participation never amounts to belonging."[54] If texts never fully "belong" to a genre – and chapter 2 will attempt to demonstrate otherwise – part of this chapter's project has been to describe the ways in which genre nonetheless infringes upon texts through critical and economic reception. Texts both bring to bear *and* have borne upon them multiple genres. If Derrida's formulation by itself is incomplete for our purposes because it does not attempt to theorize how texts operate economically and politically within romantic period culture, then we must supplement it accordingly.

One need only look to the "Prolegomenon" of Stuart Curran's *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (1986) – with its listing of lyrical dramas, lyrical ballads, historical novels, and modern eclogues – to register the penchant for formal and generic experimentation at the turn of the nineteenth century. Most explanations of this proclivity, furthermore, have leant toward the contextual, connecting it to the intense political changes wrought by the French Revolution, to larger political and economic changes within British culture, or, like Jon Klancher, to some combination of the two: "the intense cultural politics of the romantic period obliged writers not only to distinguish among conflicting audiences, but to do so by elaborating new relations *between* the individual reader and the collective audience."[55] Political divisions in the romantic period, it seems, not only produce divisions among reading audiences, but also force writers to renegotiate the writer–reader pact by writing for multiple and often conflicting audiences simultaneously.

Consequently, if Bakhtin is even partially correct in arguing that every genre choice presupposes an audience choice, then genre in the

romantic period increasingly becomes a way not only of targeting a particular audience but also of potentially negotiating *between* audiences, as writers demarcate their texts with multiple genres in order to propose pacts with multiple audiences. This hardly means, nor do I mean to suggest, that every generic or discursive shift within a text or between texts signals a shift in audience, nor does it account for all of the ways that texts cite, sample, and allude to one another. It does mean, however, that genre can become a means of reaching particular audiences, whether comprised of "real" readers or imagined *strata*. By invoking gothic or any genre, writers and publishers can *mark* a text with genre and thereby attempt to place that text into a chosen position in the contemporary literary landscape. It becomes, in short, a way for authors to *market* texts to imagined audiences.[56]

In foregrounding the economic and cultural processes that govern gothic's transmission into other cultural forms and practices, then, I have asked in this chapter, perhaps counterintuitively, to what degree generic production imagines and even defines reading audiences, and how audience reception can define generic identity and determine cultural status. Part of the project of chapter 2, therefore, will be to locate these questions within the history of gothic's formation and reception and the various contexts that informed it. Such an approach, I hope, will provide more than just a picture of writers negotiating between the conflicting demands of various audiences. It will grant us access to the economic, political, and aesthetic considerations that confront all writers and that are inherent in any act of textual production. More pointedly, it will present us with emblematic situations in which writers must gesture to audiences that define themselves in opposition to one another, and thereby risk becoming self-divided, duplicitous, uncertain, and dialectic.

CHAPTER 2

Gothic and its contexts

> Walpole's *Otranto* and Clara Reeve's *Old English Baron* were literary "Gothic stories" in the second sense of the word "Gothic"; that is, they aimed at a medieval atmosphere by means of medieval background . . . But to the reading public the outstanding feature of these stories appears to have been, not their Gothic setting, but their supernatural incident. Imitators and followers of Walpole and Reeve, therefore, being thrifty persons, and acutely conscious of the public's taste in best sellers – for Gothic romance was the first best seller – kept accenting this spectral side of the genre more and more, because there was a market for it . . . The result was the logical one; the term "Gothic" itself . . . gradually lost all connotation of the medieval, and became at last . . . a literary term . . . post-dating the chief Gothic romancers, Walpole, Reeve, Lewis, and Radcliffe, who never used the adjective except with medieval connotation.
>
> (Alfred Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism")[1]

Like most terms denoting genre or periodization, "gothic" is retrospective, coined in Britain after its referents had come to dominate the shelves of circulating libraries and the boards of the London stage. Its history, however, did not evolve as one might expect. One would suspect the literary-historical tag for this "first best seller," as was first the case for the terms "metaphysical" or "Victorian," to be the derogatory and pejorative invention of critics and reviewers. One would anticipate this particularly in the case of "gothic," a word whose meaning in Britain for much of the first half of the eighteenth century was, among other things, "barbarous."[2]

Yet far from beginning as a term of abuse in critical prose, "gothic" appears almost exclusively on the title pages of its textual products, chosen because of the prestige it had gained after the publication of Richard Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762). Hurd had deployed

"gothic" repeatedly as a foil to "classical" to denote "medieval"; his preference for medieval literature and art, and the great influence of the *Letters*, effectively changed the meaning of "gothic" after 1762 by raising the status of medieval literature and culture in Britain and by attacking, as Walpole would do two years later in the second Preface to *Otranto*, the novel of "strict truth."[3] Thus, both Walpole's *Castle of Otranto: A Gothic Story* (1764) and Reeve's *Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (1777) choose "gothic" not to denote genre but to call attention both to the predominant aesthetic ("gothic" as opposed to "classic") and to the historicized milieu ("gothic" as opposed to "modern") of their respective works. In addition, Reeve's use of "gothic" also denotes "of the Goths," England's ancestors, and therefore carries with it ethnic and cultural associations that set myths of northern against southern, Anglo/German against Mediterranean/Oriental, industry against indolence, and liberty against tyranny.[4] Hurd and subsequent celebrants of medieval art and literature had extended their praise to the culture of chivalry, and both Reeve's *Old English Baron* and James Beattie's *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (1783) extol the Goths' piety, patriotism, respect for women, and love of liberty as inherently English traits.[5] The word "gothic," then, acts in these last decades of the eighteenth century as a double gesture of authentication, a way of aligning oneself generically against the novel and culturally with the masculine and antiquarian tradition of Hurd's *Letters*, Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1765), Thomas Warton's *History of English Literature* (1774–81), and Joseph Ritson's *Observations on the First Three Volumes of The History of English Literature* (1774) and *Remarks . . . on Shakespeare* (1783).

While its prestige eroded with its medieval connotations as the eighteenth century closed, "gothic" does not seem to have become a critical term denoting genre until two decades into the nineteenth century.[6] In accounting for gothic's reception and emergence as a distinct genre, this absence of the word "gothic" – absent from the very discourses that defined and separated gothic from other popular forms of fiction and drama – raises questions crucial to the arguments of both this chapter and this book. Its absence as a term denoting genre forces us to ask in what terms gothic's producers and receptors did choose to describe this kind of text, as well as why they felt compelled to separate it from other kinds of prose fiction and drama. And they were "compelled"; Robert Miles represents the historical situation of the 1790s with what seems to me an appropriate sense of drama:

Twenty-four years separate the publication of [the second editon of] Horace

Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1765) from Ann Radcliffe's first romance, *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789). During this interval a handful of novels appeared imitating Walpole's medieval setting.

After 1789 – after Radcliffe – the deluge. Europe was flooded with specimens of the "terrorist school" of novel writing, with what we – following Walpole – have come to call the "Gothic novel."[7]

Granted neither the leisure of hindsight nor the perspective of literary historians, gothic's readers and writers had to make sense of its textual and dramatic manifestations as they exploded into popularity in the 1790s. My aim in this chapter, then, is to narrate, explain, and contextualize both this explosion and the response to it as the nineteenth century turned. The issues and objections to gothic that I track, as might be expected, do not arise in every author or review, but they do share common assumptions about purity – whether sexual, generic, national, or editorial – and about reading both as process and social threat. In responding to its emergence as a popular form, gothic's readers, not surprisingly, first looked to already-existing literary forms and critiques of those forms to place it into an understandable context; and since the "deluge" of gothic drama occurred somewhat later – approximately five years after Radcliffe's first romance – reviewers first made sense of gothic texts by placing them within the conventions of the prose romance. It is to this reception history, then, that I first turn.

I GENDERS: ROMANCE AND READERLY SEDUCTION

Asking how and why gothic fiction becomes separated from other genres at the end of the eighteenth century means we must ask both how it differs from other existing romance forms, and how its receivers registered and responded to that difference. As chapter I argued, the categories of gothic reader and gothic reviewer at the end of the eighteenth century were distinguished at once by their resolute and reductive gendering, and by strongly suggestive evidence that neither "fact" – of the femaleness of gothic readers nor of the maleness of gothic writers – necessarily corresponded to the little we know regarding gothic's readership. I characterized this disjunction through *Northanger Abbey*'s conversation of Catherine Morland and Henry Tilney, in which Catherine assumes that men read "better books" than Radcliffe and Henry informs her that she is mistaken. I suggested as well that because of the strong presence at the end of the eighteenth century of Horace Walpole, William Beckford, and Matthew Lewis among the ranks of

gothic writers, the category of gothic writer was considerably blurred in its gendering, and was portrayed most often as a primarily feminine realm corrupted by a flamboyant, "wanton" masculinity. As this chapter ultimately traces a number of reasons why social conservatives in the 1790s would consider this "corruption" of a supposedly feminine genre a real social and moral threat, its first two sections explore gendered components of gothic's reception in several ways. First, I examine the extent to which the gendering of gothic readers, writers, and reviewers is itself a legacy of the reception of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century romance. I then explore the extent to which romance's reception provided a language for reviewers to criticize gothic's other perceived transgressions against existing literary and social codes: among them the need to keep genres "pure," disciplinary boundaries distinct, and "better books" in appropriate hands.

Rather than provide an exhaustive history of romance and its critical reception in the eighteenth century – which would be largely superfluous given the excellent work done since the 1950s by critics like Richard Altick, Laurie Langbauer, Robert Mayo, John Richetti, Dale Spender, John Tinnon Taylor, J. M. S. Tompkins, Ioan Williams, and others[8] – I will trace in the next two sections a few related strands of argument regarding prose romance that recur with telling variations in the decade of the 1790s in reviews of gothic fiction and drama. In doing this, I by no means wish to assert that romance constitutes a stable, internally substantive category in the period. If Walpole's Preface to the second edition of *Castle of Otranto* renders anything clear, it is the existence of multiple, evolving "romances" in the eighteenth century: ancient and modern, French and English, conservative and "philosophical,"[9] masculine and feminine. My interest here is less with the evolution of romance as a narrative genre than with its mutability, and the relation of that mutability to the surprisingly *un*evolving assumptions that manifest themselves in its reception.

The stances of three 1692 periodicals published nearly a century before Radcliffe's *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* – *Works of the Learned*, the *Gentleman's Journal*, and the *Athenian Mercury* – provide an instructive starting point, in that they share common assumptions about romance even while as periodicals they differ greatly in their relation to it. Wishing to remain consistent with its title and the serious aims of its publication, *Works of the Learned* proudly excludes all "*Plays, Satyrs, Romances* and the like [because they tend] to corrupt men's morals, and to shake the grounds of Natural Religion, than to promote learning and

piety."[10] The *Gentleman's Journal* adopts a similar, if even more terse, silence: "as for Novels, I need not Apologize for them otherwise than by saying that the Ladies desire them."[11] Both deploy arguments that share common assumptions about class and about reading for pleasure, arguing implicitly that "romances and the like" do not belong in a serious publication because men of "learning" cannot be interested in them, that *un*learned men and "Ladies" by definition read with desire, and that to read with desire is to corrupt one's mind if one happens to be uneducated. In addition, they follow implicit lines of argumentation similar to the explicit ones argued by the *Athenian Mercury* when it confronts the question of "Whether 'tis lawful to read Romances":

> [They are lawful and might] have some *Convenience* too, as to forming of the *Minds* of *Persons of Quality*; yet we think 'em not at all *Convenient* for the *Vulgar*, because they give 'em extravagant Ideas of *practice*, and before they have *Judgment* to bypass their *Fancies*, generally make 'em think themselves some King or Queen, or other.[12]

Several lines of reasoning coalesce in these three passages into a circular argument that recurred in critical writing about prose romance for over a century: romances are fantastical, and hence should only be read by persons whose judgment bypasses their fancies, who by definition do not (or at least should not) enjoy romances.[13]

What the *Athenian Mercury*'s assessment leaves unstated, however, are the very issues of gender and desire that dominate critical responses to prose romance during the eighteenth century and which, in at least one critical account, originate with Dante's characterization of Paulo and Francesca in the *Inferno*.[14] One need only look to the rich tradition of quixotic fictional readers of romance like Austen's Catherine Morland (1798–1803, 1818), Charlotte Lennox's Arabella (1752), or Daniel Defoe's fictitious *Mist's* correspondent Arina Donna Quixota (1720) to see the persistent energy spent throughout the century in scrutinizing and policing the reading of women and young readers in general.[15] Such preoccupations fuel not only reviews but also more general critical essays – from the *Spectator*'s cautions to its "fair readers" to avoid "Romances, Chocolates, Novels and the like Inflamers," to Samuel Johnson's worries in *Rambler* 4 that "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" will read romances "as lectures of conduct, and introductions into life," to James Beattie's more direct warning to his "young reader[s]" that "Romances are a dangerous recreation."[16] Even Clara Reeve in her systematic defense of the genre, *The Progress of Romance* (1785),

concedes to opponents of romance the danger and "impropriety of putting these books into the hands of young people": "if read indiscriminately they are at best unprofitable . . . sometimes hurtful to good morals."[17] By the 1780s and 1790s, romance reading had become an explosive enough issue for its infamous presence in women's boarding schools to become a central "abuse" cited by groups calling for their reform.[18] Such calls to reform romance reading corresponded to already-existing regimens in charity schools and endowed elementary schools for the poor that strictly censured non-religious reading. These actions, furthermore, make explicit the connection elided by the *Athenian Mercury*: that youthful and female readers are vulgar, and that vulgar readers are feminine.

In this ongoing debate, the chivalric tradition of romance – with its ties to the ethnic gothicism of Hurd, Beattie, and Reeve – was lauded increasingly for its celebrations of "masculine" independence, idealism, and moral principle even as "modern" eighteenth-century prose romances were relentlessly linked to "feminine" readers and writers. What is surprising is the extent to which romance's feminizing effects were linked less to its content than to the reading experience that they reportedly produced. Even tales of chivalry and heroism, it appears, cannot completely counteract the effects of fantastic reading, which can transform even the minds of young male readers into a state of pleasured, passive "ductility." This strange mixing of genders and gendered effects, I find, is less a contradiction than a symptom of romance's mixed literary-historical status, for while romance is linked repeatedly to the "feminine" during the eighteenth century, it is often personified as engaged in particularly "masculine" kinds of interaction with its "feminine" readers and writers.[19] Both Johnson's *Rambler* essay and Reeve's *Progress of Romance*, for example, follow the fairly traditional tack of cautioning readers to be on special guard against the "dangers" of reading romances that do not attend to the strictest codes of morality and virtue. Johnson's cautions concerning the reading habits of "the young, the ignorant, and the idle" are especially instructive because they elaborate upon romance's "danger" to readers. Focusing upon the reading habits of "unregulated" minds, he portrays romance as performing a kind of assault upon them – that, being "easily susceptible of impressions," young minds are "consequently open to . . . false suggestion":

> [I]f the power of example is so great, as to take possession of the memory by a kind of violence, and produce effects almost without the intervention of the will,

care ought to be taken that, when the choice is unrestrained, the best examples only should be exhibited; and that which is likely to operate so strongly, should not be mischievous or uncertain in its effects.[20]

Romance – at least in the hands of female and adolescent readers – functions as a kind of ravisher performing unseen acts of seduction over susceptible imaginations. Holding the power to entrance through imaginative impression or cognitive violence, romance presents a "danger" to readers to the degree that it encourages socially decadent trends by causing readers to mistake fiction for reality, and to associate pleasure with irrational, immoral, or improbable characters and narratives. While not necessarily female, Johnson's romance readers occupy, interestingly enough, the mental traits of *The Female Quixote*'s Arabella or *Zofloya*'s Victoria: "unregulated" (neither disciplined by work nor guided by principle); easily impressed (in the most literal, sexualized sense); and capable of being "possess[ed] . . . by a kind of violence."

What interests me here are the ways in which representations of romance almost always contain these aspects of masculine seduction or perversion. Even in an instance where romance's femininity is most clearly demarcated – as with the *Monthly Review*'s 1787 notice of *Lucinda Osburn,* which literally describes the book as a woman – the figures surrounding romance tend toward the unscrupulous and the androgynous:

Lucinda Osburn is not a first-rate beauty: neither can her air and manner be properly considered as her own. Some few graces she certainly possesses, but they are evidently borrowed from the amiable "Clarissa," whose acquaintance she appears to have cultivated, but to whose perfections and accomplishments she could never attain. As her *features*, however, have nothing disagreeable in them – though nearly the same with those we meet with every day; – and as her *prattle* – though it amounts to little – has the negative merit of being inoffensive, she may no doubt meet with powdered admirers who will pronounce her "a heavenly creature."[21]

This review may essentialize romance as female – corroborating the premises of Laurie Langbauer's *Women and Romance* (1990)[22] – yet surrounds her with male suitors and a mixed readership. Much is familiar here: the ironic reviewer who knows "real" beauty and is not afraid to evaluate women in masculine terms; and the customary coterie who exchange romances and read them as guides for sexual conduct and models for performing femininity. Alongside these readers, however, are "powdered admirers" who take on an extremely different role from Johnson's ravisher of imagination. The review suggests at once that these

male admirers have inflated, either unknowingly or intentionally, *Lucinda Osburn*'s sense of herself, to the potentially dangerous point of overestimating her charms and therefore her value. Their status as "powdered," furthermore, lends them a whiff of dandyism and effeminacy, as if, like *Lucinda*, they spend so much time upon the niceties of dress because of their vanity. And this vanity, in turn, is the implied cause of their own lack of taste, since, like prototypical romance readers, they are either too sycophantic to distinguish merit from mediocrity or else too androgynous to see *Lucinda* with an uncorrupted masculine gaze.

A decade later in an essay entitled "Terrorist Novel Writing," we see these same narratives of Johnson, Beattie, Reeve, and the *Monthly* repeated – this time lumped into a single essay denouncing a new "fashion" of fiction, the gothic novel:

> If a curtain is withdrawn, there is a bleeding body behind it; if a chest is opened, it contains a skeleton; if a noise is heard, somebody is receiving a mortal blow; and if a candle goes out, its place is sure to be supplied by a flash of lightning. Cold hands grasp us in the dark, statues are seen to move, and suits of armour walk off their pegs, while the wind whistles louder than one of Handel's choruses . . . but in doing so, [the modern novel] carries the reader's imaginations into such a confusion of terrors, as must be hurtful . . . A novel, if at all useful, ought to be a representation of human life and manners, with a view to directing the conduct in the important duties of life, and to correct its follies. But what instruction is to be reaped from the distorted ideas of lunatics, I am at a loss to conceive . . . Are the duties of life so changed, that all the instruction necessary for a young person is to learn to walk at night upon the battlements of an old castle, to creep hands and feet along a narrow passage, and meet the devil at the end of it? Is the corporeal frame of the female sex so masculine and hardy, that it must be softened down by the touch of dead bodies, clay-cold hands, and damp sweats?[23]

What is remarkable about this passage – and the "recipe" for gothic fiction that follows it[24] – is the degree to which it deploys longstanding criticisms of romance yet in this case directs them toward a radically different "improbable fiction" than the kind imagined by Johnson, Beattie, or even Reeve. We see the same vulnerable female reader and the same empiricist conception of reading as a transformative and potentially violent process. In this case, the essay makes its longstanding assumptions about romance reading explicit, since it supposes that women readers must have grown "masculine and hardy" to require such "soften[ing] . . . by the touch" of horror. The long-term effects of such reading, however, are not so clear. While the essay assumes that

reading gothic fiction must be an emasculating activity, it nevertheless calls upon female readers at its end to "compose two or three very pretty volumes from the following recipe,"[25] suggesting that repeated gothic reading will inevitably transform gothic readers into gothic writers. The figure of the gothic writer in the essay, therefore, remains vague, an oddly androgynous figure who seduces female readers into becoming gothic writers, and who therefore transforms female readers into (presumably masculine) seducers themselves. This seems especially strange in an account otherwise so vocal about its own gender position and the sex of gothic readers. Yet the essayist perceives the effect of gothic writing to be so powerful – "hurtful" to the mind and capable of "soften[ing]" the "corporeal frame" – that he seems unable to describe gothic writers as anything other than "lunatics," and unwilling to speculate further on their identities than asserting their collective madness. In addition, he declares the genre itself also insane, since it has rendered itself entirely unfit for its social duties as conduct book, and impossible to be read for useful instruction. As such, "Terrorist Novel Writing" represents a compelling instance of the larger shift from *katharsis* to *aisthesis* argued for by Richter, and demonstrates the extent to which critical condemnation of the gothic can be read as both a response to this shift and an initial exploration – in however confused, paranoid terms – of the social effects and implications for this new vogue of writing. I wish to explore this critic's utilitarian bewilderment with gothic writing more generally in the next two sections of this chapter, as a way of tracing what critical readers holding such *kathartic* assumptions about reading perceived gothic's social threat – and effects – to be.

II DISCOURSES: GENDER, PURITY, AND THE DISCIPLINES

> Romances are a dangerous recreation. A few, no doubt, of the best may be friendly to good taste and good morals; but far the greater part are unskilfully written, and tend to corrupt the heart, and stimulate the passions. A habit of reading them breeds a dislike to history, and all the substantial parts of knowledge; withdraws the attention from nature, and truth; and fills the mind with extravagant thoughts, and too often with criminal propensities.
>
> (James Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, 574)

As Laurie Langbauer, Laura Runge, and others have asserted, the relation between romance's status as "feminine" and the other ideologi-

cal factors that determine its place in hierarchies of literary value has remained unclear or has been addressed only in passing. Early-eighteenth-century critical readings of romance remain elusive in many ways because, as Runge puts it, of their practice of "consistently overemphasiz[ing] the association between fiction and the middle-class female":[26] a practice that obscures other, associated issues that become increasingly important at the end of the eighteenth century as gothic emerges into prominence. If reviewers of gothic brought with them a collection of condescending and longstanding anxieties about gender and popular fiction, these anxieties did not explode into ire until gothic fiction began to set off other alarm bells by contradicting longstanding critical beliefs about reading and pleasure and about reading's social function.

At the end of the eighteenth century, gothic emerges next to, and comes to play a special role within, these larger debates about the utility and risks of reading in the absence of formal education and training. With Ian Duncan, Robert Miles, and Edward Jacobs, then, I read the emergence of gothic fiction between 1760 and 1790 as a response *to* the novel and as an attempt to align romance with the dignity of history and with the poetics of the medieval metrical romance and Shakespearean tragedy.[27] It is within this response and the issues associated with it that we can place the texts most often invoked in literary histories of early gothic fiction and drama: John Home's *Douglas* (1757), Thomas Leland's *Longsword, Earl of Salisbury* (1762), Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* and *Mysterious Mother* (1768), Reeve's *Old English Baron*, and Sophia Lee's *The Recess* (1783–5). Within this same configuration, we can read Clara Reeve's *Progress of Romance* and William Godwin's "On History and Romance" as arguing for romance as a potentially beneficial genre for forming the minds of younger readers because of its superiority both to pure history and to, as Walpole puts it, the novel of "strict truth." "History," Reeve argues, "represents human nature as it is in real life; – alas, too often a melancholy retrospect! – Romance displays only the amiable side of the picture; it shews the pleasing features, and throws a veil over the blemishes."[28] Romance requires, then, only the presence of a chaperone to choose properly edifying and historically probable works.

From this rhetorical position, Reeve and others attempted to respond to critics of romance like Johnson and Beattie who were worried about romance's power to seduce through the imparting of "dangerous" pleasure. I read Reeve's work in these decades, therefore, as a response to such knee-jerk equations of romance with female readers and with

"extravagance." Her *Progress of Romance* seeks to make romance more masculine by collapsing the distinction between romance and epic; at the same time it puts forward theoretical and historical arguments for romance's utility and against its extravagance. Reeve's *Old English Baron*, furthermore, embodies fictively this ethos of restraint. Declaring in her Preface to the second edition of 1778 her debt to Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, Reeve nevertheless had singled out for criticism Walpole's excessive reliance on supernatural machinations:

> The opening excites the attention very strongly; the conduct of the story is artful and judicious; the characters are admirably drawn and supported; the diction polished and elegant; yet, with all these brilliant advantages, it palls upon the mind (though it does not upon the ear); and the reason is obvious, the machinery is so violent, that it destroys the effect it is intended to excite. Had the story been kept within the utmost *verge* of probability, the effect had been preserved, without losing the least circumstance that excites or detains the attention.[29]

Walpole's novel, in spite of its "excellences," exemplifies here the ways in which romance through its own imaginative excesses can become a corrupting force. She dismisses, however, the notion that romance is especially prone to this form of corruption: "I confess that [romance] may be abused, and become an instrument to corrupt the manners and morals of mankind; so may poetry, so may plays, so may every kind of composition."[30] The *Old English Baron*, she stresses, is an accurate "picture of Gothic times and manners," possessing "enough of the manners of real life to give an air of probability to the work."[31] Its adherence to "probability" and "real life," then, allow it to occupy a moral middle ground amidst the promiscuities of sentimental romance, the "absurdities" of historical romances like Walpole's, and the "too often . . . melancholy retrospect" of history, whose "gloomy tendency [can] do much harm . . . especially to young minds."[32]

Placed in the context of eighteenth-century criticisms of romance as addictive and enervating, Reeve's defense represents an attempt to rescue romance from its stigma as a pernicious genre by prescribing to it the masculinity of antiquarian history and the same strictures of socially acceptable femininity – temperance, sense, and social duty – that constrain women writers in the period.[33] Her famous criticisms of *Otranto*, moreover, should also be understood both as a critique of Walpole's imaginative excess and as an attempt to render Walpole's "violent[ly]" sublime materials appropriate for the generality of readers. Aside from being a fairly savvy piece of literary marketing,[34]

her "improved" version of gothic seeks to blend two genders (male and female) and two types of discourses (history and fiction) under the assumption that each will correct, enhance, and complement the other.

In positing a reformed romance as a superior alternative to history, moreover, Reeve participates in a larger community of women (and men) writing in the last decades of the eighteenth century who seek to revitalize romance into a lucrative *and* instructive tool by attaching it to various forms of "real life." Charlotte Smith in *The Romance of Real Life* (1787), for example, argues for narratives that employ "real-life" romance and fable because they are "as attractive as the most romantic fiction, and yet convey all the solid instruction of genuine history"[35] – an approach taken up by Mary Wollstonecraft in *Original Stories from Real Life* (1788) and Amelia Opie in *Tales from Real Life* (1813) as well. Maria Edgeworth's Preface to *Castle Rackrent* (1800) undertakes this strategy with far greater aggressiveness. Seeking to refute directly the common critical attack on historical fiction – that it "mangle[s] history with fiction, [and] pays little . . . regard to truth" – Edgeworth attacks history as its own kind of romance, citing the excess with which "the heroes of history are so decked out by the fine fancy of the professed historian":[36]

> The prevailing taste of the public for anecdote has been censured and ridiculed by critics who aspire to the character of superior wisdom; but if we consider it in a proper point of view, this taste is an incontestable proof of the good sense and profoundly sympathetic temper of the present times. Of the numbers who study, or at least who read history, how few derive advantage from their labors! We are surely justified, in this eager desire, to collect the most minute facts relative to the domestic lives, not only of the great and good, but even of the worthless and insignificant, since it is only by a comparison of their actual happiness or misery in the privacy of domestic life that we can form a just estimate of the real reward of virtue, or the real punishment of vice.[37]

If such "present times" demand anecdote instead of history because of its accessibility and its promise of pleasure, it is because Edgeworth imagines a different kind of reader than do the "critics": one who either does not have the necessary reading-time for "study" or wishes to spend that reading-time as leisure. Edgeworth's statement, furthermore, makes two additional, implied arguments: that "anecdote," far from being harmful, bestows more "advantage" on its reader than the dry tomes of history because it pleases as it instructs; and that the pleasure derived from reading anecdote leads readers who otherwise would not read at all to read more.[38]

Yet it is precisely the "eager desire" of romance readers for historical anecdote that increasingly alarmed critics of gothic fiction in the late 1780s and the 1790s. The critical attacks, moreover, came from across the political spectrum. Taking up already-established arguments against romance reading that had existed for over a century, reviewers began to single out historical romances as particularly mischievous because of their combination of supernaturalism and historicity, condemning them as threatening civil society either by eroding the standards of truthfulness necessary to maintain it, or by infantilizing its members and rendering them less enlightened and more susceptible to tyranny. Walpole's hoax in the first edition of *Otranto* of passing the story off as a translation of a medieval manuscript may have forever cemented the link between the gothic and forgery,[39] but it was not until the genre became noticeably popular that critical audiences began to worry about the effects that mixing history and romance would have on readers. Reeve's *Old English Baron* and Lee's *The Recess*, after all, had received fairly positive reviews. Less than a decade later, however, we see the *Monthly Review* arguing, in a review of *The Castle of St. Vallery, An Ancient Story* (1792), that historical romance infantilizes its readers. The argument itself – anti-Catholic, pro-Enlightenment, slightly jacobinical – is less notable than the confidence with which it identifies a distinct genealogy of fiction as especially pernicious – what we now call "gothic":

> This story is an imitation of the Castle of Otranto, Sir Bertrand, the Old English Baron, and others, in which the chief passion intended to be excited is fear. Of all the resources of invention, this, perhaps, is the most puerile, as it is certainly among the most unphilosophic. It contributes to keep alive that superstition which debilitates the mind, that ignorance which propagates error, and that dread of invisible agency which makes inquiry criminal. The dealers in prodigy make a ridiculous mixture of miracle and matter of fact . . . The good writer teaches the child to become a man; the bad and the indifferent best understand the reverse art of making a man a child.[40]

Furthermore, as the August 1790 *Monthly* review of James White's *Earl Strongbow: Or, The History of Richard de Clare and the Beautiful Geralda* (1789) asserts, this "puerile . . . [and] ridiculous mixture of miracle and matter of fact" is a defining characteristic of the genre as a whole:

> For those who remember the old romances of Cassandra and Cleopatra, must recollect historical facts amplified and decorated with fiction . . . we know no end to be answered by such performances, except to seduce us into an admiration of misapplied talents.

> History and fable have distinct merits, the one to inform us of past events, and the other to inforce wholesome principles by fictitious machinery, and to illustrate them: the latter is indeed often wantonly employed by men of strong imaginations, for no better purpose than to furnish amusement for the leisure of the indolent who read to *fill up time*. While these species of composition are kept distinct, they answer their respective purposes: but to blend them together, is to poison the sources of information to young readers; who, after feasting on history embellished with these meretricious ornaments, will not easily relish the dry details of truth: such writers, therefore, as they do not address themselves to mature understandings, are not to be considered as candidates for mature praise.[41]

Most striking here is the energy with which this passage works to keep cultural distinctions separate, especially those of gender and class. Historical fiction's mixing of fact and fiction, in this scenario, poisons industrious understandings into "indolen[ce]" and masculine readers into [im]maturity. Alongside this reviewer's distaste for androgyny – disciplinary or otherwise – is the fear that "the dry details of truth" will be lost the moment one ceases vigilantly insisting upon clearly demarcated boundaries between fact and fiction, utility and pleasure, bourgeois and aristocratic, masculine and feminine, mature and adolescent, and work and leisure.[42] Interestingly, the causes of this threat are themselves androgynous, sexually ambiguous figures: those "wanton . . . men of strong imaginations" who, not satisfied with their own indolence and immaturity, misapply their talents by cultivating indolence in young men and women.

Disciplinary purity – here of history in relation to other lower, less masculine modes of narrative discourse – functions in this review and countless others as a marker for other ideas of cultural purity that can only be maintained through the preservation of equally clear cultural and generic distinctions. Under such assumptions, *Earl Strongbow* and books like it become textual monsters because they break down conventional generic boundaries, which, in turn, threaten to break down the conceptual structures that undergird the social fabric. If taken to its logical conclusions, this review provides us with a telling portrait of what British reviewers and social critics in the next years came to fear most from the popular rise of gothic fiction and drama – that it produced ambiguously gendered and ambiguously desiring reading subjects contaminated by an amalgam of pleasure, historical anecdote, and supernatural fantasy, who, in their enervated and diseased state, no longer would be able to stomach "truth," utility, and morality.

III ECONOMIES: THE CIRCULATING LIBRARY AND THE PERIODICAL

> There is scarcely a street of the metropolis, or a village in the country, in which a circulating library may not be found: nor is there a corner of the empire, where the English language is understood, that has not suffered from the effects of this institution.
> (Edward Mangin, *An Essay on Light Reading, as It May Be Supposed to Influence Moral Conduct and Literary Taste*)[43]

If historians of the novel have often depended upon a similar amalgam of historical anecdote and imaginative extrapolation to describe the rise of gothic fiction at the end of the eighteenth century, then they have done so because of sparse data and plentiful second-hand accounts about the genre's readers, appearing mostly in the form of dire pronouncements by eighteenth-century literati. Ian Watt's conclusion that the amount of fiction produced per year at least sextupled between 1700 and 1800, though offered "with the greatest possible reserve," does not stop him from linking this "quantitative increase" to a fall in the novel's "intrinsic quality": "the pressures toward literary degradation were exerted by the booksellers and circulating library operators in their efforts to meet the reading public's uncritical demand for easy vicarious indulgence in sentiment and romance."[44] Watt here takes his cue from more than two centuries of literary criticism that share the assumption that higher demand for fiction and marked departures from established novelistic techniques of realism leads to "literary degradation."[45] Regardless of whether one wishes to question Watt's conclusions, the reasoning itself is at best questionable, since similar economic and aesthetic shifts apply just as easily in these same decades to late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century poetry, a body of writing traditionally described in terms not of degradation but of rebirth and revitalization.

My point here is not to quibble with the normative and evaluative conclusions of an important critical book, but rather to link Watt's assumptions and findings to similar ones operating ubiquitously in late-eighteenth-century literary criticism of fiction. Watt's quantitative estimations may fall short of Reeve's malthusian ones in the *Progress of Romance*, yet they are close enough in tone to lend credence to her apocalyptic version:

> EUPHRASIA: The press groaned under the weight of Novels, which sprung up like Mushrooms every year . . . They did but now begin to increase upon

us, but ten years more multiplied them tenfold. Every work of merit produced a swarm of imitators, till they became a public evil, and the institution of circulating libraries, conveyed them in the cheapest manner to every bodies hand.

HORTENSIUS: I rejoice that you do not defend Circulating libraries, – if you had, I would have fought against [romances] with more success, than I have met with hitherto, when I have been your opponent.

EUPHRASIA: I am entirely of your opinion.[46]

In the socratic dialogue that Reeve's *Progress* takes, both romance's female defender (Euphrasia) and its male attacker (Hortensius) unite in isolating circulating libraries as a "source of the vices and follies of our present times."[47] Euphrasia's description of a biblical "swarm" of novelists presents the rise of popular fiction both as unexplainable supernatural event and as plague "sprung up" without apparent cause. The joint condemnation of circulating libraries that immediately follows is made with neither irony nor qualification, and occurs, amazingly enough, in a book written by a pioneer of gothic whose stated purpose is to defend romance as a genre. Continuing in this vein, Reeve spends the next pages of the *Progress of Romance* identifying the exact kinds of "novels" that cause such deleterious effects, and places at the top of her list "books of a gloomy tendency" and "wild and extravagant [tales] . . . far out of the bounds of Nature and probability."[48] Her terms, needless to say, recall those of her earlier criticism of Walpole, and contribute to the book's project of singling out gothic and oriental romance as the most debilitating kinds of literature.

Whether mushroom or locust, swarm or plague, circulating libraries in Reeve's text are represented and attacked in terms similar to those reserved later for gothic fiction. Just as Reeve depicts romances as multiplying exponentially until they become "a public evil," threatening to obliterate the ability of readers and reviewers to distinguish between good and bad books, so also does she criticize circulating libraries for indiscriminately providing access without proper intellectual chaperoning: "A circulating library is indeed a great evil, – young people are allowed to subscribe to them, and to read indiscriminately all they contain; and thus both food and poison are conveyed to the young mind together."[49] The confidence of her pronouncement exemplifies what even the most cursory review of the periodical literature verifies: that in the last two decades of the eighteenth century this very criticism of libraries engaging in promiscuous lending has become a kind of cliché, so widespread that even the most novel- and library-friendly periodicals

allow its partial veracity. To some degree, their anxiety is understandable. In a period of just over sixty years, the *Monthly Magazine* declared in April of 1801, the number of circulating libraries in Britain outside London had grown from two to "not less than one thousand," an expansion that James Raven and others have characterized as nothing less than a "revolution."[50] And while several of the first circulating libraries in the 1740s had advertised themselves proudly as *not* carrying novels and romances, these institutions nevertheless became known in subsequent decades primarily as storage places of cheap fiction.

A piece of correspondence on circulating libraries from this same April 1801 *Monthly Magazine* captures nicely the problem that the growth of circulating libraries posed to monitors of British literacy and its relation to literary culture. Responding to a somewhat derogatory article from the previous month on Sunderland, the correspondent patriotically defends the town's intellectual life by illustrating the fondness that its inhabitants have for reading. The letter points first to the quantity of business done by its booming circulating library, whose "novel readers have given such ample support . . . that its librarian is continually augmenting [its] already considerable collection," and then to the quality of books held by its subscription library, whose holdings consist of "history, philosophy, and the belles-lettres, some standard works of an earlier date, and approved translations from ancient and foreign languages."[51] Most fundamentally, the correspondent attempts to have it both ways by providing two distinct kinds of evidence, gesturing to the quantitative increases in reading at one library (of popular fiction) while assuring readers that the quality of another library's holdings have remained sound (by excluding such fiction). While one could read this account as an allegory of the emerging gap between high and low culture, I find even more suggestive the care it takes to assure readers that the two are kept separate – that novels do in fact reside in a location *different* from Sunderland's repositories of, as the correspondent puts it, "choice productions." Popular fiction, in this account, does not in and of itself constitute a threat so long as it remains contained in its appropriate place within Sunderland's cultural hierarchy and does not intermingle with other disciplinary categories of literature. The account, then, duplicates Reeve's critique of the circulating library in its rhetorical strategy and structure even as it seeks to put the best possible face on the correspondent's home town.

Part of the uncertainty over the social benefits of circulating libraries,

then, stems from the multitude of uses to which they were put by patrons. As Paul Kaufman has observed, while circulating libraries played a central role in distributing and popularizing fiction, they also helped institutionalize other, new literary forms as well: "'self-improvement' works . . . guides in the practical arts, agriculture, gardening, cookery, and also professional aids for the layman in home remedies ('physic'), law, trade, and commerce, as well as instruction in the fine arts."[52] In loaning books to those who either could not afford or did not wish to own them, circulating libraries raised basic questions about readerly pleasure and reading's social function. Because they increased access to reading, social and literary critics have analyzed them primarily as institutions for distributing books and spreading literacy. Following the findings of Jan Fergus's "Eighteenth-Century Readers in Provincial England," however, I would like instead to focus on their role in democratizing the notion of reading for pleasure.[53] As Fergus notes, the records of Samuel Clay's circulating library and bookshop in Warwick are remarkable for showing distinct differences in readerly taste between book-buyers and book-borrowers, even when buyer and borrower are the same person: "In general, buyers and borrowers, while they overlap, seem to display rather different reading habits. Clay's borrowers had a taste for novels and secondarily for books of travel that they rarely gratified by buying works. Indeed, their interest in these genres would have been impossible to infer from the buying records alone."[54]

I would like to suggest that part of the reason that circulating libraries later came to be so synonymous with gothic fiction was that they not only made reading affordable to new readers, but also made a specific kind of reading *experience* affordable to *existing* ones. Readers who would never have considered buying fiction could borrow it fairly cheaply, and, as Clery notes, gothic was particularly suited to this kind of temporary possession:

> Supernatural fictions along the lines of *Otranto* should have been the ideal commodity for the libraries. They offered a novel alternative to the standard merchandise of sentimentalism, and dealt in unrepeatable effects of suspense and shock perfectly suited to the library system, which by keeping the narrative in perpetual circulation kept them perpetually new as they changed hands.[55]

A compelling fusion of economic and aesthetic innovation, this compatibility between book-borrowing and fictions intricate in plot and devoted to shock and suspense was not lost on the proprietors of the

libraries themselves. If circulating libraries became strongly associated with popular fiction in the second half of the eighteenth century, it was largely because of the practice of larger libraries like that of the Noble Brothers (1737–89) and, later, William Lane's Minerva Press (1784–1813), both of which participated in the publication of original fiction in order to augment their profits. Chiefly entrepreneurial, these publishers relied on new writers of no established reputation in order to keep their costs low, and, as might be expected, both literati and common readers accorded these productions a different and usually inferior status. This is particularly true of Lane's infamous line of Minerva fiction and drama. With their distinctive bindings and predictable subject matter, Minerva books not only were represented in these years as a separate kind of literature, but also often were accorded a separate space on library shelves, grouped alone or with other "mysteries" and "tales" published by similar booksellers.[56] Understanding the process by which gothic became separated from other kinds of romance, then, requires that we understand it as emerging dialectically out of romance's interaction with changing reading rituals and new technologies of book distribution. Commissioned, produced, sold, and distributed by agents fundamentally different from the usual group of booksellers that dealt in "choice productions," gothic became defined as much by who produced and published it as for its readerly effects. And in this case, gothic's modes of production and effect have played equally important roles in defining the genre and determining its mutations into other media ranging from avant-garde painting to film, popular music to theme parks. Most strikingly, gothic production and effect share an array of common traits: disposability, consumability, and lack of legitimacy, respectability, and authority.

That the effect of these changes on literary markets was not lost on literati is clear from the frequency with which they criticized the gothic on economic as well as aesthetic grounds. It is most suggestively captured, however, in an uncorroborated rumor that appears frequently in late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century satirical and review writing: that the Minerva Press would pay £5 per volume for *any* manuscript regardless of quality so long as it proved to be in keeping with the traditions and conventions of Minerva fiction.[57] The rumor – illustrated below in a passage from George Daniel's *The Modern Dunciad* (1814) – demonstrates the extent to which Minerva had come to be associated not only with the mass-production of texts, but also with producing texts of a specific kind:

> Ghosts are but ghosts; and demons, demons still;
> Alike in matter, and in form the same:
> Hobgoblins differ only – in the name:
> Yet Lewis trembles lest his fame be won,
> And Mistress Radcliffe fears herself outdone.
> But these are harmless, Satire must confess,
> To the loose novels of Minerva's Press;
> Such melting tales as Meeke and Rosa tell;
> For pious Lane, who knows his readers well,
> Can suit all palates with their diff'rent food,
> Love for the hoyden, morals for the prude!
> Behold! with reams of nonsense newly born,
> Th'industrious pack who scribble night and morn;
> Five pounds per volume! an enormous bribe,
> Enough, methinks, to tempt a hungry scribe.[58]

What this passage demonstrates is the extent to which gothic in general and Minerva in particular functioned at the turn of the nineteenth century as a synecdoche, as a way for critical writers to embody and isolate undesirable changes throughout the publishing industry. Part of our understanding of gothic at the turn of the nineteenth century, then, must include the frequency with which it was cited, with varying degrees of polarizing hysteria, either as a symptom of more general cultural changes or (more frequently) the cause of them. Consequently, we see gothic writing in both periodical review and literary essay blamed for various changes in literary production and consumption: perceived shifts from quality to quantity; originality to mass-production; and the text-as-work to the text-as-commodity.

What is also clear from the above dichotomies, however, is the extent to which they allow satirists and reviewers to construct a divide that stresses the differences between periodicals and popular fiction while hiding their similarities. Faced with gothic's conspicuous popularity and its close ties to an institution already vilified by them, it should not be surprising that periodicals – and particularly the more serious monthly Reviews, which for decades had defined themselves separately from more miscellaneous magazines[59] – attacked gothic fiction in the 1790s with such vigor and in such dualistic terms. While the subsequent chapters of this book explore how gothic's reception forced late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century writers to appropriate gothic using duplicitous strategies, nowhere do we find more duplicitous behavior than in the Reviews themselves.[60] Occupying a position of arbiter of taste and defender of established and universal "canons of criticism,"

eighteenth-century Reviews in these years, Derek Roper notes, "stood at the height of their power and prestige . . . Wordsworth was convinced that reviews could materially affect the immediate sale of a book, and Southey estimated that a favourable notice of *Madoc* in the *Critical* would make him 'half an edition a richer man.'"[61] Between 1750 and 1790, the *Monthly Review* and *Critical Review* derived at least part of their solid reputations from their ability to claim editorial consistency and therefore objectivity. They guarded this claim with alacrity by insisting that their various contributors write within the Reviews' conventions, thereby presenting the illusion of a single, institutional voice capable of responding to new publications reliably.[62] The ability to claim such consistency was especially important after the emergence of new, partisan Reviews like the *British Critic* (1793) and the *Antijacobin Review* (1798), which began to erode the veneer that the Reviews had enjoyed for decades.

Arguably even more important than political neutrality was the ability of a Review to claim economic autonomy. The sudden ascent to dominance of the *Edinburgh Review* in 1802 can be attributed less to its Whig politics than to its ability to claim intellectual independence from the booksellers involved in its production,[63] a factor essential in a period when "puffing" books was considered a regular and recognized practice by booksellers who often bought or started periodicals as a way of advertising cheaply. Such claims of autonomy and consistency, furthermore, are fundamentally tied to the Review (as opposed to the magazine, newspaper, or other kinds of periodicals) as a cultural entity, since Reviews even in the earliest days of the *Monthly* and *Critical* sought to present themselves as above catering to popular opinion and as not subject to the day-to-day contingencies of traditional periodicals. Rather, they sought to present themselves, in Roper's words, as "objective chronicle[s] of cultural progress" rather than as "organs of opinion," and as containing knowledge of permanent value not subject to the kind of rapid depreciation suffered by most newspapers and magazines.[64] In the interest of maintaining if not enhancing their cultural authority, even the earliest Reviews made it an institutional practice to deflect and deny their own contingent, periodical status, which meant defining themselves in opposition to the whims of popular circulation and taste.

I attribute part of the hostility accorded to gothic writing by periodical Reviews, then, not to their differences but to their fundamental similarities: both potentially are undermined by their own status as

consumable publications and by their financial connections to booksellers and book distributors.[65] Like gothic fiction and drama, Reviews embody many of the social and economic contradictions inherent in the term "cultural commodity" itself, a divide similar to that faced by writers like Wordsworth, Baillie, and Scott, who often perceived themselves as having to choose whether to write for popular or artistic success. Yet Reviews, for their own financial health, were forced to anticipate popular taste even as they sought to mold it, and therefore usually seized critical positions from which they could remain separate from popular taste while not fully opposing it. In this light, gothic's massive popularity presented for them an uncomfortable quandary – a situation in which periodicals risked alienating readers by reviewing gothic texts negatively, yet where gothic's triply damned status as popular, feminized, and disposable pointed to the very traits that Reviews most wished to deny about themselves.

IV GENEALOGIES: RADCLIFFE, LEWIS, AND THE "GERMAN"

> No German nonsense sways my English heart,
> Unus'd at ghosts and rattling bones to start.
> (Thomas James Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*)[66]

As E. J. Clery has noted, the critical success of *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) allowed Ann Radcliffe to ascend from anonymity to legitimate authorship: "By the second edition of *The Romance of the Forest* (1791) her work is in every sense 'authorised': 'Ann Radcliffe' appeared on the title-page and the author was mentioned by name in the reviews."[67] Radcliffe's career until 1791 had been fairly successful: her *Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* (1789) had gone through many editions in spite of negative reviews;[68] her *Sicilian Romance* (1790), though receiving the same short notices as had her previous work, was applauded for its "happy vein of invention, . . . correctness of taste," and the "dexterity" and "skill" of her narration.[69] Certainly part of Radcliffe's success in her third published romance derived itself simply from her own maturation as a writer of fiction; few writers, however, have responded so directly to periodical criticism. Each successive work saw previous "errors" corrected: the *Monthly Review*'s strong criticism of *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne*'s reliance on "the *marvellous*" and on "wonders," for example, probably contributed to her decision to curb such devices in subsequent works, while the *Critical Review*'s desire for more authentic local detail in

Dunbayne was lavishly attended to in *The Sicilian Romance* and later books. Even the "numerous improbabilities and 'hair-breadth escapes' too often repeated" noted by the *Critical Review* of *The Sicilian Romance* were used more sparingly thereafter.[70] One can attribute this learning curve to the ultimately practical nature of Radcliffe's dealings with social and aesthetic codes of her time. As Clery notes, "A woman wishing to publish fiction in a supernatural vein needed to be prepared to negotiate,"[71] and Radcliffe's responsiveness to periodical criticism explains at least some of her eventual success with reviewers. The *Critical*'s review of *The Romance of the Forest*, furthermore, indicates just how clearly delineated the terms of those negotiations were:

> We spoke with respect of the Sicilian Romance; but this lady, for by the term (authoress) we must suppose it to be the production of a female's pen, has greatly exceeded her first work . . . The greater part of the work resembles, in manner, the Old English Baron, formed on the model of the Castle of Otranto. We have the ruined abbey, a supposed ghost, the skeleton of a man secretly murdered, with all the horrid train of images which such scenes and such circumstances may be supposed to produce. They are managed, however, with skill, and do not disgust by their improbability: every thing is consistent, and within the verge of rational belief.[72]

I wish to dwell on this review, and reviews of *The Romance of the Forest* in general, because they capture a watershed moment in gothic's "rise"; the above review recognizes a "model" of writing sired by an appropriately masculine and aristocratic originator, and, like "Terrorist Novel Writing," provides a definitive recipe of ingredients and writing practices associated with it. The review's opposition of "ruined," "supposed," "secret," and "horrid" with "skill," "probability," "consisten[cy]," and "rational[ity]" in effect defines and lays down the terms by which it will accept the gothic. The confident brevity with which it appropriates the terms of Reeve's Preface to *The Old English Baron*, particularly its echo of her phrase "verge of rationality," indicates the extent of Radcliffe's success in positioning herself as Reeve's direct descendant and therefore as a more correct practitioner of the supernatural sublime introduced by Walpole.

What remains unclear in the above extract is the degree to which these rules are based on gender – a factor that becomes increasingly apparent in reviews of Radcliffe's later fiction. By this, I do not mean merely that Radcliffe as a woman writer was subject to different criteria than were her male contemporaries. I also mean that the gender of presumed *readers* of gothic and other kinds of romance (adolescents and

young women) produce in reviewers an obsession with the morality of their producers and distributors (gothic writers and circulating libraries) and therefore a critical fixation on correctness, temperance, morality, and purity. As we saw in chapter 1 with the case of Elizabeth Moody's anonymous review of James Thomson's *The Denial; or, The Happy Retreat* (1790), the sex of a gothic writer matters less to reviewers than the perceived gender of the genre and its readers. Gothic, then, does not emerge as a genre separate from romance because it carries with it different gender associations or a different readership; rather, it emerges as a genre separate from romance because reviewers and social critics see its practitioners as committing different and more pernicious transgressions upon the same group of readers.

The Romance of the Forest, therefore, marks a high point of gothic's cultural prestige and Radcliffe's critical standing. Her prestige remains, furthermore, remarkably high until at least 1810, the year that marked both Scott's and Anna Letitia Barbauld's sustained criticisms of her. Nevertheless, beginning with *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, Radcliffe's novels still receive praise for their ability to give pleasure without infringing on the social strictures that surround young female readers, yet begin to receive censure when and wherever they transgress against the standards established in reviews of *The Romance of the Forest*. The extent to which such assumptions about decorousness and female authorship shaped the practices of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century women writers already has been treated at length by critics including Ann Mellor and Marlon Ross, as well as by recent accounts of "male" and "female" gothic traditions.[73] What the reception to Radcliffe's later works demonstrates, however, is the extent to which the critical condemnation of gothic was waged on two contradictory fronts – against its conventionality *and* against its supposed transgressions against convention – and both in the name of the besieged modesty and morals of the imagined young women and men who read them. Reviews of *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) and *The Italian* (1797), while still positive, accordingly criticized both their "sameness" and "excesses" of language, description, length, and suspense.[74] After the treatment of *The Romance of the Forest* as a perfect expression of its form, it became impossible for Radcliffe's later productions to constitute anything other than a fall from this edenic position.[75]

This fall occurred at least in part, ironically, because Radcliffe's next book, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, was to have such an influence on subsequent gothic writers. Part of this influence stemmed from rumors

concerning how much the bookselling firm G. G. and J. Robinson had paid for the manuscript; in addition, its first reviews – by the *Analytical*, the *English*, and the *European Magazine and London Review* – were overwhelmingly positive, praising even those aspects of Radcliffe's romance that later would draw repeated fire: its poetry and descriptions of landscape.[76] In its first eighteen months the book went through three London and two Dublin editions. *Northanger Abbey* may provide the most remembered account of the *Udolpho*'s omnipresence in British culture over the next few years, but even more telling is the frequency with which *Udolpho* is cited in reviews of *other* novels – more than any other Radcliffe novel.[77] Its influence on other writers of gothic fiction, therefore, cannot be underestimated. Stretching to four volumes and amply decorated with poetry, it showed for the first time that considerable money could be made in gothic fiction by writers of reputation. This same year, moreover, saw the resounding success of James Boaden's *Fontaineville Forest* (1794), a Covent Garden adaptation of *The Romance of the Forest* that made clear the extent to which Radcliffe's fiction could be translated to the stage. This potent combination of legitimate publisher, legitimate payment, and legitimate theater does much to explain the explosion of Radcliffean imitators appearing after 1794. When we look, for example, to the many other writers of fiction who appropriate Radcliffe's technique of the "explained supernatural" in the 1790s, we see few taking their cue from *The Romance of the Forest*: only Charlotte Smith and Mrs. M. Harley. The bulk of Radcliffe "imitators" – among them Elizabeth Bonhote, Mrs. Carter, Eliza Fenwick, Isabella Kelly, Mary Meeke, George Moore, Eliza Parsons, Regina Maria Roche, and Julia Maria Young – begin appearing approximately nine months after the publication of *Udolpho*. With them we see gothic emerge into public consciousness as a recognized mode of fiction; we also see, as the subsequent reviews of *Udolpho* indicate and Scott was to remember later, an immediate and precipitous decline in gothic's status:

> It was the cry at the period, and has sometimes been repeated since, that the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe, and the applause with which they were received, were evil signs of the times, and argued a great and increasing degradation of the public taste . . . There might be some truth in this, if it were only applied to the crowd of copyists who came forward in imitation of Mrs. Radcliffe, and assumed her magic wand, without having the power of wielding it with effect . . . But the inferiority of this servile race is much more likely to put the particular style they imitate out of fashion, than to engraft its peculiarities upon the public taste. (*SMP*, III:362–3)

Scott's own *Quarterly* review of Maturin's *The Fatal Revenge*, as we have seen, had cited the "dulness" of Radcliffe's "imitators," and argued that the repetition of the same conventions and the same reading experience had killed a viable genre. His attack on "explained supernatural" in this same review, furthermore, put forward an implicit analogy between Radcliffe's use of this technique and her relationship to her imitators: just as her own rational explanations could never stand in for the supernatural effects she generated, so also her imitators never could wield her "magic wand . . . with effect."

Scott's critique, of course, ignores the very constraints that govern Radcliffe's practice in the first place, and Clery is persuasive in arguing for the key role played by Radcliffe's rational supernaturalism in first establishing and then eroding her critical reputation.[78] Scott's criticisms of 1810, however, have little to do with the attacks on gothic as a genre that gathered force around 1796; we should read Scott's criticism of Radcliffe, in fact, as part of a series of attempts he made in his lifetime to defend *another* gothic writer – the one who bore the biggest brunt of the condemnations that occurred in the second half of the decade, and whose career literally was defined by the genre he would help bring into common consciousness: Matthew G. Lewis.

Lewis figures strongly in my account of gothic's reception because he is at once such a central figure within that literary movement – dominating British writers of gothic fiction and drama after 1796 – and such a confounding one for both late-eighteenth-century reviewers and writers informed by romanticism like Baillie, Byron, Coleridge, Scott, and Wordsworth. His reception, moreover, epitomizes the ways in which genres are not always constituted amiably or even contractually, and challenges the notions of genre epitomized by Derrida's "Law of Genre": that "[e]very text participates in one or several genres . . . yet such participation never amounts to belonging."[79] Lewis's *The Monk* and subsequent works may participate in several genres, but here participation *did* amount to belonging. Lewis's reception, in fact, enables us to see the extent to which gothic's critics aimed to redefine the genre reformed by Reeve and established by Radcliffe, brand its practitioners permanently with the mark of that genre, and insist that its mark constituted irrevocable damnation, therefore "belonging."

To give the reception history[80] concisely, the first edition of *The Monk* appeared anonymously in March of 1796, received fairly favorable reviews, and sold well enough for a second edition to appear in September of that year. Because of the book's initial success and mild treatment

by reviewers, Lewis decided to publish the second edition under his own name, allowing himself full vanity of title as "M. G. Lewis, Esq., M. P." The small flourish of these two final letters cost him dearly; reviewers, satirists, clergy, and politicians immediately joined in calling for the book's suppression for its supposed obscenity and blasphemy, sometimes even reversing their own previous positive reviews of the book.[81] The *Analytical Review, British Critic*, *Critical Review*, *European Magazine*, *Monthly Mirror*, the *Monthly Review*, and *Scots Magazine* all reviewed the novel outspokenly, often more than once, and, with the exception of the *Monthly Mirror*, negatively.[82] While the *Monthly Review* initially found the book marked by "obscenity" and "unfit for general circulation," Coleridge's *Critical* review went further, voicing dismay at Lewis's position as a Member of Parliament and attaching to the *Monthly*'s previous allegations of "obscenity" the term "blasphemy," an explicitly legal term[83] in turn taken up with even greater aggressiveness by Thomas James Mathias in the fourth dialogue of *The Pursuits of Literature* (1797). Five months later, in December of 1797, Lewis's *Castle Spectre* opened at Drury Lane and ran for an unrivalled three months to popular acclaim and critical accusations of plagiarism, German-centeredness, improbability, fatalism, and violent jacobin sympathies.[84] Because of the ensuing controversies surrounding him, Lewis proceeded to take the unorthodox step of publishing the play not as performed but as originally written, with plentiful notes and an appendix. In it, he defended the play as apolitical and himself as persecuted. A month later in February of 1798, Lewis released a bowdlerized fourth edition of *The Monk* under the title "*Ambrosio, or the Monk: A Romance . . . With considerable additions and alterations*." Here he went beyond excising all remotely indecent words from the text; gone were entire scenes and passages, regardless of whether such excisions rendered its action less intelligible.[85] In the next eighteen months, two parodies of *The Monk* appeared, the *Edinburgh Register* and the *Gentleman's Magazine* led a debate over the merits of *The Pursuits of Literature*, and James Boaden's unsupernatural and carefully respectable adaptation of *The Monk, Aurelio and Miranda* (1799), was panned by reviewers for immorality – not because of its content but because any attempt to render *The Monk* acceptable to a wider audience was argued to be pernicious to public morality. No charges, however, were brought against Lewis.

Lewis himself formally apologized for *The Monk* in a Preface and Postscript to his play *Adelmorn the Outlaw* (1801), and in spite of *The Monk*'s considerable success, did not write another novel until 1807.[86] By 1800,

The Monk could claim five English and two Irish editions, not to mention numerous pirated chapbooks, stage adaptations, and parodies.[87] Given its popularity, one must assume that Lewis in part turned to translation and to the stage, and later to writing tragedy, because of the cultural prestige associated with them. We might also wish to see Lewis's decision to write for the theater, however, as a defensive gesture, particularly given the heavy government regulation and censorship under which London theaters operated at this time. At a point in his career when he was being held to social standards he could not meet – not those of an author but of an author–legislator – Lewis retreated out of prose fiction and into the theater, out of published print and into theatrical spectacle, and, in 1802, out of Parliament and public life. Even thirty-four years after the publication of *The Monk* in his 1830 "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad," Scott remembered first and foremost the hysteria surrounding *The Monk*'s critical reception. Given Lewis's prompt and wide-ranging expurgation of the fourth edition, Scott could not understand why Lewis continued to be ruthlessly attacked: "the pertinacity with which the passages . . . were dwelt upon, seemed to warrant a belief that something more was desired than the correction of the author's errors."[88]

It is this "something more" that leads me to question in greater detail what Lewis transgresses, and to argue that *The Monk*'s importance – both its contribution and its legacy to gothic's development – lies in the way that reviewers and social conservatives were able to cast it as exemplary of a *genre*. The processes through which this occurred are both complex and telling, and they correspond to, and are part of, the growing political suppression and religious hysteria traced by British historians of the 1790s.[89] As we have seen, by the summer of 1795, reviewers already had begun to criticize Radcliffe's fiction for its recognizable conventions and for its influence on other women writers; these criticisms, however, were usually not directed at Radcliffe herself, and instead amounted to little more than dismissing Radcliffe-inspired works as "mere imitations" and "copies" of a vastly superior, impeccably moral original. At the very most, these books moved gothic fiction in reputation back into the publishing houses of circulating libraries where it had first thrived.

These same months, however, saw other, equally significant erosions of the rational and "correct" terms Radcliffe had established with *The Romance of the Forest*. Here, the career of the minor playwright James Boaden in the 1790s provides a nice snapshot of how Radcliffe's rational

gothicism gave way to something more sensational. In April of 1794, Boaden launched an extremely successful adaptation of Radcliffe's *Romance of the Forest* for the Covent-Garden stage, an adaptation that would derive its success not from the piety of Boaden's adaptation but rather from its significant departures from Radcliffe's original. His next play, an adaptation of *Hermann von Unna* retitled *The Secret Tribunal*, sought to exploit the notoriety of the first British translations of early German *Schauerroman* ("shudder novels") – Carl Grosse's *The Dagger* (1794) and K. F. Kahlert's *The Necromancer, or a Tale of the Black Forest* (1794) – books that originally had followed the productions of the *Stürm und Drang* movement in Germany.[90] Having moved from Radcliffe to a German play also noted for its use of explained supernatural, Boaden would next adapt Radcliffe's *The Italian* as *The Italian Monk* (1797), and then Lewis's *The Monk* as *Aurelio and Miranda* (1799). The obvious conflation of *The Monk* and *The Italian* in *The Italian Monk* embodies in a single title what Boaden's career in these years suggests more generally: that by 1797 Radcliffe's work had become inextricably associated with a larger body of fiction and drama that reviewers increasingly dismissed as "the German."[91]

Lewis's own accounts of the composition of *The Monk*, furthermore, contributed to this confusion of sources. While his own letters claimed the book to be inspired by Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, *The Monk*'s printed Advertisement pointed primarily to German and Spanish sources, and playfully prompted readers with regard to its "plagiarisms" that "many more may be found."[92] In a sense, this single aspect of Lewis's Advertisement did more to form gothic as a perceived genre than did all of Radcliffe's "imitators." While Radcliffe's "imitators," both in fiction and on stage, invited critical audiences to recognize gothic as a predictable set of conventions regarding setting, character, and plot, Lewis invited his readers to compose their own genealogies of gothic's sources and origins. And the results – coming as they did during a time of world war, national crisis, and invasion fears, with all of the xenophobia and cultural bigotry that often accompany them – were telling. Readers and critics looking for sources immediately looked to Germany, encouraged by Lewis's own invitation and by *The Monk*'s nearly contemporaneous publication with three separate translations of Bürger's *Lenore* – by Poet Laureate Henry James Pye, J. T. Stanley, and W. R. Spencer – in March of 1796.[93] With Lewis's disclosure of authorship that autumn, this search for sources was transformed into a more painstaking hunt through *The Monk*'s pages for the source of its corruption. The unim-

peachable morals and politics of Lewis's primary British sources – Radcliffe and ballad compilers like Thomas Percy and Joseph Ritson – led Mathias and Reviews like the *British Critic* and the *Monthly Review* to attribute *The Monk*'s treatment of sexuality and religious institutions to the nineteen-year-old Lewis's being corrupted by German morality and culture. Even Coleridge in his February 1797 *Critical* review of *The Monk* would begin his criticisms thus, arguing that any attempt to import German horrors to Britain would precipitate a decline of its literature. Coleridge is especially vocal in linking *The Monk*'s fondness for promiscuously mixing genres and disciplines, especially with regard to religion, to moral corruption and decline:

> [T]he tale is indeed a tale of horror, yet the most painful impression which the work left on our minds was that of great acquirements and splendid genius employed to furnish a mormo for children, a poison for youth, and a provocative for the debauchee. Tales of enchantments and witchcraft can never be useful: our author has contrived to make them pernicious, by blending, with an irreverent negligence, all that is most awfully true in religion with all that is most ridiculously absurd in superstition.[94]

To the extent that it pointed subsequent reviewers to both the instances and sources of *The Monk*'s moral corruption, Coleridge's review acted as a kind of lightning bolt, and after its publication the attacks on Lewis intensified exponentially. The November 1797 *British Critic* exploited the publication of Lewis's translation of Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* as a convenient occasion not only to attack *The Monk* for a third time, but also to reverse disingenuously their previously guarded, though positive, assessments of German literature:

> One thing, which surprises and offends us, is, that after the severe and most just reprehension he has met with for his pernicious novel, he should choose, to make himself known specifically by that book as a previous title to notice. Rather ought he to wish that all memory of so disgraceful a production should be completely obliterated . . . We have always thought the tragedies of Schiller coarse and overcharged, norwithstanding the fame they have obtained. Of these faults abundant instances might easily be selected, even from this *best* translation of the present drama . . . We cannot think that the English taste is likely to be improved by such importations.[95]

Such responses illustrate how quickly *The Monk* and works associated with it had come to be associated with "Germanness." They also show how quickly the gothic was transformed from a home-grown innovation of Walpole and Reeve into an "importation" complete with defining

characteristics of the genre. If we are to look anywhere for definitions of gothic from contemporary sources – ones that show British readers' awareness of gothic as a genre with narrative, poetic, *and* dramatic manifestations – it is in essays like "Terrorist Novel Writing" (quoted above) and the *Monthly Mirror*'s assessment of the origins of Lewis's gothic:

> The imagination is hurried away for a moment into the *world of spirits*, and all the fictions of the nursery, and the bugbears of romance become realized; – the *illuminated oratory*, the *aerial music* – magical every note of it, – and the determined *silence* of the praeter-natural visitant . . . Mr. Lewis's intimacy with German literature is strongly proclaimed, through the whole of the *Castle Spectre*. The *Dream of Osmond*, his *Atheism*, *Reginald's* sixteen years immurement, (derived, probably, from the Robbers) and the frequent appeals to Heaven, with a levity unusual to our stage, are all *German*.[96]

While this catalogue of effects is in itself useful as a barometer for understanding the degree to which gothic had become a recognized kind of writing, I wish to call attention to the structural split in this passage existing between what is praised and what is implicitly criticized. While everything applauded in the above review carries no national identity – therefore arguably carrying a default British one – everything isolated as excessive is immediately exported to Germany and to German drama. As Michael Hadley has suggested, this repatriation of "gothic" to Germany and German origins is a fiction: "it is only in the late 1790s . . . after the German translation of M. G. Lewis' *The Monk* (1797), and indeed after the major English Gothic novels appeared in German translation, and well after these originals and their translations had been reviewed in German journals, that the *Schauerroman* really came into being."[97] For Hadley both English and German accounts of gothic's national origins operate similarly, gothic in each standing as a cultural other and being identified with foreign, "immoral" literary traditions. I call attention to the above review, then, because it illustrates in a single passage the process by which Lewis's *Monk*, *Castle Spectre*, and subsequent dramas effectively invited readers to remove gothic from its English moorings to German ones. This urge to deport gothicism to Germany was strong enough, in fact, for it to surface even forty years later in Lewis's first biographer, Margaret Baron Wilson. Wilson had desired so strongly to identify as German the "overstrained sentiments" and "tales of most thrilling horror" of *The Monk* and *Castle Spectre* that she posited Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1779) as the primary

inspiration for Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764), thereby reversing time itself to give *all* supernatural fiction and drama a German origin.[98]

V LEGALITIES: "A VEIN OF OBSCENITY"

> A vein of obscenity . . . pervades and deforms the whole organization of this novel, which must ever blast, in a moral view, the fair fame that, in point of ability, it would have gained for the author; and which renders the work totally unfit for general circulation.
>
> (*Monthly Review*, review of *The Monk*)[99]

"The German," however, was not the only category into which critics sought to place *The Monk* and subsequent gothic texts. The two common-law terms "blasphemy" and "obscenity," which found their way into the early *Monthly* and *Critical* reviews of *The Monk*, were to plague Lewis for most of his life. I wish to focus in this final section especially on this latter term obscenity, since *The Monk*'s supposed celebration of it produced the bulk of the legal threats that swirled around Lewis between 1796 and 1803. These threats in effect defined the particular kind of literary celebrity that he enjoyed, while the notion of obscenity – and the reading experience it assumes – shaped the public perception of both Lewis and those writers viewed to be his successors.[100]

While the *Oxford English Dictionary* documents the word "pornography" as first appearing in England only in 1857, the Common Law prosecution of books for obscenity in England began almost two centuries earlier through a series of legal cases that culminated in the 1727 conviction of publisher Edmund Curll for obscene libel.[101] Beginning in 1663 with a watershed case against the poet Charles Sedley, the court argued that "immoral" conduct, as a form of subversion, could be tried as a breach of the king's peace. By the late seventeenth century, this notion of subversive conduct had begun to be extended to the printing and publication of "immoral" books, and prosecutions accelerated especially after the expiration of the Licensing Act on 3 May 1695. They received a serious setback, however, in the 1707 trial of the publisher James Read when the presiding justice sent the case back to the ecclesiastical courts, arguing that, since no law of obscene libel existed in the Common Law, the king's judges lacked jurisdiction over obscenity

prosecutions: "There is no law to punish it: I wish there were: but we cannot make law. It indeed tends to the corruption of good manners, but that is not sufficient for us to punish."[102]

Curll's conviction in 1727 for publishing two obscene books, then, came as more than a surprise; it overturned *R.* v. *Read*, constituted an about-face for the Courts of the King's Bench, and effectively created a law against obscene libel for the first time in English history. The case represents a significant departure from preceding decisions handed down by the secular courts because, after it, published writing no longer had to attack specific individuals or the government to be considered libel. As a result, *R.* v. *Curll* created a legal classification and therefore a *category* of writing – one based on historically and geographically local definitions of obscenity and later conflated with pornography.

Eighteenth-century obscene libel as a legal category most fundamentally differs from our notions of genre in its vantage point and its scope;[103] it uses as its defining basis neither subject matter nor recurring conventions, but rather perceived readerly effects. It is not so much a kind of writing as a category of reader response – in this case, a legal interpretation of the social *effects* of a certain kind of reading. Any publication judged by British legal authorities after 1727 to be obscene and to display a tendency to corrupt the morals and manners of the general population could be suppressed and prosecuted for obscene libel. The legal category of obscene libel, then, does not so much create an illegal genre as a set of undesirable readerly effects achievable through multiple genres; it then criminalizes the production of any text as "obscene" that appears likely to produce these readerly effects.

Rather than creating "pornography" in its modern sense, obscene libel created a legal space that came to be inhabited after 1830 almost exclusively by pornography. Before 1820, however, the kinds of texts coming under the gaze of obscene libel were much more disparate, and, beginning with *The Monk*, social conservatives began attempting to apply the law to the tradition of gothic writing that we now characterize as "horror gothic" – that is, primarily to the fiction of Lewis but also to his primary successors, Charlotte Dacre and Charles Robert Maturin. Reviewers, literati, and clergy repeatedly compared these texts to John Cleland's most notorious writings, and the literary hierarchies and histories they constructed differ noticeably from our own of the period.

It is clear from the chronology of *The Monk*'s reception that Lewis's social position as a Member of Parliament and the son of the Secretary

to the Minister of War was a significant source of the public scandal.[104] As four recent studies by Jerrold Hogle, Clara Tuite, James Watt, and Lisa Wilson have suggested, moreover, other issues exacerbated the attacks as well. Lewis's reputed Whig politics, effeminacy, rumored homosexuality, and obsession with class were documented anecdotally by his peers – from Byron's description of Lewis as having "male loves" and "fill[ing] up his table with young ensigns,"[105] to speculation concerning Lewis's otherwise unexplainable attachment to the younger William Kelly, to Scott's description of Lewis being humiliated by the Duke of Dalkeith:

> I remember a picture of him being handed about at Dalkeith House. It was a miniature I think by Saunders, who had contrived to mufle Lewis's person in a cloak, and placed some poniard or dark-lanthorn apurtenance (I think) in his hand, so as to give the picture the cast of the Bravo. "That like Mat Lewis!" said Duke Henry, to whom it had passed in turn; "why, that is like a *man*!" Imagine the effect! Lewis was at his elbow.[106]

Assembled, these scattered anecdotes present a suggestive, inconclusive, and tantalizing picture of Lewis as a besieged literary lion in the late 1790s and 1800s. They also give credence to James Watt's account of Lewis as wavering between mortification, contrition, and outrage at the hostility directed at *The Monk* by the various institutional readers who condemned it. Along these lines, Hogle's recent article explores *The Monk*'s tendency to invoke class and sexual anxieties only to displace them onto "counterfeits" – as with, in one characteristic example, Ambrosio first falling in love with the portrait of the Madonna in his room, then developing a sentimental friendship with the male novice Rosario who reminds him of the portrait, then finding Rosario to be not only a woman (Matilda) but the one who has posed for the portrait, and finally discovering Matilda to be a demon in league with Satan. These manic displacements, for Hogle, provide Lewis with an opportunity to engage in veiled satire and self-ironizing, both of "middle-class pretensions such as his own" and of "the semi-concealment of his homosexuality."[107] Tuite, in contrast, focuses on the restraint with which Lewis portrays the homoerotic friendship between Ambrosio and Rosario, arguing that Rosario's "unveiling [of himself as a woman] is in fact not an unveiling but a re-veiling in female costume . . . a denial of and flight from the blackmailability of homosexual implication, into a parodic version of heterosexual relations, a kind of hyper-heterosexuality."[108] Both Hogle and Tuite intend their accounts to be explorative, and their

readings of *The Monk* constitute sustained readings of Lewis's novel as well as persuasive complications of the pioneering work of George Haggerty and Eve Sedgwick, both of whom argued for "[gothic's] close, relatively visible links to male homosexuality."[109]

In raising these issues of Lewis's sexuality in relation to the reception of *The Monk*, however, it is for my purposes less important to "out" Lewis on what evidence exists than to argue for his ambiguous gender status as constitutive for gothic's emergence as a genre in the 1790s. With Lisa Wilson, then, I find the links between Lewis's effeminacy and his status as a male writer of gothic fiction extremely important; it shapes my sense not only of gothic's formation as a genre, but also of why the added fact of Lewis's status as a legislator produced such vitriolic attacks and threats of prosecution. As Iain McCalman's work has suggested, the link between perceived radicalism and threatened prosecution for libel between 1795 and 1830 was a fairly strong one, and Lewis's politics, however moderate by the standards of the time, were subjected to increased scrutiny because of his personal eccentricities and his status as a holder of elected office.[110] For the social conservatives who attacked him, his status as "author of *The Monk*," in the most reductive terms, amounted to an admission of weakness in the government, and their response was to attack his writing as perverse, blasphemous, and obscene, and to try, literally and discursively, to pillory him.

By all accounts, then, "Monk" Lewis became after 1796 one of the best-known (and most notorious) literary figures of late-eighteenth-century England. Even in top government circles, *The Monk* raised discussion and debate, as is evidenced by William Wilberforce's cryptic entry in his diary of 1797:

> Dined Lord Chancellor's – Loughborough, Windham, Pitt, Lord Chatham, Westmoreland, &c. – talk rather loose. I fear not guarded and grave enough. Much talk about "The Monk," a novel by Lewis' son.[111]

One might treat his final sentence about Lewis as a *non sequitur* – and thus conclude that the loose talk and Wilberforce's anxieties about gravity concern other unnamed subjects – were it not for Wilberforce's position as head of the Proclamation Society, begun in 1787 and later merging with the Society for the Prevention of Vice in 1801. The Proclamation Society is remembered most often for putting on trial the publisher of Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*; but, as André Parreaux has documented, its daily efforts were especially assiduous in encouraging Attorney General John Scott to prosecute libel of all kinds, and especially obscenity:

[Scott's] well-known boast – twice repeated in 1795 – that *in the last two years there had been more prosecutions for libels than in any twenty years before*, makes it clear that his personal responsibility was to a large extent involved . . . If the Proclamation Society did invite him – as implied by Mrs. Baron-Wilson's statement – to prosecute either Lewis or his publisher, Sir John Scott was hardly the man to turn a deaf ear to their request.[112]

These details and later second-hand accounts of *The Monk*'s threatened prosecution raise other possible readings of Wilberforce's entry, and suggest strongly that responding to Lewis's romance was a matter of concern to government officials. While no figures exist regarding the legal activities of Wilberforce's Proclamation Society, its successor the Society for the Prevention of Vice was to prosecute 159 cases between 1802 and 1857. It was to win a staggering 154 of them, or just under 97 percent.[113]

In this light, the long line of commentary on Lewis's decision in 1798 to bowdlerize the fourth and all subsequent editions of *The Monk* constructs a fairly compelling case for a threatened prosecution early in 1798. Both Byron and Scott in later life were to intimate that Lewis "was forced to suppress" the book, and the *Biographia Dramatica* in 1812 and the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1818 printed accounts in which Lewis was "induced," both by "severe censure" and by "a prosecution . . . we believe commenced," to "remove some of the most offensive passages."[114] The most resolute claims come from Lewis's first biographer, Margaret Baron Wilson, who speaks of the prosecution as a certainty yet offers no new evidence to document her claims:

The Attorney-general was actually instructed, by one of the societies for the suppression of vice, to move for an injunction to restrain its sale. To use the language of the law, a rule *nisi* was obtained, and the young author did not think proper to show cause against it. The rule, however, was never made absolute, and the prosecution was dropped.[115]

Louis Peck and André Parreaux, Lewis's most recent critics to address the reception of *The Monk* at length, rightly treat Wilson's account and the others with some skepticism. Based on the scant evidence available both nonetheless take the threat of prosecution seriously, and most later commentators have concluded that Lewis most likely would have been prosecuted under the Common Law for either obscene or blasphemous libel had he not published a bowdlerized fourth edition early in 1798.[116]

What commentators have not addressed often enough is the extent to which such prosecutions – or the threat of them – contributed to how

gothic was perceived, and constituted, as a genre. Lewis's most outspoken critic, Thomas James Mathias, provides a succinct example of how critical writers could apply the already-existing legal categories to his text and ultimately transform its cultural standing. While even the earliest reviews of *The Monk* had touched upon its "vein of obscenity," "impiety," and "voluptuous revelry,"[117] *The Pursuits of Literature* went beyond mere censure, arguing that explicitly personal attacks were necessary if satire was to have an effect on "those cases, in which the pulpit and the courts of law can seldom interfere, and rarely with effect."[118]

As his own lawyerly explanations of slander suggest, Mathias attacked Lewis in the *Pursuits*' fourth dialogue with the intricacies of Common Law in mind. After first identifying *The Monk* as an obscene text more egregious even than Richard Payne Knight's *Discourse on the Worship of Priapus* (1794), he reveals an agenda against Lewis that is explicitly legal:

> But though that Garden-God forsaken dies,
> Another Cleland see in Lewis rise.
> Why sleep the ministers of truth and law?
> Has the State no control, no decent awe,
> While each with each in madd'ning orgies vie,
> Panders to lust and licens'd blasphemy?
> Can Senates hear without a kindred rage?
> Oh may a Poet's light'ning blast the page,
> Nor with a bolt of Nemesis in vain
> Supply the laws, that wake not to restrain.[119]

Mathias supplements these verses with even more explicit footnotes:

> I believe this 7th Chap. of Vol. 2 *is indictable at Common Law*. Edmund Curll in the first year of George II was prosecuted by the Attorney General (Sir Philip Yorke, afterwards Lord Hardwicke) for printing two obscene books. The Attorney General set forth the several obscene passages, and concluded, that *it was an offence against the King's peace*. The defendant was found guilty and sent to the pillory. See Str. 788. 1 Barnardiston 29.[120]

Mathias's directives, moreover, do not end here; he extracts from the case, explains the court's reasoning, and assiduously applies these same arguments to *The Monk*. Far from wishing his satire to "supply" a want that the courts cannot fill, Mathias aims to produce an explicitly legal prosecution to ban Lewis's book and to redefine its cultural status from "a romance" (Lewis's own descriptor) to "obscenity" and "blasphemy."

Mathias's conservatism may appear hysteric even by the standards of the time, yet Clery is certainly correct in describing *The Pursuits of Literature* as "influential."[121] Reviewed extensively, Mathias's poem produced no fewer than fifteen published responses[122] – replies that in turn provoked further reviews and responses, and echoed Mathias's tone even as they protested his bluntness. Mathias, moreover, did not limit his calls for prosecution to this poem; in *The Grove* (1798) he again equated Lewis with Richard Payne Knight, and in *The Shade of Alexander Pope on the Banks of the Thames* he explicitly called upon John Scott to prosecute Lewis.[123] The ultimate effect of his efforts, however, is best measured by two documents produced as the controversy was in the process of dying down. The first is Lewis's strange double-apology in the "Preface" and "Postscript to the Preface" in *Adelmorn, the Outlaw*. Here, five years after the initial publication of *The Monk*, Lewis launched an elaborate apology and defense of it, attributing the negative reviews of *Adelmorn* to its being written by "the author of *The Monk*":

> [Reviewers have argued] "'The Outlaw' is written by the author of 'The Monk'; therefore it must be immoral and irreligious."
>
> I positively deny the conclusion—A fault, were it one ever so serious, committed at twenty, and followed during a course of years by no error of a similar nature, might, I should think, be forgiven without exercising any dangerous lenity . . . I have nearly served a seven years apprenticeship to patience, under the attacks of the most uncandid criticism, unmitigated censure, and exaggerating misrepresentation; nor have I ever written a line to right myself, or blame those who magnified a single act of imprudence into charges equally discordant with my principles, and insulting to my understanding.[124]

Registered in his piling of details and in his representing of himself as blameless and his persecutors as the most gothic of villains, Lewis's exasperation is that of a man forced to address what will otherwise not go away. That he feels compelled to dredge up the scandal – and thereby threaten a new publication's success – testifies to, if not the influence of Mathias, the influence of the scandal magnified and sustained by Mathias.

The second document is a letter from Samuel Coleridge to Mary E. Robinson, daughter of Mary Robinson, in which Coleridge responds to Robinson's request to include his "The Mad Monk" in an anthology of poems in honor of her mother entitled *The Wild Wreath* (1804):

> But, my dear Miss Robinson! . . . I have a wife, I have sons, I have an infant Daughter – what excuse could I offer to my own conscience if by suffering my name to be connected with those of Mr Lewis, or Mr Moore, I was the *occasion*

> of their reading the Monk, or the wanton poems of Thomas Little Esqre? Should I not be an infamous Pander to the Devil in the seduction of my own offspring? – My head turns giddy, my heart sickens, at the very thought of seeing such books in the hands of a child of mine . . . O dear Miss Robinson! exert your own Talents – do you plant the night violets of your own Genius & Goodness on the Grave of your dear Parent – not Henbane, not Hemlock! Do not mistake me! I do not suspect, that the Poems, you mean to publish, have themselves aught in the least degree morally objectionable – ; but the *names* are those of men, who have sold provocatives to vulgar Debauchees, & vicious School boys. (*CL*, II:905)

One might point simply to the hysteric tone and histrionic nature of this letter – its high moral rhetoric, panicked invocations, and multiple exclamation points – as ample testimony of the nature and extent of Lewis's reputation after the publication of *The Monk*. Here is Mathias's discourse without Mathias, occurring in Coleridge's private correspondence, a discourse with fewer demands for high morality and respectability than those that come with the public discourse of the monthly Reviews. Part of Coleridge's anxiety, of course, stems from Robinson's already having "The Mad Monk" in her possession. The similarity between the title of his own poem and that of Lewis's romance surely motivates the prose; the stylized nature of the letter's hysteria suggests that Coleridge resorted to high moral outrage in the hope that it would deter her from publication.[125] But even more interesting here is the way in which Coleridge distinguishes between Lewis the person and "Lewis" the public entity. Neither Lewis the private individual nor the content of Lewis's poetry appear to matter; Coleridge, in fact, had admired Lewis's poetry both in his private correspondence and in public reviews.[126] Rather, it is at the proposed association with Lewis's *name* that he balks, and to read the above passage closely is to see Lewis's name take on, at least in part, the properties of genre. The crux of Coleridge's argument lies in the impossibility of separating the name of "Lewis" from *The Monk*'s reputation for obscenity, and therefore from "provocatives [sold] to vulgar Debauchees, & vicious School boys." And while the "night violets" Coleridge describes at first appear to represent the actual poems that will comprise *The Wild Wreath*, it becomes clear a few lines later that the "Henbane" and "Hemlock" with which Robinson threatens her mother's grave are not the poems of Lewis but rather the name "Lewis" itself. "I do not suspect, that the Poems . . . [are] morally objectionable," Coleridge argues, "*names* are."

In detailing the ways in which libel – especially the category of

obscene libel – was brought to bear upon *The Monk*, my interest is less in demonstrating how the threat of prosecution enforced stringent standards of decency upon specific passages than in how a specific legal space managed to define *The Monk* and its imitators generically. Coleridge's association of the name Lewis with various poisons is hardly unique and, as Geoffrey Robertson notes, is consistent with the rhetoric for attacking pornography:

> The first Obscene Publications Act, in 1857, was sponsored by a Lord Chancellor who equated pornography with poison. In 1928 *The Well of Loneliness* was destroyed on the theory that it would prove more dangerous than a phial of prussic acid. In 1974 at the Old Bailey a book about homosexuality was described by treasury counsel as "a sugar coated pill of poison", and the metaphor has found a fashionable resting-place in current crusades against the spread of "moral pollution."[127]

The level of success of the attacks on Lewis, and the degree to which they defined *The Monk*'s genre, is evident from how standard books of reference like the *Biographia Dramatica* represented Lewis's romance in later years as "disgraced by the outrages on decency and propriety,"[128] charges to which Lewis's first biographer, even four decades after the publication of *The Monk*, was more than ready to accede.[129]

That gothic's strong associations with obscenity went beyond Lewis to those "imitators" condemned by Scott and others can be seen in the reception of Charlotte Dacre, whose strong associations with Lewis inspired frequent and pointed criticisms. A self-proclaimed follower of Lewis, Dacre dedicated her first novel, *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer*, to him in 1805 and in the next year published *Zofloya* (1806), an extremely powerful rewriting of *The Monk* that dramatized its heroine's relentless pursuit of sexual power and knowledge. As with *The Monk*, reviewers were most disturbed by *Zofloya*'s close alignment of sexual pleasure with sadism, and reviews of *Zofloya* immediately called attention to both its undesirable subject matter and its even more pernicious precursor:

> The principle personages in these wild pages are courtezans of the lewdest class, and murderers of the deepest dye: shielded by the broad title of a Romance . . . We are sorry to remark, that the "Monk" seems to have been made the model . . . and there is an exhibition of wantonness and harlotry, which we should have hoped, that the delicacy of a female mind, would have been shocked to imagine.[130]

Other reviews called for the book's suppression, calling attention, as had Mathias, to the prosecution of Curll, the suppression of *Fanny Hill*, and

the self-suppression of *The Monk*: "It is a remarkable fact, that while one of the most celebrated of these male authors [Footnote: "Lewis, in The Monk"] has been induced, by a severe and public animadversion, to retract, at least to omit, in a subsequent edition, what he had before said; a woman (I blush to say it) has, at the age of eighteen, shamelessly avowed the most disgraceful principles; nor, like her FRIEND, has been moved by public reprehension to alter them."[131]

One could multiply these examples, were it necessary, with extracts from Coleridge's attack on Maturin in *Biographia Literaria*, which accused Maturin in legalistic language reminiscent of Mathias and of *R.* v. *Curll* of undermining basic "moral principles," of committing "an insult to common decency," and of "poison[ing] the taste" by providing "the grossest and most outrageous stimulants" (*CBL*, 229). That such moral "outrages" on "decency" were ascribed not only to Lewis, Dacre, and Maturin but also at least to the tradition of gothic fiction they inspired is captured with equal succinctness in satires like George Daniel's *The Modern Dunciad* and William Henry Ireland's *Scribbleomania*, both of which define gothic fiction as "loose novels from Minerva's Press," full of "lewd heroines" and "descriptions . . . luscious" with "new philosophy": "Which to perform, in language just and brief, / Let 'bawdry' be inscrib'd on every leaf."[132]

As these instances testify, Lewis's reception and the reputation it created significantly shaped gothic's status and identity. James Watt notes that even the published *defenses* of *The Monk* did not hesitate to acknowledge its "outrage[s] against decency and propriety," but instead used its perceived transgressiveness as a foundation on which to construct *The Monk* as a "distinctly daring" work of "genius."[133] Given my interest in defining gothic as a genre constituted neither amiably nor even contractually, I am left wondering less whether the drive to prosecute obscenity and blasphemy at the end of the eighteenth century somehow "produced" gothic as we know it than to what extent these legal categories shaped British hierarchies of genre and determined the histories of specific kinds of writing. I am not, then, arguing for the wholesale status of "gothic" texts as "obscene" at the turn of the nineteenth century. Yet what is clear is that the legal categories of obscene and blasphemous libel were brought to bear on gothic texts to the extent that they could be associated with *The Monk*'s perceived textual practices and readerly effects. This prevailing association, I contend, not only shaped the later output of Lewis and writers associated with him; it also affected the gothic's cultural status and trajectory

for most of the nineteenth century. If Lewis through his correspondence and writing reveals anything about the reception of *The Monk* and books like it, it is his dumbfounded disbelief that reviews like the *Annual Review* could take a book "shielded by the broad title of romance" and transform it by "unmitigated censure, and exaggerating misrepresentation . . . into charges . . . discordant with [his] principles." Perhaps no other group of writers at the turn of the nineteenth century found their genre claims the object of such contention, their texts placed so far afield of their own assertions, or (taking up again the language of "The Law of Genre") their "participation" mandated in such a way as to amount to "belonging." As my subsequent chapters will demonstrate, this threat of gothic "belonging" operated with surprising efficiency on the writing we now associate with the formative stages of romanticism.

3

"Gross and violent stimulants": producing Lyrical Ballads *1798 and 1800*

The Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* occupies a contradictory place in romantic studies. Its idealization of the figure of the poet, celebration of "low" language and forms, and analyses of poetic inspiration and composition have made it a foundational document both to contemporary[1] and modern[2] accounts of romanticism. The year 1998 saw a number of bicentennial celebrations of *Lyrical Ballads* and 2000 will see, most likely, scholars noting the two hundredth anniversary of its second edition – a marked contrast to the literary landscapes of 1798 and 1800 that Wordsworth and Coleridge inhabited, dominated as they were, respectively, by the unprecedented popular successes of Lewis and Kotzebue. A similar kind of historical contrast has operated with regard to the Preface. Often celebrated in this century, it was largely rejected by contemporary reviewers and literati, and later by Wordsworth and Coleridge themselves. Modern critics have usually placed it at the center of late-eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century poetry as its most important critical manifesto, a position that contrasts strongly with that accorded by Wordsworth and Coleridge, who, ironically, spent considerable energy later in their lives distancing themselves from it[3]:

Coleridge on LB *Preface, 1800–17*	*Wordsworth on* LB *Preface, 1800–43*
The Preface contains our joint opinions on Poetry. (September 1800)	Several of my Friends are anxious for the success of these Poems . . . on this account they have advised me to prefix a systematic defence. (1800)
Wordsworth's Preface is half a child of my own Brain / & so arose out of Conversations, so frequent . . . that we could scarcely . . . say, which first started any particular Thought . . . yet I am far from going all lengths with Wordsworth (1802)	The preface which I wrote long ago . . . I was put upon by the urgent entreaties of a friend, and heartily regret I ever had any thing to do with it. (1834)

With many parts of this preface . . . I never concurred; but on the contrary objected to them as erroneous in principle, and as contradictory . . . to other parts of the same preface. (1817)

I will mention that I never cared a straw about the theory, & the Preface was written at the request of Mr Coleridge out of sheer good nature. (1843)

I find the above extracts instructive for the force with which they communicate a fundamental and even rudimentary point, one that most likely would not require reiteration were it not for the *Lyrical Ballads*' almost mythical status in romantic studies in the last century: that the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* functioned at publication as both stance and statement of purpose, and that it grew burdensome to both poets as historical, political, and economic conditions changed. The passages illustrate more generally the degree to which self-representations – and the ideologies that inform them – are subject to similar contingencies, often erasing and confounding past "selves" even as they claim to explain them. In the fevered summer months of 1800 that were devoted to preparing the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* for the press, Wordsworth and Coleridge found it either desirable or necessary to cut a critical–theoretical figure, and determined that the best way to cut that figure was by affixing a "defence" to the first volume of the work. A decade and a half later while writing the *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Coleridge felt the need, even as he engaged in yet another theoretical defense of Wordsworth's poetry and poetics, to distance himself from that same "joint" prose Preface – one that since Jeffrey's 1802 *Edinburgh* review of *Thalaba the Destroyer* (1801) had raised considerable critical ire.[4] Looking back over more than a decade of sustained critical abuse (1807–19) followed by a decade of growing but fragile critical acclaim (1822–34), Wordsworth apparently felt this need even more strongly, and the strength of his disavowals testifies to the level of his frustration.

Most fundamentally, then, this chapter posits the production of the first and second editions of *Lyrical Ballads*, and especially of its Preface, as subject to similar contextual pressures. In particular, I contend that the pointed criticisms of gothic in the Preface and the satires of the early ballads arise out of Wordsworth's own desire to oppose the supernaturalism of the *Lyrical Ballads* project to that of gothic fiction and drama. Context matters to *Lyrical Ballads*, I argue, particularly in regard to the many "rejections" it performs for its readers – not only the Preface's famous condemnation of "frantic novels [and] sickly and stupid German tragedies," but also the less overt critical gestures that occur in the poems themselves. Perhaps never has a collection of poems rejected so

many of its own sources and influences, and by its second edition those condemned ranged from gothic fiction to German drama to the very poets of sensibility within whose traditions Wordsworth first wrote.

Citing the Preface's attack on the "gross and violent stimulants" of gothic fiction and drama as a heartfelt protest against the infantilizing of English letters, critics of Wordsworth generally have explained the gothicism of early poems like *The Vale of Esthwaite* and *Salisbury Plain* as a childish predilection he abandoned once he began to write about humble and rustic characters and the sublime "something far more deeply interfused" that he found in Nature.[5] Within this narrative, the parodic elements of poems like "The Idiot Boy," "The Thorn," and *Peter Bell* have signalled Wordsworth's inevitable rejection of gothic fiction and drama as source materials.[6] Such accounts, however, fail to explain Wordsworth's experimentation with these same materials beyond *Lyrical Ballads*, and ignore the extent to which dismissing gothic fiction and drama constituted a strategy through which Wordsworth could legitimate his own poetic projects. I aim in this chapter, therefore, to read Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* – and the poetry it sought to explain – both within the context of gothic's reception in the last years of the eighteenth century and as a response to it. Such a reading, I hope, will explain not only why the collection's ballads required such elaborate explanation and "defence," but also why, upon returning from Germany in early spring 1799 to hostile reviews of the work, Wordsworth abandoned supernatural subject matter altogether for the remaining poems that he included in the second volume. Placed in relation to reviews of the 1798 first edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, the 1800 edition's famous dismissals of the gothic, I find, are as much defensive reaction as heartfelt attack, as much strategic retreat as manifesto.

I THE ROLE OF COLERIDGE

> During the first year [1797] that Mr. Wordsworth and I were neighbours, our conversations turned frequently on the two cardinal points of poetry, the power of exciting the sympathy of the reader by a faithful adherence to the truth of nature, and the power of giving the interest of novelty by the modifying colours of imagination . . . The thought suggested itself . . . that a series of poems might be composed of two sorts. In the one, the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of the emotions, as would naturally accompany

> such situations, supposing them real . . . For the second class . . . [the] object, [was] to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom. (*CBL*, II:6–7)

As James Butler and Karen Green have argued painstakingly in the Introduction to their Cornell Wordsworth edition of *Lyrical Ballads and Other Poems, 1797–1800*, the planning and production of *Lyrical Ballads* was "far more haphazard" (*LB*, 5) than represented by Coleridge twenty years later in *Biographia Literaria*.[7] For Butler and Green, the plan for the joint venture that became *Lyrical Ballads* took many proposed forms involving widely disparate texts between June 1797 and spring 1798. More importantly, the supposed division of subject matter into "supernatural" and "things of every day" appears to have been at least in part a fiction, the product of twenty years' reassessment and retrospection by Coleridge. Far from being a volume produced from a preconceived plan, the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* (if we can judge from the documents that remain from its production history) was at first assembled *ad hoc* from various and miscellaneous materials. And as Wordsworth's note to Isabella Fenwick on the inception of *Lyrical Ballads* suggests, if the volume began with the composition of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," it did so in an effort to exploit the popularity of supernatural poetry for financial gain:

> In the Spring of the year 1798, he [Coleridge], my Sister, & myself started from Alfoxden, pretty late in the afternoon, with a view to visit Linton & the Valley of Stones near it, and as our united funds were very small we agreed to defray the expence of the tour by writing a Poem to be sent to the New Monthly Magazine . . . Accordingly we set off and proceeded along the Quantock Hills, toward Watchet, and in the course of this walk was planned the Poem of The Ancient Mariner . . . [which] grew and grew till it became too important for our first object which was limited to our expectation of five pounds, and we began to talk of a volume . . . Accordingly I wrote The Idiot Boy, Her Eyes are wild &c., We are Seven, The Thorn & some others.[8]

If we are to believe this part of Wordsworth's note, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" began as magazine poetry, and, in being written for this medium, shares common origins with poems like "Lewti; or the Circassian Love Chant" and "The Voice from the Side of Etna; or the Mad Monk: An Ode, in Mrs. Ratcliff's manner."[9] At the very least, Coleridge's correspondence from these months establishes his need for money and desire to sell his writing – whether to his publisher Joseph

Cottle or to the *New Monthly Magazine*[10] – to pay existing debts and to finance travel.[11] Wordsworth's indignant response (in a summer 1799 letter to Cottle) to Robert Southey's *Critical* review of *Lyrical Ballads* confirms for both poets the pecuniary dimension of the volume:

> Southey's review I have seen. He knew that I published those poems for money and money alone. He knew that money was of importance to me. If he could not conscientiously have spoken differently of the volume, he ought to have declined the task of reviewing it. (*WL*, 1:267–8)

It is difficult to discern at what point in its composition the *Lyrical Ballads* ceased to be primarily a financial venture and became an experiment to see how well "the dramatic truth of the emotions" could reside within supernatural materials. Judging from Wordsworth's note and the ample correspondence surrounding its inception, however, the *Lyrical Ballads* began in the company of the very "idle and extravagant tales in verse" that its Preface would later deride and dismiss.

In spite of these beginnings, the volume's haphazard production and miscellaneous nature arose out of conflicts over genre and materials, especially on the part of Wordsworth. We usually remember 1797 as a breakthrough year for Wordsworth because it produced *The Ruined Cottage*, a poem that fulfills most if not all of the aspirations written into the Preface three years later: simple yet lofty diction, low and rustic subject matter, and a story neither "frantic" nor "gross and violent." One need only look to the poems composed just before or along with *The Ruined Cottage*, however, to comprehend the ambivalence presiding over the production of the *Lyrical Ballads*. By the end of 1797, Wordsworth had recently revised *Salisbury Plain*; had composed a "German" Tragedy (*The Borderers*), the "Fragment of a Gothic Tale," "Incipient Madness," and the lines now known as "The Discharged Soldier"; and had begun "The Three Graves" and "The Somersetshire Tragedy," both of which, if concerned with "low and rustic life," focus on its most ghoulish and violent aspects. Trafficking in ghosts, murder, bands of robbers, and the haunting effects of superstition and war, these poems consist of the same sensational materials as the productions of Lewis, Radcliffe, Bürger, and Schiller. If not "gross and violent stimulants," these poems of Wordsworth's at the very least cater, as James Averill has noted, to an audience possessing a "craving for extraordinary incident":

> As we have seen, Wordsworth himself, or part of him had felt the all-too-human craving for the extraordinary . . . The problem Wordsworth faced in the *Lyrical Ballads* is to reconcile the sense that deluging an audience is vulgar with the belief that poetry should move one profoundly.[12]

For Averill, this ambivalence is systemic in both the 1798 first edition and the Preface, and even can be found in the differences between the 1798 and 1800 volumes.[13]

Unravelling this contradiction – between Wordsworth's gothic predilections and the *Lyrical Ballads*' ostentatious rejection of those same predilections – is essential to explaining the problems that Wordsworth's gothicism poses for his later efforts to present himself in 1800 as a simple poet of proud humility. In confronting this problem, I find myself facing two immediate explanations that seem to oppose one another: either the *Lyrical Ballads* project witnesses Wordsworth finally rejecting the gothic materials with which he has experimented his entire life; or else its gothic parodies and anti-gothic diatribes are part of a sustained marketing ploy, a self-conscious concession to critics grown hostile to gothic-indebted productions, especially by unestablished authors. Taken separately, neither of the above readings is satisfactory. Neither, for different reasons, accounts for Wordsworth's continued interest in the supernatural while in Germany, an interest that finds its way into both published ("Lucy Gray" and "Hart-Leap Well") and unpublished work (*The Prelude*). Yet as chapter 1 demonstrated through the examples of Wollstonecraft, Coleridge, and Scott, these two explanations need not be mutually exclusive. Given the cultural status of gothic after 1797, in fact, this book argues in its final three chapters that poets working with gothic materials at the turn of the nineteenth century to some degree *must* take on a double perspective – what Averill describes in the case of Wordsworth as "Wordsworth himself, or part of him."

Reminding ourselves of Wordsworth's capacity to write simultaneously from competing and even contradictory viewpoints allows us at least to begin imagining him moving from writing strongly gothic texts (the revised *Borderers*, the "Fragment of a Gothic Tale," "The Discharged Soldier," and "The Three Graves") to writing anti-gothic parodies and manifestos ("The Idiot Boy," "The Thorn," *Peter Bell*, "Hart-Leap Well," and the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*) and back again. It cannot explain, however, *why* Wordsworth moves across these two perspectives, let alone why this movement occurs almost exclusively in the years 1798–1800. Answering these questions, I suggest, requires that we acknowledge the extremely popular yet vilified status of gothic in these years. It also requires the presence of Coleridge – not only as the other half of the collaborative dialectic that produced *Lyrical Ballads*, but also as the *Critical* reviewer of gothic fiction in many ways responsible for inaugurating the backlash against both Radcliffe and Lewis and the later gothic writers indebted to them.

Critical investigations into Coleridge's role in the production of *Lyrical Ballads* usually begin with Coleridge's account in the *Biographia Literaria*, though they treat the account with understandable suspicion. John Emory Jordan puts the matter succinctly: "there is no contemporary evidence to support Coleridge's view of the two-fold invention of the collection . . . Not only was Coleridge writing from a memory of nearly twenty years, and after an awkward estrangement had altered the relationship between the two men, but he was also producing a kind of defense of his literary career."[14] This may in part explain why Coleridge, in the *Biographia Literaria*, presents the story of the *Lyrical Ballads*' inception and production not as an allegory of collaboration but rather as one of the inevitable and total takeover of the project by a superior poet:

> With this view I wrote the "Ancient Mariner," and was preparing among other poems, the "Dark Ladie," and the "Christabel," in which I should have more nearly realized my ideal, than I had done in my first attempt. But Mr. Wordsworth's industry proved so much more successful, and the number of his poems so much greater, that my compositions, instead of forming a balance, appeared rather an interpolation of heterogeneous matter. Mr. Wordsworth added two or three poems written in his own character, in the impassioned, lofty, and sustained diction, which is characteristic of his genius. In this form the 'Lyrical Ballads' . . . were presented by him, as an *experiment* . . . To the second edition he added a preface of considerable length . . . prefixed to poems in which it was impossible to deny the presence of original genius, however mistakenly its direction might be deemed. (*CBL*, II:7–8)

As the opening of this chapter suggested, if the *Biographia* presents Wordsworth as the primary producer of *Lyrical Ballads* and the sole author of the Preface, it does so at the expense of earlier statements in Coleridge's correspondence. As Jordan and others have suggested, Coleridge's account of losing control of the *Lyrical Ballads* project doubles as an explanation of why he abandoned poetry and turned to critical prose. It is not surprising, then, that the account depends upon a more general narrative of Coleridge losing the powers of poetic creation altogether, or that it buries its critique of Wordsworthian "industry" as *over*production so deeply as to obscure it almost entirely from view. Presenting himself as a lesser poet capable only of producing "heterogeneous matter" – a key term of fragmentation coming from a poet obsessed with unity[15] – Coleridge constructs the death of his own poetry as a necessary sacrifice to Wordsworth's fertility. He then removes himself from the account at precisely this mythic moment when

Wordsworth eclipses him, a dramatic touch that presents him as a Hyperion-like figure supplanted by "original genius," whose remaining function is one of interpreter.

Judging from the style and the ideas of Wordsworth's Preface, however, Coleridge's presence in Wordsworth's writing had hardly ceased in 1800, let alone in 1798 as Coleridge's account suggests. As Mary Jacobus argues in *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads (1798)*, Coleridge's influence over Wordsworth's theoretical thinking about the nature and purpose of poetry was especially strong in the spring and summer months of 1798, and continued for years after as Wordsworth attempted to compose *The Recluse*. Commenting on the Wordsworth lines that begin "Not useless do I deem," Jacobus attributes their content directly to Coleridge:

> [These lines are] not, perhaps, great poetry – but a measure of the thoroughness with which Wordsworth has absorbed Coleridge's ideas. He is now a moralist and a visionary with a need to preach that equals Coleridge's. The passage here forms the draft conclusion to "The Ruined Cottage" . . . Still fervent, basically didactic, Wordsworth gives subjective colouring to the doctrine which he elsewhere states with the absoluteness of a recent convert. In the process he discovers the personal voice which is to be central to his poetry.[16]

Wordsworth's shift from the strong gothicism of 1787–97 to the mundane naturalism of *The Ruined Cottage*, according to Jacobus, constitutes an act of conversion to Coleridge's ideas – for her nothing short of conversion will explain the sudden change in Wordsworth's style and subject matter from the gothic-influenced work that had preceded it. Even more significantly, Jacobus narrates Wordsworth's conversion as occurring in the spring of 1798, just as he began to write the ballads that would eventually give the *Lyrical Ballads* project its name.

Yet as Wordsworth's *Prose* editors W. J. B. Owen and J. W. Smyser warn, demonstrating that the direct influence of Coleridge extends to the *Lyrical Ballads* Preface is difficult. The problem, they assert, lies not only in the project's collaborative nature but also in Wordsworth's failure to admit any significant debt:

> Wordsworth, indeed, admits that Coleridge urged him to the composition of the Preface . . . but he does not, so far as we have discovered, acknowledge any profound debt to Coleridge for its matter. Of the alleged debt the only trace now remaining appears to be *CNB* i.787 . . . and here, as our note suggests, it is difficult to see who is the debtor. It is also difficult to believe . . . that Coleridge was as sympathetic to the Preface as the letters suggest. True, the letters criticize

mainly the additions of 1802; but in *Biographia Literaria* Coleridge quotes the text of 1800 and later versions with equal disapproval. (*WP*, 1:113)

In asserting this lack of evidence, Owen and Smyser focus their explanatory notes primarily upon possible sources for the primitivist theories of language that dominate much of the Preface.[17] Regarding the Preface's attacks on gothic fiction and drama and upon popular genre in general, however, they are silent, including only brief glosses on Walpole, Kotzebue, and magazine poetry.[18] Consequently, I wish to reopen this fundamental question of Coleridge's role in producing the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* because it will allow us to begin to understand how Wordsworth's attacks on gothic fiction and drama in the Preface could be at such odds with his own recent poetic practice. Understanding the source of the Preface's attack upon the gothic's "frantic novels" and "gross and violent stimulants" will provide a starting point for the task of answering why Wordsworth displays at once such intimacy with, and such ambivalence to, gothic throughout *Lyrical Ballads*.

While I see little or nothing in Wordsworth's poetry, prose, or correspondence prior to 1798 that resembles the attacks on gothic in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, I see much in Coleridge's prose work preoccupied with these themes. In addition, Coleridge's critical writing addresses the issues of money, audience, and politics that produced the need for such attacks in the Preface in the first place. I make these connections, then, to argue that we can best unravel the problem of Wordsworth's relation to the gothic by understanding the degree to which he appropriates the critical stance of a friend in order to contend with a critical environment irrationally hostile to any expression of the supernatural. As we shall see, the care that Wordsworth must take in handling such materials shows him contending with the same economic and political issues that govern gothic's reception.

Characteristically, Coleridge's *Biographia* would have us believe otherwise. The passage cited above instead presents Coleridge in the summer of 1797 as planning to write psychologically realistic supernatural verse along the lines of Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*.[19] What it omits is that Coleridge had spent the previous "six or eight months" as "an hireling in the Critical Review" reviewing gothic fiction – here described in a March 1797 letter to William Lisle Bowles:

Indeed I am almost weary of the Terrible . . . I have been lately reviewing The Monk, the Italian, Hubert de Sevrac & &c & &c – in all of which dungeons, and old castles, and solitary Houses by the Sea Side, & Caverns, & Woods, &

extraordinary characters, & all the tribe of Horror & Mystery, have crowded on me – even to surfeiting. (*CL*, 1:318)

Even allowing for the decorum Coleridge exercised when writing to Bowles,[20] the letter communicates a very different attitude to "the Terrible" than does the *Biographia*. It is the voice of this letter, furthermore, that we find in the Reviews' representations of gothic as "crowded . . . [with] all the tribe of Horror & Mystery" to the point of "surfeiting." This sense of saturation – that gothic fiction can be repetitive yet still overwhelming – recurs in the opening paragraph of Coleridge's review of *The Monk*:

We trust, however, that satiety will banish what good sense should have prevented; and that, wearied with fiends, incomprehensible characters, with shrieks, murders, and subterraneous dungeons, the public will learn, by the multitude of the manufacturers, with how little expense of thought or imagination this species of composition is manufactured.[21]

Appearing between February 1797 and August 1798, Coleridge's reviews of *The Monk*, *The Italian*, and Mary Robinson's *Hubert de Sevrac* attacked gothic fiction with vigor and care. They expressed all the outrage of a man of letters somewhat fascinated and even more repelled by excellence in a "species of composition" that inevitably and inherently "betray[ed] a low and vulgar taste" like so much else from the "garret of a circulating library."[22] Trafficking in "figures that shock the imagination," he argued, was a trade to which a "man of rank and fortune" like Lewis should not descend and where Coleridge, to use Jerrold Hogle's words, "would apparently not be caught dead."[23]

Coleridge's review, consequently, stresses gothic's status as "manufacture," and finds fault with its "gaudy" and artificial diction, unnatural characterization, extravagant plots, and obsessive fixation upon readerly stimulation rather than upon moral purpose – a list that recurs in the 1800 Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*. These similarities occur most strikingly at the openings of Coleridge's reviews, which share with the Preface a concern about the capacity of "stimulants" to produce "torpor," not to mention wielding similar, almost apocalyptic, rhetorics:

The horrible and preternatural have usually seized on the popular taste, at the rise and decline of literature. Most powerful stimulants, they can never be required except by the torpor of an unawakened, or the langour of an exhausted, appetite. The same phenomenon, therefore, which we hail as a favourable omen in the belles lettres of Germany, impresses a degree of gloom in the compositions of our countrymen . . . It [is] not difficult to foresee that the *modern*

romance, even supported by the skill of the most ingenious of its votaries, would soon experience the fate of every attempt to please by what is unnatural, and by a departure from the observance of real life, which has placed the works of Fielding, Smollett, and some other writers, among the permanent sources of amusement.[24]

Compare this to the Preface:

For the human mind is capable of excitement without the application of gross and violent stimulants . . . A multitude of causes unknown to former times are now acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind, and unfitting it for all voluntary exertion to reduce it to a state of almost savage torpor. The most effective of these causes are the great national events which are daily taking place, and the encreasing accumulation of men in cities, where the uniformity of their occupations produces a craving for extraordinary incident which the rapid communication of intelligence hourly gratifies. To this tendency of life and manners the literature and theatrical exhibitions of the country have conformed themselves. The invaluable works of our elder writers, I had almost said the works of Shakespeare and Milton, are driven into neglect by frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and deluges of idle and extravagant stories in verse. When I think upon this degrading thirst after outrageous stimulation I am almost ashamed to have spoken of the feeble effort with which I have endeavoured to counteract it. (*WP*, 1:128–30)

Coleridge's own correspondence confirms that Wordsworth had relied heavily upon Coleridge's notes in writing the Preface, and that initially Coleridge himself was to have written it.[25] Even more compelling in the above comparison, however, is the part of the passage that does not coincide: the Preface's famous critique of "great national events . . . produc[ing] a craving for extraordinary incident." Yet this passage – perhaps the most Wordsworthian of the arguments above – corresponds almost exactly to Coleridge's critique of war in "Fears in Solitude":

all read of war,
The best amusement for our morning meal!
The poor wretch, who knows scarcely words enough
To ask a blessing from his Heavenly Father,
Becomes a fluent phraseman absolute
And technical in victories and defeats,
And all our dainty terms for fratricide;
Terms which we trundle smoothly o'er our tongues
Like mere abstractions, empty sounds to which
We join no feeling and attach no form!
As if the soldier died without a wound; . . .
Passed off to Heaven, translated and not killed

(*CPW*, 106–17, 121)

Here is the place, rather than anywhere in Wordsworth's poetry of this time, where we see "great national events" "acting with a combined force to blunt the discriminating powers of the mind." This argument recurs, furthermore, in Coleridge's review of *The Monk*:

> All events are levelled into one common mass, and become almost equally probable, where the order of nature may be changed wherever the author's purposes demand it . . . Tales of enchantments and witchcraft can never be *useful*: our author has contrived to make them *pernicious*, by blending, with an irreverent negligence, all that is most awfully true in religion with all that is most ridiculously absurd in superstition.[26]

In this passage, gothic supernaturalism may replace war coverage in the conspiracy to blunt sensibility, but the method – "[making a]ll events . . . levelled into one common mass" – remains the same.

Given Coleridge's lifelong preoccupation with controlling and educating reading audiences, the *Lyrical Ballads*' obsession with elevating readers by purging them of their appetite for "extraordinary incident" is hardly surprising. As early as 1796 in the first pages of *The Watchman*, Coleridge had made reading an issue in itself by focusing upon questions of censorship and ideological control. Maintaining that "PEOPLE ARE FREE IN PROPORTION AS THEY FORM THEIR OWN OPINIONS," *The Watchman*'s Prospectus had targeted the monopoly of information enjoyed by "the weekly provincial papers" as a case-study of the relation between controlling reading and controlling thought:

> These Papers form the chief, and sometimes the only, reading of that large and important body of men, who living out of towns and cities have no opportunity of hearing calumnies exposed and false statements detected. Thus are Administrations enabled to steal away their Rights and Liberties, either so gradually as to undermine their Freedom without alarming them; or if it be necessary to carry any great point suddenly, to overthrow their Freedom by alarming them against themselves.[27]

One runs into this general argument frequently in Coleridge's writing,[28] where either imperfections in commerce or in the dissemination of information corrupt the public taste and its capacity to make informed and rational judgments. His attacks on the reviewing system, for example, maintain that Reviews neither operate in a free marketplace of ideas (instead forming a kind of oligarchy of taste) nor exercise the objectivity to which they lay claim.[29] His own reviews of gothic fiction, furthermore, operate along similar lines by calling attention to the relation between gothic fiction's exploding popularity and booksellers'

profit.[30] His insistence on describing gothic fiction as a form of "manufacture" accentuates his argument that its popularity exposes at least two moral failures: of the literary market to produce wholesome fare, and of reviewers to police excessive production of a useless, and perhaps pernicious, commodity.

Tracing the Preface's attacks on gothic fiction and drama to Coleridge's early prose writings provides us with at least a few preliminary answers regarding the ambiguous status of gothic conventions in the *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge's dominance on matters of theory in these years accounts for what would otherwise be an entirely contradictory handling of gothic conventions by Wordsworth in the period 1797–9. Given the rapidity with which Wordsworth took on Coleridge's views in the summer and fall of 1797, I find especially plausible Jacobus's suggestion that it took Wordsworth considerable time to assimilate these ideas fully and reconcile them to his own poetic practices. Yet as the marked differences between Coleridge's critical writings and the project's supernatural and mercenary beginnings suggest, Coleridge was hardly certain himself over how best to wield the popular materials of Lewis's, Robinson's, and Radcliffe's novels. The *Lyrical Ballads*' miscellaneous nature and contradictory handling of these materials, then, stem from a real ambivalence for both authors over how to tap gothic's exploding popular readership while neither corrupting that readership nor exciting the ire of reviewers. It should not be surprising, then, that the most gothic ballads of the collection should also be the ones that most ostentatiously perform their theoretical underpinnings by making reading and readerly pleasure an issue in itself.

II GOTHIC "READING" IN THE BALLADS OF 1798

On one level, then, we can read Wordsworth's and Coleridge's ballads from the spring of 1798 as implementing the criticisms of Coleridge's reviews of gothic fiction, and therefore as putting into practice the aesthetic ideologies of gothic reviewers. Such an interpretation at best would see the two poets as rescuing the gothic from the excesses of Radcliffe, Robinson, and Lewis in an effort to redirect public taste away from "violent stimulants" to what they see as better ends.[31] It would find, moreover, explicit directives in the reviews, since in them Coleridge is extremely clear regarding what he believes the "extravagances" of gothic writing to be: an inattention to "real life and manners"

(in *Hubert de Sevrac*); a "tedious protraction of events" and reliance on "trick" to sustain suspense (in *The Italian*); and a tendency to make "all events . . . equally probable" and to exploit scenes of sex and violence for their own sake (in *The Monk*).[32] I wish less to discount this reading than to attend to the ambivalences in *Lyrical Ballads* that must be ignored in order to produce it, since *Lyrical Ballads* engages in an extremely complicated dance with popular gothicism, one that contributes significantly to Wordsworth's and Coleridge's later statements regarding what constitutes literary value. If the ballads of 1798 treat gothic with careful irony, we should not ignore the degree to which such a stance proved efficacious with critical audiences. I read these poems, therefore, as attempts to rescue the *materials* of the gothic – its antiquarian fondness for medieval ballad and the metrical romance of chivalry; its Enlightenment interest in religious enthusiasm and superstition; its scientific obsession with explaining madness, sexual violence, monstrosity, and the supernatural – from *both* extravagant writers and excoriating reviewers. The ballads respond to gothic writing not by summarily condemning their subject matter as too "low" for serious poetry; rather, they separate gothic's materials from the reading experience that gothic writing customarily provides, and repeatedly subject the latter to critique.

Context matters here considerably. We sometimes forget, for example, that during their celebrated *annus mirabilis* Wordsworth and Coleridge spent the first seven months of it – from June 1797 to January 1798 – working not on *Lyrical Ballads* but on two gothic dramas, *The Borderers* and *Osorio*. At the time when Wordsworth was beginning to conceive and compose his ballads for the collection in the spring of 1798, he was also still smarting from the rejection of his play by Drury Lane Theatre. This same theater was the current venue for Lewis's *Castle Spectre*, which between December 1797 and June 1798 enjoyed such popular and pecuniary success that it would account for one-quarter of Drury Lane's gross receipts in its first season.[33] The annoyance that *Castle Spectre*'s success caused Wordsworth registers itself in his March 1798 letter to James Tobin, which Wordsworth wrote after reading *Castle Spectre* but before seeing it performed in June of 1798. The letter is often cited as evidence of Wordsworth's lack of real interest in gothic drama or the theater.[34] The text of the letter, combined with Wordsworth's willingness less than four months before to travel to London for three weeks to advocate for his own tragedy, suggests otherwise:

I am perfectly easy about the theatre, if I had no other method of employing myself Mr. Lewis's success would have thrown me into despair. The Castle Spectre is a Spectre indeed. Clothed with the flesh and blood of £400 received from the treasury of the theatre it may in the eyes of the author and his friend appear very lovely. (*WL*, 1:210)

In spite of the ironic juxtaposition of being "easy about the theatre" yet near "despair," Wordsworth communicates a considerable degree of irritation, which appears to have increased upon seeing *Castle Spectre* three months later in Bristol. His lengthy description and piqued summation of it to Hazlitt – that "it fitted the taste of the audience like a glove"[35] – indicate something akin to jealousy, particularly given that the plots of *The Borderers* and *Castle Spectre* share common influences in Shakespeare, Schiller, and mid-1790s jacobin and gothic fiction.[36]

What I find most of interest about this gap between *Castle Spectre*'s success and *The Borderers*' failure, however, is that it produces in Wordsworth not dramatic writing but dramatic *criticism*. Faced with Lewis's success and his own lack of it, Wordsworth's first response is to adopt a reviewer's voice and dismiss the play in language that resembles a short notice in a Review. The main thrust of Wordsworth's critique lies in his play on the word "spectre," his point being that he sees nothing in the *text* of Lewis's play to account for its success. Implicit in this dismissal is both a denial of any merit to Lewis's composition and a critique of London stage drama and its audience. Popular plays are mere spectres of legitimate drama, he implies, because unlike legitimate dramas – which depend on artistic merit for what acclaim they receive – their success can be bought for £400 from a theater's treasury.

As Hazlitt's account and both poets' correspondence demonstrate, the success of *Castle Spectre* demonstrated for Wordsworth and Coleridge more than just audience *naïveté* and corrupted taste. It required an appropriate response, one signifying, as Hazlitt put it, intellectual depth and "severe principles [that] reject rather than court popular effect."[37] Their correspondence, furthermore, indicates the extent to which they had discussed the play at length over the previous weeks, as this late January 1798 letter from Coleridge to Wordsworth illustrates:

I have just read the Castle Spectre – & shall bring it home with me. I will begin with it's defects, in order that my "But" may have a charitable transition. 1. Language – 2. Character. 3. Passion. 4. Sentiment. 5. Conduct – – 1 . . . There are no felicities [of language] in the humorous passages; and in the serious ones it is Schiller Lewis-ized – i.e., a flat, flabby, unimaginative Bombast oddly sprinkled with colloquialisms . . . 2. No character at all . . . [3.] Passion – horror!

agonizing pangs of Conscience! Dreams full of hell, serpents, & skeletons! starts & attempted murders &c &c &c; but, positively, not *one* line that marks even a superficial knowledge of human feelings, could I discover . . . [4.] Jokes that would have stunk, had they been fresh; and alas! they have the very saeva mephitis of *antiquity* on them. – BUT – 5 – the Conduct of the Piece is, I think, *good* . . . . This Play proves how accurately you conjectured *theatric* merit. The merit of the Castle Spectre consists wholly in it's *situations*. These are all borrowed, and all absolutely pantomimical; but they are admirably managed for stage effect. There is not much bustle; but *situations* for ever. The whole plot, machinery & incidents are borrowed – the play is a mere patchwork of plagiarisms – but they are very well worked up, & for stage effect make an excellent *whole*. – There is a pretty little Ballad-song introduced – and Lewis, I think, has great & particular excellence in these compositions. The simplicity & naturalness is his own, & not imitated . . . This play struck me with utter hopelessness – it would be [easy] to produce these situations. (*CL*, 1:378–9)

If the humor of Coleridge's letter lies in the systematic rigor with which he engages in his critique, this does not make the critique any less serious or devastating in its intent. Its length, moreover, is anomalous. Up to this date no other author, with the possible exception of Godwin, receives this degree of sustained attention in Coleridge's correspondence, and one begins to wonder why he takes such pains in this particular instance. The aggression with which Coleridge dismantles Lewis's play, and his nod to Wordsworth's previous "conjecture[s]" about the play's "*theatric* merit," indicate not only that *Castle Spectre*'s success had been an object of sustained and energetic scrutiny for him and Wordsworth, but also that responding to it in an appropriately rigorous and critical fashion was essential to placating their own sense of failure and to conceptualizing their next creative projects.

While *Castle Spectre*'s insistence on plot at the expense of character and originality – its "*situations* for ever" "all borrowed, and all absolutely pantomimical" – present a gothic that is all plot and all pantomimic effect, Southey's ballads from this same period posed another model for the two. In 1797 Southey already had capitalized on his contemporary readers' taste for gothic with a series of ballads in his *Poems*. Yet unlike Lewis's "Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogine" and Bürger's "Lenore" – from whose meter and style Southey borrows heavily[38] – Southey's gothic ballads claim to provide wholesome fare to readers by doubling as polemical broadsides. Their humanitarian prescriptions of industry and honesty are as clear as they are morally unimpeachable. In combining polemic with worthy purpose, Southey's models resemble the propagandist ballad-tracts of Hannah More's 1795 *Cheap Repository*,

which offered "palatable . . . antidotes" to "counteract . . . those licentious publications which are vended in our cities."[39] Obviously, Southey's jacobin politics in the 1797 *Poems* differ from More's as drastically as do their intended audiences. His combination of gothic ballad and humanitarian polemic, however, establishes his legitimacy by infusing the ballads with precisely what Lewis stubbornly denies his readers: a clearly defined, "worthy" purpose.

Southey's ample sales, moreover, made him a necessary force for Wordsworth and Coleridge to emulate and consider, as Marilyn Butler has noted:

> From 1797, for example, in what we have chosen to call Wordsworth's Great Decade, [Wordsworth] mostly figured in the public mind as a follower of Southey. It was Southey, with two collections of ballads in 1797 and 1799, who was already celebrated for this form of literary slumming; Wordsworth's lyrical ballads could never in his lifetime be sufficiently dissociated from Southey's.[40]

Southey's spectre, however, does not mean that Wordsworth and Coleridge did not try to differentiate themselves from their more famous friend. Wordsworth's and Coleridge's ballads may make similar claims of worthiness; yet they do so not through an ostentatious display of idealized politics and moral didacticism, but rather by making tale-telling an issue in itself, questioning the value of the pleasure that readers derive from "horrible and . . . preternatural" tales. While the narratives of such tales "depend entirely on terrific incidents and intricacy of story," Wordsworth's and Coleridge's gothic ballads self-consciously ask to be read for reasons other than merely their narrative.[41]

This poaching on Southey's "turf" while eschewing his didacticism may well have sparked his famously hostile review of the *Lyrical Ballads*. In writing his ballads, Coleridge had chosen to substitute dense textuality for the headlong progress of the tale, and ethical complexity for Southey's more pat moralisms. His "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," in making its narrative dependent on an ambiguous and highly symbolic event (the shooting of the Albatross), forces its reader to construct its tale as allegory to understand a narrative whose events elude customary laws of causality. Yet the allegory is hardly straightforward. After critics complained that they could not make sense of the story, Coleridge added marginal notations for the 1817 publication of *Sibylline Leaves* in an attempt to secure this allegorical reading. Even with these changes, the poem resists its own moral glosses, largely because its easy didacticism – "to teach . . . love and reverence to all things that God made and loveth"

(*CPW*, 1:261) – does not begin to contain the bulk or the allusiveness of the narrative. Coleridge's "Foster-Mother's Tale" also presents an allegorical narrative, this time about liberty, in which a child of nature is corrupted by culture and then flees to live "among the savage men" (*LB*, 794); but again its complexity denies its reader the possibility of cleanly moralizing from it. "Christabel," "Lewti," and "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie" (all intended for the *Lyrical Ballads*) also resist their traditional ballad function of providing "mere" narrative titillation or broadside polemic through their opaque textuality, the rapid and contradictory emotions of their speakers, and their heavily complex situational settings. All of Coleridge's ballads self-consciously demand – at the risk of projecting modern critical terminology onto them – "close reading."

If Wordsworth's attacks on gothic fiction and drama in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* seem lifted largely from Coleridge's reviews and *Watchman* critiques of market publishing, the poetic persona he assumes in the ballads constitutes a more complex piece of posturing. It is a figure cut out of necessity, representing Wordsworth's remaking of himself in the face of overwhelming criticism of gothic in print not only from reviewers but also from his new best friend. It reminds us as well what an oddly contorted figure Wordsworth is, a man who must be ballad singer and critic, lyricist and theoretician. Facing such conflicting demands, Wordsworth's ballad-singer presents us with a poet who must succeed in the marketplace yet aspire to be a transhistorical repository of essential values. His literary commodity, in a sense, must be both ballad and Preface, popular yet learned, feminine yet masculine.

Increasingly suspicious that this insistence on transcendence and originality was produced as much by late-eighteenth-century market pressures to provide new kinds of texts, modern critics have taken great interest in the figure that Wordsworth cuts in *Lyrical Ballads*, asking to what extent we can read its 1798 and 1800 editions as responses to cultural and social immediacies. While Alan Liu chooses to envision *Lyrical Ballads* within a continuum maturing in the lyricism of 1807, he nevertheless recognizes that Wordsworth's experimentalism of 1798 is at least in part forced by the literary landscape he inhabits.[42] Alan J. Bewell, on the other hand, explains Wordsworth's efforts in 1798 to separate himself from the gothic imaginings of his ballads' characters by reading these episodes as part of a more general tendency in the period – one that seeks to realign "magical discourse" within Enlightenment scientific discourse. Citing the 1805 *Prelude*'s description of

Wordsworth's mind as "beset / With images, and haunted by itself," Bewell argues, in effect, that Wordsworth deploys medical discourses on female hysteria as a means of analyzing himself, particularly "the manner in which 'language and the human mind act and react on each other.'"[43] In focusing on discourses of hysteria, Bewell limits himself to discussing female figures in Wordsworth's ballads, focusing primarily on Betty Foy ("The Idiot Boy"), Goody Blake, and Martha Ray ("The Thorn"). With Karen Swann, I would like to redirect the focus of his medical eye to Wordsworth's male characters as well, not for the purpose of contradicting Bewell's argument, but in order to make a more general claim about how Wordsworth's ballads negotiate a critical position regarding their own gothicism.[44] Wordsworth's relationship to the gothic, I find, resembles his relationships to the hysteric figures – both male and female – who people these poems.

In a poem like "Tintern Abbey," where Wordsworth must address another self (Dorothy) to commune with his own past, the function of gender in Wordsworth's poetry becomes marked. There, Dorothy's femininity allows Wordsworth to make her into that primitive self with which he feels he has lost touch; in similar ways, he often mines her journals for the raw materials of poems, treating her entries as pure observation unmediated by self-consciousness and complex subjectivity.[45] Yet this kind of figure – "feminized" by Wordsworth's representation of it as limited or marginal in gender-specific ways – hardly resides exclusively in the female figures that people Wordsworth's poetry. Whether they be real person or imagined character, female vagrant or male hysteric, Goody Blake or Harry Gill, these figures provide Wordsworth with a means of distancing himself from subjects and experiences about which he would rather not speak in his own voice. Drawing both on James Averill's foundational *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering* and Bewell's work on hysteria, Adela Pinch brings the function of these feminized figures in *Lyrical Ballads* back to the problem of pleasure:

> One suspects that critics tend to avoid the gender of Wordsworth's principal sufferers in order to dignify or to distance Wordsworth from a sensational engagement with others' suffering as if it were indeed "a wantonness" (to quote the Pedlar of *The Ruined Cottage*), a morally suspect, sexual pleasure, to write about suffering. This perspective implies that persons in poems are subject to the moral violations of people in real life, that engagement with literary suffering is like a form of personal violence; and it grants an autonomy to both poet and poet's "victim," each inhabiting a fixed position of subject or object.[46]

Pinch's reference to the Pedlar is a pointed one. In the language of the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, the excitement of reading about another's pain – a staple pleasure of the gothic – carries with it great moral dangers, particularly when enjoyed solely as a spur to emotional gratification:

> If the words by which this excitement is produced are in themselves powerful, or the images and feelings have an undue proportion of pain connected with them, there is some danger that the excitement may be carried beyond its proper bounds . . . This may be illustrated by appealing to the Reader's own experience with the reluctance with which he comes to the re-perusal of the distressful parts of Clarissa Harlowe, or the Gamester. (*WP*, 1:146)

As both Averill and Pinch note,[47] Wordsworth's primary aim in this passage is to justify his use of meter, which bestows a regularizing force upon "distressful" subject matter by meting out its painful pleasure in regular and constant doses. When we combine this passage with the Preface's attacks on "frantic novels" and other "violent stimulants," however, a different set of concerns emerges regarding gothic reading. Such "stimulants" are most dangerous and least morally defensible, Wordsworth suggests, when they are selfishly consumed as an unwholesome pleasure similar to chapter 2's description of "gothic reading." In the language of the Preface, such readerly pleasure is characterized as an almost animal "craving for extraordinary incident"; in *The Ruined Cottage*, it is a "vain dalliance" or a "wantonness":

> He had rehearsed
> Her homely tale with such familiar power,
> With such a[n active] countenance, an eye
> So busy, that the things of which he spake
> Seemed present, and, attention now relaxed,
> There was a heartfelt chillness in my veins.
> I rose, and turning from that breezy shade
> Went out into the open air and stood
> To drink the comfort of the warmer sun.
> Long time I had not stayed ere, looking round
> Upon that tranquil ruin, I returned
> And begged of the old man that for my sake
> He would resume his story. He replied,
> "It were a wantonness and would demand
> Severe reproof, if we were men whose hearts
> Could hold vain dalliance with the misery
> Even of the dead, contented thence to draw
> A momentary pleasure never marked
> By reason, barren of all future good." (*WRC*, 208–26)[48]

I find this passage striking because it connects Wordsworth's own anxieties about the uses of narrative pleasure with some subtly gothic metaphors. In telling Margaret's story to the young poet-figure, the Pedlar becomes so immersed in his tale-telling – and here the term "rehearsed" evokes the oral traditions from which ballads come – that both of them become possessed by the narrative. In this process, the Pedlar's word becomes incantatory, breaking the barrier between signifier and signified in making things "seem present." But more importantly, the tale unmans both teller and listener and threatens to replace masculine "virtue" with "wantonness." The young narrator experiences "a heartfelt chillness in my veins," and proceeds to display the marks of his emasculation in several ways: by taking pleasure in another's suffering; by expressing his desire to be pleasured in this way further; by losing his ability to enjoy the wholesome "comfort[s]" of the "open air" and "warmer sun." The Pedlar, in turn, while cautioning the young poet ("It were a wantonness and would demand / Severe reproof"), nevertheless resumes the tale, which being "common [and] / By moving accidents uncharactered . . . / [and] to the grosser sense / But ill adapted, scarcely palpable / To him who does not think," will incite "A power to virtue friendly" in his listener (*WRC*, 231–2, 234–6, 229).

This relationship between Pedlar, youth, and tale of suffering also has been addressed cogently by Karen Swann, who reads this passage as an evasive maneuver by Wordsworth, an attempt "to deploy a popular, feminine narrative machinery without becoming identified with . . . an already constructed public of extravagantly passionate, feminized readers.[49] My own aim in taking up this passage's acute anxieties about gender and reading is to connect them to chapter 2's observations about gothic reading and Wordsworth's own anxieties about authorial distance in the gothic ballads of 1798. In a value system where to read with too strong a sense of identification is to read with "wantonness" and without "dignity," Wordsworth's desire to maintain distance between himself and his feminized characters likely comes out of his desire to maintain dignity as an author.

Yet distance, whether readerly or writerly, is not the same as outright rejection. On one hand, while the youth is unmanned by his inability to control his desire for narrative pleasure, Wordsworth's Pedlar maintains at least the appearance of restraint and a higher morality. On the other, even the Pedlar's "active countenance" and "busy eye" (not to mention the relative ease with which the youth coerces him to continue his tale) suggest this restraint is at least in part a fiction – that the Pedlar, like the youth, also takes pleasure in what the poem at its end calls the "weak-

ness" and "impotence of grief" produced by tales of suffering and horror (*WRC*, 495, 500). The passage gives us, then, a curiously doubled perspective on narrative pleasure, dramatizing the unmanning and possession of two men by a tale of suffering while insisting that we must nevertheless maintain manly fortitude even when allowing ourselves to be pleasured by feminine excesses of sympathy. As such, it nicely encapsulates Wordsworth's contradictory attitudes toward gothic materials, since they on one hand produce strong feeling and identification in readers while on the other carrying that pleasure "beyond its proper bounds" and into "wantonness."

While *The Ruined Cottage* models for us the need to maintain a critical distance from tales of suffering even as we engage in the pleasure of sympathetic identification, Wordsworth's gothic ballads spend considerable time focusing upon the fates of listeners unable to maintain this separation. These listeners, appropriately, become gothic readers much in the same way that Catherine Moreland becomes one just before arriving at Northanger Abbey, where her inexperienced mind is seduced into a state of gothic readerly desire and enthusiasm by Henry Tilney's description of its buildings and servants. As such, Wordsworth's listeners take on the same characteristics as Bewell's female hysterics or the stereotypical gothic readers represented in the Reviews. While the ballads dramatize these processes, it will be helpful to begin with the radically different *Ruined Cottage* since it states so explicitly the effects of gothic reading.

At the end of the Pedlar's tale of Margaret, Wordsworth first portrays the young man as in the process of engaging in another "wantonness": he is unable to speak, and "turn[s] aside in weakness" and "fondly" reviews the story until the Pedlar cautions him:

> "My Friend, enough to sorrow have you given,
> The purposes of wisdom ask no more;
> Be wise and chearful, and no longer read
> The forms of things with an unworthy eye.
> She sleeps in the calm earth, and peace is here."
>
> (*WRC*, 508–12)

Like the "young" and "lusty" Harry Gill, who so strongly identifies with Goody Blake's sufferings through her curse that he becomes like her, the young man of *The Ruined Cottage* risks giving himself over to sorrow and therefore requires correction from the Pedlar.[50] And to give oneself over to sorrow is to "read / The forms of things with an unworthy eye."

To read with such an eye, then, is to do more than merely make

incorrect interpretations. What makes the youth's eye "unworthy" – and here I stress the vast number of other three-syllable adjectives Wordsworth could have chosen – is that he fails to profit from the Pedlar's narrative other than transferring symptoms of Margaret's sufferings onto himself through too literal an identification with her. In such an economy, it is the listener/reader who inserts moral value into a tale, which in Wordsworth's formulation requires a reader capable of something other than an over-literal act of sympathy to read its "forms" worthily. Conversely, this same economy requires that the tale-teller choose a tale that will not distract or disarm this interpretive process. As an example of an unworthy reader, then, Harry Gill is feminized by Goody Blake's curse because he fails to distance himself from the almost-supernatural suffering that the curse makes "seem present":

> She pray'd, her wither'd hand uprearing,
> While Harry held her by the arm –
> "God! who art never out of hearing,
> "O may he never more be warm!"
> The cold, cold moon above her head,
> Thus on her knees did Goody pray,
> Young Harry heard what she had said,
> And icy-cold he turned away.
>
> He went on complaining all the morrow
> That he was cold and very chill:
> His face was gloom, his heart was sorrow
> Alas! that day for Harry Gill! (*LB*, 97–108)

What prevents Harry from properly distancing himself from Goody's curse – and what Wordsworth distances himself from by treating it with irony – is gothic superstition. Like the youth of *The Ruined Cottage*, Harry "turn[s] away" at the moment of identification, that moment in which he fails to read Goody's curse with proper distance. To be a gothic reader, then, is to be like Betty Foy in "The Idiot Boy" – one victimized by her own irrationality into causing unnecessary pain to herself and into saying "unworthy things":

> "Oh saints! what is become of him?
> "Perhaps he's climbed into an oak
> "Where he will stay till he is dead;
> "Or sadly he has been mislead,
> "And joined the wandering gypsey-folk.

"Or him that wicked pony's carried
"To the dark cave, the goblin's hall,
"Or in the castle he's pursuing,
"Among the ghosts, his own undoing;
"Or playing with the waterfall."

At poor Susan then she railed,
While to the town she posts away;
"If Susan had not been so ill,
"Alas! I should have had him still,
"My Johnny, till my dying day."

Poor Betty! in this sad distemper,
The doctor's self would hardly spare,
Unworthy things she talked and wild,
Even he, of cattle the most mild,
The pony had his share. (*LB*, 232–51)

Stephen Parrish, Mary Jacobus, and James Averill have commented on the extent to which "The Idiot Boy" and other 1798 ballads mock poetry that exploits the supernatural as a source of stimulation.[51] In the passage above, the target of the satire is clearly Bürger's *Lenore*, with Johnny's ride a pointed deflation of Lenore's midnight gallop to her grave with her skeleton bridegroom. Here, however, what is parodied most pointedly is not gothic subject matter itself but the typical *experience* of reading such poetry. Like Harry Gill or the loquacious narrator of "The Thorn," Betty Foy's gothic imaginings reduce her to a mindless and distinctly feminine form of "wild" and "unworthy" speech: what Pinch refers to as "female chatter" and Bewell isolates as hysteria. A worthy reading of Goody Blake's curse – that a superstitious woman who is cold enough to curse and steal from her landlord is miserable enough to deserve help – would ally Harry Gill with the principles of enlightened liberalism, and place him in the exact position which the poem's narrator occupies at the poem's close by abjuring his readers to "think":

No word to any man he utters
A-bed or up, to young or old;
But ever to himself he mutters,
"Poor Harry Gill is very cold."
A-bed or up, by night or day;
His teeth they chatter, chatter still.
Now think, ye farmers all, I pray,
Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill. (*LB*, 121–8)

If one accepts the argument of Wordsworth's ending, then to be a gothic reader or listener is to be muttering, irrational, and childish. More importantly, it is to be everything that the Pedlar and Wordsworth, who both can maintain appropriate distance from the tales they tell, are not.

What I find of greatest interest in these ballads, then, is the trouble that Wordsworth takes with such "unworthy" discourse – here specifically put forward as a subject for irony and carrying specific generic (gothic) markings. Wordsworth's practice, moreover, differs markedly from Southey's because he does not appropriate the conventions of popular ballad and of horror for the purposes of polemic. As Don Bialostosky has noted in *Making Tales: The Poetics of Wordsworth's Narrative Experiments*, Wordsworth's attempts to make his poems "worthy" are not openly prescriptive or didactic. Citing the last lines of "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" – "Now think, ye farmers all, I pray, / Of Goody Blake and Harry Gill" – Bialostosky focuses upon the nature of its exhortation as a key distinction between Wordsworth's ballads and Southey's:

> One must take the lines' advice, and "think" for a moment before realizing they do not say *what* to think of Goody Blake and Harry Gill. Like gestures in the middle of "Simon Lee" and the end of "Resolution and Independence," this admonition to "think" leaves the task of making meaning unfinished.[52]

What matters to the Pedlar, then, when he accuses the youth of reading "[t]he forms of things with an unworthy eye," is that the youth has not transformed the particulars of the tale of Margaret into a more generalized process of thinking. In other words, he has not allowed the tale's ability to represent "the forms of things" to inspire him to reflect upon the nature of things. When the Pedlar states that his tale of Margaret is "By moving accidents uncharactered, / . . . hardly clothed / In bodily form, and to the grosser sense / But ill adapted, scarcely palpable / To him who does not think," he not only echoes Wordsworth's anti-gothic manifesto in "Hart-Leap Well," but also prescribes specific requirements for the form and content of narratives. The implication here is that if the details of a narrative are too "moving," then listeners will not have to "think"; instead, they will identify too strongly with the tale's characters, and will become, like Betty Foy and the speaker of "The Thorn," mired in unworthy particulars until they become chattering and superstitious.

Such gestures to "think" occur most frequently where *Lyrical Ballads* is most gothic. It is no accident that the poems that most explicitly

challenge readers to become self-conscious of their reading habits are the same gothic-influenced poems singled out for defense in the Advertisement to *Lyrical Ballads*: "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," "The Thorn," and "The Idiot Boy." While "Goody Blake" directly conjures readers to puzzle out a meaning, the long-winded narratives of "The Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn" – narratives in which next to nothing actually happens – ask the same question even more tenaciously. Even the Advertisement echoes these concerns by coupling theoretical questions with concerns that readers will mistake the poems for lower forms of discourse, asking readers to "think" rather than relying on their "own pre-established codes of decision" to reject the poems as "too low . . . and not of sufficient dignity" (*WP*, 1:116).

For Coleridge and Wordsworth in 1798, then, gothic conventions require special treatment: authorial distance, textual density, persona, parody, and a theoretical framework that will underwrite the liability of the materials themselves. It shows them anticipating potential criticisms regarding *Lyrical Ballads*' interest in superstition and the supernatural by ostentatiously rejecting specific kinds of readerly pleasure associated with gothic writing, among them its penchant for suspenseful plot and violent sensationalism. Their treatment of these materials, moreover, indicates a far more complex relationship to the gothic than the wholesale rejection of the "frantic novels," "German tragedies," and "extravant stories in verse" enacted by the Preface two years later. If the gothic plays a central role in both Coleridge's and Wordsworth's attempts to refashion an ethics of reading, that role is not merely a negative one. For every caution made that we not engage in taking only visceral pleasure from gothic scenes or stories, both poets also call attention – through representing the strange workings of superstition or the psychological effects of the supernatural – to the transformative potential of these same materials so recently popularized by Radcliffe, Bürger, Lewis, and Kotzebue. To borrow the language of contractual arbitration, Wordsworth and Coleridge attempt to separate gothic writing's penchant for shock and sensation from its interest in extreme states of consciousness in order to reject the former and renegotiate the value of the latter. In this light, Southey's negative review a few months later – carping upon the "*worthlessness*" of the experimental ballads, and asserting that "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" would "promote the popular superstition of witchcraft"[53] – would have been particularly galling, especially to a poet trying to believe that his power "to read the forms of things" could make any kind of poem "worthy," even a gothic one.

III GOTHIC RECEPTIONS AND PASTORAL PRODUCTIONS: *LYRICAL BALLADS* (1800)

Coleridge and Wordsworth left England on 16 September 1798, a little over two weeks before *Lyrical Ballads* was published.[54] The first notices appeared that fall, and between October 1798 and March 1799 *Lyrical Ballads* received four reviews.[55] If we can trust the general sense of Sarah Coleridge's letters to her husband and to Thomas Poole, Wordsworth arrived back in England that March to find *Lyrical Ballads* "not esteemed well here . . . laughed at and disliked by all with very few excepted."[56] The reviews, while more mixed than her two letters indicate, nevertheless presented Wordsworth with legitimate cause for concern. With the exception of the *Analytical Review* – published by Joseph Johnson, who had published Wordsworth's *An Evening Walk* and *Descriptive Sketches* and Coleridge's *Fears in Solitude* (1798) – reviewers consistently singled out the ballads in the collection as unsuccessful, and labelled "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as the worst poem in the volume. In addition, the publication of the volume had been marred by what Wordsworth described to his brother Richard as "sad mismanagement"; Cottle not only still owed Wordsworth two-thirds of the £30 he had offered initially for the poems, but also had failed to transfer all copies and rights to Johnson as Wordsworth had requested the previous fall, instead retaining the copyright and sending the books to J. and A. Arch. Writing to Cottle as late as 24 June 1799, Wordsworth was still trying to sort out what had happened:

> You tell me the poems have not sold ill. If it is possible, I should wish to know *what number* have been sold. From what I can gather it seems that The Ancyent Mariner has upon the whole been an injury to the volume, I mean that the old words and the strangeness of it have deterred readers from going on. If the volume should come to a second Edition I would put in its place some little things which would be more likely to suit the common taste. (*WL*, 1:264)

By the time that Cottle, Wordsworth, and Coleridge reunited in late October 1799, Cottle was out of the book business,[57] having sold his stock and copyrights to Longman; and (according to Cottle's *Reminiscences*) "the subject of the 'Lyrical Ballads' was mentioned but once, and that casually, and only to account for its failure! which Mr. W. ascribed to . . . the 'Ancient Mariner' . . . [and] the unfavourable notice of most of the reviewers."[58]

Sales, however, were not the only worry. Wordsworth's correspon-

dence in the first six months after his return to England suggests that the reviews of *Lyrical Ballads* to some degree had unnerved him, and at least for the moment had taken away his taste for publication. Writing to Cottle twice in the summer of 1799, he stressed "his aversion from publication" in the future except for financial reasons, and as late as 27 December 1799 voiced his thankfulness that the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* did not have his name attached to it, instructing Coleridge to "take no pains to contradict the story that the L.B. are entirely yours. Such a rumour is the best thing that can befall them."[59] Whether said out of affection for Coleridge, embarrassment over the reviews, or concern for his own public reputation, Wordsworth's exhortation at first glance seems odd, coming as it does from a man who had taken some pains that fall to re-procure the copyright of the poems, deemed worthless by Cottle's appraiser.[60]

Why then would a man intent on owning a work's copyright not be willing to own the book as partially written by him? In directing our attention to the reception of *Lyrical Ballads*, we see the extent to which that reception shaped Wordsworth's poetic production for its second volume after April of 1799. If the reviews to *Lyrical Ballads* unnerved him, they did so because most reviewers had failed to read the ballads as distinct from – and as critiques of – other contemporary gothic writers. Rather than finding himself positioned as an acclaimed antidote to popular gothicism, Wordsworth returned from England to find his ballads unfavorably received compared to those of Bürger and Lewis.

Southey's October 1798 *Critical* review, it appears, had been particularly influential in setting this tone. It had inaugurated the first wave of criticism directed at *Lyrical Ballads* and had provided a rubric to subsequent reviewers who approached the volume. Most importantly, it had taken the volume's predilection for tales of haunting to task and had aligned it with "German" writing and with "superstition":

> We do not sufficiently understand the story [of the Mariner] to analyse it. It is a Dutch attempt at German sublimity . . . The story of a man who suffers the perpetual pain of cold, because an old woman prayed that he never might be warm, is perhaps a good story for a ballad, because it is a well-known tale: but is the author certain that it is "*well authenticated?*" and does not such an assertion promote the popular superstition of witchcraft?[61]

As Paul Magnuson has noted recently in *Reading Public Romanticism*, "The word *German* in the public discourse meant 'Jacobin' in the 1790s,"[62] and by 1800 such an association as the one made by Southey

could only hurt the reputation and sales of the volume. In addition, Southey had attacked "The Idiot Boy" and "The Thorn" for their choice of subject matter and prolixity, comparing them unfavorably to "Tintern Abbey": "On reading this production ['Tintern Abbey'], it is impossible not to lament that he should ever have condescended to write such pieces as the Last of the Flock, the Convict, and most of the ballads."[63] Combining the two above-quoted passages nicely captures the duplicity of Southey's attack. In its first salvos, it represents the ballads in the collection as corrupted by the extravagance and opacity of "German sublimity," whose supernaturalism "promote[s] the popular superstition of witchcraft." Yet at the same time he does not even allow the ballads the power of such supernaturalism; instead of achieving the sublimity of *Lenore* or the German *Schauerroman*, they constitute "Dutch attempt[s]" to copy these genres, and therefore fail from tedium and dullness:

> No tale less deserved the labour that appears to have been bestowed upon this ["The Idiot Boy"]. It resembles a Flemish picture in the worthlessness of its design and the excellence of its execution . . . With that which is entitled the Thorn, we were altogether displeased. The advertisement says, it is not told in the person of the author, but in that of some loquacious narrator. The author should have recollected that he who personates tiresome loquacity, becomes tiresome himself.[64]

Considering the pains to which Wordsworth and Coleridge had gone to differentiate themselves from contemporaries writing on supernatural subjects or imitating German ballad poetry, these barbs cut doubly deep. By citing the ballads' "German" flavor and their potential to inculcate superstition, Southey's criticisms aligned the volume squarely and unquestionably with other "unworthy" British attempts to copy the German supernatural – invoking both Lewis and the many translators of Bürger, Kotzebue, Schiller, and the *Schauerroman*. Even worse, Southey had entirely ignored the gothic ballads' determination to call into question the "craving after extraordinary incident" that had fueled the revival of the supernatural ballad beginning in 1796.

Other Reviews took up a number of these criticisms, and, while usually not as negative as Southey's foundational review, they did little to stray from the general reading he had provided. The *New Annual Register* called many of the ballads "unfortunate experiments, on which genius and labour have been misemployed," while the *Monthly Review* complained of the volume's implied politics, found the ballads' "delin-

eations of low-life . . . degrading [to] poetry," and mocked its penchant for medieval "rust" and the supernatural "forgery."[65] Even the *Analytical Review*, which had applauded many of the ballads, pointed to "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" as having "the extravagance of a mad german poet."[66] A clearly positive review, then, did not appear until the *British Critic* applauded the *Lyrical Ballads* in October 1799, and by then Wordsworth was already convinced that "The Rime" and hostile reviewers were the cause of its low sales.

I wish to track Wordsworth's responses to these reviews because I find that they point to a common end: that of distancing the *Lyrical Ballads* away from the "German," the uncommon, and the gothic, and toward the English, the common, and the pastoral. Between his return home to England in April 1799 and the publication of the second edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in January 1801, Wordsworth worked feverishly to remake himself and to repair the *Lyrical Ballads*' poetic reputation. Much of this reinvention, I contend, involved rejecting "German" and supernatural associations that reviewers had criticized, and culminated in the Preface's condemnation of "frantic novels, sickly and stupid German Tragedies, and . . . idle and extravagant stories in verse."

Part of this process of remaking the second edition involved immediate damage control and, where possible, purging the collection of suspect and objectionable poems. Wordsworth's actions in these months were pointed and deliberate. "The Convict," with its Godwinian arguments about nature and incarceration (criticized by the *Monthly Review*), was dropped and replaced with Coleridge's "The Ballad of the Dark Ladie," tellingly retitled "Love" for the volume. Far more telling, however, was Wordsworth's momentary decision to scrap "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" because of its negative reception, evidenced in the above-quoted 24 June 1799 letter to Cottle. While Wordsworth eventually reconsidered this decision and reinstated the poem, he did not do so before extracting from Coleridge fairly exacting terms. Before republication, Coleridge revised the poem painstakingly to remove "the old words," and allowed Wordsworth to change its title from "The Rime of the Ancyent Marinere" to "The Ancient Mariner: A Poet's Reverie." Even with these revisions, Wordsworth apparently still objected to the poem's "strangeness" and therefore chose to relegate it from its position as the volume's opening poem to that of twenty-third poem, where it would no longer, as Wordsworth had claimed to Cottle, "deter readers from going on."

In addition, Wordsworth in October 1800 wrote two "Notes" to be

appended to poems from the original 1798 volume. Not surprisingly, these Notes were for the two poems most indebted to gothic sources and attacked by reviewers: "The Thorn" and "The Ancient Mariner." Like the careful explanations that had been provided for each poem in the 1798 Advertisement to *Lyrical Ballads*, the 1800 Notes ostentatiously sought to provide explanations and deter criticisms, with one difference: in 1800, the task was no longer one of anticipating reviewer criticisms but rather of responding to them.[67] For reasons long debated by literary historians,[68] Wordsworth in the Note to "The Ancient Mariner" only weakly defended the poem, and instead focused upon distancing himself from it:

I cannot refuse myself the gratification of informing such Readers as may have been pleased with this poem, or with any part of it, that they owe their pleasure in some sort to me; as the Author was himself very desirous that it should be suppressed . . . The Poem of my Friend has indeed great defects; first, that the principal person has no distinct character . . . secondly, that he does not act, but is continually acted upon: thirdly, that the events having no necessary connection do not produce each other; and lastly, that the imagery is somewhat too laboriously accumulated. (*LB*, 791)

The disingenuousness of Wordsworth's rhetoric, not to mention the betrayal of Coleridge inscribed in these lines, testifies to the Note's primary function: that of denying Wordsworth's own authorship of the poem and placating reviewers by reproducing many of their criticisms. It offers us testimony as well of just how strongly Wordsworth wished to absolve himself of "The Ancient Mariner"'s "defects" and the *Lyrical Ballads*' gothic origins.

The Note to "The Thorn" achieved similar effects by different means, since in this case Wordsworth wrote about one of his own poems and therefore rigorously defended its artistic aims and intellectual sophistication. Addressing reviewers who had claimed the poem to be merely silly and "tiresome," Wordsworth presented several linguistic theories that explained, he maintained, the poem's style of narration and use of repetition. In addition, the note validated the supernatural predilections of "The Thorn" – and, by inference, those of the other ballads – while denying its kinship with the popular gothic texts so often accused of rekindling superstition among the British public:

Such men [as the retired sea captain who narrates the poem] having little to do become credulous and talkative from indolence; and from the same cause . . . they are prone to superstition. On which account it appeared to me proper to

select a character like this to exhibit some of the general laws by which superstition acts upon the mind. (*LB*, 350–1)

Far from "promot[ing] popular superstition" as Southey had insinuated, "The Thorn" and other ballads like "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" instead expose, according to Wordsworth's Note, the mental operations that produce superstitious belief. They do not invite naive gothic reading but rather purport to raise reader consciousness by analyzing such reading. In doing so, the ballads constitute here a kind of antidote to gothic reading, laying open for inspection the same reading processes that gothic writing supposedly exploited to produce superstitious terror.

Wordsworth at this time may have maintained that he "care[d] little for the praises of any . . . professional critic" except as a spur to book sales (*WL*, 1:268), but his poetic production in the first months after his return suggests otherwise. Rather than continuing to compose as he had in Germany – writing poems for *Lyrical Ballads* while working on other, longer ones as well – Wordsworth, after April 1799, instead went to work primarily on the philosophical poem that would become *The Two-Book Prelude*. The change suggests that the *Lyrical Ballads*' reception jarred him considerably. It was only in December of 1799, after the *Lyrical Ballads* had received two positive reviews from the *British Critic* and the *Anti-jacobin Review*,[69] that Wordsworth began composing shorter poems in hopes of a second edition. These poems, however, held decided differences from the ballads that had preceded them. Significantly, the first poems on which Wordsworth went to work, "Hart-Leap Well" and "The Brothers," were manifesto-pieces. "Hart-Leap Well" rejected gothic writing's "moving accidents" and "freezing the blood" as "trade," while "The Brothers" provided a plain and pastoral prequel to Coleridge's "Rime," with Leonard at the end of the poem becoming "a grey-headed Mariner."[70] All of the poems that Wordsworth wrote between December 1799 and December 1800, in fact, cohere in ways that the previous *Lyrical Ballads* had not. Part of this coherence is confirmed by Wordsworth's own generic demarcations for these poems: five are dubbed "pastorals" ("The Brothers," "The Oak and the Broom," "The Pet Lamb," "The Idle Shepherd Boys," and "Michael"), five are collected under the heading *Poems on the Naming of Places*, and the remaining seven could sit easily under either rubric: "Hart-Leap Well," "The Waterfall and the Eglantine," "Rural Architecture," "The Two Thieves," "Lines Written with a Slate Pencil upon

a Stone," and two "Inscription" poems. These are the seventeen poems that have led Stephen Parrish to conclude in *The Art of the Lyrical Ballads* that "the program of *Lyrical Ballads* . . . is a program centered on the pastoral mode."[71] I wish less to disagree with Parrish than to argue that this pastoral center is grafted onto the *Lyrical Ballads* project after Wordsworth returned from Germany. Comprising 1,851 of the second volume's approximately 3,100 lines, these final poems studiously avoid any appearance of trafficking in "gross and violent stimulants," and provide a foundation for the Preface's claims about "low and rustic" language as an antidote to the excesses of gothic. It is these poems, I contend, that inevitably changed the character of the entire *Lyrical Ballads* project.

Coleridge noted this shift as early as April 1800, when he reported in a letter to Southey that "Wordsworth publishes a second Volume of Lyrical Ballads, & Pastorals" (*CL*, 1:585). The letter suggests, among other things, that Coleridge did not consider these new poems to be "lyrical ballads" since they required their own separate heading of "Pastorals." In addressing these differences between the 1798 and 1800 *Lyrical Ballads*, James Averill has noted that in the production of the second volume Wordsworth became increasingly uneasy about his own predilection for sensational subject matter:

> Looked at with sufficient introspection and skepticism, any narration of human suffering might appear exploitative. This is not a problem that would bother Lewis or Bürger, but for Wordsworth it becomes critical to show that the human mind can be excited without "gross and violent stimulants." The effort of *Lyrical Ballads*, particularly the 1800 volume, is to create a poetry that accomplishes this paradoxical purpose.[72]

The poems composed after Wordsworth's return to England, certainly, avoid the "stimulants" of Lewis and Bürger, but this is not so clearly the case with the poems composed in Germany between October 1798 and April 1799. These show much stronger similarities, both in their subject matter and in their fondness for ballad measures of tetrameter and trimeter lines, to the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* than to the other poems that comprise volume II of the 1800 edition. Of the twenty poems written in Germany that appeared in the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, ten are written in some form of this ballad measure, compared to only three of seventeen poems composed by Wordsworth for the collection after returning to England. There exists as well a break between the subject matter of the German and English poems. Like the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads*,

the German poems obsessively focus upon death (the "Lucy" poems, "Ruth," "Ellen Irwin," "There was a Boy," "The Fountain," "The Childless Father," "'Tis said, that some have died for love," "The Two April Mornings"), upon mad and marginal figures ("The Farmer of Tilsbury Vale," "Poor Susan," "Ruth," "Song of the Wandering Jew"), and upon superstition and possibly supernatural occurrences ("Lucy Gray," "Strange Fits of Passion," "The Danish Boy," "Nutting"). In contrast, the English poems, while periodically touching on these subjects, spend considerably more time attempting to represent, as the Preface puts it, "low and rustic life" (*WP*, 1:124) than focusing upon its outcasts and oddities. None, furthermore, touches on supernatural subjects or other "violent stimulants" – be they war, madness, murder, or suicide.

IV CUTTING "CHRISTABEL"

What Wordsworth *removed* from the second volume of *Lyrical Ballads*, however, is in many ways even more important to understanding its shift from gothic to pastoral, as well as understanding the larger process by which gothic's reception shaped the circumstances through which romantic writing emerged at the turn of the nineteenth century. As Stephen Parrish notes, as late as the beginning of October 1800, the second volume was to end not with "Michael: A Pastoral Poem" but with Coleridge's "Christabel":

> All that we know is that on the evening of 4 October Coleridge abruptly left his house at Keswick and walked down to Grasmere, where he read to William and Dorothy the beginning of Part II of "Christabel." After hearing the poem a second time the next morning with "increasing pleasure" (as Dorothy recorded in her journal), William composed a paragraph discussing "Christabel," to be inserted toward the end of his Preface; that night Dorothy mailed it to the printer. But the very next day (6 October) the partners "Determined not to print Christabel with the L.B.," as Dorothy bleakly noted.[73]

Faced with this sudden reversal, Parrish concludes that the decision not to print "Christabel" stemmed from Wordsworth's recognition that "his partner's imagination had expired under the weight of his afflictions."[74] While it is true that Coleridge had finished Part Two of "Christabel" in a heroic effort, more seems at work here than mere exhaustion. Much of it involves psychological, ethical, and professional tensions – caused at least in part by the initial reviews of the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* – that border on turmoil. Even before Coleridge's arrival on 4 October, Wordsworth

had begun the process of distancing himself from Coleridge by sending off on 2 October the highly critical Note to "The Ancient Mariner" to Longman and Rees. Coleridge, leaving his home in the evening and walking thirteen miles to Grasmere over fairly rugged terrain, would have arrived unexpectedly in Grasmere well into the night of 4 October. He then would have read to the Wordsworths the second part of a poem even more mesmerizing, difficult, generically unstable, and extravagant than "The Ancient Mariner" – a poem that tapped occult and sexual imagery, depicted supernatural haunting and possession, and spoke in a persona as loquacious and superstitious as that of "The Thorn." And sometime between hearing it again the morning of 5 October and Coleridge's departure 6 October, Wordsworth would have had to weigh a number of choices. On one hand, to reject "Christabel" from *Lyrical Ballads* was to inflict more than a slight on Coleridge; it was to threaten their friendship, particularly given the effort Coleridge had expended selflessly on behalf of the new edition. During most of the winter and spring of 1800, Coleridge had lobbied assiduously for the *Lyrical Ballads* in London, and on arriving in Grasmere at the end of June, had thrown himself, in spite of his own pressing commitments and financial embarrassments,[75] into the task of preparing the new edition for the press. Wordsworth, on the other hand, still needed Coleridge's poems from the 1798 edition to fill the necessary pages of the first volume. Doing without "Christabel," then, not only placed him in sudden need of an extra twenty-five pages with which to end the second volume, but also raised the threat of Coleridge removing all his poems from the first volume as well. These are considerable, and even prohibitive, costs; and it is only when we imagine the magnitude of them that we can begin to understand how damaging Wordsworth must have considered "Christabel" to be to the *Lyrical Ballads* project. Sometime during the night of 5 October, then, Wordsworth probably concluded that the costs of including "Christabel" were even higher than those of excluding it, and so he chose the latter course of action.

Both poets' accounts of this episode are of use here for determining just what Wordsworth considered the costs to be. Coleridge's letter of 9 October 1800 to Humphrey Davy first attributes the decision to the poem's being "so much admired" by Wordsworth as to make him unwilling to print "with *his* name" a poem of such length written by someone else (*CL*, 1:631). Wordsworth, with his characteristic bluntness, explained in a letter to Longman and Rees that "upon mature deliberation I found that the Style of this Poem ['Christabel'] was so discordant

from my own that it could not be printed along with my poems with any propriety" (*WL*, 1:309). Luckily, the remainder of Coleridge's letter to Davy sheds light on what Wordsworth meant by "propriety":

> ["Christabel"] was in direct opposition to the very purpose for which the Lyrical Ballads were published – viz – an experiment to see how far those passions, which alone give any value to extraordinary Incidents, were capable of interesting, in & for themselves, in the incidents of common Life – (*CL*, 1:631)

There exist enough echoes here of Wordsworth's own letter to Longman, I think, for us to gather that Wordsworth objected primarily to the "extraordinary Incidents" of "Christabel" – a phrase that occurs both in the Preface's attack on gothic fiction and drama and in Coleridge's reviews of gothic fiction.[76] Judging from Wordsworth's explanation to Longman, it is not just that "extraordinary Incidents" cannot mesh with Wordsworth's own poems with "propriety." The implication here – inscribed in Wordsworth's use of "discordant" and implied in Coleridge's pejorative use of "extraordinary" – is that the "incidents" of "Christabel" do not *possess* "propriety" in and of themselves. These considerations, and the verbal echoes of the Preface and of Coleridge's reviews, indicate that when Wordsworth objected to the "extraordinary Incidents" of "Christabel" he was objecting to its heavy gothicism. They also make clear that at some point between 1798 and 1800 Wordsworth had changed his notions concerning "propriety" significantly enough for them no longer to include "Christabel" (the first part of which Wordsworth already had read) or what "Christabel" represented. Considering how many of Wordsworth's own poems written before April 1799 could be accused of exploiting similar "extraordinary Incident" – among them "The Female Vagrant," "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," "Lucy Gray," "Ellen Irwin," and "Ruth" – I can only assume that the poems to which "Christabel" now lay "in direct opposition" were Wordsworth's pastorals, and that it was from these poems that Wordsworth now derived "the very purpose for which the Lyrical Ballads were published."

Given the centrality of the Preface's statements regarding "purpose" – to the *Lyrical Ballads* itself, to Wordsworth's ideas concerning poetry and poets in general, and to critical accounts of romantic poetry – I cannot help asking what difference this shift, as I have outlined it above, makes to a reading of *Lyrical Ballads* and to the careers of Wordsworth and Coleridge. At its most literal level, it asks us to imagine a radically different *Lyrical Ballads* from the version published in 1800: one remaining jointly authored, ending with "Christabel" rather than "Michael",

and retaining the original ordering of the first volume. We are also forced to reconsider the emerging aesthetics of *Lyrical Ballads*' second volume as linked less to theories of poetry and more to the practicalities of the poetic career. This shift in "purpose," after all, forces us to read the "pastorals" of the second volume not as a wholesale rejection by Wordsworth of "The Ancient Mariner" but rather as a response to the negative reviews of that poem. By similar logic, the "pastorals" become less a rejection of the supernatural and gothic elements of Coleridge's poetry than a response to reviewers' rejections of those same elements. Put another way, "Christabel" simply resembled "The Ancient Mariner" too closely, and this ultimately was enough for Wordsworth to bar it from inclusion. The heavy irony of his decision, of course, lies in the origins of Wordsworth's rationale for rejection – that in order to purge the second volume of the gothicism that had provoked such a negative response to the *Lyrical Ballads*' first edition, Wordsworth had to ransack Coleridge's own notes and critical writing to find the language with which he could reject what is arguably one of Coleridge's finest poems, and unarguably his most gothic.

More generally, we must consider rereading the Preface itself along similar lines: as strategic rather than wholesale rejection of gothic sensationalism, as "defence" of the first volume of *Lyrical Ballads* rather than as manifesto, as response to reviewer criticism rather than revolution against it. Wordsworth's revised second volume, buttressed by the Preface, represents a response to *Lyrical Ballads*'s initial reviews, and an attempt to renegotiate its cultural status by redefining the collection's character and purpose. When we consider the foundational status of the Preface to the formation of romantic ideology, furthermore, Wordsworth's (and, by extension, romanticism's) rejections of the supernatural, the sensational, and "the German" become less the product of fundamental differences over poetics and poetry than the result of economic and practical necessity. As my next chapter will show, these considerations were in no way limited only to poetic genres; as the career of Joanna Baillie will testify, they also operated upon the production, the staging, and, most importantly, the theorizing of tragedy at the turn of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER 4

National supernaturalism: Joanna Baillie, Germany, and the gothic drama

> If such a period ever occurred in the Dramatic History of this country, the present is avowedly the crisis . . . Avarice, combined with Dullness; Ignorance, with Pride; Arrogance, with Meanness; and the whole of this unhallowed mass fermented with the vile leaven of selfishness and venality, have long threatened, (and nearly accomplished those threats) to obscure the theatrical horizon with a total eclipse; with worse than Gothic darkness and barbarity.
>
> (Prospectus to *The Dramatic Censor* [1800])[1]

In calling Lewis's *Castle Spectre* "a spectre indeed . . . [c]lothed with the flesh and blood of £400" that "fitted the taste of the audience like a glove," Wordsworth in the previous chapter privately invoked sentiments abounding in the published dramatic criticism of his contemporaries: that the national drama was dead or dying and that theater audiences, managers, and monopolies were squarely to blame for its demise. Such refrains occur so frequently in the dramatic criticism of the day that one is hard pressed to find *any* British drama critic who does not lament in apocalyptic tones the state of the theater. Among these voices were two new Reviews, both of which claimed as their vocation the reform of current "abuses" of the stage. Like the *British Critic* (begun 1793) and the *Anti-Jacobin* (begun 1797) that set out to correct a Whig bias in reviewing and political reporting, the *Monthly Mirror* (begun 1795) and the *Dramatic Censor* (begun 1800) made similar claims in their prospectuses about the necessity of correcting current stage practices, which they claimed were biased by artificial economic and political constraints.

Yet the specific targets of these two periodicals' attacks – separated by only five years – could not be more different, and this difference suggests a significant transformation either on the stage itself or in the public perception of it. For the *Monthly Mirror* in 1795, the blame for this

"lamentable state of the stage" lay squarely at home, and stemmed from the political and economic fetters of government censorship and legal monopoly. Its first number, accordingly, called on the Lord Chamberlain to reform the office of the Licenser of Plays.[2] Subsequent numbers continued to attack the Licenser and other forms of "DRAMATICK DESPOTISM," linking the decline of the stage with London theater managers colluding to eliminate competition between themselves:

The stage, alas! is declining, too rapidly to need any disposition on the part of managers to precipitate its ruin. Our degeneracy, indeed, is said to be general; and . . . it is pretty evident the *acmé* has long since been gained, and every succeeding generation will be more and more inert and stupid. If this be the case, the managers have some plea to offer in excuse for the miserable trash they are perpetually foisting on the public; but alas! if they are unable to stem the torrent of nonsense which is pouring down so rapidly from every quarter, they surely need not lend a helping hand to expedite its progress; – if they cannot communicate genius to their authors, nor judgment to their players, they can at least keep the channels of theatrical information, clear and unobstructed . . . In short, LET THE MANAGERS COALESCE, AND ALL THE PURPOSES OF THE DRAMA ARE COMPLETELY ANNIHILATED.[3]

When Thomas Dutton brought out the *Dramatic Censor* less than five years later, however, the conspirators had changed. Instead of focusing upon theater monopolies and the Licenser of Plays, the *Dramatic Censor* directed its first issues at German drama, which, in the form of Auguste von Kotzebue, had enjoyed a two-year vogue on the London stage:

When the managers of our theatres, instead of cultivating the talents of our own writers, enter into an *actual conspiracy* against British genius, by contracting with *foreign* scribblers for manuscript plays, which they import at a high price, though no use can be made of their vile productions, till they have undergone a complete metamorphosis (or to speak more technically, a *dressing*) from the hands of some experienced English dramatist; for which a sum *equal to the purchase of original compositions must be paid* – when such a system of theatrical *manufactureship* is pursued by those, who possess, like St. Peter, the *power of the keys*, and can *lock-out*, or *let-in* whomsoever they please; – it becomes a duty of the first importance to canvas, and hold up to merited reprobation, the flimsy pretensions of these dramatic invaders.[4]

I cite these passages at length not only for their typicality but also because they reflect the level of hyperbole that pervades writing about the stage in these years. Such accounts of legitimate British drama being taken over by "a system of theatrical *manufactureship*," after all, were hardly limited to the pages of the *Monthly Mirror* and the *Dramatic Censor*.

Even the most respectable periodicals of the day like the *Monthly Review* carried similar stories about "German spectres hav[ing] almost driven Shakespeare and Congreve from the stage."[5] Its July 1800 review of two adaptations of Schiller and Iffland, for example, is striking for its similarities to the *Dramatic Censor* in imagery, tone, and content:

> Our resistance to the irruption of northern barbarians has hitherto been tolerably successful. We have asserted the independence of the British theatre, and have endeavoured to persuade our readers that, whatever reform might be necessary, we ought to begin it at home, instead of submitting to the yoke of foreign invaders: – but what can now be done, when HANNIBAL is at the gates? Harassed as we are, we must . . . repel the swarthy champions of the black-letter from the citadel of taste.[6]

Conspiracy theories about the state of the drama may have abounded throughout the 1790s, but this passage and others like it demonstrate the extent to which the conspirators have become "foreign invaders" of the blackest dye. They have become both racial "Goths" and literarily "gothic" – not just "swarthy" "northern barbarians" but those "of the black letter," as if their taste for medieval-looking typescript had somehow darkened their skin as well.

My interest in this chapter lies in explaining how and why this transformation took place, and how it affected the production and trajectory of romantic tragedy. For the accounts of the *Monthly Review* and the *Dramatic Censor* do more than deport the enemies of British literary culture to Germany; they define any such importation as a forgery of legitimate drama – as a translated, "vile production . . . [having] undergone a complete metamorphosis" or, in Wordsworth's words, "a spectre . . . [c]lothed with the flesh and blood of £400." More generally, they shape a theoretical urge at the end of the eighteenth century usually associated with "romanticism": that of defining tragedy as the most intellectual, imaginative, evocative, generically "pure," and innately British of dramatic forms, and of dissociating it from contemporary trends toward spectacle and supernatural effect.

This association of illegitimacy with the supernatural, present both in Wordsworth's letter and in the pages of the *Monthly Review*, is hardly accidental. Both derive their metaphors and logic from the production processes that governed the gothic drama, whose productions of the 1790s were dominated not by original scripts but rather by adaptations from novels like *Castle of Otranto, The Romance of the Forest, Caleb Williams, The Monk,* and *The Italian.* Since so much of the debate over the merits of

these productions focused on the vogue for supernatural effect that they created, I begin by tracing this debate over the supernatural onstage and the questions that it raised, the most important of which was the function of supernatural effect in the playwright who produced the supposed "acme" of British drama: Shakespeare. Shakespeare's unassailable position at the end of the eighteenth century presented difficulties to opponents of the supernatural onstage, since so many of his most celebrated plays – among them *Hamlet, Macbeth,* and *Richard III* – resembled contemporary gothic dramas in their medieval settings and ghostly effects. For most reviewers, then, the problem was one of separating Shakespeare from the supernatural drama of the 1790s: either by historicizing his supernatural practice, vilifying his audience's taste, or celebrating his transcendent genius and ability to break all rules of taste.

As it is this ambivalence over the supernatural I wish to recount and explain, I focus primarily upon the plays of Joanna Baillie – a writer hailed with the publication of *Plays on the Passions*[7] as an antidote to the dramatic excesses embodied by Lewis's *Castle Spectre* yet in our own day regarded as primarily a gothic dramatist in the tradition of Lewis.[8] Baillie serves as an excellent case-study because her work consistently invokes the supernatural even as it seeks to ally itself with the practices of Shakespeare and with a "British" heritage that functions in her drama as an alternative to the "German" models so popular at the end of the eighteenth century. Like Coleridge and Wordsworth in 1798, gothic conventions for Baillie receive extremely special treatment: elaborate framing devices, dense and selective allusion, and a theoretical framework that argues for the "worthiness" of the materials themselves. The effect of such treatment, I argue, is to reproduce the gap between critical and popular tastes structurally in her work – where theoretical preface and scholarly footnote help to package the published productions of her plays as discernably different from her gothic and German contemporaries. In addition, Baillie's theatrical practice aims for effects similar to the *Lyrical Ballads*: to reform theater audiences addicted to "German spectres" by refocusing these very tastes onto more "legitimate" questions of character psychology and subjectivity. Her handling of the supernatural provides us, then, with a playwright attempting to distinguish between British and German supernaturalism, and to define the former as legitimate and the latter as illegitimate.

I THE SUPERNATURAL ONSTAGE

> But in stage-customs what offends me most
> Is the slip-door, and slowly-rising ghost.
> Tell me, nor count the question too severe,
> Why need the dismal powder'd forms appear?
> (Robert Lloyd, "The Actor" [1760])[9]

Before *The Castle Spectre*, even the most spectacular of gothic dramas had avoided representing ghosts on stage, and exceptions to this unwritten rule were rare. The most notable of the exceptions is James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest*, an extremely popular and critically vilified adaptation of Ann Radcliffe's *The Romance of the Forest.* Boaden admired Radcliffe's works immensely but had decided that her practice of closing novels by supplying rational explanations for supernatural events cheated her readers into feeling tricked by the ingenuity of her narration. Therefore, Boaden had taken the most suspenseful scene of Radcliffe's *Romance* and had tellingly altered its supernatural content.[10] In the original scene, Adeline awakens from a nightmare, hears what is identified at the novel's end as the voice of a servant, and faints; in Radcliffe's ending, she derives her "supernatural" experience from her own imagination and frenzied state of emotion. While Radcliffe's novel plays this scene first one way and then another, Boaden chose, in the words of his own epilogue, not "to give up the ghost," and instead took elaborate technical measures to make his ghost look as much like the lofty figure of Henry Fuseli's *Hamlet and the Ghost* as possible, placing the slender John Follet in close-fitting armor behind a blue gauze screen. Follet's gigantic steps, and skill in pantomime, had made the scene popular with audiences.

Reviews of *Fontainville Forest*, however, were nevertheless negative, either ignoring Boaden's gestures to Fuseli and Shakespeare or else dismissing them as manipulative. Condemning the play as both unenlightened and irreligious, they point to the extreme demands for conformity surrounding supernatural representations on stage. While the *Analytical Review* simply argued that no enlightened human being could look on a representation of a ghost without laughing, the July 1794 *Monthly Review* labelled the play as debilitating to the social fabric: "We should ourselves be guilty, were we not to pronounce this to be a most pernicious doctrine; the offspring of barbarous ages, which every writer, especially a Christian writer, should make it his duty to detect and

expose."[11] Responses to Boaden's ghost quickly organized themselves into two distinct though associated claims: Anglican critics condemning representations of spirits as a blasphemous turn to the idolatries of popery; and rationalist critics dismissing them as invasive, unenlightened barbarism. Both arguments shared a literal, limited understanding of what ghosts on stage could signify, and made no space for their potential to signify such internal states of mind as moral or psychological haunting.[12] Simply put, one either believed that ghosts existed materially or that they did not, and to represent a ghost on stage was to support exploded superstitions forbidden by the Church of England, and to be laughed at by the enlightened.

This portrait we get of English reviewers desperately holding on against an onslaught of gothic superstition becomes more pronounced as the decade progresses and as the British economy and war with France worsen. As the 1790s progressed, supernatural representations onstage took on a significance far exceeding the questions of superstition, enlightenment, and suspension of disbelief apparent in the 1794 reviews of Boaden. They became, in a sense, both synecdoche and last straw: synecdoche in that ghosts onstage became for reviewers symbolic of everything wrong with British drama; last straw in their status as brazen affront to the stage's perceived intellectual, artistic, and moral foundations. Like Boaden's ghost in *Fontainville Forest*, Lewis's *Castle Spectre* succeeded with audiences in spite of the united opposition of reviewers, intellectuals, religious officials, and even Lewis's own actors and managers.[13] Unlike *Fontainville Forest*, however, *Castle Spectre* created a lasting stir, spawned countless imitations, and produced real debate between dramatists and critics over the place of the supernatural on stage.

Responding to critical dismissals of his smash hit, Lewis's first response was almost legalistic in its penchant for definition and precedent; he argued in an appendix to the printed text of *Castle Spectre* (January 1798) that there existed no difference between ghosts in tragedy and fairies and heathen gods in comedy, pantomime, and ballet.[14] The next month, a reviewer writing for the *Monthly Mirror* under the pen name "Charon" immediately countered "that our immortal bard has furnished no precedent, in his writings, for the employment of supernatural agency, without a cause adequate to such extraordinary means."[15] Having neither adequate psychological nor adequate narrative cause, Lewis's spectre by this line of reasoning was "a SHAM GHOST" not worthy of the critic's approval.[16] Later in the same year, after a success-

ful run at the Haymarket, Boaden appealed in his preface to *Cambro-Britons* (1798) to this same dramatic "tradition" created by Charon and other critics to counter Lewis, the "rules" of which he claimed to observe assiduously:

> In former plays, I have invariably framed my work upon incidents in such romances as were deservedly popular. I believe my practice may be justified by the *great* masters of our art, from the dawning of the drama among us . . . I have, upon this repetition of the offence, taken care to produce a sufficient *cause* for an event, which no effort of reason has yet shown to be impossible.[17]

Boaden's appeal to the "*great* masters" of renaissance drama did not stop reviewers from stepping up their own arguments – both in frequency and in volume – against any representation of the supernatural, whether on stage or in the closet. Most often, they resorted to the same kinds of historicizing first engaged in by Walpole and Reeve. Instead of arguing for the appropriateness of the supernatural to plays set in superstitious times, however, reviewers reverted to longstanding arguments that present times required the exposure of all belief in the supernatural – whether of "Catholicism" or of extreme radical Protestantism – *as* superstition. In a two-year period beginning in May of 1798, the *Monthly Review* condemned such representations no fewer than five times, claiming that Lewis and his imitators were conspiring to destroy English drama by turning the stage into a "Land of Apparitions."[18] The *Monthly Mirror*, after having staunchly defended Lewis's *The Monk* for two years against allegations of blasphemous libel, published in August of 1798 "The Complaint of a Ghost," written by "a much injured spectre": "every wretched scribbler usurps the right of dragging me from my bed and forcing me either to perform penance arrayed in a sheet on some frozen heath . . . or to march barefoot, with majestic gravity, rigged out in musty armour."[19] These reviews in particular – and the four-year debate about the supernatural on stage in general – point to how polarized audience and reviewer tastes had become, and to the virtual impossibility of bridging such a wide ideological expanse. They also are emblematic of larger anxieties over generic legitimacy and class. While the *Monthly Mirror*'s Ghost complains of hacks claiming *rights* that they do not have, these other reviews make explicit the distinction between dominant "good taste" and the amusement of mass spectacle. Perhaps most remarkable is their undeviating unanimity of opinion. The *Monthly Mirror*'s Ghost's conclusion corresponds to similar views expressed by the *Analytical Review*, the *Anti-Jacobin*, the *British Critic*, the *Critical Review*,

the *Dramatic Censor*, and the *Monthly Review* – that supernatural representations afford "a splendid and amusing scene to the galleries, but good taste is always disgusted . . . In the present state of the drama, when pasteboard pageantries and German spectres have almost driven Shakespeare and Congreve from the stage, we cannot but applaud any attempt to 'hold the mirror up to Nature.'"[20] It is no accident, moreover, that this small piece of applause by the *Monthly Review* was for an anonymous volume released in April of 1798, entitled *A Series of Plays: in which It Is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind. Each Passion Being the Subject of a Tragedy and a Comedy* (later redubbed *Plays on the Passions*).

II REGULATING GOTHIC THEATRICAL SPACES

The *Monthly*'s above notice of *Plays on the Passions* is striking for how far its opposition of "Shakespeare and Congreve" to "pasteboard pageantries and German spectres" misrepresents actual stage practice. Long before *Castle Spectre* hit the Drury Lane stage, the plays of Congreve and other Restoration dramatists had fallen into disfavor because of their supposed moral laxity. And if we are to judge from available playbills and reviews, productions of Shakespeare during the last decade of the eighteenth century exhibited the same tendency toward supernatural spectacle as gothic drama.[21] John Philip Kemble's April 1794 production of *Macbeth* may have omitted – to great critical approbation – representing Banquo's ghost on stage, but it did not hesitate to add other supernatural effects conducive to Drury Lane Theatre's cavernous size:

> Indeed the noble firmness and compactness of the action was dreadfully broken and attenuated by the vast crowds of witches and spirits that filled the stage, and thundered in the ear a music of dire potency. The auxiliary injured the principal, and Matthew Locke became the rival of his master. Mere speech, however masterly, is weak upon the ear after the noise (call it harmony if you will) of a full orchestra, and perhaps fifty voices, with difficulty kept together in tolerable time and tune.[22]

In excluding Banquo's ghost from the stage, Kemble sought to ally himself with the large number of reviewers and London intelligentsia who, since Bonnell Thorton's *Have at You All; or, The Drury Lane Journal* (1752) and Robert Lloyd's *The Actor* (1760), had wished to banish Shakespeare's ghosts to trap doors under the stage.[23] To read Kemble's omission of Banquo's ghost as solely an attempt to reform an increasing-

ly gothic-obsessed audience, however, would require that we overlook the menu of effects – including fifty witches wildly singing and dancing to a full orchestra – that he did insert.[24] It would especially be an oversight when we consider that Kemble chose this production in order to dedicate to Shakespeare's memory the new Drury Lane Theatre, a colossal pile whose interior was designed by Henry Holland to resemble the inside of a gothic cathedral.[25] Given the popular success of Boaden's *Fontainville Forest,* which in April 1794 was completing its initial run at rival Covent Garden Theatre, Kemble's decision to bar the ghost of Banquo in the most elaborate and spectacular *Macbeth* of the century smacks at least as much of marketing and business rivalry as it does of frustration with the taste of late-eighteenth-century audiences.[26] While in most cases no more than a blip in histories of romantic literature, Kemble's *Macbeth* and Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* show us how the formulation of critical standards still familiar to us also arises out of the contingencies of economic necessity and the opportunism of self-fashioning.

In functioning as a specific arena in which questions of literary authority can be contested, Kemble's *Macbeth* helps us to contextualize Baillie's cultural predicament by showing us not only the desirability of allying one's own name with Shakespeare, but also the difficulty of joining Shakespeare's authority to the views of contemporary critics unable to reconcile eighteenth-century dramatic theory with Shakespearean practice.[27] It is for this reason more than any other that I read Baillie's handling of gothic conventions as a negotiation – an attempt both to write permanently popular plays and to reform a national drama in a perceived decline by bringing it back to its Shakespearean roots. Part of the challenge for Baillie, then, is one of redefining popular gothic conventions like the supernatural onstage *as* legitimate because Shakespearean. Her attempts, furthermore, demonstrate that the gap between critical and popular audiences does not lie so much between the closet and the stage as between notions of legitimacy and illegitimacy. Baillie's response, I contend, is to reproduce this gap structurally in her work – between her theoretical prose introductions and her dramatic practice, and between the projected performances of her plays (where one "views" the play's script in conjunction with scenery and music) and their published texts (where one reads the play's script in conjunction with stage directions, preface, and footnotes).[28] Not surprisingly, the bulk of Baillie's legitimizing moves occur in the material that surrounds her plays in their published version.

This challenge of bridging this gap between critical and popular audience, moreover, is acknowledged not only by Baillie but also by those contemporaries purporting to produce legitimate drama as well. Coleridge's *Remorse* (1813), for example, contained in its central scene an elaborate supernatural spectacle so full of Shakespearean references that the *Theatrical Inquisitor* and the *Critical Review* mocked Coleridge for having the arrogance to compare himself to "our Bard."[29] Other periodicals, however, praised Coleridge's "ardent admiration for the father of English drama."[30] As if to insure that Coleridge's audience and reviewers could not miss *Remorse*'s veneration for Shakespeare, Charles Lamb's prologue to the play spent twenty-eight of its fifty-three lines in direct homage to Shakespeare and his characters, and gestured to the memories of Booth, Betterton, Quin, and Garrick as well.[31]

Yet even while Coleridge sought to ally himself with the legitimating authority of Shakespeare, *Remorse*'s central scene strongly resembles the most famous supernatural scene of Lewis's *Castle Spectre*. In both plays, the heroine through supernatural intervention learns of a murder. Both also employ incantations to demons in language reminiscent of *Macbeth*, provide elaborate stage directions with an exactness and minuteness of detail that smack of pantomime, and take particular care to manage music, song, and ritual so that they progress in volume and pace to a spectacular pitch. The only difference between the two scenes is that Coleridge's is presented as mere trickery, a show put on by his protagonist as a way of exposing the treachery of his brother:

> ALVAR: The spell is mutter'd – Come, thou wandering shape,
> Who own'st no master in a human eye,
> Whate'er be this man's doom, fair be it, or foul,
> If he be dead, O come! and bring with thee
> That which he grasp'd in death! But if he live,
> Some token of his obscure perilous life.
> (*The whole Music clashes into a Chorus*)
> CHORUS
> Wandering demons, hear the spell!
> Lest a blacker charm compel –
> (*The incense on the altar takes fire suddenly, and an illuminated picture of* Alvar's *assassination is discovered, and having remained a few seconds is then hidden by ascending flames*.)
> ORDONIO (*Starting*): Duped! duped! duped! – the traitor Isidore!
> (*At this instant the doors are forced open,* Monviedro *and the* Familiars of the Inquisition, Servants, *&c., enter and fill the stage*.)
> MONVIEDRO: First seize the sorcerer! suffer him not to speak!
> (*CPW* II:851)

In combining the Inquisition, religious rituals and symbols, magic, and satanic incantations, Coleridge's scene combines "all that is most awfully true in religion with all that is ridiculously absurd in superstition": the exact criticism he had levelled at *The Monk* in 1797. His scene, then, possesses all the incantation and spectacle of Lewis's, but has inscribed into it distancing devices similar to those deployed in *Lyrical Ballads*. Coleridge does not ask his viewers to commit to accepting the scene as "real." Instead, Coleridge's audience can relax and be titillated by poetry, music, smoking incense, a sudden fire, and a picture appearing as though by magic, all comfortable in the knowledge of their own enlightenment. That the play ran twenty nights with primarily positive reviews and was the most successful tragedy of the first quarter of the nineteenth century testifies that Coleridge was able to achieve the rare coup of satisfying most critics while delivering goods that would draw large audiences.[32]

If we are to judge from his letters and the gushing introduction he added to the published version of the play, Coleridge evidently saw no resemblance between his own use of supernatural representations and Lewis's. I would like to suggest that one of the reasons why Coleridge could be comfortable with his sham-supernatural scene lies in the similarities that his *Remorse* holds to a number of the *Plays on the Passions*. Baillie's *Plays* not only base themselves in the exploration of a single emotion (as does Coleridge's exploration of remorse), but also freely employ gothic and Shakespearean supernatural scenes as a means of representing both the passions themselves and character psychology.[33] Before *Remorse* ever debuted on stage, Baillie had been working for fifteen years, with varying degrees of success, to tap into gothic drama in a way that would be popular with both audiences and critics. While she was more successful in presenting herself as an antidote to gothic extravagance than in getting plays staged, Baillie clearly wrote for the stage, and often withheld publishing plays because she did not wish to jeopardize their attractiveness to various theaters.[34] Recent commentators on Baillie have been struck by the similarities existing between Baillie's early "Introductory Discourse" and the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*;[35] I find similar correspondences between Baillie's handling of gothic materials and the ballads of that collection, and between Baillie's work and Coleridge's *Remorse*. Aside from sharing with Wordsworth and Coleridge an interest in stories unornamented by elaborate plot, Baillie's appropriation of supernatural material is always carefully framed, self-conscious, and never without some kind of enlightened distance or unassailable authority attached to it.

Given the reception of gothic fiction in the 1790s and the extreme critical condemnation that supernatural scenes had received after *Castle Spectre*, this is hardly surprising. As a result, Baillie resembles Reeve and Radcliffe in almost never haunting her characters with anything other than their own minds; she goes beyond her predecessors, however, in making the mind the sole source of gothic effects, rather than having her characters misinterpret ambiguous stimuli outside themselves. Her usual stage practice is to provide recognizably gothic settings and effects but to withhold actual supernatural representations. Even Baillie's tragedy on fear, *Orra* (1812), for example, with its exploration of the mental consequences of seeing a ghost, employs a sham ghost (really Orra's lover in disguise) in order to show the very real psychological effects of being scared (literally) out of one's wits. *De Monfort* (1798), her tragedy on hatred, may invoke a gothic wood where its title character allows his superstitious fancy to run wild, but De Monfort's imaginings are entirely his own; moreover, they are immediately contradicted by another character who visits the same wood, hears the same sounds, yet muses on different subjects. In a scene recalling that of Banquo's death set as "*Moon-light. A wild path in a wood, shaded with trees*," De Monfort enters "with a strong expression of disquiet, mixed with fear, upon his face" (*BP*, 1:377). In such a state of mind, he responds to his surroundings as if they were supernatural:

> DE MONFORT: How hollow groans the earth beneath my tread!
> Is there an echo here? Methinks it sounds
> As tho' some heavy footstep follow'd me.
> I will advance no farther . . .
> Things horrid, bloody, terrible, do pass,
> As tho' they pass'd not; nor impress the mind
> With the fix'd clearness of reality.
> (*An owl is heard screaming near him.*)
> (*Starting.*) What sound is that?
> (*Listens, and the owl cries again*)
> It is the screech owl's cry.
> Foul bird of night! what spirit guides thee here?
> Art thou instinctive drawn to scenes of horrour?
> I've heard of this. (*Pauses and listens.*)
> How those fall'n leaves so rustle on the path,
> With whisp'ring noise, as tho' the earth around me
> Did utter secret things!
> The distant river, too, bears to mine ear
> A dismal wailing. O mysterious night!
> Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou. (*BP*, 1:377–8)

When De Monfort exits, his rival Rezenvelt enters, hears the same owl, and responds to the same surroundings:

> REZENVELT: Ha! does the night bird greet me on my way?
> How much his hooting is in harmony
> With such a scene as this! I like it well.
> Oft when a boy, at the still twilight hour,
> I've leant my back against some knotted oak,
> And loudly mimick'd him, till to my call
> He answer would return, and thro' the gloom
> We friendly converse held.
> Between me and the star-bespangl'd sky
> Those aged oaks their crossing branches wave,
> And thro' them looks the pale and placid moon.
> How like a crocodile, or winged snake,
> Yon sailing cloud bears on its dusky length! . . .
> A hollow murm'ring wind comes thro' the trees;
> I hear it from afar; this bodes a storm.
> I must not linger here –
> (*A bell heard at some distance.*)
> What bell is this?
> It sends a solemn sound upon the breeze.
> Now, to a fearful superstitious mind,
> In such a scene, 'twould like a death-knell come:
> For me it tells but of a shelter near,
> And so I bid it welcome. (*BP*, 1:378–9)

I quote these passages at length because they demonstrate a doubleness of perspective that pervades Baillie's plays whenever she invokes "gothic" materials. Like Coleridge in the central scene of *Remorse*, Baillie allows her audience to participate fully in the mental processes that produce De Monfort's superstitious responses while at the same time reminding that audience that the only supernatural visitation occurring is in De Monfort's mind. The doubleness of the scene then, allows audiences to enjoy the gloomy pleasures of a scene reminiscent of *Romance of the Forest* and *Fontainville Forest*, and then to reexamine that pleasure with ironic detachment. This scene does not work, however, like the deflating rational endings of Radcliffe's romances of which Boaden complained. De Monfort's superstitious state of mind may cause him to create spirits in everything he hears and sees, but it also produces the very real effect of Rezenvelt's murder, as well as causing his own heart to implode from the force of his emotions at the play's conclusion.

Baillie's project, then, is not to debunk supernaturalism so much as to

move it into the minds of her characters as a way of revising existing models of psychology and subjectivity. Her passions, lurking underneath the surface of social feeling and beyond the scope of empirical analysis, exist in a space resembling the unconscious. This assumption, in turn, drives her dramatic project: to trace destructive passions to their origins, and to train her audiences to make connections between causes (passions) and effects (observable behavior).[36] Her "Introductory Discourse" (1798) to the first volume of *Plays on the Passions*, rather than proposing to mortify and chastise contemporary audiences with productions that are ascetically intellectual, argues for supernatural and psychological spectacle as a potential tool for moral and intellectual instruction, basing its claims on a theory of learning through spectating, operating by a mechanism she calls "sympathetick curiosity":

> This sympathetick curiosity of our nature . . . is universal . . . It is our best and most powerful instructor. From it we are taught the proprieties and decencies of ordinary life, and are prepared for distressing and difficult situations. In examining others we know ourselves. (*BP*, 1:12)

Like preceding writers of the cult of eighteenth-century British and German sensibility,[37] Baillie believes the experience of emotion to be ennobling and worthwhile in itself, even while she consistently subjects these same experiences to minute analysis.[38] She steps beyond eighteenth-century men and women of feeling in arguing, as do Wordsworth, Byron, and Mary Shelley after her, that "dark and malevolent passions" form an inherent and lurking part of the human psyche, and must be arrested in childhood and erased through the processes of socialization and education.

Likely composed in the years 1796–8 though not revised and published until 1804, Baillie's play *Rayner* provides us with perhaps the clearest example of Baillie working out the dramatic theories of her "Introductory Discourse." Its scenes illustrate her desire to "excite [audience] curiosity and interest" – and thereby exploit the instructive potential of the stage – by placing characters "in extraordinary situations of difficulty and distress" (*BP*, 1:5). Act III of the play, for example, begins with a gathering of people waiting to hear whether Rayner will be executed. While waiting, various members of the crowd discuss previous executions they have witnessed and, in the process, discuss their motives for attending such events – to learn something about death and dying by sympathetically watching a fellow human being go through the experience:

SECOND CROWD: Ay, I remember the last criminal that was condemned here; a strong-built man he was, tho' somewhat up in years: O, how pale he look'd as they led him out from court! I think I stood on this very spot as he passed me; and the fixed strong look of his features too – it was a piteous sight!

THIRD CROWD: Ah man! but that was nothing to the execution. I paid half a dollar for a place near the scaffold; and it would have made any body's heart drop blood to have seen him when he lifted up the handkerchief from his eyes, and took his last look on the day-light, and all the living creatures about him. (*BMP*, 54–5)

Their shared memories of losing themselves in another's suffering lead them, later in the scene, to sympathize so strongly with the condemned Rayner that they demand that Rayner's captors cease their unnecessarily cruel behavior by unchaining Rayner so that he can attend to his love Elizabeth, who has fainted on hearing of the verdict. In terms of its structure, the scene presents Baillie's audience with an audience on stage to observe and from which to learn. Rather than presenting her viewers with a comparatively unmediated spectacle of an execution, Baillie provides an execution two steps further removed by presenting her audience with an audience on stage discussing their perceptions of a previous execution rather than witnessing a present one. Consequently, by the time that Rayner makes his entrance in chains, Baillie's actual audience is prepared to apply the theoretical instruction provided by the audience on stage, and to sympathize properly with the pain Rayner feels in being unable to comfort Elizabeth's pain.

As with the double perspective she builds into representations of the supernatural, Baillie's representations of suffering show her simultaneously distrusting dramatic spectacles of emotion even while she wishes to exploit them for her own ends. In this aspect, we can read Baillie's meticulous and highly mediated treatment of the supernatural as part of a greater wariness over scenes that, as she puts it in the Introduction to her *Miscellaneous Plays*, "weaken the interest . . . by attending too much to magnificence and show" (*BMP*, xviii). Baillie's plays may provide their audiences with the "gross and violent stimulants" of gothic spectacle condemned in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, but they also demand, like the *Lyrical Ballads*, that these same audiences analyze the processes of their own seduction and identification. Several times in her "Introductory Discourse," Baillie argues that the human fascination with anyone in the throes of violent passions is so strong that "should we meet him unexpectedly on our way . . . if invisible, would we not follow him into his lonely haunts, into his closet, into the midnight silence of his

chamber?" (*BP*, 1:11). Aside from there being something wonderfully seductive about this passage – which presents us with an almost primal scene of what Catherine Burroughs has called Baillie's characteristic "closet" drama[39] – it also neatly encapsulates her arguments concerning how and why dramatic representations please spectators, as well as explaining her interest in supernatural spectacle as a vehicle for psychological exploration. In the above passage, dramatic representation becomes simultaneously most enthralling and most ideologically powerful when it takes the drama of the private closet and represents it on stage – moments that, in following impassioned men to their private closets, make available for scrutiny precisely those places where prudent women at the end of the eighteenth century are not supposed to venture.

Baillie's theories, then, however naive they might be considered in their optimism about human nature, feed off a sense of dramatic spectatorship as an ultimately voyeuristic experience. Because the potential for social instruction is greatest in scenes most titillating to audiences, Baillie's desire to harness the 1790s mania for supernatural representations leads her to argue, against the almost unanimous outcry of reviewers throughout the decade, that ghostly scenes are of particular interest to the rational, empirical, enlightened viewer:

> No man wishes to see the Ghost himself, which would certainly procure him the best information on the subject, but every man wishes to see one who believes that he sees it, in all the agitation and wildness of that species of terrour. To gratify his curiosity how many people have dressed up hideous apparitions to frighten the timid and superstitious! and have done it at the risk of destroying their happiness or understanding for ever. (*BP*, 1:8–9)

Taking Kemble's ghostless *Macbeth* as primary inspiration for its central scene, *Rayner* again provides us with a compelling illustration of Baillie's tendency to deflect audience interest away from the supernatural and onto character perception of it. Having been seduced in a moment of despair into joining a band of thieves who intend to kill his rival, Hubert, Rayner becomes separated from the other members of the band as they make their way through a forest and a terrible storm to position themselves for their planned ambush of Hubert's travel party. His search for some kind of shelter leads him to a cave, where he is received by an old hermit; just after the two have lain down to sleep, the old man starts up in horror and responds to a ghost that neither Rayner nor the audience can see:

OLD MAN: (*Turning toward the door as if he saw some one enter.*)
Ha! com'st thou still in white and sheeted weeds,
With one hand thus pointing to thy bloody side?
Thy grave is deep enough in hallow'd ground!
Why com'st thou ever on my midnight rest?
What dost thou want? If thou hast power, as seeming . . .
I'll follow thee to hell, and there abide
The searing flames . . . (*In the vehemence of his agitation he throws out his arm and strikes it against* Rayner, *who alarmed at his ravings has left his resting place, and stolen softly behind him.*)
Ha! what art thou? (*starting, and turning round to* Rayner)
RAYNER: Nay, thou with bristling locks, loose knocking joints
And fixed eyeballs starting in their sockets,
Who speak'st thus wildly to the vacant place,
Say rather, what art thou.
OLD MAN: I am a murderer. (Rayner *starts back from him and drops his sword.*) . . .
RAYNER: And what am I? (*after a disturbed pause.*)
The storm did rage and bellow thro' the air,
And the red lightning shiver'd:
No traveller would venture on his way
In such a night. – O, blessed, blessed storm!
For yet it hath not been, and shall be never . . .
(*As he bows himself to the earth, and is about to kneel, a report of fire arms is heard without, and he starts up again.*)
'Tis done! – O, it is done! – the horrible act!
(*Exit, beating his forehead violently.*) (*BMP*, 45–6)

This scene is of interest both for the complex ways in which it attempts to mediate audience perception of the supernatural, and for the care Baillie takes to guard herself against existing critical dismissals of supernatural scenes as silly and immoral. In one sense, it attempts to challenge critical assumptions about the value of supernatural representations – and thereby distance itself from the gothicism of *Castle Spectre* and its kin – in ways similar to those we saw in the previous chapter in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's ballads. Evoking Kemble's reputation as a proponent of legitimate drama by having the Old Man respond to an invisible spectre, Baillie argues, first by positioning Rayner as an audience to the Old Man's hallucination and then by having him repent of his intent to murder Hubert because he has witnessed the Old Man's agonized guilt, that supernatural representations are both innately interesting to rational observers and potentially instructive to them. In

addition, the scene shows Baillie working out the extent to which character subjectivity can be impressed on an audience – in this case by inviting them to suspend their (religious or rational) disbelief in ghosts for moral purposes. This invitation to suspend disbelief is nowhere more present than in Baillie's meticulous stage directions for the storm scene in the forest, and in the careful choreographing of the subsequent scene with Rayner and the Hermit.[40] Read in the context of the late-eighteenth-century debate over the supernatural on stage, the ingenuity of these scenes shows us not only the effort to which Baillie goes to write dramas exploiting existing popular conventions of gothic drama, but also the power of critical taboos to direct and regulate representations of the supernatural on stage.

III THE SPECTRE OF GERMANY

> No Congress props our Drama's falling state,
> The modern ultimatum is, "Translate."
> Thence sprout the morals of the German school;
> The Christian sinks, the Jacobin bears rule:
> No virtue shines, but in the peasant's mien,
> No vice, but in patrician robes, is seen;
> Through four dull acts the Drama drags, and drawls,
> The fifth is stage trick, and the curtain falls.
>
> (Thomas James Mathias, *The Shade of Alexander Pope on the Banks of the Thames*)[41]

Baillie published her first volume of *Plays on the Passions* in the early spring of 1798, when wholesale alarm and social upheaval in Britain made the stakes of literary experimentation extremely high. While Boaden's ghost in the 1794 debut of *Fontainville Forest* provoked strongest criticism from viewers and reviewers who felt such representations to be mildly blasphemous, the sheer hyperbole of the critical outcry in 1798 to Lewis's *Castle Spectre* indicated, at the very least, an altering literary landscape replete with new demands on authors. Dismissals of Boaden's ghost as laughable or contemptible had become, by 1798, sounds of alarm against a spectre of cultural and ideological invasion by corrupt literatures from the Continent – an alarm supported by very real fears of French invasion beginning in 1797 and increasing as the century drew to a close.

Within this context, critics increasingly labelled gothic dramas like Lewis's as unwanted German "importations," and therefore as cul-

turally invasive, morally corrupting, and politically jacobin. Much of the process by which British reviewers, dramatists, and essayists arrived at this blanket dismissal of a body of writing is mapped by Rosemary Ashton in *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought 1800–1860* (1980), who dates the wholesale British rejection of German literature as occurring around 1800:

After an early receptivity to Gothic and sentimental dramas and novels, British editors, reviewers, and readers settled down to ignorant contempt of individual German works like *Wallenstein* and *Faust* and *Wilhelm Meister* for their "immorality" or "absurdity" or "obscurity" . . . Periodicals like the *Monthly Review* and *Monthly Magazine* had published regular notices of translations and productions of German plays in the 1790s, but by 1800 the reviewers were complaining of the "trash" they had been "obliged to swallow."[42]

Among the most compelling aspects of Ashton's study is her illustration of the power of periodicals, when united in opinion, to shape British taste. In the case of the reception of German drama and the English gothic dramas conflated with it, condemnation was united enough by December of 1800 to produce a studied silence. Reviews that had regularly run notices of German publications throughout the 1790s discontinued them; Coleridge's translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, for example, was ignored by all but the *British Critic* and *Critical* and *Monthly* Reviews, which published sneering notices of what they termed Coleridge's "languid" and "insufferably tedious" translation, advising him next time to be less faithful to his German source.[43] By December 1802, Francis Jeffrey, in a piece for the *Monthly Review* on Holcroft's translation of *Hermann und Dorothea*, could claim to define "true German taste" as "deal[ing] largely in suicides, adulteries, castles, and enchantments," and in the first number of the *Edinburgh Review*, with succinct confidence in his ability to wound deeply, could attack Southey's *Thalaba* as being part of a "*sect*" of "dissenters from the established systems in poetry and criticism . . . of German origin."[44]

Given that this "sect" that Jeffrey attacked as ideologically "of German origin" consisted of Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, and (in at least one recent critical account[45]) the late Mary Robinson, accounting for this rejection of German drama in England strikes me as essential to our understanding not only of Baillie's cultural predicament, but also of the context within which romantic writing formed its assumptions about literary value. Placing British drama as a happy compromise between what they characterized as French pedantry about rules of dramatic

composition and German *Stürm und Drang* rebellion against such rules, British reviewers, from their self-proclaimed center, saw both countries' drama as extremist and based in theoretical principle rather than "nature."[46] Rejecting the domination of French classical drama in the courts of Germany and Austria, *Stürm und Drang* writers like Lessing, Herder, and Goethe had sought to create a national drama through a celebration of formal freedom. After the French Revolution, these writers also celebrated democratic freedom; the most famous British proofs of the power of this celebration are the responses of Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Wordsworth to Alexander Tytler's 1792 translation of Schiller's *Die Rauber*. Yet as Coleridge notes in a letter to Thomas Poole dated 26 October 1798, German authors like "Klopstock, Goethe . . . Wieland, Schiller & Kotzebu [*sic*]" had drawn back in horror at the news of the Terror: "It is absolutely false that the literary Men are Democrats in Germany – Many *were*; but like me, have *published* Abjurations of the French" (*CL*, 1:435). These abjurations, however, were not translated into English, and the political satirists of periodicals like the *Anti-Jacobin* were not interested in such details anyway.[47] The surprise that Coleridge shows in his letter to Poole, among other things, illustrates the amount of misinformation present in Britain by 1798 concerning the politics of German drama – misinformation that did not change for twenty-five years. Even in 1820, Hazlitt's essay "On the German Drama" describes German dramatists as "incorrigible Jacobins . . . their school of poetry is the only real school of Radical Reform."[48]

Ashton arrives at 1800 as the watershed date for the British rejection of German literature, then, largely because it coincides with the publication date of Coleridge's *Wallenstein* and the waning in popularity of English adaptations of the plays of August von Kotzebue. In her account, she cites the famous 4 June and 11 June 1798 numbers of the *Anti-Jacobin* – whose "The Rovers" had savagely parodied German drama as morally promiscuous and bent on overthrowing all governments – as playing a central part in German drama's sudden fall from critical favor. Because she is more concerned with the process by which interest in German literature revived after 1820, her project does not allow her to construct an adequately complex explanation of how and why German drama, after receiving an enthusiastic and distinguished reception between 1788 and 1794, so quickly came to be perceived as a threat to British cultural stability and identity. My interest here lies less in providing an exhaustive account of this reception than in demonstrating how and why debates earlier in the decade over the supernatural on stage become conflated with, and subsumed by, later histrionic rejec-

tions of German drama. Further complicating Ashton's accurate though linear narrative of reception and rejection and its effect on British writers will enable us to understand why many of Baillie's plays, after 1798, attempt to exploit the popular mania for supernatural spectacle by positing a non-German, discernibly British supernatural placed in a recognizably British historical setting, and surrounded by the legitimacy of Shakespeare, protestantism, and patriotism.

I would like to suggest that the problems German drama poses for British reviewers stem not from its perceived differences from British drama, but from its perceived similarities to it. Beginning with Henry MacKenzie's 1788 address to the Royal Society of Edinburgh – the first known mention of Schiller in Britain – British critics had narrated the meteoric ascent of German drama as a British victory in a British–French conflict. Even MacKenzie's learned *Account of the German Theatre* (1788) presented it as previously enslaved both to the French language and to French false standards of taste, only to be challenged and defeated by a vernacular theater drawing on Shakespeare as its chief inspiration. Once England had gone to war against France in 1792, it is not surprising that such an account – which dramatizes a pure, national genius overcoming a tyrannical French internationalism – proved persuasive to a number of reviewers. As the war with France progressed and as fears of invasion grew, however, these same nationalist feelings also increased in intensity, to the point of becoming histrionic and xenophobic. In chapter 2's account of the reception of German literature in England, I attributed such a central role to Lewis not only because the perceived excesses of *The Monk* and *Castle Spectre* stigmatized the German sources from which Lewis drew, but also because the reception of these works illustrated the very processes by which British reviewers in turn rejected German drama. Lewis's reviewers and biographers, in scrutinizing every detail of *The Monk* and *Castle Spectre*, had concluded that the source of their appeal lay in Lewis's English "genius," while the sources of their corruption lay squarely with both texts' "Germanness."[49] British reviewers had achieved a similar separation of Englishness and Germanness by attributing the English attraction for German drama to its Shakespearean roots, while at the same time arguing that German drama's moral and political excesses were in danger of debauching the taste of English audiences for the wholesome fare of their national dramatists.

The countless reviews, letters, biographies, and accounts from these last years of the eighteenth century make clear that the British anxiety of influence over German drama is more complex – and in ways that alter

how we imagine its relation to British drama of the period – than modern critical accounts thus far have indicated. On one hand, it is undeniable that British periodicals exercised considerable power and cultural authority; such documents as Scott's "Advertisement" to *The House of Aspen* (1830), which recounts his decision in 1799 not to publish his "Germanized brat" because of the *Anti-Jacobin*'s condemnation of German drama as morally and politically subversive, testify to the overall climate of intimidation prevailing at the close of the century.[50] Such a cultural climate also begins to explain, to name a related example, why Coleridge would publicly deny in 1800 being "numbered among the Partizans of the German Theatre" even while his own notebooks and Lamb's recollections indicate otherwise.[51] What the reception history also suggests, however, is that British anxieties stemmed not from the mere existence of German drama but rather from fear that British readers would become politically or morally corrupted by coming into contact with it. German drama, reviewers repeatedly proclaimed, was an admirable thing – so long as it stayed in Germany, on the German stage, and in the German language.[52] After all, even Thomas Holcroft's famous importation of French melodrama to the English stage – *A Tale of Mystery* – occurred during the only window of peace – the Peace of Amiens – of an otherwise solid wall of twenty-three years of warfare. Rather than producing a wholesale rejection of German drama *per se*, then, it appears more likely that the widespread fears of military invasion in the mid-1790s produced an accompanying, obsessive vigilance at the end of the century over linguistic purity and cultural inviolability.

For Baillie, the daunting task of how to write plays that would be successful with both critics and audiences in the face of increasing cultural xenophobia was made more difficult by two specific events occurring after the spring 1798 publication of *Plays on the Passions*: the unprecedented successful staging of twelve plays by August von Kotzebue between March 1798 and March 1800, and the virtual failure of *De Monfort* at Drury Lane Theatre in April of 1800 in spite of predictions that its staging would herald a new age for legitimate drama. Now largely forgotten except as a footnote to histories of romantic drama, Kotzebue's presence on the British stage – and the significant effect of his popularity on British dramatists writing at the turn of the century – cannot be underestimated. The immensely successful production in March of 1798 of Benjamin Thompson's translation of *The Stranger*, featuring spectacles of emotion exceeding those of sentimental

drama previously seen in England, did more than produce a craving for extraordinary incident that translators quickly moved to fill; it also made prophetic earlier histrionic warnings by reviewers that the British stage would be overrun by invading foreign hordes. Between 11 October 1798 (the premiere of Elizabeth Inchbald's translation of *Lovers' Vows*) and 7 February 1800 (the final showing of Richard Cumberland's translation of *Joanna*), audiences at Drury Lane and Covent Garden were presented with roughly 240 separate performances of dramas (40 percent of all mainpieces) adapted from Kotzebue in the 300 nights in which the theaters were open to perform dramas. On any given night in this sixteen-month period, then, it was more likely than not that one of the two major playhouses in London would perform a play by Kotzebue, and six times more likely that they would perform a play by Kotzebue than one by Shakespeare.[53]

Predictably, reviewers and literati in the period read Kotzebue's dominance of the British stage during these months apocalyptically, seeing Kotzebue's "usurp[ation of] the venerable boards of Shakespeare" as a sign of British national weakness – foreboding not only the breakdown of moral and social structures but also accompanying usurpations by seductive and hostile forces on the Continent. Even fifteen years later, Jane Austen in *Mansfield Park* (1814) could represent the private staging of *Lovers' Vows* not only as potentially immodest and morally dangerous, but also as an activity oppositional to respectable family reading of Shakespeare's plays.[54] Boaden's recollection of these years, even thirty years later, still carries in it the near-hysteria of reviewers and dramatists who tried in vain to make sense of a level of popularity never before observed in such a short time, even by Sheridan in the 1770s and 1780s:

> We are now entered upon the most immoral period of the stage. Kotzebue had almost a monopoly on *Seduction*, and as he monopolized also the whole dramatic talent, we had a succession of agreeable incidents best discussed in a court of justice, and the only unity of action recommendable, is that of an action for damages . . . The very devil possessed the stage of Europe just now; not a single mortal could write but upon the subject of *seduction* – a hateful, treacherous, and unmanly vice.[55]

While Boaden in this passage goes on to present multiple examples of immorality in Kotzebue's plays, the allusiveness of his writing here tempts one to ask further just what is being seduced, and what damaged. As Anna Clark notes in *Women's Silence, Men's Violence: Sexual Assault in*

England 1770–1845, "in the eyes of the law sexual assault was only significant when it involved the 'property' of a man – a virginal daughter or wife."[56] Boaden's sexual and legal vocabulary constructs a scenario in which a virginal British stage – and its entire dramatic talent – has been seduced by an "unmanly" foreign evil that has robbed it of its purity and honor. Boaden's presentation of Kotzebue's seduction of the British stage as grounds for a civil suit, then, on one level reflects existing modes in the period for prosecuting sexual assault; his introduction of multiple references to "monopoly" into the scenario, however, deepen his accusation to something more treacherous and despicable. No longer merely as a maiden betrayed by a continental libertine, the British stage, once "monopolized," becomes a maiden sold into prostitution by the economic rapaciousness of the very guardian-managers bound to protect her and to insure the legitimacy of her productions. By Boaden's logic, an improperly protected national stage quickly becomes violated and dishonored, forced to produce illegitimate – half-English and half-German – offspring.

Boaden's preoccupation with "unmanly" violation and with the purity of the stage is echoed in contemporary periodicals like the *Analytical Review*, which in 1798 describes the production of Germanized dramas like *Castle Spectre* "as truly humiliating to the pride of our national taste; and as seeming to demonstrate, that the manly and sublime beauties of the drama must resign their place in the estimation of a British public to stage-trick and scenery; to pantomime and farce."[57] As the confrontation over the supernatural on stage earlier in the decade suggests, "Germanness," while treated as a corrupting and invasive force by reviewers, simply makes manifest generic "impurities" that have existed for decades. Once deported outside the borders of Britain's national literature, pantomime, farce, and associated forms of dramatic spectacle become not only impure prostitutions of legitimate tragedy and comedy, but also invading cultural forms threatening to feminize the British stage.

IV BRITON'S GHOSTS AND "NATIVE GENIUS"

For a majority of reviewers and intellectuals, then, the failure of Baillie's *De Monfort* to live up to expectations when it was staged in 1800 signified a death knell for British theater. From our own historical perspective, it is fairly easy to see why Baillie's play – whose energy lies in its poetry and characterization rather than in spectacle and what Coleridge would call

its "situations" – would succeed only moderately in a theater where only half of the audience could hear a regular speaking voice clearly. Ten years later, the successful Edinburgh première of Baillie's *The Family Legend* would feature a more intricate and suspenseful story, Scottish subject matter, and a smaller venue. Yet for Baillie's contemporaries *De Monfort*'s "failure" confirmed the wholesale debauchment of London theater audiences, and rendered her – unwillingly – a kind of exemplary martyr of corrupt managers and corrupt popular taste. Over a decade later, Scott's "Essay on the Drama" would take up these metaphors in what is one of the least reserved and most laudatory assessments of his career. For the purposes of this chapter, I call attention both to the position of German drama in Scott's narrative and to the central role played by ideological assumptions about purity – assumptions that ultimately conflate purity of genre with that of national identity and gender:

> While the British stage received a new impulse from a country [Germany] whose literature had hitherto scarce been known to exist, she was enriched by productions of the richest native genius. A retired female [Baillie's name footnoted by Scott here], thinking and writing in solitude, presented to her countrymen the means of regaining the true and manly tone of national tragedy. (*SMP*, VI:387)

Scott's opposition of "retired female" to "countrymen" and "manly tone" shows him to be well aware of the ironies of gender operating here – ironies that led Byron to speculate with amusement that Baillie had borrowed testicles to write her tragedies,[58] and that had invited most London literary figures at the end of the eighteenth century to assume the author of the first volume of *Plays on the Passions* to be a man.[59] Scott's ironic juxtaposition, however, does not lessen the magnitude of the cultural assumptions operating here – assumptions that equate tragedy with intellect, national manliness, and "truth," and late-eighteenth-century popular spectacle with emotionalism, international unmanliness, and falsehood. Moreover, in constructing these dualisms, Scott's formulation not only privileges national tragedy as the highest kind of dramatic discourse but also defines it in diametric opposition to the kinds of German-influenced gothic drama popular at the turn of the nineteenth century. Scott's assumptions concerning tragedy, then, do not merely echo those of his critical contemporaries in defining dramatic value by rejecting "foreign" influences and "impurities." They also contain a tacit rejection of a genre within which, as we will see in the

next chapter, Scott himself wrote at the beginning of his career and which he chose to abandon when its reputation plummeted after 1798.

Even more striking, however, is the degree to which Scott's construction of both Baillie and tragedy depends upon ignoring the very same kinds of "impurities" operating underneath any formulation of the "British" nation. As Linda Colley has chronicled in *Britons*, internal dissension at the turn of the nineteenth century within Britain – and even within Scotland itself – was hardly a thing of the past.[60] With *Douglas* author John Home, then, Baillie became in 1809 a centerpiece to Scott's efforts to reestablish a national theater in Edinburgh, a project that would at once assert Edinburgh's importance within the United Kingdom while erasing one more glaring difference between that city and London. Like *Douglas*, Baillie's *Family Legend* focuses itself on explicitly national subject matter while reinventing the figure of the highlander as the prototypical *British* military warrior: brave, enlightened, fearless, and honorable. As Beth Friedman-Romell recently has suggested, this reinvention is particularly suited "for national consumption and export," and both Baillie and Scott took considerable care in planning *The Family Legend*'s production so as not to stir up longstanding enmity between clans.[61] Part of Scott's construction of a properly national drama, then, depends not just upon purifying the stage by banishing "Germanized" gothic drama; it also requires an appropriately pure voice capable of transcending historical and partisan disputes *within* the nation.

For Scott, Baillie is able to provide "the means of regaining the true and manly tone of national tragedy" even while writing within the intricate array of cultural demands produced by wartime censorship and xenophobia. As Baillie's own productions from this same decade indicate, however, her "national" ambitions are far more British than Scottish. While of Scotch descent and clearly pleased over the Edinburgh reception of *The Family Legend*, Baillie is hardly a "national" dramatist except in the most pan-British sense. Raised in Glasgow yet living in London for her entire adult life, Baillie directed her ultimate ambitions toward achieving success on the London stage. None of the introductions to the *Plays on the Passions*, furthermore, make reference to her Scottish origins, and her Introduction to her *Miscellaneous Plays*, which refers to the legend of Rob Roy, plainly states her desire to contribute to the stock of national (i.e., English) drama by "leav[ing] behind me in the world a few plays, some of which might offer a chance of continuing to be acted" (*BMP*, v). The disappointing reception of *De Monfort* at Drury Lane, as she was well aware, had made this goal after

1800 more difficult because it produced a subsequent lack of interest in Baillie's plays by London theater managers.[62] Consequently, volume II of *Plays on the Passions* (1802) must be read both as a personal response to an initial failure on the London stage and as a patriotic response to the perceived larger failure of the British stage to adhere to its own Shakespearean traditions. As the central piece of this second volume, the two-part *Ethwald* (her tragedy on Ambition) embodies Baillie's attempt to write plays that will be more popular than *De Monfort* with audiences, and which posit a legitimate and national (or in Scott's words, "high and manly") alternative to German spectacle.

For a modern reader, *Ethwald* is most striking for its elaborate use of grand spectacles, rivaling in magnitude Lewis's *Castle Spectre* and Sheridan's translation of Kotzebue's *Pizarro*. *Ethwald Part I* alone contains a banquet, an after-battle ceremony, two elaborate battle scenes, a rebellion and murder of a king, a spurned lover's mad scene, and a deathbed scene. It also refers to no fewer than nine of Shakespeare's plays, and most frequently to *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Richard III*, whose frequent revivals dominated productions of Shakespeare on the London stage in the last quarter of the eighteenth century.[63] Shakespeare's presence in *Ethwald* is more than merely to counter-balance the resemblance that many of its scenes have to German and to supernatural drama; the play itself constitutes Baillie's most determined attempt to incorporate renaissance language and modern stage spectacle into a serious and stageable drama. Her description of a druids' cave, spoken by a young boy afraid to sleep, provides a typical example of how rigorously she attempts to infuse supernatural subjects with highly wrought poetry:

> ETHWALD: The Druids' cave, say'st thou? What cave is that?
> Where is it? Who hath seen it? What scar'd fool
> Has fill'd thine ears with all these horrid things?
> BOY: It is a cavern vast and terrible,
> Under the ground full deep; perhaps, my Lord,
> Beneath our very feet, here as we stand;
> For few do know the spot and centre of it,
> Tho' many mouths it has and entries dark.
> Some are like hollow pits bor'd thro' the earth,
> O'er which afar their lakes of molten fire
> Swelt'ring and boiling like a mighty pot.
> Some like straight passes thro' the rifted rocks,
> From which oft' issue shrieks, and whistling gusts,
> And wailings dismal. (*BP*, II:183–4)

The supernatural content of this description, however, and that of the scene that follows it in the druids' cave, cause Baillie sufficient anxiety

for her to footnote each passage. These footnotes serve either to demonstrate sufficient historical or literary precedent, or to explain away the same scene rationally through this supporting text: "It is natural to suppose that the Diviners or Fortune-tellers of this period should, in their superstitions and pretensions, very much resemble the ancient Druidesses" (*BP*, II:183n). Still more striking is the scene that follows – in which incantations, dance, fire, and subterranean thunder bring forward "crowds [of] terrible spectres," and in which Ethwald hears "the dungeon'd captives' sighs" and his miserable subjects' "shrieks" – and in which Baillie immediately cites her source, *Macbeth*:

> I will not take upon me to say that, if I had never read Shakespeare's Macbeth, I should have thought of bringing Ethwald into a cavern under ground to enquire his destiny, though I believe this desire to look into futurity (particularly in a superstitious age) is a very constant attendant on ambition; but I hope the reader will not find in the above scene any offensive use made of the works of that great master. (*BP*, II:194n)

Immediately striking here is the similarity between Baillie's defense of this supernatural scene and Boaden's defense of *Cambro-Britons*; both employ the language of dramatic necessity and legal precedent, referring to Shakespeare as the "great master" of British drama. As with Coleridge, Baillie's anxiety does not originate where much of modern criticism would teach us to expect it in a romantic writer – the clear influence of *Macbeth* and particularly Kemble's production of it – but rather from the scene's incredible complexity and grandiosity of spectacle, which exceeds anything in *Castle Spectre* or even in George Colman the Younger's *Blue-beard* (1798). Resembling at once a womb and a pit of hell, Baillie's "wide arched cave, rude but grand" is site to scores of ghosts shrouded by mist, "music, solemn and wild," and a large assembly of Mystics and Mystic Sisters, who "bow themselves very low" to an Arch Sister, who then performs an elaborate pagan ceremony to tell Ethwald his future (*BP*, II:188). Baillie's scholarly footnotes, then, allow her to re-present supernatural scenes in rational terms without having to do so within the main text of the narrative. Perhaps more importantly, they enable her to vary her presentation of these scenes depending on the audience, which means, to use an earlier example, that the text version of *Ethwald* can reside within the rational supernatural of *The Romance of the Forest* while a performed version can indulge squarely in stage representations of the supernatural. After all, such notes do not carry over into stage productions, nor are they desired by gothic-

indulged theater audiences; they are there for Baillie's critical and reading audiences only.

Given this full-blown supernatural scene and the play's predominance of grand processions and exotic rituals, it is not surprising that the two parts of *Ethwald* studiously avoid any resemblance or reference to German drama or to germanized productions like *Castle Spectre*. Baillie takes particular care to locate her "real" supernatural scene – the only one in all of the *Plays on the Passions* – safely in a druid past, which she argues can accommodate a more imaginative and fanciful dramatization without violating antiquarian standards of probability:

> I have therefore thought that I might here, without offence, fix my story; here give it a "habitation and a name," and model it to my own fancy, as might best suit my design. In so doing, I run no risk of disturbing or deranging the recollection of any important truth, or of any thing that deserves to be remembered. However, though I have not adhered to history, the incidents and events of the plays will be found, I hope, consistent with the character of the times. (*BP*, II:x)

This trouble taken by Baillie to keep "consistent with the character of the times" by securing her supernatural scene within the legitimacy of *Macbeth* and antiquarian scholarship was warranted. Even three decades later, critical strictures against the supernatural on stage remained intense enough to act virtually as a litmus test of legitimacy. As late as 1832, theater historian John Genest described both *Fontainville Forest* and *Castle Spectre* as "contemptible" because of their supernaturalism; in the case of *Castle Spectre*, Genest saw no need to explain his criteria for judgment beyond saying "the plot is rendered contemptible by the introduction of the Ghost."[64] In a climate where one supernatural scene automatically rendered a drama illegitimate and "contemptible," Baillie's seemingly meticulous attention to historical issues and to the example of "great master[s]" of renaissance drama becomes more understandable.

Baillie's awareness of the stigma of German drama is indirectly present not only in her studious cultivation of Shakespeare in *Ethwald*, but also in her setting: "Britain, in the kingdom of Mercia, the time towards the end of the Heptarchy" (*BP*, II:x). Her decision to set her tragedy well before the Norman invasion, I believe, should be read as an attempt to make the tragedy as British as possible – to bypass all French influence by setting up a structure in which she can link contemporary political and religious ideas to ancient indigenous precedent.[65] The

action of the play itself, moreover, plays with remarkable adroitness to contemporary political orthodoxy by allegorizing the ultimate downfall of the French Revolution and of Napoleon. Like Napoleon, Ethwald distinguishes himself in battle, leads a revolt, and exploits Catholic superstition to declare himself king. In doing so, he violates the very familial, social, and political hierarchies celebrated by Coleridge in *Remorse*.[66] Baillie, moreover, associates Ethwald's fondness for Napoleonic overreaching and tyranny with Catholicism, representing the Catholic Church as only interested in ideological control and political power. The play's preoccupation with finding an appropriately "British" setting, therefore, extends to its ideological construction of religious conflict, since it, breathtakingly, dramatizes the longstanding conflict between Catholic and Protestant as existing in germ in pre-Conquest Mercia well before Henry VIII's break with Rome in 1538. Catholic–Protestant conflict in *Ethwald*, then, is both fundamental to the formation of British notions of political liberty and an inherent part of Saxon consciousness. And Protestantism, predictably, becomes the natural outcome of any Christian religious inquiry when faced with corrupt religious officials who claim no local allegiance yet claim a monopoly on religious truth and power.

One of the play's projects, then, is to distinguish between superstition (which enslaves people) and true religion (which frees people). Baillie raises these issues through her most heroic character, Ethwald's mentor Ethelbert, who engages in a conflict with the Catholic Church, and whose attempts to liberate the young Ethwald's mind through reading ultimately fail. In the play's opening scene, Baillie presents Ethwald as a Mercian "stripling" confined to his father's castle and pining to test his strength in battle – an avenue forbidden to him because of a wizard's prophecy. Upon hearing the story of a born leader who declined to become king, he becomes momentarily animated, a rare enough occurrence for his brother Selred and Ethelbert to dispute the cause of his inconsistent behavior. While Ethelbert argues that "close confinement makes the pining youth / More eager to be free" (a psychological solution in line with Baillie's critique of superstition in *Orra* and *The Family Legend*) Selred affixes a different cause to Ethwald's holding ambition above his station – his fondness for reading:

> SELRED: Nay, rather say, the lore he had from thee
> Hath o'er him cast this sullen gloom. Ere this
> Where was the fiercest courser of our stalls

That did not shortly under him become
As gentle as a lamb? What bow so stiff
But he would urge and strain his youthful strength,
Till ev'ry sinew o'er his body rose,
Like to the sooty forger's swelling arm,
Until it bent to him? . . .
But since he learnt from thee that letter'd art,
Which only sacred priests were meant to know,
See how it is with him! (*BP*, II:115–16)

Selred's association of reading with class pretensions duplicates that of late-eighteenth-century critics of the gothic, and, within this scene, allows Baillie to offer a rather ingenious double criticism of gothic writing and Catholicism. Selred distrusts reading because he trusts religious authority; he accepts the decree of the Church prohibiting its members from reading the Bible (and thereby preserving its monopolistic power of interpretation) because he is "a plain soldier, and unfit to judge / Of mysteries which but concern the learned" (*BP*, II:118). Ethelbert defends himself by defending the Bible, which he has been teaching Ethwald to read – an activity for which the Catholic Church has branded him as a worshipper of the devil. Ethwald's erratic behavior, however, has not been caused by reading the Bible, but rather by reading other books that have closed rather than opened his mind:

ETHELBERT: In thy younger brother I had mark'd
A searching mind of freer exercise,
Untrammell'd with the thoughts of other men; . . .
With pains and cost I diverse books procured,
Telling of wars, and arms, and famous men;
Thinking it would his young attention rouse;
Would combat best a learner's difficulty,
And pave the way at length for better things:
But here his seized soul has wrapp'd itself,
And from the means is heedless of the end. (*BP*, II:119)

To put it plainly, Ethwald's ambition has been fired by reading romances, which, instead of serving as a means to "better things," have ruined his taste for such learned works. Reading in the play is not necessarily a pernicious activity, however, if what gets read is the Bible. To prove this to Selred, Ethelbert recounts, in terms reminiscent of the Pedlar in *The Ruined Cottage*, "a plain and simple tale / As true as it is artless": of discovering the beauties of the Bible, and of discovering that "leagued priests" determined "to hold th' immortal soul of man / In

everlasting thraldom" have misused the book for oppressive purposes (*BP*, II:117–18). With its familiar opposition of priestly falsehood to biblical truth, Ethelbert's tale establishes the play's larger religious conflict in terms of artless simplicity combatting worldly sophistry. For Baillie's 1802 audience, it defines Protestant–Catholic conflict as an unavoidable, if not universal, result of the abuse of religious authority, doing so through a series of dualisms perfectly palatable to British wartime patriotism: good versus evil, truth versus falsehood, Protestantism versus Catholicism, and Britain versus the Continent.

Disclaiming kinship to gothic and German drama, I contend, is inextricably bound to romanticism's exaltation of tragedy as the highest, most legitimate, and most British of dramatic forms. That Baillie's dramatic patriotism necessitates her rejection of German drama becomes clear in the preface to her *Miscellaneous Plays* (1804), where Baillie anticipates imputations that her tragedy *Rayner* betrays the influence of Schiller:

> A Play, with the scene laid in Germany, and opening with a noisy meeting of midnight robbers over their wine, will, I believe, suggest to my reader certain sources from which he will suppose my ideas must certainly have been taken. Will he give me perfect credit when I assure him, at the time this play was written, I had not only never read any German plays, but was even ignorant that such things as German plays of any reputation existed? (*BMP*, xii–xiii)

Frederick Ewen quotes this passage as evidence that the reputation of Schiller after 1798 had plummeted so drastically "that some writers were forced to an emphatic disclaimer of the charges . . . of German paternity to literary offspring."[67] In Baillie's preface, the only statements stronger than her disavowal of German drama are those in which she declares her patriotism:

> So strong is my attachment to the drama of my native country, at the head of which stands one whom every British heart thinks of with pride, that a distant and uncertain hope of having a very few of the pieces . . . represented to [the public] with approbation . . . is sufficient to animate me to every exertion that I am capable of making. (*BMP*, viii–ix)

The relation between dramatic patriotism and dramatic xenophobia is most clear, however, in Baillie's apology for Act III, Scene One of *Rayner* – the scene (quoted above) in which several crowds wait for the verdict of Rayner's trial. Regarding this scene, Baillie apologizes for the "varied conduct of the whole, sometimes gay and sometimes ludicrous, some-

times tender or distressing, but scarcely at any time solemn or dignified," which she worries "will be displeasing to those who are accustomed to admire tragedy in its most exalted form" (*BMP*, xi). Such a scene – especially the point within it "where the songs of the confined chief of banditti and a slight sketch of this character are introduced" (*BMP*, xi) – is the staple of the German genre of "drama," popularized in Britain by *Castle Spectre: A Drama in Five Acts* and defined in Britain by Henry MacKenzie in *An Account of the German Theatre*: "*drames*, a species of performance for which we have not yet got in English a very definite term . . . holds a sort of middle place between tragedy and comedy, borrowing from the first its passions and sentiments, from the last the rank of its persons, and the fortunate nature of its conclusion."[68] Baillie's anxiety about this scene and the "varied conduct of the whole" of *Rayner*, then, stems from the fact that it marks her play not only as German-influenced but also as generically impure. As she concedes, the scene exposes *Rayner*'s violation of the rules of "tragedy in its most exalted form," and of Baillie's pledge not to "introduce any under-plot nor patched scenes unconnected with the main business, but . . . to make everything arise naturally from the circumstances of the story" (*BMP*, xi). In anticipating these criticisms of generic impurity and German influence, Baillie argues that the scene, though imperfect, is proof of her love of her country:

> That part of the scene . . . though very appropriate to the place, stands loose from the business of the play, and may therefore be considered as superfluous and contradicting what I have said above. But as it is short, and is a fancy come into my head from hearing stories in my childhood of Rob Roy, our Robin Hood of Scotland, I cannot find in my heart to blot it out, though, either on the stage or in the closet, any body is welcome to do it for me by passing it over. (*BMP*, xi)

Looking back, then, to the highly "varied conduct" of the supernatural scene in *Ethwald* – with mystic sisters dancing and chanting, smoke-covered stage, "crowds of terrible spectres" (*BP*, II:191), "dismal sounds from without, and distant music, solemn and wild" (*BP*, II:188) – we can see that the scene poses a threat not only to the generic purity of Baillie's tragedy, but also to her project of aligning Catholicism with superstition and Protestantism with a true and "artless" religion based in the study of the Bible.

Given the critical vilification of gothic writing and the popular mania of her contemporaries for the supernatural on stage, Baillie's decision to

stage an elaborate supernatural spectacle in *Ethwald* is most likely market-driven – a response to the 1800 failure of *De Monfort* and an attempt to exploit the perennial success of Drury Lane's productions of *Macbeth* and *Richard III*. Baillie's desire for stage success strikes me as the most plausible explanation for this sole supernatural scene in all of the *Plays on the Passions* in part because of the enormous ideological problems that such a scene poses for her attempts to locate the seeds of a natural and national Protestantism in pre-Norman England. If we are to accept the word of her footnote, the function of Baillie's supernatural scene is to demonstrate a psychological truism: that the "desire to look into futurity (particularly in a superstitious age) is a very constant attendant on ambition" (*BP*, II:194n). Given the trouble to which Baillie has gone prior to this scene to ally Catholicism with superstition and Protestantism with religious truth, one would expect Baillie's scene in the druid cave to function like Coleridge's sham-supernatural scene in *Remorse*. Instead, Baillie represents the powers of the mystic sisters as real, and their prophecies as true. Her footnote may speak from a rationalist viewpoint and refer to the setting of *Ethwald* as "a superstitious age," but it in no way approaches rationalizing or undercutting the scene's numerous spirits, claps of thunder, and feats of prophetic magic. While the threats of Catholic priests in *Ethwald* are always empty of real religious power or truth, the prophecies of the arch-sister are all fulfilled, to the letter, by the end of the play. In introducing a second source of legitimate religious power, then, Baillie renders her Protestant–Catholic opposition less clean and less orthodox. She seems content, however, to neutralize this alternative religious power by placing it in an identifiably British ancestral religion, long dead and about which little is known.

In a play whose setting does not allow the convenience of an ancient past without history, however, Baillie's ghosts undergo drastic changes. Published in her three-volume collection of *Dramas* (1836), Baillie's *The Phantom* contains a scene in which the heroine Alice, while in the house of her betrothed Malcolm, is visited by the ghost of her best friend Emma Graham, who has just died of a fever and whom Malcolm secretly loves. As Emma had not loved Malcolm, her ghost instructs Alice to find a secret paper that explains that Emma already had sworn to give her hand to Basil Gordon, a Catholic whom her father loathes. The scene's interest to us lies in its absolute lack of German and gothic influences, which elsewhere are so prevalent in Baillie's plays, particularly when she writes on Scottish subjects:

ALICE: I dare approach no nearer till I hear
Words of thy natural voice. Art thou alive?
PHANTOM: A term, short as the passing of a thought,
Hath brought me here from the chamber where my friends
Are now lamenting round my lifeless body.
ALICE: And 'tis thy spirit which before mine eyes
Thy body's semblance wears: and thou art nothing
That mortal hands may touch or arms encircle!
O look not on me with that fixed look!
Thou lov'st me still, else thou hadst not been here,
And yet I fear thee.
PHANTOM: Fear me not, dear Alice!
I yearn'd to look upon thee ere I pass
That gulf which parts the living from the dead:
And I have words to utter which thine ear
Must listen to, thy mind retain distinctly.
ALICE: Say what thou wilt; thou art a blessed spirit,
And cannot do me harm –
I know it well: but let thy words be few;
The fears of nature are increasing on me.
(*Bending one knee to the ground.*)
O God! Lord of all beings, dead and living!
Strengthen and keep me in this awful hour!
PHANTOM: And to thy fervent prayer I say, Amen.
Let this assure thee, that, though diff'rent natures
Invest us now, we are the children still
Of one great Parent.[69]

As the only plays containing "real" supernatural scenes in the Baillie dramatic corpus, *Ethwald* and *The Phantom* show Baillie to be less apprehensive about the stigma of German supernaturalism when writing plays with British settings. While *Ethwald* posits a non-German, British supernatural by locating it safely in Britain's druidical ancestry, the more modern setting of *The Phantom* presents Baillie with the difficult task of how to imagine a truly British supernatural – one independent of influence from the Continent and capable of titillating the large audiences of London theaters. Considering the preponderance of supernatural scenes in early-nineteenth-century popular drama, Baillie's scene in *The Phantom* is remarkable for its rationality, pan-Protestantism, and elaborate efforts to alleviate the religious doubts of its audience. It is all the more remarkably *un*frightening when we consider that *The Phantom* employs more conventionally gothic effects elsewhere, as well as

courting popular stage practices by packaging the play as "A Musical Drama" and exploiting the Scottish Highlands as both an exotic yet safely national locus.[70]

These examples, and Baillie's critical introductions and letters, constitute one of the most impressive homages and comprehensive responses to gothic's cultural stigma. Written in the face of cavernous theaters and a critical climate that drastically restricted her choice of legitimate dramatic models and practices, Baillie's dramas show us a playwright attempting to reform theater audiences mad for supernatural and German spectacle by reworking these same popular conventions until they subvert their own supposedly anti-intellectual and pernicious tendencies. Taken as a body of work, Baillie's dramatic corpus presents us with perhaps the most sustained effort by a romantic writer to retheorize gothic drama's penchant for the spectacular and redirect its most sensational conventions to ends more in harmony with prevailing notions of dramatic legitimacy. Her efforts display a deep-seeded and complex distrust of unmediated supernatural representations and of the gothic dramas that instituted them, and her leeriness produces strategies of representation similar to those employed in the 1798 *Lyrical Ballads* for rendering the supernatural palatable to reviewers and transforming it into a tool for audience edification. The ghost of Emma Graham, not to mention the long train of supernatural interventions that preceded it in Baillie's work, represents more than merely an attempt by Baillie to identify herself as a national dramatist wishing to purify and revitalize British stage tragedy. It also stands as a microcosm of early-nineteenth-century attempts to contain the political, emotional, and religious histrionics of gothic drama by positing a national supernaturalism in opposition to the "German" gothicism popularized by Lewis. Baillie's attempts to reach London theater audiences while retaining her status as a legitimate dramatist, then, function in this study as an emblem for how romantic ideology's conceptions of legitimacy and illegitimacy extended beyond poetry to the stage, and grew out of the very economic and political conflicts that Baillie and writers like her were forced to negotiate.

CHAPTER 5

"*To foist thy stale romance*": *Scott, antiquarianism, and authorship*

> And think'st thou, Scott, by vain conceit perchance,
> On public taste to foist thy stale romance,
> Though Murray with his Miller may combine
> To yield thy muse just half-a-crown per line?
> No! when the sons of song descend to trade,
> Their bays are sear, their former laurels fade.
> Let such forego the poet's sacred name,
> Who rack their brains for lucre, not for fame:
> Still for stern Mammon may they toil in vain!
> And sadly gaze on Gold they cannot gain!
> Such be their meed, such still the just reward
> Of prostituted Muse, and hireling bard!
>
> (Byron, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*)[1]

As Jane Millgate, Peter T. Murphy, and John Sutherland recently have argued, the relation between popular success and artistic success in literary production – writing "for lucre . . . [or] for fame" – was "a subject which Scott himself could never leave completely alone."[2] Part of the reason for this lies with Scott's unprecedented popularity as a writer of metrical romances between 1805 and 1813. As Murphy notes, "His accomplishment remains, I think, almost unparalleled, even in our era of smash hits and giant blockbusters."[3] Scott's commercial success in these years made him ripe for attacks like the one above by Byron in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, and scholars such as Sutherland have attributed the anonymity of the Waverley novels at least in part to Scott's wariness of this particular kind of attack.[4] Scott's own letters confirm that by 1814 writing under his own name had become somewhat of a hindrance and a constraint, and that *Waverley*'s anonymity allowed him to have "a great deal of fun in the accomplishment of the task" (*SL*, III:457). Three weeks later, Scott asserted in a letter to John Morritt that claiming authorship for his novel would "prevent me of the

pleasure of writing again" as well as being "[in]decorous": "In truth I am not sure it would be considerd quite decorous for me as a Clerk of Session to write novels[.] Judges being monks clerks are a sort of lay-brethren from whom some solemnity of walk & conduct may be expected" (*SL*, III:479). What is clear from Scott's concern with what is "decorous" in this missive, and from much of his other correspondence throughout his career, is that he saw authorship as a curb to his own writerly pleasure and creativity. Both suggest as well that the social demands of being "Walter Scott the author" worked in ways similar to those of being "Walter Scott, Clerk of Session," and evidently these demands were not those that accorded him the most pleasure.

Given *Waverley*'s centrality in histories of the novel and its enormous impact in its own time, modern assessments of Scott's persistent anonymity and pseudonymity have focused almost exclusively on his later career as a novelist. Yet as Jane Millgate cautions, "th[is] later career was necessarily built upon . . . his earlier career both as a poet and, earlier still, as a translator, collector, editor, and annotator."[5] *Waverley*'s success, combined with the more general sense that Scott's novels eclipsed his poetry, often has led modern critics to forget that Scott first achieved an unparalleled level of acclaim and popular success between 1805 and 1813 as a poet. Its astounding success, then, has made us too liable to forget as well that Scott possessed a barrister's sense of authorship as a social and legal category well before he published *Waverley* in 1814. Scott's earlier manipulations of authorship usually had involved the relatively simple question of whether his name would appear on the title page of a given work; he generally refused to authorize inexpensive editions or anything that smacked of cheapness. As both Millgate and Marlon Ross have noted, however, Scott's authorial decisions also carry with them marked logics of genre and gender. Beginning with an analysis of Byron's attack in *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, Ross asserts that "It is not by mistake . . . that Byron latches onto the female reader to represent the low level to which literature has stooped in his age . . . [For Byron i]t is not that writers like Scott do not have talent, but that they unwittingly are contributing to the erosion of a culture which it is their duty to propagate."[6] It is hardly surprising, then, that Scott shows an especially strong disinclination to be associated too closely with gothic romance and, as he put it, other "*missy* form[s] of publication."[7] Extending Ross's analysis beyond the arena of romance, one need only look to the genres in which Scott mostly wrote to understand why he strove throughout his career to dissociate himself from female readers and

from the appearance of "prostitut[ing his] Muse" or "descend[ing in]to trade." His creative *oeuvre* – metrical romances, historical novels, and translations and imitations of supernatural ballads and German dramas[8] – comprises those genres most closely associated with gothic fiction and drama. It is this combination of proximity to the gothic and careful cultivation of authorial persona that makes his career so pertinent to this study's arguments about gothic's reception and its relation to romantic ideology's construction of high culture.

As we saw most starkly in chapter 1 with his *Quarterly* review of *The Fatal Revenge*, Scott was well aware of gothic's cultural status, and did not hesitate to place the "imitators of Mrs. Radcliffe and Mr. Lewis" on the bottom rung of prose fiction. Such condemnations, however, are hardly characteristic of Scott's treatment of his gothic predecessors, and what renders him so interesting a study on the larger question of the relation of gothicism and romanticism is his extensive and lifelong ambivalence toward the gothic and its practitioners. If Scott was always pragmatic about keeping a distance from gothic "imitators" and "*missy* form[s] of publication," he also was, as Fiona Robertson notes, "an early . . . support[er] of those writers of terror-fiction whom he admired as original creators rather than hack imitators."[9] His *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* (1821–4)[10] provided detailed and serious treatments of the fiction of Walpole, Reeve, and Radcliffe, and his 1830 "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad" constitutes one of the most extended, if measured, assessments of Matthew Lewis in the nineteenth century. While confirming Scott's generosity as a critic, these essays also show him carefully constructing a gendered hierarchy of gothic fiction and drama that privileges the "masculine" gothic of Walpole and Lewis over the "feminine" of Radcliffe and Reeve by allying the former with the masculine realms of imaginative autonomy and antiquarian history.

This chapter aims in part, then, to understand why Scott feels compelled to make such a distinction, since Scott's construction of a gendered hierarchy of gothic fiction in his essays hardly negates his efforts to promote certain women writers during his career. I aim to connect Scott's gendered assessment of gothic fiction, however, to his early efforts to create "Walter Scott" the public author, since Scott inscribes into his own early works the same ambivalences and anxieties that appear more explicitly in the later essays on gothic writers that he included in the *Ballantyne's* series. Part of Scott's early project, I argue, involves a full-scale appropriation and recasting of popular gothic materials into a respectably historical, national, masculine, and poetic

mould. Like Baillie, Scott's transformative acts of appropriation – from "gothic" forgery to antiquarian authenticity, from foreign to national, from prose to poetry, and from feminine to masculine – require that he reject the gothic and German sources that most directly inform his own early writing. His *Minstrelsy on the Scottish Border* and subsequent metrical romances, then, show him self-consciously transforming himself from translator of the German and disciple of Lewis to antiquarian scholar and national bard.

I GENDER, HISTORY, AND GOTHIC

In writing prefatory memoirs for *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library*,[11] Scott's participation in the "trade," as concealed partner of Ballantyne and Company, presented him with the problem of positioning himself to those writers of his generic predecessor, gothic fiction. Scott's primary task in providing introductory essays to works by Walpole, Reeve, and Radcliffe was, of course, to sell books by reviving interest in a genre that had begun in 1821 to fall out of fashion. Yet Scott's ability to distance himself from his gothic predecessors throughout his career also had been essential to securing his own literary reputation, particularly since he had played a central role in reviving metrical romance and instituting it into its romantic form. By including Walpole, Reeve, and Radcliffe in an edition of standard British novelists, Scott constructed a genealogy of gothic fiction that exceeded the overall number of gothic works provided by Anna Letitia Barbauld's landmark fifty-volume *The British Novelists* (1810) – one that Scott planned to expand, had the series proven popular, by including works by Brockden Brown, Godwin, and Holcroft as well.[12]

That Scott originally wrote his *Ballantyne's* essay in 1811 defending Walpole's right to the unrestrained imaginative use of the supernatural suggests that he sought at once to support and extend Barbauld's claims for romances in her essay "On the Origin and Progress of Novel Writing," which opened *The British Novelists*. His subsequent essays on Radcliffe (1824) and Reeve (1821), moreover, extended and fleshed out the arguments and distinctions of the Walpole essay. When read as a unit, these essays attempt to reclaim gothic fiction by allowing for a more inclusive definition of the novel than that of Barbauld's essay, which, while hardly condemning romances, had nonetheless separated them from more privileged realist prose fiction.[13] Scott instead insisted that novels might indulge in supernaturalism and other "improbable"

events so long as they cultivate "authenticity" through a strenuous attention to historical detail. The problem most gothic fiction poses, he argued, was not that it threatened to seduce readers away from other forms of serious and "useful" literature, but rather that it was, with rare exceptions, inaccurate or unbelievable to some degree:

> The difficulty of attaining this nice accuracy of delineation may be best estimated by comparing "The Castle of Otranto" with the less successful efforts of later writers; where, amid all their attempts to assume the tone of antique chivalry, something occurs in every chapter so decidedly incongruous, as at once reminds us of an ill-sustained masquerade, in which ghosts, knights-errant, magicians, and damsels gent, are all equipped in hired dresses from the same warehouse in Tavistock Street. (*SMP*, III:316)

The effect of this passage is to set up a dichotomy between two kinds of gothic fiction, in which the former embodies "real" history and the latter only an "ill-sustained masquerade" of it. His use of theatrical metaphors, while less subtle, works in ways similar to Baillie. In Scott's analogy, Walpole is to legitimate drama as "later writers" are to pantomime. Gothic practitioners after Walpole, then, can only produce a kind of dumb-show while Walpole stands separate in his ability to produce the "nice accuracy of delineation" necessary to capture the appropriate antique tone that will allow discerning readers to suspend disbelief:

> Now, it seems to have been Walpole's object to attain, by the minute accuracy of a fable, sketched with singular attention to the costume of the period in which the scene was laid, that same association which might prepare his reader's mind for the reception of prodigies congenial to the creed and feelings of the actors . . . The association of which we have spoken is of a nature peculiarly delicate, and subject to be broken and disarranged. It is, for instance, almost impossible to build such a modern gothic structure as shall impress us with the feelings we have endeavoured to describe. It may be grand, or it may be gloomy; it may excite magnificent or melancholy ideas; but it must fail in bringing forth the sensation of supernatural awe, connected with halls that have echoed to the sounds of remote generations, and have been pressed by the footsteps of those who have long since passed away. (*SMP*, III:314–15)

This passage not only positions the aims of gothic fiction on the same intellectual and cultural level as history and legitimate drama, but also names Walpole as a master craftsman who can build in his readers' imaginations what an architect cannot build in reality. This power of evocation, furthermore, finds its basis in Walpole's antiquarianism. As with *Otranto*, whose "minute accuracy" produces "awe" and joins

present readers to an "authentic" historical past, Walpole's *Historical Doubts on the Reign of King Richard the Third* (1768) functions for Scott as exemplary of the power of antiquarian scholarship: "The 'Historical Doubts' are an acute and curious example how minute antiquarian research may shake our faith in the facts most pointedly averred by general history" (*SMP*, III:304–5). Against impossible odds, "Walpole has attained in [*Otranto*'s] composition, what, as an architect he must have felt beyond the power of his art" (*SMP*, III:315). The art of making the supernatural believable in this narrative becomes a supernatural, or at least sublime, feat in itself.

Contrasting her to Walpole's sublime model, Scott constructs Reeve as a lesser imitator who, in attempting to improve upon *Castle of Otranto*, has lost much of its magical effect. While Reeve possesses "excellent good sense, pure morality, and a competent command of those qualities which constitute a good romance," she neither possesses Walpole's "wonderful imagination" nor, given her retired domestic way of life, can she:

> It was scarce to be expected that the amiable and accomplished authoress, in her secluded situation, and with acquaintance of events and characters derived from books alone, should have rivalled those authors who gathered their knowledge of the human hearts from having, like Fielding and Smollett, become acquainted, by sad experience . . . Nor was it to be thought that she should have emulated in this particular Walpole, who, as a statesman, a poet, and a man of the world "who knew the world like a man," has given much individual character to his sketch of Manfred. What we here speak of is not the deficiency in the style and costume, but a certain creeping and low line of narrative and sentiment. (*SMP*, III:334–5).

Scott's criticism here is more complicated than that of his contemporaries, who, like Barbauld, so often condemned gothic fiction as an adulteration of a specifically realist genealogy of the British novel. While one is tempted to detect in Scott the familiar irritation toward women writers, it at the very least stems from a different source. Scott's irritation with certain aspects of Reeve's gothic does not stem from a belief that the inherent "femininity" of Reeve's gothic and sentimental predilections have encroached upon the realism of Defoe and Fielding. Rather, it is that Reeve's romance has annexed what Scott perceives to be originally masculine genres, embodied for him by Walpole and Mackenzie. As Ina Ferris has argued, part of Scott's accomplishment was to "ma[k]e the novel a major genre" while, at least in several instances, "acknowledg[ing] the femininity of the field he entered."[14] Yet such

acknowledgments, as Ferris, Chris Ferns, and Beth Newman have documented, were not without considerable anxiety:

> Lurking in these not wholly successful efforts to make . . . unambiguously "masculine" text[s] are two possibilities that Scott would probably find disquieting: that the novel is in some way inherently "feminine" . . . or that masculinity is itself tenuous, never completely or simply achieved.[15]

Like the English/Scottish Border on which he locates himself, Scott also finds himself throughout his career located on the borders of gender. His attempts to privilege distinctly masculine criteria in his introductory essays to Walpole, Reeve, and Radcliffe stem from his own awareness that he occupies a feminized position of authorship as a popular male writer of historical novels and metrical romances. But this does not sufficiently explain the periodic lapses of Scott's normally diplomatic tone, particularly in an introductory essay whose primary function is to promote sales.

One clue to Scott's ambivalence toward Reeve lies, I think, in his tendency throughout his essay to refer to Reeve as an "authoress." Unlike the "author" Radcliffe, Reeve is praised by Scott for having the "good sense" of knowing the limitations of her powers as a female writer. After describing Reeve's use of supernatural machinery as "cautious," Scott applauds her for appropriately "confin[ing] her flight within those limits on which her pinions could support her" (*SMP*, III:331). What prompts Scott's subsequent criticisms and my own interest are not his judgments of *The Old English Baron* itself but the preface to its second edition. In particular, Scott focuses upon the fact that Reeve has had the audacity to attack Walpole's "extravagance" as injuring *The Castle of Otranto*'s believability, and has *theorized* her critique of Walpole into a set of general rules concerning the use of the supernatural in prose fiction. Contrary to the historicist theory Scott has constructed through his analysis of Walpole's "nice delineations," Reeve maintains that ghosts must conduct themselves as they would have when living, and that historical accuracy matters less than their conduct being easily understandable and believable to modern audiences. While willing to accept Reeve so long as she stays within the confines of her sex, Scott responds with uncharacteristically vehement irony the moment that she transgresses onto traditional masculinist claims of "authority":

> We must, however, notwithstanding her authority, enter our protest against fettering the realm of shadows by the opinions entertained of it in the world of realities . . . It seems to be Miss Reeve's argument, that there is a verge of

probability, which even the most violent figment must not transgress; but we reply by the cross question, that if we are once to subject our preternatural agents to the limits of human reason, where are we to stop? . . . Where, then, may the reader ask, is the line to be drawn? or what are the limits to be placed to the reader's credulity, when those of common sense and ordinary nature are once exceeded? The question admits only one answer, namely, that the author himself, being in fact the magician, shall evoke no spirits whom he is not capable of endowing with manners and language corresponding to their supernatural character. (*SMP*, III:328–30)

The passion of Scott's questions over imposing boundaries, and his insistence on absolute authority for the author, suggest that his anxiety stems from the larger threat that Reeve's "authority" poses to his own. It is this issue of "fetters" that ultimately separates Walpole from Reeve and the other "imitators" whom Scott constructs as Walpole's female heirs.

Radcliffe presents a more complex case, since Scott is willing to celebrate her originality and taste and to accord her the status of a major writer. Yet in his estimation she ultimately fails to measure up to Walpole's achievement for reasons similar to Reeve. Even as Scott accords her the same author–magician status he does Walpole, he is careful to separate Radcliffe's "genius" from the kind of fiction that she has inspired in her imitators:

It was the cry at the period . . . that the romances of Mrs. Radcliffe, and the applause with which they were received, were evil signs of the times, and argued a great and increasing degradation of the public taste, which . . . was now coming back to the fare of the nursery, and gorged upon the wild and improbable fictions of an overheated imagination. There might be some truth in this, if it were only applied to the crowd of copyists who came forward in imitation of Mrs. Radcliffe, and assumed her magic wand, without having the power of wielding it with effect. (*SMP*, III:362–3)

What is most striking – and most typical – in Scott's treatment is his resounding rejection of the usual complaints against gothic fiction as an improbable adulteration of the novelistic practices of Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett. Rather than finding fault in Radcliffe's work for its improbabilities, Scott instead proceeds to inveigh against her use of explained supernatural as an infringement on the imagination of the author:

Mrs. Radcliffe, a name not to be mentioned without the high respect due to genius, has endeavoured to effect a compromise between those different styles of narrative [modern and ancient romance], by referring her prodigies to an

explanation founded on natural causes, in the latter chapters of her romances. To this improvement upon the Gothic romance there are so many objections, that we own ourselves inclined to prefer, as more simple and impressive, the narrative of Walpole, which details supernatural incidents as they would have been readily believed and received in the eleventh and twelfth century . . . [T]he precaution of relieving our spirits from the influence of supposed supernatural terror, seems as unnecessary in a work of professed fiction, as that of the prudent Bottom, who proposed that the human face of the representative of his lion should appear from under his mask, and acquaint the audience plainly that he was a man as other men. (*SMP*, III:316–17)

Such "pruden[ce]," "precaution," and "compromise," with their associated gender connotations, deflate Radcliffe's "genius" at inciting terror and, in Scott's argument, render her achievement that of a lower order than Walpole's. Scott enforces this sense of hierarchy, furthermore, through his association of Radcliffe with Bottom (a "rude mechanic") and his subsequent explanation of both authors' readerly "appeal." While Radcliffe inspires a "germ of superstition" in the "*mass* of humanity," Walpole inspires "the sensation of supernatural awe . . . that secret and reserved feeling of love for the marvellous and supernatural" (*SMP*, III:313) even in his aristocratic and antiquarian peers at Cambridge – who, in Scott's unironic retelling of Gray's famous letter of 1764, believed *Otranto* to be an authentic ancient text, and were frightened to the point of being deprived of sleep by it.[16]

II FROM IMITATOR TO EDITOR

> [The author] had lately chanced to look over these scenes [of *The House of Aspen*] with feelings very different from those of the adventurous period of his literary life during which they were written, and yet with such, perhaps, as a reformed libertine might regard the illegitimate production of an early amour . . . There is something to be ashamed of, certainly; but, after all, paternal vanity whispers that the child has some resemblance to the father.
>
> (Scott, Advertisement to *The House of Aspen*, 1830)[17]

Scott's association of himself with Walpole, and Walpole with the masculine tradition of antiquarian scholarship, is no accident. In locating Walpole squarely within the masculine arenas of "real history" and imaginative liberty, Scott aligns Walpole's specific kind of gothic writing with the very kinds of legitimacy most often denied to gothic's practitioners. The extent to which Scott models himself upon Walpole, moreover, is striking. His cultivation of himself as gentleman author of

antiquarian history and supernatural romance, not to mention his interest in controlling all stages of literary production, suggest a strong kinship, one that Scott cultivated most conspicuously in the construction of his estate, Abbotsford. As Scott's biographer John Sutherland describes, Abbotsford, like Walpole's Strawberry Hill, provided Scott with an arena within which he could literally fabricate history and thereby channel his gothic predilections:

> Inside, Scott's imagination ran wild. Suits of armour and old weaponry (guns, pistols, claymores, bugles, horns) covered the walls. He had a library-study, with secret recessed compartments (shades of Northanger Abbey) . . . [and] commissioned paintings to celebrate his family history and lore. Heraldic devices were posted up in the main hall.[18]

What Sutherland calls Abbotsford's "spurious antiquity" – its conical turrets and castellated fringe outside and profusion of stained glass and heraldic devices inside – strongly recalls not only Walpole's villa but also his ruse with *Castle of Otranto*, which he presented in its first edition as an English translation of a sixteenth-century Italian retelling of a story set during the Crusades. Walpole's success in *Otranto* in passing off its story as an authentic "found" history was a feat that Scott admired, and the power to shape opinion inscribed in Walpole's ruse provided Scott with a model for his own historicist fictions.

Yet if Walpole played an important role in providing Scott with a model of the autonomous and aristocratic author, then Scott's other male gothic predecessor, Matthew Lewis, was of more immediate importance in shaping Scott's authorial practice. Perhaps Lewis's most successful pupil, Scott in the first years of his career wrote in nearly the same genres as did Lewis: supernatural ballad and ghost story, Gothic drama, and German tragedy. While predating Lewis's ascendance as a popular author, Scott's cultivation of German supernatural literature – so strong that he named his mare "Lenore" in 1795 to commemorate the midnight gallop of Bürger's poem[19] – was strongly directed by Lewis's example. *Castle Spectre*'s popular success showed Scott, first and foremost, gothic drama's remunerative potential, and Scott responded by accelerating the production of his own translations and original compositions. By 1799, Scott had translated or imitated no fewer than five German dramas, and in March 1799, thanks to Lewis's ministrations with his own publisher Bell, received £50 for his translation of Goethe's *Götz von Berlichgen*. While in London celebrating the publication of his *Götz*, Scott composed a full-length gothic tragedy, *The House of Aspen*,

cultivated his friendship with Lewis in the hope of getting his play produced, and agreed to contribute several poems to Lewis's *Tales of Wonder* (1801). The quantity and seriousness of Scott's dramatic work in these years suggest that, even in 1799, he considered himself principally a dramatist, holding an additional interest in collecting, imitating, and translating English and German ballads. His correspondence shows him, as late as 1802, contemplating a spectacular drama in the style of *Castle Spectre* and *Douglas* entitled *The Perilous Castle of Douglas*.[20] Unlike Lewis, Scott did not find a venue for his dramatic work; his unsuccessful bid to have his *House of Aspen* staged more closely resembles the experiences of Wordsworth and Coleridge than it does Lewis's experiences on the London stage. Scott was similarly piqued, since the play had been intentionally written, as he explained in a December 1801 letter to George Ellis, in the style "of the Castle Spectre, Bluebeard, and the other drum and trumpet exhibitions of the day" (*SL*, I:124).

While the *House of Aspen*'s rejection is usually cited as the reason that Scott turned to poetry,[21] it does not altogether explain his decision to abandon translation and German literature. Scott's correspondence amply documents his dislike of theater managers and his constant refusals after 1802 to write for the theater[22]; what this same correspondence also makes clear is that his hesitation comes from his negative expectations concerning the kind of public exposure to which authoring a play will subject him:

> There is a touch of the ridiculous which clings to the author of an unsuccessful piece while success by no means makes up to the candidate for public applause the risque which he runs in case of failure. Then supposing your work to be in every respect as deserving of success as you could desire still you commit yourself to the taste or rather to the caprice of a mob of people assembled by no means from the best informed classes of society and even the very excellences of your piece may be hissed if they do not jump with their humour. (*SL*, IV:473)

This worry about being made "ridiculous" recurs frequently in Scott's correspondence, and leads him to exercise great vigilance in watching over his own public reputation. It feeds as well the tenacity with which he denies authorship of *Waverley* and its successors, and even governs his decision in 1813 to refuse the "somehow ridiculous" office of Poet Laureate – in spite of his own Tory patriotism – because it will undermine his reputation for propriety and disinterested independence and expose him to "ridicule."[23]

I call Scott a pupil of Lewis's because of his sensitivity to the very issues of genre and reception that plagued Lewis during the last years of

the eighteenth century. Because of the similarity of their tastes and productions (as Scott himself acknowledged later in his career[24]), the hostility accorded to Lewis and to gothic drama at the end of the eighteenth century shook Scott, and led him after 1800 to avoid the literary and political associations that had brought Lewis public scandal and dishonor. These same years 1799–1803, moreover, saw him cultivating the friendship of several eminent antiquarians, among them Kenneth Curry, Richard Heber, Robert Surtees (author of the *History of Durham*), and original *Anti-Jacobin* contributor George Ellis, who in turn introduced Scott to fellow "Anti-Jacobins" George Canning, John Hookham Frere, and William Gifford. While Scott's Tory politics and antiquarian interests gave him much in common with these men, his fondness for gothic and German writing presented a potentially serious conflict, fresh as Ellis and his cohorts were from their 1798 *Anti-Jacobin* parodies of German drama. Lockhart is characteristically silent on this issue, but Sutherland nicely captures the predicament that these new friendships presented to Scott:

> It was with the likes of Canning, Gifford, Frere and Ellis (all later friends and collaborators) that Scott particularly wished to associate himself. He could not do so as the author of the type of mush the "Rovers" mocked. From this point on in his literary life, Scott became a witheringly sarcastic commentator on his early "German mad" productions, of which he had once been so proud as to make a love-gift to Williamina Belsches. What, then, having spurned his *Gesamtwerk* up to 1799, was Scott to write?[25]

Scott's "'German-mad' productions" doubly compromised him, then, when "Glenfinlas," "The Eve of St. John," "The Fire King," and "Frederick and Alice" finally appeared in *Tales of Wonder* in 1801. Scott's friends criticized the publication as "[in]judicious"[26]; their uneasiness no doubt increased when *Tales of Wonder* itself became the object of numerous parodies worthy of the *Anti-Jacobin*. Whether in response to such warnings or simply because of changes in his own interests, Scott's own attitudes appear to have changed at this time as well. In his correspondence he begins to observe that "Ghosts . . . have of late been put out of fashion by a promiscuous & ill-judged introduction of tales relating to them," and vows never again to produce "Germanized brat[s]" for the stage or press: "should I ever again attempt dramatic composition, I would endeavour after the genuine old English model" (*SL*, I:118n, I:124).

His subsequent publications kept to this vow, and for the next twenty

years he signed "Walter Scott" only to "genuine" works of poetry, handsome editions, and literary scholarship. His next publication was a respectably national work of antiquarian research – the three-volume ballad collection *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* – that claimed not Lewis as its main influence but Bishop Thomas Percy, author and editor of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. The *Minstrelsy*'s first two volumes, published in 1802, had contained essays and "ancient" ballads; its positive reception inspired Scott to publish in 1803 a scholarly edition of *Sir Tristrem* and a third volume of the *Minstrelsy*, this time featuring modern "Imitations of the Ancient Ballad" and featuring Scott's "Thomas the Rymer" and ballads by antiquarians Robert Jamieson, John Leyden (unnamed co-editor of the *Minstrelsy*), and Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe. In addition, Scott included a single, decidedly unsupernatural ballad of Lewis's (likely as a gesture of thanks for Lewis's publication of Scott's ballads the year before) and republished his own "Glenfinlas" and "The Eve of St. John."

As a cultural document, the third volume of Scott's *Minstrelsy* is a wonderful testimony both to the power of repackaging textual materials and to the relation between hierarchies of genre and the commercial gradations of print culture. Having first established himself as a respectable scholar with the publication of the first two volumes of the *Minstrelsy*, Scott's third volume presented modern "tales" similar to those published by Lewis two years earlier. But to compare this volume with *Tales of Wonder* is to marvel at their differences in presentation. Impressively printed by Ballantyne, Scott's volume provided each poem with an introduction and elaborate scholarly notes usually far longer than the poem itself. Leyden's 264–line "Lord Soulis," for example, carried with it a 9-page introduction and 17 pages of closely printed notes. Scott's own contributions, while not as excessively documented, displayed the same careful erudition and breadth of knowledge, anchoring themselves self-consciously in local history and literary traditions. As they do in Baillie's discourses and "British" works, scholarly footnote and "national" (as opposed to "foreign") subject matter in the *Minstrelsy* feed off one another, legitimizing the other's enterprise – as if the notes sanctioned the ballads' status as local antiquarian history while at the same time claiming that local interest as the rationale for their own length and detail. Transplanted into such a setting and next to such company, "Glenfinlas" and "The Eve of St. John" took on a very different significance and cultural status. In a word, they ceased being tales of wonder exploiting already-sated gothic readers and became respectful

homages "after the genuine old English model." A similar process, needless to say, can be seen at work in the *Minstrelsy*'s effect on Scott's literary reputation and authority.

III "THE POETRY OF ANTIQUARIANISM"

> "Historians, you think," said Miss Tilney, "are not happy in their flights of fancy. They display imagination without raising interest. I am fond of history – and am very well contented to take the false with the true. In the principal facts they have sources of intelligence in former histories and records, which may be as much depended on, I conclude, as anything that does not actually pass under one's own observation; and as for the little embellishments you speak of, they are embellishments, and I like them as such."[27]

Recent scholarly writing has characterized Scott's antiquarian pursuits as essentially materialist and preservationist in their approach to history, and therefore as typical of antiquarianism as a whole.[28] First and foremost collectors of the unpublished and the miscellaneous, antiquarians traditionally dealt in textual and archaeological fragments, "unofficial historical memory and record . . . song, legend, joke, family tradition . . . letter, tracts, pamphlets and private memoirs."[29] While in our own century the word may be associated with amateurism and pedantry, this was hardly the case in Scott's own time. Much of the success of periodicals like *The Gentleman's Magazine* can be traced directly to the interest that its antiquarian bent aroused, not to mention its ability to convince readers that their own local ruins, traditions, and records could validate, revise, or disprove received notions of Britain's origins and identity. It was this power that Scott extolled when in his *Ballantyne*'s essay he praised Walpole's command of detail, which had the ability to refute accepted historical truths: "minute antiquarian research may shake our faith in the facts most pointedly averred by general history" (*SMP*, III:304–5). Yet Scott hardly took for himself the role of David to historiography's Goliath. Far from seeking to bring down historical narratives with a single detail, Scott's own antiquarian practice, as Ina Ferris has noted, was deferential to historiography and tended to locate itself "in the interstices left by official history,"[30] where materials were either scarce, contradictory, or both. One suspects that Scott chose such historical gaps not only because he wished to avoid contradicting published histories, but also because such spaces gave him a greater freedom of narration and invention.

The ease with which Scott moved in the *Minstrelsy* from reconstructing ballads to inventing them testifies to the short distance existing between antiquarian research and the kind of historicist fabrication that produced *The Castle of Otranto*. For this reason J. H. Alexander, when exploring the question of how Scott's readers categorized his poetry generically, dubs Scott's metrical romances "the poetry of antiquarianism."[31] With the third volume of the *Minstrelsy*, Scott discovered that it was precisely that moment when he became expert at discerning "real" antiquity that he also gained the authority and reputation to forge his own historical fictions and retellings. As we have seen in this book's Introduction and in Baillie's deployment of footnotes discussed in chapter 4, it is no accident that the most gothic scenes in Scott's metrical romances tend to be among his most heavily documented and supplemented. Emulating Walpole's "nice accuracy of delineation," it seems, authorized Scott's poetry and allowed him, in it, to make other gestures, both generic and ideological, as well.

Yet as chapter 2 argued and Austen's *Northanger Abbey* dramatizes succinctly, gothic writing in the last decades of the eighteenth century was also summarily aligned by reviewers with the fictions of romance, both prose and metrical, and opposed to the "truths" of history. Austen at first appears to reinforce this dichotomy when Catherine Morland, her prototypical gothic reader, declares that she "cannot be interested in . . . real solemn history."[32] While Austen's novel goes to great lengths to convince Catherine and its readers that a wide gulf exists between real life and gothic fiction, Eleanor Tilney's comments about history (quoted above) argue a more subversive point: that a similar distance also exists between historical discourse and real life (represented by Austen's novel).[33] In the novel itself, Austen immediately defuses the statement through Eleanor's confidence in her ability to separate history's "principal facts" from its "flights of fancy" – as if to say that for the mature reader such moments are hardly dangerous and usually pleasurable. This does not change, however, what she leaves unsaid (though strongly implied) and what constitutes the logical conclusion to Catherine's and Eleanor's conversation: that gothic fiction and history, while different in degree, are not different in kind. They may differ in their abilities to raise interest, their fidelity to sources, and their claims to truth, but both in the end engage in "false history" as well as true. Austen's readers may begin the conversation smiling at Catherine's insistence that history should read like a novel, but they leave it wishing that history were more like novelistic writing in "raising interest."

When Scott reviewed Austen's novels in 1818, he was unreserved in his praise and saved his warmest admiration for Austen's ability to represent "real life" while raising the same interest as gothic and sentimental romance:

> [H]ers is that unpretending kind of instruction which is furnished by real life; and certainly no author has ever conformed more closely to real life, as well in the incidents, as in the characters and descriptions. Her fables . . . have all that compactness of plan and unity of action which is generally produced by a sacrifice in probability: yet they have little or nothing that is not probable. (*SMP*, XVIII:224)

Given Scott's fondness for accuracy of delineation, his admiration for Austen's attention to detail is understandable, as is his respect for her ability to supply "fable" and "instruction" under the guise of "real life." While Scott's metrical romances could not differ more greatly from Austen's fictions in setting and scope, they nevertheless share an insistence upon "raising interest" while maintaining a "nice accuracy." If one is to understand the function of gothic scenes in Scott's poetry, one must begin by acknowledging that they always operate dialectically with historical discourse to produce a dual end: that of "raising interest" while serving as "real solemn history." The gothic is transformed in Scott's poetry, then, much in the same way that Scott's "Glenfinlas" and "Eve of St. John" were transformed when Scott republished them in the *Minstrelsy*. For it is only when Scott's gothic appears under the guise of "real" history that it can deliver fully its ideological burden.

The historical authority of metrical romance, moreover, certainly informs Scott's decision to move after 1803 into the realm of poetry rather than prose. If the *Minstrelsy* constituted Scott's shift from gothic ballad and Germanized drama to scholarly edition of local ballads, then Scott's subsequent decision to write metrical romances on English and Scottish historical subjects completed his dissociation from contemporary practitioners of gothic while allowing him to continue exploring medieval and supernatural subject matter. To recall chapter 2's opening discussion of the word "gothic," Scott is able, through the *Minstrelsy* and the metrical romances that followed it, to move from embodying one sense of "gothic" (the generic "gothic" of Lewis and Radcliffe) to embodying its other, earlier meaning (the antiquarian, medieval "gothic" of Hurd's *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*). To use the language of Hurd's *Letters*, Scott's metrical romances, reminiscent of *The Faerie Queene* in their "cantos" and in their fondness for the formal irregularity and asymmetricality of gothic architecture and medieval "minstrelsy," are self-consciously "gothic poems" in the older sense of the word "gothic":

When an architect examines a Gothic structure by Grecian rules, he finds nothing but deformity. But the Gothic architecture has it's own rules . . . The same observation holds of the two sorts of poetry. Judge of the *Faery Queen* by the classic models, and you are shocked by it's disorder: consider it with an eye to it's Gothic original, and you find it regular . . . The *Faery Queen*, then, as a Gothic poem, derives it's METHOD, as well as the other characters of it's composition, from the established modes and ideas of chivalry.[34]

I quote Hurd's famous statement on gothic as an irregular yet coherent form because I wish to join it to another statement by him concerning prose fiction. The passage below, from Hurd's *Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry* (1766), bears on why I believe Scott moved from scholarly collection to metrical romance:

[W]hat are we to think of those *novels* or *romances* . . . though without metrical numbers, and generally, indeed, in harsh and rugged prose . . . wholly destitute of measured sounds (to say nothing of their other numberless defects) they can, at most, be considered but as hasty, imperfect, and abortive poems . . . However, such as they are, these *novelties* have been generally well received . . . for the gratification they afford, or promise at least, to a vitiated, palled, and sickly imagination – that last disease of learned minds, and sure prognostic of expiring Letters. But whatever may be the temporary success of these things (for they vanish as fast as they are produced, and are produced as soon as they are conceived) good sense will acknowledge no work of art but such as is composed according to the laws of its *kind* . . . for there is a sort of literary luxury, which would engross all pleasures at once, even such as are contradictory to each other . . . but true taste requires chaste, severe, and simple pleasures; and true genius will only be concerned in administering such.[35]

Hurd's distinctions between prose and verse romance recall chapter 2's survey of the dichotomies shaping the reception of romance in the eighteenth century. Put plainly, prose romance in Hurd's estimation is a monstrous, formless readerly pleasure, and Hurd opposes it, both overtly and by implication, to the "chaste, severe, and simple pleasures" of verse narrative's "measured sounds" and formal purity. These pronouncements, moreover, are taken up by other antiquarians like Beattie and Warton, not to mention the verse satire of the *Anti-Jacobin*. If we wish to understand Scott's decision after the *Minstrelsy* to establish himself as a poetic rather than prose romancer, we must connect it to the traditions of antiquarian literary criticism within which the *Minstrelsy* participates. For Scott, ultimately, will sign his name to nothing – no matter how popular and remunerative – not conforming to similar, established standards of "true genius" and "true taste."

Scott's metrical romances, then, do not appropriate gothic scenes and motifs merely to bolster sales by tapping the burgeoning audiences for

gothic fiction and drama. His concern with maintaining both sales and reputation is undeniably strong and, as I hope to show in the pages that follow, dictates the circumstances under which he wields gothic conventions. But Scott also sees the gothic as a powerful vehicle for ideological work, and his metrical romances reserve deployment of gothic scenes and motifs for their most ideologically charged moments. Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *Marmion*, for example, place within the form of metrical romance highly marketable scenes of supernatural horror strongly reminiscent of *The Monk*, *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, and Anna Letitia Barbauld's semi-parodic "Sir Bertrand." These scenes, however, also recast centuries of English–Scottish conflict under a grand and inclusive narrative of emerging British national unity. At a time when Britain had been engaged for twelve years in almost continual warfare with revolutionary France, Scott's antiquarian attempts to reconstruct a *local* history of the Scottish Border understandably became conflated with his patriotic desire to promote *national* (British) unity against an almost supernatural foe, Napoleon. His metrical romances, then, attempt to place English–Scottish conflicts safely into an irretrievable past, and to render the source of the conflicts themselves harmless by garbing them in gothic conventions.

As Anne Janowitz has noted, the icon of the decaying castle or gothic abbey provides eighteenth-century poets with more than merely a fragmented space on which to romanticize history. It also allows poets access to history through a medium that encourages a mythic gap between past and present and that rejects the idea of linear and continuous historical change. Much of Janowitz's own study focuses on "picturesque ruinists" like Sneyd Davies, John Langhorne, and Thomas Gray who, by naturalizing ruins, participate in "the de-historicizing – the making picturesque – of the past."[36] While Scott undeniably is the product of this popular tradition that presents the ruin as "neutral and general, bearing more of a formal than a thematic function,"[37] his own fusion of ruined history and gothic narrative shows him engaging in different ideological practices. Rather than presenting an ahistorical, ruined past in order to mourn its loss, Scott's most successful poems (1805–13) represent the past as a place of historically documented romance *and* horror. In making the past simple and chivalric yet supernatural and senselessly violent, his poems can hardly be said to advocate a return to the historical venues that they inhabit. If Scott's poems mourn anything, it is the gradual erosion of differences between Scottish and English identity, which he represents as arising from, and preserved

by, military conflict. Like the death of the minstrel, however, Scott posits the erosion of these national differences as both tragically inevitable and ultimately desirable. They may constitute a loss, but they also are represented as the necessary product of national maturation, evolution, and unification.

Consequently, Scott's gothic focuses more upon documenting "the customs and manners" of ancient Border chivalry – described in the original Preface to *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* as "a state partly pastoral and partly warlike" – than the romantic love-plots of Radcliffe and her imitators.[38] Stories of romance and courtship are always peripheral in Scott's poetry, and usually serve either as devices for driving the narrative forward or as generic nods to the tradition of romance. Scott's poem *Marmion* (1808), for example, concentrates far more on the chivalric ethics of its troubled hero than on his relationships with Constance or Lady Clare, while his description of the procession of the Cross of Fire in *The Lady of the Lake* (1810) is as much a tribute to British readiness to defend itself against French invasion as it is a celebration of ancient Scottish chivalry and martial prowess. As I have argued earlier, part of this strategy stems from Scott's desire to market a masculine romance that will prove popular with gothic readers yet maintain a comfortable difference from gothic contemporaries like Lewis. Yet Scott's tendency to move the gothic from the bower to the battlefield also originates in his desire to stress the differences between the scenes of his poems and those of the present day. If romantic love, that staple of Radcliffean gothic, stresses that young people then were (or should have been) like young people now, then Scott's focus upon the arcane rules of chivalry and its blood-feuds expresses a different argument – one that stresses a more developmental view of British national identity. For like Baillie, Scott is interested in reviving an essentially national supernaturalism, and in representing the fiction of a modern, unified Britain as always already present in bud form – even in pre-Hanoverian Britain.

One can track this odd double perspective of identification with, and separation from, the past in Canto One of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, Scott's first metrical romance and the one in many ways most closely aligned to the *Minstrelsy*. The poem, characteristically, begins on both a gothic and a martial note, describing "Nine and twenty knights of fame" fully armored and in a state of constant readiness, drinking "red wine through the helmet barred" (*SPW*, 1:33). Scott's five stanzas of description then build to a series of pressing questions, first historical, then rhetorical:

Why do these steeds stand ready dight?
Why watch these warriors armed by night? . . .
Can piety the discord heal,
Or staunch the death-feud's enmity?
Can Christian lore, can patriot zeal,
Can love of blessed charity? (*SPW*, 1:42–3, 66–9)

Scott then resoundingly answers:

No! vainly to each holy shrine,
In mutual pilgrimage they drew,
Implored in vain the grace divine
For chiefs their own red falchions slew.
While Ettrick boasts the line of Scott,
The slaughtered chiefs, the mortal jar,
The havoc of the feudal war,
Shall never, never be forgot! (*SPW*, 1:70–7)

What is both striking about this passage – and typical of Scott's gothicism – is the irony and playfulness with which it wields multiple historical perspectives against one another. While dramatizing the psychology of an endless blood-feud, Scott's "answer" also communicates to his contemporary readers a meaning exactly opposite to its literal denotation: that the heartfelt "never" of his ancestors has indeed been "forgot" and superseded.

Scott reinforces these notions, moreover, through the figure of the minstrel, "the last of all the bards," who exemplifies that "Old times were changed, old manners gone" (*SPW*, Introduction:7, 19). In describing him as "begg[ing] his bread from door to door, / And tun[ing], to please the peasant's ear, / The harp a king had loved to hear" (*SPW*, Introduction:25–6), Scott presents the minstrel as cut off from his own brethren and accompanied by an "orphan boy" (*SPW*, Introduction:6), whose past has also been erased by the death of his parents. For James Watt, the framing device of the Minstrel allows Scott to operate on both sides of the divide that the minstrel straddles in the poem, so that Scott is able, "as he put it in the work's preface, to describe both 'scenes highly susceptible of poetical ornament' *and* 'the customs and manners which anciently prevailed on the Borders of England and Scotland.'"[39] The minstrel functions, then, similarly to the way that gothic ruins function in Scott's poetry – by providing a link to an ancient past that has otherwise been forgotten, and that hence has little consequence either on Scott's historical present or on the historical present of the poem.

"Like some tall rock with lichens gray" (*SPW*, 1:335), the ruin of

Melrose Abbey is presented by Scott as part of a gothic landscape, and like the minstrel serves as a convenient icon by which to contemplate a long-forgotten past:

> If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
> Go visit it by the pale moonlight;
> For the gay beams of lightsome day
> Gild but to flout the ruins gray.
> When the broken arches are black in night,
> And each shafted oriel glimmers white;
> When the cold light's uncertain shower
> Streams on the ruined central tower; . . .
> When distant Tweed is heard to rave,
> And the owlet to hoot o'er the dead man's grave,
> Then go – but go alone the while –
> Then view Saint David's ruined pile (*SPW*, II:1–8, 13–16)

Inviting his readers to know "what should ne'er be known" – to be, like William of Deloraine, "chilled with dread" – Scott freely endows the abbey, and his poem in general, with a host of gothic touches: a "withered" monk guarding a magic book both he and William are forbidden to open; the undecaying corpse of a wizard; halls that echo with "Loud sobs, and laughter louder . . . / And voices unlike the voice of man" (*SPW*, II:58, 192, 258–9). When William speeds back to Branksome Hall with the book, it is then stolen by Lord Cranstoun's goblin page, who uses a spell within it to lure the young heir of Branksome Tower away from his home until an army of English soldiers captures him. With the young boy as hostage, the army then marches to Branksome to demand William of Deloraine in exchange. The threatened battle is only broken up when Cranstoun uses the same spell to assume the form of Deloraine and win a single combat that both exonerates William and proves himself worthy to wed Margaret, the daughter of the Ladye of Branksome. Even from this small sampling of gothic conventions employed in the *Lay*, it is clear that they play an instrumental role both in creating the poem's conflicts and driving its plot forward. Without the magic book taken from a wizard's coffin, and without a goblin page to create mischief with it, no English–Scottish conflict would occur.

Scott ascribes a similar role in his poems to Catholicism, which functions both as exotic, supernatural "other" to contemporary Anglican Protestantism and as convenient object of blame. His portrayal of a Catholic abbey as guarding a supernaturally evil secret – borrowed from

The Monk and *The Italian*, among others – not only increases the distance between his readers and the *Lay's* embattled setting, but also links the cause of Border battles with Catholic superstition. As Scott notes in the *Minstrelsy*:

> The reformation was late of finding its way into the Border wilds . . . The influence of the reformed preachers, among the Borders, seems also to have been but small . . . But, though the Church, in the Border counties, attracted little veneration, no part of Scotland teemed with superstitious fears and observances more than they did . . . These were superstitions flowing immediately from the nature of the Catholic religion. (*SPW*, I: 139–40)

This and other notes in the *Lay* dismiss as superstition the same supernatural events that, within that poem, drive its plot. Regarding Cranstoun's goblin page, Scott documents its literary antecedent (the legend of Gilpin Horner) and renarrates it in as bemused a manner as possible. Of Michael Scott, the wizard in the poem emblematic of both evil secrets and ancestral *virtú*, he writes, "he appears to have been addicted to the abstruse studies of judical astrology, alchemy, physiognomy, and chiromancy. Hence he passed among his contemporaries for a skilful magician" (*SPW*, 517). Like Baillie in *Ethwald* and Wordsworth in "Goody Blake and Harry Gill," Scott provides extensive factual and scholarly commentary for every gothic convention and supernatural occurrence in his poems – a tic that, at the very least, suggests an anxiety at invoking such devices, and demonstrates Scott's determination to exploit the gothic's powerful hold on readers while maintaining his authority as a historian and serious author.

The distance that Scott maintains between himself and his material through his notes resembles the distance his metrical romances seek to maintain between their contemporary audience and the history they recast. Within this framework, the *Lay*'s supernatural devices – from its magic book and goblin page to the sorcery that resolves its central conflict – attempt to relocate the causes of English–Scottish wars in a gothic past, and within the very superstitions his notes trivialize. Such a practice recalls the minstrel's own fanciful method of storytelling:

> Amid the strings his fingers strayed,
> And an uncertain warbling made,
> And oft he shook his hoary head.
> But when he caught the measure wild,
> The old man raised his face and smiled; . . .
> The present scene, the future lot,
> His toils, his wants, were all forgot;

Cold diffidence and age's frost
In the full tide of song were lost;
Each blank, in faithless memory void,
The poet's glowing thought supplied;
(*SPW*, Introduction:84–8, 93–8)

Given his own role as a "supplier" of history, it is not surprising that Scott takes the place of his old minstrel in his subsequent poems, or that he portrays such historical re-tellings as "harmless art" which only "The bigots of the iron time" would call "a crime" (*SPW*, Introduction:21–2).

The effect of the *Lay*'s most gothic scenes, then, is to celebrate British martial prowess in the face of invasion while simultaneously attributing the causes of English–Scottish disputes to supernatural agency. Scott then proceeds, in the climactic scenes of the poem, to argue that the English and Scottish are naturally brothers. In Canto 5 of the *Lay,* even when reinforcements arrive for Brankstoun, the previously established truce between the English and Scottish sides is not broken:

Now, noble dame, perchance you ask
How these two hostile armies met,
Deeming it were no easy task
To keep the truce which here was set;
Where martial spirits, all on fire,
Breathed only blood and mortal ire.
By mutual inroads, mutual blows,
By habit, and by nation, foes.
They met on Teviot's strand;
They met and sate them mingled down,
Without a threat, without a frown,
As brothers meet in a foreign land: . . .
Visors were raised and faces shown,
And many a friend, to friend made known,
Partook of social cheer.
Some drove the jolly bowl about;
With dice and draughts some chased the day;
And some, with many a merry shout
In riot, revelry, and rout,
Pursued the football play. (*SPW*, v:88–99, 103–10)

Aligning "habit" with the English and Scottish armies' sense of "nation," Scott opposes these two concepts to the grander and more compelling idea of the British nation, which he argues is the natural nation-state of men who share fraternal ties as obvious as those shared by Scottish and English. Meeting in the "foreign land" of warfare, the

sides know themselves to be "brothers" by each other's faces, and by the fact that they share ties of friendship that transcend the outdated and habitual notions of separate Scottish and English nations. Even more powerfully, the passage suggests that the conflicts arising from these outdated ideas are in and of themselves a blindness, the result of men who, their visors not "raised," cannot see their own kin in front of them. Such a period of internal warfare, the causes of which Scott relocates into the realm of Catholic superstition and habitual factionalism, becomes in the *Lay* a period of national adolescence preceding the emergence of Britain as a unified international power. In this light, Scott's portrayal of the Scottish and English at *play* is as much a statement about the adolescent state of Britain at the time of the border wars as it is an assertion of British natural unity. His linking of gothic supernaturalism with this state of cultural and national adolescence seeks to portray the causes of such border wars as gothic and therefore trivial, the products of a national childhood so long outgrown it has been forgotten.

IV THE POLITICS OF GOTHIC AUTHORSHIP

> There his own peasant dress he spies,
> Doffed to assume that quaint disguise,
> And shuddering thought upon his glee
> When pranked in garb of minstrelsy.
> "O, be the fatal art accurst,"
> He cried, "that moved my folly first,
> Till, bribed by bandits' base applause,
> I burst through God's and Nature's laws"!
>
> (*SPW*, *Rokeby*, 6:119–26)

Scott's irony and playfulness toward his materials and himself – evidenced in the self-referential passage from *Rokeby* above – is part of a more general desire to neutralize or bypass the strictures of his critical contemporaries. When one reads reviews of Scott's poetry, it is not difficult to see why. Whether praising or rebuking him, Scott's reviewers focus throughout his career on his "unprecedented success," attributing his poetry's mass appeal to his characteristic fusion of antiquarian lore and gothic conventions. An 1813 *British Review* notice of *Rokeby*, while complaining of its intricate plot, nevertheless praised Scott for his "indulgence of his own genius," which does not lie in "new sentiments, new images, or new expressions," but rather in Scott's "fascinating mode of working up the common and stock materials."[40] Yet even this

positive review – and this is true of critical responses to Scott's poetry in general – expressed dismay over the "tenacity" with which Scott cultivated the conventions of gothic romance: "the same system of manners, the same imagery, the same . . . bowers and towers."[41] Even Coleridge, reviewing *The Lady of the Lake* in an 1810 letter to Wordsworth, voiced similar frustration over Scott's recurrent use of gothic conventions by writing a recipe first for Radcliffe's fiction, and then a related one for "the component parts of the Scottish Minstrelsy":

> The first Business must be, a vast string of patronymics, and names of Mountains, Rivers, &c – the most commonplace imagery the Bard gars look almaist as well as new . . . Secondly, all the nomenclature of Gothic Architecture, of Heraldry, of Arms, of Hunting, & Falconry . . . with a *Bard* (that is absolutely necessary) and Songs of course – For the rest, whatever suits Mrs. Radcliff[e], i.e., in the Fable, and the Dramatis Personae, will do for the Poem, with this advantage, that however thread-bare in the Romance Shelves of the circulating Library it is to be taken as quite new as soon as told in rhyme – it need not be half as interesting – & the Ghost may be a Ghost, or may be explained – or both may take place in the same poem. (*CL*, III:294–5)

Interestingly, Coleridge's criticisms differ only in intensity, and not in substance, from those in the *British Review*. Even the *British Critic*'s overwhelmingly positive review of *The Lady of the Lake* voices a wish that "[Scott] would not always be quite so much of the Minstrel, but would rise to some higher and more regular strains of poetry."[42]

Lurking over these reviews – and inextricably tied to the complaints they voice against Scott's poems – is the same spectre of the mob that haunts the period's representations of gothic's popular readership. Coleridge and Jeffrey, for example, both feared that Scott's standards were too low, and that his fondness for gothic scenes allowed him to "produce at too cheap a rate, to be worthy the ambition of a poet of original imagination."[43] With the publication of *Marmion* in 1808, the *Satirist* and *Le Beau Monde* promptly attacked the heavy gothicism of Scott's second canto as threatening to undermine public taste – accusing Scott of "compil[ing it] from the jejune stories of Monk Ghost Lewis, Esq.," and likening Constance to "what Matilda, in the Monk, would have been, if she had not turned out to be the devil."[44] Even Scott's most positive reviewers involuntarily twitched at his unprecedented popularity and periodic gothicism, glancing nervously to imagined masses of adolescent and female readers; Coleridge's chastisement of Scott for appealing to "babes in the wood" stems from the same anxieties that cause the otherwise enthusiastic *British Review* to remark nervously on

the "young ladies . . . acquired" by that "annual visitor from Edinburgh . . . Walter Scott's muse."[45] Taken as a whole, these reviews indicate that Scott's reviewers are aware that the presence of the gothic ("whatever suits Mrs. Radcliff[e]") destabilizes Scott's standing as a serious author by placing him on the borders of gender and of taste. Consequently, these same reviewers urge him to produce the same "higher and more regular" standards that they seek to cultivate through their periodicals.

What these reviews of Scott's poetry suggest more generally is that the supposedly transcendent standards of taste inherent in "higher" literature arose out of the local contingencies of writer–reader negotiation. This process of negotiation, furthermore, involved multiple steps dialectic in their nature. And if they began with Scott responding to attacks on Lewis by shifting from German dramatist to antiquarian editor, they continued as reviewers were forced to respond to Scott's characteristic assemblage of gothic materials, ostentatious scholarship, local history, and overwhelming sales. Scott's popularity, without doubt, made his reviewers simultaneously uneasy and defensive, since on some level it forced them to take great care in how they went about criticizing his work. It is no accident, then, that most of the reviews critical of Scott's metrical romances attack those aspects of them most resembling gothic fiction: his habit of rapid composition and his fondness for the medieval and the supernatural. In his 1808 review of *Marmion,* consequently, Jeffrey launched an attack on the Tory politics of Scott's romances by attacking *Marmion*'s gothicism and its similarities to popular fiction. Beginning along conventional lines, the review assumes the "public" to be "supped full" of the "images borrowed from the novels of Mrs. Ratcliffe and her imitators," and therefore dismisses *Marmion*'s "monstrous improbability" as "the machinery of a bad German novel."[46] Structuring his review as a list of "objections" to Scott's poetry in general, Jeffrey warns that Scott's use of "stern abbots and haughty prioresses, with their flowing black dresses, and books of statutes laid on an iron table, . . . of donjons, keeps, tabards, scutcheons, tressures, caps of maintenance, portculisses, wimples, and we know not what besides" would "establish an indiscriminate taste for chivalrous legends and romances in irregular rhyme," and produce "as many copyists as Mrs. Radcliffe or Schiller." Scott's gothic predilections, Jeffrey warns, threaten to make him "the founder of a new schism in the catholic poetical church."[47] That the review upset Scott is shown by his correspondence from these months;[48] it is telling, however, that Jeffrey's

position as the editor of the most powerful Review in Britain produced from Scott not a direct rebuttal but a diplomatic, negotiated solution. Galling as was the prospect of being reassociated with gothic and German writing – let alone of being placed at the head of a new school equally contemptible – Scott asked Jeffrey to dinner where both of them "had a hearty laugh at the revisal of the flagellation" (*SL* II:54). Jeffrey never wrote another negative review of Scott's poetry.

Woven into Jeffrey's critique of *Marmion*'s shared affinities with Radcliffe and Schiller is an ideological analysis of Scott's habit of fusing history and gothic conventions. Claiming that the public thus far has been charmed by "the stupid monkish legends . . . the various scraps and fragments of antiquarian history and baronial biography . . . it does not readily understand," Jeffrey argues that Scott's poems, through the "displaying [of] the erudition of the author," seek to popularize ancient ideals of "valour, and gallantry, and aristocratical superiority."[49] He attacks Scott's antiquarian displays of knowledge, therefore, by questioning their authenticity:

> We are glad, indeed, to find these little details in *old* books, whether in prose or verse, because they are there authentic and valuable documents of the usages and modes of life of our ancestors . . . In a *modern* romance, however, these details being no longer authentic, are of no value in point of information; and as the author has no claim to indulgence on the ground of simplicity, the smile which his predecessors excited is in some danger of being turned into a yawn. If he wishes sincerely to follow their example, he should describe the manners of his own time, and not of theirs. They painted from observation, and not from study; and . . . pictures extracted by a modern imitator from black-letter books, and coloured, not from the life, but from learned theories, or at best from mouldy monkish illuminations, [are] mutilated fragments of painted glass.[50]

While ostentatiously objecting on aesthetic grounds that Scott's historical details are unauthentic and therefore tedious, Jeffrey nevertheless asserts that Scott's works are indeed "studies," and therefore calculated recastings of history "from learned theories" capable of achieving real political effects.

Understanding the relationship between Jeffrey's own politics and his role as chief reviewer and sole editor of the *Edinburgh Review* is crucial to following the negotiations he must undergo in formulating a critique of Scott's use of gothic conventions for ideological ends. While the Whig *Edinburgh*, like most Reviews of the day, was overtly partisan in most of its articles, it derived much of its authority as a Review of current literature by maintaining a reputation for being free of the influence of

booksellers, and for judging new books by "common sense" standards of "correct taste." In this light, the closing statement of Jeffrey's review – that "We have no business, however, on this occasion, with the political creed of the author; and we notice these allusions to objects of temporary interest, chiefly as instances of bad taste" – must be read both as a generic nod to existing cultural expectations of reviewer objectivity, and as an expression of Jeffrey's anxiety that Scott commands a readership as great as his own.[51] Both Scott and Jeffrey, after all, are anxious about the other's huge readership and the potential power it holds over aesthetic and political standards. As an ideological rival of Jeffrey, Scott is keenly aware that appearing to be free from the biases of political partisanship is essential to maintaining an image of authorial integrity in the literary marketplace. Such issues are not only related to Scott's and Jeffrey's jealous guarding of their standing as free and spontaneous writers, but also to maintaining their high sales and profits.

This intimate relation between authorial freedom, partisan politics, and profit surfaces most pointedly in Scott's role as conspirator and co-founder of the Tory *Quarterly Review* in 1808–9, in which Scott advises proposed editor William Gifford on the necessity of manufacturing the appearance of political independence and detachment:

> Much of this popularity [of the *Edinburgh*] is owing to its being the only respectable and independent publication of the kind . . . [I]t is ably conducted & how long the generality of readers will continue to dislike the strain of politics so artfully mingled with topics of information and amusement is worthy of deep consideration . . . But as the real reason of instituting the publication is the disgusting & deleterious doctrine with which the most popular of these periodical works disgraces its pages it is essential to consider how opposite & sounder principles can be most advantageously brought forward . . . On the one hand it is certainly not to be understood that we are to be tied down to advocate upon all occasions & as a matter of course the cause of administration. Such indiscriminate support & dereliction of independence would prejudice both ourselves & our cause in the eye of the public. (*SL*, II:105, 107)

For Scott, the *Edinburgh* poses a threat not so much because of the strength of its political stance, but because no Review of an opposing viewpoint competes with it for its audience. For the most part, Scott takes the 1689 Whig settlement as normative, and sees the *balance* of Whig and Tory factions as necessary to the proper functioning of government. Given the consistency with which such fantasies of "factional harmony" occur in Scott's romances, I am led to speculate that Jeffrey's negative

reviews of Scott's poetry, especially as they ultimately did not hinder the sales of *Marmion* (the poem sold 36,000 copies by 1825), ultimately afforded Scott a degree of relief by making his monopoly of popularity less monolithic. Scott's dinner with Jeffrey after the review demonstrates the importance to Scott of maintaining harmonic relations even with literary "enemies," as well as clarifying the centrality of such ideas in Scott's metrical romances. In this light, Scott's introductory epistle to the first canto of Marmion, to use Marlon Ross's observations, attempts "to raise [Scott] above politics and its factions by elegizing both Pitt and Fox . . . As both Fox and Pitt 'deigned to praise' his romances, so he transcends their ideological camps to praise them."[52] When balances of power between factions are threatened in Scott's poetry, his representations of those breakdowns assume decidedly gothic guises – ones that vibrate not only with Scott's worst political nightmares, but also with anxieties over his own role as a popular author holding an apparent monopoly over the tastes of the British reading public.

In *Marmion,* therefore, Scott's deployment of gothic conventions occurs precisely at those moments when existing social orders are threatened by subversion from within. The poem's most gothic section – Constance's trial in the abbey of Lindisfarne – elicits horror not because the abbey embodies Catholicism but because within its walls no voice of dissent is possible. Constance's vigorous speech before her execution, for example, elicits only a restatement of the vows she has broken and a formulaic sentence from her judge that her "sorrows" will "cease" when she is dead (*SPW*, II:600). Reminiscent of the inquisitional trials of *The Monk* and *The Italian*, her hearing in "that dire dungeon, place of doom" (*SPW*, II:602) becomes gothic for Scott because her jury exists merely for show, the power to condemn held only by the tyrannical and unfeeling abbot who, in his desire for absolute power, has literally lost sight of his duty of impartiality as judge:

> Her voice despair's wild energy
> Had given a tone of prophecy.
> Appalled the astonished conclave sate;
> With stupid eyes, the men of fate
> Gazed on the light inspired form,
> And listened for the avenging storm;
> The judges felt the victim's dread;
> No hand was moved, no word was said,
> Till thus the abbot's doom was given,
> Raising his sightless balls to heaven (*SPW*, II:590–9)

Similarly, Scott's gothic hero/villain Marmion threatens to subvert the institutions of chivalric warfare and courtship. Marmion seduces a nun, Constance, making her his page, only to spurn her so that he may abduct Lady Clare, whose property he desires but who is in love with another knight, De Wilton. He then manages, with the help of Constance, to betray De Wilton by accusing him of treachery, which he confirms through the device of forged letters and by defeating him in single combat. For Scott, what makes Marmion a traitor is not so much his betrayal of a fellow countryman as his exploitation of the chivalric codes of honor and courtship for his own ends. Throughout the poem, Marmion is haunted by the spectre of De Wilton, first in the form of a Palmer (De Wilton in disguise) whose figure troubles Marmion's dreams, and then as an avenging knight "from the gulf below," who defeats a sleepless Marmion one night on the moonlit heath (*SPW*, IV:415). Significantly, Marmion only sheds the clothes of gothic villainy the day he is slain on Flodden Field, when he fights solely for his faction rather than for his own gain.

Like Marmion, *Rokeby*'s two gothic figures, Oswald and Mortham, are also haunted by nightmares that are the inevitable products of their actions. Oswald's are so intense that, like Radcliffe's Montoni and Schedoni, they disfigure him:

> Those towers of Barnard hold a guest,
> The emotions of whose troubled breast,
> In wild and strange confusion driven,
> Rival the flitting rack of heaven . . .
> Thus Oswald's labouring feelings trace
> Strange changes in his sleeping face,
> Rapid and ominous as these
> With which the moonbeams tinge the Tees.
> There might be seen of shame and blush,
> There anger's dark and fiercer flush,
> While the perturbed sleeper's hand
> Seemed grasping dagger-knife or brand . . .
> Features convulsed and mutterings dread
> Show terror reigns in sorrow's stead.
> That pang the painful slumber broke,
> And Oswald with a start awoke.
>
> (*SPW*, I:25–8, 45–52, 59–62)

Like Oswald's troubled countenance, Mortham's has been disfigured by the guilt of his past accidental murder of his wife and her brother in a fit of jealous rage, and by the painful disappearance of his only son

(Redmond) that immediately followed it. Reminiscent of both Milton's Satan[53] and Radcliffe's Schedoni in *The Italian* – from which *Rokeby* borrows plentifully – Mortham's characteristic traits of desolation and despair only begin to disappear once he has discovered Redmond to be his son, and after he "rightfully" combines his domain with his neighbor Rokeby's through the marriage of Redmond and Matilda.

The intricate plot of *Rokeby* is propelled forward by the subversive potential of Mortham's riches, which have been hidden by him in a chest in Rokeby Hall for Matilda in the event he does not survive the battle of Marston Moor. Mortham's chest, unfortunately, has spurred members of both factions, Cavalier and Roundhead, to desert their ranks and band together to seize the chest for their own gain. The band of outlaws – "Gleaned from both factions – Roundheads, freed / From cant of sermon and of creed, / And Cavaliers, whose souls . . . / Spurn at the bonds of discipline" – represents for Scott the anarchic but logical conclusion of greed unconstrained by the values of institutionalized social hierarchy (*SPW*, III:287–90). Yet as both Ross and Nancy Moore Goslee have noted, the poem's heavy-handed thematics – where national ties and social duties are spurned for material gain – also mirror Scott's own anxieties about his poems, particularly during the time of the composition of *Rokeby*.[54] Throughout its composition, Scott seems torn over whether his own mercenary reasons for writing – the construction and improvement of his Walpolian extravaganza, Abbotsford – can be rationalized by the pleasure he derives from being *paid* for what he still calls, aristocratically, an "amusement" of a "gentleman":

> My work *Rokeby* does and must go forward or my trees and inclosures might perchance stand still . . . These circumstances, which have hitherto interfered with my literary labours or amusements, are now like to impel me toward them: for if I build I must have money, and I know none will give me any but the booksellers; so I must get up into my wheel, like a turnspit . . . I want to build my cottage a little better than my limited finances will permitt out of my ordinary income and although it is very true that an author should not hazard his reputation yet as Bob Acres says I really think reputation should take some care of the gentleman in return. (*SL*, III:88, 40, 30)

Of course, the reasons that Scott's motives for writing *Rokeby* trouble him lie in his own knowledge that he is not a "gentleman," but rather a man who must labor to acquire what a poet like Byron has held from birth. His correspondence on the subject, moreover, is all the more revealing for the way in which it first separates "income" and "reputation" (reminiscent of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*' separation of

"lucre" and "fame") only to argue that the two are hardly so exclusive as is usually thought. Throughout his correspondence, Scott couples this worry – that the wealth and reputation gained by his metrical romances are the products of opportunism and not merit – with the suspicion that by exploiting the desire of gothic-indulged readers he has deserted for personal gain his "proper" *authorial* vocation of raising existing standards of taste. Like *Rokeby*'s gothic villain Oswald, Scott is aware that on some level he is an interloper with aristocratic pretensions who has taken advantage of the weaknesses of the reading public.

In this light, it is not surprising that Scott distances himself from Oswald by depicting him as the most unrepentant and quintessentially gothic villain of his poetry. For Oswald is a double traitor: first in betraying his faction by (unsuccessfully) arranging the assassination of Mortham in battle, and second in manipulating a time of national crisis into an opportunity to enlarge his own domain by illegally acquiring the property of his countrymen. Unlike Marmion and Mortham, Oswald is a villain to the end of the poem because he refuses to take sides. Even Bertram, who leads the outlaw raid on Rokeby Hall, is recuperated by Scott through his heroic slaying of Oswald at the poem's conclusion – an act which, coupled with Mortham's arrival to save Redmond and Rokeby from execution, reinstates the social hierarchies threatened by the disruptions of civil war.

Through the unsubtle endowment of Oswald with the most satanic of gothic traits, then, Scott performs an almost equally unsubtle act of displacement by aligning himself with the recuperated patriarch Mortham. Just as he rejects Oswald's manipulations of the battlefield, Scott must also reject his own manipulations of the marketplace. Like Mortham, Scott, in founding the *Quarterly* and in providing readers with a Britain in which internal conflicts are rendered either as a necessary stage of maturation or as the result of supernatural accident or personal treachery, has fought for what he conceives to be his proper place on the literary and political battlefield. And as Scott repeatedly informs his critics, in writing popular romances he has not sought to enlarge his own domain, but rather to provide security for his children and grandchildren. His chest of wealth, like Mortham's by the end of *Rokeby,* has been reinvested to insure the prosperity and well-being of his descendants, "Yielding, like an April day, / Smiling noon for sullen morrow, / Years of joy for hours of sorrow" (*SPW*, VI:981–3).

V CODA. THE ROMANTIC AUTHOR'S "PROPER PERSON"

If Scott learned a permanent lesson from Lewis, it lies in the secrecy with which he shrouded his anonymous writings, and in the savviness with which he manipulated authorship in his own career. For both the similarities and the differences between the "The Author of the *Monk*" and the "The Author of *Waverley*" are instructive, and, as I hope that this chapter and book have shown, the latter could not have existed without the example of the former. Each man behind his respective "Author" occupied a government position requiring, as Scott put it to John Morritt, "some solemnity of walk & conduct."[55] Each wrote an immensely popular novel whose sales were only accelerating as its first edition ran out. As John Sutherland notes, in Scott's case "early reviewers were not deceived, nor were Jane Austen, Maria Edgeworth, nor most of the cultivated population of Edinburgh."[56] Scott, however, refused for twelve years to sign his name to *Waverley* as Lewis had done with the second edition of the *Monk*, instead adopting "The Author of *Waverley*" for his subsequent ventures. His dogged attachment to the ruse remains, for Sutherland, the real mystery, one for which no one reason voiced by Scott or his commentators can account.

My interest in this chapter has been less in exploring Scott's anonymity as "The Author of *Waverley*" than in connecting it to his early gothic writings and his subsequent invention of "Walter Scott," antiquarian editor of *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* and author of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*. The later poems, from *Marmion*'s introductory epistles through *Rokeby*'s recasting of the English Civil War, explored the creative and political range of both the medium and the authorial identity. As I hope both this chapter and this book have attested, Scott's cultivation of "The Author of *Waverley*" arose out of strategies begun in the *Minstrelsy* and developed in the metrical romances. If romantic ideology constituted itself, as I have urged, through a series of skirmishes with gothic and with its reception, then the relation of the legitimate author "Walter Scott" to the gothic exemplifies and embodies this relation. As a coda for both this chapter and this book, then, I turn to a text Scott wrote not in his so-called German "adolescence" but at the height of his mature powers – a play in which Scott self-consciously engages with the gothic without being constrained by the anxieties of legitimate authorship: *The Doom of Devorgoil: A Melo-drama* (composed 1818; published 1830).

The production history of *Devorgoil* and the correspondence surrounding it testify to the longevity of Scott's gothic predilections while

showing him defining gothic writing in diametric opposition to the tastes and interests of the romantic author "Walter Scott." What is remarkable about the play and the details of its composition, in fact, is how decisively and clearly they display – a mere twenty years after the publication of *Lyrical Ballads* and the first volume of *Plays on the Passions* – romantic ideology's assumptions concerning the relation of high to low culture. Written as a present for his godson Walter Scott Terry, the new child of English actor Daniel Terry, Scott's only stipulation regarding the play was that Daniel Terry claim authorship for it:

> To answer your principal question first, – the drama is
> "Yours, Terry, yours in every thought."
> I should never have dreamed of making such an attempt in my own proper person; and if I had such a vision, I should have been anxious to have made it something of a legitimate drama, such as a literary man, uncalled upon by any circumstance to connect himself with the stage, might have been expected to produce. Now this is just what any gentleman in your situation might run off, to give a little novelty to the entertainment of the year, and as such will meet a mitigated degree of criticism, and have a better chance of that *productive* success, which is my principle object in my godson's behalf . . . I will never forgive you if you let any false idea of my authorial feelings prevent your acting in this affair as if you were the real parent, not the godfather of the piece. (*SL*, v:77–8)

Aside from almost reading like a primer on authorship in the period, Scott's letter explicitly states assumptions implicit – or inscribed at the level of narrative frame and form – in the metrical romances. Most striking here is the highly developed sense of what Scott calls the "literary"[57] – at once invoking "literate" and "literati" – and its opposition to the "[il]legitimate" drama of *Devorgoil.* Touching on the relations between genre, reputation, and class position, Scott's letter stresses the ease with which a man of Terry's profession can own such a play. Since as an actor Terry will not inspire the high expectations that would be accorded to the author of *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* and *The Lady of the Lake*, Scott argues that Terry will meet with only "mitigated criticism" because *The Doom of Devorgoil* by "Daniel Terry, Actor" will produce a different reception than the same play authored by "Walter Scott" or even "The Author of *Waverley*."

Freed from the constraints of his "proper person," Scott fills *Devorgoil* to capacity with elaborate gothic effects: ancient curses, a giant suit of enchanted armor, lightning striking on stage, an apocalyptic flood and an ill-gotten treasure, and divine retribution and judgment. While aiming to make the play a "*productive* success," he takes special satisfac-

tion in the fact that he will derive no profit from it other than pleasure. The play, then, allows Scott to glut his own gothicism without risking his reputation as a public author responsible for maintaining existing cultural standards of taste. It does not require much of an imaginative leap, furthermore, to gauge the kind of response the drama would have received had it debuted as authored by "Walter Scott" or "The Author of *Waverley*." When compared to the playful mixing of comic and tragic moments in *Devorgoil*'s "melo-drama," Scott's notion of a properly literary subject for a "legitimate drama" – "the concealment of the Scotch regalia during the troubles" (*SL* v:78) – shows the extent to which his "proper person" constrains his creativity, and the degree to which he imagines the public self of the metrical romances participating in the project of instilling institutionalized standards of taste in his literary audiences.

What is most telling about this episode of gothic liberation is its brevity; for as soon as Scott turned his attention from composing *Devorgoil* to fitting it for the stage, his anxieties over the play's critical reception caused him to curb its gothicism. His letters to Terry indicate that he conceived the play's pivotal scene as a "ghost's banquet" preceded by a supernatural procession that would "give great exercise to the scene painter and dresser": "I will make the ghosts talk as never ghosts talked in the body or out of it; and the music may be as unearthly as you can get it" (*SL*, iv:406). Yet as their correspondence turned to getting the play accepted for staging, Scott began to worry about the reception of his spectres, and revised his original plans out of his fears that "it will be damnd most infernally" (*SL*, v:50):

> I shrunk from the projected Phantom feast. I could have managed it for the poetical part but I despaired of impressing the audience with sufficient respect for my goblins & so have trusted to the effect of one single spectre – old Erick, who by dint of looking glum and glunch & speaking little may perchance be imposing . . .[also] I have attempted to introduce our old Castle spectre the German Barber. You will judge whether this will be endured . . . If you do not think the audience will endure an actual *Ghaist* something of this kind might yet be done. (*SL*, v:100, 61)

The finished composition whittles down Scott's grand supernatural procession of ghosts to one real Scottish ghost (Erick) and two false German "Castle spectre[s]," Owlspiegel the German barber and his assistant Cockledemoy. Their function, tellingly, is to help the play's main characters to distinguish between legitimacy and illegitimacy, and to discern authenticity from forgery. Erick's intervention at the end of

the play, therefore, names the hero Leonard Dacre as the legitimate heir of Devorgoil's fortune, and provides him with the opportunity to show himself worthy of Flora, daughter to Baron Oswald of Devorgoil. In contrast, the visitation of Owlspiegel and Cockledemoy (Blackthorn and Katleen in disguise) exposes the conceited Gullcrammer – a commoner of German-sounding name with aristocratic pretensions to the hand of Flora – as a superstitious fool unworthy of the religious office he has gained through his connections. Gullcrammer proves himself an impostor in social rank and authority through his inability to distinguish a real British ghost from a fake German one, and through his lack of proper respect for rank, tradition, and ceremony. By the play's final scene, he is brought down to his proper place in the society of the drama – the position of fool – and wears ass's ears to signify the folly of his false learning, arrogance, and superstition.

If the final published version of *The Doom of Devorgoil* is a testimony to the ambivalence toward gothic that operates throughout Scott's career, then its composition history places in bold relief the assumptions of Scott's *Minstrelsy* and his subsequent poetry. Scott's correspondence, for example, expresses his assumptions about audience and the relationship between the self-censorship of plays and the marketing of them:

> It [supernatural spectacle] is a singular & I think a bad way of amusing the public in point of taste but that is no good reason why you should not make the most of the many headed brute & shew before him such forage as his sort for the time is disposed to delight in. (*SL*, v:150)

This representation of popular theater audiences as "many headed brute[s]" who "forage" recalls not only Alexander Pope's famous description of eighteenth-century theater audiences but also, more pointedly, Edmund Burke's labeling of French revolutionary mobs as a "swinish multitude."[58] As *Devorgoil*'s politics suggest, Scott may be willing to provide gothic slop for such audiences, but only if accompanied by the careful, explicitly *un*incendiary, *British* politics of the metrical romances. Consequently, he studiously avoids the emotional and social upheaval usually associated with German supernaturalism and replaces it with hymns to "constancy," with sustained ridicule of *Devorgoil*'s only upwardly mobile character, and with the restoration of Erick's ill-gained wealth to its rightful and worthy heir. In addition, Scott cultivates a self-consciously British patriotism and politics by ending with the promise of a joyful English–Scottish union through the marriage of the English Leonard Dacre to the Scottish Flora of Devor-

goil – a match that Scott celebrates with "strains of wild music," "chorus[es]," and decrees from "high heaven."[59] With the help of supernatural intervention, the play's symbolic and actual unions are brought about by the Scottish and English patriarchs of the play, Oswald and Durward, who lift the "doom" placed on Devorgoil by renouncing the border feuds of their ancestors and by allowing the marriage of Leonard and Flora. Their truce, finally, is supported by the heaven-sent scroll found at the end of the play, which Durward reads to close its action:

> DURWARD: Peace, all! and hear the blessing which this scroll
> Speaks unto faith, and constancy, and virtue.
> No more this castle's troubled guest,
> Dark Erick's spirit hath found rest.
> The storms of angry Fate are past –
> For Constancy defies their blast.
> Of Devorgoil the daughter free
> Shall wed the Heir of Aglionby;
> Nor ever more dishonour soil
> The rescued house of Devorgoil![60]

If *The Doom of Devorgoil* raises the same issues of genre and legitimate authorship that Lewis faced twenty years previously, it also demonstrates Scott's willingness to live within these parameters and to manipulate his culture's generic hierarchies to his own ends. The trajectory of his career, beginning as it does with the translation of Bürger's *Lenore* and ending with the publication of *Devorgoil* in 1830, provides us with a view of romanticism, genre, and authorship in which writers manipulate and are manipulated by institutional, legal, and social definitions of genre and of identity.

As a name appearing exclusively upon poems, expensive editions, and scholarly prose, the construction of "Walter Scott" constitutes perhaps the most concrete manifestation of the assumptions about literary value and legitimacy that I have located in this book within romantic ideology. Given the lasting legacy of gothic's reception and formation, it is hardly surprising that Scott's biographers and executors – or those of the other writers examined in this book – zealously maintained the distance between their authors and the popular genres from which they gathered their materials. The consistency of Wordsworth's, Coleridge's, Baillie's, and Scott's behavior appears not only in the seriousness they accorded both gothic writing and its reputation but also in the strategies that govern their acts of appropriation.

This consistency suggests that the creation of romanticism as separate from gothic must be understood as part of a continuing process of authorial collection and revision, and that the work of ideological purification attendant upon it can occur through the labor of the writers themselves or through their compilers and critics. To the degree that this book has documented how romantic ideology constituted itself generically as a sustained response to the reception of gothic writing, it ultimately must rest itself upon cases like Scott's and creations like "Walter Scott" – an exemplary, romantic authorial construct that privileged poetry, antiquarian masculinity, romances of historicity, and, in drama, "the true and manly tone of national tragedy" (*SMP*, VI:387).

It has been my contention throughout this book that the reception of gothic writing both defined gothic as a genre and established the contours by which its conventions could be transmitted into other cultural forms. Most fundamentally, my project has been that of imagining the relation between "gothic" and "romantic" writing; more pointedly, it has involved carefully rendering the space between the two fully visible. I have ended with *The Doom of Devorgoil*, then, because it provides us with a rare glimpse of the kinds of play that might have existed within romantic writing had the unmediated and unproblematic borrowing of gothic into other literary forms been possible. Even here, however, I find in many ways the rapidity with which Scott must abandon his fantasy of unrestrained gothicism to be an even more compelling ending for this study. His inevitable worries over propriety testify to the ease with which gothic's cultural stigma could serve as a basis for the construction of more legitimate cultural forms. That Scott ultimately could not shed his own "proper person" in writing *Devorgoil*, I believe, demonstrates more than merely the power of gothic's reception and reputation; it also suggests that definitions of literary propriety at the turn of the nineteenth century required the rejection of precisely those things that *Devorgoil*'s excesses represented. In Scott's case, it caused him to censor his own generic predilections and instead produce, through a kind of arbitration, an oddly muted play – one that, for all its spectacular excesses, is palpably weighed down by its own notions of legitimacy and authority.

Notes

INTRODUCTION. ROMANTICISM'S "PAGEANTRY OF FEAR"

1 Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 1–2.
2 Jacques Derrida, "The Law of Genre," *Glyph* 7 (1980), 212.
3 The two quotations are from Stuart Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanticism* (Oxford University Press, 1986), 4; and Derrida, "The Law of Genre," 212. See as well Tzvetan Todorov, *Genres in Discourse* (1978), trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge University Press, 1990), ch. 1.
4 Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Cornell University Press, 1981), 160.
5 Robert Miles, *Gothic Writing 1750–1820: A Genealogy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 3.
6 See James Watt, *Contesting the Gothic: Fiction, Genre and Cultural Conflict, 1764–1832* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Ian Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel: The Gothic, Scott, Dickens* (Cambridge University Press, 1992); Ina Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority: Gender, History, and the Waverley Novels* (Cornell University Press, 1991); Peter Manning, *Reading Romantics: Texts and Contexts* (Oxford University Press, 1990); and David Richter, "The Reception of the Gothic Novel in the 1790s," in *The Idea of the Novel in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Robert W. Uphaus (East Lansing, MI: Colleagues Press, 1988), 117–37.
7 Miles, *Gothic Writing*, 189.
8 See James Chandler, "Representative Men, Spirits of the Age, and Other Romantic Types," in *Romantic Revolutions: Criticism and Theory*, ed. Kenneth R. Johnston, Gilbert Chaitin, Karen Hanson, and Herbert Marks (Indiana University Press, 1990), 104–32; Marlon Ross, "Breaking the Period: Romanticism, Historical Representation, and the Prospect of Genre," *American Notes and Queries* 6 (1993), 127. Chandler's arguments about representativeness as a romantic trope and his suggestions regarding how literary periods shape our own notions of literary history have been collected and expanded upon in his recent *England in 1819: The Politics of Literary Culture and the Case of Romantic Historicism* (University of Chicago Press, 1998). See as well Tilot-

tama Rajan and Julia Wright, eds., *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre* (Cambridge University Press, 1998), first frontispiece: "Romanticism has often been associated with the mode of lyric, or otherwise confined within mainstream genres. As a result, we have neglected the sheer diversity and generic hybridity of a literature that ranged from the Gothic novel to the national tale, from monthly periodicals to fictionalized autobiography."

9 Ross, "Breaking the Period," 127.

10 Philip Cox, *Gender, Genre and the Romantic Poets* (Manchester University Press, 1996), 2.

11 Karen Hanson, "Romanticism without Wordsworth," in *Romantic Revolutions*, 101.

12 Marlon Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire: Romanticism and the Rise of Women's Poetry* (Oxford University Press, 1989), 5.

13 Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire*, 5.

14 See Rosemary Ashton, *The German Idea: Four English Writers and the Reception of German Thought 1800–1860* (Cambridge University Press, 1980); Karen Swann, "Public Transport: English Romantic Experiments in Sensation," *ANQ* 6 (1993), 136–42. For contemporary views, see William Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, ed. P. P. Howe, 21 vols. (London: Dent, 1930–4), V:151–2, V:346–62, VI:32; Francis Jeffrey, review of *Hermann und Dorothea*, *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 39 (1802), 384; Francis Jeffrey, review of *Thalaba the Destroyer*, *Edinburgh Review* 1 (1802), 63–4; *SL* I:118–118n; William Wordsworth, Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, in *WP* I:111–92.

15 See especially Jerome J. McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (University of Chicago Press, 1983); James Chandler, *Wordsworth's Second Nature* (University of Chicago Press, 1984); Marjorie Levinson *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems: Four Essays* (Cambridge University Press, 1986); Jon P. Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences, 1790–1832* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1987); Clifford Siskin, *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse* (Oxford University Press, 1988); Marilyn Butler, "Repossessing the Past: The Case for an Open Literary History," in *Rethinking Historicism*, ed. Marjorie Levinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 64–84; Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire*; Marilyn Butler, "Plotting the Revolution: The Political Narratives of Romantic Poetry and Criticism," in *Romantic Revolutions*, 133–57; Ross, "Breaking the Period"; Terrence Allan Hoagwood, *Politics, Philosophy, and the Production of Romantic Texts* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1996); Chandler, *England in 1819*, 77–9.

16 McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*, 69.

17 Siskin, *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse*, 3.

18 See especially Swann, "Public Transport: English Romantic Experiments in Sensation," 138.

19 Clara Reeve, *The Progress of Romance, through Times, Countries, and Manners*, 2 vols. (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1785), I:24.

20 See especially Derek Roper, *Reviewing Before the* Edinburgh *1788–1802* (University of Delaware Press, 1978), 21–6; and Marilyn Butler, "Culture's

Medium: The Role of the Review," in *The Cambridge Companion to British Romanticism*, ed. Stuart Curran (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 126–7.

21 Perhaps the best barometer of critical opinion on gothic around 1970 is the exchange in which Robert Hume and Robert Platzner engaged in *PMLA* vols. 84 (1969) and 86 (1971). In a footnote, Hume's "Gothic versus Romantic: A Revaluation of the Gothic Novel" argued for a self-evident relation between gothicism and romanticism, and added the following swipe at his critical contemporaries: "There is a persistent suspicion that Gothicism is a poor and probably illegitimate relation of romanticism, and a consequent tendency to treat it that way. There are those, indeed, who would like to deny the relationship altogether" (282n). Replying to Hume, Platzner took issue most strongly with Hume's argument about the closeness of the two literary movements: "Only the most selective reading of Coleridge himself would yield evidence for Hume's assertion that the imagination 'serves the romantics as their vehicle of escape from the limitations of the human condition.' But I doubt even more strongly that this statement could be taken seriously when applied to the later Keats or Shelley. No reader taught by Earl Wasserman (among others) to perceive the dialectical processes of the Romantic imagination or the recurrent ontological crises that constitute the ironic depth of 'Prometheus Unbound' or Keats's Great Odes would thoughtfully entertain the theory that Hume apparently assumes to be the only condition tolerable to the Romantic sensibility" (266). See Robert Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic: A revaluation of the Gothic Novel," *PMLA* 84 (1969), 282–90; and Robert Platzner, "'Gothic versus Romantic': A Rejoinder," *PMLA* 86 (1971), 266–74.

22 In saying this, I do not wish to denigrate the essential work of historical recovery done before 1970 – work that in many ways made possible the explosion of interest in gothic in the last quarter-century. See Edith Birkhead, *The Tale of Terror: A Study of the Gothic Romance* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1921); Eino Railo, *The Haunted Castle; A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism* (New York, E. P. Dutton and Company, 1927); Montague Summers, *The Gothic Quest; A History of the Gothic Novel* (London: The Fortune Press, 1938); J. M. S. Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England, 1770–1800* (London, Constable and Company, 1932); and Devendra Varma, *The Gothic Flame, Being a History of the Gothic Novel in England, Its Origins, Efflorescence, Disintegration, and Residuary Influences* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1966).

23 Jacqueline Howard, *Reading Gothic Fiction: A Bakhtinian Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 2.

24 Anne Williams, *Art of Darkness: A Poetics of Gothic* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), 12–16.

25 Maggie Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 5, 8.

26 Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*, 3.

27 Miles, *Gothic Writing*, 4.

28 Miles actually quotes one of these lists as an epigraph to his *Ann Radcliffe: The Great Enchantress* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 1. See *The Spirit of the Public Journals. Being an Impartial Selection of the Most Exquisite Esays & Jeux D'Espirits* 1 (1797), 227–8. In my own analyses in subsequent chapters, I have recourse to similar lists compiled by Coleridge, Byron, Jeffrey, and Scott.

29 See Marshall Brown, "A Philosophical View of the Gothic Novel," *Studies in Romanticism* 26 (1987), 280; and Jeffrey Cox, ed., *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825* (Ohio University Press, 1992), 6–7.

30 Williams, *Art of Darkness*, 1.

31 Williams, *Art of Darkness*, 4–5. Probably the most emblematic of Modernist dismissals of gothic is Virginia Woolf's "Gothic Romance," *TLS* (1921), 288: "there is no need to confound it with the romance of Spenser or of Shakespeare. It is a parasite, an artificial commodity, produced half in joke in reaction against the current style, or in relief from it. If we run over the names of the most famous of the Gothic romancers . . . we shall smile at the absurdity of the visions they conjure up. We shall, perhaps, congratulate ourselves upon our improvement."

32 Lord Byron, *Don Juan*, in *BPW*, vol. v, canto 10, stanza 24.

33 See Robert Southey, review of *Lyrical Ballads*, *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 24 (1798), 200; *Analytical Review* 28 (1798), 583; and *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 29 (1799), 203.

34 Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*, 102.

35 Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*, 103.

36 The most recent biography of George Beaumont is Felicity Owen and David Blayney Brown, *Collector of Genius: A Life of Sir George Beaumont* (Yale University Press, 1988). Earlier accounts include William Knight, ed., *Memorials of Coleorton* (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1887); Leicester Museum and Art Gallery, *Sir George Beaumont and . . . His Circle* (Leicester: Museums and Art Gallery, 1953); and Margaret Greaves, *Regency Patron: Sir George Beaumont* (London: Methuen, 1966).

With regard to contemporary writings on the picturesque, see William Gilpin, *Three Essays: on Picturesque Beauty; on Picturesque Travel; and on Sketching Landscape: To Which is Added a Poem, on Landscape Painting* (London: R. Blamire, 1792); and Uvedale Price, *An Essay on the Picturesque as Compared with the Sublime and Beautiful* (London: J. Robson, 1794). Gilpin differs somewhat from Price in his interest in landscape composition rather than picturesque "essence," and therefore is not interested in arguing for the picturesque as an independent aesthetic: "[I]n *landscape-painting* smooth objects would produce no composition at all . . . The very idea is disgusting. Picturesque composition consists in uniting in one whole a variety of parts; and these parts can only be obtained from rough objects. If the smooth mountains, the plains were broken by different objects, the composition might be good, on a supposition the great lines of it were so before" (19). Given the variable and fluid conception of the picturesque during these years, I wish to reiterate that in my reading of "Peele Castle" I am interested less in

distinguishing between various versions of the picturesque than in its cultural status as a corrupted form of the sublime and as an explicitly "popular" aesthetic.

More recently, a number of critical studies have appeared on the picturesque and its relation to poetry and aesthetics. The ones that have proven most useful to my own work have been Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque* (Stanford University Press, 1989), ch. 3; William Galperin, *The Return of the Visible in British Romanticism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); and Timothy Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty, and Authority: Poetry, Criticism, and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge University Press, 1996).

37 Martha Hale Shackford, *Wordsworth's Interest in Painters and Pictures* (The Wellesley Press, 1945), 21. I find Shackford's statement particularly engaging for its interesting conflation of "Romantic" and gothic – suggesting, perhaps, a less divided history between the two in art history than exists in literary history and cultural studies.

38 Karl Kroeber, *Romantic Landscape Vision: Constable and Wordsworth* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1975), 47.

39 J. D. O'Hara, "Ambiguity and Assertion in 'Elegiac Stanzas,'" *Philological Quarterly* 47 (1968), 69–82; reprinted in *Wordsworth: The 1807 Poems*, ed. Alun R. Jones (London: MacMillan, 1990), 164.

40 The way in which ruins and fragments demand active reader response, or leave imaginative work for readers to do, has been explored at length by Don Bialostosky in *Making Tales: The Poetics of Wordsworth's Narrative Experiments* (University of Chicago Press, 1984); Marjorie Levinson in *The Romantic Fragment Poem: A Critique of a Form* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986); and Anne Janowitz in *England's Ruins: Poetic Purpose and the National Landscape* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990). Janowitz's book in particular has been instrumental in historicizing eighteenth-century poetry's fascination with ruins and fragments, and in linking it to theories of history and imagination.

41 See McGann, *The Romantic Ideology*; Levinson, *Wordsworth's Great Period Poems*; David Simpson, "Literary Criticism and the Return to History," *Critical Inquiry* 14 (1988), 721–47; Alan Liu, "Wordsworth and Subversion, 1793–1804: Trying Cultural Criticism," *Yale Journal of Criticism* 2 (1989), 55–100.

42 See especially the letters to Beaumont and Lady Beaumont in *WL* I:622–7; II:7; II:54; II:112–19; and II:505–6.

43 Aside from the *Essay on the Picturesque*, Price also published *A Letter to H. Repton, Esq.: On the Application as well as the Principles of Landscape-painting to Landscape Gardening* (London: J. Robson, 1795); and *A Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful: In Answer to the Objections of Mr. Knight* (London: J. Robson, 1801). The *Essay* went through three editions by 1798, with a fourth edition issued in 1810.

44 As recent studies have shown, these assertions apply as well to romantic writers in general. In particular, see Curran, *Poetic Form and British Romanti-*

cism, ch. 1; Marlon Ross, "Scott's Chivalric Pose: The Function of Metrical Romance in the Romantic Period," *Genre* 18 (1986), 267–97; Ronald Tetreault, *The Poetry of Life: Shelley and Literary Form* (University of Toronto Press, 1987); Gary Kelly, "The Limits of Genre and the Institution of Literature: Romanticism between Fact and Fiction," in *Romantic Revolutions*, 158–75; Ross, "Breaking the Period"; and Rajan and Wright, *Romanticism, History, and the Possibilities of Genre.* These studies, among others, have been instrumental in reintroducing genre into romantic studies, as was the first conference in 1993 of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism (NASSR): "Romanticism and the Ideologies of Genre."

45 See especially Edward Jacobs, "Anonymous Signatures: Circulating Libraries, Conventionality, and the Production of Gothic Romances," *English Literary History* 62 (1995), 603–29. I treat the relation of circulating libraries and the periodical in detail in ch. 2.

46 See in particular Jacobs, "Anonymous Signatures"; Lee Erickson, "The Economy of Novel Reading: Jane Austen and the Circulating Library," *Studies in English Literature 1800–1900* 30 (1990), 573–90; and Laurie Langbauer, *Women and Romance: The Consolations of Gender in the English Novel* (Cornell University Press, 1990). Theories of reading and of genre proposed recently by scholars working in nineteenth-century American literature have been particularly helpful to my own formulations. In particular, see Richard Brodhead, *Cultures of Letters: Scenes of Reading and Writing in Nineteenth-Century America* (University of Chicago Press, 1993); and Amy Kaplan, *The Social Construction of American Realism* (University of Chicago Press, 1993).

47 See Miles, *Gothic Writing*; E. J. Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction, 1762–1800* (Cambridge University Press, 1995); Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*; David Punter, *The Literature of Terror* (London and New York: Longman, 1996); and Jerrold Hogle, "The Ghost of the Counterfeit – and the Closet – in *The Monk*," *Romanticism on the Net* 8 (1997), n. pag., internet: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/ghost.html.

48 Hume's "Gothic versus Romantic," for example, focuses upon gothic moments in Coleridge, while Punter's chapter on "Gothic and Romanticism" in *The Literature of Terror* specifically mentions every major canonical romantic *except* Wordsworth. Even the more recent, excellent work by Kilgour, Miles, Richter, and Anne Williams does not take up Wordsworth's fifteen years of gothic poetic production directly, and instead points most frequently to Byron, Coleridge, Keats, and Shelley as holding a strong interest in gothic.

49 The quoted phrase is from an 8 December 1801 letter by Scott to George Ellis; the association of gothic and German drama after 1795, however, is nearly ubiquitous. The Scott quotation in its entirety typifies the phenomenon: "At one time I certainly thought, with my friends, that it [*The House of Aspen*] might have ranked well enough by the side of the Castle Spectre, Bluebeard, and the other drum and trumpet exhibitions of the day; but the *Plays of the Passions* have put me entirely out of conceit with my Germanized

brat; and should I ever again attempt dramatic composition, I would endeavour after the genuine old English model . . . The various kinds of distress under which literary men, I mean such as have no other profession than letters, must labour, in a commercial country, is a great disgrace to society. I own to you I always tremble for the fate of genius when left to its own exertions, which, however powerful, are usually, by some bizarre dispensation of nature, useful to every one but themselves" (*SL*, 1:118n).

1 GOTHIC, RECEPTION, AND PRODUCTION

1 Punter, *The Literature of Terror,* 87.

2 See Beers, *A History of English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Keegan Paul, 1898); and Railo, *The Haunted Castle.*

3 See Bruhm, *Gothic Bodies: The Politics of Pain in Romantic Fiction* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994); Jeffrey Cox, *Seven Gothic Dramas*, 5–9; Judith Halberstam, *Skin Shows: Gothic Horror and the Technology of Monsters* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995); Kilgour, *The Rise of the Gothic Novel*; Miles, *Gothic Writing*; Monleón, *A Specter is Haunting Europe: A Sociohistorical Approach to the Fantastic* (Princeton University Press, 1990), especially 107–9; David Richter, *The Progress of Romance: Literary Historiography and the Gothic Novel* (Ohio State University Press, 1996), ch. 5; and Williams, *Art of Darkness.*

4 Hume, "Gothic versus Romantic," 282.

5 Miles, *Gothic Writing*, 213.

6 Halberstam, *Skin Shows*, 92, 2.

7 Miles, *Gothic Writing*, 213.

8 Richter, "The Reception of the Gothic Novel in the 1790s," 117–18.

9 See Jauss, "Sketch of a Theory and History of Aesthetic Experience," in *Interpretation in Narrative*, ed. Mario J. Valdès and Owen Miller (University of Toronto Press, 1978), 138–46; an *Towards an Aesthetics of Reception*, trans. Timothy Bahti (University of Minnesota Press, 1982).

10 Richter, *The Progress of Romance*, 110.

11 Richter, *The Progress of Romance*, 112–13.

12 See Ronald Paulson, "Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution," *English Literary History* 48 (1981), 532–54; and Paula Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics: Theatrical Power and Mass Culture in Early Modern England* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 163–4.

13 Richter, *The Progress of Romance*, 111.

14 Richter, *The Progress of Romance,* 121. Richter's reading of the gap between the buying habits of readers and the critical assumptions of periodical reviewers is voiced as early as 1926 by F. W. Stockoe, *German Influence in the English Romantic Period 1788–1818, with Special Reference to Scott, Coleridge, Shelley and Byron* (Cambridge University Press, 1926), 48.

15 My own research on the reception of Gothic fiction and drama has lead me to examine systematically reviews from fourteen periodicals – *Analytical*

Review, Antijacobin Review, British Critic, Critical Review, Dramatic Censor, Edinburgh Review, English Review, European Magazine, Gentleman's Magazine, Monthly Mirror, Monthly Review, Quarterly Review, Scots Magazine, Thespian Magazine – and to read essays on novels and romance by Austen, Baillie, Barbauld, Beattie, Hurd, Jeffrey, MacKenzie, More, Radcliffe, Reeve, Scott, Walpole, Warton, and Wollstonecraft.

16 The years 1797–8 show British Reviews especially hostile to gothic and other forms of popular literature. Not surprisingly, these same years are almost cataclysmic for the British economy and war effort. Nicholas Roe's *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Radical Years* (Oxford University Press, 1988), 248–66 provides probably the most concise account of the panic and war fever of these months: the near-mutiny of the British navy, the near-invasion by Napoleon, and the near-failure of the Bank of England. As the *Gentleman's Magazine* noted throughout the summer of 1797, however, there were also more biblical signs of imminent, if not apocalyptic, disaster: tempestuous storms, floods, coastal waterspouts, and an unforeseen comet. Their reportage of the weather and its possible significance occurs throughout its June, July, and August 1797 numbers; for report of the comet, see the *Gentleman's Magazine* 67 (1797), 819.

17 Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, 3–14.

18 Richter, *The Progress of Romance*, 110. In particular, Jauss's blanket concept of "general readers" ("prä erflexive Ebene") corresponds to the "Johnsonian" assumptions about audience of late-eighteenth-century periodicals; both notions erase the very diversity of population that fuels the cultural conflicts defining the period.

19 See especially Kevin Gilmartin, *Print Politics: The Press and Radical Opposition in Early Nineteenth-century England* (Cambridge University Press, 1996); Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*; Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries, and Pornographers in London, 1795–1840* (Cambridge University Press, 1988); Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*; and Richard Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800–1900* (University of Chicago Press, 1957).

20 Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, 28.

21 Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, 3. Frank Donoghue's *The Fame Machine: Book Reviewing and Eighteenth-Century Literary Careers* (Stanford University Press, 1996) locates this uncertainty over readership earlier in the century, although not with Klancher's sense of radical uncertainty: "By midcentury, readers could no longer be enumerated, either as people receiving a privately circulated manuscript or as names on a subscription list" (2).

22 Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, in *Mary Wollstonecraft: Political Writings*, ed. Janet Todd (University of Toronto Press, 1993), 104. See also Diane Hoeveler, "Vindicating *Northanger Abbey*: Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, and Gothic Feminism," in *Jane Austen and Discourses of Feminism*, ed. Devoney Looser (New York: St. Martin's Press,

1995), 117–35; Shawn Lisa Maurer, "The Female (as) Reader: Sex, Sensibility, and the Maternal in Wollstonecraft's Fictions," *Essays in Literature* 19 (1992), 36–54; and Janet Todd, "Reason and Sensibility in Mary Wollstonecraft's *The Wrongs of Woman*," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 5 (1980), 17–20.

23 This claim was first put forward by Garland Greever in *A Wiltshire Parson and His Friends* (London: Constable, 1926), which printed for the first time the four reviews of gothic fiction that it claimed had been written by Coleridge for the *Critical Review*: of Radcliffe's *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (August 1794, 12:361–72) and *The Italian* (June 1798, 23:166–9), of Mary Robinson's *Herbert de Sevrac* (August 1798, 24:472), and of Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (February 1797, 19:194–200). Greever's primary evidence is a letter by Coleridge To William Lisle Bowles dated 16 March 1797, in which he reports that "I have been lately reviewing The Monk, the Italian, Hubert de Sevrac & &c & &c – in all of which dungeons, and old castles, and solitary Houses by the Sea Side, & Caverns, & Woods, & extraordinary characters, & all the tribe of Horror & Mystery, have crowded on me – even to surfeiting" (*CL*, I:318). Greever then points to the opening of the review of *The Italian,* which refers to the *Critical*'s earlier review of *Udolpho* and wields some similar critical terms in reviewing *The Italian.* The authorship of these reviews rightfully has been the subject of some debate; for my own purposes, I find the evidence of Coleridge's correspondence compelling with regard to the reviews of *The Monk, The Italian,* and *Hubert de Sevrac.* The incongruously earlier publication date of the review of *Udolpho* makes Coleridge's authorship of it, I think, less likely.

24 See *SL*, I:124.

25 The full review was first published in *Quarterly Review* 3 (1810), 339–48, and reprinted in *SMP*, XVIII:157–72.

26 While we would have cause to call into question Scott's intimacy with Dante in this passage – he appears to confuse the *Inferno*'s "Limbus Patrum" (Limbo, or the first circle) with the "depths and depths profound" of the lower circles – the significance of gothic's place in Scott's hierarchy of fiction is both clear and striking. In placing "[t]he imitators of Mrs. Radcliffe and Mr. Lewis" below even novels of scandal – those "lowest denizens of Grub Street narrating . . . all that malevolence can invent and stupidity propagate" (*SMP*, XVIII:161) – Scott portrays gothic writers as both damned and malevolent, and gothic texts as pernicious to the social fabric. It is even more interesting, perhaps, to speculate regarding the nature of Scott's verbal slip here, as if, even in the process of ostentatiously damning gothic fiction to the lowest circle of literary hell, he cannot quite do so without ambivalence, and inadvertently places it in Limbo instead.

27 *Edinburgh Review* 12 (1808), 9.

28 Charlotte Dacre, *Confessions of the Nun of St. Omer*, 3 vols. (London: D. N. Shurry, 1805), I:1–2.

29 *British Critic* 26 (1805), 671.

30 Review of Robert Bage, *Man As He Is*, in *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 10 (1793), 293.
31 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 3 (1790), 400.
32 Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, 1:82; *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 81 (1789), 563.
33 Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, 12.
34 Richter, "The Reception of the Gothic Novel in the 1790s," 129.
35 In looking to the borrowing records of the Bristol Library and the list of subscribers for the Bath Municipal Library, Kaufman concludes that "Such condemnation [of circulating libraries and female readers] is a commonplace of literary history; and it has never been challenged or critically examined . . . The record does show a spate of sentimental novels, often sensational and sometimes erotic, accelerating in volume in the second half of this century . . . But the imposition of the burden of responsibility upon women is an irresponsible and essentially arrogant male slander. The judgments are merely *a priori*, supported by the flimsiest random observations." See Paul Kaufman, *Libraries and Their Users: Collected Papers in Library History* (London: The Library Association, 1969), 223–5. More generally, within Kaufman's *Libraries and Their Users*, see "Some Reading Trends in Bristol," 28–37; "The Community Library: A Chapter in English Social History," 188–222; and "In Defence of Fair Readers," 223–8. Since Hilda Hamlyn's pioneering work, studies of the practices, growth, and function of circulating libraries increasingly have attracted scholars. The most influential and important studies in this field are, in my opinion, Hilda Hamlyn, "Eighteenth-Century Circulating Libraries in England," *Library* 1 (1947), 197–222; Devendra Varma, *The Evergreen Tree of Diabolical Knowledge* (Washington: Consortium Press, 1972); Fergus, "Eighteenth-Century Readers in Provincial England: The Customers of Samuel Clay's Circulating Library and Bookshop in Warwick, 1770–2," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America* 78 (1984), 155–213; and Jacobs, "Anonymous Signatures."
36 Fergus, "Eighteenth-Century Readers in Provincial England," 191.
37 Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 82–3.
38 Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 21.
39 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 79 (1788), 467.
40 The term is associated with M. M. Bakhtin, whose work has become influential since the early 1980s because of several translations published by the University of Texas Press, particularly *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981). Rather than provide an exhaustive bibliography of critical work in Romantic Studies devoted to Bakhtin, I will point to two recent publications: Don Bialostosky, *Wordsworth, Dialogics, and the Practice of Criticism* (Cambridge University Press, 1992); and J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt, eds., *Scott in Carnival: Selected Papers from the Fourth International Scott Conference, Edinburgh, 1991* (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1993). Both invoke Bakhtinian notions of

"dialogism," "carnival," and "heteroglossia" in order to highlight the diversity and complexity of voices in Wordsworth's and Scott's texts. Bialostosky, in particular, sees in Bakhtinian theory a means of replacing unnecessary and partisan politicizing of Romantic Studies with more congenial exchange.

41 See M. M. Bakhtin, "The Problem of Speech Genres," in *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays*, ed. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, trans. Vern W. McGee (University of Texas Press, 1986), 99: "Thus, addressivity, the quality of turning to someone, is a constitutive feature of the utterance; without it the utterance does not and cannot exist."

42 Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 21.

43 Marlon Ross, "Contingent Predilections: The Newest Historicisms and the Question of Method," *Centennial Review* 34 (1990), 494.

44 E. D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1967), 78, 88, 110, 116f., 271; Cyril Birch, *Studies in Chinese Literary Genres* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 4. I am indebted to Mary Gerhart, *Genre Choices, Gender Questions* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 102–3, for these details and citations.

45 Philippe Lejeune, *On Autobiography*, trans. Katherine Leary (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 13–15.

46 Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 105–6.

47 Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 117.

48 Jameson's notions of genre – and especially romance – as intervening in and placating widespread political and economic anxiety have been reiterated compellingly in Ross, "Scott's Chivalric Pose," 267–97; Lennard Davis, *Resisting Novels: Ideology and Fiction* (New York: Methuen, 1987); and Halberstam, *Skin Shows*.

49 Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 89.

50 See Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1977), ch. 4.

51 Jameson, *The Political Unconscious*, 107.

52 Katie Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton University Press, 1997), 131.

53 See Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, chs. 2–3; as well as Paulson, "Gothic Fiction and the French Revolution"; Ross, "Scott's Chivalric Pose"; Backscheider, *Spectacular Politics*, Part 3; Michael Gamer, "Marketing a Masculine Romance: Scott, Antiquarianism, and the Gothic," *Studies in Romanticism* 32 (1993), 523–49.

54 Derrida, "The Law of Genre," 212.

55 Klancher, *The Making of English Reading Audiences*, 11.

56 See Klancher, "Introduction" to *The Making of English Reading Audiences*; and Roland Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text* (New York: Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1975). In exploring the erotics of reading and how readers "claim" texts as for them, Barthes provides a reader- and desire-centered account of what I wish to argue from a producer- and marketer-perspective: "The text

chooses me, by a whole disposition of invisible screens, selective baffles: vocabulary, references, readability, etc." (27).

2 GOTHIC AND ITS CONTEXTS

1 Alfred Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism," *Modern Language Notes* 38 (1923), 459–61.

2 See Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism," 453; see also "Gothic," "Gothically," and "Gothicism" in *The Oxford English Dictionary*.

3 Richard Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance* (1762), ed. Edith J. Morley (London: H. Frowde, 1911), 36. See especially Letters IV–VI, which compare Greek and Roman literary culture to British and European medieval ("Gothic") culture. The closing passages of Letter VI conclude by choosing the gothic over the classic for the purposes of poetry: "We are upon enchanted ground, my friend; and you are to think yourself well used that I detain you no longer in this fearful circle. The glympse, you have had of it, will help your imagination to conceive the rest. And without more words you will readily apprehend that the fancies of our modern bards are not only more gallant, but, on the change of the scene, more sublime, more terrible, more alarming, than those of the classic fablers. In a word, you will find that the *manners* they paint, and the *superstitions* they adopt, are the more poetical for being Gothic" (113). Hurd's centrality in revivifying the gothic as an aesthetic has been taken up by many scholars, and has received renewed attention in recent historicist work on the emergence of gothic fiction in the second half of the eighteenth century. See Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism"; Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival: An Essay in the History of Taste* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 69–70; Miles, *Gothic Writing*, 35–8; Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 68–9.

4 On the historical and political valences of "Goth" and "Gothic" and their relation to British myths of national origin, see Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel*, 21–4; Janowitz, *England's Ruins*, 65–77; Samuel Kliger, *The Goths in England; A Study in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1952); Howard Malchow, *Gothic Images of Race in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Stanford University Press, 1996); Miles, *Ann Radcliffe*, 40–3, 67–8; David Simpson, *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt against Theory* (University of Chicago Press, 1993), 64; and Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, 51–60. For sustained discussions of both British nationalism and its evolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 11–43, 101–32; Christopher Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution: Studies in Interpretations of the English Revolution of the 17th Century* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1958); and Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism*, 19–34.

5 See James Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical* (London: W. Strahan and T. Cadell, 1783), 523–30.

6 There are a few scattered instances after 1815, as with the *Monthly Review*'s complaint that Coleridge's *Christabel* had "succeeded in Gothicizing, as largely as any one of his contemporaries, the literary taste of his countrymen of the passing century" (quoted from Miles, *Gothic Writing*, 190). Such occurrences, however, are rare; we may find the beginnings of such usage in publications like Nathan Drake's 1798 *Literary Hours* (where "gothic" means "supernatural") or in Walter Scott's 1811 essay on Horace Walpole (where Scott describes Walpole as fond of "the Gothic style"), but in neither instance does the term denote a kind of literature. See Nathan Drake, *Literary Hours; or, Sketches Critical and Narrative* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1798), quoted from Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism," 459; and *SMP*, III:306.

7 Miles, *Ann Radcliffe*, 2.

8 See, for example, Altick, *The English Common Reader*; Langbauer, *Women and Romance*; Tompkins, *The Popular Novel in England, 1770–1800*; John Tinnon Taylor, *Early Opposition to the English Novel: The Popular Reaction from 1760 to 1830* (New York: King's Crown Press, 1943); Richard D. Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740–1815* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1962); John Richetti, *Popular Fiction before Richardson: Narrative Patterns 1700–1739* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969); Ioan Williams, *Novel and Romance 1700–1800: A Documentary Record* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970); and Dale Spender, *Mothers of the Novel: One Hundred Good Women Writers before Jane Austen* (London and New York: Pandora, 1986).

9 The term "philosophical romance" is fairly widely used in these years to describe what we now would call the jacobin novel. See, for example, Anna Letitia Barbauld's "On the Origin and Progress of Novel Writing," in *The British Novelists*, 50 vols. (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1810), which describes Wieland's prose fiction in this manner: "[Wieland's] powers are great, his invention fertile, but his designs insidious. He and some others of the German writers of philosophical romances have used them as a frame to attack received opinions, both in religion and in morals. Two at least of his performances have been translated, Agathon and Peregrine Proteus. The former is beautifully written, but its tendency is seductive. The latter has taken for its basis a historical character; its tendency is also obvious" (I:32).

10 Cited in Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740–1815*, 15.

11 Cited in Taylor, *Early Opposition to the English Novel*, 52.

12 Quoted in Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740–1815*, 23. Thomas Hobbes makes a similar argument about romance-reading in *Leviathan*: "So when a man compoundeth the image of his own person, with the image of the actions of an other man, as when a man imagine himself a Hercules, or an Alexander (which happeneth often to them that are much taken with reading of Romants) it is a compound imagination, and properly but a

Fiction of the mind." See Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Richard Tuck (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16.

13 This truism common in the century is put most succinctly and confidently by *Literary Magazine, or the History of the Works of the Learned . . . by a Society of Gentlemen* (1736): "Romances are commonly monstrous compositions of extravagant characters, and surprising events. For which reason they are justly treated with contempt by men of sense." Cited in Mayo, *The English Novel in the Magazines 1740–1815*, 16.

14 See Michael McKeon, *The Origins of the English Novel, 1600–1740* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), 52: "From Dante on, the fear that women's morals will be corrupted by reading romances is quite conventional, and its articulation may provide evidence less of the rise of the reading public than of the persistence of anxiety about women."

15 See Austen, *Northanger Abbey*; Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote*, ed. Margaret Dalziel (Oxford University Press, 1989); and Daniel Defoe, *Mist's Weekly Journal* (London: 19 March 1720).

16 Joseph Addison and Richard Steele, *The Spectator*, ed. Donald Bell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), 374; Samuel Johnson, *The Rambler*, vol. III of *The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson*, 16 vols., ed. W. J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1958–90), III:21; Beattie, *Dissertations Moral and Critical*, 505.

17 Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, I:66, 7.

18 See Taylor, *Early Opposition to the English Novel*, 60–3, who cites several sources that dismiss boarding schools as useless, if not pernicious, because they allow novel-reading by young women. His sources range from Frances Burney's *Evelina* to William Hazlitt's "On Reading New Books" (in *Complete Works*, XVII:200–11), to condemnations of novel-reading at schools by the Church of England, to the August 1798 *Lady's Monthly Museum,* which simply labelled boarding schools "nurseries of vice" (I:138). To these sources I would add the *Gentleman's Magazine* 63 (1793), 293–4; Hannah More's acidic comments regarding them in *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, 2 vols. (London: Cadell and Davies, 1799), chs. 1–2; and the entire chapter on "Boarding Schools" in Wollstonecraft's *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: With Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life* (London: J. Johnson, 1787).

19 On the relation of romance and gender to other economic and ideological factors, see Langbauer, *Women and Romance*; Laura L. Runge, "Gendered Strategies in the Criticism of Early Fiction," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1995), 363–78; and Naomi Tadmor, "'In the even my wife read to me': Women, Reading, and Household Life in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. James Raven, Helen Small, and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge University Press, 1996), 162–74.

20 Johnson, *The Rambler*, III:21, 22.

21 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 77 (1787), 246.

22 Langbauer's *Women and Romance* finds the association of women with ro-

mance so pervasive and so important to any critical assessment of the genre that she chooses this issue to begin her introduction: "Women and romance: in the tradition of English fiction, as well as in popular culture, these two terms seem inextricably intertwined . . . Whether conceived as a mode of erotic wish-fulfillment, or as a prose form auxiliary to the novel, romance is thought somehow proper to women and usually derided accordingly" (1).

23 *Spirit of the Public Journals* 1:229.

24 See *The Spirit of the Public Journals*, 1:229:

> *Take* – An old castle, half of it ruinous.
> A long gallery, with a great many doors, some secret ones.
> Three murdered bodies, quite fresh.
> As many skeletons, in chests and presses.
> Assassins and desperadoes, *quant. suff.*
> Noises, whispers, and groans, threescored at least. Mix them together, in the form of three volumes, to be taken at any of the watering places before going to bed.

My thanks to Robert Miles for calling my attention to this essay.

25 *Spirit of the Public Journals*, 1:229.

26 Runge, "Gendered Strategies in the Criticism of Early Fiction," 363.

27 Miles, *Gothic Writing*, 38; Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel*, 20, 31. See as well Jacobs, "Anonymous Signatures," 616–19. Jacobs is especially compelling in his analysis of the frontispiece to the 1790 Minerva Press catalogue: "This frontispiece represents Minerva, attended by another female figure, writing the categories of 'Minerva's Library' on a stone pillar. The list reads, from top to bottom, 'Histories, Voyages, Travels, Poetry, Novels, Ro' – the advertising artist having caught Minerva just in the act of adding 'Romances' to her list of literary wares. Most directly, this scene celebrates Minerva's library for being in the act of writing romances into her canon. But significantly, in Minerva's canon, romances are being written *after* 'Novels.' This ordering overtly challenges 'Novels' as the last word in fiction, and by associating Minerva with this order, the image not only advertises Minerva's kind of romance that is 'newer' than novels, but also encourages patrons to produce such 'new' romances. For, after all, the image also represents Minerva's writing of romances as incomplete" (618–19).

28 Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron. A Gothic Story* (Oxford University Press, 1967), 3. Reeve originally published the *Old English Baron* with the telling title *The Champion of Virtue*, changing the title and adding her preface in the second edition, which appeared in 1778. All references will be to Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron: A Gothic Story* (2nd. edn., London: Charles Dilly, 1778).

29 Reeve, *Old English Baron,* 4.

30 Reeve, *Old English Baron*, 3–4.

31 Reeve, *Old English Baron*, 4.

32 Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, II:25.

33 For two excellent analyses of the social position of women writers in the

romantic period, see Mary Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (University of Chicago Press, 1984); and Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire*.

34 See Clery's *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, which argues for Reeve's *Old English Baron* as an attempt to market the supernatural to a mass audience: "Reeve never married, and after her father's death in 1755 she was financially independent. It is not known whether writing was her only means of support, but remarks in her later work *The Progress of Romance* (1785) show she was a narrow observer of the book market. There she discusses among other practical matters the copyright laws, the prejudicial techniques of reviewers and their habit of reprinting excessively long extracts without payment to the author, and the threat of pirating anthologies. The project of *The Old English Baron* needs to be understood in prudential terms. When Reeve guarantees that she will trim her imagination in accordance with critical standards of acceptability, it is a sign of business sense as much as the mouthing of properties expected of novelists" (86).

35 Charlotte Smith, *The Romance of Real Life*, 3 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1787), v–vi.

36 *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 16 (1796), 222; Maria Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent: An Hibernian Tale, Taken from Facts and from the Manners of the Irish Squires before the Year 1782* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1965), vii. See *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 2 (1790), 414–16; 17 (1790), 108; and 18 (1795), 228; *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 16 (1796), 113; and 16 (1796), 222. For analyses of the relation of history and romance, see Altick, *The English Common Reader*, 26–7; Victor Sage, *Horror Fiction in the Protestant Tradition* (London: Macmillan Press, 1988); and Langbauer, *Women and Romance*, Introduction and ch. 2.

37 Edgeworth, *Castle Rackrent*, vii–viii.

38 Clara Reeve makes similar arguments in "Good Effects of Bad Novels," *Lady's Monthly Museum, or Polite Repository of Amusement and Instruction* (1798), 258–63.

39 Jerrold Hogle has argued engagingly across several essays for this notion of faking and counterfeiting as the definitive characteristic of gothic fiction. See in particular "The Ghost of the Counterfeit – and the Closet – in *The Monk*"; "The Gothic Ghost as Counterfeit and its Haunting of Romanticism: The Case of 'Frost at Midnight,'" *European Romantic Review* 9 (1998), 283–92; and "*Frankenstein* as Neo-gothic: From the Ghost of the Counterfeit to the Monster of Abjection," in *Romanticism, History and the Possibilities of Genre*, 176–210.

40 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 9 (1792), 337.

41 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 2 (1790), 414.

42 For an excellent study of how this conflict between history and fiction finds expression in the first decades of the nineteenth century, see Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, especially chs. 3 and 5–8. See as well Duncan, *Modern Romance and Transformations of the Novel*.

43 Edward Mangin, *An Essay on Light Reading, as It May Be Supposed to Influence*

Moral Conduct and Literary Taste (London, 1808). Cited from James Raven, "From Promotion to Proscription: Arrangements for Reading and Eighteenth-Century Libraries," in *Practice and Representation*, 181–2.

44 Ian Watt, *Rise of the Novel; Studies in Defoe, Richardson and Fielding* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1957), 290, 298.

45 See Raven, "From Promotion to Proscription," which provides an accurate and concise summation, and shows the extent to which Watt's conclusions originate in eighteenth-century critical discourse: "what particularly shaped eighteenth-century concern about reading environments was a conflict between support for the increased production and circulation of print, and moral and political misgivings about the extension of reading. The tension was not novel, but it was refocused by the arrangements for reading, real and imaginary, offered by the many new libraries" (177).

46 Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, II:7–8.

47 Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, II:8.

48 Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, II:25, 58. Her list of approved "Novels and Stories original and uncommon" (II:53–4), furthermore, is dominated by male writers.

49 Reeve, *Progress of Romance*, II:77.

50 *Monthly Magazine* 12 (1801), 238; quoted in Hamlyn, "Eighteenth-Century Circulating Libraries in England," 198. See Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 135; John Feather, *A History of British Publishing* (New York: Croom Helm, 1988), 99; Kaufman, *Libraries and Their Users*, 218; and Raven, "From Promotion to Proscription." The *Monthly Magazine* twenty years later calculated a further increase in the number of circulating libraries in the country up to 1,500. See *Monthly Magazine; or, British Register* 51 (1821), 51; quoted from Raven, "From Promotion to Proscription," 175. Modern estimates, while lower, are nonetheless impressive: Kaufman estimates the total number of libraries in England in 1790 at around 600, while Raven puts the number at 200.

51 *Monthly Magazine* 12 (1801), 222.

52 Kaufman, *Libraries and Their Users*, 219.

53 See Richter, *The Progress of Romance*, 119; and Fergus, "Eighteenth-Century Readers in Provincial England," 191. In many ways, Fergus's findings are most suggestive and central to reshaping our notions of the role of the circulating library in popularizing the novel. Contrary to expectation, she finds in the records of Samuel Clay's circulating library no correlation between the popularity of fiction and a growing middle-class readership: "The circulating library of this time does not seem to have greatly expanded provincial readership . . . Proportionally, members of the gentry and the professional classes outweigh tradespeople in both groups [buyers and borrowers]. In both also, very few servants and apprentices appear" (191, 190).

54 Fergus, "Eighteenth-Century Readers in Provincial England," 190.

55 Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 87.

56 See Jacobs, "A Previously Unremarked Circulating Library: John Roson and the Role of Circulating-Library Proprietors as Publishers in Eighteenth-Century Britain," *Publications of the Bibliographic Society of America* 89 (1995), 69–70: "Even a cursory examination of the careers of the most significant 'new talent' that emerged in the last two decades of the eighteenth century reveals the disproportionate role played by circulating-library publishers as developers of the novel . . . [O]ne might moreover remark that the Gothic romance genre was almost entirely underwritten by circulating-library publishers. Thomas Lowndes published the fraudulent first edition of *The Castle of Otranto,* Hookham published the first three novels of Ann Radcliffe, and John Bell's family, if not John Bell himself, published Lewis's *The Monk.* By investing in these definitive experiments in the Gothic genre, circulating-library publishers effectively created a 'craze' that would support them and many other publishers and authors for decades, and that culminated in William Lane's notorious Minerva Press."

57 See Dorothy Blakey, *The Minerva Press 1790–1820* (London: Bibliographical Society at the University Press, Oxford, 1939), 18, for Lane's actual solicitation of manuscripts. For satiric treatments of Minerva productions, see *English Review* (November 1783); George Daniel, *The Modern Dunciad: Virgil in London and Other Poems* (London: William Pickering, 1835), 100; and Samuel William Henry Ireland, *Scribbleomania; Or, The Printer's Devil's Polichronicon* (London: Sherwood, Neeley, and Jones, 1815), 140.

58 Daniel, *The Modern Dunciad*, 100–1.

59 See especially John Clive, *Scotch Reviewers: The* Edinburgh Review, *1802–1815* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 31.

60 Donoghue's *The Fame Machine* locates this kind of internal split in all kinds of periodicals, although ultimately what emerges in his own book is a split between ephemeral periodicals and bound Reviews: "For whatever their particular agendas, periodicals necessarily lead a different 'social life' than do books. They can be responsive both to changing public events and circumstances and to the needs and desires of their readers. Individual issues are ephemeral, yet periodicals that last long enough are not only preserved as bound volumes, but take on the status of institutions to an extent that is unavailable to books" (2).

61 Robert Southey, letter to William Taylor quoted in John W. Robberds, *A Memoir of the Life and Writings of the Late William Taylor of Norwich*, 2 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1843), 1:384; Roper, *Reviewing before the* Edinburgh, 21, 26.

62 As Donald Reiman notes in *The Romantics Reviewed*, 9 vols. (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1972), A:1:297, much of the *Monthly*'s longevity and the *Critical*'s earlier demise in 1817 can be attributed to the former's greater editorial consistency: "A succession of publishers employed a succession of editors [for the *Critical*] in the 1790s and first two decades of the nineteenth century in a vain attempt to recapture a readership partly alienated through the erratic behavior of the *Critical* itself and partly lost to the quarterlies."

63 See Clive, *Scotch Reviewers*, 31; Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, 20–1.

64 Roper, *Reviewing before the* Edinburgh, 44–5.

65 Ferris in *The Achievement of Literary Authority* makes a similar point about the first decades of the nineteenth century: "The two discourses – novelistic and critical – stood in peculiarly close and tangled relationship in the period, for each was a borderline discourse, neither fully literary nor fully commercial, and each was a response to the expansion of print culture and of the literary marketplace" (30).

66 Thomas James Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature: A Satirical Poem* (London: T. Becket, 1794–7; 8th. edn., Dublin: P. Byrne, 1798), 291.

67 Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 107.

68 *The Castles of Athlin and Dunbayne* was reviewed by both the *Critical Review* and the *Monthly Review*. While the former criticized Radcliffe's lack of attention to realism in depicting Highland manners, the latter attacked her use "of *trap-doors, false pannels, subterranean passages*, &c. &c." (563). See *Critical Review* 68 (1789), 251; and *Monthly Review* 81 (1789), 563.

69 See *Monthly Review* 2nd. series, 3 (1790), 91; and *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 1 (1791), 350.

70 Radcliffe continued to be responsive to criticism even after her popularity and reputation were established. *The Italian, or The Confessional of the Black Penitents*, for example, contains few protracted descriptions of landscape and, significantly, no poetry other than chapter epigraphs. For pertinent reviews of *Udolpho* on these issues, see *Analytical Review* 19 (1794), 140–5; *European Magazine and London Review* 25 (1794), 433–40; *British Critic* 4 (1794), 110–20; and *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 15 (1794), 278–83. See as well *Monthly Mirror* 3 (1797), 155–8, for a review applauding Radcliffe's changes.

71 Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 106.

72 *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 4 (1792), 458.

73 See Ann Mellor, *Romanticism and Gender* (New York: Routledge, 1993); Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire*; Williams, *Art of Darkness*; Kate Ferguson Ellis, *The Contested Castle: Gothic Novels and the Subversion of Domestic Ideology* (Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1989); and Juliann E. Fleenor, ed., *The Female Gothic* (Montreal: Eden Press, 1983).

74 See especially *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 11 (1794), 361–72, which uses the word "same" no fewer than four times in the first paragraph alone. Overall, the paragraph is complimentary while suggesting that *Udolpho* holds nothing new, so that the paragraph's conclusion – that "some readers will be inclined to doubt whether they have been exerted in the present work with equal effect as in the Romance of the Forest" (362) – is not surprising. See also *Analytical Review* 19 (1794), 140–5; *British Critic* 4 (1794), 110–20; *English Review* 28 (1796), 574–9; *European Magazine* 31 (1797), 35; *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 22 (1797), 282–4; and *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 23 (1798), 166–9.

75 See especially *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 23 (1798), 166–9. This final review summarizes aptly the general trajectory of critical discourse on Radcliffe after 1794: "In reviewing the Mysteries of Udolpho, we hazarded an

opinion, that, if a better production could appear, it must come only from the pen of Mrs. Radcliffe; but we were not totally blind to the difficulties which even she had created in that work, and in the Romance of the Forest; and the present publication confirms our suspicions. The Mysteries of Udolpho fell short of the Romance of the Forest, by the tedious protraction of events, and by a redundancy of description: the Italian falls short of the Mysteries of Udolpho, by reminding us of the same characters and the same scenes; and, although the descriptive part is less prolix, the author has had recourse to it in various instances, in which it has no natural connexion with the story" (167).

76 See *Analytical Review* 19 (1794), 140–5; *English Review* 23 (June 1794), 464–8; and *European Magazine and London Review* 25 (June 1794), 433–40. These final two reviews do note the "prolixity" and "crowded" nature of *Udolpho*, but otherwise praise it unconditionally.

77 I take as my sample size the several hundred reviews of gothic and other fiction I have read and annotated, as well as the large collection of reviews collected by David Miall and Duncan Wu for their *Romanticism: A CD-ROM* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1998). My thanks to David Miall for providing me with these texts. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* is cited by reviewers five times more often than *The Romance of the Forest*, and, at least within this sample, is referred to more often than any other work of gothic fiction. For examples of Radcliffe's influence on historians of the novel in the first decades of the nineteenth century, see "On Novels and Romances," *Scots Magazine* 64 (1802), 470–4; and (1802), 545–8; *Quarterly Review* 3 (1810), 339–47; and *New Monthly Magazine* 13 (1820), 205–9.

78 Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 106–10.

79 Derrida, "The Law of Genre," 212.

80 The best sources for these events are William B. Todd, "The Early Editions and Issues of *The Monk*, with a Bibliography," *Studies in Bibliography* 2 (1949–50), 3–24; André Parreaux, *The Publication of* The Monk: *A Literary Event 1796–1798* (Paris: Librairie Marcel Didier, 1960); and Louis Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961). Margaret Baron Wilson, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, 2 vols. (London, 1839), is also informative, although, as Peck demonstrates convincingly, its details are often unreliable.

81 Of the reversals in which reviewers sometimes engaged, the most glaring is that of the *British Critic*, whose embarrassment over their previous review of *The Monk* is palpable in their second notice: "When we gave our critique upon it what we said was concise though strong, because we feared attracting attention to a production so pernicious, even by our censures . . . [and because] it had not yet gained any celebrity; we therefore condemned it in a few strong words, such as we thought calculated to extinguish curiosity, which might perhaps be perniciously raised by a particular account of the demerits of an indecent work. Had we written upon it at a later period, when its circulation was unhappily established, we should have sought the

strongest words we could collect, to express our disapprobation and abhorrence." See the *British Critic* 10 (1797), 306; and 12 (1798), 180.

82 See *Analytical Review* 24 (1796), 403–4; *British Critic* 7 (1796), 673; *British Critic* 10 (1797), 306; *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 19 (1797), 194–200; *European Magazine* 31 (1797), 111–15; *Monthly Mirror* 2 (1796), 98; and 3 (1797), 210–15; *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 23 (1797), 451; and *Scots Magazine* 64 (1802), 545–87. The *Monthly Mirror*'s "Apology for the Monk," signed "A Friend to Genius," stands largely alone in its defense of Lewis's romance. In content, furthermore, it is a step-by-step reply to Coleridge's criticisms of the book in the *Critical Review*.

83 See, for example, William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, 10th. edn., 4 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1786) on blasphemy: "all profane scoffing at the holy scripture, or exposing it to contempt and ridicule . . . are offences punishable at common law by fine and imprisonment, or other infamous corporal punishment." More's *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education*, in turn, appears to respond directly to the offending passage of *The Monk*: "Fancy not that the Bible is too difficult and intricate to be presented in its own naked form, and that it puzzles and bewilders the youthful understanding . . . And if it be really the appropriate character of Scripture, as it tells us itself that it is, 'to make wise the simple,' then it is as well calculated for the youthful and uninformed as for any other class . . . He who could bring an unprejudiced heart and an unperverted will would bring to the Scriptures the best qualification for understanding and receiving them. And though they may contain things which the pupil cannot comprehend . . . the teacher may address to him the words which Christ addressed to Peter, 'What I do, thou knowest not how, but thou shall know hereafter'" (1:234–5).

84 See especially the *Morning Herald* for 16 December 1797, which accuses Lewis of providing "a sufficient number of Ghosts, Hobgoblins, Cells and Trap-doors to serve for a pantomimical exhibition of the most extravagant nature." See also the *Monthly Visitor* (December 1797; quoted in Parreaux, *The Publication of* The Monk, 150), which accuses the play of fomenting hatred of the clergy, encouraging slave insurrection, and supporting the abolition of aristocracy. I use the text of *Castle Spectre* edited by Jeffrey Cox in his *Seven Gothic Dramas*, 149–224. The play was originally published in London by Bell in 1798. Further references to this play will be from Cox's edition and cited by page number. Lewis makes political denials to these accusations on pages 175n, 184n, and 211–12; he footnotes his sources on pages 172n, 180n, 192n, 199n (twice), 208n, 222, and 224.

85 Parreaux's *The Publication of* The Monk, 120–1, provides an exhaustive account of what Lewis expurgated: "Lewis did not content himself with hunting out of his book any words which might be deemed indecent, such as lust, enjoy, enjoyment, incontinence, etc. Not only did he expurgate Ambrosio's vain attempt to violate Antonia, cancel almost all references to physical love, and proscribe all mention of sexual appetites or pleasures.

Whole paragraphs, nay, whole pages disappeared: the dialogue between Antonia and Leonella (silly rather than harmful), where the convention that a young lady 'should be ignorant of the differences between the sexes' was derided; the description of Ambrosio's feelings at the sight of Matilda's breasts; his voluptuous dreams; the kissing scene between Ambrosio and Matilda; the first fall of Ambrosio (in the new version, instead of yielding to temptation, he is represented struggling against it, and a concluding moral tag is added); the description of his love night with Matilda; his growing satiety, as he becomes 'glutted with the fullness of pleasure'; the description of Antonia undressing and bathing (as she appears to Ambrosio in the magic mirror), or sleeping naked (while the monk prepares to violate her); Ambrosio's anticipation of the pleasures he will experience when he enjoys her; and finally the long scene in the vaults of the convent, where Antonia is at last violated, were all cancelled."

86 Lewis did publish a few subsequent pieces of fiction – *The Bravo of Venice, a Romance translated from the German* (London: J. F. Hughes, 1805) being one example – but usually under the guise of "translation."

87 See Peck, *A Life of Matthew G. Lewis*, 19–41.

88 Walter Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1802–3), 4 vols., ed. T. F. Henderson (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1902), IV:32.

89 On these developments, see E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: V. Gollancz, 1963); Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (University of Chicago Press, 1987), 73–106; and Katherine Binhammer, "The Sex Panic of the 1790s," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6 (1996), 409–34.

90 On this genre, see Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*; and Michael Hadley, *The Undiscovered Genre: A Search for the German Gothic Novel* (Berne, Frankfurt, and Las Vegas: Peter Lang, 1978). Hadley argues that there was no German gothic novel prior to the English, and that both English and German accounts of gothic's national origins operate along similar lines. In each, gothic stands as a cultural other and is identified with foreign, "immoral" literary traditions.

91 This conclusion, in fact, is expressed explicitly by the *Antijacobin Review* 7 (September 1800), 28, in their belated review of *The Italian*: "[T]he wilderness, the mysterious horror of many situations and events in Mrs. R. are rather German than English: they partake of Leonora's spirit: they freeze; they 'curdle up the blood.'" Tracking the reception of German literature in the 1790s more generally, David Simpson's *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt against Theory* demonstrates the process by which German literature in the 1790s was at first lionized and then, as the British war with France and its accompanying xenophobia worsened, demonized by being associated with French revolutionary excess: "Germany seemed to stand for both sides of the French disposition – toward theory *and* profligacy – at the same time as

it incorporated traits that brought it into closer and perhaps threatening proximity to the ideal of Englishness: genius and imagination (and, for Kant, domestic virtue). For this reason, among others, the image of Germany was perhaps even more urgently contested in the late 1790s than was that of France, already firmly enough established as a negative paradigm" (86).

92 Lewis, Advertisement to *The Monk* (London: J. Bell, 1796).

93 Five translations in all were published, as follows: Henry James Pye, *Lenore, a Tale: From the German of Gottfried Augustus Bürger* (London: the author, 1796); J. T. Stanley, *Leonora. A Tale, Translated Freely from the German of Gottfried Augustus Bürger* (London: William Miller, 1796); W. R. Spencer, *Leonora: A Poem, from the German of Mr. Bürger* (London: Hookham, 1796); Walter Scott, *The Chase, and William and Helen: Two Ballads, from the German of Gottfried Augustus Bürger* (London: T. Cadell, 1796); and William Taylor, *Lenore, Monthly Magazine* 1 (March 1796), 135–7.

94 Samuel Coleridge, review of *The Monk, Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 19 (1797), 197.

95 *British Critic* 10 (1797), 551. The *British Critic* 7 (1796), 314, less than two years before, had published a highly complimentary assessment of Schiller, although even then they voiced distaste at his "gloomy reflections."

96 *Monthly Mirror* 4 (1797), 356.

97 Hadley, *The Undiscovered Genre*, 147.

98 Wilson, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, 1:171–3.

99 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 23 (1797), 453.

100 On the issue of Lewis's celebrity, see especially Lisa M. Wilson, "'Monk' Lewis as Literary Lion," *Romanticism on the Net* 8 (1997): n. pag., internet: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/literary.html.

101 I am indebted for my information to David Foxon, *Libertine Literature in England: 1660–1745* (New York: University Books, 1965), 7–15; Donald Thomas, *A Long Time Burning: The History of Literary Censorship in England* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 76–80; Geoffrey Robertson, *Obscenity: An Account of Censorship Laws and Their Enforcement in England and Wales* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1979), 15–34; Lynn Hunt, "Pornography and the French Revolution," in *The Invention of Pornography: Obscenity and the Origins of Modernity, 1500–1800*, ed. Lynn Hunt (New York: Zone, 1993), 302–4.

102 See *R.* v. *Read*, 11 Mod. Rep. 142 (1708); quoted in Robertson, *Obscenity*, 22.

103 For exhaustive discussions of the differences between pornography and obscenity, see Susanne Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986), chs. 3–4; Catherine MacKinnon, *Towards a Feminist Theory of State* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988) and *Only Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1994); and Pat Califia, *Macho Sluts: Erotic Fiction* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1988), Introduction.

104 Coleridge's review, as with other issues, inaugurated this element of the

"scandal" surrounding *The Monk* as well: "Nor must it be forgotten that the author is a man of rank and fortune. – Yes! the author of the Monk signs himself a LEGISLATOR! We stare and tremble" (198).

105 See Hogle, "The Ghost of the Counterfeit – and the Closet – in *The Monk*," n. pag.; Clara Tuite, "Cloistered Closets: Enlightenment Pornography, The Confessional State, Homosexual Persecution and *The Monk*," *Romanticism on the Net* 8 (1997), n. pag., internet: http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat0385/closet.html; Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, 94–6; and Wilson, "'Monk' Lewis as Literary Lion," n. pag. The quoted passage is from Horace Smith, *Rejected Addresses: or, The New Theatrum Poetarum* (22nd. edn., Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1851), 50.

106 Walter Scott, *The Journal of Walter Scott*, 3 vols., ed. J. G. Tait (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1939–46), I:6–7.

107 See Hogle, "The Ghost of the Counterfeit – and the Closet – in *The Monk*," n. pag.

108 Tuite, "Cloistered Closets."

109 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosexual Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 91.

110 See Wilson, "'Monk' Lewis as Literary Lion": "Lewis's masculinity as well as his literary authority would already have been called into question by his choice of genre . . . making it easier to cast him as effeminate." See as well McCalman, *Radical Underworld*, 204–15.

111 Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce, *The Life of William Wilberforce*, 5 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1838), II:183–4.

112 Parreaux, *The Publication of* The Monk, 118–19.

113 See Walter Kendrick, *The Secret Museum: Pornography in Modern Culture* (New York: Viking, 1987), 99; and Thomas, *A Long Time Burning*, 213.

114 See Scott, *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, IV:32; Thomas Medwin, *Conversations with Lord Byron* (London: Colburn, 1824), 233; David Erskine Baker, Isaac Reed, and Stephen Jones, eds., *Biographia Dramatica; Or, A Companion to the Playhouse*, 3 vols. (London: Longman, 1812), I:ii:453; *Gentleman's Magazine* 88:2 (August 1818), 183.

115 Wilson, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, I:153–4.

116 See Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 164; and Tuite, "Cloistered Closets."

117 *Monthly Review* 23 (August 1797), 451; *Monthly Magazine* 4 (August 1797), 121. See also *British Critic* 7 (June 1796), 677.

118 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, vi.

119 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, 292–5.

120 Mathias, *The Pursuits of Literature*, 294n.

121 Clery, *The Rise of Supernatural Fiction*, 164.

122 See *A Poem on the Authors of Two Late Productions, Intitled "The Baviad" and "Pursuits of Literature"* (London: Rivington, 1797); *Impartial Strictures on the Poem Called "The Pursuits of Literature"* (London: Bell, 1798); William Boscawen, *The Progress of Satire* (London: Bell, 1798); William Burdon, *Examination of the Merits and Tendency of the Pursuits of Literature* (Newcastle: Brown,

1799–1800); Thomas Dutton, *The Literary Census* (London: the author, 1798); *The Egotist, or Sacred Scroll* (London: Murray and Highley, 1798); John Mainwaring, *Remarks on the Pursuits of Literature* (London: Cadell, 1798); Andrew Oedipus, *The Sphinx's Head Broken, or a Poet's Epistle to Thos. Jas. M*th**s, Cl*rk to the Qu**ns Tr**s*r*r* (London: Bell, 1798); Richard Polwhele, *The Unsex'd Females: Addressed to the Author of the Pursuits of Literature* (London: Cadell, 1798); *A Letter to the Executor of the Deceased Author of The Pursuits of Literature* (London: Bell, 1799); George Chalmers, *A Supplemental Apology for the Believers in Shakspeare-papers . . . and a Postscript to T. J. Mathias, author of The Pursuits of Literature* (London: Egerton, 1799); [William Hales], *Irish Pursuits of Literature in A.D. 1798, and 1799* (Dublin: Milliken, 1799); Junius Juvenal, *The Philadelphia Pursuits of Literature* (Philadelphia: John Davis, 1803); *The Speculum . . . Addressed to the Author of the Pursuits of Literature* (London, 1806); and Ireland, *Scribbleomania*.

123 See Mathias, *The Grove; A Satire in Verse* (London, 1798), 66n; and *The Shade of Alexander Pope on the Banks of the Thames* (London: T. Becket, 1799), 39.
124 Matthew Lewis, *Adelmorn, the Outlaw* (London: J. Bell, 1801), v.
125 It did not deter her. Coleridge's "The Mad Monk" appears in M. E. Robinson, ed., *The Wild Wreath*, (London: Richard Phillips, 1804), 142–4.
126 See Coleridge, review of *The Monk*, 198; and *CL*, 1:379.
127 Robertson, *Obscenity*, 15.
128 Baker, Reed, and Jones, *Biographia Dramatica*, 1:ii:452.
129 See Wilson, *The Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis*, 1:159: "Of the justice of the general condemnation pronounced upon 'The Monk,' there can be no question; and it is to be deeply deplored that talents such as the young author displayed, had not devoted their early freshness to some more worthy object."
130 *Annual Review* 5 (1807), 542.
131 *European Magazine* 48 (1805), 326–7.
132 See Ireland, *Scribbleomania*, 141; Daniel, *The Modern Dunciad*, 101, 142.
133 See Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, 90–1; the quotation concerning Lewis's "outrage[s]" is taken from David Rivers, *Literary Memoirs of Living Authors of Great Britain*, 2 vols. (London: R. Falder, 1798), 1:371–2; quoted in Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, 91.

3 "GROSS AND VIOLENT STIMULANTS": PRODUCING LYRICAL BALLADS 1798 AND 1800

1 Jeffrey's criticisms of the "Lake School of Poetry" attack Wordsworth's "system" as expressed in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*; both Coleridge's account of Wordsworth in *Biographia Literaria* and Hazlitt's description of Wordsworth's muse as "leveling" in *Lectures on the English Poets* (London, 1818) use the Preface as a primary source as well.

2 See especially Stephen Parrish, *The Art of the Lyrical Ballads* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 3–4. In many ways still one of the most concise reviews of the reputation of *Lyrical Ballads* in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is John Emory Jordan's *Why the Lyrical Ballads?* (Berkeley and London: University of California Press, 1976), 103–6. Jordan in these pages tracks the persistence of the myth of the *Lyrical Ballads* being "entirely new" from 1802 to the present day, and in the process provides a lucid overview of the ebbs and flows of its reputation.

3 The extracts below are from the following sources. For Coleridge, see *CL*, I:627, II:830; and *CBL*, II:9–10. For Wordsworth, see the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* in *WP*, I:120; and *WL* V:352. The final Wordsworth quotation is from British Museum Add. MS 41326; it is Wordsworth's annotation to the manuscript of Barron Field's *Memoirs of the Life and Poetry of William Wordsworth* (1843), and is quoted in *WP*, I:167. Field's *Memoirs* were not published until 1975; see *Barron Field's Memoirs of the Life and Poetry of William Wordsworth*, ed. Geoffrey Little (Sydney University Press for the Australian Academy of the Humanities, 1975).

4 Jeffrey, review of *Thalaba the Destroyer*, *Edinburgh Review* 1 (1802), 63–83. Jeffrey's review inspired other reviewers thereafter to attack Wordsworth for his "system." See especially *Eclectic Review* 4 (1808), 35–43; *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 76 (1815), 123–36; *Poetical Register for 1806–07* (1811), 540–1; *Satirist, or Monthly Meteor* 1 (1807), 188–91.

5 See especially Ernest De Selincourt's notes in his edition of *The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, 5 vols. (Oxford University Press, 1940), I:viii; Geoffrey Hartman, *Wordsworth's Poetry, 1787–1814* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1964); Enid Welsford, *Wordsworth's Salisbury Plain* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966), 28; James Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1980), 184; Theresa Kelley, *Wordsworth's Revisionary Aesthetics* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), 67; George Wilbur Meyer, *Wordsworth's Formative Years* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1943); Paul D. Sheats, *The Making of Wordsworth's Poetry, 1785–1798* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973); Clifford Siskin, "Wordsworth's Gothic Endeavor: From *Esthwaite* to the Great Decade," *Wordsworth Circle* 10 (1980), 161; Jack G. Voller, *The Supernatural Sublime: The Metaphysics of Terror in Anglo-American Romanticism* (Dekalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1994), 126–57. Chapter 5 of Voller's *Supernatural Sublime* is the most recent exploration of this traditionary formulation, arguing that the "departure from Gothic convention forms the foundation of Wordsworth's anti-supernaturalism" and that "The beneficence of nature permits Wordsworth to abandon his Gothic landscapes" (131, 135). As I discuss in this chapter, the chronology of Wordsworth's own output in these years does not allow for Voller's developmental reading – where by "Tintern Abbey" "the absence of the Gothic is virtually complete" – to work cleanly. More importantly, the association of "gothic" with adolescence is itself a trope fundamental to romantic ideology. For an

excellent critique of critical accounts of Wordsworth's "maturation," see Siskin, *The Historicity of Romantic Discourse*.

6 For two excellent readings of Wordsworth that nonetheless come to this conclusion, see Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering*, 183–4; and Bialostosky, *Making Tales*, ch. 3. After showing quite nicely how Wordsworth's gothic predilections create considerable ambivalence in the *Lyrical Ballads*, Averill concludes "One suspects that the extravagant fictions of Radcliffe, Schiller, Bürger, and Lewis are not the only objects of Wordsworth's meditations on 'gross and violent' literary stimulants, nor perhaps the primary ones . . . In his great years, Wordsworth was not much tempted by the supernatural. Alone among the English Romantics, he found the common growth of mother-earth sufficient. Indeed the 'Prologue' to *Peter Bell* pokes gentle fun at 'full-grown poets' who indulge fantasies involving ghosts, fairies, spirits, and such" (183–4).

7 Gene Ruoff comments as well upon the disparity between Coleridge's account of the inception of *Lyrical Ballads* and the extant evidence. See his *Wordsworth and Coleridge: The Making of the Major Lyrics 1802–1804* (New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 4: "All readers of romantic literature should by now have become wary of such genealogies as we find embedded in Wordsworth's advertisement (1798) and prefaces (1800 and 1802) to *Lyrical Ballads* (and confusingly supplemented in Coleridge's alternative account in *Biographia Literaria*)."

8 Isabella Fenwick Note to "We Are Seven," in *LB*, 347–8.

9 "Lewti" appeared in the *Morning Post* on 13 April, 1798. "The Mad Monk" appeared in the *Morning Post* on 13 October, 1800 over the pseudonym "CASSIANI, jun.," and was reprinted in 1804 under Coleridge's name in *The Wild Wreath*, a collection edited by Maria E. Robinson, daughter of Mary Robinson. Twentieth-century criticism has focused almost entirely on the question of the authorship of "The Mad Monk," and Butler and Green summarize this debate aptly in *LB*. Its authorship was debated most famously by Stephen Parrish and David Erdman in the pages of the *Bulletin of the New York Public Library* 64 (1960), 209–37. Parrish posits that "The Mad Monk" was written by Wordsworth and then submitted by Coleridge to Daniel Stuart of the *Morning Post* in the 7 October 1800 letter that contained Wordsworth's "Alcaeus to Sappho." Reminding readers of Coleridge's habit of sending Stuart poems written by Wordsworth, and citing concordance tests showing the poem to be Wordsworthian in its language, Parrish concludes the authorship to belong to Wordsworth. Erdman responds by pointing to the heavily parodic nature of the work – not only its title, but its areas of greatest emotional stress, which he finds constructed of gothic clichés: skies of blood, jealous "love to agony," forest's "dark recess[es]," and poniarded women. Looking to the similarity of "The Mad Monk" to the "Intimations" ode, he concludes that the poem cannot be by Wordsworth because Wordsworth would have no reason to parody himself. He then cites Coleridge's fondness for parody, as evidenced by the Nehemiah

Higginbottom sonnets of 1797 and the *Skeltoniad*, a satire of James MacIntosh that Coleridge sent to Stuart on 9 October 1800 – two days after he supposedly sent "The Mad Monk." Most persuasive for Erdman are the edits made to the poem in 1804 for *The Wild Wreath*, in which the title of the poem became "The Mad Monk," its excesses were removed, and its last lines omitted. In 1804 either Coleridge or Robinson, according to Erdman, wanted to "make an honest poem" of "The Mad Monk," and therefore removed the parodic elements and put in small homages to Mary Robinson – like the replacing of "wounded woman" with "murder'd maid" at line 31, commemorating Robinson's *The Murdered Maid*. For Erdman, these edits testify to the original's parodic intent, and he concludes "The Mad Monk" to have been written by a Coleridge still stinging from Wordsworth's decision to reject *Christabel* from the *Lyrical Ballads* on 6 October. Given the poem's original title and Coleridge's habit of parodying "the manner of Mrs. Radcliffe," I lean toward Erdman's account.

10 See *CL*, 1:368: "This [£18 11s 0d] is all I owe in the world: now in order to pay it I must borrow ten pound of you, £5 of Mr Wade, and will sell my Ballad to Phillips who I doubt not will give me £5 for it."

11 See *CL*, especially 1:386–7 (18 February 1798); 1:390–1 (7 March 1798); 1:399–400 (13 March 1798); 1:402–3 (early April 1798); and 1:411–13 (28 May 1798). These letters show Coleridge making his publisher Joseph Cottle a variety of offers of poems and plays for publication. A number of Coleridge's other letters from January (*CL*, 1:361–9) directly address his need for money, a need met on 18 January when the Wedgwoods offered Coleridge a £150 annuity for life (*CL*, 1:369–73). A month later, however, the annuity money had not yet been paid, and so it seems fairly clear that Coleridge produced this flurry of correspondence to Cottle out of a need to raise money. I am indebted for this information to Butler and Green, Introduction to *LB*, 6–8.

12 Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering*, 184–5.

13 In addition, see Averill, "The Shape of *Lyrical Ballads* (1798)," *Philological Quarterly* 60 (1981), 387–407.

14 Jordan, *Why the Lyrical Ballads?*, 11. See as well Thomas McFarland, "The Symbiosis of Wordsworth and Coleridge," *Studies in Romanticism* 11 (1972), 276; Parrish, *The Art of the Lyrical Ballads*, 10; Ross, *The Contours of Masculine Desire*, ch. 3; Ruoff, *Wordsworth and Coleridge*, 73. Both McFarland and Ross are persuasive concerning the oppositional nature of the friendship that, as McFarland puts it, prohibited their "blending . . . into one literary entity" (276).

15 Coleridge writes about both religious and aesthetic notions of unity throughout his prose and letters. His most famous description of it is most probably the definition of organic form in *CBL*, which is expanded upon in the "Fragment of an Essay on Beauty (1818)": "In order to derive pleasure from the occupation of the mind, the principle of unity must always be present, so that in the midst of the multeity the centripetal force be never

suspended, nor the sense be fatigued by the predominance of the centrifugal force. This unity in multeity I have elsewhere stated as the principle of beauty. It is equally the source of pleasure in variety, and in fact a higher term including both." See Coleridge, "Fragment of an Essay on Beauty (1818)," in *Biographia Literaria*, 2 vols., ed. J. Shawcross (London: Oxford University Press, 1907), II:262. See as well *CBL*, I:20–3, II:72; and *CL*, I:192, IV:433.

16 Mary Jacobus, *Tradition and Experiment in Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads (1798)* (Oxford University Press, 1976), 83–4. Regarding these lines and their import, see as well William A. Ulmer, "Wordsworth, the One Life, and *The Ruined Cottage*," *Studies in Philology* 93 (1996), 305–8. For a more general account of Coleridge's early influence upon Wordsworth, see Roe, *Wordsworth and Coleridge*.

17 Owen's interest in Wordsworth's theories of language and their primacy in the Preface to *Lyrical Ballads* is put most clearly in his *Wordsworth as Critic* (University of Toronto Press, 1969), 3: "The main object of the Preface of 1800 is to define and defend a particular rhetoric: to assert the poetic value of 'a selection of the real language of men in a state of vivid sensation' (16.1–2) and of 'the language of prose' (23.20)."

18 *WP*, I:172. Because of its focus upon exploring Wordsworth's theories of language and imagination, Owen's *Wordsworth as Critic* does not address this passage either.

19 Coleridge describes his task in the *Lyrical Ballads* as one of writing poems in which "the incidents and agents were to be, in part at least, supernatural; and the excellence aimed at was to consist in the interesting of the affections by the dramatic truth of the emotions, as would naturally accompany such situations, supposing them real" (*CBL*, II:6). Compare this to the Preface to the second edition of *Castle of Otranto* (1765), where Walpole makes a similar defense of its supernaturalism by stressing its psychological and emotional realism: "Desirous of leaving the powers of fancy at liberty to expatiate through the boundless realms of invention, and thence of creating more interesting situations, he wished to conduct the mortal agents in his drama according to the rules of probability; in short, to make them think, speak and act, as it might be supposed mere men and women would do in extraordinary positions. He had observed, that in all inspired writings, the personages under the dispensation of miracles, and witnesses to the most stupendous phenomena, never lose sight of their human character" (7–8).

20 The same letter, for example, apologizes for disturbing Bowles, and twice inquires into the health of his mother, assuring Bowles of "the nightly prayers of my little family for the restoration of your dear Mother's health" (*CL*, I:317).

21 Coleridge, review of *The Monk*, 194.

22 Each of these reviews begins similarly by citing the current fashion for gothic fiction and prophesying that common sense will soon make the fashion disappear. The quotations in this passage are from Coleridge,

review of *The Monk*, 194, 198.

23 Hogle, "The Gothic Ghost as Counterfeit and its Haunting of Romanticism," 284.

24 Coleridge, review of *The Monk*, 194.

25 *CL*, II:811, to William Sotheby, 13 July 1802: "It is most certain, that the P[refaces arose from] the heads of our mutual Conversations &c – & the f[irst pass]ages were indeed partly taken from notes of mine / for it was at first intended, that the Preface should be written by me."

26 Coleridge, review of *The Monk*, 194, 197.

27 Samuel Coleridge, *The Watchman*, ed. Lewis Patton, vol. II of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate (Princeton University Press, 1970), 4.

28 Various forms of this argument occur not only in the reviews of gothic fiction, but also in the earlier political essays, particularly "A Moral and Political Lecture" and "Consciones ad Populum." See Coleridge, *Lectures 1795 on Politics and Religion*, ed. Lewis Patton and Peter Mann, vol. I of *The Collected Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Princeton University Press, 1969), 9–15, 38–44.

29 See Coleridge, *The Watchman*, 31.

30 Coleridge, review of *The Monk*, 194. In addition, Coleridge links gothic fiction to circulating libraries in his review of Mary Robinson's *Hubert de Sevrac*.

31 The popularity of both Gothic fiction and supernatural ballad peak with the publication of *The Monk* in 1796. Jacobus's *Tradition and Experiment*, quoting Scott's "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad," explains that "By 1801, 'the passion for ballads and ballad-mongers [had] been for some time on the wane.' In 1796, however, Scott, 'finding Lewis in possession of so much reputation,' was encouraged 'to attempt the style of poetry by which he had raised himself to fame'" (215).

32 See Coleridge, review of *Hubert de Sevrac*, 472; review of *The Italian*, 166; review of *The Monk*, 194.

33 See Hogan, *The London Stage 1660–1800; Part V: 1776–1800* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1968). By my calculations, *Castle Spectre* made £12,584 before benefits, and an approximate total of £14,700 in its first year – over one-quarter of the £54,191 that Drury Lane brought in that season.

34 See William Knight, *A Life of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: D. Douglas, 1887), I:126; Mary Moorman, *William Wordsworth: A Biography*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957–66), I:301, 351, 396; Alan Richardson, *A Mental Theater: Poetic Drama and Consciousness in the Romantic Age* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1988), 20. Stephen Gill, Wordsworth's most recent biographer, argues otherwise, and reads Wordsworth's response to the rejection of *The Borderers* and to the success of *Castle Spectre* as "very revealing. He was hurt and with some arrogance, understandable but amazing in a 27-year-old who had published almost

nothing, he seems to have blamed the rejection on 'the deprav'd State of the Stage at present' and to have declared himself undecided whether to wait for reform or to publish at once." See Gill, *William Wordsworth: A Life* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 132–3.

35 Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, XVII:118.

36 See especially Gerhard Stilz, "Robbers, Borderers, Millers and Men," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift fur Literaturewissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 65 (1991), 117–31; and Bruce David Wyse, "Repetition, Genre and Excess in Romantic Closet Tragedy: 'The Borderers,' 'Remorse,' and 'Manfred,'" doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto (1993). For more general background on *The Borderers* and its influences, see David Bromwich, "Revolutionary Justice and Wordsworth's *Borderers*," *Raritan* 13 (1994), 1–24; and the introductory essay to William Wordsworth, *The Borderers*, ed. Robert Osborn (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982).

37 Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, XVII:118.

38 Southey's "Mary," in particular, borrows the meter and rhyme scheme of Lewis's "Alonzo the Brave and the Fair Imogine." See Robert Southey, *Poems* (Bristol: J. Cottle, 1797).

39 Hannah More, *Cheap Repository for Publications on Religious and Moral Subjects* (Bath: S. Hazard, 1795), 1.

40 Butler, "Plotting the Revolution," 141.

41 Coleridge, review of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 362. Of the reviews attributed to Coleridge published in the *Critical Review* between 1794 and 1797, the case for his authorship of this review is most tenuous. It is worth noting, however, that Coleridge echoes the claims of this passage with different emphases in his paragraphs on romance in the review of *The Monk* and in the opening of his review of *The Italian*.

42 See Alan Liu, *Wordsworth: The Sense of History* (Stanford University Press, 1989), especially ch. 7.

43 Alan J. Bewell, "A 'Word Scarce Said': Hysteria and Witchcraft in Wordsworth's 'Experimental' Poetry of 1797–1798," *English Literary History* 53 (1986), 360.

44 See especially four essays by Swann written over the period of approximately a decade: "'Christabel': The Wandering Mother and the Enigma of Form," *Studies in Romanticism* 23 (1984), 533–53; "Public Transport: Adventuring on Wordsworth's *Salisbury Plain*," *English Literary History* 55 (1988) 811–34; "Suffering and Sensation in *The Ruined Cottage*," *PMLA* 106 (1991), 83–95; and "Public Transport: English Romantic Experiments in Sensation."

45 These claims are argued in relation to Wordsworth's "There Was a Boy," "Lucy Gray," and "Three Years She Grew" by Marlon Ross in "Naturalizing Gender: Woman's Place in Wordsworth's Ideological Landscape," *English Literary History* 53 (1986), 391–410.

46 Adela Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion: Epistemologies of Emotion, Hume to Austen* (Stanford University Press, 1996), 85.

47 See Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering*, 160–1; Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*, 85–8. I am indebted to these two sources for many of my observations on "Goody Blake and Harry Gill" and *The Ruined Cottage*.
48 All citations from *The Ruined Cottage* are from MS D, and cited by line number.
49 Swann, "Suffering and Sensation in *The Ruined Cottage*," 84.
50 Here especially see Pinch, *Strange Fits of Passion*, 85–8.
51 See Parrish, *The Art of the Lyrical Ballads*, 88–9; Jacobus, "The Idiot Boy," in *Bicentennial Wordsworth Studies in Memory of John Alban Finch*, ed. Jonathan Wordsworth (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 241–8; Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering*, 188–9.
52 Bialostosky, *Making Tales*, 70.
53 *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 24 (1798), 200.
54 See Reed, *Wordsworth: The Chronology of the Early Years 1770–1799* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), 255.
55 See *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 24 (1798), 197–204; *Analytical Review* 28 (1798), 583–7; *New Annual Register; or General Repository of History, Politics, Arts, Sciences, and Literature* 19 (1799), 309–10; and *Monthly Magazine* 6 (1799 Supplement), 514. In addition, the 1798 edition of *Lyrical Ballads* was reviewed by *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 29 (1799), 202–10; *British Critic* 14 (1799), 364–9; *Antijacobin Review* 5 (1800), 434.
56 See Butler and Green, Introduction to *LB*, 21; and *CL*, 1:489n.
57 Joseph Cottle, *Reminiscences of Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Robert Southey* (London, Houlston and Stoneman, 1847), 259–60. In the sale of Cottle's copyrights to Longman, the rights to *Lyrical Ballads* were "reckoned as *nothing*," and so Cottle asked for the return of the copyright and presented it to Wordsworth.
58 Cottle, *Reminiscences*, 259.
59 See *WL*, 1:267–8, 267, 281. The *British Critic*, when it reviewed the *Lyrical Ballads* in October 1799, had attributed "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" to Coleridge, and thought it likely that the entire volume had been written by him. Stephen Gill reads this exhortation by Wordsworth as "a gush of affection," but this seems unlikely given that, as Gill notes, Wordsworth had decided six months earlier to scrap "The Ancient Mariner," and a year later decided to exclude "Christabel" from the volume. See Stephen Gill, *William Wordsworth*, 165.
60 See Cottle, *Reminiscences*, 259.
61 Southey, review of *Lyrical Ballads*, 201, 200.
62 Paul Magnuson, *Reading Public Romanticism* (Princeton University Press, 1998), 9.
63 Southey, review of *Lyrical Ballads*, 203.
64 Southey, review of *Lyrical Ballads*, 200.
65 *New Annual Register for 1798* 19 (1799), 310; *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 29 (1799), 202.
66 *Analytical Review* 28 (December 1798), 584.

67 *WP*, 1:117: "The poem of the Thorn . . . is not supposed to be spoken in the author's own person: the character of the loquacious narrator will sufficiently shew itself in the course of the story. The Rime of the Ancyent Mariner was professedly written in the imitation of the *style*, as well as the spirit of the elder poets; but with a few exceptions, the Author believes that the language adopted in it has been equally intelligible for these three last centuries."

68 See especially the notes by Griggs in *CL*, 1:602n; Gill, *William Wordsworth*, 165; Butler and Green in *LB*, 29–30.

69 *British Critic* 14 (1799), 364–9; *Antijacobin Review* 5 (1800), 434.

70 *LB*, 159.

71 Parrish, *The Art of the Lyrical Ballads*, 262.

72 Averill, *Wordsworth and the Poetry of Human Suffering*, 185.

73 Parrish, *The Art of the Lyrical Ballads*, 150. The original citation for Dorothy Wordsworth is *The Journals of Dorothy Wordsworth*, ed. Mary Moorman, intro. Helen Darbishire (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), 43.

74 Parrish, *The Art of the Lyrical Ballads*, 150.

75 See *CL*, 1:635. Griggs nicely summarizes Coleridge's obligations at the end of June 1800: "he had accepted an advance from Phillips, possibly for a 'bookseller's compilation'; he had agreed to prepare a volume of his German tour for Longman; and beyond all this, he was under a moral responsibility to write his life of Lessing, a work long promised to the Wedgwoods. Instead, however, of rescuing himself from a sea of embarrassments and paying heed to his own reputation, Coleridge gave his best efforts to Wordsworth's project." See also *CL*, 1:592n.

76 See Coleridge, review of *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, 362; and review of *The Italian*, 166. Coleridge, while not echoing the phrase "extraordinary Incident" in his review of *The Monk*, nevertheless defines the gothic along these same lines. See review of *The Monk*, 194.

4 NATIONAL SUPERNATURALISM: JOANNA BAILLIE, GERMANY, AND THE GOTHIC DRAMA

1 *Dramatic Censor; or, Weekly Theatrical Report* (London: J. Roach, 1800–1), 1–2.

2 The Licenser of Plays was an employee of the Lord Chamberlain's office, and responsible for reviewing all new dramatic productions and censoring all politically and morally objectionable parts. The Lord Chamberlain originally received this authority to regulate the content of the stage with the passing of the Licensing Act of 1737. The best source of information on and analysis of the Licensing Act and its subsequent effect on the stage is L. W. Connolly, *The Censorship of English Drama* (San Marino, CA: Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, 1976).

3 *Monthly Mirror* 1 (1796), 183–4.

4 *Dramatic Censor* 3 (1800), 62.

5 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 27 (1798), 66.

6 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 32 (1800), 323.

7 The full bibliographic citation is Joanna Baillie, *A Series of Plays: In which It Is Attempted to Delineate the Stronger Passions of the Mind. Each Passion Being the Subject of a Tragedy and a Comedy*, 3 vols. (London: T. Cadell, 1798–1812). The plays were almost immediately rechristened *Plays on the Passions*. Baillie completed the series by publishing the remaining plays in her *Dramas*, 3 vols. (London: Longman, 1836).

8 This general uncertainty over where to place Baillie reveals itself strikingly in the contrast between Jeffrey Cox's Introduction to *Seven Gothic Dramas* and Daniel Watkins's *A Materialist Critique of English Romantic Drama* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993) – studies that in their placement of Baillie function like two sides of the same coin. Cox's collection includes Baillie's *De Monfort* with six other performed plays by other authors whose use of spectacle and "special effects . . . creat[ed] a new theater of shock and sensation" (16); Watkins, on the other hand, treats *De Monfort* as "romantic closet drama," and therefore as "a 'literary' internalization of the interests, tastes, and dynamics that are constituent features of social life during the Romantic period" (7).

9 Robert Lloyd, *The Actor* (1760), vol. xv of *Works of the English Poets from Chaucer to Cowper*, 21 vols., ed. Alexander Chalmers (London: J. Johnson, 1810), p. 78.

10 See Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble* (Philadelphia: H. Small, 1825), 313: "[I] admired, as every one else did, the singular address by which Mrs. Radcliffe contrived to impress the mind with all the terrors of the ideal world; and the sportive resolution of all that had excited terror into very common natural appearances . . . But, even in romance, it may be doubtful, whether there be not something *ungenerous* in thus playing upon poor timid human nature, and agonizing it with false terrors. The disappointment is, I know, always resented, and the laboured explanation commonly deemed the flattest and most uninteresting part of the production."

11 See *Analytical Review* 19 (1794), 187; and *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 14 (1794), 352.

12 See Robert P. Reno, "James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* and Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*: Challenges of the Supernatural Ghost on the Late Eighteenth-Century Stage," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 9 (1984), 95–106.

13 See "To the Reader" in *Castle Spectre*, 224.

14 Lewis, *Castle Spectre*, 223. Interestingly, in responding to Lewis's defense of his spectre, the February 1798 *Analytical Review* notice of *Castle Spectre* reversed its views. Arguing against the reasoning of its previous 1794 dismissal of *Fontainville Forest*, it said: "If, in truth, the belief in ghosts no longer existed, their appearance, in the serious drama, would be altogether as impertinent and intolerable as that of Jupiter or Juno; and we are persuaded, that the laughter and hisses of the audience would soon drive them from the stage . . . but so congenial to the human mind is the apprehension of something supernatural, that the impression of these stories is seldom perfectly erased

during the subsequent periods of life; and many a man, in particular situations, feels influenced by a belief, which he may be reluctant to acknowledge even to himself; and awed by terrours, for which he cannot account, and at which he may affect to laugh." See *Analytical Review* 27 (1798), 183. For this reviewer, audience pleasure signifies at least residual belief.

15 *Monthly Mirror* 5 (1798), 110.
16 *Monthly Mirror* 5 (1798), 113.
17 James Boaden, *Cambro-Britons* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1798), iv–vi.
18 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 26 (1798), 96.
19 *Monthly Mirror*, 6 (1798), 108.
20 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 28 (1799), 224–5; 27 (1798), 66.
21 See especially Hogan, *The London Stage 1660–1800; Part V.*
22 *European Magazine* 23 (1794), 384; Boaden, *The Life of Mrs. Jordan*, 2 vols. (London: E. Bull, 1831), I:260. Both passages quoted from Hogan, *The London Stage 1660–1800; Part V*, v:1638.
23 Reno, "James Boaden's *Fontainville Forest* and Matthew Lewis's *The Castle Spectre*," 97.
24 The grandiosity of Kemble's spectacle in the 1794 Drury Lane opening of *Macbeth* was notable enough for Scott to remember it thirty-two years later when reviewing Boaden's *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble* (Philadelphia: Robert H. Small, 1825) for the *Quarterly Review* in 1826. See *SMP*, xx:207.
25 See *Thespian Magazine* 3 (1794), 127–8; *European Magazine* 25 (1794), 236; James Boaden, *Memoirs of the Life of John Philip Kemble*, 324–6.
26 See Dennis Bartholomeusz, *Macbeth and the Players* (Cambridge University Press, 1969), 133–4, for a somewhat different interpretation of these issues. Bartholomeusz stresses Kemble's "classicism," his comparative fidelity to Shakespeare's texts, and his expressed regret in private to Joseph Farrington over resurrecting Banquo's ghost when Covent Garden audiences called for it. He ignores, however, many of Kemble's other attempts to achieve spectacular effect through music and dance, as well as Kemble's strategy of marketing himself as the true heir to the legacies of Shakespeare and the English stage.
27 Among the many excellent critical studies on the eighteenth-century reception and eventual adulation of Shakespeare, the three that have informed this book most closely are Jonathan Bate, *Shakespeare and the English Romantic Imagination* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives* (Oxford University Press, 1970; revd. 1991); and Jean Marsden, ed. *The Appropriation of Shakespeare: Post-Renaissance Reconstructions of the Works and the Myth* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).
28 Maureen A. Dowd recently has focused upon the gaps existing between Baillie's Prefaces and her dramatic practice in "'By the Delicate Hand of a Female': Melodramatic Mania and Joanna Baillie's Spectacular Tragedies," *European Romantic Review* 9 (1998), 469: "the gaps between Baillie's

prefatory rhetoric and her dramatic productions operate as a cultural performance that usefully illuminates the intersection of commercial concerns, national interest, and gender issues in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century British theater."

29 *Theatrical Inquisitor* 3 (1813), 111–16; *Critical Review*, 4th. series, 3 (1813), 402–5.

30 See *Critical Review*, 4th. series, 3 (1813), 402–5, and *Quarterly Review* 11 (1814), 188–9.

31 Charles Lamb, "Prologue" to *Remorse*, in *CPW*, II:816–17.

32 See Reeve Parker, "*Osorio*'s Dark Employments: Tricking Out Coleridgean Tragedy," *Studies in Romanticism* 33 (1994), 122–3, for a particularly cogent analysis of Coleridge's revisions to *Osorio*: "Recognizing [the merits of *Osorio*] entails, paradoxically, seeing that the very elements at the heart of the play's unconventional power made production at Drury Lane in the late 1790s unthinkable. The further irony is that later readers mistook those elements for the dreary Gothic trappings of humdrum plays that *were* popular in that venue, plays that Wordsworth and Coleridge deplored as sickly and stupid . . . *Osorio* is a cannily constructed appropriation and extension of the promiscuously circulating fashions in Gothic fiction and in contemporary staging of spectacular *tableaux*, or 'situations.'" Parker's secondary argument – that the gothic trappings of Coleridge's play have caused subsequent critics to dismiss its dramaturgy as derivative and its characters as flawed – further attests to the ways in which critical aversions to gothic's popular stigma have shaped how romanticism has been defined as a category and movement in the twentieth and the nineteenth centuries.

33 Indeed, at least one reviewer of *Remorse* noticed the resemblance of the play to Baillie's work. See *Satirist, or Monthly Meteor* 12 (1813), 269–83.

34 See the Introductions to *BMP* and *Dramas*.

35 See Mary F. Yudin, "Joanna Baillie's Introductory Discourse as a Precursor to Wordsworth's Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*," *Compar(a)ison: An International Journal of Comparative Literature* 1 (1994), 101–11; William D. Brewer, "The Prefaces of Joanna Baillie and William Wordsworth," *Friend: Comment on Romanticism* 1 (1991–2), 34–47; Ross, "Joanna Baillie," *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Volume* XCIII*: British Romantic Poets, 1789–1832*, ed. John R. Greenfield (Detroit: Bruccoli Clark Layman-Gale Research, Inc., 1990); and Jonathan Wordsworth, "Introduction," in Joanna Baillie, *A Series of Plays &c.* (Oxford and New York: Woodstock Books, 1990), ii.

36 See Ross, "Joanna Baillie," 9.

37 For the similarities between Baillie's "Introductory Discourse" and the dramatic theory of Schiller, see Dowd, "'By the Delicate Hand of a Female.'"

38 She is quite vocal, however, about her dislike of sentimental drama. Elsewhere in her "Introductory Discourse," Baillie severely criticizes sentimental comedy: "I am afraid plays of this kind, as well as works of a similar nature, in other departments of literature, have only tended to encrease amongst us a set of sentimental hypocrites; who are the same persons of this

age that would have been the religious ones of another; and are daily doing morality the same kind of injury, by substituting the particular excellence which they pretend to possess, for plain simple uprightness and rectitude" (*BP*, I:48).

39 On Baillie's handling of character and the relation between the closet and the stage, see in particular Catherine Burroughs, "English Romantic Women Writers and Theatre Theory: Joanna Baillie's Prefaces to the *Plays on the Passions*," in *Re-Visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776–1837*, ed. Carol Shiner Wilson and Joel Haefner (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 274–96; and more generally Catherine Burroughs, *Closet Stages: Joanna Baillie and the Theater Theory of British Romantic Women Writers* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).

40 The setting for Act II is as follows: "*A Wood: dark night, with a pale gleam of distant lightning seen once or twice on the edge of the horizon. Advancing by the bottom of the stage, a few moving lights, as from lanthorns, are seen, and at the same time several signal calls and loud whistles are heard, with the distant answer returned to them from another point in the wood. Enter Count Zaterloo, Rayner, Sebastian, and others of the band, armed, and a few of them bearing in their hands dark lanthorns. It is particularly requested if this play ever be acted, that no light may be permitted upon the stage but that which proceeds from the lanthorns only*" (*BMP*, 35).

41 Thomas James Mathias, *The Shade of Alexander Pope on the Banks of the Thames* (London: T. Becket, 1799), 57–64.

42 Ashton, *The German Idea*, 1, 9. Earlier studies of the British reception of German literature date the high-water mark of anti-German reviews at 1798. Ashton's dating stems from her interest not so much in the condemnation of German writers as in the settled and "profound indifference" to them exhibited by British reviewers after 1800 (vi). See also Allardyce Nicoll, *A History of Late Eighteenth Century Drama* (Cambridge University Press, 1927), 61–7; Lilian Furst, *Romanticism in Perspective: A Comparative Study of Aspects of the Romantic Movements in England, France, and Germany* (London: Macmillan, 1969); Frederic Ewen, *The Prestige of Schiller in England 1788–1859* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932); and Violet Stockley, *German Literature as Known in England, 1750–1830* (London: Routledge, 1929).

43 *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 33 (1800), 128–9. The other two reviews of *Wallenstein* are *Critical Review*, 2nd. series, 30 (1800), 175–85; and *British Critic* 18 (1801), 542–5.

44 Francis Jeffrey, Review of *Hermann und Dorothea*, *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 39 (1802), 384; Jeffrey, Review of *Thalaba the Destroyer*, *Edinburgh Review* 1 (1802), 63, 64. Cited from Ashton, *The German Idea*, 9. An even more striking blanket assessment occurs two years earlier in *Gentleman's Magazine* 70 (1800), 406–7: "Theatrical entertainments have an extensive influence upon the manners of Society. When well regulated, and the pieces for representations well selected both as to matter and manner, they may be esteemed friendly to morality, and improvers of public taste. But what shall we say when both these ends are disregarded; when moral virtue is banished from the scene,

and purity of taste is destroyed by affected language and pantomimical decorations? Improvements in almost every art and science have been, within a few years, rapid and important. But that is not the case with the stage; nor can it be, while *Kotzebue* and *his* friends usurp the venerable boards of Shakspeare . . . French principles are to be met with in almost every sentence; those principles, I mean, which, in Scripture language, *have turned the world upside down*. Kings are reviled for no other reason but because they are kings: the ministers of kings are upon all occasions the objects of calumny and reproach; the distressed veteran, who has been dismissed from his public employments for professing Jacobinical opinions, is held forth as deserving of supreme pity; chastity is despised if it opposes sentiment; the prostitute becomes the faithful wife; the faithful wife sacrifices her marriage vows to fulfil any other imaginary duty; Religion, under every description, bends before Philosophy."

45 See Curran, "Mary Robinson's *Lyrical Tales* in Context," in *Re-Visioning Romanticism: British Women Writers, 1776–1837*, 17–35.

46 The process by which this construction of British aesthetic moderation occurs has been recently analyzed by Simpson in *Romanticism, Nationalism, and the Revolt against Theory*, chs. 1, 2, and 4.

47 The repetitiveness of attacks against German drama by British social conservatives at the end of the eighteenth century is a testimony to the extent to which they read each other with more attention than they did the objects of their vilification. Jane West, for example, attacks German plays in her own *Poems and Plays*, 2 vols. (London: Longman and Rees, 1799), as "blasphemies against our Maker, these libels upon all governments . . . [these] demons and monsters of philosophism . . . . Our rulers, in their care for the security of the body politic, must carefully watch against the introduction of that seed of immorality which generally ripens into anarchy, sedition, and every public ill" (I:101–2). The *Antijacobin*, in this same year, reiterates with equal patness and certainty this equation of immorality, German drama, and French politics: "In short, such a scene of corruption as Germany now exhibits, the English mind shudders to contemplate. The young women, even of rank . . . sacrifice their virtue to the first candidate for their favour, who has the means either of captivating their fancy, or gratifying their avarice; while the dreadful number of abortions serves to proclaim the frequency and extent of their crimes . . . To *immoralize* a nation is the surest way to *revolutionize* it" (*Antijacobin Review* 4 [1799], xii, xiii).

48 Hazlitt, *Complete Works*, VI:362.

49 See *Monthly Mirror* 2 (1796), 98; *Critical Review* 19 (1797), 194; *Monthly Review* 23 (1797), 451; *Monthly Mirror* 4 (1797), 355–6. Even Thomas Dutton's defense of Lewis points explicitly to his use of "ghosts" and "German nonsense" as blemishes. See *The Literary Census*, 71n.

50 Walter Scott, Advertisement to *The House of Aspen*, in the *Keepsake*, ed. Frederic Mansel Reynolds, 3 (1830), 2. The phrase "Germanized brat" does not come from the *House of Aspen*'s Advertisement, but rather from a letter

from Scott to George Ellis. See *SL*, 1:124.

51 Charles Lamb recollects Coleridge playfully dressing up to "look like a conjuror" while translating *Wallenstein*. See *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 33 (1800), 127–31, for their review of *Wallenstein*, and 33 (1800), 336, for Coleridge's reply. See also *The Notebooks of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, 4 vols., ed. Kathleen Coburn, continuing (New York: Bollingen Corporation, 1957–90), entry 2598. Coleridge did not publicly denounce German drama until years later, in the "Satyrane Letters" section of *Biographia Literaria*. Julie Carlson relates the story of Coleridge dressing up to translate *Wallenstein* in "Command Performances: Burke, Coleridge, and Schiller's Dramatic Reflections on the Revolution in France," *Wordsworth Circle* 23 (1992), 125. Carlson's source is a letter from Lamb to Coleridge dated 6 August 1800; see *Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 3 vols., ed. Edwin W. Marrs, Jr., (Cornell University Press, 1975), 1:216–17.

52 See *Analytical Review* 28 (1798), 583–7. See also *British Critic* 8 (1796), 180–1; 12 (1798), 425; and 14 (1799), 63–9; *Dramatic Censor* 1 (1800), 120–6; and 2 (1800), 98–102, 201–4, 294–300; *Gentleman's Magazine* 70 (1800), 406–8; *Monthly Review*, 2nd. series, 18 (1795), 346; and 21 (1796), 348; *Monthly Mirror* 7 (1799), 359–62.

53 These figures are compiled by myself, and derived from Hogan's *The London Stage 1660–1800: Part V*, vol. III.

54 The significance of the staging of Inchbald's *Lovers' Vows* (London: G. G. and J. Robinson, 1798) at Mansfield Park is a question that has attracted a surprising number of scholars of stature since the 1980s – from Marilyn Butler and Mary Poovey to Syndy McMillan Conger and William Galperin – and an equally surprising diversity of opinions. Butler and Poovey, for example, have argued that Austen's novel constitutes an indefatigable rejection of German sensibility and its associated jacobinism, while Dvora Zelicovici has proposed that *Lovers' Vows* and *Mansfield Park* actually share similar moral visions. These two opposing readings in turn have been examined and complicated by Conger's tracing of the reception of *Lovers' Vows* in England, and by Joseph Litvak's and Galperin's explorations of the intricacies with which theatricality and anti-theatricality depend upon one another in the novel. For the purposes of this chapter, I wish only to add here that Austen's date of composition for *Mansfield Park* – 1811 – gives her adequate hindsight to treat *Lovers' Vows* with some tolerance and sympathetic irony. A synecdoche among critics, literati, and clergy for everything wrong with German culture, *Lovers' Vows* for Austen is a cultural legacy – a phenomenon of the past universally known and remembered, whose effects are still embarrassingly present even on the relatively removed country estate of an exemplary and upstanding aristocrat like Sir Thomas Bertram. Writing in 1811 on the eve of Madame de Stael's publication of *De l'Allemagne*, Austen believes that she is treating a freak cultural accident that has had its day. After the boom years of the 1790s, the importation of German plays had all but stopped after 1800, and, by 1807, even Kotzebue,

the most popular of these playwrights, had all but ceased to be represented in the provincial theaters. See Butler, *Jane Austen and the War of Ideas* (Oxford University Press, 1975); Kelly, "Reading Aloud in *Mansfield Park*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 37 (1982), 29–49; Dvora Zelicovici, "The Inefficacy of *Lovers' Vows*," *English Literary History* 50 (1983), 531–40; Poovey, *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer*; Joseph Litvak, "The Infection of Acting: Theatricals and Theatricality in *Mansfield Park*," *English Literary History* 53 (1986), 331–55; Elaine Jordan, "Pulpit, Stage, and Novel: *Mansfield Park* and Mrs. Inchbald's *Lovers' Vows*," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 20 (1987), 138–48; Syndy McMillen Conger, "Reading *Lovers' Vows*: Jane Austen's Reflections on English Sense and German Sensibility," *Studies in Philology* 84 (1988), 92–113; and Galperin, "The Theatre at *Mansfield Park*: From Classic to Romantic Once More," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 16 (1992), 247–71.

55 James Boaden, *The Life of Mrs. Jordan*, 2 vols. (London: E. Bull, 1831), II:34, 45.

56 Anna Clark, *Women's Silence, Men's Violence: Sexual Assault in England 1770–1845* (London: Pandora, 1987), 47.

57 *Analytical Review* 28 (1798), 180.

58 Lord Byron, *Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie Marchand, 13 vols. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), V:203. Quoted in Mellor, "Joanna Baillie and the Counter-Public Sphere," *Studies in Romanticism* 33 (1994), 559.

59 See the *Dramatic Censor*, 2(1800), 113; and Margaret S. Carhart, *The Life and Work of Joanna Baillie* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1923), 16. As Carhart documents, one of the candidates for authorship was Scott himself.

60 See Colley, *Britons*, 117–32.

61 Beth H. Friedman-Romell, "Duelling Citizenships: Scottish Patriotism v. British Nationalism in Joanna Baillie's *The Family Legend*," *NCT: Nineteenth Century Theatre* 26 (1998), 30–2.

62 See especially *Dramatic Censor* 2 (1800), 112–18, 127–9, 134. See also Hogan, *The London Stage 1660–1800: Part V*, 2267–71.

63 Between 1776 and 1800, the five most frequently produced plays of Shakespeare in London, with the number of productions in parentheses, are: *Hamlet* (164), *Macbeth* (150), *The Merchant of Venice* (119), *Romeo and Juliet* (119), and *Richard III* (101). See Hogan, *The London Stage 1660–1800: Part V*.

64 John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage from the Restoration in 1660 to 1830*, 10 vols. (Bath: H. E. Carrington, 1832), VII:163, 333.

65 See especially Hill, *Puritanism and Revolution*; Janowitz, *England's Ruins*, 67–77.

66 It is difficult, however, to assess the degree to which the politics of *Ethwald* are Baillie's, especially in light of Connolly's assertion in *The Censorship of English Drama* that censorship on the English stage has always occurred for political reasons (1).

67 Ewen, *The Prestige of Schiller in England*, 48.

68 Henry Mackenzie, *An Account of the German Theatre*, *Transactions of the Royal Society of Edinburgh* 2 (1790), 190.

69 Baillie, *Dramas*, II:260–1.

70 The play opens with a Highland wedding dance, is lavishly decorated with Highland costuming, language, and customs, and contains seven songs.

5 "TO FOIST THY STALE ROMANCE": SCOTT, ANTIQUARIANISM, AND AUTHORSHIP

1 *BPW* II:234, lines 171–82.
2 Jane Millgate, "For Lucre or for Fame: Lockhart's Versions of the Reception of *Marmion*," *Review of English Studies* 44 (1993), 196. See as well Peter T. Murphy, *Poetry as an Occupation and an Art in Britain, 1760–1830* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), ch. 4; and John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995).
3 Murphy, *Poetry as an Occupation and an Art in Britain*, 136.
4 Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott*, 172; in surveying critical theses regarding Scott's anonymity, Sutherland lists as well Scott's father's disapproval of novels, Scott's own worries about undermining his status as a public office holder, and Scott's awareness that his anonymity functioned as a sales gimmick. He concludes that none of these explanations "is absolutely convincing" (172). See as well Fiona Robertson, *Legitimate Histories: Scott, Gothic, and the Authorities of Fiction* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 124–9; Millgate, "For Lucre or for Fame," 199–202.
5 Jane Millgate, *Walter Scott: The Making of the Novelist* (University of Toronto Press, 1984), 3.
6 Ross, "Scott's Chivalric Pose," 269–70.
7 Cited from Millgate, "For Lucre or for Fame," 201. The original source is a letter from James Ballantyne to bookseller William Miller, 1 December 1805, National Library of Scotland MS 786, fos. 51–2. In this letter, Ballantyne acts as an intermediary between Miller and Scott, and claims to quote his words as near to exactly as possible.
8 Scott translated or adapted popular German ballads, poems by Bürger and Goethe, and plays by Schiller, Meier, Iffland, and Steinberg. For information on Scott's translations of German drama in the 1790s, see Duncan M. Mennie, "Sir Walter Scott's Unpublished Translations of German Plays," *Modern Language Review* 33 (1938), 234–9. Scott's "William and Helen" was one of five translations of *Lenore* in 1796. For bibliographic information on these translations, see ch. 2, n. 94.
9 Robertson, *Legitimate Histories*, 56.
10 *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library*, ed. and intro. Walter Scott, 10 vols. (London: Hurst, Robinson and Co., 1821–4) – vol. I: Henry Fielding, *The Novels of Henry Fielding*; vols. II–III (1821): Tobias Smollett, *The Novels of Tobias Smollett* and Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, *The Achievements of the Sage and Valiant Don Quixote de la Mancha*, trans. Tobias Smollett; vol. IV (1822): Alain René Le Sage, *Novels*, and Charles Johnston, *Chrysal; or, the Adventures of a Guinea*; vol. V (1823): Laurence Sterne, *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gent.* and *A Sentimental Journey*; Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*; Samuel Johnson,

Rasselas; Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling, The Man of the World*, and *Julia de Roubigne*; Horace Walpole, *The Castle of Otranto*; and Clara Reeve, *The Old English Baron*; vols. VI–VIII (1824): Samuel Richardson, *The Novels of Samuel Richardson, Esq.*; vol. IX (1824): Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*; Robert Bage, *Mount Henneth, Barham Downs,* and *James Wallace*; and Richard Cumberland, *Henry*; vol. X (1824): Ann Radcliffe, *Novels*.

11 Scott's essay on Walpole was first published ten years before the inception of the *Ballantyne's Novelist's Library* in the 1811 Ballantyne edition of *Castle of Otranto*; Scott subsequently reused it in revised form.

12 Scott's plans to expand the *Ballantyne* series are cited from Robertson, *Legitimate Histories*, 57. Barbauld's *The British Novelists* contained the following texts (volume numbers in parentheses): Samuel Richardson, *Clarissa* (I–VIII) and *Sir Charles Grandison* (IX–XV); Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (XVI–XVII); Henry Fielding, *Joseph Andrews* (XVIII) and *Tom Jones* (XIX–XXI); Clara Reeve, *Old English Baron*, and Horace Walpole, *Castle of Otranto* (XXII); Coventry, *Pompey the Little*, and Oliver Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield* (XXIII); Charlotte Lennox, *The Female Quixote* (XXIV–XXV); Samuel Johnson, *Rassalas*, and Hawkesworth, *Almoran and Hamet* (XXVI); Frances Brooke, *History of Miss Julia Mandeville*, and Elizabeth Inchbald, *Nature and Art* (XXVII); Elizabeth Inchbald, *A Simple Story* (XXVIII); Henry Mackenzie, *The Man of Feeling* and *Julia de Roubigné, A Tale* (XXIX); Tobias Smollett, *Humphrey Clinker* (XXX–XXXI); Richard Graves, *The Spiritual Quixote* (XXXII–XXXIII); John Moore, *Zeluco* (XXXIV–XXXV); Charlotte Smith, *The Old Manor House* (XXXVI–XXXVII); Frances Burney, *Evelina* (XXXVIII–XXXIX) and *Cecilia* (XL–XLII); Ann Radcliffe, *The Romance of the Forest* (XLIII–XLIV) and *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (XLV–XLVII); Robert Bage, *Hermsprong* (XLVIII); Maria Edgeworth, *Belinda* and *The Modern Griselda* (XLIX–L).

13 Barbauld's essay states a preference for realism in two places: in her statement that "A good novel is an epic in prose, with more of character and less (indeed in modern novels nothing) of the supernatural machinery" (I:3); and in her recommendation that women read novels as a "safe" way to gather "real-life" experience: "If the stage is a mirror of life, so is the novel, and perhaps a more accurate one, as less is sacrificed to effect and representation" (I:51).

14 See Ina Ferris, "Re-Positioning the Novel: *Waverley* and the Gender of Fiction," *Studies in Romanticism* 28 (1989), 292; and *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, 253.

15 The quotation is from Beth Newman, "*The Heart of Midlothian* and the Masculinization of Fiction," *Criticism* 36 (1994), 521. In addition, see Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, especially chs. 2–4; and Chris Ferns, "That Obscure Object of Desire: Sir Walter Scott and the Borders of Gender," *English Studies in Canada* 22 (1996), 149–66.

16 Scott writes in his introduction to the essay on Horace Walpole, "Mr. Gray writes to Mr. Walpole, on 30th December 1764: 'I have received "The Castle of Otranto," and return you my thanks for it. It engages our

attention here (i.e. at Cambridge), makes some of us cry a little; and all, in general, afraid to go to bed o'nights. We take it for a translation; and should believe it to be a true story, if it were not for St. Nicholas'" (*SMP*, III:308).

17 Walter Scott, *The House of Aspen*. The quotation is cited from John Gibson Lockhart, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott* (1834), 10 vols. (Edinburgh: T. and A. Constable, 1902), II:16–17.
18 Sutherland, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 156–7.
19 Sutherland, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 64.
20 See Mennie, "Sir Walter Scott's Unpublished Translations of German Plays," 234–9; and Fiona Robertson, "Castle Spectres: Scott, Gothic Drama, and the Search for the Narrator," in *Scott and Carnival*, ed. J. H. Alexander and David Hewitt (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1993), 444–58.
21 Scott himself seems to be the originator of this account; see the Advertisement to *The House of Aspen*, 3; Sutherland, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 73–4.
22 See *SL*, IV:472–4, V:150, and XII:170–1.
23 *SL* III:324. Scott calls the office "ridiculous" in his correspondence no fewer than three times.
24 See Scott, "Essay on Imitations of the Ancient Ballad," in *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, 34–6.
25 Sutherland, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 73–4.
26 See especially the letter of Kenneth Curry to Scott, 28 November 1801, printed in *SL*, I:103n: "I have observed the use Mr. Lewis made of your beautiful poems and am sorry for it. Two volumes of Wonderful Tales selected for no rule but that of their being wonderful do not I think make a very judicious publication – the wonders put each other out of countenance. I am happy you are going to intersperse your poems in your projected publication where they will appear to much greater advantage when relieved by the real language of manners and poetry of the 'Olden times.'"
27 Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 84.
28 See Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, especially ch. 7; Janowitz, *England's Ruins*, 13–15, 63; Yoon Sun Lee, "A Divided Inheritance: Scott's Antiquarian Novel and the British Nation," *English Literary History* 64 (1997), 537–67; Millgate, *Walter Scott*, ch. 5; Robertson, *Legitimate Histories*, 225–33; and Sutherland, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, chs. 4 and 5.
29 Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, 217; Katie Trumpener, "National Character, Nationalist Plots: National Tale and Historical Novel in the Age of Waverley, 1806–1830," *English Literary History* 60 (1993), 710; cited from Lee, "A Divided Inheritance: Scott's Antiquarian Novel and the British Nation," 538.
30 Ferris, *The Achievement of Literary Authority*, 204.
31 J. H. Alexander, *The Reception of Scott's Poetry by His Correspondents: 1796–1817*, *Romantic Reassessment* (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, 1979), I:46.
32 Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, 84.

33 This argument is made by several writers at the turn of the nineteenth century. The best-known of these critiques of history are William Godwin's "History and Romance" (1798), ed. Michael Gamer, at http://www.english.upenn.edu/mgamer/godwin.history.html, and the Preface to Maria Edgeworth's *Castle Rackrent* (1800).
34 Hurd, *Letters on Chivalry and Romance*, 118–19.
35 Richard Hurd, *Dissertation on the Idea of Universal Poetry* (London: A. Millar, 1766). Quoted in Ioan Williams, *Novel and Romance*, 270–1.
36 Janowitz, *England's Ruins*, 61.
37 Janowitz, *England's Ruins*, 55.
38 *SPW*, 40. All further references to Scott's prefaces and notes will be cited by page number; the poems will be cited by canto and line number.
39 Watt, *Contesting the Gothic*, 133.
40 *British Review* 4 (May 1813), cited from John O. Hayden, ed., *Scott: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1970), 64–5. All subsequent quotations from this review will be from this collection, and cited by page number.
41 Hayden, *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, 66.
42 *British Critic* 36 (1810), 124.
43 *Edinburgh Review* 12 (1808), 9.
44 *Satirist, or Monthly Meteor* 2 (1808), 191; *Le Beau Monde* 3 (1808), 267. Both quotations are cited in Robertson, *Legitimate Histories*, 53. One of the many letters quoted by Alexander in *The Reception of Scott's Poetry* mistakenly refers to Constance as "that lovely page, Matilda" (57). The original source for the letter is Abbotsford MS 922 f 10r.
45 Hayden, *Scott: The Critical Heritage*, 60, 62.
46 *Edinburgh Review* 12 (1808), 9.
47 *Edinburgh Review* 12 (1808), 9, 32, 34.
48 See *SL*, II:51, 54, 69.
49 *Edinburgh Review* 12 (1808), 32.
50 *Edinburgh Review* 12 (1808), 30–1.
51 Jeffrey's own relationship to the *Edinburgh*'s popularity is nearly as complex as Scott's, and is best encapsulated in Jeffrey's review of Thomas Campbell's *Specimens of the British Poets*, 7 vols. (London: J. Murray, 1819): "The character of our poetry depends not a little on the taste of our poetical readers; – and though some bards have always been before their age, and some behind it, the greater part must be pretty nearly on its level. Present popularity, whatever disappointed writers may say, is, after all, the only safe passage of future glory; – and it is really as unlikely that good poetry should be produced in any quantity where it is not relished, as that cloth should be manufactured and thrust into the market, of a pattern and fashion for which there was no demand." See *Edinburgh Review* 31 (1819), 466–7.
52 Ross, "Scott's Chivalric Pose," 289.
53 See Milton, *Paradise Lost*, I:591–604, in *The Complete Poetical Works of John Milton*, ed. Harris Francis Fletcher (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1941).

54 See Ross, "Scott's Chivalric Pose," 269–70; Ross, "Romancing the Nation-State: The Poetics of Romantic Nationalism," in *The Macropolitics of Nineteenth-Century Literature*, ed. Jonathan Arac and Harriet Ritvu (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991), 74–80; and Goslee, *Scott the Rhymer* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1988), 95.
55 *SL*, III:479.
56 Sutherland, *The Life of Sir Walter Scott*, 172.
57 For two excellent accounts of the histories and ideologies of the word "literature," see Raymond Williams, *Keywords*, revised edn. (Oxford University Press, 1983), 183–8; and Terry Eagleton, *Literary Theory: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), ch. 1.
58 The quotation from Burke is famously from *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790), ed. A. J. Grieve (London: Dent, 1967), 76. The quotation from Pope is the *First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace* (1737), in *The Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt, 11 vols. (London: Methuen and Co. Ltd., 1939), IV:221, lines 304–13:

> There still remains to mortify a Wit,
> The many-headed Monster of the Pit:
> A sense-less, worth-less, and unhonour'd crowd;
> Who to disturb their betters mighty proud,
> Clatt'ring their sticks, before ten lines are spoke,
> Call for the Farce, the Bear, or the Black-joke.
> What dear delight to Britons Farce affords!
> Ever the taste of Mobs, but now of Lords
> Taste, that eternal wanderer, which flies
> From heads to ears, and now from ears to eyes.

59 Walter Scott, *The Doom of Devorgoil, a Melo-drama; and Auchindrane; or the Ayrshire Tragedy* (Edinburgh and London: Cadell and Co., and Simpkin and Marshall, 1830), 174.
60 Scott, *Doom of Devorgoil*, 95.

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