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Review of *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*, edited by Jerrold E. Hogle; *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange, 1760-1960*, edited by Avril Horner; *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography* by David Lorne Macdonald; *Gothic Writers: A Critical and Bibliographical Guide*, edited by Douglass H. Thomson, Jack G. Voller, and Frederick S. Frank; *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764-1824* by Toni Wein; and *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature* by Julian Wolfreys

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tions. Some of the best essays in the volume are those which emphasise the complexity of the relationship between the English and the Celtic, whether in Malcom Kelsall's reading of Lever's bleak, post-famine "two nations" novel, *Luttrell of Arran*, or in Bernard Beatty's careful exploration of Byron's shifting representation of the Scottish elements of his identity. The play on "Scots," "Scotch," "Scotland," "half a Scot," "Scott" is also teased out by Andrew Nicholson, who examines more closely the relationship between Byron's poetry and that of his older contemporary, Walter Scott. It is as the Author of *Waverley* and Scottish tourism that Murray Pittock approaches Scott, however, in his clear-sighted discussion of the visual primitivism generated by Scott's novels, and its impact on popular perceptions of Scotland. Scott's own representation of the Highlands was coloured by Macpherson's *Ossian*, whose literary afterlife forms the subject of Dafydd Moore's polemical account. *Ossian's* importance to the collection emerges paradoxically through absence, as Moore points not just to the well-known ubiquity of Macpherson's poems in the Romantic period, but also to the way in which it has been obscured. Though methodologically very different, David Punter is equally concerned with the apparent absence, and yet refusal of absence, of the Celtic nations in Blake's strange topographies.

Punter's observation that "the Celtic cannot be kept at bay," is a prevailing theme in the collection, though in some

senses its very preoccupations combine to have this effect. Despite its admirable inclusiveness of the four nations, there is very little reference to the Celtic languages (except Welsh), nor to the writers who continued to compose poetry in Irish or Scots Gaelic. Neither is the term "Celtic" subject to very rigorous investigation, given the problematic question of "the Celts," and the considerable distinctions between various Celtic traditions. Some of the differences are evident from the essays, but a student might well be a little baffled by the sheer variety of Celtic and Celticist reference, and puzzled perhaps by which writers were supposedly "Celtic" and which were representing "the Celtic" in their work. Distinctions between Highland and Lowland Scotland, or between Protestant and Catholic Ireland are not always immediately clear to those encountering "the Celtic world" for the first time, so anyone recommending the volume to students might want to introduce it with some basic cultural history.

This is a sophisticated volume, which makes a timely contribution to the Four Nations Romanticism debate, but also one in which the individual essays stand on their own feet and can be read in isolation. The intrinsic interest of the subject, and the liveliness and range of the essays is likely to stimulate further work on Welsh, Irish, and Scottish Romantic literature – it may also spur those whose primary interests are in English literature to re-examine much-loved texts.

Jerrold E. Hogle, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction*

(Cambridge Univ.Pr. 2002) 327 + xxv \$25.00 pr.

Avril Horner, ed. *European Gothic: A Spirited Exchange 1760-1960*

(Manchester Univ. Pr. 2002) 260 + xii \$25.00

D. L. Macdonald, *Monk Lewis: A Critical Biography*

(Univ. of Toronto Pr. 2000) 311 + xv \$60.00

**A Review by Diane Long Hoeveler
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In 1812, Francis Jeffrey reviewed Madame de Stael's *D'Allemagne* for the *Edinburgh Review* and established one of the earliest genealogies for the connection between "gothic" and "Romantic" in our literary tradition: "The Germans cultivated their poetry a hundred years later, when the study of antiquity had revived the knowledge of the Gothic sentiments and principles. Nature produced a chivalrous poetry in the sixteenth century; learning in the eighteenth. Perhaps the history of English poetry reflects the revolution of European taste more distinctly than that of any other nation. We

Douglass H. Thomson, Jack G. Voller, and Frederick S. Frank, eds. *Gothic Writers: A Critical and Bibliographical Guide*

(Greenwood Pr. 2002) 544 pp. \$105.00

Toni Wein, *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel, 1764-1824*

(Palgrave MacMillan 2002) 290 + viii \$90.00

Julian Wolfreys, *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature*

(Palgrave MacMillan 2002) 175 + xiv. \$95.00/\$30.95 pr.

have successively cultivated a Gothic poetry from nature, a classical poetry from imitation, and a second Gothic from the study of our own ancient poets." For Jeffrey in 1812, the gothic was an integral component of British nationalism, a genre as well as a characteristic that associated Britain with the Germanic tribes from which they were supposedly descended. And as such, Gothicism was anti-French, indigenous, and "authentic." But such a cultural condition did not continue for very long among literary critics, for Wordsworth

and Coleridge were both frantically distancing themselves from all things considered remotely gothic by 1815.

Flash-forward to 1980 in American university English Departments and the demonization of the gothic was still very much in effect. "Romantic" meant high canonical, male-authored lyric poetry, and "gothic" meant that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* could be taught and taken seriously. That Shelley's novel was for many years the essence of Gothicism was owing to a large extent to the influence of such important studies as Ellen Moer's *Literary Women* (1976), Gilbert and Gubar's *Madwoman in the Attic*, and U. C. Knoepfelmacher's *The Endurance of 'Frankenstein'* (both 1979). The situation in 2004, of course, is radically different, at least in the academy. The "Gothic" as academic force-field has seen a veritable explosion of interest, publication, and professional activity during the past fifteen to twenty years. A scholarly journal, international conferences, and a professional organization complete with an impressive website have all appeared in the last decade. But the most important activity in the field has been the constant publication of original and theoretically sophisticated scholarly studies that approach the gothic in new and provocative ways.

Early scholarly studies tended to content themselves with mapping the terrain in order to carve out something like a canon, or what Fred Frank has called the "gothic pantheon"—Walpole, Beckford, Lewis, Radcliffe. New works on the gothic take the validity and composition of that canon for granted, but at the same time they tend to examine literary texts that could be described as inhabiting the fringes of a central terrain (French, German, Scottish, Irish, and postcolonial gothic). Two motivations dominate the field: first, to identify and understand a pervasive gothic *zeitgeist* and, secondly, to place the gothic within a large and multi-culturally diverse ideological and cultural framework(s). The works listed above are only samples of gothic titles published within the past two to four years. They range from more traditional, narrowly focused thematic and biographical studies to encyclopedia-like guides or dictionaries that attempt to map this ever-expanding gothic field.

The most traditional of the books, Toni Wein's *British Identities, Heroic Nationalisms, and the Gothic Novel*, argues that the gothic novel "figures a nationalist community through its imagining of a hero" (8). These heroes, who typify the social, cultural, and economic shift from brute force to empirical logic, constitute what Wein calls a "new technology of masculinity." Wein's contribution is to complicate the gender distinctions that have dominated critical discourse. Wein claims that both gothic heroes and heroines share cross-gendered traits and do not neatly "bifurcate into male and female forms. One central tenet of my work is that the Gothic hero and heroine share attributes, without necessarily being feminized or masculinized" (11). This claim is supported with varying results by examining a number of canonical gothic texts: Walpole's *Castle of Otranto*, Reeve's *Old*

English Baron, all of Radcliffe's novels except *The Italian*, Lewis's *The Monk*, and the gothic chapbooks.

By far the newest and most valuable section of the book is its discussion of the chapbooks, not well known and not widely analyzed. One would hope this situation will change, however, with the publication of Gary Kelly's recent collection of female gothic chapbooks (*Varieties of Female Gothic*, Pickering and Chatto). Also valuable here is the discussion of the role that editors and gothic authors played in shaping the evolving print culture: "As I hope to show, Gothic authors advocating a heightened role for themselves qua authors located individual freedom in organized authority, just as Gothic tales made the same identification possible" (208).

Nationalism or strategies by which literature assisted in constructing the new bourgeois British subject, and literature as a form of nationalist discourse—all are important new emphases for literary study, and certainly the gothic participated in the movement to construct the ideal and "authentic" British citizen. Wein chooses to focus on what she calls the "genderless" figurations of identity in gothic literature, a controversial claim given what many critics have seen as a strong bifurcation of gender in these same works. And although her focus is on the interplay between gender and nationalism, I found the most original and intriguing aspects of Wein's study to be in her understanding of literature within a transforming literary historical context (the growth of copyright laws, etc.).

D. L. Macdonald's biography of *Monk Lewis* is another of the more traditional but important contributions to canonical gothic scholarship, and it is the first modern full-scale biography of Lewis published in over forty years. Using new material from a variety of manuscript collections, Macdonald directly addresses the vexed personal issues in Lewis's life that seem to swirl throughout *The Monk*: Lewis's conflicted and tortured relationship with his mother, his parents's separation, his sexuality, and his relationship with the slaves at his Jamaican plantation. This biography directly and objectively addresses what the evidence tells us about Lewis's sexual orientation, as well as his relationship with his mother, and as such, it contributes to our understanding of the issues in *The Monk*. Also his extended treatment of Lewis's two trips to Jamaica as context for his *Journal of a West India Proprietor* is extremely valuable. Rich in anecdote and incidents, this biography provides a wealth of details about Lewis's life and how that life very directly played out in the dramas, ballads, and the novel.

According to Macdonald, the task of any biographer is to merge what are known as the "etic" and "emic" approaches to one's subject. An etic approach assumes that an analysis can only occur from an "alien" point of view, recognizing our distance from the subject, while an emic method takes an internal view, using our own contemporary values

and beliefs to understand and judge the biographical subject. Macdonald admits that he has used both of these two approaches and states: "I do not share the attitude of Lewis's contemporaries towards homosexuality, and I do not hesitate to judge that attitude (etically); but first I try to understand it (emically). I do not share Lewis's own attitude towards slavery, and I do not hesitate to judge it; but first I try to understand it" (ix). Such a statement sums up Macdonald's own positions on controversial issues in Lewis's life, positions that he explored with fairness and objectivity.

Julian Wolfreys's *Victorian Hauntings* uses Jacques Derrida's theories of spectrality, particularly as they are developed in his *Specters of Marx* (trans. 1997) to explore Charles Dickens's "fat boys" and the corpulent body in the major novels *Little Dorrit* as "a text of affirmative resistance" (97); Tennyson's *In Memoriam* and the "spectral troping of faith" (59); George Eliot's "Lifted Veil" and "notions of haunting and the spectral" (78); and Thomas Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and the "question of uncanny resonance" (112). For Wolfreys: "Textuality brings back to us a supplement that has no origin, in the form of haunting figures—textual figures—which we misrecognize as images of 'real' people, their actions, and the contexts in which the events and lives to which we are witness take place. We 'believe' in the characters, assume their reality, without taking into account the extent to which those figures or characters are, themselves, textual projections, apparitions if you will, images or phantasms belonging to the phantasmic because they appear to signal a reality that has never existed, that they can be read as all the more spectral, all the more haunting" (xiii). As a deconstructive reading of some of the same issues that Terry Castle explored in *The Female Thermometer*, Wolfreys presents several useful and interesting readings of gothic texts that in many ways are the heirs of earlier, Romantic gothic hauntings. One Wolfreys's strengths is his approaching a canonically "straight" work like *In Memoriam* as haunted and spectre-ridden, and thus opening the text to a gothic reading that it has not been given in the past. Another strength is the suggestive *Afterword*, which discusses Virginia Woolf's very short story "A Haunted House" alongside W. B. Yeats's final drama *Purgatory*.

Another trend that appears to be growing in popularity is what I would call the "encyclopediazation" of gothic studies. Gothic Handbooks such as Marie Mulvey-Robert's or two edited by David Punter are valuable overviews for undergraduate students in a very large field of literary study. The growth of encyclopedias and dictionaries also indicates that gothic has a canon that can be neatly summarized, catalogued, and alphabetized. Such a move, however, also implies that the field has now been successfully "mapped," codified, and that we all agree on its contours and shape. Many scholars working in the field would, I think, find such a premise to be premature.

Among the collections, *Gothic Writers: A Critical and Bibliographical Guide*, edited by Douglass Thomson, Jack Vollner, and Frederick Frank, is an immensely useful, unpretentious, workman-like approach to what is now understood as the canonical field. There are fifty-four brief essays on the major gothic writers in the British, American, German, Russian, French, and Japanese traditions, as well as essays on the "Northanger Novels," the gothic chapbooks, gothic drama, a timeline, and a general bibliography. Each essay provides a critical overview of the major gothic works, as well as annotating the major bibliographical sources for each author. Fred Frank's essays on the Japanese gothicists (Izumi Kyoka and Ueda Akinari) was eye-opening, and Susan Allen Ford's essay on Joyce Carol Oates was meticulous, thorough, and extremely helpful. Michael Gamer's essay on Walter Scott as a gothicist was a model of its kind, well written, clear, and extremely useful.

In addition to the essays on the major and well-known canonical figures, there were also some adventurous forays into less well-charted topics. French novelists like Baculard d'Arnaud, Sade, and Ducray-Duminil are discussed for their importance in contributing the basic narratives that are adapted by later writers like Pixerecourt, Holcroft, or even Amelia Opie. German gothicists are represented here in discussions of ETA Hoffman, Ludwig Tieck, Friedrich von Schiller, while there is a useful entry on the Russian gothicist Vladimir Fyodorovich Odoevsky. The bulk of the entries, however, are focused on nineteenth-century American writers (George Lippard, Gertrude Atherton, Washington Irving, Henry James, Poe, Melville, Bierce, and Hawthorne) and British authors writing in the gothic tradition (Walpole, the Brontës, Godwin, Dickens, Maturin, Polidori, Reeve, Mary Shelley, and Charlotte Smith among others).

The essays in *The Cambridge Companion to Gothic Fiction* are more extensive pieces that aim to provide an overview of the field in addition to scholarly and theoretical depth. My sense is that the *Cambridge Companion*, ostensibly intended for undergraduate students, is actually more geared toward graduate students and scholars working in the field, hence there is a more theoretically informed voices in each of these essays. The strongest essays were E. J. Clery's "The Genesis of 'Gothic' Fiction," Robert Miles's "The 1790s: The Effulgence of Gothic," complete with graphs, and Jeffrey Cox's "English Gothic Theatre." Perhaps the most original contribution in the collection is Lizabeth Paravisini-Gebert's "Colonial and Postcolonial Gothic: The Caribbean," an overview of a number of little-known texts dealing with Obeah, beginning with the anonymous *Hamel, the Obeah Man* (1827) and Clarke's *The Mystery of Major Molineux* (1881), and leading to such contemporary gothic works as De Lisser's *The White Witch of Rosehall* (1929), Clitandre's *Cathedral of the August Heat* (1987), and Montero's *In the Palm of Darkness* (1999).

Mish Kavka's "The Gothic on Screen" is also a strong contribution to this collection, organized around the themes

of "monstrous space," "monstrous sexuality," and "monstrous psychology." Terry Hale's essay on "French and German Gothic: The Beginnings" is an extremely valuable overview of the French sentimental tradition, the *ritter-räuber*, and *schauer-roman* traditions, the French *frénétique* tradition, and the numerous translations that were made in France of British gothic novels. Of special interest to Romanticists is Michael Gamer's essay "Gothic Fictions and Romantic Writing in Britain" (85-104). Substantial, scholarly, and dense with historical detail, Gamer's essay surveys the often contradictory interaction between the gothic and Romantic genres, arguing that while writers such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Scott all appropriated gothic conventions in their literary works, they did not reveal sympathy for the gothic in their critical reviews of other writers.

Finally, *European Gothic*, is a volume of valuable essays on what I would predict will be the next focus of serious study of the gothic: European and cross-cultural studies of the genres. Of special value in this collection is Robert Miles's "Europhobia: The Catholic Other in Walpole and Maturin," an intelligent analysis of nationalistic anxieties in Walpole and Maturin, typically misread as anti-Catholicism. Some of the essays are clearly British in focus—for instance, Catherine Lanone's essay on *Melmoth* (71-83)—but the others are continental in emphasis, including Terry Hale's essay on "Translation in Distress: Cultural Misappropriation and the Construction of the Gothic," heavily focused on French gothicists. In another interesting essay Angela Wright compares de Sade's construction of female victimization to that found in Lewis's *The Monk* (39-54), and in another, Victor Sage compares Diderot's anti-Catholic novel *Le Religieuse* to Maturin's anti-Catholic novel, *Melmoth*. By placing the essays of Miles, Sage, and to some extent Wright against each other, one can see very clearly how pervasive anti-Catholicism is throughout the gothic genre, both in England as well as across the European continent.

When the volume does focus on continental Europe, the essays are original and open up new areas of study in the field. Neil Cornwell, the recognized expert on Russian Gothicism, contributes an essay that briefly discusses Pushkin's *Queen of Spades* as either a "Gothic tale par excellence or a gothic parody" (118). New in this volume also are the essays on Potocki's *Manuscript Found in Saragossa* by Ahlam Alaki (183-203) and ritual violence in Spanish Romanticism by Joan Curbet (161-82).

For Romanticists, the most useful essays in this volume are Peter Mortensen's "The Robbers and the Police: British Romantic Drama and the Gothic Treacheries of Coleridge's *Remorse*" (128-46), and John Williams's "Translating Mary Shelley's *Valperga* into English: Historical Romance, Biography or Gothic Fiction?" (147-60). Mortensen, in an essay that

should be read alongside Michael Gamer's, explores Coleridge's *Remorse* (1813) as a response to Schiller's *Die Räuber* (1780): "I wish to speculate on the significance which European pre-revolutionary and revolutionary drama acquired during the restive years of British war-time censorship and xenophobia, and to illuminate the ideological and national implications of the embedding, harnessing and denaturing of Continent, extravagant and outlandish discourse which is carried out by Coleridge's legitimate stage-tragedy. I wish to speculate. . . on the ways in which literary appropriation could be used and was used, during the romantic period, to 'inoculate' illicit and pernicious texts, by suppressing their dangerous tendencies and replacing them with more wholesome fare" (131).

In his essay on Mary Shelley's *Valperga*, a work that epitomizes the British Romantic fascination with Italy, John Williams focuses on the many "boundaries" Shelley had to cross in order to construct her novel: gothic conventions found in Radcliffe, historical sources for Italian politics and history found in Machiavelli and Sismondi, and literary devices of historical fiction as found in Scott's *Ivanhoe*. But finally, Williams proposes that *Valperga* be examined as a species of *roman à clef*, yet another autobiographical fiction that explored Shelley's own complex marriage to Percy and conflicted relationship with her father, Claire, and Byron: "[t]he boundary between what was the Shelleys' business and what was the world's business is thus destabilized by a novel which fictionalizes historical accounts, appropriates the past as the present, projects a critique of Italian political affairs onto an English scenario (in the process subverting the fashionable form of Gothic romance), and enrolls the author's friends and neighbours in its cast list. In the end, readers cannot be sure if the text before them should be dealt with as matter for literary criticism, or considered as a test case for the cultural studies project. Destabilizing boundaries that frequently remain unchallenged elsewhere is a primary feature of the 'Gothic' text" (159). As this brief summary suggests, it is particularly fruitful to bring a comparative focus to a number of Romantic/gothic works not usually considered canonically "gothic."

The divide between "Romantic" and "gothic" will continue, I suspect, as a marker for the distinction between "high" and "low" cultural artifacts. And while the Romantic has received the more scholarly attention for the past century, the gothic would appear to be, at least for some of us, on the ascendant. The publication of these books is just one sign of the richness and energy that is currently being brought to the field. For those of who love the gothic, this is a remarkable time to be reading, teaching, and writing about the gothic. These works are all valuable additions to our increasingly expanding gothic libraries.